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Editor's Introduction

Filomeno V. Aguilar, Jr.

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Editor's Introduction

The Development Set is bright and noble, Our thoughts are deep and our vision global; Although we move with the better classes, Our thoughts are always with the masses." These lines are from Ross Coggins's poem, "The Development Set" (1976), which satirizes experts who wield specialized skills that prop up the Development Industry, which has grown even bigger since the 1970s. The Development Set, now comprised of actors in the state apparatus and nongovernment organizations (NGOs), deploys a peculiar discourse that authors in this issue scrutinize.

On Camiguin Island a fourteen-year initiative funded by the Spanish government to reduce poverty and "improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable" ended in 2004. What would one find years after the planned intervention is over? To study its remnants, one would have to undertake a sort of archaeological ethnography of the development projects there, which was what Andrés Narros set out to do in 2011. Focusing on one barangay, Narros found that, unlike the ecotourism project, the potable water system provided a vibrant testimony of those years of frenzied activities that brought in many outsiders of the Development Set. It was tangible proof that the most vulnerable were not reached. More significant was Narros's find that development was like the *komedya* of old, with an official script brought in from the outside and whose performance relied upon and strengthened local power structures, in the process generating local meanings and perceptions but with the possibility of altering social relationships. Narros shows that the history of the water system unfolded much like a *komedya*.

Armed with its own understanding of poverty and trademark solution through housing the poor, Gawad Kalinga (GK) according to its founder, Antonio Meloto, is changing the face of the Philippines and building the nation through "enlightened capitalism." With a critical eye on neoliberalism, Faith Kares analyzes GK through the lens of overseas volunteers, primarily highly educated young Filipino Americans (Fil Ams), who as GK's Development Set form a "global army of nation builders." To recruit diasporic volunteers, Kares argues that GK appropriates the discourse of heroism and inflects

it with idioms of love and care, enabling Fil Ams to feel they sacrifice for their ancestral homeland by helping the poor who supposedly cannot help themselves. Dimmed from view are the inequalities wrought by the Philippine class structure and their experiences of racism in the United States. Volunteers internalize GK discourse, one Berkeley student saying, setting aside whatever social theories he may have learned there, that “GK gives the Philippines a nationality.” Suggesting the reverse, Kares posits that humanitarian work for GK enables Fil Ams to carve a space as immigrants in American society.

Disaster risk preparedness also involves a specialized discourse. In Loh Kah Seng’s study of Barangay Banaba in San Mateo, Rizal, disaster expertise has been disseminated to informal settlers through Buklod Tao, a local NGO, even before Typhoon Ondoy struck in 2009. In the face of the huge floods wreaked by Ondoy, the disaster responses deemed appropriate by experts could not simply be imposed on the residents. While some cooperated, others resorted to the customary action of seeking refuge on their rooftops to guard belongings they feared others might steal if they evacuated; ultimately it endangered their lives. The shock caused by Ondoy, Loh argues, is part of the process by which technical ideas are selectively blended with the reservoir of cultural practices people deploy amid disasters. Given the people’s exercise of agency, Loh calls for reflexivity on the part of the Development Set.

The “Filipino First” policy has been associated with changing the racial complexion of the Philippine economy under Pres. Carlos P. Garcia (in office March 1957 to December 1961). Contrary to this notion, Yusuke Takagi demonstrates that Filipino First was an outgrowth of the Philippine Central Bank’s support (since 1949) for import substitution industrialization (ISI) through foreign exchange controls, which the export-oriented sugar bloc opposed in favor of the peso’s devaluation. The Central Bank took on Filipino First after it was announced in 1958, but external pressures saw the bank shift to gradual decontrol, signaling the end of ISI. In Takagi’s opinion, the Central Bank with its Development Set of economists managed to promote ISI and pursue decolonization, thus forming an island of state strength in a sea of weakness.

In a research note, Grant K. Goodman narrates the reeducation of Filipino officers by the Japanese Propaganda Corps. We regret that he did not see its final publication as he passed away on 6 April 2014. This issue also memorializes Fr. John N. Schumacher SJ, who died on 14 May 2014.

Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr.
Ateneo de Manila University