

FOREWORD

SISYPHUS' LAMENT, PART II: EDITING, OR THE STUDENT'S ART OF NOT BEING ONE'S OWN WORST ENEMY*

Oscar Franklin B. Tan**

Handling publications throughout my grade school, high school, and college years, I described writing as the art of coaxing ideas from the innermost recesses of one's soul, wrapping them around one's perspective of life to highlight its myriad aspects, and immortalizing the unique product that results. If writing is such a personal, creative act in the most liberating Hegelian sense,¹ then editing can be no less. Professor Carol Sanger's much

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** Chair, PHILIPPINE LAW JOURNAL; Member, Student Editorial Board (2004). Fourth Year, LL.B., University of the Philippines (2005 expected). B.S. Management Engineering / A.B. Economics Honors, *Cum Laude*, Ateneo de Manila University (2001). First Freshman Awardee, Justice Irene R. Cortes Prize for Best Paper in Constitutional Law (2002). Awardee, Professor Araceli T. Baviera Prize for Best Paper in Civil Law (2003). First Awardee, Professor Bienvenido C. Ambion Prize for Best Paper in Private International Law (2004).

¹ GEORG HEGEL, THE PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT, § 57 (T.M. Knox trans. 1971) (1821), in 46 GREAT BOOKS OF THE WESTERN WORLD 26 (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Maynard Hutchins ed. 1982).

cited "brief plea for a revival of common sense in editing"² captures this broad, human beauty:

Editing is a highly complex set of functions, and no individual is capable of exercising them all with equal aplomb. The editor who wines and dines the agents and charms authors may be a clumsy negotiator; the brilliant dealmaker may have no patience for the tedious and demanding word-by-word task of copy-editing; the copy editor who brilliantly brings a book to life word by word, line by line, may be completely at sixes and sevens when it comes to handling authors.³

For all its beauty, however, my personal frustration is that the art of editing is not always approached studiously and scientifically in law reviews. This, I feel, is exacerbated by the fact that PHILIPPINE LAW JOURNAL editors are chosen solely on the basis of a legal essay written in two hours and the equivalent of a thesis paper written in one week, meaning that it is quite possible for the majority of editors to assume office without any prior publication experience whatsoever, and especially without a deeper appreciation of the perspective and discipline an editorial position entails. No less than Judge Richard Posner calls student editors "inexperienced not only as students of the law but also as editors, writers, supervisors, and managers."⁴ Sanger puts it more bluntly: "Most student editors have likely had no editorial experience before sitting down to your paper other than having had their own work hacked to bits by students who experienced the same thing the year before."⁵

It is quite possible, in other words, for a set of highly intelligent but otherwise clueless law students to claim the words "editorial discretion" as unbridled license to be the academic equivalents of bulls in china shops — and do as much damage to the law review institution. This, most curiously, in a profession that thrives on rules and frowns on unbounded discretion.

² Carol Sanger, *Editing*, 82 GEO. L.J. 513, 514 (1993).

³ *Id.* at 518, quoting Richard Curtis, *Are Editors Necessary?*, in EDITORS ON EDITING: WHAT WRITERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WHAT EDITORS DO 33 (Gerald Gross ed., 3d ed. 1993).

⁴ Richard Posner, *The Future of Student-Edited Law Review*, 47 STAN. L. REV. 1131, 1132 (1995).

⁵ Sanger, *supra* note 2, at 517.

citation forms and other rule-bound approaches to editing, abet the worst tendencies of legal and academic writing.¹⁰

Professor Lindgren actually compiled various anecdotes:

One review accepted a manuscript and edited it, introducing over two hundred style errors into the manuscript. The author responded with a letter detailing the errors and providing excerpts from style manuals to illustrate them. The author requested either no style editing or a new, competent editor. The review refused.

A law journal recently tried to change case citations in a historical article to courts listed in *The Blue Book*, rather than the courts that actually decided them.

One law review editor thought that many uses of the word "the" were errors. Following this bizarre rule of thumb, he took as many "thes" out of manuscripts as he could, thus reducing many sentences to a kind of pidgin.¹¹

Professor Roger Cramton even went to the extent of drawing up a fictional conversation:

[T]hat must be a hot topic. We got about sixty pieces on that in the last couple weeks. We better take one of them.

Well, this one has more footnotes than any of them.

Look guys, I skimmed through that piece. If we take it – it hasn't got any historical section, and it only gives a couple page explanation of the first amendment.

No problem, we'll just send it back to her to fill in that stuff.

Better get her to beef up some of these footnotes: this one section looks a little thin.

O.K. I guess it's settled, we'll take the piece. Anyone here take a first amendment course? ... well, that's all right – we all had constitutional law. Anything else we gotta take care of today?

Yeah – some jerk author called. That economics piece. He's all bent out of shape because we fixed his piece up without telling him.

¹⁰ Posner, *supra* note 4, at 1134.

¹¹ James Lindgren, *An Author's Manifesto*, 61 U. CHI. L. REV. 527, 529 (1994).

I knew we shouldn't have taken that piece. That's the last piece we take without footnotes. What was wrong with it?

It had all this gibberish about some new theory I couldn't figure out, so I changed it to fit traditional economic doctrine.

Well the hell with the author. We're publishing it, not him. Anything else?¹²

I can attest to such frustration myself. Allow me to present a hypothetical experience where the editor responsible for deliberations, an abstract figure in my imagination designated X for convenience, was so remiss that I received a reply only *four months* after I submitted a manuscript. X then detailed revisions he was requiring me to make by listing each of the five deliberating editors' comments in bullet point form – many of which contradicted each other.

Suppose that was only the beginning. The article was very complex, to the point that when I requested a former dean to review it, he recommended that I explain a number of highly technical points further, and add analogies and imagery because even he had trouble with the nonlegal, mathematical principles I had to use in support of my Constitutional arguments. X later removed all these, claiming they were redundant and lengthy – which is in itself a justifiable judgment, of course – but did so in such a crude fashion that summaries and restatements at the ends of sections were preserved but the original discussions were deleted. Nevertheless, the paper retained numerous references to portions that had been removed. X also insisted on removing my critique of a case's dissenting opinion claiming it was irrelevant, never mind that the article dealt with proposed legislation and the dissent had been converted into a key House bill. (And while I was fuming, another student approached me and complained that someone, perhaps another manifestation of the abstract X, had almost deleted half of the substantive points in his professor's paper, which was eventually published in full in the same journal.)

But suppose this impromptu fiction's end is not yet in sight. X insisted on applying the *Philippine Manual of Legal Citation*, where I had recommended the Harvard *Bluebook*. That editor also felt that the *Philippine Manual* prohibited the use of "*id.*," and since my originally hundred-page

¹² Roger Cramton, *The Most Remarkable Institution': The American Law Review*, 36 J. LEGAL EDUC. 1, 8 (1986), quoted in Phil Nichols, Note, *A Defense of Student-Edited Journals: In Response to Professor Roger Cramton*, 1987 DUKE L.J. 1122, 1122 (1987). See also Carl Tobias, *Manuscript Selection Anti-Manifesto*, 80 CORNELL L. REV. 529, 538 (1995).

article discussed mainly two cases, the printed version repeated the same two lengthy citations several dozen times, and at some points I even saw the same full citation five times on the same page – in consecutive footnotes. Even the formatting was salt in my wounds; some text was misaligned and headings were inconsistently capitalized. Finally, the last draft I was shown even omitted my full name, my academic credentials, and – the unkindest cut of all! – the note of heartfelt thanks to my professor placed on the first page.

Sadly, while one would readily sue a surgeon who insists on operating with a meat cleaver, there is little recourse against editorial hacks, except perhaps to turn the author-editor relationship into a counter-productive power struggle.¹³ The greatest dangers and men of zeal indeed.

II. HARNESSING THE STRENGTHS OF THE STUDENT EDITORIAL BOARD

Although mere students are, naturally, far from masters of doctrine, their seeming greatest weakness is actually their greatest strength. Precisely because they are students, they are the lowly cogs in the legal machinery that allow its academe to function, because no one else has the time to devote to the law review's minutiae.¹⁴ They even have both the time and the skill to check authors' references, which is a rare service.¹⁵

Tongue-in-cheek allusions to slave labor aside, however, law students' inexperience is a great strength because it allows them to function as a sounding board for the larger audience of lawyers. Though lacking specialized experience in any particular field, students are nevertheless equipped with the latest knowledge in every general field. Thus, while they could not possibly write almost all the articles they review, student editorial boards make excellent referees, and what they publish are presumably appropriate for the general practitioner.¹⁶ They serve admirably as "first readers"¹⁷ who can point out how to focus discussions of specialized,

¹³ Gregory Maggs, *Just Say No?*, 70 CHI.-KENT L. REV. 101, 101-02 (1994).

¹⁴ James Harper, *Why Student-Run Law Reviews?*, 82 MINN. L. REV. 1261, 1274-75 (1998).

¹⁵ Posner, *supra* note 2, at 1134.

¹⁶ Nichols, *supra* note 10, at 1129-30.

¹⁷ Sanger, *supra* note 1, at 519.

complex doctrines. Student panels are also free of professional bias that may creep into faculty panels with particular research interests.¹⁸

In short, once they disabuse themselves of delusions of grandeur and editorial discretion, these inherent incompetents stand to become the profession's most effective handmaidens of academic exchange.

A. ARTICLE DELIBERATION STRUCTURE

In order to harness these strengths, Volume 79 formulated a simple but more structured article deliberation process, which is the core of the law review process. Noting journal articles such as Sanger's, Posner's and Lindgren's, we agreed to maintain a deferential approach to authors. First and foremost, this entailed a commitment to refrain from "Rambo" editing, a Volume 79 inside joke better explained by Professor Juan Perea:

A Rambo edit was one of the worst experiences of my professional life. ... The first editor with whom I worked did a good job, concentrating on matters of organization and repetition, and suggesting that an additional section might be helpful. I agreed and implemented the changes he suggested, and everything seemed to be going smoothly. Then a higher-level editor decided, on his own initiative, to "take a fresh crack" at my article. In hindsight, I can see that his choice of words revealed a Rambo editor. The second editor didn't like my writing style nor my diction throughout a long manuscript, so he resolved to make my article sound like him. He proceeded to slash and burn almost every sentence and paragraph in my entire manuscript, and in the process introduced many outright errors. The one that I remember best is that, after his edit, he had John Jay, one author of the Federalist papers and an early Supreme Court Justice, quoting contemporary sociologist Milton Gordon. Think about that. I cannot publish what I said and thought after receiving the still-smoking, smoldering ruins of my manuscript.¹⁹

Second, we made sure that authors were informed of our decisions to accept or reject an article within a week of receipt by the JOURNAL.

This anti-Rambo and pro-author attitude is facilitated by the deliberation structure suggested by Vice-Chair Gerard Chan. Instead of handling articles *en banc*, the Board divided itself into four divisions of two,

¹⁸ Nichols, *supra* note 12, at 1127-28.

¹⁹ Juan Perea, *After Getting to Yes: A Survival Guide for Law Review Editors and Faculty Writers*, 48 FLA. L. REV. 867, 871 (1996).

with the Chair or Vice-Chair breaking ties. This ensures that every article receives both a thorough and a speedy review. Further, since each pair also serve as the Issue Editors of a particular issue, clear lines of accountability and authority are drawn. This has allowed each division to complete issues in record time, yet solicit articles thematically.²⁰ At the same time, the workload becomes more manageable in that, except for the Chair, each editor expects to focus on only the submissions of one senior practitioner, two junior practitioners, and one student author, and he even has more time to communicate at length with them. And so we have been able to Rambo sparingly, and in all cases gave the author the first opportunity to shoot his own horse instead of firing a bullet into the air,²¹ trusting that he is the most capable of implementing editors' recommendations.

This structure actually enhances the Board's collegial nature. Each division is required to provide a written summary of deliberations for each article. These are e-mailed to each editor, and each recipient is able to reply with questions, similarly reproduced to the rest of the Board. Further, the Chair retains his traditional *certiorari* powers to reverse the review of a division or, more often, bring it to the attention of the entire Board. The fact that speeches of Justices Reynato Puno and Artemio Panganiban²² had recently been published in the *Manila Bulletin* but accepted by our Second Division, for example, was quickly resolved through e-mail during the semestral break, without need for a physical meeting. Parenthetically, this greatly benefits the Board's working students, and even corrections to article drafts are efficiently circulated through e-mail.

In contrast, I actually believe that the traditional structure makes for less effective collegiality. Given the constraints of setting up meetings

²⁰ Issue 1, the Professor Samilo Barlongay Political Law Memorial Issue, was handled by myself and Ramon Sarmiento. This issue has an economics and commercial law theme, and was handled by Gerard Chan and May Ann Rosales. Issue 3, sent to press at the same time as this one, deals with procedure and was handled by Francis Joseph Cruz and Charles Cheng.

²¹ Otherwise, one gets anecdotes such as: "[T]he editor sent back a completely rewritten piece which converted my article attacking an S.E.C. policy into a practitioner-oriented article advising lawyers how to comply with the S.E.C. position. The last instructions from the editor were to 'write the conclusion within one week and return.' I called the editor and told her that she had misunderstood the purpose of my article, and that her deadline was unrealistic." Ronald Rotunda, *Law Reviews - The Extreme Centrist Position*, 62 IND. L.J. 1, 10 (1987).

²² Reynato Puno, *Judicial Review: Quo Vadis?*, 79 PHIL. L.J. 249 (2004); Artemio Panganiban, *Judicial Activism in the Philippines*, 79 PHIL. L.J. 265 (2004).

between students with different schedules, including evening students, larger deliberating panels can degenerate into a simple declaration of votes even before discussing each editor's reasons. When the article is then assigned to a specific member for editing, specific arguments or conditions for acceptance may well be disregarded, which is important for articles of borderline quality.

A deliberation structure in itself addresses administrative problems, but not uncontrolled editorial discretion itself. The main problem in the context of deliberation remains that different Boards, different panels or even different individual editors can have wildly differing standards of review. This creates a problem of inconsistency, and is hard to check on a case to case basis. For example, invoking editorial discretion, I once heard of an editor who voted to reject a hundred-page article because of a single perceived error on page twenty. I heard of another who voted to reject another lengthy article because of a perceived error in an introductory discussion on legal philosophy, although he had been deliberating on a Remedial Law paper.

Such problems can only be addressed with clear editorial policies.²³ Volume 79 uses a very simple one-page set of guidelines, which is used to prepare written memoranda required for each article. At its heart is a simple distinction between what Professor Anne Enquist calls substantive and technical editing.

B. SUBSTANTIVE EDITING

The distinction is explained:

Substantive editing is the process of examining and commenting on an article's substance, that is, the ideas, arguments, and the overall organization. Substantive editing is concerned with what the article says. Technical editing, on the other hand, is the process of examining and commenting on an article's technical features, that is, the words, sentences, and minor details. Technical editing is concerned with how the author expresses his or her ideas.²⁴

²³ See Terri LeClerq, *The Nuts and Bolts of Article Criteria and Selection*, 30 STETSON L. REV. 437, 441-43 (2000).

²⁴ Anne Enquist, *Substantive Editing Versus Technical Editing: How Law Review Editors Do Their Job*, 30 STETSON L. REV. 451, 452 (2000). See Perea, *supra* note 18, at 869.

The article deliberations for acceptance or rejection are confined only to substantive editing, and Volume 79's simple guidelines require an editor to first read the article once without stopping to note perceived errors, and then review only: 1) the thesis and subtheses, and their novelty, significance and impact; 2) the structure and flow; 3) the general quality of sources and substantiation of points; and 4) the general quality of writing.²⁵ The ideal is a well-structured piece with a strong thesis, and a thesis is more than a topic sentence in that it incorporates a concrete stand on an issue. (Parenthetically, some student articles may fall short of this in that they have impressive research but take the wishy-washy thesis, "This is an important emerging field of law and the author hopes this article will inspire further research on the matter." Such a thesis makes for an excellent bibliography, but a poor legal article.)

The key is to force the reviewing editor to deliberate using a broad view, dealing with the structure of sections instead of going into individual paragraphs and sentences. Most obviously, this approach avoids the absurdity of rejecting a hundred-page article based on a perceived error in one paragraph, or nitpicking over points collateral to the author's actual thesis. The initial focus is solely on overall substance, a sensible notion I believe inexperienced editors confuse with other areas for improvement that are less significant and less immediate in the initial deliberations.

The approach further saves a lot of time when dealing with less than excellent articles because the editor is forced to identify structural problems that cannot be solved merely by correcting individual sentences. And even with already good articles, the mindset becomes one of being able to propose enhancements rather than unilaterally effecting what one feels are corrections. One common comment, for example, is that an author did an excellent job researching but spent relatively few pages articulating his analysis.

One important result, I feel, is that Volume 79 has been able to accommodate authors with more substance than style who would otherwise be rejected. I remember one especially difficult article that was put to an *en banc* vote. Four editors voted to return it to the author for revision, and the other four voted to reject it outright. The Board, it seemed, unanimously believed that the author had religious objections to certain usages of the

²⁵ *Id.* at 453. Professor Enquist uses six points: (1) the thesis; (2) the line of reasoning and arguments; (3) the large-scale organization; (4) what is not in the article; (5) what is in the text versus what is in the footnotes; and (6) the author's voice.

author my outline of the article and my co-editors' memoranda, and he agreed to submit a restructured draft within the week. I then took the draft and spent twenty-five hours further reorganizing his scattered ideas and rephrasing his sentences solely to cure verbosity, eventually trimming fifty-five pages into seventeen. After it was published, we discovered that the article reflected an important government position, and no member of the Board regrets accepting it. Similarly, for that same issue, another editor had to restructure another article that could scatter a single point across three to five different places, yet the reorganized article turned out to be a very interesting, novel, and practical piece.

I recall countless such incidents from college. Handling inexperienced aspiring freshman writers, I would review draft outlines and proposed interview questions with them in great detail only to get a disorganized, confused draft. Nevertheless, I would tell them they had done well, before proceeding to delete two out of every three words. I would explain that they had done such thorough research that the article could be reorganized and rephrased. What, again, is the editor's task but to help an author find his voice?²⁶

The truly disastrous authors were those who submitted well-written but ultimately superficial material and filled space by waxing poetic for several paragraphs. They, for example, failed to build rapport with interviewees and take the time to ask detailed follow-up questions, sometimes just asking resource persons to answer a questionnaire. In these cases, I found myself deleting close to three out of every three words, and asking them to add content. In legal writing, the equivalent would be authors who paste lengthy excerpts from decisions with barely any analysis, without even so much as a train of thought revealed by the selection of decisions and particular excerpts, nor any buildup towards a discernable thesis. No amount of structural buttressing by editors can salvage such.

C. TECHNICAL EDITING

Technical editing deals with the devils in the details, and amounts to what most people associate with editing. One generally checks for grammar, spelling, punctuation, organization of ideas on a paragraph level, paragraph and sentence structure, and precision and conciseness of wording.²⁷ If

²⁶ Ann Althouse, *Who's to Blame for Law Reviews?*, 70 CHI.-KENT L. REV. 81, 84 (1994).

²⁷ Enquist, *supra* note 24, at 461-62.

substantive editing is done properly and the article's structure is sound, technical editing is thus a very simple matter of checking individual paragraphs and sentences against the rules of grammar. As Professor Perea puts it:

If you conceive of your role as that of rewriting an article.... you are probably not thinking enough about the "macro" issues discussed above which you should be thinking about. You are beginning with a microscopic view of your role.²⁸

I believe good substantial editing leads to more deferential, less invasive technical editing as well, since the editor initially examines the article as a whole, including the author's particular tone and voice. Inexperienced editors are tempted to feel obliged to make as many changes as they can, but that is as much the measure of successful editing as the number of footnotes is a measure of substance. There are, rather, true corrections justified by principles of grammar or conciseness, and there are "corrections" dictated by an editor's sense of style. The latter are generally left alone, lest the article lose its personality.²⁹

In Volume 79, individual editors have on occasion expressed apprehension that a particular author is written in such simple language that the tone may not be formal or even scholarly enough for a legal publication, or simply sounds less impressive compared to others in the lineup. Nevertheless, if the piece is grammatically correct and hardly verbose, we leave it alone and let the author be judged as he is. It would be unrealistic, for example, to fire every article with the flourish of a Justice Reynato Puno, Isagani Cruz, Jose Laurel, or Gregorio Perfecto. Justice Vicente V. Mendoza, for example, writes simply, yet his style has innate strength driven by its meticulousness and incisiveness, and in the end inspires as much respect as the other names I have mentioned. The same surely holds true for younger authors, any of whom could be the next V.V., and it would not do to ask them to masquerade as someone else while their style ripens and matures. Of course, when an article and especially a student article is characterized by impossible passive sentences and liberally substitutes the elusive spark of wit with legalisms such as "aforecited," "be that as it may," and the malevolent "said," it must be translated into English, and such a tone bereft of all personality cannot be immortalized in print. As Professor Sanger cautions editors:

²⁸ Perea, *supra* note 18, at 871.

²⁹ Sanger, *supra* note 2, at 525.

Many revisions seem to emanate from an unhappy idea of what legal writing, especially law review writing, ought to sound like. An antiquated sense of legal rhetoric has resulted in a bureaucratic impulse toward the impersonal, the flattened, and the pompous.³⁰

Especially atrociously written articles aside, the bulk of Volume 79's technical editing focuses on footnotes, which have a special significance in a profession that emphasizes precedent. The policy is not to merely format footnotes while taking one's turn cursing the unbelievable complexity of the *Bluebook*, but to check the accuracy of each one, down to opening physical copies of the Supreme Court Reports Annotated and identifying the exact pages an author meant to refer to.

While one primarily checks the existence and proper context of references, one may be surprised by what a disciplined check reveals. We take pains to footnote all direct quotations, for example. In Issue 1, this paid off after we found out that supposedly classic lines from the likes of Saint Thomas Aquinas and Alexander Bickel had been misquoted without citing the source, and we corrected these and placed the footnotes. Such attention to detail is, again, part of the student editorial board's job.

And even with footnoting, we maintain a level of deference. Some authors use them sparingly, while others mark very clear research trails, especially students who must clearly establish their legal bases. So long as main sources and sources of direct quotes are properly cited, we accept both styles as they are as well. What we have discouraged, however, are articles that push discussion into lengthy footnote parentheticals.

III. THE HEART OF LAW REVIEW

Having discussed Volume 79's attempt to concretize editorial policy, I cannot end without discussing how daunting a task running the JOURNAL is. It is all the more daunting because in many respects, the institution itself works to undermine student editorial boards.

Consider that a new Board is usually constituted towards the end of September, which is the thick of Bar Operations work and immediately before final exams in October. Yet, the Board that realistically convenes in November is expected to produce the year's quota of journal issues by early March, or graduating editors are not recognized at their ceremony and

³⁰ *Id.* at 520.

lowerclassmen are barred from taking the next editorial exam. Further, the Board is officially prohibited from creating a staff because faculty and alumni believe that crediting students who have not passed the editorial exam in the editorial box diminishes the exam. To appreciate the gravity of this restriction, consider that American law reviews recommend allotting *thirty hours per fifty footnotes* to be checked, and my editorial exam paper alone had 461.

Nevertheless, it is actually easy for unscrupulous student editors to beat the odds. One need only lapse into the stereotype of editing, and merely take articles and produce a stream of red marks, then cut all the corners one can and hope one graduates by the time any truly atrocious oversights are discovered – and that no one familiar with the *Bluebook* actually checks your footnote formats. Again, there is an undue focus on producing four issues of whatever quality come March that there is sometimes an impression that the truly important aspects of the process are not under scrutiny. One past JOURNAL issue, in fact, merely took all the papers from a recent conference on tuna and published them as a special issue to help meet the quota.

Student editors' simplest trick is liberally raiding the last batch of graduates for their theses and research papers, particularly those that won legal writing awards. By the second semester of the Board's term, it is a simple matter to cite these authors as fresh junior associates instead of as student authors. There is a world of difference, of course, between a student-edited publication and a student publication, and the student article ratio may well be the acid test of a Board's dedication. I emphasize, of course, that there is nothing wrong with student articles – aside from the usual nightmare of editing them – and I dream of featuring the next Antonio Carpio-esque student piece during my watch, one so legendary that the author is already sitting in the Supreme Court yet it remains standard in class reading lists.³¹ I merely wish to avoid having student pieces dominate.

I am glad that, so far, Volume 79 had the luxury of keeping very conscious of other aspects of quality. However, as I opened this piece, editing is as beautifully a human art as writing itself, and although this is

³¹ Antonio Carpio, *Intentional Torts in Philippine Law*, 47 PHIL. L.J. (1972). This student piece only takes on greater significance today because of its application to the right to privacy's Civil Law aspects, and I suppose I would consider it the Philippines' equivalent of William Prosser, *The Assault upon the Citadel (Strict Liability to the Consumer)*, 69 YALE L.J. 1099 (1960), the second-most widely cited article in the *Yale Law Journal*. Fred Shapiro, *The Most-Cited Articles from the Yale Law Journal*, 100 YALE L.J. 1449, 1461 (1991).

more difficult to see in a law review process where author-editor relationships are not as close as those in one's high school and college publications, editors should not lose sight of this beauty. While, as Sanger pointed out, the editor is often peon and proofreader, he must also be maestro, cheerleader and even evangelist in relating to the authors under his care.

One early but unforgettable Volume 79 moment came when, at our induction, Dean Raul Pangalangan held up a copy of our freshly released Professor Samilo Barlongay Political Law Memorial Issue in front of his children, seated in the audience. Atty. Randy Barlongay, who wrote the foreword, was approached by another Issue 1 author, Atty. Daniel Nicer, who told him at length how much he appreciated his father. Even a Filipino-American law student, Freddie Soto, requested the Board to dedicate his article to Professor Barlongay, even though he did not have the opportunity to study law in the Philippines. We were formally inducted in the middle of September, in the middle of the bar examinations and roughly at the time Professor Barlongay would busy himself finalizing comments on the Political Law exam.

Advising student writers through the years, I always emphasized that it is too late to begin editing when one receives the final drafts. Rather, one must proactively influence the process from the moment articles are conceived or solicited, and take opportunities to communicate with authors to build an issue-level vision, anticipating and stimulating debate in particular fields that will find its way into the JOURNAL.³² I am glad we were able to come close to such a vision for our Political Law-themed first issue, and honor our dear professor with the coin he valued the most and freely gave.

That triumph of editorial planning brought out the best of the JOURNAL's academic and human spirit, and reminded me how truly alive this institution is. The ultimate personal challenge, then, is for student editors to stay conscious that their task not a passionless, mechanical abstraction of correcting grammar and checking footnotes, but a fulfilling, dynamic partnership and human endeavor with authors striving to find their voices.³³

Practitioners often advise students, after all, to enjoy student life while they still can.

³² Nichols, *supra* note 12, at 1133.

³³ See Ronald Lansing, *The Creative Bridge Between Authors and Editors*, 45 MD. L. REV. 241 (1986).

APPENDIX A: OUTLINE FOR DELIBERATION MEMOS

Within one week from receipt of the article by the JOURNAL (not from the date of your deliberations), submit a memorandum that answers all these guide questions to the Chair, including specific proposed corrections, other recommendations, and lovelife updates.

Preliminary reminder to exercise restraint

1. When was the last time you watched *Rambo* or any similar movie?***
2. Have you read the article straight through once, without stopping to note errors?
3. What is the name, institution or office, and professional background of the author? What is the article's title? When and how was it submitted to the Journal?

Overview of the thesis and stand

4. What is the thesis statement? What are the subtheses for each section?
5. Does the author take a concrete position or stand? Or merely describe a field of law?
6. Rate the thesis itself. Is it novel? Intriguing? Timely? What impact does it make?

Review of structure

7. Describe the article's structure. How is its length distributed among subtopics?
8. Does this structure convey the thesis and position in an organized, logical manner?

Review of general logical flow and quality of supporting sources

9. Are the thesis and position generally supported by sound, credible sources?
10. Are there logical or other flaws in the thesis on the article or section level?
11. Are there landmark sources or relevant doctrines missing from the article?
12. Is the piece supported by similar/relevant articles used for background comparison?

Review of writing style and overall reader impact

13. Evaluate the style, tone and grammar, though these are rarely grounds to reject.
14. What was your initial reaction to the article? What struck you as its highlights?
15. Do you have criticism on recurring collateral (not structural) errors? Any plagiarism?

Recommendation

16. In summary, why are you recommending to:
 - a. Accept the article, with minor corrections?
 - b. Accept the article, subject to major recommended corrections by the author?
 - c. Return the article with your recommendations, without accepting it?
 - d. Reject the article outright?

*** See Juan Perea, *After Getting to Yes: A Survival Guide for Law Review Editors and Faculty Writers*, 48 FLA. L. REV. 867 (1996) (on the highly discouraged "Rambo editing").