

Artists and Intellectuals and Their Public Spheres

In 2014, the University of the Philippine Diliman commemorated the 150th birth anniversaries of patriots and intellectuals Apolinario Mabini and Isabelo delos Reyes with an international conference aptly called “Intellectuals, the Public Arena, and the Nation.” Five of the papers originally presented at the conference, including the three keynote lectures by culture critic and historian Resil B. Mojares, Southeast Asian scholar and activist Ramon Guillermo, and novelist, poet, and performer Merlinda Bobis, were later prepared as articles and published in *Plaridel* 13.1 (<http://www.plarideljournal.org/issue/volume-13-issue-01/>).

In this present issue, entitled “Artists and Intellectuals and Their Public Spheres,” are four more papers which had their origins from the same conference but have been updated, refereed, and revised for publication. These share with the previous articles the desire to understand the role and strategies of the intellectual and the artist-as-intellectual in imagining and realizing the nation. In particular, however, the papers in this issue present the conflicting roles of the intellectual and the artist-as-intellectual in the public sphere and the varied ways they engage with socio-historical contingencies.

Raul C. Navarro’s “Apat na Taong Pagsikat ng Nakapapasong Araw: Musika sa Filipinas sa Panahon ng Hapon, 1942–1945,” chronicles the role of Filipino composers and musicians during the Japanese occupation in the Philippines in keying Japanese propaganda to the “spiritual-emotional

realm” and allowing it to reach the classrooms and concert halls. He considers how music and songs functioned in conjunction with other forms of propaganda in softening the colonizing process and, as a consequence, making the process more “treacherous.”

Unlike the propagandist-composers, whom Navarro discusses, who drew power from and was enabled by the center, Lara Katrina T. Mendoza, in “Gloc-9 as Organic Public Intellectual: Hip and Polished, Raw and Cool,” locates the potency of singer-rapper-songwriter Aristotle Pollisco’s compositions in the peripheries of power. Mendoza draws upon the work of Gramsci to characterize Pollisco, better known as Gloc-9, as an organic public intellectual who positions himself in solidarity with the poor and speaks/raps the truth that the poor have no capacity to speak/rap to power.

In Jimmy Balud Fong’s “Ibaloy ‘Reclaiming’ Baguio: The Role of Intellectuals,” we witness the ambiguous formation and influence of situated intellectuals. Fong details the history of the contested Ibaloy ancestral land in present-day Baguio City and the way American colonial-state and Philippine nation-state building divided the geography and peripheralized the community of Ibaloy. In this thorny process of nation building, Ibaloy intellectuals, who are themselves products of colonial and national educational systems, have paved the way for state-recognized “heritage” celebrations to be the symbolic ground for the congregation of displaced Ibaloy to reclaim their rightful place in the land.

Jaimee Faith J. Santos, in “Resurfacing the Disappeared: The Author in *Fish-Hair Woman* by Merlinda Bobis,” takes a more conceptual approach in considering the intellectual labor of the storyteller and foregrounds the work of criticism in drawing out the themes of Bobis’s novel on the violence suffered by those caught in between the “total war” of the government and the communists. Santos doubly surfaces the *desaparecidos*, as it were, by considering the novel’s (textual) author as both “dead” in the Barthesian sense and ever alive in the author’s need to speak for and through the dead and disappeared.

Apart from the four articles that make up the special issue, two others are published in the regular section. Karen Y. Varona’s “Of Victims and Saviors: Government Rhetoric on OFWs on Death Row Abroad,” assesses the crisis communication strategy of the Philippine government in engineering messages regarding Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the death row abroad. She shows how the government and the media persist in framing OFWs as “*bagong bayani*,” thereby highlighting the OFWs’ personal responsibility in working and falling victim overseas, at the same time absolving the government of its responsibility and emphasizing its role as savior.

Finally, Gregg S. Lloren's "Socio-Cultural Appropriation of Sex-Sell Billboard Ads: A Multimodal Study on the Grammar of Sexually Implicit Advertising Text and Images," discursively analyzes "sex-sell" advertisements and demonstrates how the functional language of these ads are meaningfully produced and consumed through the shared and active interpretation of onlookers and the creative industries.

This issue of *Plaridel* closes with the Documents section, featuring reviews of three Korean media texts, a reconsideration of Filipino director Lino Brocka's realist cinema, reflections on two Cebuano films, a report on the state of contemporary Mindanao filmmaking, and a virtual roundtable discussion on film canon-formation participated in by film critics Joel David, Skilty C. Labastilla, Richard Bolisay, and Mauro Feria Tumbocon, Jr.



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