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## FOREWORD

Volume 3, Issue 1 is a collection of three research articles, three creative works, and an invited artwork that reaffirms PRISMA's crucial role in providing a space for amplifying narratives and voices historically relegated to the margins. Through qualitative inquiry, oral histories, film, and poetry, the authors and the artist in this issue highlighted their collective struggles to break free from the normative structures that regulate their being, dictate the course of their lives, and shape gendered experiences.

Taken together, the three qualitative research studies in this issue engage critically the historical, cultural, and institutional dimensions of power relations and inequality, broadening the understanding of inherited assumptions about women and gender in the Philippine context.

Drawing from a decolonial feminist perspective and indigenous folklore, the first research article, *"Mandirigma and Babaylan: Deconstructing the Patriarchal Society of the Philippines,"* by Maria Peny A. Lumbea, reminds readers of what women occupy in ancestral knowledge systems as revered political authorities, spiritual leaders, and active contributors in community life. By revisiting the Maria Clara archetype through the images of Urduja and Abadeja, the study illustrates that Filipino women's identity has always been diverse, complex, and dynamic. The second research article, *"Analyzing Women-Led Resistance and Political Education in Sr. Stella L. Through Iris Marion Young's Model of Inclusive Democracy,"* authored by Ma. Zenia Miltante Rodriguez centers on the enduring relevance of film as a historical artifact of a collective resistance against an oppressive regime. By recollecting Sr. Stella L.'s political awakening from mere religious devotion as a product of critical reflection and civic engagement, the article, through a feminist lens, endeavored to examine women-led resistance during the Martial Law period. Meanwhile, Dominic De los Angeles Yasay's *"Undermined and Interrupted: Mansplaining as Epistemic Exclusion in Academia"* is the last research article in this issue. Through the lived experiences of two cisgender women faculty members in a university, the study contributes to the continuing call for inclusive and gender responsive policies and workplaces that genuinely recognize and value women's academic achievements, skills, and contributions. Exposing the ill effects of mansplaining, Yasay described how these academics navigated gendered communications and power relations through subtle negotiation of authority, patronizing explanations, and interruptions. Tied to systemic institutional, social, and cultural inequalities, the study reveals that mansplaining normalizes the invisibility of women's capacities and devaluation of their expertise.

Accompanying these qualitative inquiries are three poetic expressions grounded on gendered experiences. Each poem provides glimpses of the authors' journey from silence to self-awareness and collective action. Transforming profoundly personal narratives that are considered

political, these verses become legitimate forms of knowledge production, not detached from a broader social structure that perpetuates discrimination and oppression.

The first literary contribution is a poem in Filipino, “*Ang Walong Kulay ng Ako*,” by Bajo Evangelista, in which eight colors, including the rainbow, are used as expressions of emotions, identity, and liberation. This poetic narrative tells a story of an LGBTQIA+ individual’s voyage to self-affirmation. Rather than withholding painful experiences in challenging heteronormative expectations associated with sex assigned at birth, Evangelista exposes the realities of gender dissonance, social exclusion, and rejection and asserts the fundamental right of every person to dignity, recognition, and self-determination. The second literary piece transforms oral history and indigenous modes of remembering into a poetic form. “*Arranged Marriage*,” by Shania S. Lucyao, brings to light the narrative of her own mother, Dumngay, a Kankana-ey woman confronted by an arranged marriage tradition, *tomok*. Borne out of communal land-based obligations, the poem uncovers the intricacies of indigenous cultural life, which is often suppressed in dominant narratives and essentialized by colonial representations of indigenous peoples and women as passive recipients of tradition. As a contribution to postcolonial historiography, Lucyao’s article attempts to bridge the material and social landscape of a patriarchal kinship system and how asserting one’s agency in challenging these very structures could become pathways to expanding possibilities and emancipation. The third and last poetic sequence, “*Tracing Womanhood in Three Movements: Reflections on Labor, Identity, and the Quiet Transformations of Aging*,” by Teresita T. Rungduin and Agatha Therese Rungduin, is about intergenerational expectations that accompany womanhood and motherhood that are often unspoken but tacitly expected. Emphasizing reciprocal valuing shaped by memory, the allegories of quiet longings, contemplation, and joys, the poem is an invitation to journey through the seasons of life as women make sense of the shifting expectations and evolving relationships through the eyes of daughters, younger selves, and aging selves.

Between concealment and vulnerability, an invited cover page by Cathy Lasam Ballo, “*Palabas*,” echoes the tensions of traversing the notions of motherhood, revealing both precarity and tenacity. By transforming embodied experiences of caring for a child with autism, the artist informs the readers that everyday life is a site of critical reflection necessary for expanding conversations on gender, inclusion, and acceptance.

Through these contributions, PRISMA has once more become a pedagogical space broadening our understanding of the inextricable relationship of education and gender, inviting us to view this relationship as both a scholarly pursuit and a practice of liberation in the Philippine context. The six articles and the artwork in this issue are a verification of the enduring intensity of voices that refuse to be muted by gendered expectations, social injustices, and structural inequalities, reminding all of us that education is a remarkable tool and catalyst for social transformation. Like a glowing light, may this issue continue to illuminate our learning

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and help us realize that education is not confined to the classroom and textbooks alone but is present in the very lives of people, demonstrating how gendered ways of being are also sites of learning, strength, and hope.

**Excelsa C. Tongson**

*Editor-in-Chief*

*June 30, 2026*

**Declaration of Generative AI in Scientific Writing:**

During the preparation of this foreword, I used Grammarly to correct grammar and spelling and paraphrase some ideas. After using this AI tool, I reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for this foreword.

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