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CONTENTS

Under the Radar, Off-Beat and Off-Track

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Editor, *Art Studies Journal*

It was a beautiful Sunday in June 2022 when I explored the idea of reviving the Art Studies Journal with Mark Louie Lugue, one of the editors of this revived publication. In our exchange of emails, I informed Louie that the Art Studies Journal, at its inception 30 or so years ago, was very informal, but also a very informative repository of writings, aiming to compile and consolidate possible readings for Art Studies classes that the faculty wrote themselves. Energized by this modest ambition, we were not working under the pressure of lifting our research performance by submitting our output in publications that count–those sleek, highly ranked academic journals. Enabled by a desktop publishing software, the mimeographed publication was a backyard production produced beyond the pale of refereed publications and other parameters of the Culture of Audit and its unfortunate mediagenic offspring–World University rankings.

For this revival issue, we are reprinting the fruits of this DIY and under-the-radar labor of love to provide historical continuity from 1992 to the present. The three issues reproduced in our archive with permission from the authors, could also make us reflect on our intellectual journey and our own raw and "sophomoric" (as one colleague puts it) attempts at theorizing and reflecting on areas that were then considered off-beat and off-track. It was the 1990s–a time when radical foundational and epistemic challenges were taking place in faculty meetings and curricular workshops. We were trying out a new set of interpretive tools and what were then considered cutting edge critical theories smuggled from literary theory, "new" art history, Cultural Studies, the social sciences, and other disciplines. Back in the day when we were enamored with semiotics, for example, and Cecilia Tuble's essay (Volume 1, No. 2) on SM Megamall's floor plan became standard reading

in most of our classrooms. I believe it remains operative and instructive up to today as it spotlights–what editor Pearl Tan called–an important, but under-investigated area of study (Introduction, Volume 1, No. 2).

Aided by conceptual frames that made it possible to rethink and refunction the premises of defining "art," "society," and "culture," we were expanding the parameters of our study to include the "popular" and the "folk." But at the same time, we were also questioning and breaking down boundaries and categories. Patrick Flores asked: "Is folk fine?" (Volume 1, No. 1)–a question that cautions against the uncritical and taken for granted valorization of the folk, from the mainstream and dominant discourses up to the resistant spaces of feminist visual practice.

We were examining our role as academics and posing questions on how the academe makes sense of art and culture and how it addresses "the potential recalcitrance of a public that must continuously modify the meanings which the various bureaucracies of the institution preach, and consequently reintegrate it into and within certain situations of lived lives." (Flores, Volume 2, No. 1).

Nothing followed Volume 2 No. 1, as we buckled under funding constraints, overloaded faculty and staff, and shifts in our academic pursuits and personal lives. That it took us this long to reboot and restart is a reminder to us that while there are things that might happen in a few hours or years, there are those that require decades of preparation and incubation to emerge. Sometimes, as Paul O'Donohue writes, "the greatest challenge is to actually begin; there is something deep in us that conspires with what wants to remain within safe boundaries and stay the same. … Sometimes a period of preparation is necessary, where the idea of a beginning can gestate and refine itself… [before] we can simply take the risk and leap into a new beginning."

This issue thus marks a new beginning to the unfinished story of the Art Studies Journal. We pick up from where we left off, with the same waywardness that animated the pioneering volumes–a waywardness that cannot be muted, contained, and measured within institutional limits and quality assurance criteria. Even amidst changing norms that are displacing a system based on trust and autonomy by one based on visibility and compliance to quantifiable and auditable performance indicators, this journal aims to provide a space for the gathering of colleagues sharing common, and at times conflicting, discourses and ways of seeing. Through its pages, we aim to converse–in an office or halls, over coffee or a meal, off and on campus–just to think, reflect, and try out crazy, new ideas and possibilities, and make modest and perhaps–at certain key moments–groundbreaking change.

Thus we begin again, with a new look, a new platform, and a fresh mix of hardworking young and not so young but chastened senior bloods, eager to respond, with much courage and humility, to the urgency of producing new writing, of clearing yet another path against the spell of stagnation, and adding yet another story, yet another puzzle piece into our continuous acts of beginning and becoming.

ON MODERNITIES

MARK LOUIE L. LUGUE
EMERALD F. MANLAPAZ

Editors, *Art Studies Journal*

Much has been written about modernity as a conceptual category that encompasses various disciplines. In sociology, modernity was studied to understand changes in social formations following the democratic and industrial revolutions in Western Europe at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, while modernization was the subject of anthropological and comparative studies that looked into processes of industrial and cultural development between Western and non-Western societies (Shilliam). In these disciplines, modernity has earlier and largely been conceived to mark a utopic break from a previous social fabric, a rupture between traditional community and what came after. These demonstrate that while various ways of understanding modernity inform

the development of knowledge about humanity and society through the lens of their respective disciplines, deploying concepts from these disciplines also lends more complexity to our grasp of what modernity is.

In this new issue of the *Art Studies Journal*, we are interested in the relationship between art, broadly conceived, and modernity, specifically in the context of the Philippines, and how it can further the discussions on modernity that are still taking place. Inspired by the acceleration and scale of industrialization, the early and dominant understanding of Euroamerican modernity gave primacy to certain conceptions of human freedom. On this understanding, Euroamerican modernity cannot be separated from capitalist expansion, urbanization, specialization, functional differentiation, rationalization, and the domination of nature (Smyth 367).. Various streams of modern artistic expressions responded to these conditions differently; they reflected, critiqued, resisted, or attempted to escape these conditions (Perry 3; Hunter 46; Adorno 321). Although diverse, these streams fortified modernity's emphasis on individual liberty, which also made prominent other constructs that have their own sets of problems, such as the myth of the artist as a lone genius, originality, style, and so on. For a time, the Euroamerican experience has been the basis in defining modernity—the standard against which geographies outside of their boundaries are measured, rendering these inferior and backward, and their modernisms derivative and inauthentic (Kapur 19). This has been contested by the assertion that modernity should be more

broadly understood as "societal self-understanding" and that, since interpretations of this are open and varied, modernity has multiple manifestations and is contingent on the specificities of local history, culture, and social conditions (Wagner 150; Fourie 10-12).

The trajectory of these developments in deconstructing modernity aligns with the decades-long commitment of the Department of Art Studies to trouble the canonical understanding of art and the other conceptual categories that relate with it, through foregrounding local knowledge and experience. Recognizing this ambit, this issue of the *Art Studies Journal* includes research articles, a paper proceeding, and a research note that all delve into the various ways in which art and modernity intertwine. Specifically, these writings evaluate tendencies in doing art studies locally (historiography of modern art in the country) while also proffering critical and alternative means of doing it (renewed understanding of various objects in the context of the art museum). These also analyze forms of creative expressions beyond what are categorically considered as "fine arts" (performance in a video game platform, visual illustrations of an unbuilt monorail in Manila, and an everyday house implement).

Since their beginnings in the 1950s and their first commercial release in the 1970s, video games have become more complex. With the continuous development of technology and the emergence of Internet connectivity, game developers created massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs)—a video game genre known for

their compelling narratives, virtual interactions among their communities, and their own immersive worlds. The research note by Kevin Michael De Guzman attends to this development and forwards the phenomenological experience of playing a game—specifically, his performance ethnography in the game *Final Fantasy XIV* entitled *E/c/h/o* (2022-2023)—as a research and performative endeavor. Framed as a deployment of arts-based methodology, the performance-cum-research departs from traditional research methodologies through the primacy of the researcher's grounded experience of the topic-at-hand while a performance is being produced. Given that it is hosted in a virtual world, the performance is positioned to be an exploration of posthuman subjectivity. By performing using a virtual body that is still categorically apart from the author, the research note offers a troubling of preset definitions of what humanity is, in light of the complex ecology of human and more-than-human agents powered by various technologies. The research note also recognizes that the performance, set in a virtual world called Eorzea, can likewise delve into the social interactions among the avatars played by human players, elaborating on the idea of an alternative world, with conventions that are informed by the culture of the communities of the players.

In 1969, images of a monorail were splashed across the pages of national broadsheets and magazines, gripping the imagination of not a few inhabitants of Manila who suffer daily its increasingly onerous traffic jams. Judith Camille Rosette unpacks the iconography behind these monorail illustrations produced by the architect Otilio Arellano's firm for a planned—but unrealized—monorail project to flesh out the modernist aspirations of a good life in the city. As a technological innovation that consolidates the "modernist…vision for the future," Rosette draws comparisons between Space Age-inspired structures of the period and the monorail imagined as lines and abstracted forms in dynamic composition. The monorail is depicted speeding above a Filipino metropolis, the "image-dream" of ease and comfort which nevertheless also bears the marks of colonial history, with buildings built during the American colonial period, damaged by the Japanese occupation, and rebuilt after the war. Decades after Arellano's modernist fancies, the monorail figures in the mirage of a history that could have been, weaponized as part of the Marcos propaganda machine that derives its power from our current problems with the mass transit system in Metro Manila. Rosette highlights the enduring appeal of Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s modernist nation-building project, an indictment of the failed promise of the dictatorship's end. A dream is as potent as reality; if anything, modernist narratives endure as long as their end—progress—remains elusive.

Narratives are one of the key ways that art takes part in the nation's becoming. Art histories contribute to the project of creating a national identity. In "Myths and Imaginaries: Interrogating Modern Art Narratives (1950-1960s)," Gianpaolo Arago examines early Philippine art histories (*Art of the Philippines 1521-1957*, *Art in the Philippines*, and *A Brief History of the Development of Modern Art in the*

Philippines from 1928 to 1962) to flesh out the roots of grand narratives in Philippine art. Totalizing and comprehensive, these narratives positioned modern art relative to Philippine identity-formation and nation-building. The art historical texts in question are marked by experiences of American colonialism and the Second World War and are consequently burdened by these contexts. Arago problematizes an assumed "universal and totalizing progression" in the history of Philippine art in these texts, and their positioning of modern art as testament to Philippine art's unceasing development. An ideal Filipino identity, one that is defined by rationality and its capacity to be "improved" and "developed" according to the modern logic of progress, is made universal. The institutional roots of these narratives—in this article, the Art Association of the Philippines, the Philippine Art Gallery, and the National Museum—open future opportunities for analyzing the role of institutions in processes of myth-making in art histories and elsewhere.

Taking off from the intrinsic power of institutions in disseminating master narratives and propagating worldviews that connive with these narratives, the panel presentation of Flaudette May Datuin included in this issue proposes a different way of approaching objects in the context of art museums. Instead of seeing them as material evidence to give substance to neat periodizations and categories in which modernity is implicated, she encourages the idea that they "resist their expected roles," which she performed by zeroing in and constellating several objects previously discussed by her colleagues. Here,

she surfaces a household implement that was selected for an exhibition through a process that engaged a local community, criticizing the elitist understanding of what a museum object should be, and the singular yet powerful hand of a curator or agents of the artworld in the innately political gesture of selecting. She also delves into a Virgen from Japan that may have been washed ashore into the northern part of the Philippines by chance, troubling the conventional view of intercultural and inter-island transfers as something intentional and deliberate. In addition, she probes at clothing and asserts how it can be seen to resist its tendency to inhibit women, said to be a machination of patriarchal nationalism. These objects may not categorically fall under what can be considered modernist, yet they embody the value of modernity as a potentially transformative force.

What appears common among the materials gathered for this issue of the journal is the experience of encountering the fragility of manifestations of modernity, which in turn comes with its characteristic promise of transformation. Technological breakthroughs kindle the desire to explore and form new artistic expressions, but likewise give birth to new lines of questioning about what makes us human and how we interact with others—humans and more-than-humans alike. The gesture of dreaming of and imagining a better world—whether it be in the form of advancements such as an unbuilt monorail, or in the myth of a Philippine nation constructed by critics, historians, and annotators of modern art during the post-war years—edges toward the brink of diving into falsehoods and

unattainable fantasies. Amidst the restraints that modern genealogies and categorizations posit with regard to how we appreciate and understand objects, we are encouraged to rethink them and what they are trying to say (or to scream at us, per Datuin) by the very virtue of challenging the conventions petrified by modernity. It is through these examples where we delve into our material of study, art in the context of the Philippines, that we further find richness in the concept of modernity. At the same time, such ironies and dynamisms in modernity perhaps offer glimpses to how we can possibly make sense of Elizabeth Mansfield's proposition that modernism—modernity's artistic and philosophical armature—is "a condition of tension, instability and ultimately, irresolution" (13), which in turn compels us, scholars and practitioners of art history, to constantly reflect upon how we do art studies.

Lastly, in the face of claims about the end of modernity, the desire to transform communities and societies insists on its presence and asserts that modernity is an ongoing process, our "enduring social state" (Kumar 72; Smythe 366). This same desire mobilizes the texts within the third volume of the *Art Studies Journal* of which this collection is the first issue, and it is in the spirit of the (modernist) aspiration for transformation that this collection argues for the need to persist in studying modernity and its diverse incarnations.

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MANILA'S UNBUILT MONORAIL

Transportation and an Alternative Modern Imaginary in the Marcos Period

JUDITH CAMILLE E. ROSETTE

Abstract

Three years after being granted a fifty-year franchise to build and run a monorail system in Manila in 1966, the Philippine Monorail Transit System, Inc. (PMTS) produced a study of the first phase of the planned network lines. However, despite support from local government officials, various planners, and members of Marcos's cabinet, as well as high interest from potential foreign partners, the monorail system was never constructed. Financial constraints, doubts from government planners and transport engineers, and lack of political support from Ferdinand Marcos impeded the project. This paper supports this historical interpretation while also attempting to contribute to studies of aesthetic representations of modernity in the Philippines via an analysis of the visual aesthetics of the published and disseminated monorail illustrations. Engineering and political considerations aside, the monorail presented a vision of modernity that deviated from a distinct (and exclusionary) brand of Marcosian modernist aesthetics. Ironically, despite the former dictator's apathy toward the project, mentions and illustrations of the planned 1969 monorail circulated online in the past decade, attributed as an unbuilt Marcos plan and in support of the idea of Ferdinand as a visionary nation-builder. This study considers how a seemingly futuristic (yet unrealized) transportation project can be co-opted for the construction of an imaginary modernity that rewrites the past and contributes to the ongoing rehabilitation of Ferdinand Marcos Sr.

Keywords: *monorail*, *Marcos*, *Manila*, *mass transportation*, *modernity*

Introduction

In 1969, a company called the Philippine Monorail Transit System, Inc. (PMTS) published a study on the first phase of a planned monorail system for the city of Manila, based on a franchise granted to them in 1966 (Project Technologists, Inc.). Included amongst the engineering and route plans in the study were illustrations of the monorail whizzing past different parts of the city, as rendered by the office of architect Otilio Arellano (Rosette and Reyes 15). These monorail images were published in national broadsheets and magazines such as *Mirror*, *Variety*, and *Manila Times* (see for instance, Tunay 4; Reyes 10; Arcilla 22-A). Although not the first to envision a monorail for the city during the '60s, it was the PMTS group that came closest to actualizing the dream (Rosette and Reyes 12). Unfortunately, no station or pylon was erected (35). Financial constraints, lack of political support from Marcos, and doubts from government planners and transportation engineers were among the biggest impediments (21-31). In the 1970s and '80s, Marcos set his sights on the Japanese and later, the Belgians, for help in creating a commuter rail system for Manila. The creation of an overhead light rail transit system (LRT 1 or Line 1) along the key routes planned for the monorail effectively ended the project (31-33). No monorail network for mass transit has been built in the country to this day.

Although largely unknown to the public and barely recognized in major transport plans, images of the 1969 monorail have been digitized, uploaded, and shared online in recent years; on one end, through websites and social networking pages that feature images of Philippine historical interest, and on the other, through blatantly Marcos revisionist and propaganda pages. While the actual system was never built, the images that remain are visually arresting and symbolically loaded. The monorail remains an aspirational possibility, in light of our cities' present traffic jams and the frustrations towards our mass transit systems, particularly in Metro Manila. This paper analyzes the visual representations of the monorail images, in an attempt to unpack its significations under the framework of a modernist imaginary and in light of the return of the Marcos family to Malacañang. It seeks to contribute to the study of aesthetic representations of modernity in the Philippines; in particular, what vision of Philippine modernity did the monorail offer? How did that coincide and/or clash with the State-influenced modernity of the Marcos years?

The City as Site of Modernity

Modernity has been used to describe various epochs or periods characterized by a shift from consciousness that allows the present to differentiate itself from its preceding epoch. Initially, this distinguishing feature of the present has consisted of a renewal of ideas from antiquity (Habermas 3-4). In the 19th century, a more radical modernity emerged which sought to sever ties with both tradition and with classical historical periods in the past, opting instead for a completely new and modern experience of the world (4). Such shifts were borne from distinct changes in the economic and technological conditions of the new period. However, while a historicizing, period-based notion of modernity is present, other strands of thought in the humanities and social sciences emphasize instead the social

and collective experience of modernity (Frisby 5-6). In particular, they locate the metropolis as the locus of modernity, embodying and representing the modern through various signifiers therein (e.g., architecture, advertisements, streetscapes, transportation, etc.) (Hvattum and Hermansen xi; Frisby 7).

Walter Benjamin, in his unfinished work "The Arcades Project," conceives of the modern social experience in the metropolis. Benjamin explores the experience of modernity through the various everyday sights, representations, architecture, and things of the city, defining modernity as "the world dominated by its phantasmagorias" (qtd. in Frisby 13). From Benjamin and consequent elaborations of modernity by subsequent critical theorists, the city and its various sights can be regarded as "a text that can be a dream (requiring awakening), a picture puzzle (requiring a solution), or hieroglyphics (requiring deciphering)," albeit not deciphered or interpreted unproblematically (Frisby 13-14, 18-20). Thus, the notion of the city as image-dream, constitutes a vital component of the experience of modernity.

The development of railways has also figured as a central aspect of modernity in industrialized societies. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, technological advances in iron and construction methods led to sprawling train networks (Crouch 19-21). This allowed for an accelerated pace of modern life in terms of mobility and communication. Previously unreachable distances became accessible in a short period of time, while information, in the form of books and other print materials, was readily distributed through the lines (Rosa and

Scheuerman 5,10; Crouch 21). The sense of speed, acceleration, and a denaturalized perception of time shaped the political, social, and cultural aspects of modern life (Rosa 82-88; Koselleck 116-9). Modernity, in a way, was characterized as a harbinger of change, and of rapid social and technological transformations that contained the promise of a better life (Sá 360). However, acceleration does not entirely encompass the gamut of experiences in modernity. In the case of both developing and developed countries, certain segments of the population suffer from varying levels of deceleration or inertia in their daily life (Rosa and Scheuerman 6).

In the Philippines, the link between railways and modernity has been further made complex by the shadow of colonization. Rail-based transportation took the form of an imposed modernity under the governance of foreign imperial powers. For instance, the electrification of the streetcar system, *tranvia*, by the American colonial government in the early 1900s was an important facet in the colonizer's agenda of bringing modernity to what it deemed as a backward colony (Pante 112-13). The Americans especially derided the use of animal-drawn transportation in the islands (113), and the automobile and electric *tranvia* brought a modernizing influence. They helped shape a new kind of civic and political life under American governance, as its corresponding street rules, systems, and built infrastructure changed the way Filipinos related to their surrounding areas. It was a modernization that befitted the new imperial power's image of itself as a civilizing and benevolent force to its colony–one that helped mask the native resistance of the Filipino people (115-20).
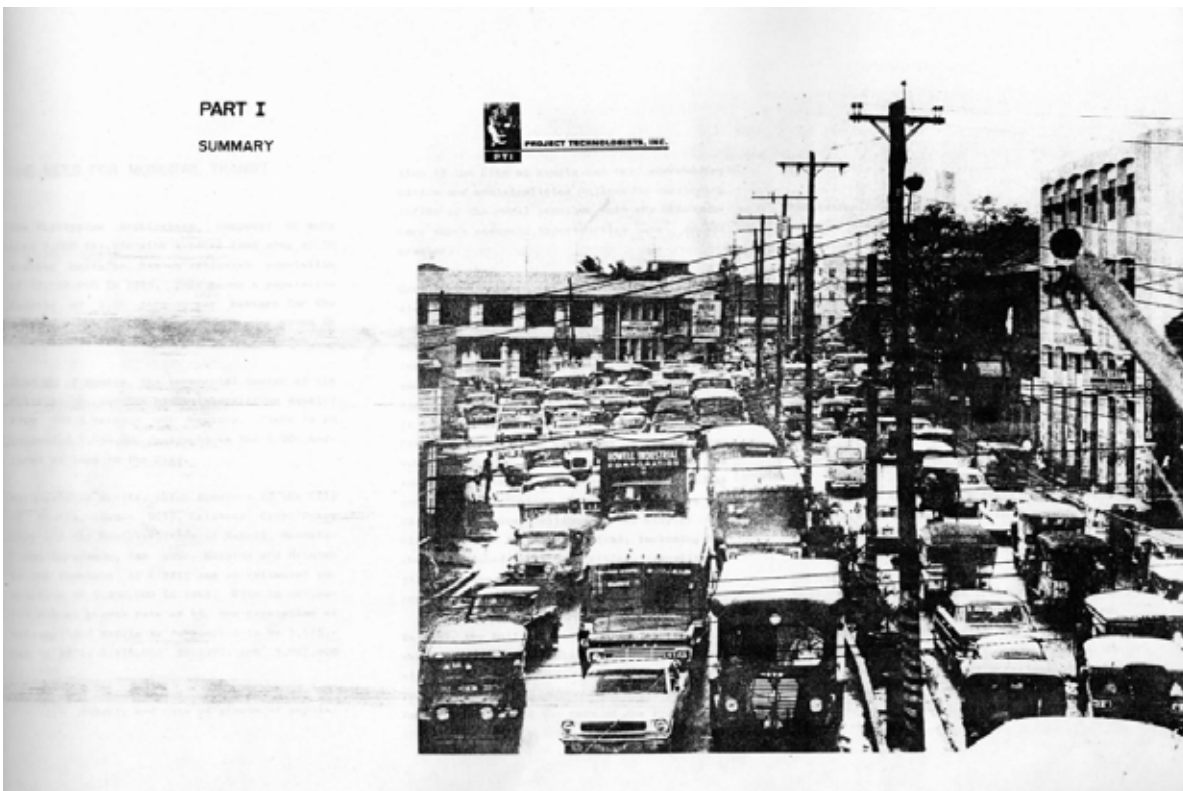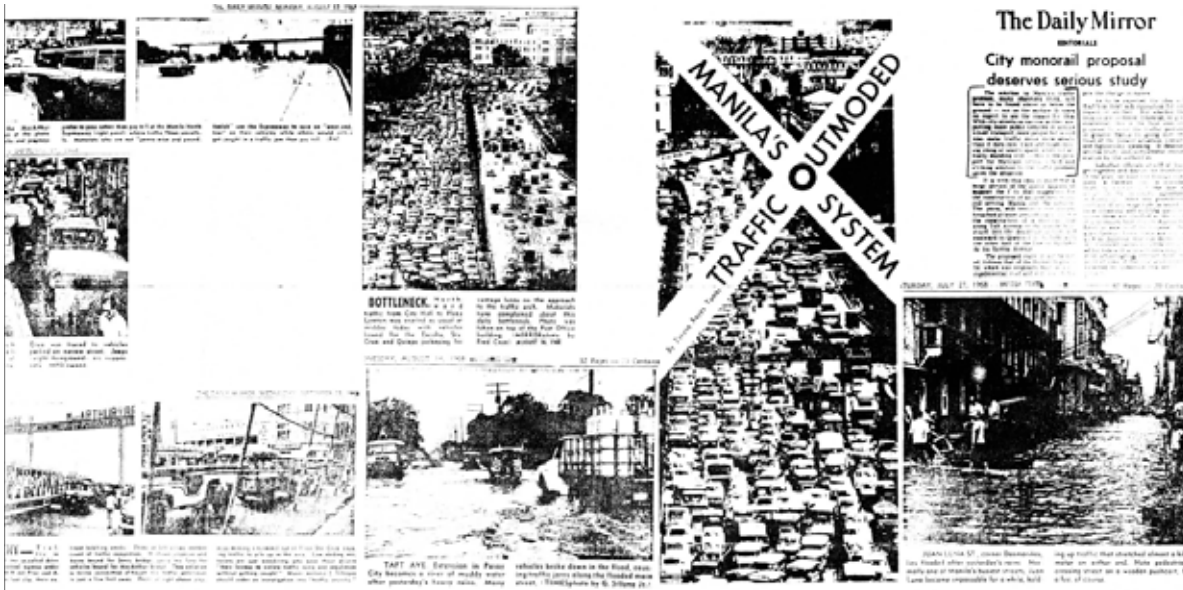
Fig. 1. Preliminary pages of the 1969 monorail plan feature images of Manila's dire traffic situation from Project Technologists, Inc.
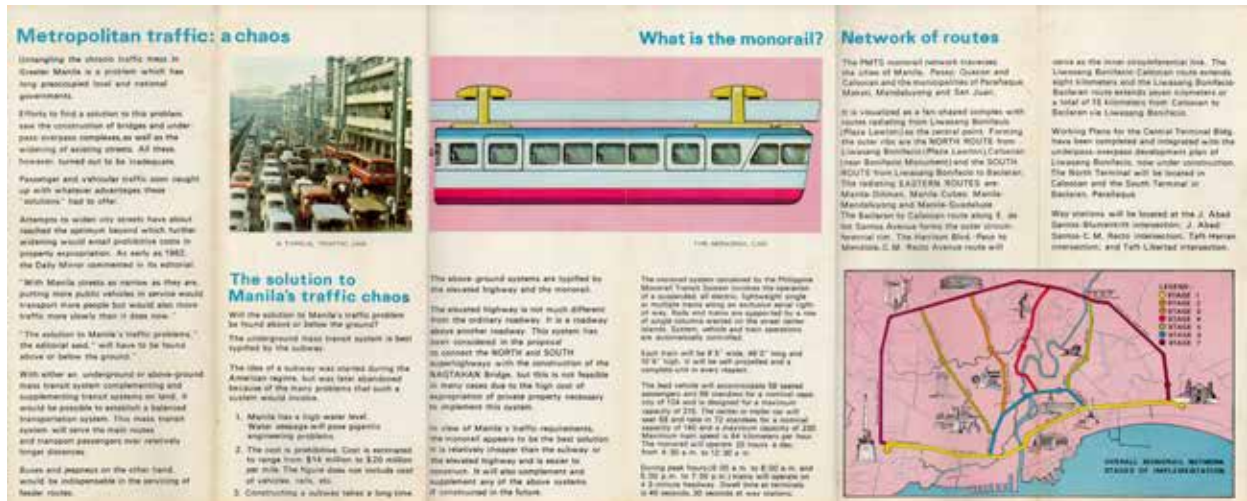
Fig. 2. Outside (top) and inside spread (bottom) of a PMTS pamphlet that was released after the extension of the franchise for the monorail lapsed into law, perhaps around late 1971. The title reads "The MONORAIL: timely solution to Manila's traffic problem." Inside spread devotes a section on Manila traffic.

Monorail and the Future

The '50s and '60s saw the advent of the Space Age in public consciousness, as war austerity gave way to better social and economic conditions (Lico, *Arkitekturang* 408). Alongside renewed faith and optimism in science, technology, and progress, the space race captured public interest and brought overlapping notions of space, flight, and the future. Furthermore, space age stylizations found their way into architecture, fashion, furniture, advertisements, decorations, and consumer goods. Its aesthetic was characterized by soft, organic forms, synthetic materials, science or space-inspired imageries, or streamlined accents that connote speed (Lico, *Arkitekturang* 406-8). In buildings and structures, "[t]he enthusiasm for air and space travel [was] translated into a visual language of long, lean horizontal lines suggesting airplane wings, soaring upright structures and parabolic arches that direct the eye to the sky, and sharply contrasted angles that express speed" (407). Examples of the space age influence in Philippine structures include the Church of the Holy Sacrifice in the University of the Philippines Diliman, erected in 1955, and whose thin, shell dome is suggestive of a flying saucer (407-8, 410); Otilio Arellano's Philippine pavilion for the 1964 New York World's Fair that featured the form of a *salakot*-cum-flying saucer (448-9); and even private residences in various cities in the country (419-20).

The monorail is similarly saddled by space age associations. An ALWEG-Monorail system debuted in 1959 in Tomorrowland, Disneyland in California. Dubbed "The Highway in the Sky", Walt Disney himself believed the monorail as a prototype for future transport systems and a solution to traffic congestion (Macdonald). With its sleek form and long nose reminiscent of a rocket ship, the Tomorrowland monorail readily signified space age futurism (Weiss). A few years later, another ALWEG monorail was featured in the 1962 Seattle World's Fair, as part of its "City Century 21" exhibition. Century 21 presented a vision of a modern Seattle in the 21st century, with a high-speed monorail that can transport people and goods efficiently (Findlay 7). Similarly, it was hoped by city planners that the monorail would eventually be used for mass transportation and help rejuvenate the Seattle downtown urban center later on (2, 5). The 1962 World's Fair itself was regarded as the Space Age Fair. Alongside the monorail, it featured futuristic-themed sights such as the iconic Space Needle, the NASA Space Exhibit, and simulations of space travel (8).

As part and parcel of the modernist dream was the efficient and accelerated circulation of labor and goods (Frisby 3; Rosa and Scheuerman 4-8; Koselleck 116-9), the future modern city ought to have solved urban problems such as road congestion. It is from this consideration of futurism and modernity that the monorail was introduced. Post-war Manila was saddled by motorized vehicles, serving as both private and public transport systems, heavily dominating its streets. By the 1960s—with its sheer volume of vehicles, narrow roads, lack of built infrastructure, and police forces' inability to enforce basic road regulations—the general public perceived Manila's urban ills to be incurable (Tamayo 38-9). Traffic jams, considered a form of dysfunctional deceleration, are an "unintended consequence of acceleration and dynamization" wrought by modernity itself (Rosa 94). While the

advent of motorized transport initially brought greater mobility and speed for the public, the urban infrastructure failed to catch up with the influx of vehicles and the situation denigrated rapidly, leading to inertia and deceleration in everyday urban life. In the context of crippling traffic conditions, the monorail was presented as a solution.

The monorail system was presented to the general public as a radical answer to Manila's dire traffic problem (see fig. 1). As a 1969 article in the publication *Mirror* claimed:

> There was a need for a bold and striking solution. And the Philippine Monorail Transit System, Incorporated (PMTS) has this bold and striking solution: the monorail system. Apparently the ultimate remedy for Manila's ailing traffic situation, the monorail system which is successfully employed in cities abroad is expected to enable a considerable percentage of Manila's passenger volume to commute from one place to another at a minimum time (Tunay 5).

The modern amenities planned for the system are also extolled. These include air-conditioned monorail cars equipped with "television cameras, telephones, and loudspeaker systems;" automated ticket vending machines and magnetically-coded tickets; park-and-ride and kiss-and-ride areas at every well-lit station/terminal; and bus, jeepney, and taxi-loading areas. These amenities, aimed to "give the riding public a taste of modern-day comfort it has never known" (5), seem incredibly idealistic in hindsight. While such amenities may be possible in more industrialized countries, such visions for a convenient and integrated

mass transit system have so far eluded Manila. Some aspects, such as the air-conditioning of the cars, magnetic tickets, and automated vending machines, took decades before they were integrated with the built rail systems. In this regard, the monorail plan during that period can be seen as straddling the gray area between realism and utopia; plausible but questionably feasible. It was a modernist, albeit wishful, vision for the future– expressed in the language of transport engineering, entrepreneurial speculation, technical specifications, and financial calculations.

Reading the Modern Image-Dream

Following considerations of the city as a key site of modernity, and of the city's various representations and landscapes as probable modernist signifiers, we turn to the monorail illustrations. Images of the monorail plan bespoke of a modernizing and utopian impulse for 1960s Manila. The monorail illustrations consist primarily of images of the monorail cars shuttling above Manila streets (figs. 3 to 5), above the Pasig River (fig. 6), and of its stations (figs. 7 and 8).

Analysis in this paper focuses on the images of the monorail above Manila streets (figs. 3 to 5) as these are the ones that seem to have been reprinted/ reposted in 1960s news articles and at present, in online social networking sites. No original sketches of the monorail system have been found by the researcher as of this date. Most images are from photocopied reproductions of the plans and digitized microfilm copies of newspaper archives. A colored PMTS brochure (fig. 2), possibly produced for investors
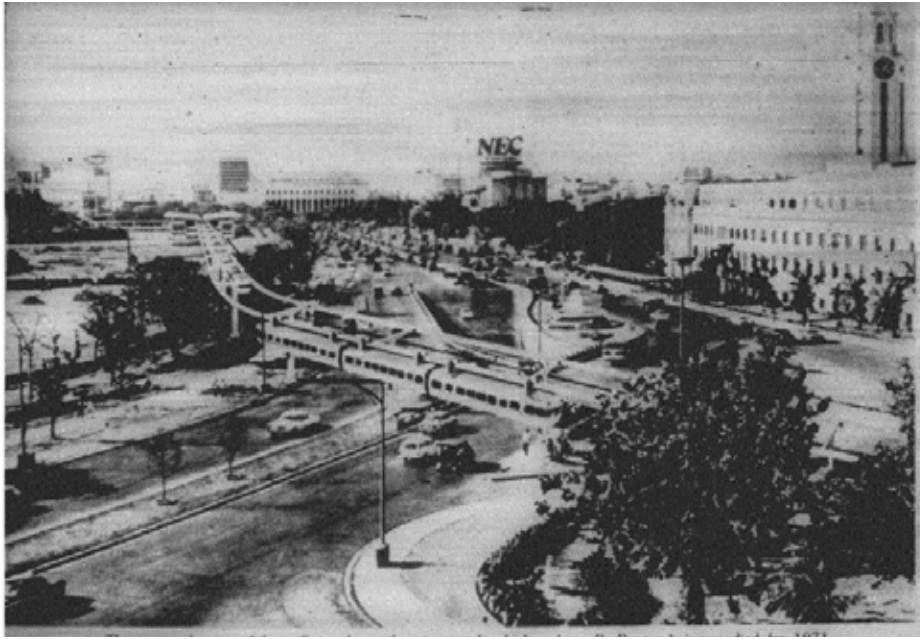
Fig. 3. Image of the monorail printed in a national broadsheet. It shows the cars whizzing past Manila City Hall. The Luneta grounds, the Metropolitan Theater, and the Post Office building can also be seen in the background (Tunay 4). This same image was used for the front cover of the 1969 Monorail Plan by PTI.

COMPOSITE PICTURE OF MONORAIL WITH MANILA CITY HALL IN BACKGROUND.

Fig. 4. A colored version of the above image from the 1971(?) PMTS pamphlet.

Fig. 5. The monorail along Taft Avenue. Jai Alai building seen in the background, from Project Technologists, Inc., page 99.
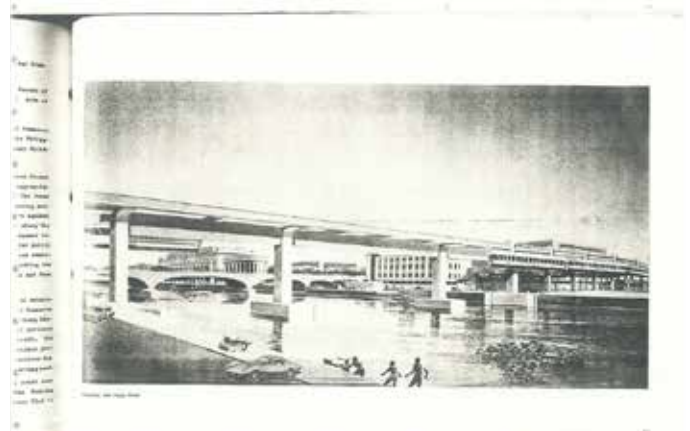
Fig. 6. Monorail cars passing above the Pasig River. The Post Office building can be seen in the background. From Project Technologists, Inc., page 99.

Fig. 7 and 8. The monorail central station, left, and a typical way station, right. From Project Technologists, Inc., pages 88 and 95.

after the franchise extension lapsed into law in 1971, includes one of the images that have been featured heavily in earlier news articles (fig. 4).

In the images shown in figures 3 to 5, the monorail is realistically portrayed and seen from an aerial perspective, as if the viewer was floating on air or standing atop a tall building. The realism of the surrounding areas indicates that the creators relied on a photographic source, with the structure of the monorail pasted on top of the landscape.

In a discussion of photographic modernism, Eleanor Hight relates how

> [Aerial] views are predominantly phenomena of the twentieth century, the era of high-rise buildings and airplanes. [Such] views represented values associated with modern technological wonders: industrialization, the city, the conquest of speed and space (118).

Such a perspective also abstracts architectural elements in space, reducing them to shapes, patterns, and lines (118). In the monorail renderings, the overall effect heightens the modern and dynamic lines of the rail system, set against the neocolonial architecture of Manila. The rail lines either curve gracefully atop the trees (fig. 3 and 4) or bisect the picture plane dynamically (fig. 5). Thus, while the cars themselves are frozen in suspension, held aloft by thin pylons, and despite the lack of blatant movement lines on the cars, a sense of movement is still generated.

Another aspect of note is how the monorail covers a small percentage of surface area in the overall image. The train cars are diminutive in size, as though seen from afar, and surrounding elements, such as the vehicles on the street and the buildings in the distance, are included in the picture frame. The creators of the image could have easily highlighted the form and details of the monorail cars by providing close-up images. Instead, they created a panorama of a distinct urban landscape. In so doing, they situated the monorail cars within the urban fabric of Manila itself.

Additionally, the use of a three-layered composition of areas–street-level foreground, middle-level railway route, and a background of buildings–creates a zonal containment of the various elements in the picture (vehicles, monorail, and built structures), allowing them to interact while remaining separate from each other. This composition, along with the dynamism of the rail lines mentioned above, makes acute the fact that the train is whizzing above the city streets, an in-between layer for the vehicles below and the roofs and sky above. It betrays a utopian, future-oriented impulse, situated between dream and reality (Sá 359), a middle layer that mediates between two zones and allows movement between one zone to the other. The monorail system, in-flight and yet bounded to the earth, poised itself as the means to transcend the congestion of the street to its promise of speed and travel through the air.

While the vehicles on the street serve as markers of the urban afflictions of Manila, the built structures in the background serve as referents to Manila's colonial and war-torn past. Scattered throughout are iconic architectural and urban landmarks of the country's capital. These include the grounds of Luneta, the Post Office Building, the Metropolitan Theater, Manila City Hall, the Jai Alai Building, and the

Pasig River. Aside from Luneta and the Pasig River, the infrastructures were built during the American colonial period and sustained extensive damages during the Battle of Manila in 1945 and/or suffered neglect after the war (Lico, *Arkitekturang* 232, 310, 335, 347, 366). In contrast to these structures, the monorail's modern form escapes the trappings and ornamentations of the nation's past. While positioning itself as part of the urban landscape, the monorail contrasts with the background, appearing instead as an engine of speed and progress. By differentiating itself from the past, it thus orients itself towards the future.

Although the Manila monorail does not feature the stylistic accents of the Tomorrowland monorail, or the surrounding Space Age-themed architecture of the Seattle World's Fair, it still hearkens to notions of flight, speed, and modernity. The form and composition of the monorail images visually reiterate this message. The monorail can be regarded as an expression of a utopian impulse, but not of utopia itself. It was but a means to a larger dream–that of an urbanized, modern life in Manila, yet free of its urban afflictions–and was symbolic of a movement away from Manila's colonial past and towards a modern future.

The Modern and the Vernacular in Marcosian Aesthetics

While select neoclassical structures of Manila, such as the Manila City Hall and Post Office building, were rebuilt after World War II (Lico, *Arkitekturang* 367), architects and designers of the post-war period turned their backs on neoclassicism

and looked towards modern architecture in the West to develop new, hybrid styles (369). Designs that embodied ideas of rationalism, technological progress, utopianism, and universalism (372) were tweaked to reflect aspirations of a Filipino identity (390), make adjustments for the tropical climate (429), and incorporate aspects of the indigenous and the vernacular (444-9). Otilio Arellano belonged to the generation of architects in the post-war years that was part of this trend. He created structures that reflected Space Age stylizations and at the same time, utilized indigenous motifs. His structures for the 1953 Philippine International Fair in Luneta (447) and the Philippine Pavilion in the 1964 New York's World Fair (448-9) utilized the native *salakot*, a traditional wide-brimmed hat, as a main stylistic image while embracing sleek, modern forms that denoted speed and hearkened to flight (447-9). The monorail renderings produced by Arellano's design firm similarly contain elements of Space Age design, with its thin, graceful pylons curving above the streets and futuristic-looking rail cars. Such stylizations also fit well with the novelty of a suspended monorail system. However, there are no indications of any attempt to incorporate vernacular motifs in the system, either in the pylons or in the architecture of the Central Station and Way Stations shown in the 1969 plan (figs. 7 and 8). It appears that the vision of modernity imagined through the monorail did not give concessions to the self-orientalizing impulse prevalent in design and architecture during those decades (447).

The fusion of the modern and the vernacular, however, soon became the official design language of the State. True to Benjamin's statement that "[t]he logical result of Fascism is the introduction

of aesthetics into political life," (19) various art historians have considered the Marcos period as having utilized aesthetics to legitimize and support authoritarian rule. Ferdinand and First Lady Imelda Marcos' reign ushered an unprecedented era of State-supported cultural development that established themselves as the ultimate patrons of the arts (Baluyut). This necessitated the creation and rejuvenation of various cultural institutions, including the Cultural Center of the Philippines (10-41), Philippine High School for the Arts (42-64), National Museum (65-85), Metropolitan Museum of the Philippines (Cruz), and Design Center of the Philippines (Lico, *Edifice* 50), among others. In accordance with the presidential couple's attempt to conflate themselves to mythic status and build a Filipino identity centered around the Great Malayan Ancestry, indigenous forms and narratives emblematic of a precolonial and prehistoric past were mined and applied in art and architecture (Lico, *Arkitekturang* 452; Edifice 45-9). Coupled with modernist aspirations, a hybrid national identity that fused urbane cosmopolitanism with mythical nativism was put forward. (Lico, *Arkitekturang* 452).

Lico describes Marcos's mythologizing efforts as "*palingenesis* or *palingenetic*, a form of utopianism which evoked the idea of rebirth or spiritual regeneration," and which necessitates the recognition of Ferdinand as father leading the nation towards greatness (452). In this context, the inclusion of vernacular motifs with modernist forms in art, design, and built structures becomes a moral and spiritual imperative, an integral cog in the Marcosian narrative and their bid to consolidate cultural, economic, and political capital. While the PMTS lacked political clout and the financial means to push through with the

project (Rosette and Reyes 21-27), the monorail was also emblematic of a modernist aspiration that did not coincide aesthetically with the vernacular-indigenous modernity of the Marcoses, thus ostracizing it further. In contrast, the Marcos-backed LRT Line 1 built in 1984, featured stations designed by Franciso Mañosa that had "prominently steep hip roofs evoking the thatched roofing of rural and mountain houses but [with] painted galvanized iron sheets to suit the metropolitan context" (Lico, *Arkitekturang* 472).

The Monorail Revived:
Retro-futurism as Propaganda

Having been shelved for decades, the monorail could easily have been relegated to the footnotes of Philippine history. Yet in the last decade, images of the monorail have re-entered the public imagination via social media. Despite the Marcoses' lack of patronage, more current reincarnations of the monorail images (see fig. 9) were used as propaganda material in pro-Marcos pages and accounts. Time and again, these online actors have utilized the numerous (and often anomalous) infrastructure projects of Ferdinand and Imelda to whitewash their dictatorship. Yet the monorail presents a unique facet of this new propaganda machine—tied to significations of modernity, progress, and the future—it is utilized to contribute to the myth of Ferdinand as a visionary nation-builder (fig. 10).

The monorail's brand of utopian modernity hits a nerve in present-day, collective experiences of crowded, inefficient railway systems in Metro Manila. The dream becomes all the more

potent and alluring. After all, these illustrations were created not only as a visualization of the monorail project, but as a presentation of an aspirational way of life in the city: a transformed mode of living, working, and moving in Manila. In the past, its images constructed a dream of "what can be" once the monorail was constructed. In the present-day context, this easily morphs into the "what could have been" and, tied to the political rejuvenation of the Marcos family, further translates to "what will be" now that a Marcos has returned to the highest political office.

As per Arjun Appadurai, the modern imaginary in the age of printed and electronic mass media has moved from the realm of "art, myth and ritual" and entered into everyday life, resulting in "a plurality of imagined worlds" (5) and of the "work of the imagination as a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity" (3). As the monorail remains a potent symbol of modernity, or an aspiration towards modernity, it has been made useful in a pro-Marcos retelling of history. It is unfortunate that in this "plurality of imagined worlds," Marcos revisionists have carved out a distorted version of imagined history in which the monorail is but another contribution. Furthermore, as the collective imaginary remains a potentially powerful springboard for action (7), the molding and shaping of such was used not only to fuel nostalgia, but also to support the political aspirations of the next generation of Marcoses. Ultimately, this paper points to how unrealized plans can still be framed as political propaganda, and by virtue of never having been realized, offers its own dangers. One can, after all, be disillusioned with the LRT1, but not with an unbuilt monorail that has never been tested in real life. It remains in the realm of the

imagination, perfectly whizzing above Manila, and now co-opted as another arsenal to revise history and serve as material for an already unfolding Marcosian return.

Conclusion

The illustrations made by the design firm of Otilio Arellano of monorail cars shuttling above Manila streets are emblematic of an aspiration for modernity underlined by a utopian impulse in the post-war period. The monorail's distinct look of seemingly gliding through the air, its novel technology, sleek cars, and bold, elegant pylons intimately tied its image to the modern. Furthermore, it was of modernity oriented towards speed, technology, and the future, as it was against inertia, the colonial past, and Manila's urban afflictions. Ironically, it is this same modernity that ostracized its aesthetics with that of the burgeoning Marcos dictatorship. Utilizing the arts and cultural sectors to legitimize their political reign, the Marcos period ushered a period of infrastructure development that favored a distinct design ideology. It was one that fused the indigenous and vernacular with modernist ideas and forms, thereby promoting a homogenous national identity tethered to both a mythical past and an aspirational, modern future. There appeared to be no place for the monorail in this Marcosian aesthetic and vision.

At present, the monorail re-enters the collective imagination through social networking posts and pages. Its image has been utilized and shared by online actors to defend and/or historically revise the Marcos period. It points to an aspirational modernity, alongside nostalgia, as one of the components of

present-day, pro-Marcos revisionism. Its symbolic modernist aspirations have now shifted and are made to revolve around the myth of Ferdinand Marcos Sr. as a visionary nation-builder–an ironic turn of events given the dictator's lack of support for the plan in the past. Additionally, its non-realization was not a deterrent for its inclusion in the propaganda. Associated with an era's optimistic faith in technology and progress, yet never concretized, it remains a potent image of a modern, but yet to be fully realized Manila.

Fig. 9.[1] Facebook posts in 2014 that claim the 1969 monorail as a Marcos project.
Caption: urge Ferdinand "Bong Bong" Marcos Jr. to run for national office in 2016.

Notes:

[1] Source: E. Marcos. Post that attributes a monorail linemaster plan to Ferdinand Marcos Sr. *Facebook*, 13 October 2014, https://web.facebook.com/marcos.709photos/a.706729006063771/809675 902435747/. Accessed 27 March 2023.

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MYTHS AND IMAGINARIES

Interrogating Modern Art Narratives (1950-1960s)

GIANPAOLO L. ARAGO

Abstract

This essay attempts to question the portrayal of modern art in the post-war grand narratives on Philippine art through selected art historical survey texts from the 1950s to the 1960s. These include *The Art of the Philippines* (1958), *A Brief History of the Development of Modern Art in the Philippines* (1963), and *Art in the Philippines* (1964). By analyzing the content and circumstances of these narratives, it may be able to yield the complexity of how modern art was depicted in these texts and surface how art history was utilized as a "site for the production and performance of regnant ideology" (Preziosi 35) that has manufactured a certain identity for the nation state.

We must drain the stagnant cesspools of local art and art criticism, and let fresh water flow through them. Our age has no use for people who at the mere mention of the words 'progress' and 'modern' get hysterical and bury their heads like ostriches in the sands of the outwork creeds and outmoded ideas.

– Salvador Lopez, "So It Seems," *Art of the Philippines*

This essay begins with an epigraph that encapsulates the oft-cited published debates between the conservatives and modernists that occurred before and during the aftermath of the Second World War. Even though the articles were mostly between Guillermo Tolentino and Victorio Edades, other critics and writers such as Salvador Lopez chimed in. The choice of this quotation then references how the historicization of the period relied on the squabbles between the two which would then be narrated to culminate in the walkout of conservatives in the 1955 Rotary Competitive Exhibition organized by the Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) when mostly modern artists were awarded. The way this period had been historicized then was punctuated by these chronicles to indicate its progression from the conservative style. But this essay aims to veer from the predictable retelling of the narratives to expand its history and surface the dominant ideologies in these histories.

This essay positions itself to contribute to the expanding art historiography research in the time period, such as in Reuben Cañete's "The Connoisseurly Brotherhood: A Metacritique of Philippine Modernist Art Criticism from the Sixties

to the Eighties" (2008) and "[Re]new-ing Philippine Art History: New Art History, 'Not New' Art History, 'In-between New and Not New' Art History, Nationality and the Globalist Subscription" (2011), or in the extensive *Art After War* (2015) by Patrick Flores. Specifically, this essay attempts to historiographically trace the portrayal of modern art in early Philippine art historical survey texts. Often characterized as spanning the time of American colonization and the Second World War as the impetus for its flourishing, and highlighting its tension with the conservative or academic school of art, the essay sifts through three texts to rearticulate and reposition them based on their historicization of modern art and consequently interrogating its actualization.

The texts in question include *The Art of the Philippines* (1958), which had a roster of authors: Leonidas Benesa, Emilio Aguilar Cruz, Angel Nakpil, Galo Ocampo, Rodrigo Perez III, Emmanuel Torres, and Fernando Zobel. Produced by the AAP, it was conceptualized as a follow-up to the two volumes dedicated to art in the 1953 *Encyclopedia of the Philippines* (Ledesma & Guerrero 53), and it stands as the first art historical publication that attempts an all-encompassing narrative for Philippine art. The AAP had a steering committee that included Gabriel Bernardo, Emilio Aguilar Cruz, Purita Kalaw-Ledesma, Arturo Luz, Armando Manalo, Dr. Eduardo Quisumbing, and Fernando Zobel (53). It was first funded by the UNESCO Philippine Educational Foundation and initially had Manalo as the editor. But due to an assigned post from the Department of Foreign Affairs, he was replaced by Winfield Scott Smith upon the selection by the Associated Publishers, which had helped with additional funding (54).

A Brief History of the Development of Modern Art in the Philippines from 1928 to 1962 (1963) was written by Leonidas Benesa and served as an accompaniment to the Modern Art Exhibition held at the National Museum under the auspices of the AAP in 1962. The inclusion of this text lends specificity even though its timeline only involved the Modern period. It can already be seen as a totalizing effort in its historicizing since it aimed to create a narrative about the progression of Philippine art that inevitably falls under Modern art. This text also offers a strong case study for the institutional ties and affiliations as they existed at the time, as it attempts to historicize contemporary art then.

Lastly, Dominador Castañeda's *Art in the Philippines* (1964) was published by the Office of Research Coordination of the University of the Philippines Diliman. The survey text was compartmentalized by periods, namely: Spanish, American, and Modern, with each further organized by the art forms of architecture, painting, and sculpture. The selection of the book rested on the criterion that its sole author was a practicing artist and scholar in the university. Much like the other authors, Castañeda was embedded in the art system and commonly narrativized to be subscribed to conservatism. Additionally, the book was identified by Florina Capistrano-Baker as a formative text that helped foster courses in Philippine art during the "Filipinization" in the 1970s (247).

As mentioned, the scant art historical literature of the time led the AAP to publish *Art of the Philippines* to supplement what was then the lone text on Philippine art history. Even then, the volumes dedicated to art in the *Encyclopedia* were an anthology of essays from artists such as Fabian de la Rosa and Galo Ocampo as well as writers like Ignacio Manlapaz and Jose P. Bantug. As a collection of essays, they did not necessarily espouse a linear narrative. Aside from this, there were pre-war periodicals such as *Philippine Magazine* and *The Philippine Herald*; wartime publications such as *Shin Seiki* and *Philippine Review*; and weekend magazines of dailies such as *The Manila Chronicle*, which composed the art historical landscape prior to these texts.

Thus, these texts were selected based on how they have been identified as representative of the earliest grand narratives in Philippine art. Their conception as such hews closer to Jean-Francois Lyotard's definition of knowledge production, which views totalizing and comprehensive history with 'incredulity' (Munslow 166). And through the analysis of the selected texts, the research solidifies the identification of these as grand narratives based on how Lyotard conceptualized them as appealing to universal values—in this case, promoting Filipino identity and progress.

Furthermore, as grand narratives, these art historical texts that have been figured within the discourses of knowledge production serve to legitimate the modernism that the narratives tout to be the testament of Philippine art's unceasing development in the light of modernity. The research then attempts to unpack the zealous appeal of the texts to render Philippine modern art as a universal and totalizing progression in its historicization. What are seen are characteristics of Filipino identity and the progression that modernism is hinged on, where both are not seen as mutually exclusive in this regard but factors that cooperate to present the totalizing

and comprehensive art history. Furthermore, the conditions upon which these are ensconced depend on a fervor for internationalization that finds its motivation from the repercussions of Philippine colonial history.

As a historiographical project, the essay does not merely aim to compensate for the gaps in history nor does it find itself intending to dismantle the bulwark of such narratives, but it hopes to present another possibility in expanding the narratives that have been adhered to in Philippine art history. Interrogating these texts may prove to be beneficial to further the questions and concerns of art historiography, which furthers its scope from just alternative-seeking histories, and to reflexively question how these texts on Philippine art may have inevitably influenced a certain narrative discourse.

The research suspects it to be a creation of a myth and consequently takes on this mythmaking capacity of narratives, especially within the complicity and promulgation by institutions. Myths in this research hews close to Roland Barthes' conception of a myth propagated by discourses. Its capacity as a mode of signification lends itself to be vulnerable to appropriation (118), and the research settles its position based on how Barthes elucidates that such signification is value-laden (124). This allows inquiry as to how these art historical texts were formed and surfacing of myths and motivating ideologies that may persist in their discourses, enabled by the ecology of socio-historical contexts and the attendant institutions that surround them. Mythmaking and grand narratives then share the consequence of proliferating such universal values which the research wishes to analyze.

Another layer in its conceptual framework is to recognize that these texts were strongly shaped by the circumstances—specifically the ecology of artistic production and circulation of the time. The narratives of these texts were prompted by the demand to capture arts and culture within a postwar and recently independent yet semi-colonial Philippines. Acknowledging this context meant that the research would need to take on a metahistorical attempt that gleans the organization or matrix that may produce and disseminate social beliefs or customs that run parallel to the disciplinary practice of art history (Mansfield 6). If taken as a vehicle of the institution in this production/dissemination of myths, art history proves the narrative and "works to represent us to ourselves by reproducing the scenography of our most cherished social-historical mythologies" (Preziosi 11).

It should be stated at this point that these texts, along with the attendant institutions and figures that compose their mode of production, underscore their relationship between the promulgation of the mythologies in the connection of art and national identity. Even though the research acknowledges that these texts comprise a small portion of one of the artworlds, the implications can be far-reaching. Studying the texts already yields a glimpse of such production and figures: the involvement of organizations such as the AAP, the PAG, and the National Museum as an institutional stronghold, and the artists and writers that form the social nexus that maintain such myths.

The implications of linear, grand narratives position the research to depend on Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* as one of its conceptual

posts. Informed by its notion of deconstruction as a way to open the design of knowledge production, this analysis can expose and surface the elements that compose the narrative of each text. More importantly, doing so would be in the purpose of also revealing the ideological values—myths, as proposed—which overlap the narrativization of the artworks and the events that it constitutes. It may also postulate associations or correlations, connections within power relations, to unexpected events of unique positions and beliefs propagated at that time. Ultimately these ideologies and values were deemed to be necessary to include and discuss in these art historical texts as well. And to uncover such myths, the research employs discourse analysis as an approach to study how a certain phenomenon or idea is represented in the art historical text (Krippendorff 16).

The Traction of Philippine Identity through Art

The editor of *Art of the Philippines*, Winfield Scott Smith, wrote in the book's foreword about the value of art and culture as invariably connected to society and its identity. Since he claims that the Philippines is a "young" country, it is inclined to seek to know and understand itself. Hence, art becomes a part of that process for figuring its identity, "for works of art have been recognized, from earliest times, as reflections of their makers" (v). This is echoed in the introduction of Alejandro Roces, then Secretary of Education, in *Art in the Philippines*, where he made the connection between the arts and culture, and their relationship to society. He hoped that despite the dearth of research materials and even scholars dedicated to Philippine studies, this text may hopefully encourage

more scholars to "devote their time and talents to recording our greatness and nobility as a people" (iii). The immense significance of arts and culture here is even stated as the "greatness and nobility" of the Filipinos, an idea that is echoed as well by the letter of Evangelina Macapagal to Galo Ocampo, then Director of the National Museum for the Modern Art Exhibition, to which *A Brief History of the Development of Modern Art in the Philippines* is dedicated. She said that the "art and culture of a people represent the sum total of a nation's history and civilization," and this exhibition and museum "contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the masses of our people" (Macapagal 3). And to reiterate the same point that Smith makes in *Art of the Philippines*, Macapagal also believes in the reflective capacity art has with respect to the nation. In fact, she believes that the "nation is only great as its culture and the true image and soul of a nation is reflected in its arts" (3). Hence, the role of the museum is crucial, since Macapagal suggests this tripartite relationship between arts, a built institution catering to the arts such as a museum, and the effect that these would have in the "true image and soul of a nation" (3).

What these demonstrate is a dependence on utilizing art as a national identifier, substantiating Donald Preziosi's characterization of art history and historiography as "a complex apparatus [to] manufacture certain forms of ideology as knowledge" (52). In the manner by which art was described in the foreword and introductions of the texts, the research proposes that this manufacturing capacity of art history tends to promote a nationalist project. Such remarks contained in the texts reason that objects of art and their historicization

are found to be able to function, as Preziosi states, as a site "for the manufacture, validation, and maintenance of ideologies of idealist nationalism and ethnicity, serving to sharpen and to define the underlying cultural unity of a people as distinct from others" (41).

Historicizing art objects then not only preserves such items into a collective history. It can be fashioned to fulfill a "nationalist" duty of constructing a unique identity, which unifies the people that identify to belong within such a group. The snippets above demonstrate the potential of art to be utilized as a reflective expression of the collective identity of society within the confines of its art historical narration.

Certainly, this point can be truistic at best—texts are invariably value-laden and would possess their own ideological implications. But articulating it within their timeline, alongside the exhaustive scope of charting Philippine art, reiterates the significance they put upon these art historical narratives to execute such a duty, and carrying with them the onus of representation. It may be inevitable then that the noble and idealist approach to writing these texts would peg notions of national identity based on ideological agendas that were deemed relevant then.

The 'Autochthonous' Imbued in Modern Art

In the May 1944 issue of Philippine Review, Emilio Aguilar Cruz, one of the writers of *Art of the Philippines* writes in his article, "The Autochthonous Tradition," that Philippine art should be engaged not within the confines of indigenous forms but with depictions of the quotidian in painting, and

he distinguishes Fabian de la Rosa to personify this term. While the use of the term "autochthonous" connotes a disengagement of identity from foreign dependence, as a means to reclaim it based on what is considered "Filipino," such identity politics and the appeal for this essentialist tendency may spring from the historical moment and the ideas permeating during the time of American colonization.

In *The Americanization of Manila 1898-1921* (2010), Cristina Evangelista Torres states that this Americanization process through government and education imbibed the very colonial mentality in Filipinos, which was believed to have delayed the development of the Philippines (2). The 1960s saw the change of opinion on the United States with the "emergence of a nationalist fervor that made American bashing popular, particularly among academicians and university students . . . with American neocolonialism at home" (2). The research suggests a connection between this nationalist fervor, which encompasses the publication timelines of these books, and the identity-seeking direction taken by the writers across the art historical survey texts.

What led to this enthusiasm towards nationalism in the 1960s may have its source from the desire for self-determination that Filipinization initiated. This can be witnessed in William McKinley's 1898 Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation or William Howard Taft's tricky slogan, "The Philippines for Filipinos," which may have been perceived as pro-Filipino. These have always been portrayed by the Americans in the public discourse as sympathetic to the Filipinos' desire for self-determination, but the insidious discourse reveals veiled imperialist interests (Torres 7).

The socio-historical implications of Filipinization also meant that the employees in the government or the faculty or teachers in the education sector secured tenure for Filipinos. This would mean that the underlying principle would be a fervent essentialist distinction between what is Filipino and foreign. Torres narrates how this nationalist tendency was manifested when Manuel Quezon, during the inauguration of the first Filipino president of the University of the Philippines Ignacio Villamor, reminded the new president that the University belongs to the Filipinos, since it was one of the first moves of the Philippine Assembly, and that "they belong to a race separate from the Americans and they should seek their own destiny as a separate nationality with a separate political existence" (150-151). Drawing the line from this divide between the Filipino and the foreign contributes to the notion of the indigenous (the "autochthonous"), as part of the meaning-making of art in terms of the self-determination of the Filipino.

The rendering of the "Filipino" is equally important in terms of how these writers and historians perceived or interpreted this notion of the "autochthonous." While there is a predilection to create an idea of the distinctly Filipino, the instances of this Filipino-ness are certainly diverse. In *Art of the Philippines*, the moderns are the ones given the spotlight as to their new representation of the Filipino. The book recognizes these moderns as creating a new fluency in the interpretation of such a nationalist fervor. They extol Hernando Ocampo's non-objective paintings as an exponent of the "Filipino style" (65), which is a terminology art critics say Arturo Luz upheld through his depictions of "untapped aspects of Philippine life, as in [*Musicians*] and his series on Filipino games" (69). While Galo

Ocampo encapsulates nationalistic flair in *Brown Madonna*, the writers of the book were also careful to say that this nationalist tendency was a "flavor of the day" (65)—as if it was an ephemeral trend in the available topics for the arsenal of subjects artists could paint. This interesting idea can be considered as moot only because of the way it underplays the topic of nationalist painting as a mere trend, and this idea was never picked upon by the other texts.

Other paintings that were perceived by the writers as Filipino were the scenes and subjects that were a clear representation of what is uniquely Filipino. Romeo Tabuena—whose paintings hark back to subjects from the Genre style elements—continued to paint the *bahay kubo* and carabaos even as an artist in the United States and as an expatriate in Mexico. Vicente Manansala's painting, *Jeepneys*, also becomes written in art history as a clear representation of Filipino painting because of the way that he "fused subject matter and color completely to achieve an authority of statement" (68).

Some of the painters mentioned in *A Brief History of the Development of Modern Art* are also referencing nationalist art most especially through the subject matter featured in their works. In what seems to be a rehash of the description of Luz's work in the previous text, it was claimed to have reached success through his rendering of quotidian Philippine scenes in *Musicians* and his series on Filipino children's games (22). And Hernando Ocampo was also recognized for "basic Philippine patterns and bold incursions into . . . abstract art" (22).

A development from the singular nationalistic identity that the usage of the term "autochthonous" promotes would be the idea of the amalgamation of

cultures that contribute to the formation of a unique national identity. Benesa, at the latter part of his own text, chose to highlight the 1957 Southeast Asian Art competition as a historical chronicle to describe the newer directions of modern art in the Philippines, which he narrated to be motivated by the Philippine artist's need "for a definition or a confirmation of . . . Asia or Eastern identity" (30). This surfaces an attempt to underscore the direction of the Filipino artist as one that would have the self-reflexivity to dislodge their practice from the inculcated tradition of the West and to reconsider how Asian culture would figure in their artmaking. This historical chronicle was also mentioned in Castañeda's *Art in the Philippines* and even though this was not mentioned in *Art of the Philippines*, the contemporary artist was coaxed to "take a cue from his Oriental brother artists, particularly great Chinese artist-draftsmen . . . developing, not only their craft, but the sensibility of the artist" (74). Hence, despite the pull to give priority to the nationalist identity in art, the search for the autochthonous was much more nuanced in the sense that it still kept tabs on possibilities of relating and creating connections to a global scope, such as in reference to the regional.

To offer a sharper distinction to this, Castañeda kept mum about providing a connection to modern art as a representation of such autochthonous bearing. But this cannot be simply accounted to an allegiance to the conservatives—the boundaries to such artistic subscriptions can be porous as a social formation—nor can it be attributed as an unpatriotic sentiment. To illustrate this, his text chronicles how Vicente Rivera's painting *El Sueño Dorado*, then exhibited by the Asociación Internacional de Artistas at Bazar Filipino in 1908, was an allegory to

Taft's "The Philippines for the Filipinos" (Castañeda 74). The painting, featuring a figure of a woman resting on a hammock while holding an issue of *La Independencia*, exemplifies how art historical narratives can be of service to the creation of specific identity-forming agendas.

It would be of interest to see how this mode of Filipinization through literature on art captured the commitment to Filipino identity that preceded its resurgence in the 1970s in the academic institutions like the University of the Philippines. Reinforced by the socio-political conditions of the time and the rise of progressive and protest movements, the indigenization of disciplines such as in historiography and psychology—like in the case of *Pantayong Panaw* and *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*—likewise bled into the humanities. The research finds these connections not to be mutually exclusive but may even serve as its intellectual lineage albeit their circumstances may have differed; the myths from these texts can be seen to have set notions of colonial influence on a more critical purview.

Modern Art's International Direction for Progress

As stated earlier, pursuing a singular Filipino identity does not, in any case, completely bar any form of interaction with the rest of the world. Instead, ways of internationalization became a yardstick of success or an indication of an artist's skill. These texts also depended on the international exposure of some artists as a valued chronicle in their narrative, their sojourn abroad often portrayed as central to the shift of their artistic practice for the better.

For instance, as a pivotal figure positioned in modern art, Victorio Edades was formed as a figure narratively pitted against the artistic status quo maintained by traditionalists or conservatives. In *Art of the Philippines*, his historicization during that time touted him to be the figure to "credit for having broken academic dominance and for having initiated change in Filipino painting" (43) and these were narrated by making pivotal his overseas education in the Art Department of the University of Washington wherein he supported himself by working in the salmon canneries of Alaska—an oft-occurring anecdote in historicizing his practice. This parallels Benesa's *A Brief History of the Development of Modern Art* almost in verbatim (11) and Castañeda's *Art in the Philippines* likewise begins his historical chronicle for Edades by stating his return from his studies in the United States (95). His stay abroad figured as pivotal chronicle in his historicizing which figured the disposition of his art practice due to being surrounded by modernist art in the West Coast of the United States and viewing The Armory exhibition. *Art of the Philippines* relates that such exposure inevitably influenced Edades and this was proven in the text to be seen in his painting, *The Sketch* (1927), which won the second highest honors in competition with other professional painters in the Pacific Northwest Coast of the United States (43). Moreover, this fervor for the international bleeds through how Edades stated that it would be pertinent for the modernist Filipino artist "to investigate every department of our environment which we directly experience, and to blend and integrate all of our impressions with our *Oriental heritage and our traditional Christian culture*—these are profound lessons with which the great modern art movement is inspiring our progressive artists today so that they may create

masterpieces which will claim their places in the art galleries of the world" (49, emphasis added).

For Edades then, to harness the "oriental" or "traditional Christian culture" is to extend the artist's scope of inquiry, whether within the continent or religious systems, but this coalesces with his claim that these will bring works to a global platform, that such investigation is an indicator of their own criteria for success, which would be possible by exoticizing their aesthetic. And as a figure positioned in the forefront of modern art, it would not be too far-fetched to point to how Edades' statement illustrates the postcolonial anxiety that strains the modern artist to find a unique artistic identity rooted in their own origin and at the same time compelled to seek international validation.

But in the writing of Philippine art history, the impulse for the international figures most pressingly in the way that the international exhibitions were historicized in conjunction with the moderns. *Art in the Philippines* details the First Southeast Asia Art Conference and Competition that was held in Manila in April 1957.[1] This was presided over by Dr. Gregorio Lim and held in the conference room of the Philippine Women's University with its exhibition at the Northern Motors Showroom. The exhibition and competition gathered artists and artworks from India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, and China (Castañeda 138). In Benesa's *A Brief History of the Development of Modern Art in the Philippines*, he mentions how the competition was also held in conjunction with the annual exhibition of AAP as the organizing sponsor (30). He reasons that the possible acknowledgement of the Western influence led Filipino artists to root themselves to

their "Asian or Eastern identity" (30) and the causality of this led to the formation of the competition. Additionally, the other art historical event included in this subsection is the "Asian Tour of Philippine Art" that was sponsored by the AAP with the assistance of the government and the United States Information Service.

In the last portion of his text, Benesa discusses the contemporary art history of the moderns (30). He starts by focusing on the events leading to the publication of the text. He simultaneously historicizes the exhibition *The Development of Modern Art in the Philippines* as part of the new directions that would lead Philippine modern art. This was followed by a chronicle about a group of artworks sent to Saigon for an international art festival (not specified) which was sponsored by the Vietnamese embassy in the Philippines, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Philippine Art Gallery (PAG). The third event was the tour of an exhibition of Philippine art to four cities in Australia that was sponsored by the Australian Embassy, Qantas, AAP, and the Cultural Foundation of the Philippines. Another international exhibition, entitled 8 Filipinos— featuring the Philippine moderns—toured Asian cities and exhibited at the Lambert in Paris funded by the International Congress for Cultural Freedom.

Aside from the exhibition at the National Museum, all of these are international exhibitions that Benesa characterized as Philippine modern art "seeking after new horizons, not only internally in search for a more personal vision, but also internationally in search of universal recognition" (30). Validation then of the international kind can be seen as highest in regard, with institutions such as AAP and PAG at the

helm, initiating and facilitating such a direction. As a precursory event that may emphasize this matter, Lyd Arguilla of the PAG was also able to manage a two-year touring exhibition for the gallery from 1953-54 in the United States. Entitled "Philippine Cultural Exhibition," Arguilla's work as a cultural attaché enabled the project, which Legaspi-Ramirez characterizes as "one of the earliest aspirational showings of the period and would be one of a number of modest gestures in aid of Philippine art going 'international'" (33). The historicizing of the moderns in this case surmises that their "progress" can be evidenced in the sophisticated and cosmopolitan "direction" of Philippine modern art vis-à-vis a global reach that has given it its "vitality" (30).

Regardless of whether they were in Southeast Asia, as in the case of Benesa and Castañeda, or a touring exhibition in the United States, these were historically chronicled to be benchmarks of success and the continuation of such practice as the direction for Philippine art. Their historicizing recognizes a critical disposition or self-reflexivity in terms of the western influence within Philippine art practices. The course of action then is directed to a more nativist approach in relation to the oriental identity contained within Southeast Asian regionalism.

These international exhibitions and competitions were easily the highlighted information in these texts, particularly with the direction of modern art in Benesa's text. And to view it in relation to the search of national identity implies a sense of security to showcase what is inherently "Philippine," while fronting modern art as a representative not only of the identity, but a visual language that

may resonate to a more global arena—whether for artists to encourage and lean on what is perceived as "oriental" or to have institutional support for more internationalized endeavors.

Moreover, the meaning-making for these artworks were portrayed through the themes and ideologies that were prominently circulating then—the search for Philippine identity and the keen interest to assess how they fare on an international level as most present. In the grander scheme of the narratives, the moderns are positioned as the denouement to these, with artistic practices that come out as fully realized and validated internationally. Philippine modern art then is seen as an entity that clinches the conundrum of national identity. Thus, notions of nation building via identity-seeking directives for art and the likewise significance of these to culture—and consequently the nation—are the general interpretation for these texts. And in this research, solely depending on these narratives without reassessing them within the purview of today's historicizing may perpetuate what figure as myths concerning Philippine art history.

Modern art and its historicization in these grand narratives can be reviewed to be underpinned by more complex circumstances that surround it. And while the brief discussion only focused on the text, it is pertinent to extend this foray deeper into the institutional art ecology which would productively encapsulate the key figures involved in the writing and production of these texts. Additionally, it would be fruitful to explore how the term 'modern' was indeed conceptualized and came into fruition as a way to further assess these ideologies and interests.

Interrogating these texts underscores the complexity of how modern art was depicted in these grand narratives. By comprehending them within the context of postwar Philippines, they can then be viewed with much more reflexivity: the preponderance to depict a national identity can be seen as an ongoing process in the desire for self-determination in a way that is wary and privy to the agendas that may permeate in them.

Notes:

[1] It should be noted that Castañeda's *Art in the Philippines* dates the competition in 1956 while Benesa's *A Brief History of the Development of Modern Art* dates it in 1957.

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Acknowledgements

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OBJECT[1]

FLAUDETTE MAY V. DATUIN

In this presentation, I excavate the "Object" as both noun and verb. As noun, object refers to the overlooked, the unimportant, the ordinary, neglected, presumed dead, until found, and singled out as "thing" or things that have lives of their own (Appadurai). Through the object as noun, I present microhistories told by my colleagues in the disciplines of art and Philippine Studies and bring to light for consideration the chamber pot, the watercraft, the dress, and the stone. These objects are triggers and platforms of interest that may or may not fall within the ambit of modernity and may or may not directly address the questions of this panel, but may in turn give life to certain other questions. As a thing that comes alive, the object thus becomes an active force (Winterson 19): the Object objects.

I will start with the chamber pot—*arinola* in Tagalog. The chamber pot, along with other objects of everyday life, was exhibited in a community museum in Bago City, Negros Occidental in Central Philippines, as part of a project by a colleague, Cecilia Sta. Maria De La Paz. The *arinola*'s journey started, not with the collection of objects, per se, but with the recruitment of participants from the local community, who were taught various research methodologies called cultural mappings and cultural calendars. "But the interview method was redefined," she writes, according to "their traditional concepts of *kuwentuhan* and *kapihan*" (De La Paz 162), meaning storytelling and having coffee. Data were processed through workshops and dialogues, with everyone going around each other's villages or barangays and becoming interested in each others' problems. Finally, they were asked to gather objects that would have "value" for the people of their barangay, one of them being the *arinola,* an object

identified with excess and its expulsion, with bodily relief at a very basic level, especially at the dead of night, for instance, when the rest room is not readily accessible, or, in another instance, with whim and luxury, as exemplified by the anecdote about a former president who was said to harbor an *arinola* made of gold in his bedroom. If President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III has his Porsche, an ill-advised purchase amidst grinding poverty, President Elpidio Quirino has his gold *arinola* (Ocampo). On one hand, the *arinola* is a "found object," probably like the urinal-turned-*Fountain* (Marcel Duchamp 1917). Both satisfy the two criteria of found objecthood outlined by WJT Mitchell: (1) A found object must be "ordinary, unimportant, neglected and (until its finding) overlooked," taken for granted, hidden in plain sight, like Edgar Allan Poe's purloined letter; and (2) "its finding must be accidental, not deliberate or planned" (114). It is presumed that the urinal and chamber pot were not sought; they were *found*. Or perhaps better, they found the founders, and in their place of display, are now looking back at us, wanting, demanding, desiring something from us, as animated vital objects.

Unlike the urinal-turned-*Fountain* however, the *arinola* is not a canonical, modernist, or modern artwork; it is not signed, lit, and put on a pedestal as an object of contemplation, or as an object of study in art criticism, art history, and aesthetics, under the rubric of "conceptual art." The *arinola* and other objects found and displayed by the community of Bago is less an object of artistic reflection in the fine arts domain, than a totem, a community rallying point that turns the "elitist" space of the museum (in general and specific terms, in this case, the

former residence of a wealthy elite)[2] into a "space of engagement," from where memories from below can be reclaimed, remapped, and retold. The *arinola* comes alive as a member of a community of objects that "illuminate their human and social context" (Appadurai 5), directing attention, not to provenance, origin, and histories as museum objects, but to "relation of artefacts to other objects, to people and cultural practices" (Henning 9).

Is there a place for the *arinola*, a most humble and maybe even embarrassing object, in the "great" museum being envisioned in this symposium?

The second object is the *watercraft*, big or small, around which I weave two stories. In one story, the vessel is possibly a boat or raft carrying a box containing the image of the Virgen Milagrosa de Badoc in Ilocos, Northern Philippines, which may have originated from Japan during the time of the persecutions of Christians in the Momoyama Period (1582-1598) and may have been stealthily dropped off at sea to let the ocean currents and the winds decide its fate. Norma Respicio speculates that the boat, the box, and the Virgen may have strayed into the shores of Ilocos, carried by warm currents that ply along the West Philippine Sea[3] greatly aided by northeasterly winds or *brizas* and southwesterly *vendavals*.

Another story is set a long, long time ago, and speaks, as told by the archaeologist Jesus Peralta, of "remains of the large boats excavated in the vicinities of Butuan City in northeastern Mindanao dating to 1230 AD, which led to the further discovery of more plank boats the earliest of which was dated

to 320 AD" (10). These boats bear an affinity with the *lepa* of the Sama Dilaut of southern Philippines. The *lepas* are highly sophisticated, Peralta says, and he cites one type of sail—the *lamak boa-an* or sail with the mouth—which "enables the *lepa* to tack at a very shallow angle almost directly into the wind, enabling the boat to sail regardless of the direction of the prevailing winds, when other boats with conventional sails would flounder" (10). If the sails of the *lepas* are any indication, the ancient boats may have facilitated long-distance travels, port-to-port alliances, intra-regional conquests, trade relations, and perhaps even intermarriages between chiefdoms and kingdoms giving rise to what James Warren (1975) describes as the "segmentary state," a slippery and fractured polity, characterized by a multiplicity of centers and networks of loyalty. Foreign incursions into this region and subjugations which took centuries to unfold were made possible, not just through outright conquests but by forging diplomatic, economic, personal, and social connections, sometimes deliberate, like perhaps giving and exchanging gifts of gold and golden *arinolas*, and at times, in conjunction with the direction of prevailing winds and ocean currents.

Perhaps this inter-island mingling can be mapped into what John Clark refers to as "horizontal relations between parallel branches of the genealogical trees" (406), distinct from vertical relations, which revolve around notions of transfer as origination and derivation, and of asymmetrical power relations between receiver and origins. While horizontal relations point towards families or differences or groupings characterized more by structural resemblance than common origins, vertical relations homologically resemble modernity's linear, developmental model of progress.

It is interesting to note however, that such mapping of horizontal relations could remain resistant to the shaping of an integrative vista for Asian history. What we have instead is an unwieldy, porous, fluid map resistant to modernity's neat periodizations, as well as interstitial, interregional transfers of particular objects and relics, as we see in the mutation of the Virgen, purportedly washing ashore from Japan, and its adoption as a local object of veneration in a context already primed by Christianization. Perhaps even John Clark's metaphor of a genealogical tree is equally problematic, because of the top-down orientation of the arboreal image, an objection I appropriate from Deleuze and Guattari who prefer and proffer the metaphor of the rhizome instead. How can a museum, with aspirations to greatness, give shape to this waterborne, waterlogged geography? What metaphors or models can best describe this watery topography, one that is navigated by watercrafts, big and small? And in these days of flooding and reclaiming of lands by the rivers and seas, how does one make sense of makeshift rafts, which inspired Mark Salvatus' *C-rafts* show at the University of the Philippines Vargas Museum, a modernist institution in architecture and temper?[4]

Makeshift alliances forged through stealth boats, and makeshift rafts made of consumer items like the inflatable bed remind me that the movement across waters is fraught. Waters make their claim and, as it is believed in some societies in the Philippines, they are peopled with spirits who embody the forces of nature, which giveth (as capital and livelihood providers)

and taketh. Animals continue to be sacrificed to propitiate and appease the spirits' demand for a share, but even these offerings cannot quell their appetite and periodically lay claim to people's lives. The Pasig River, that smelly body of water that runs through several municipalities in Manila, is known to claim its own share of mortals, and in 2009, the river, its tributaries, and the Laguna Lake washed away houses, killed people, and damaged crops and infrastructure along their banks as they swelled from floods of typhoon Ondoy (international code name Ketsana). And if we are to bear in mind that the river is but a small (25–27 kilometers long), though important, portion of a bioregion called the Pasig River Basin, then we are talking of close to a million people adversely affected.

Spirits making their claims are mysterious presences, different—as pointed out by the philosopher and ecologist David Abram (13)—from "our Western notion of 'spirit' (which is so often defined in contrast to matter or 'flesh')" as occult, supernatural, or pagan figures assuming anthropomorphic forms. The spirits of traditional societies are "primarily those modes of intelligence or awareness that do *not* possess a human form" (13). Interestingly, among the Ivatans of Batanes in the northernmost part of the Philippines these beings are called "the unseens"; they cannot explain who and what they are or what form they take, only that these unseen presences are powerful beings that the Ivatans venerate along with the Catholic God.[5]

In the literature on the Pasig River, on the other hand, so much is written about the *Mutya ng Pasig* (Pearl of the Pasig), the romantic and orientalized feminine figure of lore, art, and tourism. In various guises and incarnations, the spirits don the cloak of Culture, becoming symbols of nationhood or cityhood (it is rumored, for example, that at least two municipalities are competing for the Mutya as their symbol or icon) construed by a Filipino nationalism that is continental, male, and imperialist, which is encoded in the figure of Jose Rizal, our America-sponsored National Hero, whose 150th birth anniversary we are celebrating this year. I will return to him in a while. Meanwhile, in the process of colonization and Christianization, the spirit, which I describe as pre-modern, is made to don a feminine form as it transforms into what Marian Pastor-Roces refers to as a "costumed identity" ("Text and Subtext"). Coopted by patriarchal nationalism, very much organic to modernity, the costumed identity is an emasculated decorative icon, devoid of its own animate power and agency.

This point brings me to my third object: *dress, costume, clothing*. Clothing wields and tames the body, as we have seen in the feminine costumed identity. The *baro't saya* of the elite (a traditional costume approximately translated as blouse and long dress), the exquisite and often butterfly-sleeved ensembles of silk and embroidered pineapple cloth, neatly—yet shakily—held in place with jewelry pins and clasps, the bikini bits of cloth of the nightclub dancer, the loose-fitting *dasters* (loose, flowing dresses) of poor women in the cities and countrysides, the "uniforms" of laborers and "maids" tending the homes of strangers in strange lands, and even the homes of privileged Filipinas are repeatedly worn by the Filipina in art as emblems of an unproblematic identity. In whatever pose and clime,

the emblematically clothed Filipina is permanently dressed as "Culture," wearing ornaments and clothes of stereotypes and identities that transcend history.

However, Pastor Roces also takes note, in a paper delivered for a conference on Rizal in 2011, that while elite Filipinas are identified with the traditional *baro't saya*, Jose Rizal, our nationalist icon, is garbed in the European overcoat, and is seldom, if at all, seen in the vernacular clothing. The overcoat is marker for the *ilustrado*, a term referring to young Filipino elites in the 1800s whose preferred site for professional and higher study is Europe. At the same time, so-called "primitive" Filipinos, wearing nothing but their g-strings, had to endure the cold while being exhibited at the 1884 Madrid Exposition of Fine Arts, an event which angered Rizal. Clothing—or lack of it—thus speaks of civilized/uncivilized, modern/primitive, mind/body, culture/nature, *ilustrado/indio* binaries embedded in what John Clark refers to as vertical relations and top-down modernist genealogies. Clothing also speaks of the checkered career of the *ilustrado*, epitomized by Rizal as continental, a Europeanized hero/villain, a world-class traveler, a polymath, and even the first ever Overseas Filipino Worker or OFW.[6]

Before his execution, Rizal wrote "*Mi Ultimo Adiós*" or "My Last Farewell," a moving poem now carved in stone, the fourth object in my presentation. Enshrined at the Fort Santiago, where Rizal was held prisoner before he was shot nearby, the poem was meticulously "written" on sandstone, imported from Italy and executed by a maker of gravestones from Romblon, Central Philippines, home of the best marble and marble artisans in the Philippines. Pastor Roces, who was part of the curatorial team

tasked to make shrines dedicated to the hero during the centennial year of the Philippine Revolution in 1998, reveals that in the process of monumentalizing the poem, "we aimed for *materiales Fuertes*, the best materials and the most difficult of techniques, the kind of technique that leaves no room for mistakes" ("Text and Subtext"). However, 13 years later, at a conference on the hero, one of many activities dedicated to his 150th year, Pastor Roces reflects, and I roughly translate from the original Tagalog: "Despite the joy of having flawlessly carved and inlaid the poem, a germ of doubt nested in my heart. The poem is so beautiful it moves one to tears, but casting it in stone, drains it of life" (2011).

I recall that in the Renaissance, it is the sculptor's duty to free the life form imprisoned in the marble and bring it to life. The stone and—if I may bring in another object—the glass cases in museums are bearers of the dead, which could be awakened, in which case they are not actually dead for all eternity but are somehow alive, perhaps in suspended animation. However, in Pastor Roces's meditation, the poem, once alive, is now very definitely dead, killed by the modernist, secular idea and its process of memorialization. How can the poem come to life again?

I have no ready answer, but I turn to Michelle Henning for a possible option: that is to take as a starting point the idea of modernity as "fundamentally, if unevenly, transformative" (2). And if there is any preliminary conclusion I can take from this cue and from the objects and stories I excavated, it is this: instead of scrounging around for "other" modernities, or as the panel brief for this Symposium puts it: "different traditions of Asian art [that] could

be considered modern even before encounters with Western art," I would rather bring to light the "other side of modernity"—the tendency of objects, four (or five, if we include the glass case) of which I singled out here, to exceed their designated roles, and to resist their integration into a coherent narrative of progress and their reduction to documents, texts, or representations. The feminine costumed identity, here imaged as the docile mermaid in a city logo, might fight back, and assume violent forms like the monstrous mermaid. The unseen spirits imprisoned in human form continue to claim their share. The *arinola* continues to foment a rebellion with other household implements and argue among themselves and scream, not only at each other, but at us. Rizal's overcoat and the elite *baro't saya* might begin to ask uncomfortable questions, and the poem might leap at us and demand to be touched and be held. Objects cannot be tamed, although our responses to them, under the shadow of modernity and its stone and glass cases, can be. I will end with a final question then: How can a museum, with aspirations to greatness, make us and our vital signs come alive and object?

Notes:

[1] This essay is a modified version of a paper that was originally presented at "Making a Great Art Museum: Contending with Southeast Asian Modernities and Art," a symposium held on 13 July 2011 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, LASALLE College of the Arts and organized by the NHB Academy (now The Culture Academy, Singapore) and the Institute of Policy Studies.

[2] Balay ni Tan Juan Community Museum in Bago City, Negros Occidental is named after Juan Araneta, a sugar baron who fought in the Philippine Revolution of 1898.

[3] This is where the Spratly Islands, currently disputed among several countries, including the Philippines, are located.

[4] The artist Maria Taniguchi hinted at and interacted with this strain of modernity as it is seen in the Vargas Museum in her site-specific exhibit entitled *Echo*, in May 2011. In her video at the West Wing, she mounted two screens which screened 11-minute documentations of the carving *Dawn's Arms* by a marble artisan in Romblon. *Dawn's Arms* replicates the arms of the statue *Dawn* by the artist Georg Kolbe, which was exhibited at the German Pavilion of the Barcelona Exposition in the 1950s. The result of the Romblon artisan's efforts was a photograph of *Dawn's Arms*. Taniguchi is linking two modernist buildings, the German Pavilion, constructed by Mies van der Rohe, and Vargas Museum, and makes a sly reference to its faux marble flooring.

[5] These insights emerged from a documentary research I conducted with filmmaker Nick de Ocampo in Batanes, Northern Philippines, 2009-2010. For fuller details, please see my essay "For the Birds" for the exhibition catalog of *The River Project* exhibited at the Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, Australia in 2010.

[6] For a fuller discussion on the changing meanings of the term *ilustrado*, see Caroline Hau's "'Patria e intereses': Reflections on the Origins and Meanings of Ilustrado." In this essay, she elaborated on the resignification of the "ilustrado" as Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) in the prize-winning novel by Miguel Syjuco.

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AT THE CUSP OF EORZEAN ECHOES

Notes on the Use of Virtual Performance for Arts-Based Methodology

KEVIN MICHAEL A. DE GUZMAN

Abstract

As a queer approach to research, arts-based methodology (ABR)—the process of creatively representing any or all parts of a study—serves as a springboard to emancipate the data and/or its interpretation from the often-inartistic dimensions of research dissemination. In this research note, the performance ethnography *E/c/h/o* (2022-2023), as a product of ABR, is put through the looking-glass—revealing the posthuman dimensions that enveloped its conception. In this way, ABR is illustrated to intertwine two hybridized possibilities: (1) to artistically represent parts of a research with the goal of arriving at particularly relevant answers to specific sociological research questions and (2) to highlight the creative process of translating research into art as an epistemological undertaking in and of itself. In other words, *E/c/h/o* not only posits sociological findings about online interactions from the game world of *Final Fantasy XIV*, but also serves as a performance that underscores the autopoietic process of birthing a posthuman affective assemblage from the perspective of Popperian aesthetics.

This research narrative began with a refusal and ended with a small round of applause. The refusal manifested itself through a rejection letter of the initial pre-publication manuscript, while the small round of applause emanated from the three-dimensional phantom hands of the audience avatars from Eorzea, the virtual world of *Final Fantasy XIV (FFXIV)*. Traversing the road from refusal to applause, this research note is about how I turned stone into gold, as if bearing Midas' touch—a blessing bestowed by Western arts-based research (ABR) scholars like Leavy and Bagley. Essentially, this research note not only recounts an arts-informed methodological approach to ethnographic data, but also aims to demonstrate how the arts can effectively turn sociological research inquiry into an affective (posthuman, ontoepistemological, and postphenomenological) practice with just one (aesthetic) touch.

Arts-based methodology (ABR) serves as the Midas touch to this research process. Arts-based research incorporates artistic production (e.g. performance, dance, autoethnography, painting, etc.) into any or all parts of research (Leavy 4). Through these techniques, research data are effectively transported to a plane of affective resonance that seeks both to inform and to inspire. Concomitantly, this method revolutionized the epistemic approach of modern research by injecting it with the aesthetic process at whatever state it may be found. For the most part, ABR equips the researcher with first-hand experience about the findings of the study, making him/her/them/xem more grounded, more involved, and more agglutinated to their distinct epistemic goals. In an anti-hegemonic sense, ABR interpolates as a queer response to the academic pursuit of knowledge that tends to focus primarily on the harmony between theory and argument(s).

The stone: the data presentation of Manuscript Version 1. The first version of the manuscript was a recounting of observations in Eorzea, the virtual world of *Final Fantasy XIV (FFXIV)*—a massive multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) published by Square Enix. Boellstorff says that virtual worlds are sites for the ethnographic exploration of the human connections mediated by the new realities accorded by technological advancement (4). Thus, I began my ethnographic expedition into the social interactions of *FFXIV* inhabitants from the Atomos Server (more on this later).[1] Collecting my online observations mean keeping track of the same through fieldnotes coupled with screen-recordings of about 80+ hours of game footage, but my expedition appeared to be more colorful than my recollection. It was no Horace Miner, full of neologisms and critical thought (see *The Body Ritual among the Nacirema*); rather, its findings and data presentation were labeled bland and directionless by some journal reviewers. And so, I started from scratch; that meant revisiting and retelling the story from the ground up. Little did I know, I was about to make gold.

The gold: the data presentation of Manuscript Version 2. I translated the data into the universally known language of performance. *E/c/h/o* (2022-2023) is one of the first virtual ethnographic performances (if not *the* first) in *FFXIV* by a Filipino artist. It is an arts-based recollection of the ethnographic data which I have collected from the voices I overheard in Eorzea. In a sense, the performance poses as a critical posthuman production as it involved not only the movements of

my meat-space self through minimal movements like moving the mouse, clicking buttons, and typing on a keyboard, but also a series of motions caused by an automated string of code that inevitably translates into the movement, imputation, and expression of my meta-space self: Ji Changmin (named after main dancer from the K-pop group *The Boyz*). The theatrical production is composed of nine scenes set in the outer wilds of Eorzea, near the Aethernet crystals, where the players would be the unsuspecting audience for the virtual performance. The star of the show is the avatar himself, Ji Changmin. He poses as the *kawaii* (the Japanese word for "cute") version of Hamlet, engaging mostly in a soliloquy with himself as the actor-vessel of all the performance's characters, demarcated only by in-game costume changes that are permitted by the *FFXIV* instant-wardrobe-change feature. Each of the scenes from *E/c/h/o* (2022-2023), in fact, pertain to a compartmentalized gist of all the notable observations from Eorzea.[2] For example, sociolinguistic findings about the many different dialects used by and between players were summarized in ☆Scene 8: stan TwT 101!?☆ (S8) through the Stan Twitter dialogue between two Gen Z users. Another scene depicts the unseen: the private messages between players, who speak mostly through in-game private chats. These private messages are represented in ☆Scene 3: This enchantment 2☆ (S3), as a multiplicity of ellipses that engulf the Eorzean atmosphere during two players' (non-)conversation.[3]

The performance was staged in Eorzea from *FFXIV,* an MMORPG published by Square Enix. According to Salazar, the ontology of any MMORPG is manifested by gameplay that involves considerable social interaction, an overarching plot, simulation/interactive story elements, and

ludological design that emphasizes cooperation (1). In simpler words, MMORPGs are role-playing games with social interaction at their core. Progress in MMORPGs is demarcated, if not circumnavigated, by socialization, interaction, and intra-actions. In order to house over 40 million active players and facilitate smooth functioning of its RPG elements, MMORPGs often have different servers, which contain different instances of the same virtual world. Across all these instances, players from all around the world access data points that allow them to simultaneously interact, play, and converse with any player occupying the same server (or visiting one) in real time. Because these servers are separate and distinct, they have become sites where different cultures emerge. In *FFXIV*, a group of servers are also tied to a larger Data Center for which traveling between worlds is allowed. To reiterate, servers allow several instances of Eorzea to occur at several Data Centers from Japan, Oceania, North America, and Europe. Thus, a server populated by English speakers in Atomos, which belongs to the Elemental Data Center in Japan, is governed largely, though not absolutely, by Japanese customs and etiquette (that is, of course not to say that English speakers conform to this; the governance does not establish the status quo but simply a quasi-collective social imaginary). Hence, it is important to study different people, different servers, different data centers, among others.

Distinctively positioned from the historicity of other virtual worlds that are purely lore-based, the Eorzea of today is literally and figuratively a post-apocalyptic world. The first version of *FFXIV* in 2010, dubbed as Patch 1.0, was generally disliked by players because of its clunky controls, grotesque

game features, bugs, and graphical issues, among other reasons. Square Enix, the game developer, decided to overhaul its mechanics and overall feel by appointing Naoki Yoshida, or YoshiP, as the game director. His first task was to transform Eorzea Patch 1.0 into an essentially new game, so instead of simply changing it, he introduced destruction into the lore. Before the overturning of the whole Eorzea that we know of today (Patch. 2.0-present), YoshiP destroyed the whole world of Eorzea by having the Eorzean moon, Dalamud, fall upon the world, causing a massive apocalyptic wipe. In fact, Eorzea's demise is well-documented online, with Patch 1.0 players collectively witnessing Dalamud fall from the sky before the servers finally went offline; it was months before players were able to access the Eorzea we know today.

In the same way that the figurative yet actual calamity of Eorzea Patch 1.0 was instrumental to its rebirth into the rich world of Patch 6.0 onwards—the world that *FFXIV* players inhabit at present—the rejection of my first manuscript was instrumental to a phenomenological discovery of the critical flaw in my sociological analysis: I realized that I was epistemologically and ontologically disconnected from the subjects I had studied. Although I was a participant-observer, I was not the participants themselves; if I walked a mile in their shoes, I'd be more in-touch, expressive, and analytical of their experiences. Although the first manuscript was not necessarily destroyed by a falling moon, it was epistemologically destroyed by dissecting the data and retaining only what mattered to me. Like Eorzea itself, a new paper would arise out of the ashes and demise of a forgotten world. It is at this cusp that Barad's ontoepistemological insights bear

significance in understanding the transformation of the analytical part of the paper. According to Barad, an ontoepistemological point-of-view recognizes practices of knowing through being (185). Thus, addressing the gap between me and my research subjects necessitates embodying, if not performing, their lives. Such a postqualitative approach to performance ethnography using my own virtual body is emphasized by what Coetzee called embodied knowledge: a manner of knowing that uses the body as a site of movement, diagram, and collision towards the creation/discovery of something important; after all, without embodied knowing (i.e., proprioception), a body cannot be positioned in its environment, in much the same way that the positionalities of my research subjects must be triangulated back to the virtual world of Eorzea itself (1). To carefully position their bodies epistemologically, I realized that I had to perform as one of them, through them, with them, and for them.

The initial process of rewriting the story for the stage is concomitantly sidetracked by one particular limitation known to ABR: the perceivable inaccuracy of data presentation. To resolve this minor issue, I have worked closely to represent the data in a manner that cuts through all instances observed, even tangentially. In S8, I carefully selected words that are more frequently used than others to mimic the majority rule in weighing the options; thereafter, these words were strung together to form a plausible conversation between two individuals. Other than that, the trivial limitation of the difficulty of mounting the virtual stage was resolved due to the researcher's use of in-game Macros[4] that automatically perform the action in sequential pattern with very few click triggers by the player, allowing the postphenomenological

attachments to ontoepistemologically traverse the realm of discovery.

Immensely informed by the insights of Bagley's performance ethnography and Leavy's holistic approach to ABR, I was able to liberate the Eorzean narratives of Manuscript 1 from the bleak prison in which they were caged. I was able to digitally perform the research subjects' grief, happiness, guilt, anger, and sadness in a profound and affective way though my online avatar—his three-dimensional Lalafell[5] body acting as a "zone of contact" between the past and the present in a "parahistorical" tableau (Yambao 229; Sorensen 230). With a series of hybridization of automated movements through *FFXIV* emotes[6] and text-based interaction through the Say[7] and Yell[8] features in the game, I was able to bring to the Eorzean inhabitants themselves the tenets of their online interactions—in other words, to return the echoes back into the virtual world from where they came.

The process of creative interpretation and the translation of the ethnographic data into a performance is described as a mode of discovery in and of itself.[9] Echoing Karl Popper's "World 3 Thesis"—which proposes that products borne out of human ideas and the human mind are considered a part of World 3, and are partly autonomous from the mental and physical, with the capacity to affect both (Boyd 221)—Naraniecki argues that there is an inherent epistemological discovery in the creative process because, as Popper noted, the works of great artists were not products of technical proficiency bur rather "the result of an intellective or intuitionist engagement with the ideas of the genre" (Naraniecki 273). In this case, I critically engaged with the data

by having an internally external dialogue with my non-human other—the posthuman subjectivity known as 'I' borne out of an autopoietic process of distributing fragments of my identity onto an online avatar (Wilde, 366; Arumpac, 113). One understands my real self as the researcher, and the Lalafell as the performance artist himself—two ontologically (in)distinct entities capable of engaging in a quasi-imaginary discourse about the objective data that they collected and how to artistically represent it (see Villacorta). Such a conversation reflects a collision—an intercourse—between the "objectivist" perspective and the subjectivist "myth of expression"—two terms which, in Kantian ethics and Popperian epistemology, are distinguishably positioned at opposite poles, generally incapable of interacting with each other (Naraniecki 265). Such post-collision unification owes to the anthropological facade of evolutionary epistemology, described as the parameter of life that adventurously seeks outward (and, in the creative process of *E/c/h/o*, inward). More emphatically, my surrender to the control of the posthuman subjectivity through my avatar, both in the performance and the creative process, is what Naraniecki called "transcendental intuition," whereby the (art)work itself detaches, if not emancipates, from the artist himself/herself (270). The metaphysical aspect of such detachment is "a cosmos imposed upon chaos—in its tensions and harmonies inexhaustible even for its creator" (271). What I have discovered, in this process alone, is that the posthuman subjectivities that surround this process have breathed life into the performance itself—one that independently exists from me, as a researcher, and eventually materializes and manifests entirely at the hands of my non-human other.

Out of these epistemological dialogues, the performance's own life was born. According to Naraniecki, the products of the human mind, whether real or otherwise, have actual existence in World 3 (274). Unlike other Worlds, however, World 3 is discovered, and not merely made. In order to go beyond Popper's detestation of the computer and make sense of Naraniecki's aesthetics as it was applied to a virtual performance (for which a computer was used), the notion of what World 3 implies must be revitalized. Backes argues that the internet made it possible for World 3 to actualize immaterialities, or things which are essentially imprisoned in the metaphysical (278-279). From this, World 3 is discovered intermittently between states of being and is not connected through World 2 alone but, with the dawn of the internet, accessed from World 1 primarily. The subsistence of *E/c/h/o* in this newly discovered World 3 that occurs at the cusp of Eorzea materialized an affective assemblage, defined by Resser as a nonhuman being that amplifies the individual's power to affect and be affected (38). More closely, the performance affects its responsive virtual audience (having them respond to each scene) and at the same time is affected by all of the research findings that have been collected. Besides, due to the queer position of the performance ethnography as being situated in a virtual world played by a one-Lalafell performer, the performance resists the categorical hedonism of anthropocentric, heterosexist dimensions of performance, towards the recognition of the "myriad of flows, forces, metabolisms, [and] behaviours," hosted by the post-anthropocentric body (Vanouse 32).

In a way, the posthuman process of this art production decentralized art from the human (me) and steered it towards a critical subsistence that is non-human, technological, and rhizomatic, i.e., the posthuman "I." More closely, the performance text itself acts as an affective assemblage of its own, one which necessitates its own agency that resists the humanistic, hegemonic, and egalitarian desires of art (Hulme 62; Winkenweder 288; McDonald 38). As affective assemblages capable of affecting (an audience) and being affected (by the audience response and the artist's own posthuman experiences), the performance resonated across Eorzea to a multitude of diverse audiences from different races, cultures, and subcultures.

These affective resonances across both performer and audience mirror a postphenomenological effect on the mental and (meta)physical world, a condition which solidifies *E/c/h/o* as subsisting in World 3 (i.e., between states of ontoepistemological significance). According to O'Brien, Ihde's postphemonological philosophy of technology, about how "experience is formed in interactive spaces through the gestures and behaviours of bodily movement," allows humans to extend/reduce their human body (120, 135). Furthermore, this extension allows human-technology relationships to act as sites for transference to occur, enacting the phenomenology to move beyond just being, to metaphysically being one in a shared performance of the virtual body that co-creates a new kind of experience (i.e., in this context, the ontoepistemological discovery of the subject's experience) (O'Brien 129). Simply put, the phenomenological pertains to lived experience of a human, while the postphenomenological pertains to (un)lived experience of a posthuman. In this regard, the (meta)physical effects of this ontoepistemologically postphenomenological discovery is felt through the

introduction of the *E/c/h/o*'s World 3 existence and its effect on how the audience interacted and co-created the performance itself, while the mental effects postphenomenologically allowed the researcher to perform in their shoes and develop a better understanding not just of their virtual social interactions but also on how to mount a virtual performance ethnography as an embodied knowledge-making practice. In other words, *E/c/h/o*'s extension of Popper's World 3 Hypothesis to virtual performance procures a postphenomenological experience for the performer, the audience, and the performance itself.

Such is highlighted by the Deleuzoguattarian element of *E/c/h/o* (2022-2023), whereby Scenes 1 to 9 are not performed in the chronological order that they were enacted, but rather in a slew of orderly randomness to illustrate that interactions in virtual worlds reflect a continuum—a cogent whole whose parts independently occur in their own (un)stable growth. The randomization of which occurs only at the whims, the apparent choices, of the posthuman subjectivity of Ji Changmin.

Because of the non-human motif of my avatar in performing *E/c/h/o*[10] the virtual conditions of the live show were able to position the performance at the metaphysical entanglement between the real and the unreal, between human agency and posthuman subjectivity, and between the "I" and the "Other" (Wilde 367; Resser 48). Disrupting, if not dismantling, the alienating effect of conflating virtual and actual reality, this performance traversed the liminal space located in the midst of truth and untruth—of which transcendental gender identities and autonomous sounds may be found (Bertens,

91; Annette, 167). *E/c/h/o*, much like RESBAK's (Respond and Break the Silence Against the Killings) regenerative network of engagements, continues to tread a life of its own; however, it proves resistant not to the State apparatuses that seek to eliminate perceived threats, but rather to the humanistic dimensions of the art of performance—traditionally relying on the human body as the medium—that homogenize Anthropocentric agency; a point from which departure is imminent, if not essential, to achieve the non-humanistic, non-binarized, and non-essentialist futures that we desire (Arumpac 127; Brisini and Simmons 192; Chu 134).

Although this research note was more interested in highlighting the emancipatory and cataclysmic process of ABR by exploring the theoretical dimensions of the art production of *E/c/h/o*, it is important to underscore the manner by which the observations were written, or translated, for performance. The findings of the study imply that the off-game contexts of the players themselves permeate through the screen and envelop the identity of their posthuman subjectivities. This thesis of the research note served as a springboard that propelled further research into the self in a virtual space towards a poststructural postphenomenology.

In S8, the use of Stan Twitter dialect typically endemic to K-pop-related exchanges on text-based platforms were transformatively practiced, and casually used, by certain *FFXIV* players through their avatars. This scene was forged from 12 datasets screen recorded from several *FFXIV* dungeon instances where K-pop fans exclusively talked in said dialect. These data were supplemented by Say/Yell/ Tell conversations personally sent to the author and

observed from Savage Raids involving the use of the Stan Twitter slang. Instead of simply performing verbatim all recorded instances, I isolated the notable words correlatively and regularly used at an integral point of 67% frequency or higher as the dialogue for S8. The end result was S8 depicting an exchange that amalgamates a conversation using the most frequently used words. Note here, however, that the data was not pre-analyzed before the performance translation; the dataset was initially rewritten as a script. Only after it was performed did I manage to commit to embodied knowledge and truly understand what I had observed and how I translated it by ontoepistemologically reflecting and postphenomenologically experiencing said occurrences. In effect, the sociological findings were felt, embodied, transgressed, and discovered only post-performance (and a bit of it during) by tracing the senses of my virtually-tied body.

Noteworthy to discuss also, in brief, is one of the sociological findings that emanate from the study. Using S8 as the same example, I recognized through the performance of S8 that speaking in Stan dialect mimics a manner of "bleeding" which Celia Pearce identified as the blurring between the real and the digital identity facilitated by a ludisphere—a virtual gameworld (221). Aptly, my identity bleeds through Ji Changmin in Eorzea, the virtual ludisphere which we inhabit. From this observation one understands that the distribution of one's identity onto an *FFXIV* avatar carries with it a socio-cultural background that becomes the basis of many of the avatar's in-game discursive practices of communicating.

Through the tracing of how the stone of Manuscript Version 1 has been crystallized into the gold of Manuscript Version 2, this research note encourages scholars to consider traversing the yellow brick road to Emerald City in order to meet the Wizard of Oz—of taking the colorful, vibrant, artistic direction to epistemic inquiry in their search for the "truth."[11] Likewise, in this research note, a virtual performance entitled *E/c/h/o* (2022-2023) was demonstrated to be a critical mode of epistemic investigation as to the findings about social interactions in a virtual world, in particular, the manner by which socio-cultural predispositions bleed through online avatars—aesthetically (r)evoked from the performance itself. In addition, the creative process was underscored as a mode of discovery in and of itself—especially with regard to the posthuman elements of virtual performance production. Truly, ABR can equip researchers with a multi-layered, multi-sensorial, and multi-faceted approach to epistemological inquest and also provide them with a critical lens to intermingle inquiries about the creative process as well. Such is possible only if they willingly surrender themselves to the whims of holistic and queer approaches to research, and, in particular, to pay attention to the non-human voices that envelop their research (or artistic) process.

Notes:

[1] The specific site for my study is Atomos, part of the Elemental Data Center from Japan, in which several Filipino guilds (to one of which I belong) have created virtual diasporic communities where they can communicate and share bonds.

[2] A more comprehensive breakdown of each scene is elaborated in Manuscript Version 2, currently in the process of consideration/evaluation under a reputable academic journal.

[3] A video copy of the performance may be privately shared to curious researchers by emailing a request to my personal email kevzdg15@gmail.com

[4] This is an *FFXIV* feature that allows the execution of several actions in succession to automate movement, gestures, costume changes, among others.

[5] This is a small and tiny race from *FFXIV* that is more similar to a child-like hobbit with *kawaii* feature.

[6] A type of in-game pre-selected avatar movement in *FFXIV* executed through the use of slash "/" before the emote or simply the click of a hotbar button

[7] A textual communication received by *FFXIV* players within a few 'yalms'

[8] A textual communication received by *FFXIV* players within a greater scope than "Say"

[9] Apart from merely focusing on the analytic dimensions of sociological thought it produces

[10] See images of the performance here: https://medium.com/@kevzdg15/e-c-ho-2022-14ad925f7fb5; Please email the author for limited access to the virtual performance viewed from performer's perspective at kevzdg15@gmail.com.

[11] I speak here of the truth with a small 't' which is the temporary, mitigated version of truth, as opposed to 'Truth' with a capital 'T' which denotes the infallibility and non-paradoxical sustenance of that which is *true for all time* (Gardner, 82). After all, the Wizard of Oz is not a 'real' wizard.

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Acknowledgements

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