

NEWT HAS READ IT -- HAVE YOU?
continued from page 30

CARLO SANTAYANA:

DISCLAIMER:

To comply with the Editor-in-Chief's chosen theme for this issue of Laico Lines, this book review was intentionally written in Taglish – a task that goes against the normal writing habits and principles of the author of this book review. On a lighter note, the author's initial dread at the thought of writing in Taglish was quickly replaced with enjoyment and fun. Although this will not become a habit, I have to admit: it's *nakaka-aliw* to write this way!

I was excited to read Mike's book *The Ten Thousand* so I stopped by the local bookstore to get a copy. I was *medyo busog* anyway, so I started reading during my lunch break. The opening chapters were an enthralling account of how Greek soldiers made *sugod* a fortress and how some of them got *ihaw* by an ancient flame thrower, a weapon I had once heard about on the Discovery Channel. So, not only was this book exciting, it was also historically accurate, offering an insightful look at what human life was like before the time of Christ.

The novel is about the adventures Xenophon, an Athenian *señorito* who became an officer in a mercenary army. It is narrated by his friend and *yayo*, Themistogenes, or Theo for short. Theo recounts the travels he made with his *alaga*, and how Xenophon got into a fight with his dad, how they made *luwas* to see a *manghuhula* who was *mahilig sumagot in bugtong*, and how they joined the army. Theo also writes about a girl he meets while traveling, and how the girl becomes his *syota*. While serving under Clearchus, a General who was *siga* and *basagulero*, Xenophon learns how to command his own troops. He even displays enough leadership and *pakisama* to get the bigger, more *mayabang* Spartan and Athenian soldiers to become *barkada* with the smaller, but equally *matinik* Rhodian soldiers who used *tirador* to fight the enemy instead of a sword or *pana*. The story traces the journey from Greece to Babylon and back again. It is fraught with the perils of traveling in hostile territory, and how remaining troops, merely a fraction of the original ten thousand, have to deal with making *tawid* the *ilog*, staying focused when they're *praning*, and entrusting their fate to the gods when faced with the impossible. This last tribulation is something I find rather difficult to explain... the words escape me when I try to write about it, but I know the feeling very well. *Ay nako, bahala na*, you know what I'm talking about.

GLOSSARY:

Nakaka-aliw –amusing

Medyo – rather, somewhat

Busog – full, not hungry
Sugod – to charge, to attack
Ihaw – barbecued
Señorito – pampered young boy
Yayo – male nanny, manservant
Alaga – ward, person under one's care/watch
Luwas – to leave town on a long journey
Manghuhula – fortuneteller
Mahilig – fond
Sumagot – to answer, to reply to a question
Bugtong – riddle
Syota – girlfriend
Siga – tough guy
Basagulero –skull crusher (literal)
Pakisama –camaraderie, ability to connect with others
Mayabang – arrogant, snobbish
Barkada –a group of buddies
Matinik – proficient, skilled
Tirador – slingshot
Pana –bow and arrow
Tawid – to cross, to traverse
Ilog – river
Praning – paranoid

Will Mike Ford's next book be The Ten Thousand Laicos?

RANDY VILLASENOR:

The first chapters hit me like the first battle scene of the movie *Gladiator*. The description was so vivid that I felt the scalding oil poured on the attackers in so enclosed a space. I could hear the arrows sing, I could feel the pain of sheared flesh,

I wished I could see through the smoke, but I could taste and smell the blooded attackers. Ford's book hits the senses. You ARE there and you wish you WERE NOT there. I was at first drawn by the historicity of Xenophon, the warrior scholar. With Mike's well chosen language and generous sprinkle of Greek words defined, my education is complete.

POPOY:

Is there a video? I'll just wait for the video.

NINI:

The best part about the book was the acknowledgments section in which he thanked Cristina.