

**Serrano, Vincenz**, University of Manchester, United Kingdom

**City Limits and Time Lines: Montage in Nick Joaquin's *Almanac for Manileños***

My presentation will examine Nick Joaquin's *Almanac for Manileños* (1979) using Walter Benjamin's notion of montage. Joaquin's text includes various genres—calendars, horoscopes, weather reports, and essays—assembled under the sign of the almanac.

I will focus on the calendars and essays and demonstrate how Joaquin's method of historicising the nation is shot through with contradiction. On one hand, calendars offer a miniature yet monolithic view of Philippine history, akin to Benjaminian “monuments to historical consciousness.”

On the other hand, montage and synchronicity are the structural principles for the essays: each of the almanac's 12 chapters corresponds to a month; each chapter features short essays from Philippine history. These essays are assembled not by way of historical linearity, but by calendrical coincidence: essays in one chapter are associated with that month.

I will demonstrate how the essays counterpoint with the calendar: by placing discrepant topics side by side, Joaquin—in the manner of Benjaminian montage—allows for surprising temporal combinations. Hence, Joaquin's bifurcated view of Philippine temporality—monolithic yet montage-like—offers a new way, using an old genre, of representing national history.