

Perspectives in the Arts and Humanities Asia

Volume 12 | Number 1

Article 1

1-9-2025

Editor's Preface

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Recommended Citation

Carsi Cruz, Nikki B. (2025) "Editor's Preface," *Perspectives in the Arts and Humanities Asia*: Vol. 12: No. 1, Article 1.

Available at: <https://archium.ateneo.edu/paha/vol12/iss1/1>

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Preface

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THE CONTACTS AND
CONTINUITIES CONFERENCE
AND PAHA'S SPECIAL
DOUBLE ISSUE

This special double issue on the quincentennial commemoration of Asian-Iberian Encounters draws from the international conference *Contacts and Continuities*, hosted in 2021 by the School of Humanities, Ateneo de Manila University, in collaboration with CHAM-NOVA FCSH (Centro de Humanidades, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Portugal) and the National Quincentennial Committee of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

The conference was originally envisioned as the second of a two-part series, with the idea that one leg would be held in Europe and the other in Asia. The first conference, titled “The Philippines—a Global Contact Zone: Transoceanic Connections (1521–1898),” took place at the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal in Lisbon on March 21–22, 2019. Continuing the same theme, the second conference, *Contacts and Continuities*, was initially slated for March 21–22, 2021, to be held on campus at the Ateneo de Manila University.

However, plans were soon upended by a global event: the outbreak of COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdown. International travel

and even campus access became impossible. It quickly became clear that the conference would not simply be delayed—it had to be completely reimagined. And what a fortunate derailment it turned out to be. Pushed off the expected path, the conference evolved in new and unexpected directions. What emerged was a gathering that expanded in both scale and scope, ultimately far exceeding our original expectations.

From its modest pre-pandemic conception as a typical two-day conference, *Contacts and Continuities* evolved into an epic, month-long series of events, featuring nearly a hundred panelists and moderators from around the world.

Instead of issuing a traditional call for papers, we—the Organizing Committee, composed of Paulo Pinto in Lisbon; Noelle Rodriguez in Kuala Lumpur; and Jonathan Chua, Francis Navarro, and myself in Manila—reached out to colleagues and collaborators in our respective networks. Together, we curated 23 academic panels held on weekdays, supplemented by four special Saturday panels throughout the month. To open and close the series, we also organized two “bookend” events: an Opening Ceremony on June 23 and a Closing Ceremony on July 23, exactly a month apart. In total, we mounted 29 Zoom events in 31 days.

We believed that spreading out the sessions—one event per day—would be far more manageable than hosting multiple concurrent panels over a compressed schedule. We were also mindful of sparing both ourselves and our audience from the all-too-familiar phenomenon of screen fatigue.

Focusing on one topic at a time allowed us the space to truly savor the ideas presented and engage in meaningful conversations before and after each panel. This pacing created moments reminiscent of the informal “coffee and lunch break” discussions that are often the most memorable parts of face-to-face conferences—unstructured, spontaneous, and enjoyable.

The conference sought to examine how the contacts, connections, and continuing conversations between the Iberian kingdoms of Portugal and Spain and various Asian polities—particularly the Philippines—since

the sixteenth century helped shape the societies involved. It brought into sharper focus the adaptive and adoptive capacities of the Asian and Iberian agents of encounter, as well as their communities. Central to the discussions were the themes of cultural exchange and the enduring legacies of the colonial encounter. These themes were explored through four key sites of negotiation, which became the organizing framework for the conference's four parts:

Part 1: Legacies of the Encounter in Seafaring and Trade

Part 2: Legacies of the Encounter in Ideas

Part 3: Legacies of the Encounter in Institutions

Part 4: Legacies of the Encounter in Forms of Expression

Contacts and Continuities brought together both eminent and emerging scholars, who—from the comforts of their own homes across the globe—offered diverse perspectives and critical points of inquiry into the encounters and interactions between Asian and Iberian cultures.

Organizing such a gathering required navigating numerous challenges, from coordinating schedules across multiple time zones to offering on-the-fly translation during moments of linguistic or technical difficulty (or both). And adjust we did—collaborators, speakers, and audience members alike—as the world collectively learned to operate online while in lockdown.

Everyone gained new skills: screen sharing, muting, and unmuting, adjusting lighting, blurring or changing virtual backgrounds, and deftly using the chat box. The panels were streamed live via social media and YouTube, and made available for asynchronous viewing. This resulted in a truly multimodal global conversation, extending across platforms—Facebook, YouTube, Messenger, and even good old-fashioned email—as people engaged by leaving comments, reactions, and thoughtful and encouraging feedback. Fortunately, the university had a capable and amply manned Zoom and Campus Events Team headed by Chris Castillo. As workers were displaced

by the pandemic, staff with primarily on-site jobs, like technicians of campus venues, or cashiers of the bookstore, needed to find work that can be done remotely. The daily sessions of the conference became the training ground for staff to learn how to provide technical support remotely.

Who took part in the conversation? Many voices in the *Contacts and Continuities* conference came from Europe, beginning with Portugal. Paulo Jorge de Sousa Pinto opened the entire conference series with the main opening keynote address. A distinguished roster of speakers also joined the conference from Lisbon, including José Manuel Garcia, Miguel Rodrigues Lourenço, Jorge Semedo de Matos, Teresa Nobre de Carvalho, Eduardo Frutuoso, Elsa Penalva, Kevin Carreira Soares, Manuel Lobato, Alexandra Curvelo, Rui Manuel Loureiro, and Pedro Palma. The Philippine Embassy in Portugal, under the leadership of Ambassador Celia Anna “Cookie” M. Feria, also made a valuable contribution by organizing the special panel “From Spices to Start-ups.”

Other European scholars joined from across the continent: From France: Guillaume Gaudin, Clotilde Jacqueland, Jean-Noël Sánchez, and Sylvie Morishita; from Italy: Angelo Cattaneo; from Finland: Eeva Sippola; from Belgium: Rocio Ortuño. From Spain, Javier Ruescas of the Asociación Cultural Galeón de Manila delivered the keynote for Part 4 of the conference, focusing on the legacies of the encounter in forms of expression. He was joined by several other scholars from across Spain: Antonio Sánchez de Mora, Beatriz Alvarez-Tardio, Florentino Rodao, Aitor Anduaga, María Dolores Elizalde, and Pedro Luengo. One particularly engaging moment came from the special panel “Following in the Footsteps of Rizal: Filipino Students in Madrid,” organized by the Philippine Embassy in Spain. It featured not only Ros Costelo—who also presented in another panel—but also her fellow students Jacee Amon, Jolina Manalang, and Eunice Lociano.

Moving Westward to the Americas, voices from the USA included those of Barbara Watson Andaya who delivered the keynote for Part 2 of the

Conference: Legacies of the Encounter in Ideas; and Vicente L. Rafael who delivered the keynote speech for Part 3: Legacies of the Encounter in Institutions. Other speakers based in the USA included: Vina A. Lanzona, Leia Castañeda Anastacio, Paula C. Park, John D. Blanco, Florina H. Capistrano-Baker, Sandra Castro, Margaret Sarkissian, and Luis Francia. Joining from Mexico were Ivan Valdez-Bubnov, Guadalupe Pinzón-Rios, and Paulina Machuca. Across the Pacific, to the South, Kristie Patricia Flannery joined in from Australia, and A. M. Leal Rodriguez joined from New Zealand. Voices from the rest of Asia included the Conference co-convenor Noelle Rodriguez, and scholars Stefanie Shamila Pillai, Simon Soon, and artist Fuad Ahmad Osman, all from Kuala Lumpur. Ruth de Llobet joined from Shanghai, Stuart McManus from Hong Kong, and Cuahtemoc Villamar from Bangkok.

A wealth of contributions also came from the Philippines, spanning across the archipelago. From Baguio, National Artist Kidlat Tahimik participated. From Bicol, historian Danilo M. Gerona; from Cebu, George Emmanuel R. Borrinaga; and from Zamboanga, Antonio F. B. de Castro, SJ, and Jose Genaro R. Yap-Aizon. Manila-based independent scholars and institutional representatives included: Regalado Trota Jose, Raphael P. M. Lotilla, Felice Prudente Sta. Maria, Jose Elias “Anselm” Manalastas, OSB, Patricia May B. Jurilla, Wystan de la Peña, Sir Anril P. Tiatco, Ma. Patricia Brillantes Silvestre, Gino Gonzales, Aireen Barrios-Arnuco, and Javier Galván of Instituto Cervantes Manila.

From the host institution, Ateneo de Manila University, Fr. Rene B. Javellana, SJ, delivered the keynote for Part 1: Legacies of the Encounter in Seafaring and Trade. Panel speakers from Ateneo included Leovino Ma. Garcia, Jovino de Guzman Miroy, Agustin Martin G. Rodriguez, Adolfo Dacanay, SJ, Fernando N. Zialcita, Patricia P. Lambino, Jose Mario C. Francisco, SJ, Jose Mari Cuartero, Michael M. Coroza, Gary C. Devilles, Joaquin Jose Mari C. Sumpaico III, SJ, Mark Dizon, Greg Bankoff, and myself. Meanwhile,

the Department of Filipino organized a special panel titled *Panitikan at Pananampalataya*, delivered in the Filipino language, and participated in by Ariel A. Diccion, Lorraine F. Fernando, Sharmaine V. Hernandez, and Iva Melissa Magsalin. The conference culminated with a rousing Closing Keynote by Ambeth R. Ocampo, capping off a month-long journey of intellectual exchange with provocative prompts for further reflection.

The conference also became an occasion for collegial cooperation among various units in the university. Aside from the conference speakers, role players included administrators from different departments who hosted various panels or events and supplied moderators. Units and people involved include the ff: from the Office of the President Fr. Roberto C. Yap, SJ; from the Office of the Vice President for the Loyola Schools, Ma. Luz Vilches; from the Office of International Relations, Fr. Jose M. Cruz, SJ, from the Office of the Dean of the School of Humanities, Jonathan O. Chua, from the History Department: David Lozada III, Olivia Anne M. Habana, Meynardo Mendoza, Jose Edito Tirol, and Michael M. Pante; From Interdisciplinary Studies: Skilty C. Labastilla, Nikki Carsi Cruz, and Noelle Rodriguez; from the Fine Arts Department: Allan Pastrana and Bianca Maalat; from the Filipino Department: Jethro Tenorio, and Andrea Trinidad; from the English Department, Jacqui Franquelli; from the Philosophy Department: Jean Tan and Remmon Barbaza; from the Ateneo Library of Women's Writing - Khursten Santos; from the Department of Environmental Science - Marie Abigail Favis; from the Modern Languages Department: Jackie Lou Jose, Carmina Ma. Veronica Bautista, Ma. Luisa Young, and not to be forgotten, Patrick Michael L. Capili.

With the support of the National Quincentennial Committee, details of the conference events were cross-posted on the official social media platforms of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and the Department of Education (DepEd). The synergy of this official promotion, combined with the unique conditions of the pandemic lockdown—when audiences were

largely homebound—resulted in unprecedented reach. Panels streamed live on Facebook reached tens of thousands of viewers, far surpassing the typical audience numbers of conventional academic conferences. Many teachers and students from across the Philippines regularly tuned in, some even following the daily presentations with the enthusiasm one might reserve for binge-watching a favorite drama series. A sense of community organically formed among returning viewers, with some participants referring to one another as “classmates.” One member of the Zoom technical support team even remarked, at the end of the month-long series, that she felt as if she had completed a certificate course in Quincentennial Studies.

The contents of this special issue are primarily drawn from the conference presentations, with the exception of a few pieces specifically written for inclusion here. The issue opens with Paulo Jorge de Sousa Pinto’s keynote essay, “*Connecting the Dots: From the Mythical East to the Real Asia*,” which originally opened the conference series and framed its intellectual scope. It closes with Ambeth R. Ocampo’s keynote, “*Rewind, Fast Forward, Record, Delete? Liberating Ourselves from the Past 500 Years*,” which provided a resonant conclusion and an invitation for reflection on what lies ahead.

The articles featured in this issue engage a wide array of cultural expressions. In the realm of music, Patricia Brillantes Sylvestre’s piece, “*In the News!: ‘Teatro Filipino’, ‘Artista Filipina’, ‘Piano Filipino’: Semantic Birthings of a Nascent Identity in Music*,” explores early articulations of Filipino cultural identity and was first presented in the panel “Cultural Flows and Reinventions.” In the visual arts, Sylvie Morishita, a Paris-based researcher, undertakes historical detective work in her essay “*Iberian Trade Routes and the Circulation of Works of Art between Europe and Japan during the Christian Century*,” drawn from her participation in the panel on “Flows of Art, Artifacts, and Art Styles.”

Written specifically for this issue is a collaborative literary piece by Jonathan Chua, who, as Dean of the School of Humanities, played a central

role in organizing the conference, and Luisa Young, long involved in curating Literature panels for this and other similar events hosted by the Modern Languages Department. Although not presented during the conference itself, their contribution, “*On Translating Adelina Gurrea’s ‘La Doncella que Vivió Tres Vidas’*”—which includes both a translator’s note and an English rendition of the original Spanish work—is a welcome and necessary addition to this special issue. The translation not only ensures that literary arts and practices are represented but also amplifies the voice of a writer who has been multiply marginalized: Adelina Gurrea, a Philippine-born woman writing in Spanish. Through this effort, Gurrea’s work finds renewed life in English, offering readers a meaningful point of contact with a figure historically “othered” within dominant literary canons.

From the Philippines, the focus shifts to Malaysia, starting with Margaret Sarkissian’s “*Ripples across Time and Space: The Malaysian Rancho Folclórico Tradition.*” Drawing from fieldwork in Melaka, Sarkissian offers a window into the world of folkloric dance and music, offering a detailed account of key movers and moments in the making of Melaka’s own “Portuguese dance” tradition. While Margaret Sarkissian offers the history of an art form, Simon Soon’s work makes us think about how art forms history and fills in the gaps when historical records offer scant evidence. His reflective essay “*Notes on Afterlife and Representations of Enrique de Malacca,*” was penned specifically for this issue after he moderated the Special Panel on Representations of Enrique de Malacca. The panel brought together four artists from different parts of the globe—each with a distinct process and creative engagement with the enigmatic figure of Enrique de Malacca, the “slave from these parts” who accompanied Magellan on his circumnavigation of the globe.

Featured in the panel are:

- Pedro Palma, a Portuguese filmmaker who produced the documentary “*Henry de Malacca: A Malay and Magellan*”;

- Fuad Ahmad Osman, a Malaysian visual artist who created original artwork and curated “*The Enrique de Malacca Memorial Project: A Room Installation*”;
- Luis Francia, a New York-based Filipino playwright, author of “*Black Henry: A Full-length Play*”; and
- Kidlat Tahimik, the Filipino filmmaker and National Artist whose epic film “*Balikbayan #1: Memories of Overdevelopment*” represents a four-decade-long cinematic journey in search of “Ikeng,” his personal name for Enrique de Malacca.

The full transcription of the Special Panel is included in this issue, offering readers a rare multi-genre, multi-vocal, and multi-generational conversation across mediums and geographies by artists who faced the same challenge of having to “connect the dots” (to borrow Paulo Pinto’s phrase from his opening keynote). The Art Folio accompanying this issue features the artwork of Ahmad Fuad Osman, the iconic images he produced of Enrique de Malacca and other key figures in history.

Finally, the section titled *For The Record* provides the complete conference program—including the various parts of the series, panel themes, speaker line-ups, and abstracts. It is our hope that committing these details to print will serve as a valuable archival resource for future researchers. More than a record of events, this section points to rich scholarship, to novel and diverse lines of inquiry into the legacy of our shared colonial past. Through this documentation and the contributions featured throughout the issue, we hope to fulfill the conference’s aim of shedding light on creative encounters and opening new pathways for re-evaluating our heritage—allowing us to recognize Asian and Iberian agents not as passive subjects but as active interlocutors in a global exchange of culture and ideas.

This special double issue also marks my final curtain call as Editor of *Perspectives in the Arts and Humanities Asia*. Since I took on the role in

2017, serving as PAHA's Editor has opened many doors and offered countless exciting opportunities—among them, the privilege of co-convening the *Contacts and Continuities* conference. I still remember when Dean Jonathan Chua of the School of Humanities first proposed that PAHA organize an international conference that would generate content for a special issue. Neither of us imagined the scope and scale the project would eventually take. But that has often been the case with Dean Chua's ideas for the journal. When he suggested making the *Festschrift* in honor of Rofel Brion a special issue, our usual table of contents—typically composed of seven to eight items—expanded to over 30 contributions. And when he initiated a special issue on Nanjing Literature in collaboration with Josh Stenberg, our standard 150-page volume ballooned to 340 pages—more than enough for a double issue.

Looking at the colorful issues now lined up on my shelf, I feel a deep pride in what PAHA has accomplished over the past several years. We've not only thickened our issues, but also increased our international content by including more voices from and on Asia and beyond. At the same time, we've deepened our roots in the Ateneo community, encouraging many of our faculty to share their scholarship and creative work through our pages. While some corners of academic publishing discourage contributions from one's own institution, I take pride in a moment that has stayed with me: when Ateneo President Fr. Roberto Yap flipped through the *Festschrift* for Rofel Brion and, upon seeing the many contributions from our community, remarked, "This is Ateneo." He then ordered a hundred copies to be given away as gifts.

But the days of giving away printed copies of *PAHA* as gifts are soon coming to a close. This special double issue marks the final printed edition of *Perspectives in the Arts and Humanities Asia*. Enjoy holding this copy in your hands; feel the texture of the gorgeous cover designed by Joanna Ruiz. After years of printing covers in vibrant colors, we chose to go for a black background for the very first time, an aesthetic move to best showcase

the Manton de Manila design. It is a departure from our usual palette, but it seems appropriate. It is, after all, the last cover to be printed.

Beginning with the next volume, the journal will transition to a digital-only format—a change that will make our work more accessible to a global readership. It is a timely shift, and while it marks the end of an era, it also signals a new beginning for the journal as Jonathan O. Chua returns as Editor. I thank him deeply for entrusting me with the journal these past five years.

As I close this chapter, I wish to thank all those who have journeyed with me—colleagues, contributors, collaborators, teammates, and friends—who made both the conference and this journal issue possible. Thank you for your support, your trust, and your shared commitment to scholarship, creativity, and meaningful dialogue. This special double issue is special indeed—and doubly so. It is my last, and the last of its kind.

With gratitude,

Nikki B. Carsi Cruz, Ph.D.

PAHA Editor (2017 to 2022)