

Humanities Diliman closes this year with essays, a monograph, and reviews that discuss intersecting issues of gender, identity, and language, all familiar but still critical and significant issues to our times.

Julienne Thesa Y. Baldo-Cubelo's "Women Advertisement-Makers' Standpoint on the Production of Beauty Product Advertisements as Negotiated Co-optation of Feminism" takes the reader to the world of the seemingly empowered Filipino women ad-makers who confront the challenges of creating advertisements for beauty products that simultaneously celebrate women and unwittingly co-opt feminism. The in-depth semi-structured interviews of twelve women ad-makers and the focus group discussions with another twelve, reveal their sentiments towards their position in the advertising industry, the degree of "freedom" they enjoy in creating advertisements, and the impact of their creations on women. In using the feminist standpoint and muted group theory, Cubelo provides a space for voices of women ad-makers who find themselves delicately balancing a degree of agency with the demands of the neoliberal capitalist discourse.

If the feminist discourse is at times co-opted by advertisements for women, gayspeak has ingeniously formulated words that both express a group's identity through the playful assembling of words. "*Jokla and Jugels: A Comparative Analysis of the Construction of Popular and Hiligaynon Gay Words*" by Rhoderick V. Nuncio, Generoso B. Pamittan, Jr., David R. Corpuz, and Edgar V. Ortinez focuses on popular and Hiligaynon gay language spoken in the island of Panay constituted by the provinces of Capiz, Aklan, Antique, and Iloilo. Aside from the creativity seen in linguistic constructions through phonological resemblance, appropriation, association, neologism, word combination, acronyms, and mutation, a distinct sense of humor is palpable in the semantic alterations. Scholars of gender and language will draw inspiration from the various linguistic conventions and practices in Hiligaynon gayspeak to explore their possible counterparts in other Philippine languages and examine specific regional gay identity politics.

Also concerned with identity politics but this time through the writing of autobiographies, is Mary Grace R. Concepcion's "Writing and Rewriting the Self: Narrative Projection and Transformation in Martial Law Autobiographies." Combining a close reading of the autobiographies of Martial Law figures Jose Maria Sison, Peter Geremia, and Danilo Vizmanos with an analysis of their personal interviews, Concepcion looks at the changes in self-narration in the two autobiographies they each published after Martial Law and carefully describes the projected self in their narratives in the context of their struggle against Martial Law. Particularly

relevant in the analysis are discussions on the autobiography as a genre and the type of construction of the self it enables, thus reminding us of the need to look at the entanglement of language, discourse, and narration when engaging with autobiographical texts.

Examining another aspect of identity—one that is tied to language and the nation—is Ramon Guillermo’s “Ang Kasaysayan ng ‘Sariling Uica’: (O Kun Sino ang Kumatha ng ‘Sa Aking mga Kabata).” Guillermo revisits the popular Tagalog phrase “sariling wika,” which, he explains, has not quite provided the momentum for the development of a Philippine national language, but on the contrary could be used to challenge this idea. Using a digital corpora of books and various materials from Google Books, HathiTrust Digital Library, and University of Michigan Digital Collections (“The United States and its Territories: 1870-1925: The Age of Imperialism”), the discussion presents the different uses, various contexts of usage, and a range of interpretations of the phrase “sariling wika.” The examination begins with Jose Rizal’s *Noli Me Tangere* where Ibarra asks Pilosopo Tasyo “In what language do you write?”, to which the latter replies, “In our language, Tagalog.” Guillermo, in showing the different translations of this dialogue into Tagalog/Pilipino/Filipino from 1906 to 2000, calls attention to the vexatious history of the discourse of “our language,” which almost parallels that of the Philippine national language. More interestingly, the exposition leads to another work attributed to Rizal, “Sa Aking mga Kabata” (To my fellow children), considered responsible for the afterlives of the phrase “sariling wika,” but whose authorship is also challenged by Guillermo.

If the central issue in the first three essays is the constitution of identity and its attendant notions of gender and language, the very concepts of reality and truth in relation to identity are explored in Omid Amani, Hossein Pirnajmuddin, and Ghiasuddin Alizadeh’s “Fantastic Narrative Spaces in Sam Shepard’s *A Lie of the Mind*.” Drawing on theories from narratology and space, the study looks into the postmodern fantastic use of space and storytelling in Shepard’s play *A Lie of the Mind* to question our apprehension of reality. The play’s juxtaposing and blurring of worlds or spaces are in effect ontological interrogations that impinge on both the “lay of the land” and the mind. The characters’ mindscape, also referred to as a possible “lie of the mind,” is demonstrated in the space-time disorientation which likewise problematizes notions of female and male consciousness and the tensions as the characters confront their desires and fantasies. Ultimately, a compelling question then is how do individuals perceive and map out their identities within material spaces?

When one talks of identity formation, what ideological apparatus could be more critical than education, an institution that produces and perpetuates not only

individual but collective identities? In “Am I really... merely... a conscious little rock? Ethical Education in Tom Wolfe’s *I Am Charlotte Simmons*,” Sahar Jamshidian and Hossein Pirnajmuddin, in analyzing Wolfe’s novel, investigate how neuroscience is taught in American universities. The pivotal issue in the essay is of paramount importance particularly in contemporary times, with the erosion of criticality and the overtaking of herd culture in social media. Has liberal education, the bedrock philosophy of most American universities, really developed autonomous and free-thinking individuals? The crucial question—“Am I really... merely... a conscious little rock”? is raised by a professor in the novel when he encourages his students to think of human beings as a piece of falling rock which acquires awareness in midflight. It is such consciousness that gives the rock the impression of having agency and being responsible for its movement. From this analogy, the discussion advances to other issues related to liberal education such as intellectual creativity, autonomy, receptiveness to diversity, analytical thinking, and eventually to Emmanuel Levinas’s ethics of alterity as a philosophical source of ideas to address the weaknesses of contemporary education. At a time when the arts and humanities are under threat, the essay reminds us once again of the need to develop citizens who are able to think with emotional detachment, and thus resist the pack mentality.

The monograph “ANG REBOLUSYONARYA: Gunita at Pananalinghaga ng Makatang MAKIBAKA” by Pauline Mari Hernando is a valuable contribution to the study of how the poetry of women of the Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA), the first and only revolutionary movement of women in the Philippines, is an expression of both their individual and collective identity. The analysis, which combines close and materialist readings of the poems in the context of the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship and the succeeding presidencies of Cory Aquino and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, enables the reader to appreciate the texts as literature and as political and social history. Hernando’s careful attention to details such as imagery and tone in relation to historical contingencies situates MAKIBAKA’s poetry in the tradition of the nation’s propaganda movement and claims for it a significant position in Philippine literature.

Two works, one related to national identity politics, and the other, to the expression of female identity, are reviewed in this issue. In “In the Intersections of Cinema and Cultural Politics: A Book Review of *Scenes Reclaimed: CCP 50 x Cinemalaya 15* by Patrick Campos, Karl Castro, Tito Quiling Jr., and Louise Jashil Sonido,” Mary Anne Mallari discusses the Philippine film industry during the Martial Law period and the present administration of Rodrigo Duterte. As an accompanying volume to the 2019 Cinemalaya Film Festival exhibit of the same title, the book’s different parts take off from concepts that are crucial in both the political and cultural history of the country. In highlighting the structure and scaffolding of the book, Mallari comments

on how cinema and film critics and educators Patrick Campos, Tito Quiling Jr., and Louise Jashil Sonido theorize on specific issues that reveal the deep connections between Philippine cinema and the nation's politics.

In “Laging Ngayon Lamang ang Nililingon’: Hinggil sa *Ruta: Mga Bago at Piling Tula*” ni Benilda S. Santos, Christian Jil R. Benitez reviews Santos’s collection of poems by pointing out the trajectory and recurring concerns of the poet. Benitez’s framework in reading allows a conversation among the poems in the current collection and in Santos’s earlier works. What the review provides the reader is a sharp appreciation of the poems’ concern with the multiple roles that constitute the Filipino woman’s identity. Benitez quotes memorable poetic lines that serve as points of departure in highlighting the Filipino woman’s multifaceted subjectivity.

Thus, while some works in our July-December issue of *Humanities Diliman* pivot on concerns that trigger once again our uneasiness towards popular media, the idea of a national language, and notions of individual agency and autonomy, others demonstrate the interventions of language and literature in the messy contingencies of gender, identity, and national politics. Taken together, the essays, monograph, and reviews, all with a strong historical sensibility, show that it is incumbent upon scholars and critics to continuously engage with long-standing and still unresolved issues that beleaguer us.



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