

EDITOR'S PREFACE



Welcome to our first, special guest-edited issue of ALON! When colleagues José B. Capino and Martin F. Manalansan IV presented to us the thought of granting them guest editorship of a special issue on the “Marcosian Era,” we did not hesitate at all to say yes. A good number of us—scholars based in North America, Europe, and Asia—still connect with such a recent historical period through our works and family migration accounts, and many of us have indeed experienced that era personally despite having memories of it that are not so fond. I, myself, remember this era in connection with the brutal murder of a beloved high school classmate named Luis Manuel Mijares, known to both Manalansan and me as “Boyet.” Back in 1977, Boyet was allegedly targeted by Marcos’ supporters in retaliation for Boyet’s father’s public exposure of the dictatorship’s atrocities. This, for sure, is just one of so many tragic lives victimized during that horrible period.

Scholars based in the Philippines, I would assume, may have a more palpable relationship to that past than those of us elsewhere, now even more compounded by the recent declaration of Bongbong Marcos as a candidate for the next presidential elections. This so-called Marcosian Era originated from 1965, climaxed during the imposition of Martial Law in 1972, and continued until the EDSA Revolution of 1986 when People Power finally succeeded in ousting the dictator. Writing that just made me shudder at the thought of so many people’s lives affected, mostly tragically, under the ravages of authoritarianism and massive theft.

So why and how do we deal with the Marcosian Era, 35 years after its downfall? Other than encouraging you to ruminate on the uses of the past or, technically, to explore the nuances of *narrating* such a sordid past, I’d like to invite you to ponder these questions with Capino and Manalansan, along with their five authors who comprise this, ALON’s special issue. Capino is a narrative and cinema studies scholar whose most recent book is entitled *Martial Law Melodrama*, while Manalansan is a cultural anthropologist of sexuality, gender, migration, and globalization, whose book on *Global Divas* continues to be required reading especially on issues of Filipinx transnationalism. Their introduction and stewardship of the essays in our main section,

as well as the essays themselves, will altogether surely rouse your thinking of Marcos, past and present.

Our Reviews section continues our special issue topic with a review of a book on Filipino American labor activism, a chapter of which analyzes a legal campaign that resulted in finding Ferdinand Marcos guilty of masterminding the murders of union organizers Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes. Following this, we offer a review of a 2019 documentary entitled *Aswang*, which uses the mythic monster as a metaphor for the recurring violence of Philippine politics, and another book, *Women Against Marcos*, a collection of stories by Filipinx and Filipinx American women “who fought a dictator.”

In Leese Street Studio, we highlight the artwork of Johanna Poethig, an accomplished muralist and performance artist, as well as Professor Emerita of visual and public art at California State University, Monterey Bay, among many other titles. An image of her “people power” mural (painted with Vicente Clemente and Presco Tabios) in San Francisco graces our cover, with other parts of it, including a photo during the mural’s dedication and a video documentary of its making, are also found in the issue.

We underscore the short essay contributions of two esteemed luminaries in our Forum section, one of them, Leni Robredo, current vice president of the Republic of the Philippines and candidate for its presidency in 2022, who has a piece about the enduring lessons and legacies of people power. And the other is Ninotchka Rosca, famed author and human rights activist, whose writings mostly center on activism during the Martial Law years and beyond, and who now implores us to consider that “ousting one man is not enough.”

We hope that this special issue of texts, voices, and images that we and our guest editors collected to ruminate on the Marcosian era stimulates your thinking and re-thinking about history, the power of the people, and the limits of singular authoritarian rule, including its enduring impact on our lives here and elsewhere.

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