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Editor's Introduction

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Editor's Introduction

Basketball, which is integral to the habitus of countless Filipinos, has received scant scholarly attention. On the premise that the meaning of basketball to Filipinos and the historical forces that impinge upon the sport are far from static, Lou Antolihao gives basketball its due. He examines the period from 1975 to the 1990s when the binary divide between the elite and the masses was dramatized in the rivalry between the most popular teams in the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA). These professional teams were perceived as representing one segment of society based on the somatic features, origins, and playing style of their players as well as the consumer products of the sponsoring company. Until the 1980s the main opposition was between the Toyota and Crispa teams; the latter was identified with the masses, but financial woes and connection to the Marcos state led to Crispa's collapse and the team's disbandment in the mid-1980s. In this juncture the team of Ginebra rose to spectacular popularity as the "team of the masses," a phenomenon that Antolihao illumines by analyzing two songs that served as anthems of Ginebra's legion of fans who saw a correspondence between their daily struggles and that of their favorite team. This signification ended as Ginebra outgrew its underdog status and as the PBA itself declined at the onset of the twenty-first century.

Written in the early 1980s, the Ilokano poems of Herman Garcia Tabin evoke the sensations of a middle-class person beholding the destitution of the lumpenproletariat in the metropolis. Roderick G. Galam reads Tabin's poems following an approach that analyzes the rhythms imposed on urban everyday life, as registered especially on the body, by the interplay of political

power and the Marcos state's development strategy, which simultaneously produced growth and impoverishment and which caused the marginalized to contend with both repression and cooptation. In this context, Tabin "documents" the diminishing and fading rhythm of life of the dying poor, whose existence is prolonged somehow by refuse in the streets. Although Tabin's poems make this reality visible and "show what the movement for a 'New Society' was really like for many people," Galam argues that, like other Ilokano writers, Tabin politicized his work but eschewed a political stance vis-à-vis Marcos, a fellow Ilokano—a stance that has persisted into the post-Marcos era.

Under the watch of American colonial officials, a rice crisis occurred in 1919 and again, more complexly, in 1935, which Yoshihiro Chiba investigates by studying the structure and operation of the rice market to understand its effects on the starvation of the lower classes in the city and countryside. It would be easy to pin the blame on the trading networks of ethnic Chinese, some of whom were certainly implicated, but Chiba argues that big rice landlords, especially in Nueva Ecija, engaged in speculation and lobbied to protect their interests. Landlord action in 1935 effectively put rice out of the reach of even share tenants and rural farm laborers in Central Luzon, where rural unrest led the government to pour relief rice to the detriment of the traditionally rice-deficient areas of Bicol and the Visayas. Perceiving the depth of the crisis, the government established the National Rice and Corn Corporation, which, being under the sway of agrarian capitalists, failed to serve poor consumers, restricted merchants' profits, but proved advantageous to rice landowners.

In these three articles the apprehending of the struggles of the marginalized produced variable results based on the perceiver. For basketball fans it led to collective catharsis. For the poet it articulated a form of safe politics. For the powerful it produced maneuvering to advance even more their group interests, which deepened the suffering.

In his research note, Ramon Guillermo revisits Rizal's study on Tagalog poetry. In a mark of true scholarship, Guillermo engages in an autocritique of his contention, published in this journal in 2006, that Mariano Ponce had engaged in pseudotranslation in rendering Rizal's text in Spanish from the original German. In resolving his mistaken conjecture, Guillermo grapples with historiographical accuracy and in the process reveals the errors of other historians who dealt with this text of Rizal. Interestingly the confusion Guillermo confronted was abetted by someone's lack of editorial care.