

May JURILLA (SOAS)

Entertainment after the war: *Aliwan* and the Tagalog novel

In the early twentieth century, the Tagalog novel made more progress as a commercial commodity than as a literary form. It thrived in the marketplace more as serials in periodicals than as books. With the emergence of weekly magazines in the 1920s, the novels that came to be produced generally conformed to what the masses wanted and not what they possibly needed to read. What appealed to them were moralistic melodramas, or stories with stereotypical characters and romantic or sensationalistic plots that offered total entertainment, some moral instruction, and nothing more.

A peculiar little publication that appeared after World War II attempted to make a difference for the Tagalog novel. *Aliwan* (Entertainment), which ran from 1945 to 1948, served as a venue where the Tagalog novel could make the transition from a form of commercial entertainment into a form of meaningful literature. What allowed the publication to perform such a function was its duality: *Aliwan* was a mass-produced serial that was published in book form. It featured only full-length fiction—only Tagalog novels.

This study examines the case of *Aliwan*. The publication offers a unique perspective on the conditions and circumstances of literary publishing in the Philippines after World War II, a crucial period in the history of the nation. More importantly, it has much to tell specifically about the publishing history of Tagalog novels both as serials in periodicals and as books.