

ISSUE EDITOR'S NOTE

This PCS Review Issue on “Communication, Media and Culture” offers a variety of takes on interconnecting areas of inquiry that are currently forging new directions in Philippine communication, media and cultural studies.

Beyan Atta M. Hagos’s “The Moro (Muslim Mindanao) Question and the Media Coverage: The Philippine Daily Inquirer” is a timely piece on the reportage (or lack thereof) on the Moro or the Muslim Mindanao question by mainstream broadsheets like the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Using quantitative content analysis, the research study confirmed the lopsided treatment of the Moro question by the Manila-centric press. This scarcity of contextualized and nuanced reportage of the Moro has persistently reduced the issue to a peripheral position. It becomes specially so when compared to the stories that receive the bulk of attention paid by the major broadsheets to stories that are deemed “national” in impact. The reductionist approach of the majority of Moro-related reportage – heavy on the military skirmishes and thin on development-related stories on Mindanao – reflects the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of the region and on the part of news management, a clear case of reportorial imbalance.

Hagos has affirmed in this exploration that the lack of contextualized journalism is contributory to the age-old subsidiary position occupied by the Moro question within the sphere of news reportage. This imbalance in news flow may have also contributed to the perceived retardation of the peace process. Traditionally treated as a regional issue instead of a national issue, the Filipino Manila-centric broadsheets have contributed to the *othering* of the Moro. In this age of collective demands for inclusivity, the Moro question still begs for attention and deliberation. After all, Filipino culture would be sorely incomplete without the just and balanced inclusion of the Moro and without a fair examination as well of the sad history of neglect, minoritization, and *othering* that the Moro question has suffered under the lens of an urban-centric, and for the most part, elitist and populist press.

Orville B. Tatcho's "Debating as Ritual: The Performance of the Northern Luzon Debate Community in the Philippine Debate Scene" examines the activities of a number of debating societies of the Northern Luzon Debate Community (NLDC) and how these demonstrate a ritual view of communication. The recruitment and training of debaters, the competitions, and their accomplishments are viewed alongside their means of negotiating and re-negotiating their position in the larger debating community. As a skill honed through dedication and experience, debating becomes inextricable from the formation of societies that provide the impetus and inspiration for the goals and values of each individual debater. Tatcho's thorough examination of the weaknesses and strengths of the NLDC, its strategies in positioning itself in the Cordillera region and in the bigger arena of national debate circuit, presents a culturalist view of group formation and group communication. Debate then becomes the core skill and aspiration to achieve individual self-worth. Yet corollary to that, social dynamics and cohesion become the strength behind the group's sustainability and continued survival.

Bien S. Mabbayad's "The Philippine Manga: Examining the Aesthetics and Identity of Black Ink" explores the elements of Philippine manga as "borrowed" art and as a Filipino appropriation. Introduced during the U.S. colonial period, the komiks has always been a major aspect of Filipino popular consciousness. The industry of komiks, meanwhile, has always drawn from foreign influences; taking on visual styles, narrative elements, motifs, and themes. The Japanese manga is one of the major comic book influences for local artists. However, although the Filipino practitioners of the art form can be derivative, they could also bring in their location in the execution of visuals and could reinterpret the form through the thematic content. For a fact, the Japanese manga has been, as Mabbayad has explained, equally derivative; drawing liberally from Walt Disney's imagination and from other Western sources. This matter reflects the unique ability of Japanese visual and literary artists in assimilating foreign influences and in hybridizing these or making these appear indigenous to Japanese popular imaginary. In the same breath, Filipino artists could be as agile in producing hybrid art;

adapting Japanese styles without neglecting their own or leaving their imprint on what is now a global and popular imaginary.

Julienne Thesa Y. Baldo-Cubelo's "Filipino Women's Standpoint on the Representation of the 'New Women' in Beauty Product Advertisements of Feminism" analyses the ambiguous positionality of the "New Women" ideal as this has been represented in selected product advertisements. While the said advertisements highlight a free, emancipated, economically-secured working woman, they reflect a brand of feminism that is co-opted by the neo-liberal economy and the culture industry, which follows the stance of the Marxist Feminist school of thought. The supposed political emancipation of women has been compromised in the face of the commodification of their needs and values as seen in how the advertising industry has projected their image, the kind of "product" they have become, and how that can be made viable economically. The idea of female embodiment and conceptions of female beauty are arbitrated by Western, colonial, and mediated aesthetics that are tied to capital, to the flow of products and services, and to their complex co-optation by the new woman concept— working, buying, dressing up, sexed-up, etcetera. In Baldo-Cubelo's study, the standpoint feminist theory that highlights and presents a critique of feminine embodiment finds a contrary view in one of the issues of post-feminism: co-optation. In the face of such many feminisms, which Baldo-Cubelo has adeptly worked around, a path for a third space for deliberation and negotiation has been opened.

Robert Montaña's "Integrating a Normative Culture of Justice in Contemporary Mass Communication" explores the need to re-examine the mass media, more specifically the ubiquitous social media, as the site where concepts of normative justice may be meted and deliberated. Montaña examines the nature and characteristics of mass media and its natural predisposition to freely accommodate all forms and contents of communication regardless of whether these are inimical to cultural values. He argues that theories emphasizing the ability of the medium to form cultures and how the same medium becomes the message itself – as posited by Marshall McLuhan – may be re-contextualized. Although technologies create communities or become the core characteristics of said communities, their impact on normative culture must be examined.

Specific - and most often, contradictory and fragmentary - messages abound in social media and they impact collective culture. The creation of a technological culture may be both swift and far-reaching; yet, specific images that taunt current sensibilities (like the *Napoleon Quince* brandy ad) are taken by clusters of narrow sectors. They make sense of their impact based on salience of affect and on how these resonate in their lives. Montaña contends that normative culture need not be perceived separately from technological culture. Technology and technological cultures are as ideological as the messages they carry. The collectivist, homogenizing, and universalizing bent of current technological cultures should become a major consideration in exploring and integrating normative justice in communications media and how the two boulders of concepts need not contradict or work against each other.

Jose Carlo Garcia de Pano's "Source Credibility, Persuasion, and Culture: A Literature Review" is a comprehensive review of the most recent literatures on source credibility and its role in persuasive communication. It also tackles the role of culture in assigning credibility to source or to ethos and in determining the impact of culture on occasions where levels of source credibility are assessed. Traditionally analysed within the perspective of interpersonal communication and group communication, source credibility has always been seen as a universal human phenomenon since the time of Aristotle and this lends to the existence of voluminous literatures on the subject. However, De Pano's timely contribution to the said discourse is the exploration of source credibility and persuasion as these have been informed by culture. This culturalist take on the subject departs from the behaviourist route or the scientific assumptions of positivist research. As De Pano has created an opening for another line of inquiry, it can be assumed that in future investigations on the subject, indigenous theories and the application of phenomenological-hermeneutical approaches may be utilized in enriching what is supposed to be one of the oldest research sites in communication studies.

There are various factors that lead to source credibility but the cultural explanation of ethos can be an emerging site of discourse. Cultural values refract definitions and perceptions of credibility. The contribution of reception analysis to source credibility research can also

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be a major item for consideration. The communal and localized meaning of ethos can recontextualize research, away from its universalist claims and toward a more culture-specific methodology.

The articles in this issue are therefore diverse attempts to re-understand Philippine communication and media studies as these intersect with cultural studies. The more relevant objective that this issue has attempted to address lies in de-emphasizing Western or received discourse and tackling the subject of inquiry from the lens of culture; that is, grounded, specific, indigenized, local, and emergent.

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