



Center for Philippine Studies

School of Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Present . . .



Clenched Fists and Yellow Ribbons

Philippine Poetry in Ilokano, Tagalog and English
during Martial Law (1966-1986)

By

Dr. Lilia Q. Santiago

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University of Hawaii at Manoa

ABOUT THE LECTURE:

The philosopher Plato once declared the poet's life was incompatible with the demands of the "philosopher king"; thus, the poet needed to be "exiled" from the Republic. Many poets in martial law Philippines (1966 – 1986) endured a fate like those of the poets in Plato's Republic; many were banished from the islands, were imprisoned or even killed by the regime. Their voices and writings however resonated throughout the archipelago and their vision of a free Philippines eventually contributed to the dismantling of the dictatorship.

This presentation deals with aspects of Philippine protest poetry during martial law and how poets in three major languages of the country, while writing in different tongues, spoke with one voice against militarization and dictatorship. The presentation will examine how poetry, itself a contested terrain in the production of knowledge, becomes partisan and significant as a communicative tool toward political action and social change.

The icons of the clenched fists and yellow ribbons describe the ideological conglomeration of political forces that found themselves using modes of circumvention, rebellion and negotiation to create a historical conjuncture that can only be described as one of the most memorable moments in modern Philippine history- the EDSA People Power revolt of 1986. This uprising can aptly be called "a poetic moment" which Filipinos can share with the world.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER:

Lilia Quindoza Santiago is Assistant Professor of Ilokano language and literature at the Department of Indo Pacific Languages and Literatures, UH Manoa. She was herself a political prisoner of the martial law government and was detained at the military camp of Fort Bonifacio before joining the faculty of the University of the Philippines. She teaches and writes in Ilokano, Tagalog and English and has received awards for her numerous books and works, e.g., *Sa Ngalan ng Ina* (In the Name of the Mother) *100 Years of Philippine Feminist Poetry*, published in two languages by the University of the Philippines Press. She received the *Makata ng Taon* (Poet of the Year) in 1989 and also given a *Plaque of Recognition* by the *Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino* (Commission on National Language). Her research studies include the publication *Mga Panitikan ng Pilipinas* (Philippine Literatures) and *Sexuality and the Filipina*.

February 24, Wednesday

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. – Moore Hall 319 (Tokioka Room)

Free and open to the public

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