



You are cordially invited to a Special Seminar on

Un/doing Things With/out Words: Critical Discourse Practice Across Disciplines and Potential Contribution to Social and Cultural Analysis in the Philippines

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University of the Philippines Diliman

Discussant: *Mario Ivan Lopez*, CSEAS Kyoto University
Coordinator: *Hau, Caroline Sy*, CSEAS Kyoto University

on June 6, 2019, 4 p.m. – 6 p.m.
at the Tonantei (Room 201), Inamori Building
Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Japan

Roundtable abstract

The roundtable traverses the different scholarly practices built on the theoretical and methodological foundations and revisions in critical discourse studies. Recent global events prove that integrated, intersectional, and interdisciplinary modes of critique are crucial in social and cultural analysis. The five presentations navigate this complex relationship that people have with language and representation in society, but also foregrounds the limits of the foundational frameworks of a discourse-centered lens in order to cultivate transgressive possibilities of understanding the human condition. Unpacked, the main title of the presentation implies both fractions and inclusivity in discourse theory and practice. *Doing things with words* is a reference to an Austinian privileging of language as a means of performative intervention. *Undoing things with words* pertains to the unraveling of covert and overt meanings—the apparent agenda of foundational critical discourse projects that focus on language and its entanglements with power. On the other hand, *doing things without words* is a challenge to the logocentric bias by affirming the value of human experience beyond the confines of linguistic signification. Such an ontological revision proposes an epistemological shift by *undoing things without words*, through critical engagement with emerging fields of discourse that compel new ways of understanding people, culture, and society.

Background

Alwin C. Aguirre (College of Arts and Letters [CAL]), Michelle G. Ong (College of Social Sciences and Philosophy [CSSP]) and Aileen O. Salonga (CAL) formed the University of the Philippines Diliman Discourse Studies Group (UPDDSG) in 2016 with the general aim of advancing the theories and methods of critical discourse studies for social and cultural

analysis. The proposed roundtable is in line with such goal as we intend to conduct events, produce materials, and develop programs that propound discourse as a productive theoretical, methodological, and analytic framework in different fields of study even as it is interrogated and extended within and by these different fields. Joseph Palis (CSSP) and Monica Santos (CSSP) had been among the featured speakers in the group's past public lectures largely co-hosted by the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy and College of Arts and Letters in the University of the Philippines Diliman. The UPDDSG has so far organized at least 10 public lectures and roundtable discussions covering various theoretical and methodological themes. The proposed roundtable hosted by the CSEAS Kyoto University is its first international academic meeting.

Presentation abstracts

1. #englishfeels: English, affect, and agency

Aileen O. Salonga

In the Philippines, statements about English like 'English is cool!' or 'English sucks!' do not warrant strong reactions, much less an analysis. However, in this presentation, I show that these statements of feeling carry beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies that have implications for how English is received, interpreted, and deployed by those who use it. Through an examination of interview data of different Filipino speakers of English, I demonstrate that feelings about English do not come about 'naturally'. Instead, they emerge from the material reality and discursive construction of English in the country, and from the speakers' own lived relationships with the language. In the end, I propose the feasibility of affect as an alternative analytical category with which to analyze language attitudes and ideologies. I also look into the agentive role of affect in linguistic choice and production.

2. *Why don't I feel what they feel*: Emotions, empty signifiers, and affective hijacks in online migrant discourse

Alwin C. Aguirre

My presentation is a response to calls in both migration and cultural studies to pay attention to the role of emotions in migrant life (Brooks and Simpson 2013) since they are a distinct but necessarily integrated aspect of social relations and relations of power (Harding & Pribram 2002). I view the general issue from an *affective-discursive* lens (Wetherell 2012) as I endorse the argument that feelings, though not necessarily only expressed in discourse, are completed in discourse (Burkitt in Wetherell 2012). I analyze state-produced documents aimed at immigrant Filipinos, corporate texts that capitalize on the Filipino diaspora as market, and particular cases of individually produced social media texts of Filipino migrants to demonstrate how emotion, as *empty signifier* (Laclau 1996), is appropriated by different interests in the pursuit of discursive control.

3. Embodying the modern retiree: Stories from Filipina migrants in Japan

Michelle G. Ong

Using a discursive approach in the thematic analysis of older, Japan-based Filipina migrants' stories about growing older, I discuss how the discourse of the 'modern retiree' (Rozanova, 2008) is shaping how they think about, plan for, and act on their own ageing. I argue that a positive subjectivity may be claimed through responsibly managing one's finances, health, and care needs for the future to avoid being a burden to society and one's family. These claims resonate with discussions in Japan and elsewhere that highlight the costs of an increasingly elderly on society and reflect neoliberal ideas which highlight individual choice and responsibility for one's ageing while diminishing state support for services for older people. Evidence from this study supports the idea that social inequalities, not individual will or skill, determine to a great degree how well Filipina migrants in Japan achieve a 'successful' ageing.

4. Moving bodies, discourse, culture: An anthropological study of ballet dancing in the Philippines

Monica FA W. Santos

This presentation discusses how an expressive form, ballet dancing--as it is practiced in the Philippines--is studied using the lens of the anthropology of human movement, specifically the framework of semasiology. Semasiology views human body movements as action signs--analogous to Saussure's linguistic sign. As Farnell (1994) argues, moving bodies constitute 'talk from the body' that are meaningful in culturally specific ways. As such, the performance and training practices of ballet dancing are viewed as particularly significant to its practitioners in the Philippines as these are embodied articulations of transnational and cosmopolitan aspirations. This challenges the view of 'dance' or 'ballet' as a universal language, especially in light of its world-wide presence.

5. Artistic Cartographies in Re-territorializing Urban Milieus

Joseph Palis

This presentation discusses processual practices of counter-mapping in the Philippines: art maps and installations which reconfigure and re-assemble 'official' maps whose creation and authentication were legitimized by hegemonic state power to represent the modern nation-state. Filipino artists Cian Dayrit, Mark Salvatus, Annie Lumao produced counter-mapped art works and installations that serve as interventions in the critical examination of state power in standardizing and legitimizing a specific and particular brand of nationalisms. Dayrit's cartographically-informed art incorporates maps that destabilize the emblem of imperial and colonial power. Salvatus and Lumao embody the emotional and affective geographies of urban subalterns who navigate the labyrinth of institutionally and discursively violent terrains of Metro Manila. The maps and installations provide an alternative representation of geo-affective dislocations and institutionalized marginalization due spatial elitism. These cartographic and

interventionist art maps assist in destabilizing commonly-held cartographic imaginations shaped and reinforced by normalized state violence in the Philippines.

About the Speakers

Aileen O. Salonga

Department of English and Comparative Literature
College of Arts and Letters, UP Diliman

Aileen O. Salonga teaches at the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. She has a PhD in English Language Studies from the National University of Singapore, and writes in the areas of sociolinguistics, discourse studies, and language and gender studies. She is currently the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the College of Arts and Letters.

Alwin C. Aguirre

Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature
College of Arts and Letters, University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman

Alwin Aguirre teaches at the College of Arts and Letters, University of the Philippines—Diliman, where he also presently serves as Associate Dean for Research, Creative Work, and Publication. His current research interests are migrant identity work in social media and the integration of affect and discourse in multimodal discourse events.

Michelle G. Ong

Department of Psychology
College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, UP Diliman

Michelle G. Ong is the current chair of UP Diliman, CSSP, Department of Psychology. She finished her doctorate at the University of Auckland's School of Psychology. Her research interests include children's rights, migration and ageing, and critical psychology.

Monica FA W. Santos

Department of Anthropology
College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, UP Diliman

Monica FA W Santos trained in anthropology at the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman and at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, specializing in socio-cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology and the anthropology of human movement, with training in Labanotation. Recently, she was Guest Editor of *Musika Jornal 12* (special issue on Music and Movement). She teaches at the Department of Anthropology at UP Diliman where she has developed courses in Discourse Analysis and the Anthropology of Performance, and works on projects that promote expressive cultures in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

Joseph Palis

Department of Geography, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Center for International Studies
UP Diliman

Joseph Palis is a faculty member at the Department of Geography and an affiliate faculty at the Center for International Studies. He is a co-editor of the Pivot series of Palgrave Macmillan's Geographies of Media. Whenever he is in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, he DJs in house parties, underground clubs and WXYC.

Roundtable Programme

4:00 to 4:10	Introductions
4:10 to 4:20	Overview and Background of the panel <i>Alwin Aguirre</i>
4:20 to 5:10	Individual presentations (5 presentations, 10 min each)
5:10 to 5:20	Synthesis <i>Michelle Ong</i>
5:20 to 5:50	Discussion <i>Participants & Presenters</i>
5:50 to 6:00	Planning for potential collaboration and future activities
	Closing