

Session 3.2: Redeeming Advertising and Propaganda Technology 3rd February 2018

Title: When Fact is Fictional and Truth is Fiction

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Melba Padilla Maggay is a communication specialist with an anthropological interest. She graduated from the University of the Philippines with a first degree in Mass Communication (Cum Laude) and a Master's degree in English Literature, with her thesis titled, Towards an Adequate Definition of Terror. Her Ph.D. dissertation, published as "PAHIWATIG, Kagawiang Pangkomunikasyon ng mga Pilipino" by the Ateneo University Press, is the first scholarly and comprehensive analysis of Filipino communication patterns. The book is now a major reference for students of Philippine culture and intercultural communication issues.

A specialist in intercultural communication, she was research fellow on the subject at the University of Cambridge in the UK under the auspices of Tyndale House, applying it to the question of culture and theology. She has lectured on this and other cross-cultural issues worldwide, including a stint as Northrup Visiting Professor at Hope College, Michigan and Visiting Lecturer at All Nations Christian College in England. As a development specialist and practitioner, she has initiated and supervised research projects and ground-breaking grassroots work as president of the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture, a research and training organization engaged in development, missiology and cross-cultural studies aimed at social transformation. She is also President of the Micah Global, a network of more than 750 faith-based development organizations worldwide, where she serves as resource person on culture and development issues.

Abstract:

There is the myth going around that the world has become a 'global village.' As media theorist McLuhan has long ago predicted, each country is now within hearing distance and we are seeing the narrowing of the world into virtual village communities as information technologies advance in their reach and sophistication. This session will examine the truth of this and other global myths that circulate in a social environment that is now mostly technologically-mediated. Discussion will be focused on the impact of communications technologies on social perception and their use as tools for political engagement. Technological determinism, which has now reared its head once again as an issue, will be addressed. Attention will be paid on how biblical perspectives can illuminate the question of media as a human extension, how it heightens the capacity for conjuring fictional worlds, but also how it enlarges the space for creating social imaginaries. We shall also explore together the implications to our own culture-making as media practitioners.

Reading:

- "The Social Construction of Facts and Artifacts" Trevor J. Pinch and Wiebe E. Bijker.
Article #24 in Scharff and Dusek.
- "The 'Autonomy' of the Technological Phenomenon" Jacques Ellul.
Article #36 in Scharff and Dusek.
- "Tool-Users vs. Homo-Sapiens and the Megamachine" Lewis Mumford.
Article #32 in Scharff and Dusek.*

* This was chosen as one of the set readings for Session 1, independently chosen for Session 2, and now independently chosen for Session 3. If you have read it already, you are all set. If you missed it for Sessions 1 or 2, now is the time to spot a recurring theme, and wonder if this article might be worth reading.