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**Sa Sariling Bayan Sa Sariling Bayan:  
Apat na Dulang May Musika  
by Bienvenido Lumbera**

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*Philippine Studies* vol. 51, no. 4 (2003): 647–650

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

popping in the fire, not a single sound could be heard around our circle" (p. 129). The book contains some of the most beautiful figures of speech ever spun by the human mind. Because famine is described as the condition of being "swallowed by a crocodile," good fortune is "the crocodile spitting us out" (p. 55). A beautiful woman is "one so fair you can see the food going down her throat (p. 91)," and "her fingers are like the buds of a ginger plant (p. 99)." And should the Subanen wish you a long, healthy life, they would pray that "you will be agile enough to walk along a sugarcane leaf. . . . You will be in this world so long that you will even lie curled around an earthen rice pot" (pp. 111–13).

In her Introduction, Brichoux states that the book will please a wide range of readers: the general scholar, the linguist, the anthropologist, the student of literature. In his Foreword, Isagani R. Cruz adds that it is also for both the curious—who will find in it "amusing accounts, peculiar attitudes, entertaining anecdotes, semi-factual vignettes, credible etymologies, effective incantations" (p. xvii)—and the reflective, who will find "insights into humanity and nature" (p. xvii). Undoubtedly, it is a treasure trove for creative writers as well, for it is the literary tradition in which they can be rooted, so that—instead of floundering in "a habit of shore"-lessness—they may at last find themselves one with this voice of many rivers in the archipelagic nation called the Philippines.

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**Bienvenido Lumbera, *Sa Sariling Bayan: Apat na Dulang May Musika*. Manila: De la Salle University Press, 2004. ix + 533 pp.**

Reading a play is an odd thing. We are often told that the proper place of drama is in the theater where it rises and falls with the curtain. One may say, however, that a play is not merely for the senses but for the mind as well. A play read can become more persuasive than a play performed because the mind is free to imagine. This, perhaps, is how

we should read Bienvenido Lumbera's newest work on the Filipino drama, *Sa Sariling Bayan: Apat na Dulang may Musika*. Perhaps we should read the play as if it is written not only to be seen, but also read and imagined, taken to heart where it must stay.

This notable publication from the De la Salle University Press collects Lumbera's four plays with music, produced over a span of two decades: *Nasa Puso ang Amerika*, *Bayani*, *Noli me Tangere the Musical*, and *Hibik at Himagsik nina Victoria Laktaw*. *Noli me Tangere* and *Bayani* are revisionary interpretations of Jose Rizal's life and work. *Nasa Puso ang Amerika* is an adaptation of Carlos Bulosan's novel *America is in the Heart*, part of the canon of Asian-American studies in U.S. universities, while *Victoria Laktaw* chronicles the struggle of women during the Filipino-American war.

Without a doubt, Lumbera, along with the late Rolando Tinio, stands among the contemporary giants responsible for the continued relevance of drama in a place where cultural philistinism is god. This new addition to the canon of the Filipino drama, perhaps the most neglected of the literary arts today, is sure to renew its hitherto desolate existence. Lumbera readily laments that plays in this country are usually limited to connoisseurs, contained in universities as well as cultural centers. A play is born, seen. Shortly after, it dies like yesterday's news.

Lumbera refuses to accept this as the sad fate of the Filipino drama. For him, plays must extend beyond the theater and move into the minds of the people. Thus, Lumbera declares that his collection is essentially for the Filipino reader, now and yet to come. The publication may be taken, therefore, as a sign of the author's own attempt to expand the readership of drama, against which current practices militate. For example, it is common to see more Western pieces performed than original works by Filipino dramatists. This is the same reason why Lumbera proposes that more and more original Filipino plays should be shown and published so that the Filipino dramatist himself will begin to understand the needs of his work and audience. This appreciation, needless to say, ends with nothing short of the dramatic tradition's refinement and, consequently, endurance.

Lumbera's search for an audience becomes deeply interesting if it is connected to the recurring desire that resides in all of the plays: the search for country. The pursuit of readers, then, is truly the pursuit of country. It is Lumbera's profession, for example, that his plays are inspired by his love of country. The book he presents as proof of his

love, so that reading the plays is, essentially, reading the life story of the writer's *Inangbayan*. The plays are, therefore, the other biography of the nation. They are about the nation in as much as they are emblems of the nation itself. Perhaps this is the underlying reason why the plays may be seen as, in themselves, acts of memory. This is because the collection draws on the nation's own historical memory. The Propaganda Movement and the Marcos dictatorship, for example, are combined to form the core of *Bayani*. The Filipino-American war serves as the background for *Victoria Laktaw*. *Nasa Puso ang Amerika* recounts the diaspora to the U.S. of Filipino peasants searching for a better fortune.

It is neither safe nor wise to assume, however, that Lumbera's plays are artifacts of history. They are not strictly history in the sense that history is a record of an inalterable past. For the past that we see in the plays is not the past as it happened, but rather the past as it should have been, as it must be. The historians of old, for instance, are certain to scoff at *Bayani* where we find Rizal meeting Andres Bonifacio in Dapitan. There is no proof that this event happened. Indeed, the past in Lumbera's mind is captive to the wishes of the dramatist who looks back at times past, full of hope and regret. What he finds are the ruins of history that he must, as a dramatist, bring together into a new form of wholeness. What we read in Lumbera's volume is, therefore, not history really, but longing. Thus, the only way a dramatist can save the history that haunts him, one which he did not make but to which he serves as an heir, is by offering it to the judgment of imagination and necessity.

This necessity is what the present demands, and the plays themselves may be taken as the labor of the author's imagination. Ours, needless to say, is the continuing age of nation-formation. Crucial to the realization of this nation is memory. Here enters Lumbera for his work is necessarily a kind of memory that makes the history of the nation real and felt, rather than inaccessible and cold. This is the need that he sees, the commitment he claims. Lumbera remembers, for example, how the textbooks that he read as a growing boy in Lipa obscured the ravages of the Filipino-American war. To this lack *Victoria Laktaw* is a supplement so that the Filipino reader, Lumbera hopes, will see the blood in the enemy's hands. In other words, Lumbera's play reveals that which is suppressed in public memory—the real violence of American colonial intervention.

It can be observed, accordingly, that Lumbera's collection hopes to achieve one end, and that is the production of consciousness. Because the writer intends his plays to be read, they are inextricable from the uses of pedagogy. It is only proper, in that case, to regard Lumbera as a chief architect of the pedagogy of consciousness. This does not come as a surprise to those who have seen the literature textbooks that Lumbera has authored and, in certain instances, co-edited with others: *Pedagogy, Philippine Literature: A History and Anthology*, *Rediscovery: Essays in Philippine Life and Culture*, *Filipinos Writing: Philippine Literature from the Regions*, and *Paano Magbasa ng Panitikang Filipino: Mga Babasahing Pangkolehiyo*.

Lumbera admitted elsewhere how his personal vision was transformed after reading the works of nationalist historian Renato Constantino. How beautiful it is to imagine the scale of minds molting after reading Lumbera. It is only right that Lumbera joins the ranks of Balagtas, Rizal, Lazaro Francisco, Amado V. Hernandez and the others loyal and true biographers of *Inangbayan*. In the next one hundred years, Lumbera's texts will reveal to their readers the way we have come to understand the country of our time.

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Sally Ann Ness, **Where Asia Smiles: An Ethnography of Philippine Tourism**. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002. 392 pages.

Although the last three decades have seen the active development of Philippine tourism, attempts to study the consequences of this development have been few. As such, *Where Asia Smiles* is certainly an important contribution to Philippine tourism literature. This book is the only major publication in tourism research to have come out in the Philippines since Linda Richter's *Land Reform and Tourism Development* (1982), the first monograph published on tourism in the Philippines.

The title of the book sounds rather like a tourism promotion slogan and is probably lifted from an earlier photodocumentary entitled