

Humanities Diliman's January-June 2026 issue features articles that are cross-cultural and interdisciplinary in their analysis of cultural practices and exchanges, aesthetics, discourse, translation, and identity. Consistent with the critical, context-specific, and deconstructive nature of studies in the humanities, the articles in this issue underline the necessity of probing into the complex interplay of history, economics, and politics in the analysis of any cultural material.

In “Artista bilang Aktibista: Pagsusuri sa Naratibo ng Eksibit na *Warm Bodies* gamit ang Semyotikang Pangmuseo,” Jay Israel B. De Leon and Maria Elena M. Dator examine *Warm Bodies: Upholding Freedom of Expression*, an exhibit of the Concerned Artists of the Philippines at the University of the Philippines from 26 January to 17 February 2024.

Using museum semiotics as a framework to analyze the narrative of the exhibit, the study provides a critical reading of the various parts of the exhibit, in particular its linguistic, iconic, and design codes to show how artists and cultural workers in the Philippines have struggled for freedom of expression since the 1970s. Taking off from the meaning of “warm bodies” which refers to a general way of determining the number of people in gatherings such as protests and rallies, the exhibit reveals that each warm body has a particular story to tell. Readers are not only provided with a clear method of mapping out the segments of the exhibit—“Rehimeng Marcos Sr.,” “Rehimeng Duterte,” and “Rehimeng Marcos, Jr.”—before particular works such as songs, photographs, editorial cartoons, and paintings are semiotically approached, but also with an analysis of the entire exhibit as a system of signification whose objects and elements constitute a discourse. As such, the narrative of the entire exhibit is shown to be one of repression of freedom of speech—a repression of warm bodies calling for justice—in the Philippines.

In a similar vein, Rose P. Capulla and Feorillo Petronillo A. Demeterio III’s “Mga Ideolohiyang Politikal na Nakapaloob sa mga Obrang Kabilang sa Klaster ng Panahon ng Pananakop ng mga Amerikano ng Permanenteng Exhibit na *Sining Saysay* ng Gateway Gallery” examines the ideologies of six paintings under the American Period cluster of *Sining Saysay: Philippine History in Art* in the Gateway Gallery. The current study complements the authors’ 2023 article titled “Mga Ideolohiyang Politikal na Nakapaloob sa mga Obra ng *Sining Saysay* na

Kabilang sa Panahon ng Batas Militar Hanggang sa Kasalukuyan” which focused on the fifth sequential cluster of the exhibit. Complementing Roland Barthes’s semiotics with Hans Slomp’s and F.P.A. Demeterio’s ideological spectrum and Alice Guillermo’s art criticism as hermeneutical lenses, the study determines and compares each painting’s politics—from liberal libertarian, to conservative libertarian, to authoritarian. The discussion then uses both synchronic and diachronic perspectives in further looking at the general ideology of the cluster. The meticulous identification of the different elements of each painting reminds us of the importance of exploring the six works in relation to the other paintings in the exhibit— twenty-three sequential works and seven thematic works in all. What the study demonstrates is a way of engaging with numerous artworks curated according to historical periods and themes. Moreover, *Sining Saysay* is an important subject of analysis as it is a permanent exhibit at the Araneta Center continuously viewed by shoppers, employees, and passersby, and the result of collaborative efforts of the University of the Philippines Diliman’s Alumni Association and Araneta Center, Incorporated.

Whereas the first two articles examine the process of signification within the intersemiotic space of an exhibition, Bambang Sunarto, Agung Zainal Muttakin Raden, Agung Purnomo, and Andra Arie Anto’s “Local Culture and Contextual Design: Visual Identification on Lamuri Tombstone Ornaments” turns to a public space and focuses on gravestones not just as personal symbols of remembrance but as cultural and historical markers.

For a deeper appreciation of the Lamuri Plak-Plieng tombstones, the study deploys a visual methodology to determine and examine their ornaments. Readers will find fascinating the historical and archaeological significance of the Lamuri site, in Lamreh Village, Mesjid Raya District, Aceh Besar Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia. Such critical location made it a major hub of trade from the 13th to the 15th centuries; Lamuri was once a strong kingdom and played a crucial part in the development of the Aceh Sultanate. The perspective afforded by the visual methodology used in the study leads to the investigation of four correlated sites: site of production, site of image, site of circulation, and site of audience. The analysis pays attention to the craft involved in making the tombstones—design

elements such as symmetry, floral patterns, ornamental motifs, and geometrics— as a clear indication of skills and as an index of interactions between Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. The Plak-Plieng tombstones, as the study asserts, gesture toward a narrative of cultural exchange and adaptation.

From discussions on different cultural productions and artifacts, the next two articles deconstruct discourses and their ideological implications.

“Our Silent Slavery, Our Silent Martyrdom’: The Janus-facedness of Silence as a Feminist Rhetorical Art” by Nicko Enrique L. Manalastas returns to a long-debated issue of whether silence is an act of cowardice or a strategic deployment of power. Discussing the extent of violence against women in the Philippines as a background to highlight the significance of both remaining and breaking one’s silence, the study then narrates the courageous opposition voiced out by Tessa Luz Reyes-Sevilla, wife of a military officer who was about to be appointed to the rank of Brigadier General in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. After remaining silent regarding the abuse she and her children experienced in the hands of her husband, Reyes-Sevilla finally spoke up. Although the problematization of whether silence as a rhetorical act is a form of power has been done by numerous scholars, in particular those in the West, Manalastas’s study locates the issue in the context of Philippine society, its patriarchal value system that informs familial relationships. Rhetorical silence, as the study asserts, is a “necessary antecedent to speaking out,” an argument that traces its provenance to the developments in queer, feminist, and racial liberation movements in the second half of the 20th century. Because silence is not the opposite of speaking but shares its potency and thus could be considered its supplemental, the study reiterates that in remaining silent before speaking out, Reyes-Sevilla recognized the former’s strategical power.

If silence’s potency is at the core of Manalastas’s study, it is the “loud” and intense language of former President Rodrigo Duterte’s pandemic speeches which is the focus of Ejay Domingo’s “The War Against COVID: A Critical Discourse Analysis of former President Duterte’s Speeches during the 2020 Pandemic in the Philippines.” By combining critical discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, and critical metaphor

analysis, Domingo identifies the pervasive discourse during the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. The analysis of twenty-one transcripts of Duterte's speeches from March 2020 to May 2020 reveals the particular lexical and metaphorical choices which framed the pandemic as a "war" necessitating an aggressive response. Such discursive framing, palpable in the word choice, collocation, and connotations in the speeches, became more apparent when Duterte appointed numerous retired army generals to the National Task Force (NTF) Against COVID-19. More interesting, however, is Domingo's assertion that the COVID-19 pandemic war discourse must not be seen as distinct and peculiar to Duterte's administration as the latter just resurrected former President Ferdinand Marcos Sr.'s rhetoric of war to rationalize the use of force in dealing with the new enemy—the virus.

Interrogating the politics of discourse is equally critical in dealing with translations. Christopher Mitch Cerda's "The Pagsasalin ng *Dugo*: Ang Ugnayan ng Rasismo at Kolonyalismo sa Salin ng *The Octoroon* ni Mary Elizabeth Braddon tungong *Dugo sa Dugo* ni Francisco Laksamana" thoroughly teases out the interventions that occurred in the translation of *The Octoroon* by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Using as major references the computer-aided analysis programs deployed in Ramon Guillermo's *Translation and Revolution: A Study of Jose Rizal's Guillermo Tell* (2009) and the essay "The Pulse of the Text: Using Digital Tools for Closer Reading," the analysis carefully details the strategies employed in translating the English novel to Tagalog. Cerda's reading of the two novels calls attention to how the act of translating is, to an extent, an act of re-writing and as such necessitates an intimate relationship with both the source text and its translation. As Cerda argues, the themes of slavery and racism were reworked from *The Octoroon's* abolitionist and anti-racist discourse into *Dugo sa Dugo's* anti-colonial and anti-imperialist discourse. The study's exhaustive comparison of the novels—the English published in 1862 and the Filipino, in 1921—demonstrates the complementarity of machine-aided data collection, literary studies, and a deep understanding of the factors informing the process of translation.

The last article in this issue revisits a common belief about the Ilocano people—their extreme sense of frugality bordering on selfishness, otherwise known as “pagka kuripot.” Baby Jean VC Jose, in “Ang D.A.N.A.S at Kuripot: Dalumat-Salita sa Marangyang *Padas* ng Diasporang-Ilokana sa Singapore” untangles the web of Filipino values and characteristics associated with this identity/cultural marker in the context of Ilocano women’s migration from the Province of Isabela in the Northern Philippines. Generally seen as a negative trait of the Ilocano people, *panagkuripot*, as Jose explains must be understood in light of the economic and cultural realities of the Northern Philippines—Isabela in particular—and the challenges faced by Ilokano women in the diaspora. Thirteen women with five to twenty-five years of work experience in Singapore as domestic helpers, caregivers, nurses, and sales representatives were the primary informants of the study framed by Rogelia Pe Pua’s push and pull theory accounting for the various reasons why these women leave the country. Jose encapsulates her findings in the acronym D.A.N.A.S or D(anag/anxiety), A(nus)/sacrifice, N(amnama)/hope, A(rapaap)/aspiration, S(anikua)/accumulation, which explains the various aspects of the lived experiences of Ilokano women in Singapore. What emerges in the study is a finer appreciation of the word “kuripot,” one which points at prudence, careful management of resources, community solidarity, and a range of related positive Filipino values.

This issue closes with Laurence Marvin Castillo’s review of Nicanor Tiongson’s *Manong: The Life and Works of Gerardo de Leon*, published by the University of the Philippines Press in 2025. By emplotting the different sections of the book and summarizing each part which foregrounds National Artist for Film Gerardo de Leon’s contribution to Philippine cinema, the evaluation likewise offers readers a glimpse of Tiongson’s breadth of knowledge—described by Castillo as his “encyclopedic grasp of Philippine cultural history and archival rigor”—not only of Philippine cinema but also of Philippine culture in general. Castillo’s review is thus two-pronged as it highlights both de Leon’s achievements and legacy and Tiongson’s contribution to scholarship in Philippine arts and humanities.

We hope that the articles in this issue have made visible how ideologies and conditions of production and utterance shape, structure, and influence the processes of knowledge creation. Indeed, a wealth of insights always emerge from the many ways of approaching texts and considering their positionality and situatedness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RP' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

RUTH JORDANA L. PISON

Editor-in-Chief