



Crimetime: Toughness, Gender, and Genre in Philippine Detective Fiction

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Abstract. This article reads Maria L.M. Fres-Felix's collection of stories featuring Filipina detective SJ Tuason, *Crimetime*, to explore Tuason's performance of gender-neutral toughness as a policing mechanism in Quezon City. Tuason uses toughness to expose and combat the culturally specific systems of corruption in the Philippines that contribute to antifeminist structures and violent crimes against women.

Given detective fiction's long history, it is notable each time a new national literary tradition in the genre emerges. Such an occurrence allows the practitioners of that nascent tradition to create new spaces, drawing from the endemic sociopolitical factors that differentiate national detective fictions while still situating their works in relationship to extant traditions. As one of the first texts in the emerging genre of Philippine detective fiction, Maria L.M. Fres-Felix's *Crimetime* positions itself as offering an expressly non-Western viewpoint on criminality, particularly violent crimes against women, in the Philippines. In particular, Fres-Felix's detective protagonist SJ Tuason engages in a performance of gender-neutral toughness, in opposition to the traditionally gendered toughness on display in much of the Western tradition. Fres-Felix establishes gender-neutral toughness as a toughness devoid of, or even set in opposition to, detective fiction's conventional displays of masculinized or feminized toughness and their attendant gender norms. Fres-Felix uses the cultural context of crime in the Philippines to create a space for a different version of toughness as a mechanism for combatting the political corruption and antifeminist cultural practices that contribute to violence against women. This article works to highlight those differentiations through

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