

Youth and the Media

The media have long been touted as “man’s greatest invention.” This idea, albeit arguable, may have some truth in it. The media, it is said, have enabled and empowered people in their search for the truth and have quenched people’s thirst for knowledge. Likewise, it is said and taken as truth that the media are powerful.

We are in the midst of media forms that have the capacity to provide the answers to the multitude of questions about the world we could possibly ask. The media have taken on roles in our lives that hitherto have largely been performed by humans—as baby sitter, storyteller, “big brother or sister,” even life companion. The media have provided us a window to the world and a shared arena to articulate our narratives, problems, and anxieties. Yet, we tend to take the media for granted because they are ubiquitous; they are entrenched in every household and have become an indispensable artifact in the smorgasbord of appliances and equipment that we can afford and own.

The media’s frontispiece is technology. The media are forms of technologies that emerged to respond to particular human needs, and one of them is the need to communicate. It cannot be denied that there is continuing rapid development in the technologies used for the media. The media have, for the longest time, evolved ways of looking at, experiencing, and learning about the world and Philippine society.

The advent of *new media* has enhanced the production, delivery, and processing of information, knowledge, and learning. It has ushered in new production cultures and aesthetics for entertainment and the creation of various narratives for people from all walks of life. The enhancement is in the form of on-demand access to content at any time and in any place. New media also allows user interactivity with the content, which in turn fosters feedback, participation, and community formation as well as identity within the context of the media content. As well, new media has been known to democratize access to information and creation of digital content that encourages people, especially the youth, to tell their stories and create their realities.

The youth are a constantly evolving media audience as they go through shifting constructions and layers as affirmed by the changing media technologies, markets, influences, and cultural expectations. It is timely and relevant to explore and study Filipino and international youth cultures within the context of the contemporary media sphere in the Philippines and abroad (e.g., the Internet, mobile telephony, new television, digital filmmaking, new radio, online newspapers, blog sites, podcasts, and social, political, and cultural networking sites). Moreover, it would be interesting to see how the so-called traditional media forms of print, television, radio, and film compete with or have accepted the convergence with new media.

This issue of the *Plaridel Journal* explores the thematic landscape of **Youth and the Media** through studies that look at the media from a critical perspective of how the youth appropriate the media space provided by both traditional and new media forms. The articles also offer critiques on the various ways the media are apprehended by the youth in spite of cultural, social, economic, and political forces that intervene in their negotiations with the media.

Pam Cruz looks into how popular romantic films have created a new production culture that has evolved filmic conventions that were not immanent before within the cultural space of Baguio, a city in Northern Luzon. In a postcolonial context, Cruz states that “these narratives can be rooted to the politics in the American’s colonial hill station project in the idyllic space of Baguio during the early years of the 1900’s.”

Airah Cadiogan, in “Decoding ‘The New Order’: Audience Interpretations of the 20th Philippine Advertising Congress (PAC) Television Commercials,” examines the imaging of Aetas, a Philippine indigenous people group, in a series of television advertisements for the 20th Philippine Advertising Congress. Cadiogan employed Stuart Hall’s encoding/decoding model and Croteau and Hoynes’ model of media and the social world to seek the answers to the question, “Does cultural background play a role in shaping audience interpretations of mediated

representations of indigenous peoples and other ‘othered’ racial groups?” The results of focus group discussions with “indigenous” and “non-indigenous” audiences led her to conclude that political affiliations and personal experiences with indigenous peoples are influential in decoding the representations of Aetas found in the commercials. This study provides insights into the negotiated readings by audiences on the image of Aetas vis-à-vis “the systems of knowledge upon which racial discrimination are founded.”

Eulalio Guieb III’s “Tablay at Banua ng mga Kabataang Tagbanua Calamianen sa Hilagang Palawan: Pagbabanua ng Tablay, Pagtatablay ng Banua” explores how the *tablay*, an old form of Philippine oral literature and communication, has evolved into a contemporary communication tool used by the Tagbanua Calamianen, a Philippine indigenous group. Through the *tablay*, the Tagbanua Calamianen youth are able to articulate their narratives and experiences within contemporary times.

The article “Fluid Identities in the Structure of Cyberspace: A Comparison of Philippine and Korean Experiences” deals with the identities that are formed and subverted in the very popular Internet cyberspace form known as Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games or MMORPG. The author, Jong Suk Ham, studies the way gender identities through the players’ avatars are formed and how the players “grow” with their avatars through a series of battles, which is the main feature of MMORPG. Ham also looks into the narrative structure of MMORPG using the lens of Apparatus Theory.

Jose C. Gutierrez III looks into how the digital revolution has paved the way for contemporary Filipino independent filmmakers to articulate their narratives and explore unexplored or far from the ordinary thematic grounds for their films in “For the Youth: Pursuing Sustainability in Filipino Indie Filmmaking.” Gutierrez propels the need for sustainability to enable Filipino independent filmmakers to make and continue making films and evolve to be artists.

It is hoped that these articles will inspire readers to look at the various media phenomena around them with a critical eye, especially in their capacity of making the youth more articulate about their own experiences. Moreover, the six articles in this issue lend insight into how the youth are able to appropriate the media space for their ends. Lastly, this issue hopes to have introduced another way to study media effects on the youth through critical research.



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