

Editor's Note (Volume 9, Number 1)

How do we measure the impact of Philippine education? Is it in the honor graduates we produce? The workers we export? Or those students who chose to stay in the country and help build its future? *TALA* opens publication year 2026 with the haunting reality of these questions as the liberal and humanist education, a legacy of our forebears since the introduction of universities in the country, is being undermined by external factors, chief among them the elimination of general education courses that aim to hone not only the mind, but the hand, and the heart.

Our response remains aligned to our cause: to narrate the historical past of our nation so that we could give a glimpse of what happened, why it happened, and how it links to our present situation. An analysis and understanding of the link of the past to the present provides insights on what to do next—that in being aware of the contemporaneity of the past, we learn from our mistakes then recommend actions to secure a better future. In the Filipino context, this is a future of a *maginghawang buhay*.

The six articles for this issue continues *TALA's* journey towards a *maginghawang buhay*. Together, they narrate the political, social, cultural, and economic realities of different Philippine historical periods in a non-linear manner.

Mark Jayson E. Gloria's *Japanese Propaganda's Exploitation of Jose Rizal's Cultural Memory in the Tribute's Reporting of his 82nd Birth Anniversary* illustrates how heroes become tools for propaganda: that in exploiting Rizal's cultural memory by those who control the flow of information, they manipulate the truth to fit the colonizer's aim of using Rizal's perceived dream of independence to entice the Filipinos to support the Japanese Imperial Government in the Philippines.

Nikolai Russeger's *Sin, Sickness, or Social Issue? Discourses on Suicide in the 20th Century Philippines* traces the hermeneutic of suicide, and in turn, mental health, during the American period in the Philippines. Though limited by the availability of written sources, this study brings to light the religious and

secular views and more importantly, connects those written sources to the Filipino view of suicide and wellness in the 21st century.

Benelyn P. Ferrer's *The 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition and the Colonial Exhibition of Philippine Education* explains how the United States of America intended to use 20th century expositions to showcase and justify their imperialism juxtaposed with Ferrer's examination of primary sources revealed that for the Filipino people who endured more than three centuries of colonization, they used it as an avenue to claim their identity as a people long before they set foot in the islands. The 1915 Panama Exposition became an avenue for Filipinos as a progressing nation, erasing their previously negative image marketed during the 1904 St. Louis Exposition.


Meanwhile, *Evidence, Silence, and Execution: Reassessing the Trece Martires de Batuan (1900)* by Hecel Rose Arong Yana, Joycefhe P. Delfino, Rica Joy Gulder Raper, Mary Ann Lim Sabornido, Jo Kariza Celeste de Asis, and Mark Steven A. Pandan delves on local and oral history, historical criticism, and memory studies using the primary source analysis as a device to narrate and analyze the basis of commemorating 13 individuals believed to be martyrs. The researchers' interdisciplinary methodology emulated how historical criticism of an ecclesiastical document cross-referenced with oral sources clarified the lack of theological or historical basis on the acclamation of martyrdom of 13 individuals in Bilar, Bohol.

Mark Joseph Pascua Santos's *Samahang Mesyaniko, Sekularisasyon, Kilusang Propaganda-Reporma: Tipolohiya ng mga Pilipinong Dulog sa Kristiyanismo sa Ika-19 na Dantaon Kaugnay ng Kontekstong Kabanhawan ng Europa* is an interesting analysis of the intersections of indigenization, nationalization, and modernization during the 19th century Philippines. Santos presents a new perspective on reading the Philippine messianic movement toward indigenization and Philippine secularization as religious movements interlaced with nationalistic fervor. Contrasting this parochial focus is the Propaganda Movement of the ilustrado-reformists who pushed for modern political reforms. Threading these seemingly isolated ideals and movements is the birth of a concept of a *nacion*, separate from what existed at that time as 'bayan.'

Finally, Gene Michael M. Atanacio's *A Dominican and a Historian: A Narrative on Life and Selected Historical Writings of Fr. Fidel Villaroel, OP* fills-in the equivalent of this issue's review as he brings to wide readership a listing and an examination of the works of the esteemed Thomasian historian and archivist. Atanacio looked beyond Fr. Villaroel's contribution in narrating Fr. Jose

Burgos, Jose Rizal's and Marcelo H. del Pilar's days in the University of Santo Tomas. He also emphasized Fr. Villaroel's role in the creation of the Philippines' first Filipino saint and other Dominican saints thereafter.

TALA continues the journey of describing, analyzing, and interpreting the Philippine historical past amidst an era of post-truths and conflicting narratives. As history and other humanities courses are once again being undermined in the higher education, we invite everyone to soldier on, to see how far the Filipino nation have become, to deduce what needs to be done now so that we may all have the *maginhawang buhay* we have always aspired for. *


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Issue Editor