

Humanities Diliman closes the year 2022 with studies that examine the rhetoric and aesthetics of various kinds of texts and cultural practices. This issue calls attention to the need for mindfulness of the implications and consequences of discourse concretised *through* and *in* practice. Not to be overlooked in each essay is how every identified issue is located within moments in history, providing scholars with a better understanding of the inquiry raised. All texts examined are therefore appreciated as inflections of a cultural and historical period or economic and political discourse. As disparate interventions in various contestations, the provocative arguments forwarded attest to the state of ongoing critique in different fields.

“Remaking Against Removal: Protest Artmaking in Sitio San Roque Against the Neoliberal State’s Aesthetic Regime” by Jose Monfred Sy looks at the creative cultural engagements of the urban poor community of Sitio San Roque in Quezon City. Collaborating with the group Save San Roque (SSR) whose many members are artists, architects, cartographers, and students, the community has clamored for on-site development instead of relocation. The eviction of the residents for the construction of the Quezon City Central Business District has been a controversial issue for almost a decade. As Sy points out, the communal envisioning of a community development plan by SSR opposes the neoliberal mode of governance which depicts the slums— pejoratively referred to as “squatters”—as obstacles to national growth and development, and in effect contests the state’s discourse of development. Such counter-discourse is articulated primarily in murals, music, sculpture, educational discussions, and protest actions. As a participant in some activities of the SSR, Sy observed how the community residents achieved a sense of what Jacques Rancière calls a “community of sense,” borne out of a particular aesthetic experience of the place and space, that is Sitio San Roque. Sy’s analysis, which also uses Alice Guillermo’s concept of protest art, demonstrates how the community is able to claim what David Harvey calls “the right to the city.” In the oppositional aesthetics regime of the the urban poor lies, as elaborated in the analysis, the possibilities of claiming the right to live in the city.

If Sy’s study focuses on artworks, particularly murals, to illustrate how an alternative sensing of space can be instrumental in claiming a space of residence for the urban poor,

Karlo Mikhail Mongaya’s “Sosyo-Semyotiks ng Welgang Bayan: Representasyon ng Panlipunang Aktor sa Rurok ng Anti-Diktadurang Pakikibaka” probes into the discourse of “welgang bayan” or people’s strike as a form of protest against the government. Mongaya’s interesting narrative of the history of welgang bayan begins with its launching in 1984 and its subsequent occurrence in different parts of the

Philippines. Six articles published in 1984 and 1985 in *Ang Bayan*, the Communist Party of the Philippines' official publication, are studied to ascertain the discourse of *welgang bayan* and what it reveals about the people's struggle. Mongaya advances arguments framed by a socio-semiotic lens and Marxist critical theory, which allow for a materialist grounding of the analysis of the language/discourse of the *Ang Bayan* articles. Treating the social actors in the articles as textual elements, Mongaya draws forth the possible direction of the revolution towards victory. The study does acknowledge, however, that the tension regarding this direction, which has been at the crux of debates among members of the movement, is not quite captured in the articles which prioritize the need for a unified voice of the Party. The revolutionary movement in the 80's, with its armed struggle and other modes of protest such as the *welgang bayan*, makes the decade an important area of study in relation to social movements in the Philippines.

Another example of an ideological stance embedded in discourse occurs in the enunciations of leaders. Speeches, in particular, powerfully convey a national leader's political, economic, and cultural platform. In "Ambivalences in Cohesion and Dissociation Framing of Labor Migration in Philippine President's Labor Speeches (1974 to 2016)," Junalou Labor, Knulp Aseo, and Meghan Therese Reyes examine 26 recorded and transcribed labor day speeches of Philippine presidents covering the period of 1974 to 2016. The analysis, which focuses on cohesion and dissociation frames used in the speeches, explains how elements of framing such as selection and salience complement each other to foreground a president's position on labor migration. Of particular interest in the discussion is the comparison of attitudes towards labor migration of the presidents during the identified time period. What surfaces from combing through every selected speech is its agenda which is to emphasize either the need for workers to sacrifice their lives for the state or the president's heroic role in protecting the migrant laborers. The study's significance lies not only in how it reveals the rhetorical modes employed in speeches in order to gain for the government the desired response from the people, but also in how it paves the way for understanding labor-related economic policies pursued by the nation's presidents.

The next two essays are on controversial but hardly discussed figures in contemporary academic circles. The first, philosopher Ricardo Pascual, was in the middle of the ideological tensions in the 1950s at the University of the Philippines (UP), and the second, Filipina celebrity Isabel Preysler who, despite her privileged stature, became a subject of racial prejudice in Spain from the 1970s to the early decades of the twenty-first century.

Joshua Mariz Felicilda's "Ang Pilosopiya ni Ricardo Pascual" revisits Pascual's contribution to debates in philosophy in the Philippines when he was a faculty of

UP from the '30s to the '60s. Scholars in the field of philosophy will find important the classification of Pascual's major works based on Feorillo Demeterio's sixteen discourses in Filipino philosophy (a kind of taxonomy of philosophical agenda). The critical evaluation of Pascual's works, some of which echo Jose Rizal's insights on possible solutions to the nation's illness, includes how these enagage with political issues during his time. A critical part of the study is the political context of Pascual's career—he was a logical positivist accused of spreading ideas on communism/socialism and agnosticism by the Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities (CAFA), an organization established in 1948 by the Philippine Congress to investigate the growing influence of communism in the country, and JD Constantino, a former UP faculty and staunch defender of the Catholic faith. As the study shows, Pascual has a definite place in the intellectual history of the Philippines and young Filipino scholars ought to have knowledge of his contribution to the intellectual ferment of the '50s-60s.

Another figure whose life is a worthy subject in the area of gender studies is María Isabel Preysler Arrastía, a Spanish-Filipina socialite and television personality. Known to the older generation of Filipinos as the wife of singer Julio Iglesias, and later the Hispanic aristocrat, Carlos Falcó, then the politician Miguel Boyer, and finally the lover of Nobel Prize winner for literature Mario Vargas Llosa, she is perhaps more familiar to the younger generation as the mother of singers Enrique Iglesias and Julio Iglesias Jr. A celebrity in her own right known not just for her stunning beauty but also her charity work, Preysler led a life that was not without complications, as what Pedro Vasquez-Miraz and Luis Sampayo in "The (Sexist and Racist) Image of Isabel Preysler in the Spanish Media Throughout Her Romantic Relationships" points out by examining how racism and sexism informed the way she was depicted by the Spanish media. Miraz and Sampayo track the changes in how the celebrity, particularly in her romantic relationships, was portrayed *by* and *in* the entertainment industry. The shifting perception of Preysler, Miraz and Sampayo explain, may be read against the backdrop of the socio-political and cultural developments in Spain and its prejudice against Asians/immigrants. Various representations of her in the news, magazines, television programs, and commercials demand attention because they illustrate the entangled issues of race, gender, and class.

Class tensions are palpable across texts and practices, even in the culinary scene as what Loren Evangelista Agaloos in her article "The Possibilities of *Pan de Sal* and Filipino Food" suggests. Taking off from the popularity of the pan de sal during the pandemic and using the lenses of food and cultural studies, Agaloos dwells on what is considered the "national bread" and explains how it has come to signify both national and class identity. The study takes the reader to the history of

pan de sal from the Spanish colonial period to the different versions of the bread in contemporary times. As the pan de sal has signified not only national identity but class identity as well, the study returns to the much-loved short story “The Bread of Salt” by Filipino writer NVM Gonzalez and the poem “Pan de Sal” by poet, critic, and activist Gelacio Guillermo. The comparative reading allows for a nuanced appreciation of the difference in the treatment of the image of the pan de sal before Agaloos pursues the new directions chefs and foodies in the Philippines and abroad have taken the pan de sal. Thus, by way of her analysis of the material, representational, and symbolic aspects of this bread, Agaloos points the reader to the fluidity of the concepts of “identity” and “authenticity” and to the possibilities of Filipino cuisine.

This issue closes with a review of Kerima Lorena Tariman’s *Sa Aking Henerasyon: Mga Tula at Saling-Tula* by Angeli Lacson. The posthumous collection of poems by Tariman whose literary works embody how one’s politics could and should be lived, is a compilation of her books, chapbooks, publications in journals, and translations of poems by other activists. Lacson clearly explains the structure of the collection and presents how each part of the book is an iteration of the commitment of Tariman to peasant communities and the revolutionary movement. Both a description and a critical reading of the collection, the review effectively connects readers to the works of Tariman and shares the sense of hope that runs through all the poems. Lacson’s analysis of the collection’s significance cannot be overstated, considering the deaths of Tariman last year and her husband, Ericson Acosta, weeks before the publication of this journal’s December 2022 issue. Both were victims of military operations in Negros Occidental.

As this issue shows the continuous critical engagements of scholars, we are looking forward to the publication of more studies that pursue new directions in the humanities. The queries raised in the essays are by no means unique to criticism *in* and *about* the Philippines/Filipinos and are also explored by scholars around the world. The lively discussions in literary, communication, media, cultural, and food studies, and philosophy underscore the fact that these areas of studies are imbricated in global and cultural politics. The year 2023 promises more works that will contribute to a sustained evaluation of and opposition to predominant discourses.



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