

Akda: The Asian Journal of Literature, Culture, Performance

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Preliminaries and Editor's Introduction

Dinah Tapia Roma

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AKDA

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Akda: The Asian Journal of Literature, Culture, Performance is an international peer-reviewed journal that seeks to publish cutting-edge articles in the areas and intersections of Literary, Cultural, and Performance Studies. It is an open-access journal, which comes out semi-annually, with issues in April and October. We especially welcome articles that will inaugurate new and dynamic directions for scholarly inquiry on the literary and cultural production of the Asian region. Further, in our commitment to diversity and to multicultural dialogue, we welcome contributions that may potentially be relevant to the concerns of the region from various national and cultural backgrounds. The journal is supported by a distinguished editorial board that represents the journal's scholarly depth and geographic scope.

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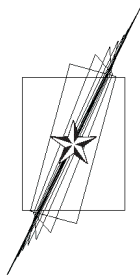
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From the Editor

In Between Series and Progress: Note to a Year-ENDER

The AKDA editorial team extends warm wishes for a fulfilling end-of-year. Assembling articles for 2023 posed significant challenges due to the array of submissions. However, overcoming these hurdles is inherent in the process. Our satisfaction lies in identifying promising and innovative writing and perspectives. These contributions and others offer readers a glimpse into the diverse inquiries pursued by scholars, academics, and creative writers in response to AKDA's priority areas—literary, cultural, and performance studies.

Hence, we return to Ninoy Aquino's assassination in 1984 through the documentary entitled "11 Days in August," the aftermath of the historic typhoon Yolanda through the poetry of Victor Sugbo, the unjust incarceration of poets Kerima Lorena Tariman (in 2000), Axel Pinpin (from 2006-2008), Ericson Acosta (from 2011-2013) and a revisioning of the significance of their poetic works in the light of the continuing fight for democracy, a reassessment of the video games as mediating Philippine source texts, and a much-awaited intervention on the pedagogical and creative modalities of the longest-running creative writing workshop in the Philippines and Asia, and, lastly, a review of Marjorie Evasco's long-standing achievement in Philippine poetry. All these make us aware of the vital role of academic inquiry and how AKDA attempts to sustain its modest contribution to knowledge building.

For this issue, we have curated five research articles focusing on media, literary, and cultural studies, along with a critical review of Marjorie Evasco's definitive work, *It's Time to Come Home*. Though these diverse pieces encompass various subjects, a common thread emerges the significance of remembering and witnessing in comprehending past events. Specifically, they highlight how remembering can prompt a renewed interest in past occurrences, encourage more persistent questioning, and foster a more rigorous critical perspective. This emphasis brings forth fresh insights from overlooked facts, granting them increased relevance for present-day readers.

Mae U. Caralde leads off this issue with her study "*11 Days in August* and the 'ghosts in the machine'." Her research explores the conceptual ideas of 'imaging back' and 'bodying back,' not just to evaluate the pivotal moments of Ninoy Aquino's 1984 assassination, but also to emphasize how the documentary *11 Days in August* embodies the processes of documentation and editing as representing a form of 'political mimesis.' The film effectively mediates the crisis of that period and subsequent events by highlighting the internalization process of both the 'sentient' bodies depicted on screen and those of the 'real' spectators.

In the research article "Pag-Igpaw sa Inip at Inis ng Pagkakapiit: Talambuhay sa Anyo ng Talinghaga't Taludturan," author Kevin P. Armingol does justice to the lives and aspirations of poets Kerima Lorena Tariman, Alex Pinpin, and Ericson Acosta who were imprisoned in different years over the last two decades. By adapting prison literary criticism, Armingol gives credence to the long days of these former political prisoners and likewise depicts the "prison" space as fruitful and significant despite the uncertainties and hurt they experienced along the way. Viewing their poetry as representational of the emergent "prison literature," their works and the continuing struggle for democratic space are afforded the long overdue legitimacy they deserve.

Jessa Amarille's piece, 'narampang nga mga takna... nangangaliding nga mga higayon': Memory, Nostalgia, Love, and Loss in Victor Sugbo's *Taburos Han Dagat*, presents a timely exploration into the aftermath of the historic typhoon Yolanda (internationally known as Haiyan). The significance of this article is not solely due to Yolanda marking its 10th year this year, but also because Sugbo's poems serve as poignant reflections on how nostalgia emerges from the tragic losses inflicted by the typhoon. The resilience observed stems from emotions forged amidst these profound absences, lingering as people grapple with the memory of such overwhelming losses.

Amarille's perspective, noting that Sugbo's poems may not be inherently ecocritical, should not necessarily be seen as a critique of Sugbo's poetry. Instead, we interpret Amarille's essay as reinforcing Sugbo's stature as a poet deeply connected to environmental causes. Sugbo achieves this by encapsulating experiences of loss and trauma among the survivors of Yolanda, demonstrating a profound commitment to environmental concerns through evocative expressions and experiences.

Alana Leilani C. Narciso takes on a controversial topic in her paper entitled "Contact Zones, Discursive Spaces: The Case of the Silliman University National Writers Workshop," which is part of her dissertation. Narciso provides a counterclaim to the allegations made by writers like Conchitina Cruz and Gina Apostol that Silliman University's National Summer Writers Workshop (NUSWW) is an offshoot of the US Cold War propaganda. Furthermore, it is argued that the workshop pedagogy of New Criticism stifles much of the talent of young writers as it still promotes colonial and classist ideas of language and writing.

Narciso's study claims the workshop's significance by asserting that its space should be seen more like Mary Louie Pratt's "contact zone," where much discussion can occur, and ideas can be weighed and tested. Narciso substantiates her claims by taking specific sessions from the 2019 and 2021 workshop years and outlining several issues and concerns related to the works in English and Cebuano. While it may be said that these matters were not fully resolved, it could be maintained that a rich and informative exchange ensued. These exchanges further allowed the emergence of ideas related to craft and writing. In this way, the workshop can be considered an interpretive community, as Narciso claims, and also a site of negotiation.

In its 61st year, the NUSWW is still regarded as a necessary "rite of passage" among young writers and serves as a community where lifelong friendships are often forged.

Philip Adrian L. Gungab's article "Adarna: Remediating Philippine Source Texts Through Video Games" interestingly links aspects of media and literary studies regarding how video games "remediate" Philippine source texts. Through the theoretical framework of "remediation" advanced by media critics Jay Bolter and Richard Grusins, Gungab attests to the enduring power of Philippine folklore, such as *Ibong Adarna*, which was adapted into a video game in 2015. Refashioning this folklore into a digital game also reveals how video games offer an added dimension to storytelling.

Finally, for the review section, Cebuano poet and critic Ester Tapia examines Marjorie Evasco's poetry collection aptly entitled *It's Time to Come Home: New and Collected Poems* (2023). The book was released in time for the poet's 70th year and is seen by Evasco herself as the outcome of her life's poetic work.

Tapia refers to the critical writings by Resil Mojares and Merlie Alunan on Cebuano literature to contextualize Evasco's unique poetic qualities and contribution. For Mojares, Cebuano's poetry inheres are reflections of social interaction. Alunan shares the same findings but cites that the rise in female poets in Cebuano poetry has introduced a much-awaited change in Cebuano's poetic landscape.

Tapia locates Marjorie Evasco's work within the continuum of change. Tapia identifies Evasco's unique qualities by focusing on a particular section in the Evasco collection entitled *Ochre Tones* (1999) and "uncoupling" the poems from their English original. Tapia said, "I gave myself the luxury of focusing on the Cebuano poems and consciously uncoupling them from their original pieces in English." By this gesture, Tapia strongly senses the "gentleness" and "silences" that permeate Evasco's poems in Cebuano, as found in the section "Tando-Huni." Tapia observes a quiet sensuousness that evokes ethereal realms as well. In the end, Tapia concludes how Evasco exceptionally establishes an *ars poetica* through her poems in Cebuano—one that "concord between temporality and immortality" where death and life are not a duality but one that undergirds the act of creation.

On this note of creation, AKDA releases its new issue. Your continued support will bring us more into succeeding discoveries and foster an enriching dialogue within the vibrant academic community. Thank you for being part of our journey.

Dinah T. Roma
Editor-in-Chief