

# Introduction

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## AKDA: THE ASIAN JOURNAL OF LITERATURE, CULTURE, PERFORMANCE



The De La Salle University's Department of Literature welcomes everyone to its new journal AKDA: The Asian Journal of Literature, Culture, Performance.

The launch of this inaugural issue would not have been as meaningful without the long period of conceptualization that took into account the radical changes occurring in the arts and the humanities in the global higher education. We began with the concern of what would distinguish AKDA from others currently proliferating the country's institutions of higher education. The primary challenge that confronted us was how best to respond to the local and international call for a publication that would innovatively engage in the production of knowledge.

Foremost, our editorial team considered what the DLSU's Department of Literature can offer alongside emergent fields. Expansive was the word that came to mind. And by the term, we mean not only for it to convey a geographic intent but one that would encourage explorations farther afield. Much as we were wary that the term 'Asian' would be construed as homogenizing the geographical field it aims to represent, we felt it more as a point of departure, an invitation to cross borders, to navigate terrains, to imagine new ones.

What guided us along the way was the currency which research, teaching, and learning presently aspire for—interdisciplinarity. While trends in research and publication in the international arena still acknowledge specific approaches to knowledge formation, there has been an insistent call for multiple perspectives in fully grasping broader and more complex issues and concerns that beset today's world. There is a need for openness, synergy, collaboration.

As we took each strategic step toward this direction, we realized that what would make for a worthwhile difference in the journal's scope is to build on those fields that have continually been productive disciplinary platforms for the department while registering a claim to emergent fields.

Literature and culture are the key realms that have long defined the breadth of many journals. So it has been for us. Literary, creative, and cultural studies have been the research and publishing sites of many of our faculty and students, and it is through these disciplinary locations that many have likewise taken off into other pursuits.

The addition of Performance Studies is something we strongly feel responds to the dictate of the times. And we are glad to pioneer in this endeavor. 'Performance' has at times been described as 'nebulous,' caught in the conflicts of its own theorizing, a way of justifying its existence in the midst of financial constraints in the academe. But its importance lies in taking our usual notion of 'performance' away from the bright lights of the stage right into the whole gamut of performative occurrences of everyday. Its forerunners may have yet to agree on the basic tenets that would subject 'performance' to a disciplinary category, but it is basically this quality of the incomprehensible, translated as a vigilant resistance to fixity, that make for it a much needed lens in examining everything in a country, culture, and history such as the Philippines.

It is from these fertile grounds of diversity, debate, and discovery that AKDA is eager to catch the multiplicity of voices across the fields. We are excited at the prospect of how they may resonate with each other and converge into new directions of seeing, probing, creating.

That we have finally decided on the word AKDA, a Filipino word for 'authorship', embodies a happy confluence of significations—'textual', 'cultural', and 'performative' authorship that lend to further productive permutations. That they flow into and out of each other, that they are in flux rather than falling into order, ready to blur borders, and persist in questioning what is accepted knowledge is our vision for AKDA's future.

It is in this spirit of dynamism that we likewise deal with the more practical concerns of sectioning the journal. By opting for simple bylines of 'Articles', 'Perspectives', and the 'Creative', we allow for the possibility of texts as being co-equal to each other, defying the burden of rigid divisions.

Lastly and, more importantly, we can only thank the contributors of this inaugural issue who were generous to entrust their works to us. The selections represent various areas of inquiry, exciting

explorations in their interdisciplinary best. Toshi Pau's study entitled "Takeshi Kawamura's *Tokyo Trauma: Performing Gender and Sexuality*" (with translation of the play *Tokyo Trauma, Act 8* provided by the writer himself) breathes life anew into a modernist anti-war play by the Japanese playwright Kawamura in order to recuperate the Asian body from Western hegemonic structures.

Rina Garcia Chua's article "The Surviving Sunset of Manila Bay and the Ethics of Environmental Justice in Philippine Ecopoetry" asserts the power of poetry to mediate in the environmental problem as it brings issues to a personal and aesthetic front, a capacity other modes of intervention do not possess the language for. Reagan Romero Maiquez's essay examines the concept of 'flow' as can be glimpsed in Cebu's Sinulog festival through the lens of performance studies and auto-ethnography. Antonette Talaue-Arogo's work, which is part of longer study on postcolonialism, is an appraisal of the critical writings of J. Neil Garcia that serve as takeoff point in the survey of the country's larger postcolonial literary landscape.

In the Perspectives section, J. Neil Garcia's essay "Myth and the Creative Imagination" revisits the Panay Bukidnon's epic series to highlight how its mythic material continually inspires artists into creative production. Fidelito Cortes's "The Poetry of Everyday Things" is an exegetic reflection of how the personal and political were the fertile ground of five poems in his recent collection *Everyday Things* (UST Publishing House, 2010).

We are also privileged to have in our 'Creative' section the works of Kabel Mishka Ligot whose ingenuous poetic work on the Philippines' old syllabary defamiliarizes linguistic space both orally and in print, the fine fiction of Richard Cornelio, and the poignant poems of the versatile and prolific poet Allan Popa.

We hope that reading this inaugural issue affords the same rewarding experience we ourselves enjoyed as we first came upon the submissions. For AKDA's succeeding issues, we eagerly await contributions from scholars, researchers, and creative practitioners.

This is our first harvest, and we invite everyone to look forward with us to seasons of flourish.

**Dinah Roma**  
Editor-in-Chief

# AKDA

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