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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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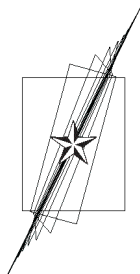
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From the Editor

More than serendipity or expediency, AKDA's current issue is a purposeful response to the continuing interrogation of sociohistorical phenomena that continue to impinge on the present. The articles in this issue offer different critical lenses into the intersection between history and literature. These two disciplines have long been intertwined for the possibilities of representation and truth. While history has long been attributed for its claim on facts and objectivity, literature's power is its ability to generate insights that illumine historical processes and actors. There are more enough assertions presented in this publication that attest to the myriad junctures of history and literature as they occur in the Philippines.

If one attempts to trace a historical line through some of the pressing topics foregrounded in this issue, it will have to hark back to the bleak and violent period of Martial Law in the 1970s. A reader would know that much of the country's dark legacy has not been made to account for the atrocities experienced by its victims. The Philippines was ruled by a dictator whose reign could no longer hold together a nation clamoring for change. But as the growing dissidence threatened the dictatorial regime, it fought back with the only way a faltering state could do—wreak havoc on the people's lives. The vast majority of the people then lived in fear of being summarily arrested and 'salvaged' (the word that came to be known for summary execution). The writ of habeas corpus was suspended to legitimize disappearances of people who were vocal against the establishment.

But, then again, literature is an uncompromising witness. The power it wields is such that the past is its abundant muse. We begin with the work of Epifanio San Juan who is an internationally renowned scholar, writer, and public intellectual. San Juan's article in this issue—"Lakas ng Feministang Makabayan Laban sa Patriyarkang Diktadurya ng Imperyo: Pagsubok sa Interpretasyon ng Dekado '70 ni Lualhati Bautista"—focuses on one of the most emblematic novels written about the martial law period. Its protagonist is Amanda Bartolome who struggles with the onerous roles she plays in life—women, wife, and mother. That she carries out these roles under the most repressive period of the country's history and with five boys to raise only means a constant fear of living on edge. Bautista's novel, however, convincingly portrays how repression finds its own release. As the period's violence seeps into the family's daily lives, the entire family is transformed. Jules, the oldest of the five boys, finally realizes that to be free is to gain a voice. Here is the crux of the narrative that San Juan forcefully argues for. Amanda evolves from that of being compliant to dissident, and this transformation blurs the lines that separate the domestic (private sphere) from the political (public sphere).

San Juan astutely recontextualizes the novel as a reminder of what our history and literature demand from the exigencies of the past. With a Marcos regime in place once more, there are more than enough lessons to tell us that another grim period may not be a remote possibility. San Juan admonishes too well the public that the chronicles of a nation's past is well chronicled in the pages of fiction.

Katherine Ojano's "Myth, Dream, and Resistance in Ninotchka Rosca and Emmanuel Lacaba's Fictions" fills in the lacuna of critical storehouse on resistance literature against the Martial Law period. Ojano discusses Ninotchka Rosca's *The Monsoon Collection* (1983) and Emmanuel Lacaba's *Salvaged Prose* (1992) as "mythopoeic" gestures that situate their work within the conflicts of modernity against a collective consciousness that limns memories of hope. Noteworthy are Ojano's fine observations of the distinct qualities found in the writings of Rosca (mythopoeic) and Lacaba (oneiric) that should render their fictional works as central texts in Philippine resistance literature.

Ojano opens an impressive network of references with her mention of contemporary scholars in the fields of literary and cultural studies. By citing the theoretical works of Barbara Harlow, Ghasan Kanafani, Benita Parry, Soledad Reyes (among others), Ojano inevitably contends how literature as a rhizomatic response arising from the people's democratic struggle is an intellectual priority.

That literature provides a lens for historical awareness is proven again by Laurence Marvin S. Castillo in the article “Fictionalizing Error in Edberto Villaga’s *Barikada*.” *Barikada* (2013) is the second novel of Edberto Villegas who is considered a prominent figure of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). The novel narrates the misguided attempts of a group of urban revolutionaries at an uprising that was not endorsed by the main leadership. This dovetails with the post-EDSA revolutionary context in which assassination units (sparrows) were fielded to target abusive police and government officials. This historical novel provides a backdrop to a range of issues central to revolutionary struggle, some of which include the miscalculations and blunders.

Castillo cites the writer, critic, poet, and revolutionary Gelacio Guillermo in arguing for the value of historical novels like the *Barikada*. He asserts that fiction does not only chronicle actual events. More importantly, they become a source of learning, a curbing of excesses, that is integral to the self-correcting discipline and eventual success of the movement. In the end, Castillo remarks on the “revolutionary subject” as one that is not exempted from the guidance of “errors as experiential resources.”

“Freedom and Complicity: The Case of *Horison* and *Solidarity*, two CFF Journals in Southeast Asia” by Amado Anthony G. Mendoza III is a welcome step in unraveling the political and social stratagems by which the Cold War had been entrenched in many parts of the world. Mendoza begins with a brief historical background of the creation of the anti-communist Congress for Cultural Freedom (CFF) in West Berlin in 1950. Its goal is to counter the rise of USSR in the world. With its substantial financial support from the CIA, the CFF did not waste time in reaching out to writers and cultural organizations in 35 countries that could align with their objectives.

Mendoza’s analytical work recognizes the beginnings of studies on the CFF especially as it involves the organization’s political and economic machineries. His comparative study on the literary journals of Indonesia’s *Horison* and Philippine’s *Solidarity*, however, fills in a missing link to the existing scholarship on the CFF. As Mendoza takes a step further by spotlighting the two journals, he opens a unique vantage point from which to scrutinize how anti-communist discourses were subtly embedded in the pages of supposed literary magazines.

In “Kritika ng Kritika ng Post-Kolonyalismo: Ang Abstraktong Universalismo ni Vivek Chibber,” Ramon Guillermo’s article illuminates the ramifications of recent Western intellectual history by looking at the relations of Marxism with postcolonialism (PC) that emerged in the Western academe and that of *pantayong pananaw* (PP) in the Philippines. Guillermo examines the trajectories of these two theoretical stances and identifies junctures of thought. The remarkable intellectual Vivek Chibber, a sociologist by discipline, surfaces as the one to intervene in shaping the current thoughts on the critique of postcolonialism from a Marxist standpoint. His experiences as an Indian migrant to the US richly provided him with more than enough experiential resources to work from. Guillermo recognizes that he and Chibber both use the Marxist terms of “class” and “relations of production” to drive their analysis of socioeconomic relations. Expansive and in-depth, Guillermo’s work on Vibber’s critique on PC and his own PP is indeed a veritable venture into the high ground of Marxist intellectual sway.

Shirley Lua’s succinct book review is a fitting conclusion to AKDA’s current issue. *Ang Daigdig ng mga Api: Remembering a Lost Film* (2022) by Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. is a homage to a lost time. Though not quite so. As Lua points out at the start of her review, the demise of Filipino films can be attributed to the industry’s failure to anticipate its value for the future generation. Citing the prophetic tale of National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera on how films, due to a lack of programs and mechanisms for their documentation and preservation, will simply be read about instead of watched. Yet, history fulfills its role in various paradoxical ways. And with the likes of Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr., on whom the remains of the film *Ang Daigdig ng mga Api* have been bestowed by no less than his father, history comes alive through a memoir. What results is an admirable look into a past when film is a powerful medium of social representation.

To quote Lua, “to remember is to dream that the treasure is out there.” All we need to do is open ourselves to the possibility of encountering them. And we hope that through this issue, we have given a bit of that.

Dinah T. Roma
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