

Geo-political, Moral, and Virtual Contexts of Peace-making

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The articles in this issue elevate competing knowledge claims and value presuppositions to the level of noble ideals, higher motives, and prescribed principles of action. These attempts to overcome contradictions (*Aufhebung*)¹ can guide peacemakers through the maze of geo-political divides, haunting memories of atrocities, and post-truth claims.

The first article, John Giordano's "Circum-navigating the World Island, among Enemies," foresees that future battles will be fought between the chasms created by the geographical limitations imposed by the Earth on ideal human aspirations. He recommends Victor Segalen's notion of an "aesthetics of diversity" as a means toward the construction a more harmonious global society. This goal is exemplified by scholarly gatherings that continuously meet regularly regardless of the warfare engaged in by the scholars' home countries.

¹ *Aufhebung* is a German philosophical terminology used by G.W.F. Hegel to explain the sublation of partial and competing claims in order to not only accommodate, but also to transcend, these claims to a higher level of synthesis.

The second article, “Healing of Historic Memories,” by Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil of Guwahati, India, suggests that “higher motives” can persuade people “to forgive past injuries and create a new start together.” Based on his previous experiences of conflict-resolution, the Archbishop of Guwahati believes that new possibilities for reconciliation can be awakened among participants caught in situations of conflict by offering their grievances to the altar of shared values.

Roberto Paolo T. Sangil’s “Cutting across the Waves of the Web: The ‘Care of the Self’ as an Ethical Response to Post-truth Politics in Social Media,” prescribes “decomposition exercises” that release the pressure generated by misinformation campaigns and post-truth claims. These exercises enable the underlying messages of speakers to emerge and be decoded from their distorted utterances. Distracting speech-acts such as expletives are ignored in order to cut through the speakers’ intended actions. Peace makers can effectively address the demands of concrete situations when they are able to achieve autonomy from the heated debates of contending parties.

Veronica Marie Araneta’s Research Notes, “Google Earth: A Discussion on Colonial Inscriptions and the Role of Digital Technology Experts in Development,” exposes the reduction of socio-political realities to the monolithic grids of digital technologies. She laments that ‘poverty experts’ are being replaced by digital technocrats without addressing the actual social problems imbedded in the data captured by computer

screens. She believes, however, that digital technologies can be redirected to support systemic solutions that respond to concrete social problems.

The disparities between abstract theories and concrete social realities are articulated further by the two review essays that follow Araneta's note. Vincent Casil's review of Wataru Kusaka's *Moral Politics in the Philippines: Inequality, Democracy, and the Urban Poor*, highlights the gap between the political expectations of the poor and the middle classes. The former "sees nothing wrong with the attitudes of dependency given their impoverished condition" while the latter idealizes the values of "independence, self-sufficiency, and hard work to achieve economic success." The reviewer suggests that the latter reach out to the former in order to achieve solidarity in Philippine society.

The second review essay, Benjiemen Labastin's review of Ranilo Hermida's *Imagining Modern Democracy: A Habermasian Assessment of the Philippine Experiment*, emphasizes the importance of transforming our political landscape from its authoritarian tendencies toward "people empowerment grounded on the Constitution." He commends Hermida's efforts to reconceptualize Philippine democracy from Habermasian perspectives as an imperative. He concurs that "imagination is a condition *sine qua non*" to achieve political change.

Shane Epting's review of *Making Sense of the City: Public Spaces in the Philippines*, edited by Remmon Barbaza, summarizes the

articles contained in the collection of essays and recommends it to researchers and students of this cross-cutting field of study. He believes that “the topic of urban public space in the Philippines has lessons to teach the world’s cities.”

These Reviews, along with the Articles and Research Notes in this issue of *Budhi*, present various ways of healing the pervasive fissures embedded in the virtual and actual public spaces of our contemporary world.