

# EDITOR'S PREFACE



**T**his issue of ALON is a “lean” one. We’ve been worried about the dearth of individual article submissions to our journal over the past year, but we collectively decided that we should still push forward even with just one essay without apologizing for it. We wanted to accept and recognize the reality that we live in a moment of uncertainty that’s quite different from any that we’ve experienced before. And to be sure, the writing communities that we’re part of have not been immune to the ravages of our pandemic. When we started putting out ALON last year, we did benefit from the spate of submissions that fell on our laps right before Covid-19 hit us. So, owing to the ten- to twelve-month editorial process that our manuscripts go through from submission to publication, our first year was indeed bursting. But then came the catastrophe. And the lull. Hence this one-essay issue. When I spoke to other journal editors about our situation, I found out that we were not alone. The worlds of professional academic publishing that comprise our larger community are certainly in some form of deep distress.

Nevertheless, ALON is now a year older, and we remain committed to pursuing our mission of being our fields’ premier forum for ideas, conversations, and dreams, no matter what. This ethos is no less palpable in David Siglos’ essay, “*Walang Arte: Gina Apostol’s Insurrecto and Filipino Non-Coherence.*” Offering a compelling take on what he refers to as a “Filipino repertoire of style” to negotiate the violence of translation by way of language playfulness, Siglos provides a deft reading of Apostol’s text and contexts in their most illuminating modes. This essay is an invitation, as well as a provocation, to imagine differently how speaking through and across translation is an exercise of stylistic skill that can be so subversive in its subtle ways. I myself, including our reviewers, were profoundly taken by Siglos’ provocative twist of *walang arte* as an analogue to Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns’ *puro arte*, so we anticipate that this will similarly affect you so.

Leese Street Studio features the work of Marlo De Lara, whose creative expression focuses on the intersections of sound, visual, and storytelling forms and objects. In this issue, we offer three sound renditions that she did to ruminate on survival, indigeneity, and collective labor. This is something different that we’re delighted and excited to present to ALON readers: opportunities to “experience” De Lara’s

sound performance by way of several links to the audio files of her work. We pair these sound elements with some visual representations as well, one of which, an image of a *banig* (traditional Filipino mat), graces our cover.

In our Reviews section, we offer also a different, though not unusual, practice of appraising scholarship. For this issue, we invited two scholars to write review essays on a common book that they read, *A Nation on the Line: Call Centers as Postcolonial Predicaments in the Philippines* (Duke 2018), by Jan M. Padios. Then, we asked Padios to respond in writing to the two reviews that were made available to her prior to publication, and to record an interview with Reviews editor Antonio Tiongson, Jr. for an extended engagement with her work, including her views about the research and publication process (especially addressing the unique situations of junior faculty), as well as the possibilities of incorporating creative writing into one's academic scholarship. The complete recording of that interview is available through a link that we provide in the section. We hope this collection of ruminations regarding an important work in Filipinx and Diaspora studies enriches and deepens your understanding of the layered intersections of global labor and postcoloniality.

Our Forum segment, titled "Chikadora Chururut," may be the one that's quite bursting with more energy than usual, owing to the enthusiastic leadership and advocacy of its editor, Joseph Allen Ruan-to-Ramirez, who took on the task of pursuing varied takes on Filipinx trans/queer or *beki* social formations, processes, advocacies, and genealogies. Seven pieces provide us with distinctive and lavishly discursive incitements to consider, engage, and question the otherwise hidden or suppressed meanings of who we are and where we've been, from the perspectives of those who have oftentimes spoken from the margins. We decided to leave these works as they are, several of them replete with expressions in their original forms — untranslated, that is, so that, somehow, we get accosted by the sheer power of language to hide, magnify, or play with meanings. What we may end up feeling after we've read them will most certainly include the desire to know, applaud, and hope for more of what needs to be further represented and recognized.

Looking at the spread of multiple and diverse knowledges in this issue — an essay on the intricacy and subtleness of playful translation, some amazing sound and image files from a one-of-a-kind artist/scholar, a group reading of a common book with a featured author interview, and a forum on *bekiness* — I'm actually hesitating now to describe this ALON iteration as a lean one! So many of us now are bent on writing about creating and spreading joy and hope in the midst of, or in spite of, our great pandemic. We offer you our own version of

pockets of creative and exuberant energies and possibilities within this ALON issue, as we hope for our continuing endurance.

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