

# Intellectuals, the Public Arena, and the Nation

In 2014, the College of Mass Communication of the University of the Philippines (UP), in collaboration with the Colleges of Music, Arts and Letters, Fine Arts, and Social Sciences and Philosophy, as well as the School of Labor and Industrial Relations and the Archaeological Studies Program, marked the 150th birth anniversary of Apolinario Mabini and Isabelo de los Reyes with an international conference entitled “Intellectuals, the Public Arena, and the Nation.” Mabini and de los Reyes were both exemplary patriots and thinkers, and the conference, successfully held at UP Diliman’s Palma Hall and Recto Hall, served as a venue for contemporary patriots and thinkers from various disciplines to present over sixty papers on topics as diverse as people’s struggles, media and society, archaeology and the history of ideas, performance and public spaces, aesthetic traditions, pedagogy, and university life. This issue of *Plaridel* features keynote papers by Resil B. Mojares, Ramon Guillermo, and Merlinda Bobis, as well as papers by Ma. Diosa Labiste and Joyce L. Arriola originally read for the conference and subsequently revised for the journal.

The first three articles in this issue deal directly with Mabini and de los Reyes. In “Apolinario Mabini, Isabelo de los Reyes, and the Emergence of a Filipino Public,” Mojares outlines the factors that contributed to the emergence of a “public” in late nineteenth-century Philippines and locates in this context the distinctive careers of Mabini and de los Reyes. He also sketches the activities of both of these intellectuals which, in turn, helped

in defining a public sphere that was distinctly more “national” in character. In “Natural Law and Anarchism,” Guillermo offers a comparative analysis of Mabini’s *La revolución filipina* (1901-1902) and de los Reyes’s *La sensacional memoria de Isabelo de los Reyes sobre la revolución Filipina de 1896-97* (1899) as species of historical writing. He distinguishes between Mabini as historian and de los Reyes as chronicler and, in the process, outlines the differences in these patriots’ conception and presentation of the causes and meanings of the Philippine revolution. In “Folklore and the Insurgent Journalism of Isabelo de los Reyes,” Labiste revisits de los Reyes’s project of combining genres of knowledge production that have become boldly distinguished in contemporary practice. She argues that by engaging in folklore and journalism at the same time, de los Reyes was able to perform both acculturation and subversion.

Bobis and Arriola’s articles, on the other hand, shed light on artists and their role as public intellectuals. In “Tahao/Middle Road: From Imagining Nation to Embodying Transnation,” Bobis elucidates her personal poetics as a fictionist and performer who must come to terms with her “expatriate arts practice.” Mapping a critical and creative border between Legazpi City, her “original home,” and Australia, the place from where she writes about her home/region, Bobis explains how her “survival strategy” as an artist in diaspora does not only “fragment the heart” but also allows her to perform a new kind of wholeness. In “Visual Artists as Literary Artists: Fantasy and Folklore in 1950s Cinematic Adaptations,” Arriola explores how popular culture artists—komiks creators and filmmakers functioned as the “other” literary artists in the 1950s. In particular, Arriola analyzes how the creators of the komiks series *Tulisanang Pugot* (1953) and *Tucydides* (1954) and the producers of these komiks’ film adaptations appropriated, localized, and indigenized foreign materials to suit the taste of local audiences.

This issue includes two open-section articles and a number of other documents. The first open-section article, Jefferson Lyndon D. Ragragio’s “Negotiating the Struggle for Justice: Negotiation and Communication Practices of Selected Families of Media Killings,” is a qualitative study that inquires into the negotiation styles and counter-hegemonic practices employed by families of victims of media killings in their pursuit of justice. The second one, Christine Cox’s “Food Fight: Cross-cultural Conflict in a Polish Blogger’s Post about Filipino Food,” uses Stella Ting-Toomey’s Face Negotiation Theory to analyze how people from different cultures “save face” in an online environment. This issue also presents historian and critic Nicanor G. Tiongson review of Jerrold Tarog’s phenomenal film *Heneral Luna* (2015). Papers from the round-table discussion on the Poetics and Practice of Film Criticism in the Philippines participated in by members

of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino, Tiongson, Bienvenido Lumbera, Rolando B. Tolentino, members of the Young Critics Circle Film Desk, Patrick D. Flores, Eulalio R. Guieb III, Choy S. Pangilinan, and independent scholar Nick Deocampo; and the Gawad Plaridel lecture of Nora Aunor, recipient of the said award from the University of the Philippines in 2014, are published here for the first time.



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