

## Editor's Note

The world does not speak to us in plain language. It speaks in signs, in the red of a traffic light, in the howl of a wind before a storm, in the raised voice of a mediator on a television screen, and in the silence of a teacher standing alone at the edge of an island classroom. To live is, in the most fundamental sense, to interpret and make meaning. And yet, the act of interpretation is never innocent, never neutral, never free from the weight of history, culture, power, and identity. It is precisely this very understanding (that signs are not merely communicative but constitutive, and that they do not simply reflect reality but actively construct it) that undergirds the four studies gathered in this issue of *Simbolismo: Signs, Identities, Meanings*. This journal was founded on the conviction that semiotic inquiry, pursued with rigour and critical imagination, has the capacity to illuminate the deepest structures of human experience. The scholarship presented here affirms that conviction with remarkable force and commitment to knowledge sharing.

The first two contributions situate semiotic analysis in the spaces where Filipino life is most visibly organised and most brutally tested. In *Meaning in Motion: A Semiotic Study of Traffic Signs in Davao City as the Language of Road Communication*, the authors turn their attention to the traffic signs of a massive city in Southern Philippines, considered to be infrastructural objects so familiar as to have become invisible, and reveal within them an interwoven system of civic governance, spatial authority, and communicative negotiation. That a road sign can bear the imprint of institutional power, cultural assumption, and the unspoken rules of urban belonging is not self-evident; rather, it requires the precision of a semiotic method to make legible what the eye has learned to overlook. *When the Wind Whispers: A Semiotic Reading of Resilience in the Filipino Experience of Typhoons* operates on an altogether different register of urgency. Here, the typhoon, that defining meteorological reality of the Philippine archipelago, is read not merely as a natural event but as a semiotic occasion. Typhoons are moments in which Filipino communities circulate, reproduce and transform signs of suffering, endurance, courage, resilience, and collective meaning. Together, these two studies establish the terrain on which *Simbolismo* intends to operate, one where the ordinary and the catastrophic are equally worthy of interpretive attention and sensemaking.

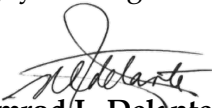
The third and fourth studies move inward into the intimate architectures of family, authority, pedagogy, and marginality. The analysis of *Raffy Tulfo in Action in Signs of Conflict and Authority: A Peircean and Social Semiotic Analysis of Mediated Family Dispute in Raffy Tulfo in Action, an Online Public Mediation Program*, as a site of mediated dispute resolution is among the timeliest contributions this journal could publish. In subjecting a massively popular online public mediation programme to Peircean and social semiotic scrutiny, the authors expose the complex choreography of power that unfolds when conflict is made into spectacle: who speaks, who is silenced, whose version of the truth is granted the authority of

a sign, and whose is consigned to noise. This is semiotics in the service of social critique, most attentive to the ways in which mediated platforms do not simply transmit meaning but adjudicate it. The fourth study, *Teaching at the Margins: Semiotics, Power, and Meaning in the Lived Experience of an Island Teacher*, completes the issue with a contribution of unusual emotional and intellectual depth. It asks what it means to teach, to make meaning, to build knowledge, and to exercise professional identity from the geographic and institutional periphery of an island province in the central Philippines. In doing so, it insists that the margins are not merely absences of the centre but spaces of their own semiotic richness, sites where power is felt most acutely, precisely because it arrives from elsewhere.

Read together, these four studies advance a coherent and urgent argument about the nature of signs in Filipino life: that meaning is always made under conditions, that those conditions are always unequal, and that the act of reading signs carefully is itself a form of resistance to the forces that would prefer they remain unread. From the civic geometry of a road intersection to the threshold of an island school, from the eye of a typhoon to the mediated theatrical drama of a family in conflict, the contributors to this issue demonstrate that semiotics is not an abstract intellectual exercise but a discipline with profound moral gravity. Signs, as these scholars remind us, do not merely mean; rather, they govern, they wound, they sustain, and occasionally, they liberate.

It is with deep gratitude and genuine intellectual excitement that I present Volume 2, Issue 2 of *Symbolismo* to its readers. A journal is, at its core, a community of inquiry, a shared commitment to asking better questions about the world we inhabit and the signs through which we inhabit it. The scholars whose work appears here have honoured that commitment with sincerity, creativity, and care. To our contributors, our reviewers, and our readers, the conversation continues, and we cannot seem to stop. May this issue be one that endures, deepens, and disturbs in all the ways that good scholarship must.

Enjoy reading!



**Nimrod L. Delante, PhD**

Editor-in-Chief

*Symbolismo: Signs, Identities, Meanings*