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## Editor's Introduction

Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr.

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# **philippine studies: historical and ethnographic viewpoints**

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## **Editor's Introduction**

Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr.

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# Editor's Introduction

**T**he American construction of Philippine history under Spanish colonialism was first tackled by Glòria Cano in her article on the making of Blair and Robertson's *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, in *Philippine Studies* vol. 56, no. 1 (2008). In that article Cano showed James A. LeRoy's great influence in determining the final configuration of this famous multivolume compilation of documents in a way that served US colonial purposes. In this issue, Cano focuses on LeRoy's book, *The Americans in the Philippines*, which appeared in 1914, some five years after his death at age 34. We do not know what transpired between his death and the publication of this book, but its appearance was well received in official American circles and it became a standard reference for succeeding American scholarly writing on the Philippines.

Based on LeRoy's correspondence and the lengthy chapter on the Spanish colonial period found in *The Americans in the Philippines*, Cano argues that LeRoy, who perhaps more than any American at that time had the broadest grasp of Spanish-language sources, selectively assembled his bibliography to reinforce the Black Legend about Spain and justify the American imperial intervention in the Philippines. Cano emphasizes LeRoy's reliance on painting broad strokes about the nineteenth century that were anachronistic: LeRoy ignored the reforms that began to be implemented starting in the 1860s. In Cano's view, some reforms, particularly the Maura Law, actually undermined the authority of the Spanish parish priest, but LeRoy persisted in portraying the unmitigated reign of the friars.

Cano suggests that blanket assertions about Spanish rule still prevails. Their present-day prevalence, however, may not be due to LeRoy but to the Filipino nationalist sentiment that arose in the late nineteenth century—which in this period resonated with US imperial purposes. Cano's intervention underscores that it is high time to examine, based on archival

evidence, the social dynamics in parishes and municipalities in the late nineteenth century. To what extent is San Diego in *Noli me tangere* typical of local conditions in Rizal's time? Is there a causal link between reforms and the revolution against Spain? In other words, a nuanced history of the late nineteenth century is called for.

The need for a nuanced representation of Philippine society and its fissures and divisions undergirds Lisandro E. Claudio's article. The works of Zeus Salazar, champion of the Pantayong Pananaw school of indigenous historiography, and Reynaldo Ileto, trenchant advocate of history from below, represent, according to Claudio, strands of a leftwing nationalism that flourished during the 1970s. In his view, Salazar and Ileto have advanced the critiques of colonialism and neocolonialism, and dismissed the writings of Western scholars who study the Philippines seemingly for the outsider (*pansila*) or harp on social divisions and their oppressiveness (evoking Orientalism). Nationalist sentiment may very well frame these Western analysts as anti-nation, even as heirs of LeRoy's imperialism, but Claudio sees them as generating studies usable by local movements. Indeed he calls to task nationalist historians who privilege the nation but sidestep the social differences that divide Philippine society.

The intersections of class, state, and nation are underscored in Meynardo P. Mendoza's history of the Philippine Airlines (PAL), 1946–1961. Headed by Andres R. Soriano, PAL accessed state resources and received state protection. In exchange, PAL had to fly to far-flung destinations, which were not very profitable but which served to tie the country together, or at least directly link the margins to the state capital. Eclipsing other domestic airlines, PAL rose to become a national symbol while indulging rent seeking by a powerful clique.

In a new section on Professorial Addresses, Resil B. Mojares locates the origins of Southeast Asian studies among Southeast Asians who critically engaged Western practices and forms of knowledge. Illustrative was the nineteenth-century Filipino intellectuals' engagement with the construct *Malasia* and the Filipino's putative inclusion in the Malay race. These thinkers articulated a concern for the world beyond the nation, but just the same it was impelled by national concerns.

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