Ang Macabagong Alpabetong Pilipinx

Kabel Mishka Ligot
Independent Writer, US, kabelmishkaligot@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://animorepository.dlsu.edu.ph/akda

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.59588/2782-8875.1008
Available at: https://animorepository.dlsu.edu.ph/akda/vol1/iss1/9

This Creative Work is brought to you for free and open access by the DLSU Publications at Animo Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Akda: The Asian Journal of Literature, Culture, Performance by an authorized editor of Animo Repository.
Ang Maca, bagong Alfabetong Pilipinx

three poems

Pilipinx

There is a short version about the Pilipinx language itself that can be discussed another time. The long version: F (along with C, Ñ, J, Q, V, X, and Z) did not exist in the native script of the Philippines (known as baybayin)—long before Spanish influence and rule. As a means to decolonize our selves and way of thinking, most things will be spelled as they are according to this notion. As for the @ [of the Pilipin@ label], it basically says that there are only Pilipino/ Pilipina people and no other gender. X is gender neutral and encompasses all genders that Pilipinx people are.

— Frequently Asked Questions, This is Not Pilipinx (http://thisisnotpilipinx.tumblr.com/faqs)

Beautiful names, italicized, slip so easily off of your tongues like water
on the feathered backs of migratory birds:

Maharlika  Makabayan  Malansang Isda
Taga-ilog  Igorot  Alibata
Bathala  Whang-od  Malakas at Maganda
Singkil  Chickenjoy  José Rizal
Kalantiaw  Tasaday  Kalayaan
Inang Bayan

Putang Ina

Pilipinx,

X
A trustworthy new import from Thomas's alphabet
Plot out the archipelago with Xs
You're Yamashita looking to bury
a myth's mouthful of fool's gold
and hope it germinates

X for a borrowed spectrum X for all gender/genders X for no
gender X for your brother's laboring hands X for your sister's
naturalization papers X for bell hooks X for Anzaldúa
and Moraga X for Césare X for Senghor, for the copperplate
inscriptions X for shards of pottery X for slam poets X for prophets
you claim to possess you X for the Manila, not yours, but of your grand-
parents X for all gay and bakla and trans transfiguring under the X of one thatched
binukot roof X for babaylan X for katalonan, bayot, binabae X for the call
centered English X for buzzfeed X for Pacquiao and Pempengco and pinay mail-order brides.com X
X X

X for the sign

you refuse to read again and again

X

the unknown

X the unfathomable, the hybrid

X the stutter, the switch the X, from x:

(x = [170 different codes])

X that has been smelted from a Butuanon funerary mask into a Spanish Infanta's diadem in a touring exhibit in a Makati consulate.

Refashioning your chains into jewelry instead of shucking them off, X stands

for the island you now see
with Magellan's parched eyes, delirious from months, land-starved.
impit

ghostbreath that usually appears
unwritten, the glottal stop, the rising silent cocking of the mouth’s rifle, or the sudden pause, an arrested exhale, (as if to say, *I am not finished speaking*) severing the utterance, clipping the curlicue of the word. *basa — basâ*: to read becomes damp, wet, fertile upon the pinch. invisible to the untrained ear, to the amateur eye, it is inaudible. it divines and divides—(“hindí kayâ!” versus “hindí kayâ”; *it is not possible! and no, i insist* it is.) for example: *nag–ibâ* atrophies, crystallizes into *nâgibâ*: there is only a subtle difference between the forces between *dismantling* and *change*. interestingly, no opening vowels exist without this unsignaled first.
baybayin

at dead quiet of night, a text from abroad: _hey, there's a white man practicing baybayin on the bay area train_. adjusting to the screen's glare, i think of other kababayan calligraphing, font-designing, showing pity to the bastardized script damned to be the stylish _what if_, the postcolonial angst of forgetting, or forging esoteric connections to a utopian past whose mighty knees folded to rigid rules, ganoid edges of the latin alphabet. dazzled by national oneness it's easy to forget. hanuno'o poets still mark their musings in a syllabary of their own, their selfhood indelible. perhaps we're just like the authors of the _doctrina cristiana, or arte de la lengua tagala_, with good hearts, but effecting the authoritative singularity of a manuscript placed in the center of a library. thus, consider this tagalog, hailed _the_ native script, overwriting a hundred utterances, codes: the kapampangan kulitan or the ivatan v, the tausug j, the meranaw ē, the kalinga f, the ibanag z, tongues all packed up, folded, placed in the storeroom. it seems we rebuild and reconstruct at random, dismantling floorboards without dusting for fingerprints first. the noble savage is literate. which savage? one who replaces? or one who dilutes old spells into tattoos? despite our nativist attempts, the symbols' sinuous waves beat upon some unreadable shore. narcissus cannot see himself in the tide. it remains elusive, like wavering vowels in god's pre-babel name, too sacred to be spoken or written in full: "_yahweh_" is said aloud only by those who do not fully believe in the word's power.