

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Media and Communication Discourse

Media and communication processes are as numerous as they are complicated. Either new theories replace old ones or they evolve over time. New concepts are also introduced as society becomes progressive or retrogressive.

Just as the Philippine economy is said to defy basic paradigms of growth and development, Philippine media and communication systems are not easily explained by generally accepted theories. This situation is more apparent as one tries to use Western theories in analyzing what is happening in the Philippines. How can one explain, for example, the continued preponderance of broadsheets even if only three of them are said to be actually earning? Why is the community press not as vibrant as we expect despite the existence of various local print and online publications and broadcast stations? How can one explain the country's having the freest press in Asia at a time when media killings are on the rise and there are pending bills in Congress that can compromise, or even kill, press freedom?

Unlike most societies in the West, Philippine society is plagued by the most basic of concerns like where to get the next meal. Abject poverty, along with a plethora of problems, makes it impossible for most of the people to appreciate the current technological improvements that are said to improve media and communication processes. Even if such technologies are available in the country, the wide disparity between the rich and the poor deprives the majority of using them.

This issue of *Plaridel* contains four articles that analyze the various facets of Philippine media and communication.

In her article titled "Learning from the News: Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Motivational Effects", Clarissa David identifies important media and communication theories related to

the understanding of news and notes the lack of research on the motivational effects of news. Shirley Evidente discusses how various Filipino journalists in Metro Manila use the press identification card in her paper titled “The Iconic Images of the Philippine Press Identification Card in Metro Manila”. Clarissa David and Jenna Mae Atun, in their article titled “Influence of Interpersonal Discussion on Contraceptive Use: A Study of the Philippine Case”, analyze the people’s behavior on contraceptive use through interpersonal communication. Jose Gutierrez III studies selected films of the late director Lino Brocka to know how the mothers are portrayed in his paper titled “Images of the Mother in Lino Brocka Films: 1970-1991”.

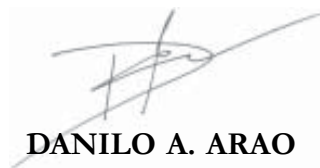
In trying to know the workings of Philippine media and communication processes, the first article is significant as David provides recommendations on how the Philippine news media can be better used to motivate Filipinos. On the other hand, the second article makes a strong case for changing the attitude of journalists as regards the profession they are engaged in, not to mention the need to reaffirm the highest standards of journalism. The third article shows that despite advances in technology and the age of “borderless communication”, a more personal and intimate discussion with partners and other authorities (in this case, on contraceptive use) can still help define the best contraceptives to use which is a very important decision if one considers the country’s growing population. Meanwhile, the fourth article shows the significance of a person’s (in this case, a filmmaker’s) political awakening as basis for his or her better articulation of issues and concerns – from weak to strong, from simplistic to contextual, from superficial to indepth.

Aside from these four articles, Patrick Campos in this issue writes “Manuel Conde and the Filipino ‘Indie’ Cinema”, a critical review of not just the contents but also the significance of Nicanor Tiongson’s book titled *The Cinema of Manuel Conde*. By analyzing the book’s place in the various studies of Filipino films, his review motivates other film scholars to continue studying the

body of work of other practitioners through the years in a manner that is both academic (in terms of quality of research) and journalistic (in terms of style of writing).

I have also taken the liberty of reprinting in full the proposed consolidated bill on “freedom of information” by the Access to Information Network. In the wake of current debates on the proposed laws on “right of reply” and the “decriminalization of libel”, the pending bills in Congress on access to information must also be analyzed in the context of how media can better fulfill their role of disseminating important information to the public.

These outputs do not in any way provide all the answers to problems surrounding Philippine media and communication processes but can give interested readers an idea of how they can help change them. This issue of *Plaridel* hopes to contribute to media advocacy by increasing media literacy not only among scholars and practitioners but also, more importantly, to the audiences.



DANILO A. ARAO
Editor

330302, Linton Global College
Hannam University
Daejeon, South Korea

23 March 2009

v