Editor's Introduction

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Digital humanities have pushed the boundaries of scholarship in recent years. Computer-assisted methods have enabled scholars to generate insights that would not have been possible with the limited tools of an unaided human mind. An individual's capacity for analysis is boundless, but its speed is no match to the computational quickness of a microprocessor. Such a reality is evident in this issue's lead article.

Ramon Guillermo's "*Magkunkuno ti Makina*: Python Code for the Computer-Assisted Reading of Hanunuo Mangyan *Ambahan*" demonstrates how digital tools can open new avenues in the study of languages and literature, especially those that have a relatively small number of speakers. Using a code written in Python, Guillermo proposes a computer-assisted method of deciphering ambahan, a poetic form consisting of four heptasyllabic lines that is typically written in Hanunuo, the indigenous language and script of the Mangyan. The article explains the method by going through each step in unlocking the meaning of a transcribed ambahan sample text. Due to the idiosyncrasies of the language and the script, a simple combination of written Hanunuo characters can be read in a multitude of ways, which makes it challenging for nonnative speakers and cultural outsiders, even those who have a working knowledge of the language, to comprehend the meaning of even a single line in a poem. However, this degree of difficulty is greatly reduced by Guillermo's program, which generates different possible readings of an ambahan text.

Despite the code's high level of efficiency, Guillermo is quick to note that it is only designed to be a pedagogical aid and research implement, and can never replace the actual human skill of learning the Hanunuo language and script, including the quirks of their everyday usage. Such is especially true for those studying poetry, considering that, like most literary art forms, it often plays with the ambiguities, inaccuracies, and imperfections of language to convey an aspect of the complexity that is human experience. Arguably,

these linguistic peculiarities are what differentiate a living language from a straightforward programming code, even if both are vessels that enable a source to transfer information to a recipient.

A different type of transmission of coded language is featured in "'This Wonderful Telegraph': Plants, Cables, and the Wiring of the Sulu Sea, 1898–1903." Like in Guillermo's article, technology plays a role in Anthony Medrano's assessment of the dynamics between the US imperial project on this side of the Pacific and the changing fortunes of the Sulu Sultanate at the start of the twentieth century. Medrano focuses on the laying of submarine cables that connected the Philippines, including the Sulu Archipelago, to the US mainland through a telegraph system, as well as on the archipelago's local economy that produced gutta-percha plants (*Palaquium spp.*), which yielded the raw materials needed to manufacture these cables. The author weaves an intricate web of spatial and temporal transpacific connections, providing another vista through which one could view the Philippines in the age of empire.

Much has been written about Dean Conant Worcester's career and scholarship and how he has come to epitomize the American imperial ethos. "'From Savages to Soldiers': Igorot Bodies, Militarized Masculinity, and the Logic of Transformation in Dean C. Worcester's Philippine Photographs" adds to this literature by showing how his photographic and textual portrayals of Igorot headhunters formed the basis of his "civilizational argument, whose logic of transformation depended on the valorization of the male Igorot body, which then was reconfigured into military potential and therefore employable by the colonial state" (245). Juan Fernandez argues that the colonial discourse that Worcester's work propagated did not only create baseless divisions between so-called civilized and noncivilized Philippine ethnolinguistic groups but also caused further bifurcation among the non-Christian communities. The highlight of this essay is the uncovering of a manipulated photo of a group of Igorot men in Worcester's collection, a reflection of the great lengths he would go to to spread his ideas about the transformative capacity of his activities in the Cordilleras. Colonial intervention takes on a different meaning in this case, considering his crude use of technology to justify the legitimacy of the American imperial project.

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