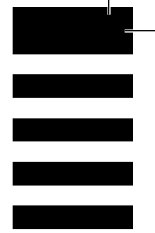


## Communication and Media Studies in Asia



The *Plaridel Journal* is making history. Setting a precedent, it leaves the confines of Filipino scholarly work and broadens the Philippine communication horizon. Appropriately so, starting with this issue with its theme, “Communication and Media Studies in Asia,” the *Plaridel Journal* will bear a new title description—“A Philippine Journal of Communication” instead of “A Journal of Philippine Communication,” thus honoring, rather than merely accommodating, the works of international scholars.

This issue also responds to the call of University of the Philippines President Emerlinda R. Roman for the university to invigorate its internationalization efforts and keep pace with developments spawned by globalization.

The articles herein impart an understanding of how Asians perceive and analyze communication and media. The major articles represent the research works of scholars from Indonesia, Korea, India, China and the Philippines. They cover the gamut of various media forms, both traditional and new: film, print, TV, radio and the mobile phone. They give us glimpses of the role, status and prospects of communication and media studies in Asia.

Offering a view of the extent of hetero-sexism as reproduced in films in Indonesia is Maimunah Munir’s critical reading of the emergence of non-heterosexual sexuality as a theme in contemporary Indonesian films. Framed by the queer film theory and Tom Boellstorff’s (2005 & 2007) studies on *gay* and *lesbian* communities, her study on “The Representation of Female Same-Sex Homoeroticism in Contemporary

Indonesian Film” inquires into how film strives to negotiate the meaning of “heteronormativity” and homophobia. Munir’s research investigates the “pattern of female non-heterosexual intimacy and friendship, and suggests a breaking away from the dominant hetero-patriarchal norms.”

Her study reveals the filmmaker’s strategic devices to “subvert censorship codes and social taboos in a country where non-heterosexual intimacy and friendship are accommodated, but where homosexual identities remain outside the range of socially and culturally sanctioned subjectivities.”

Straddling both print and broadcast media, Taeyun Yu, a Korean, uses the prism of Orientalism to expose how Western media handled, in strikingly similar fashion, two different stories involving two Asian-Americans (one, a half-Filipino, and the other, a half-Korean), who committed acts of violence against white Americans. In his article, “Eastern Gunslingers: Andrew Cunanan and Seung-Hui Cho in the Western Media Imaginary,” he effectively shows how the media perspective reinforces and reconstructs the stereotypes of Asians in American society. He brings to the fore Western media’s attitude of “differentiating, rather than accepting, the actions of the Oriental “other” in the manner of their Western counterparts.”

Aleli Quirante and Victorio Sugbo, Filipino joint contributors to this volume, in their “In the Minds of Philippine Audiences: Constructions of Malaysian Culture from Two TV Soap Operas” connect Philippine culture with Malaysian culture through two TV soaps or *telenovelas*. They explore how Filipino audiences have constructed Malaysia and its culture. Mediated by a prolonged exposure to the TV program, the Filipinos’ knowledge of Malaysian culture revolves around values and customs pertaining to marriage, family loyalty, Islam, language, and so on. The study generates meaningful insights on how soap operas, as powerful media, capture the attention of a wide range of audiences, shape and reshape the latter’s values and beliefs, and confirm the real-life interracial relations, inter-government cooperation, and the Chinese presence in both countries.

Meanwhile, “Mobile Phone Intimacies and Moral Panics in India” by Gopalan Ravindran looks at another aspect of new media – the mobile phone – and contributes a different viewpoint, particularly how the gadget engenders new cultures of intimacies in India, and in the process, acquires the dubious distinction of becoming a conduit of moral panic. Applying the new media modernity theory in his study, Ravindran offers scholarly attention to how the definition of moral panic collides with the youth and the so-called moral agents, represented by parents, police, school, etc.

Finally, Duan Peng's "Evaluating the Application Value of Radio Technology in Selected Provinces in China" inquires into how the radio becomes a medium for the development of poor areas of China. Field investigations disclose that radio technology is not widely used, notwithstanding its important role in transforming Chinese society. For instance, the study suggests that the radio, acquiring a new meaning, is being used not only for entertainment but also as a tool to guide motorists in traffic and to obtain information for income-generating projects.

For the other articles in this issue:

- a. A keynote speech, delivered during the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Inter-University Conference held in Manila in 2008, scrutinizes Citizen Journalism and related volunteer news co-creation activities in the ASEAN region. Dr. James E. Katz of Rutgers University, New Jersey, shares the implications of these activities on the ASEAN countries' communication environment, including: i) the operations of news organizations; ii) the ability of governments to influence domestic and international perspectives; iii) the information resources of citizens; and iv) the formulation of public policy.

Dr. Katz provides interesting case studies of Citizen Journalism from the ASEAN region as he analyzes the relationship between Citizen Journalism and the issues essential to the future of the region, such as freedom of information, human rights, self-determination, certification of professional journalists, democratic participation, security and cultural harmony.

- b. Flordeliz Abanto picks the brains of the new secretary-general of the Asian Media and Information Center in an interview, eliciting Dr. Sundeep Muppidi's views on the developments, problems, status and prospects of communication and media studies in Asia. The interview highlights the "cultural hybridization" of new media platforms as a result of convergence and globalization, affecting local culture and the media industry in both positive and negative ways.
- c. To feature Filipino language and cultural products, Olivia Cantor writes a discourse on the Manila Film Festival. In her "*Ang MMFF 2009 Bilang Pampalipas ng Paskong Pilipino*, (The MMFF 2009 as a Filipino Pastime During Christmas)" she reviews the movies exhibited in the 2009 Metro Manila Film Festival during the Christmas season. To find out if the movies meet the organizers' objective of encouraging and assisting the production of Filipino quality films, she critically analyzes the reasons for the box office success and failures of the films.

- d. As a regular feature of the *Plaridel Journal*, Nonoy Lauzon, Berinice Zamora, Pol del Mundo, and Robyn Villanueva provide a filmography of movies shown for the period. The filmography includes both commercial and independent films exhibited in film festivals and regular commercial movie houses.

Overall, the articles in this issue span issues and discourses on communication and media in Asia, reflecting the perceptions and experiences that scholars from this part of the world share.

Lastly, this issue widely opens the door to more article submissions here and abroad. It hopes to generate more interest from the international community of scholars.



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Issue Editor  
August 2010

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