

Depicting Gender

Gender has been the focus of intensive and extensive theorizing and research on communication and media. Gender has been dissected across waves of feminist theorizing, by canonical studies on discourses about and portrayals of gender in various media, and in newer research on the intersectionality between gender and other concepts such as class, race, nationality, religion, among others. Gender as a concept has also expanded from traditional binaries to a spectrum that acknowledges the nuances of human sexuality and identity.

Notwithstanding the rich literature on gender, however, there remains a paucity in its study and theorizing in the Philippines. Here in the *Plaridel Journal*, for example, a simple search for the keyword “gender” results only in three articles: Marlon James Sales’ “Lalaki Dao, Babae Sha: Meteor Garden and Its Gender(ed) Representations in Retrospect” in 2004, Munir Maimunah’s “Challenging New Order’s Gender Ideology in Benyamin Sueb’s Betty Bencong Slebor: A Queer Reading” in 2014, and Na Rim Kin’s “Un-motherly Mothers and Motherly Fathers: Gender Roles in Contemporary South Korean Reality Programs” in 2017. Four articles, meanwhile, are about gay discourses: Johann Vladimir Jose Espiritu’ “Pambihirang Bakla: Ang Homoseksuwalisasyon sa Tambalang Bakla sa Bakla ng “Ang Boyfriend Kong Bading” ni Allan K,” Randy Jay Solis’ “Cruising Through Spaces: Exploring the Mediatization of Gay Cruising in the Philippines,” Fernando A. Austria’s “Gays, the Internet, and Freedom” and “Kaloka, Keri, Bongga:

Pakahulugan at Pahiwatig ng Gay Language sa mga Piling Pelikula ni Vice Ganda” by Feorillo A. Demeterio III, Generoso Pamittan, Jr., Victoria Amante and Charri Amado.

This issue, with its 11 articles that essay how gender is depicted across media, thus helps address this rather concerning dearth of gender articles in *Plaridel*.

The articles are an excellent representation of the diversity of topics, theories, methods, modalities, and units of analysis in gender and media studies.

In terms of media, we have Andrea Anne Trinidad’s paper that interrogates a movie about fangirls and traces fandoms across media. Iris Brillon’s paper also locates the spectacle of Darna actresses across print and audio-visual materials. Mayette Tabada expounds on the depiction of conflict women in websites and online articles.

Two articles focus on news, but across two types: Brillon’s looks at entertainment news while Maria Aurora Lomibao’s looks at current events news on the saga of Mary Jane Veloso. Likewise within the sphere of entertainment is Michael Pante’s work on the Eraserheads.

Two papers consider advertisements, but with different units of analyses: Julianne Baldo-Cubelo examines the standpoint of women ad-makers while Czekaina Esrah Rapanot et al. determines gender representation in print ads. Speaking of print, while Rapanot’s data sources are contemporary broadsheets and tabloids, Brillon’s and John Lee Candelaria’s are historical. Brillon begins her discussion from the first ever Darna in 1951 to the most recent search for a new Darna in 2019. Candelaria, meanwhile, examines Japanese wartime propaganda as published in the Tribune.

While Cubelo and Rapanot et al. discuss the advertising industry in the Philippines, Nobertus Santoso explores public relations in Indonesia. Just as Trinidad explicates fandom through the Fangirl movie, Alyana Bacarra contextualizes a queer character who navigates the spaces of family, community, and church in the movie *Miss Bulalacao*.

Across the spectrum of media, we also have Kristine Kalaw-Adalla’s paper that looks at hand embroidery as a medium through which issues of gender and power are communicated and negotiated.

The articles in this issue demonstrate the many discourses and characters from and through which we can surface new insights about gender. The articles essay various characters from Eraserheads, Darna, Mary Jane Veloso, Maria Kristina Sergio, Celia Veloso, a queer character, conflict women, fangirls, news actors and actresses, advertisement models and makers, PR practitioners to women embroiderers. These characters move within and give life to discourses that, with rigorous scrutiny, reveal the

complexity and problematics of gender. That rigorous scrutiny, meanwhile, was performed by our contributors who deployed various analytical tools—such as discourse analyses, content analysis, online surveys, interviews, focus groups, metamodal analysis, frame analysis, and case study—to muster the evidentiary foundation for their respective theses and theorizing about gender and media.

Emerging from the studies are innovative arguments about 1) the gender spectrum from the queer, the masculine, and the feminine; 2) the relationship between gender violence, conflict, and crisis; and 3) gender identity and presentation, either by the self or by media.

Beyond the research articles in this issue, we have Elvin Valerio's review of Michael Kho Lim's *Philippine Cinema and the Cultural Economy of Distribution*. Moreover, we have the thought-provoking cover, which deftly conveys the spectrum of gender and gazes, by freelance artist Dale Magsino.

As I thank the contributors to this issue for their excellent work, let me also express my gratitude to the many reviewers who have generously and punctiliously shared their time and expertise with us.

As I close this message, I open the second chapter of our work on gender and media: For as this issue addresses a paucity in gender and media articles in *Plaridel*, it also serves as the springboard for a forthcoming second issue on gender next year.

Padayon sa pananaliksik at mga mananaliksik ng kasarian at midya!


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Issue Editor

