

FROM THE EDITOR

The articles in this issue of *Humanities Diliman* may be appreciated together as studies implicitly concerned with how “folk” practices and ideas are reiterated in various ways in modern and postmodern contexts of ever-increasing social fragmentation. That is to say, a thread of how traditional, oral, localized, and face-to-face community performances and symbolic narratives are articulated in contemporary social phenomena connects the pieces contained in this volume.

The first two articles directly comment on and seek to intervene in Philippine sociopolitical issues. “In Court, On Air, On Trial” by Junesse d.R. Crisostomo is an appraisal of the impeachment of Supreme Court Chief Justice Renato Corona as a social drama performed in the space where governmental politics, the law, and mass media intersect. Crisostomo analyzes this drama in terms of its narrative units and shows how rhetoric is wielded by all the “performers” involved to influence public perception. She concludes by reflecting on the implication of Corona’s impeachment on the current political climate. Noel Christian A. Moratilla, meanwhile, scrutinizes the letters written by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in order to put forward a layered story of subalternity based on firsthand accounts and confessions. In “The Migrant Worker as Disposable Body,” he allows the OFWs themselves to describe and narrate their own plight, address their loved ones, and speak to the rest of us who would care to listen, so that he could marshal these voices into a kind of epistolary narrative that exposes a system of victimization and calls for collective justice. The essay’s use of testimonies seeks to orient the narrative away from a romantic view of OFW life and toward a more realistic one, as the author highlights the themes of resistance and hope.

The next four essays track traditions in kinship relations, literature, theater, and art and explain their development in contemporary times. “Anak, Mag-anak at Magkakamag-anak” by Roberto E. Javier Jr. explicates the shifting Filipino notion of *anak* in a cultural economy that gives high premium to the value of *utang na loob*. Through the method of *pagtatanong-tanong*, he traces the concepts of child, family, and kinship and their movement in meaning from self-awareness to separation. At the same time, he demonstrates the continued centrality of *anak* in modern Filipino psychology.

“An Babaye ug Suba” by Jay Jomar F. Quintos traces the trope of the “woman-by-the-water” in Philippine literary tradition. First, Quintos discusses the significance of this evocative and enduring figure in the precolonial folk tales of various ethnolinguistic groups throughout the islands. Then he demonstrates how this figure was transformed into an image of victimization and tragedy in colonial literary texts. Finally, he analyzes recent literary works that respond to the historical development of the trope and calls for a return to the subversive power of this figure. (It is worth noting that the essays of Javier, Moratilla, and Quintos may be productively read together and appreciated for how they evaluate the crucial place of the woman in culture, literature, and society.)

Apolonio B. Chua’s “Paano Ipinagpapatuloy ang Tradisyon ng Komedyang?” is structured differently. Chua focuses first on contemporary performances of the *komedyang* in 1992 and 2008—performances that markedly depart from the traditional theatrical form as well as traditional textual sources. He shows us how these later mountings of the *komedyang* were defined more by the intervention of nontraditionalists and adapted to a youthful audience. Chua then returns the essay to the nineteenth-century departures of the *komedyang* from its colonial roots in the hands of Balagtas, and later, of the Katipuneros, ultimately arguing that the *komedyang* persists precisely because changes are introduced to it from elsewhere—in the case of early adaptations by Filipinos, this elsewhere is the *bayan*.

Manuel Kristoffer C. Giron’s “Ang ‘Tradisyonal’ at ‘Moderno’ sa Higante ng Angono, Rizal” also puts much emphasis on how changes introduced to folk art from elsewhere transforms practices and identities. Giron immerses himself in the preparations for the town fiesta of Angono and the celebration of the Gigantes Festival. He notes the formal changes that have been introduced to the designs of the giant human figures paraded during the festival—changes that have visible correspondences to history and current events. And he illuminates the way the makers of the *higantes* and the spectators create a shared meaning as new elements and images are introduced in the parade. In the end, Giron argues that the community’s concept of the traditional is constructed alongside—not before—the introduction of the modern form and sensibility.

The last essay in this issue is not focused on Philippine matters, but its disposition is comparable to those of the other essays. Niloufar Behrooz and Hossein Pirnajmuddin's "The Nostalgic Sublime in Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and *Cosmopolis*" makes the claim that while DeLillo is known primarily as a postmodernist writer, his works actually exhibit a pining for transcendence that is not characteristic of postmodernism. This desire, according to the authors, is articulated in two of DeLillo's novels, as seen in the way he straddles between a traditional sense of sublimity and the modernist nostalgia for the sublime. And because DeLillo is a chronicler of the fragmented present, he locates transcendence not in a distant past or the great beyond, but in the mundane and everyday.



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