

Editor's Notes

The December 2016 issue of *Social Science Diliman: A Philippine Journal of Society and Change (SSD)*, features three articles: Michelle G. Ong and Virginia Braun's "Erasing/embracing the marks of aging: Alternative discourses around beauty among Filipina migrants"; Janus Ruel T. Cabazares's "A legal text with a single *Dapat*: Looking for deontic modality in the Filipino translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)"; and, Gilbert E. Macarandang's "Pagpopook ng kapangyarihang politikal: Prosesong elektoral sa Lalawigan ng Tayabas, 1846–1895" (Contextualizing political power: Electoral process in the Province of Tayabas, 1846–1895).

These articles reflect the thrust of *SSD* to provide new ways of examining continuing, as well as new issues in Philippine contemporary society in particular, and the social sciences, in general, and of connecting these to a particular historical moment. In the process, the articles challenge and refine current modes of analyses while taking into critical account the historical context of these issues—one of the foundations of social science research—without the authors necessarily leaving or abandoning their fields of specialization. Thus, in these articles, we see the interplay of ideals and realities, of conscious innovation, and determined re-examination. While states of mind and habits formed in particular social settings determine behavior and structure societies and therefore become patterns that determine ways of life, individuals can choose their own fate. Institutions and institutionalized practices which emerge from particular cultural and historical settings reveal similar contemporary realities. As such, in the articles, details surrounding each particular moment become especially meaningful in the context of larger social and historical settings.

Michelle G. Ong and Virginia Braun's "Erasing/embracing the marks of aging: Alternative discourses around beauty among Filipina migrants" examines the host of factors and the constellation of emotions that determine Filipina migrants in New Zealand's notions of beauty through *pakikipagkuwentuhan* (story-telling), a methodological approach in Filipino Psychology or *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*. The article shows the extent to which maintaining an attractive and youthful appearance is important to these Filipinas and the lengths they will go to, to stay attractive. In doing so, the article also explores common notions of beauty, particularly in relation to aging and gender.

Neoliberalism emphasizes individual responsibility and choice, diminishes the value of older women, and regards bodies as objects and manifestations of success and the means to attain it. While argued in this context, the authors, by their deft interrogation of the nuances of the impetus of attaining and preserving beauty for these Filipina migrants, have shown that these women, while subscribing to social pressures in the pursuit of beauty, have done so on their own terms. As such, they are portrayed to be self-sufficient, to have strong ideas of what their lives should be, and to be true to the values they hold dear, regardless if these do not necessarily conform to the expectations and dictates of their society. By claiming these rights, these Filipinas have also managed to expand the realm of possibilities available to them within their private and public spheres, even if their struggles are never on level ground, and have succeeded to assert their individual ways of life according to the standards of their choice.

Janus Ruel T. Cabazares's "A legal text with a single *Dapat*: Looking for deontic modality in the Filipino translation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)" provides a good starting point to underline the intellectualization of the Filipino language. The article highlights Heiko Narrog's approach to modality and Ricardo Ma. Nolasco's functionalist morphosyntactic interpretation of Filipino verbs in order to compare the semantics of a subject text and a target text in the examination of the performative function of Filipino *in/as* a legal text. Specifically, the methodology is applied to the Filipino translation of the UDHR through the identification of deontic modality, a linguistic modality that indicates "how the world ought to be in terms of freedom to act (including permission and duty)".

Cabazares identifies modal markers in the Filipino translation of the UDHR as a necessary element in order to designate a performative function to Filipino, a quality that should help propel its capacity not only to become a legal text and in the process bestow academic distinction to translation works in Filipino, but also to contribute towards the intellectualization of the Filipino language.

According to Bonifacio P. Sibayan, one of the pioneer scholars in Philippine sociolinguistics, in his "Intellectualization of Filipino" (2015), an intellectualized language is a language used "for giving and obtaining complete education in any field of knowledge", from preschool education to advanced degrees. It is also a

written language and thus requires reading and writing skills. In an intellectualized language, knowledge and skills on any subject are recorded and reported in various written sources or forms of media. English, Russian, German, French, and Japanese are some examples of intellectualized languages. Filipino, however, is not (yet) an intellectualized language, even with the available body of literature in Filipino, as well as a significant number of writers in Filipino, and support organizations and publications for the development of Filipino literature.

Since 1974, when Filipino became “co-equal” with English as a medium of instruction in all schools and universities in the Philippines, Filipino educators have realized that Filipino is still the ideal language for the majority of Filipinos because it is the most accessible to all. In this regard, Cabazares’s article, which identifies and expands the usage of Filipino beyond the home and as *lingua franca*, is a contribution to the vision of Filipino educators to intellectualize the Filipino language. According to Nolasco (“Intellectualizing a Language”, 2009), “We can only intellectualize a language by using it”.

Gilbert E. Macarandang’s “Pagpopook ng kapangyarihang politikal: Prosesong elektoral sa Lalawigan ng Tayabas, 1846–1895” (Contextualizing political power: Electoral process in the Province of Tayabas, 1846–1895), takes us to the last decades of Spanish rule in the Philippines by examining the electoral process, which was intended to transform municipal governments in the Philippines into more effective and autonomous administrative units in the nineteenth century, based on the laws, decrees, and circulars of the Spanish government for the election of the *gobernadorcillo*. Under Spain, the *gobernadorcillo* was the municipal judge or governor who simultaneously carried out functions as leader, economic planner, and judicial administrator in the towns or *pueblos*. By these functions, the position of *gobernadorcillo* became implicated in the political triumvirate of Spanish Philippines—church, state, and local elite—and inevitably, became crucial to the political and social life of both Filipinos and Spaniards during the period under consideration. In aggregating the past in this regard, a valid academic exercise, Macarandang has shown that this emancipatory project was in vain because of how it was linked to Spain’s imperial genealogy.

In the wake of the recently concluded 2016 elections in the Philippines and the events that continuously unfold since then, Macarandang’s article is significant in order to remind us to remain connected to our history so that our past is not forgotten and it ceases to be “a foreign country”. And in these challenging times, it is invoked to teach a lesson about the present.

I hope that you will find the December 2016 issue of *SSD* worthwhile. Thank you.

Ma. Mercedes G. Planta
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