

UNITAS

Marking History in Scholarly Journal Publishing

UNITAS in the early 20th century

UNITAS is a journal published by the University of Santo Tomas, a pontifical university. The journal was established in 1922, centuries after the university was founded on April 28, 1611, during the Spanish colonial era. UST has the oldest extant university charter in the Philippines and in Asia; as such, for centuries, UST was the Spanish colony's flagship institution of higher learning. Long before American colonialism which began in 1898, UST had established itself as the "ground-zero" of knowledge production and education, producing national leaders, intellectuals, writers, artists, scientists, and national heroes who became prominent figures in their various professional and academic fields.

Understandably, when *UNITAS* was founded in 1922, it was one of the pioneering academic publications of the early 20th century in Asia that has survived to this day. As far as we have uncovered in the archives, *UNITAS* is the oldest existing multidisciplinary academic journal of its kind established by a modern, private university in Asia.

The pioneering publications

During the early 20th century, when *UNITAS* was founded, a handful of academic and scientific journals were already in existence in the Philippines.

Of these, among the esteemed journals which have remained extant to this day, including *UNITAS*—albeit with changes in the name of the publisher and the name of the journal itself—are: (a) the *Philippine Journal of Science*, a science-based journal which was established by the Bureau of Science under the American colonial government but now published by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST); (b) the *Philippine Agricultural Scientist*, which was founded by the student body of the College of Agriculture of the University of the Philippines, now called *Philippine Agriculturalist*; and (c) the *Philippine Law Journal*, which, as the journal indicates, was “designed as a vital training tool for law students, and modeled after the student-edited law reviews of American law schools.”

Therefore, among the above-mentioned journals, *UNITAS* is one of those that has lasted a century; all, however, experienced a hiatus during the Pacific War years. Of these journals that we know about, it is one of only two journals (with the *Philippine Law Journal*), which has never had a change of publisher and name, leaving the journal’s “provenance” clear, legacy unbroken, and identity intact for about a century.

Best of all, only *UNITAS* has all the back and current issues since 1922 available online for the public at the UST Library, open-access, offered as a gift to scholars worldwide as *UNITAS* celebrates its centennial year in 2022; hence, this centennial issue.

UNITAS since 1922

The history of *UNITAS* is proudly embedded in the intellectual history of this country. At the outset, *UNITAS* stood for, well, “unitas,” a fusion of disciplines. As conceived, the journal was to hold together between covers different “facultades” because initially, the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Medicine had their own separate journals. “Facultades” may be taken literally to refer to the different colleges and their departments that house particular academic disciplines as well their academic and teaching staff which the name “unitas” had hoped to conjoin. Indeed, other faculties would soon join *UNITAS*.

Wittingly or unwittingly, the decision to name the journal was both fortuitous and visionary. In the context of important reforms being undertaken by the university at that time and the modern future the journal was meant to help prepare the “facultades” for, “unitas” turned out to be setting up interdisciplinary conversations leading up to 2022, a century later. Indeed, the journal’s current interdisciplinary aspirations are rooted in the journal’s multidisciplinary pages as far back as 1922, its founding year. As the editors of the maiden issue had said in its editorial:

Hasta aquí triste es decirlo—pero las confesiones tristes y sinceras son las únicas que valen algo—hemos vivido separados, distanciados los unos de los otros. No ya las diversas Facultades, pero aún los mismos cursos de una Facultad apenas si se conocen, cuando no son antagonistas y casi enemigos. Hasta aquí, cada uno vivía para sí, sin acordarse de los otros, olvidando que somos un cuerpo, y que en el cuerpo organizado o todos los órganos y miembros marchan a una o el cuerpo muere y se descompone. Por eso hemos dado a la Revista el nombre de *Unitas* que quizá a no pocos parezca un nombre feo y antiestático. Séalo en hora buena, con tal que exprese nuestros pensamiento, que ¡Dios quiera! tengan cumplida realización. (“The First Dawn” 25)

Sad to say that—but sad and sincere confessions are the only ones that matter—we have lived so far apart from each other. Not just that the various colleges are segregated, but even the course offerings are strange to each other when they are not even opposed to each other like enemies. As yet, each one lived for himself, unmindful of others, forgetting that we are a body, and that in an organized body either all the organs and members coordinate with each other or the body dies and decomposes. That is why we have given the journal the name of *Unitas*, which may seem an unbecoming and unsightly name to some people. In good time, as long as it expresses our thoughts, may God allow the fruition of our ideas! (my trans.)

UNITAS was established by UST as an organ of the students of the various faculties of the University of Santo Tomas. By 1941, it became a faculty publication. In fact, the tagline in the first issue of *UNITAS* was “Órgano de los alumnos de la diversas facultades de la Universidad de Sto. Tomas (“Organ of the students of the various faculties of the University of Sto. Tomas”), by which same tagline the journal would be known for years,

from 1922 to 1931. It would change to “official organ of the university from 1933 to 1937, and still, become “Revista de Cultura y Vida Universitaria” (“Magazine of culture and university life”) from 1938 to 1961. Later, it would be “the quarterly for the arts and sciences” from September 1961 to March 1977, and currently, “Journal for advanced research in literature, culture, and society.”

The journal’s maiden issue opened with a lengthy editorial about its purposes, “Nuestros propósitos” as a “revista escolar” (scholarly publication). It consisted of disciplinary divisions, including Sección de Ciencias Eclesiásticas, Sección de la Facultad de Derecho, and Sección de la Facultad de Medicina. Articles in its first issue were authored by Filipinos who would later become major national figures including Salvador Araneta, with his article, “¿Cómo están las cosas?” (“How Are Things Going?”), as well as regional political figures like Miguel Cuenco, with a series of articles entitled, “A los lectores de la *Revista Escolar de Derecho*” (“To the Readers of the *Law School Magazine*”) and “Nuestro cuerpo parlamentario” (“Our Parliamentary Body”). It also included articles that were mostly written in Spanish and partly in the English but the journal was also open to submissions written in French. With articles written in either Spanish or English since the beginning, historically, *UNITAS* issues have aimed to be not monolingualistic. In fact, *UNITAS* has been multilingualistic on the whole, allowing itself to evolve from a journal published in Spanish and English, eventually expanding linguistically by including articles written in Tagalog and other languages. Indeed, the linguistic evolution of *UNITAS* in this country’s multi-linguistic and multi-cultural setting is interesting in itself. As Fausto Gomez, OP, former editor of *UNITAS*, said fifty years ago:

Most of the articles and comments of the first volumes of *Unitas* were written in Spanish. From Volume V to X, they were in English and Spanish. After Volume X, onward, most of the articles were published in English. The last article in Spanish was written in the issue of June, 1966, by Fr. Victoriano Vicente, O.P., entitled, ‘El P. Alonso Sandin, Segun el Libro de Grados de la Universidad’ 9p. 269 &ff.). (“The *UNITAS*” 2)

Throughout the decades, the shifts in the language of the journal from Spanish to English and the recent opening up to other foreign (including Spanish) and major Philippine languages suggest linguistic diversity in academic discourse in which the “vernacular” has proven to be at par with any other major language, whether local or foreign, in terms of intellectualization. Still, that Spanish and English were the academic languages used in scholarly journals early in the 20th century in the Philippines is understandable because when *UNITAS* came out, the American public school system had been put in place and the English language was already being taught in schools.

Beyond the language question, as *UNITAS* began to publish more and more articles from the faculty members of different disciplines, especially after the Pacific War, its pages began to be more marked theoretically and methodologically by particular disciplinal protocols not only in the objective description and analysis but also in the critical evaluation and interpretation of their objects of inquiry as understood within the scholarly parameters given the political context of the historical period. Discursively, *UNITAS* aimed to address an audience that was “a happy medium between unproductive generalizations and elitist specializations.” Moreover, “As much as possible, what we hope to project is a happy balance of articles that appeal several notches above the level of the popular and the common, yet responsive enough to relate themselves to the changes and innovations around us” (Gomez, “The *UNITAS*” 5).

The main contributors during the early decades of *UNITAS* came from the ranks of the local intelligentsia, including the Filipino *pensionados* who had studied in “America” from whose ranks the next generation of artists, scientists, and intellectuals in the country would come, had yet to return from various universities in the United States. That, while the Filipino artists and intellectuals who had remained in the country for their higher education, were already writing articles for *UNITAS*— many of whom had taken part or had witnessed the Philippine Revolution and the Philippine–American War. These artists and intellectuals had also been trained by the local universities like UST and universities in Spain.

UNITAS before WWII

Themes that continue to bedevil the country today have been studied and written about in the pages of *UNITAS* even before the Pacific War, including the following titles, as examples:

1. “Una iglesia indígena” (“An Indigenous Church”) written by a professor in theology (*un profesor de teología*) (vol. 2, no. 16, Nov. 1923; vol. 2, no. 17, Dec. 1923; vol. 2, no. 18, Jan. 1924; vol. 2, no. 19, Feb. 1924; vol. 2, no. 20, Mar. 1924)
2. “Problemas de la legislación obrera en Filipinas” (“Problems of Working-Class Legislation in the Philippines”), Dr. Mariano D. Gana (vol. 2, no. 18, Jan. 1924)
3. “The Socialistic Dream” by Ramon O. Balana (vol. 3, no. 2, Aug. 1924)
4. “Las bellas artes y el placer estético” (“The Fine Arts and the Aesthetic Pleasure”) by “F. J.” (vol. 3, no. 3, Sept. 1924)
5. “The Philippine Woman and her Influence in the Future” by “C. del M.” (vol. 3, no. 4, Oct. 1924)

Also published in *UNITAS* were a series of linguistic studies entitled “Estudio comparativo de las nomenclaturas gramaticales del balarila del Instituto de la Lengua del Idioma Nacional y del Salitikan ng Wikang Pangbansa” (“A Comparative Study of the Grammar of the Institute of the National Language”) by Jose L. Sevilla et al. (vol. 20, no. 3, Sept. 1941), “A Criticism of Education in the Philippines” by Rev. Fr. Dr. Evergisto Bazaco (vol. 20, no. 3, Sept. 1941), and “A Survey of Culture in Modern Filipino Homes” by Pedro P. Talastas (vol. 19, no. 5, Jan. 1941).

UNITAS during and after WWII

UNITAS was stilled by the Pacific War, as the rest of the country and the world lay in ruins. From January 1942 to February 1945, UST became known as the Manila Internment Camp, the largest of several camps in the Philippines in which the Japanese interned enemy civilians, mostly Americans, in World War II, housing more than 3,000 internees. *UNITAS* would resume publi-

cation in 1948 after the War. Like all the other publications in the country, *UNITAS* would come out again with issues that continued to concern scholarship relevant not only to the disciplines but also to Filipino society, the nation, and the world.

As *UNITAS* began to publish more and more articles from the faculty members of different disciplines, its pages began to be more marked theoretically and methodologically by particular disciplinary protocols in the objective description and analysis but also in the critical evaluation and interpretation of their objects of inquiry as understood within the scholarly parameters of the time.

UNITAS continued publication of important research and groundbreaking scholarship by prominent intellectuals in the country by 1948. One of the notable articles in *UNITAS* is “An Approach to Social-Economic Security” by M. Z. Landicho, MSC (vol. 21, no. 1, Jan.–Mar. 1948). Apart from publishing articles about the local topics, *UNITAS* also looked outward into the larger world other countries with a series of articles on other countries such as “The Legal Evolution of Nationalist Movement in Indonesia and Malaya,” (vol. 21, no. 2, Apr.–June 1948), “The Legal Evolution of Nationalist Movement in Burma and Ceylon” (vol. 21, no. 3, July–Sept. 1948), and “The Legal Evolution of Nationalist Movements in India and the Middle East” (vol. 21, no. 4, Oct.–Dec. 1948) by Mauro Mendez, LIM, who would later become a well-known legal scholar and esteemed diplomat.

It even published a pioneering study on Philippine music such as “La música filipina: Lo que es, y lo que puede ser” (“The Filipino Music: What It Is, and What It Can Be”; vol. 22, no. 4, Oct.–Dec. 1949) by Antonio J. Molina, a renowned versatile musician, composer, music educator, and academic. Other well-known contributors included Gregorio Zaide, Leonor Orosa Goquinco, Lino Brocka, Napoleon Abueva, President Diosdado Macapagal, and Florentino Hornedo, among many others.

Into the 1960s and the 1970s, *UNITAS* published rare archival materials as a service to the world of scholarship as it continued to be sustained by “its initial spirit of dedicated intellectual service.” (Gomez, “Retrospection of *UNITAS*” 27). As the editor explains, “The *Unitas* is venerable not only

from the standpoint of age but also from the quality and quantity of learned and scholarly literature” (26). While continuing the tradition of innovation and relevance in journal publication, *UNITAS* yet again expanded its reach. Fr. Fausto Gomez, OP explained that the journal became no longer just a quarterly publication “but also a series of publications” when in the 1960s, “Fr. Panizo began reprinting some monographic issues of *Unitas* as separate books” and publishing the annual UST Cultural Series. Aiming to provide an “integration of human knowledge” (Gomez, “Retrospection of *UNITAS*” 27), into the 1970s, *UNITAS* also published scholarly articles that were timely and relevant; a tradition that would continue to this day.

Apart from regular papers, *UNITAS* annually published scholarly articles “on major historical, political, economic, social and religious events of the country and the world” in a special issue of the UST Cultural Series (Gomez, “Another Chapter” 29). Of the existing journals in the country with an increasingly narrowing scope of specialist focus, *UNITAS* has remained steadfast in its broad multidisciplinary interest and interdisciplinary coverage. This owes to the articulated commitment of the journal to the “belief that a responsive scholarly journal caters to varying interdisciplinary motives” (29).

UNITAS today

Today in 2022, a hundred years since its first issue, *UNITAS* has expanded the arena of its scholarly conversations with the rest of the world, transforming from a national to an international scholarly publication as befitting a journal of such a long and distinguished past from which one can trace back vignettes of the intellectual history of a people and developments in scholarly inquiries across the disciplines.

The scope or academic coverage of *UNITAS* has become both interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary while focusing on the humanities and the arts and related disciplines like history and philosophy. It has also welcomed contributions from professional fields like translation studies, music, and Architecture, and it has also opened its pages to the traditionally recognized social science disciplines as well as area or regional studies. Recent examples

in the direction of inter and intradisciplinarity include the special section on culture and the environment in volume 94, number 2, in November 2021, in which the papers combine environmental studies with cultural studies, economics, ecology, philosophy, and religion. In the same issue, a particular paper entitled “Metonymies of Ethnobotany and the Fellowship Discourse of Sagrada Familia Healers in Irosin, Sorsogon, Philippines” by Jesus Cyril M. Conde in which are deployed the interface of discourse analysis and literary and cultural criticism, botany and folk beliefs.

Apart from its renewed and consistent disciplinary inclusiveness and crossovers, in almost 100 years of its existence, *UNITAS* has in the last several years expanded even more broadly the conceptual terrain of academic and disciplinary coverage as indicated in the journal’s editorial pages. It has published on cutting-edge and time-honored interdisciplinary topics in which both established and emerging voices in research and scholarship are heard in articles that range across traditions, modernities, movements, philosophies, themes, politics, geographies, histories, musical types, architectural styles, gender relations and sexualities, educational philosophies, media, forms, genres, canons, pedagogies, literary and cultural relations, and comparative studies, among others, in book review essays, critical commentaries, scholarly papers, and monographs. Such an expansiveness has allowed for establishing new lines of inquiry or exploring new lines of thinking about old ones.

UNITAS has been honored by the support of the still-expanding International Editorial Board consisting of leading international scholars in their specific fields of specialization. This expansion of the board whose membership currently comes from different countries, disciplines, and scholarly and intellectual traditions, has been a reflection of the journal’s active participation in the international conversations on local and global issues that are both socially relevant and scholarly invigorating. Moreover, having gone global, online, and open-access, *UNITAS* continues to be alive and kicking, broadening its readership as it reaches its first 100 years, and taking that one giant step forward to gear up for the next 100 years.

UNITAS on Philippine Literary Theory and Criticism and Cultural Studies

Multidisciplinary commitment notwithstanding, *UNITAS* remains true to UST's long humanistic tradition. Housed by the Department of Literature, *UNITAS* takes pride in the articles on literature and literary criticism it has published within the larger context of history, culture, and society. After all, UST has produced the most number of alumni in the roster of National Artists to date, among the top universities in the country.

Throughout the decades, in particular, *UNITAS* has published articles that may now be considered to fall under the rubric of Philippine literary criticism and cultural studies, which were written by major figures in the country's literary and academic scenes such as:

1. **Paz Latorena, "Educating the Literary Taste"** (vol. 24, no. 1, Jan.–Mar. 1951). Latorena (January 17, 1908–October 19, 1953). She was a poet, editor, author, and teacher and is considered as one of the important writers of the first generation of Filipino English writers, in both literary writing and education.
2. **Emerita S. Quito, "Structuralism: A General Introduction"** (vol. 44, no. 1, Mar. 1971). She was a Filipina philosopher who was known for her contributions to the development of Filipino Philosophy, Critical Thinking, and Language.
3. **Nick Joaquin, "Manila Has Been Many Cities"** (vol. 44, no. 3, Sept. 1971). Also known as Quijano de Manila, Joaquin (May 4, 1917 – April 29, 2004). was a Filipino essayist, fictionist, translator, and National Artist of the Philippines for Literature.
4. **Ophelia A. Dimalanta, "Philippine City Fiction as a Literary Genre"** (vol. 57, no. 4, Dec. 1984). Dimalanta (June 16, 1932–November 4, 2010) was a Filipina poet, editor, critic, essayist, teacher, and editor of various literary anthologies, and professor at the University of Santo Tomas for many years until postretirement.
5. **Florentino H. Hornedo, "The Changing Core Themes of Filipino Nationalism and their Literary Expression"** (vol. 62, no. 4, Dec. 1989). Hornedo is a professor and scholar of literature,

history, philosophy, and cultural studies who has contributed to Philippine literary studies with his research on Ivatan literature, from the Batanes islands in the northernmost Philippines.

6. **Bienvenido L. Lumbera, “DATING”: Panimulang Muni sa Estetika ng Panitikang Filipino**” (vol. 70, no. 4, Dec. 1997). He was a multi-awarded poet, critic, dramatist, lyricist, comparatist, scholar of Philippine Literature, National Artist of the Philippines, and a recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature and Creative Communications.
7. **Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, “Helen Yap: Translation and Self-Exploration in Travel Writing”** (vol. 93, no. 2, Nov. 2020). Hidalgo is a multi-awarded fictionist, critic and pioneering writer of creative nonfiction in the Philippines. She is Professor Emerita of English & Comparative Literature at the University of the Philippines Diliman and Director of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) Center for Creative Writing and Literary Studies.

UNITAS and the Office of the Scholar-in-Residence

Hosted by the Department of Literature of UST, *UNITAS* is managed and run by the Office of the Scholar-in-Residence which sponsors international lectures; conducts seminars and workshops on research, academic and scholarly writing; organizes and hosts international conferences; and actively engages in international linkages. Under the Scholar-in-Residence’s leadership who is also the editor-in-chief, *UNITAS* has also expanded the arena of its scholarly contributions transforming the journal from a national to a global scholarly publication as befitting a journal of such a long and distinguished history from which one can have glimpses of the scholarly and intellectual history of a people.

In the last few years, *UNITAS* has become no longer just a journal. With the Scholar-in-Residence as editor-in-chief, *UNITAS* currently operates as a research, and scholarly writing center as well as an internationalization hub under the auspices of UST’s Faculty of Arts and Letters with *UNITAS* as a flagship output under the guidance of the Editorial Board consisting of

leading international scholars in their specific fields of specialization. During the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, *UNITAS* has conducted a much-needed series of online lectures and webinars for scholars, teachers, and students, providing them with knowledge, training, sources and materials for their research and teaching in order to overcome the serious constraints brought about by the pandemic.

UNITAS has also been actively engaged with other institutions and individuals as part of its national and international initiatives toward collaborative research and joint initiatives in journal publication work, specifically:

1. On the National front
 - a. It is an institutional member of CLASS (Cultural, Literary, and Art Studies Society, Inc.), geared toward developing the scholarship and pedagogy among senior high scholar and university faculty members as patterned after the goals and activities of the MLA (Modern Language Association of America).
 - b. It hosts foreign scholars for lectures at UST .
 - c. It conducts workshops on reviewing and editing manuscripts and other aspects of journal publication editorial protocols, to date.
2. On the International front
 - a. It organizes or coorganizes international conferences and colloquia held in the country and abroad (IAELC conference in UST in 2018; CLASS-cosponsored colloquia in Jakarta (Universitas Kristen Univ, 2018) and Yogyakarta (Sanata Dharma Univ, 2016), Indonesia; Seoul, South Korea (Konkuk Univ 2018; 2019); and Fukuoka, Japan (Kyushu Univ, 2019).
 - b. It has established linkages with universities and academic journals abroad in activities geared toward collaborative research.
 - c. Finally, *UNITAS* had led efforts to organize a network of Asian journals in a group called Asia Journals Network (AJN) which is slated for August 2022 to be conducted online. It is organized by the Office of Scholar-in-Residence and *UNITAS*, both headed by Maria Luisa Torres Reyes, as Scholar-in-Residence herself

and editor-in-chief of the journal. To be attended by academic journals from China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, and the Philippines as founding members, AJN is cosponsored by *Kritika Kultura*, the online journal of the Ateneo de Manila University.

UNITAS is now an international online peer-reviewed open-access journal of advanced research in literature, culture, and society published biannually (May and November). It has been “multidisciplinary” in publishing scholarship that is also now intradisciplinary within the humanities and the arts, and inter-disciplinary across the other disciplines while remaining cognizant of the scholarly protocols of disciplinary specializations.

It is celebrating its centennial year now, 2022, a rare feat in these parts, allowing for a *longue durée* of a perspective for those who might be interested in the study of the country’s intellectual history throughout the journal’s pages in the last 100 years. For the centenary, *UNITAS* has sponsored online activities which we have billed as “UNITAS 100” with the tagline, “Scholarship that Stands the Test of Time.” Among the activities are several sets of lectures each called “international lecture series,” which started in 2021 and will end in November 2022. The celebration is highlighted by the publication of this special centennial issue for which contributions have come from the members of the international board. Like the 50th anniversary of *UNITAS*, the centennial celebration affirms that the journal continues to have “a foot in its living past, and the other in the air, poised and ready to become a better medium of scholarship and relevance.” (Gomez, “The *UNITAS*” 7)

We end in the spirit of a passage from Fr. Fausto Gomez, in the golden anniversary issue of *UNITAS*:

Still we believe that there is plenty of room for improvement in the publication of *UNITAS* and specially, in the development of *UNITAS* publications. If, through the prism of this anniversary issue, we look back at yesterday, it is mainly to look forward ... But that in knowing living traditions of

yesteryears, we may find valuable help to build the UNITAS of tomorrow.
(Gomez, "The *UNITAS*" 7)

Mabuhay!

The Editor-in-Chief
July 2022

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