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## Editor Preface

Joseph L. Roche, S.J.

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## Editor's Preface

The search for one's "roots" is a common, underlying theme in this issue. Ms. Cristina Lacónico-Buenaventura offers us, in a real labor of love, a sense of the history of the theater in Manila during the last century, illustrated by photos of the time recovered from the many treasures buried in libraries and archives. In today's groping to escape the dehumanizing pull of so much of applied technology and consumerism, this reflective look at the resiliency of a people's theater offers an encouraging spark. The historian's work here could encourage other humanists to take up a comparative study of the place and function of the theater in certain first world and second world countries, with a view toward gauging their impact on developing nations such as the Philippines. Despite various "cultural revolutions," and propagandizing uses of the theater and of the arts in general, which have become so characteristic of our age, the fundamental human values and ideals of the arts may yet prove to be stronger; at least that is the faith and hope of any Christian philosophy of the arts.

What might prove to be at least as detrimental to authentic, artistic expression of one's roots as the gross dangers above is any premature stifling of free expression under the guise of nationalistic fervor. It is such a danger that Dr. Leonard Casper addresses in his "A Pluralistic View of Filipinism in Literature." An acknowledged scholar in Philippine literature, Dr. Casper offers a condensed version of a series of lectures delivered at the Ateneo de Manila University in mid-1978 while on a research grant from Boston College. The article presents us with almost a miniature crash-course in Philippine literature in English; for those relatively unacquainted with the field, the essay will prove difficult but extremely rewarding; for the *periti* in the field, Dr. Casper offers a dense, challenging statement which invites further dialogue on

any number of intriguing positions. For example, besides the general theme of Filipinism, there is the very topical question of protest literature and the role of literary criticism in a people's thrust toward liberation and unity — topics with which this insightful articulation from overseas should be able to tempt some confirmatory/critical response from native Filipino *literati*.

Insights into the national hero's life never fail to interest any Filipino in search for "roots"; Fr. Raul J. Bonoan's painstaking research into Rizal's academic record at the Ateneo corrects a common misunderstanding and provides one more authentic facet of the *real* Rizal. As the author writes: "the actual story of the student from Calamba is far nobler than any myth about him, and not so rare as popular belief would have it to be." Another aspect of seeking Filipino roots is taken up by Fr. Vicente Marasigan, S.J., in his summary description of what used to be known as "folk religion," or "popular religiosity." "Rituals in Manila's 'Catacombs'" offers an informative and balanced account that avoids the common pitfalls of either condescending "damning with faint praise," or conversely, over-zealous, naive, ethnocentric pleading a cause. The author's concluding theological proposal concerning "indigenous sacramentals" deserves a more developed, interdisciplinary type of discussion in the future.

Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, S.J., Dean of the College, Ateneo de Manila University, also takes up "rootedness," this time in terms of contemporary educational policy of a Jesuit university in the Philippines. The clarity and incisiveness of the presentation will recommend this essay to anyone involved in Filipino catholic college education; it manifests a judicious blending of personal experience (*praxis*) with sound theoretical analyses. The triple goal of academic excellence, social concern, and personal spirituality, all toward the formation of Christian communities of prayer and faith, goes far toward clarifying and integrating the very values and ideals so urgently pursued by Filipino educators today. Fr. Joseph A. Galdon, S.J., again introduces our book review section with "The Hazards of the Theological-Literary Critic." A past master in this field, Fr. Galdon's essay should stimulate a comparable effort from the theologian's side, perhaps deepening the discussion through the work of Paul Ricoeur on symbolism, or Heidegger and Gadamer on truth. But that's to come!

*Joseph L. Roche, S.J.*