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Workshop Report

By

Victor Valbuena
EDITORIAL
CARTOONING

WORKSHOP REPORT

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
18–21 September 1989

Prepared by Dr. Victor Valbuena, Workshop Coordinator
Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre
WORKSHOP ON EDITORIAL CARTOONING
18-21 September 1989
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WORKSHOP REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the proceedings of the Workshop cum Exhibition on Editorial Cartooning organized by The Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center (AMIC) with support from the Asia Foundation (TAF). The workshop was held at the Hotel Equatorial, Kuala Lumpur from 18 to 21 September 1989. Sixteen participants came from four ASEAN countries, namely: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore.

Workshop Objectives. The objectives of the workshop were:

1. To provide ASEAN cartoonists an opportunity to meet and to discuss the constraints and challenges of the art and profession of editorial cartooning in the region;
2. To familiarize themselves with various styles and approaches to editorial cartooning; and
3. To explore ways to upgrade their professional status as editorial cartoonists.

WORKSHOP FACULTY

Dr. Victor T. Valbuena, Senior Programme Specialist and Coordinator of the Seminars and Institutional Development, AMIC, was Workshop Director. He is a communication educator from the University of the Philippines and the Ateneo de Manila University.

Two top international editorial cartoonists from America and Europe served as principal resource persons: Mr. Corky Trinidad from Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A., and Mr. Antonio Antunes from Lisbon, Portugal.

Corky Trinidad (Francisco Fernando Macario Felipe Trinidad, Jr.) has been the political cartoonist of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin for over 15 years. Born in Manila, Philippines, Corky (his professional name) earned a BA in Journalism from the Ateneo de Manila University. At the age of 20, he became the political cartoonist for the Philippines Herald. He was the first winner of the Ten Outstanding Young Men award for creative communications in the Philippines.

Corky's cartoons have won "Grand Prix" awards at major
humour and cartooning salons and exhibitions in the world. He was the first Asian cartoonist syndicated nationally in the United States. His cartoons have also appeared in major newspapers in Australia, Canada, Europe, and South America. Corky teaches a class in political cartooning at the University of Hawaii.

Antonio Antunes has been an editorial cartoonist since 1974; his cartoons are published by the leading Portuguese newspapers. Since 1983, his cartoons have been included in "Views of the World", a selection of 50 international cartoons published in the United States and Canada.

Antonio (his professional name) studied visual arts in Lisbon. He has participated and won several "Grand Prix" awards in international humour and cartooning exhibitions in Canada and Europe. Antonio has had individual exhibitions in Portugal, Brazil and West Germany. He is the author of several humour and cartoon books: Kafarnaum (1977), Suspensorios (1983), Album de Caras (1985) and Album de Caras II (1987) and Political Playing Cards (1985).

Antonio's participation in the workshop was through the courtesy of UNESCO Paris.

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

The programme featured lecture-demonstrations by Corky and Antonio, participant discussions, cartooning workshops directed by the resource persons, and presentation/critique of the workshop outputs.

A copy of the programme is found in Appendix A.

Opening. Mr. Vijay Menon, AMIC Secretary-General, opened the workshop. He discussed the various roles played by editorial cartoons in media and society, including creating awareness of and highlighting social issues, conscientization, and political education.

Talks by Resource Persons. Corky discussed the cartoon as a form of communication that must be studied and appreciated very much like other art forms such as the novel or poetry. The cartoon, he said, must be seen and understood in terms of its form, theme and message, imagery and by-imagery, and humour. He emphasized that "picturing" in cartoons is different from other forms of communication in terms of "the basic picture" and "the sense of recognition" that it generates.

Corky said that the editorial cartoon first and always must take a stand; it must make a statement... be a statement. But it does not always have to be an angry statement. He said that usually, the cartoon's stand coincides with the newspaper's editorial stand. Occasionally, it does not. He said that on occasion where his cartoon does not not coincide with that of the newspaper, it is not published in the editorial section. It is
not censored either but "floated" in other pages of the newspaper to indicate that it is more representative of the cartoonist's stand rather than the newspaper's.

He said that editorial cartoonists have a responsibility to arrive at a definition of what the craft is. He bewailed the fact that "most who write about cartoons are not cartoonists - they do not know what it's all about."

Antonio, for his part, discussed cartooning as art and as journalism. He said that as art, it must conform to the basic elements of the plastic arts; as journalism, it must adhere to the basic principles of good journalistic practice.

He criticized the tendency of some quarters to dismiss cartooning as a minor art, and said that "there is no minor art, only minor artists."

Antonio admitted that to say that the cartoon is the true international language is a most ambitious idea, but hastened to add that this is possible if the cartoonist works enough to ensure sufficiency of his design. He said that the humour component of the cartoon design is the most difficult to work with, considering that humour is "a way of seeing things differently in different cultures". He approaches the problem simply by considering the target audiences: he uses national symbols if he is addressing the Portuguese, international symbols if he is addressing a global audience.

(Antonio was not very fluent in English; he was more conversant in Portuguese, French and Spanish. During his presentations, he was assisted by Mr. Rui Paulo da Cruz, a Portuguese journalist and UNESCO consultant, who either interpreted or elaborated on Antonio's discussions, in English. Despite this communication limitation, the participants remarked that Antonio was most generous in sharing his ideas and in passing on techniques to improve their art. The participants reserved similar praises for Corky.)

Cartooning Workshops. Corky and Antonio each conducted a cartooning workshop among the participants. In Corky's workshop, the participants focused on an issue of their choice. In Antonio's session, they decided to focus on one global issue: the environment.

Reproductions the cartoons from these two workshops are found in Appendices B and C.

The two resource persons also conducted a third and joint workshop session by Corky and Antonio - on caricaturing. The participants decided to caricature each other and the resource persons. Most of the participants decided to keep these outputs for their personal files. Some were exchanged among the participants, as gifts from one artist to another.
Participant Discussions. The participants exchanged ideas on cartooning in their various countries and shared experiences in dealing with the working environments and constraints to their art and profession, e.g., censorship, poor employment conditions in the media, low social prestige, and limited outlets for their cartoon creations in both national and international terms. At the end of the workshop, the participants urged the publication of a news and cartoon magazine as an outlet for their works and as a means of upgrading their professional status. The participants elected one of the Filipino delegates, Mr. Severino Marcelo from The Manila Chronicle, to head a committee to pursue this proposal. They coined a name for their proposed publication: KARTUNASEA. They also decided on a logo for the magazine.

The prototype logo for the proposed publication is found in Appendix D.

CARTOON EXHIBITION

An exhibition featuring the works of Corky, Antonio, and the workshop participants was held at the mezzanine floor of Hotel Equatorial for the duration of the workshop. The exhibition was opened by Ms. Kathleen O'Keefe, representing The Asia Foundation. The exhibition was covered by the local press and led to media interviews with some of the resource persons and participants. It attracted a sizable audience during its four-day run.

Copies of the media articles are found in Appendix E.

Closing. Encik Railey bin Jeffrey, Deputy Minister of Information, Malaysia was guest speaker at the closing ceremonies. He recalled an early survey on political cartoonists in Malaysia conducted by Dr. John Lent of Temple University, U.S.A. who was at the time affiliated with the Univeriti Sains Malaysia in Penang. He said that conditions may have changed in Malaysia since then. He said that cartoonists now enjoy a greater latitude of freedom of expression, and that they do not always have to "play it safe", referring to a quote from an editor cited in the Lent study.

The Deputy Minister encouraged the participants to carry on their art and profession as they served a vital role in society. He asked them, however, to consider the principle of fairness in depicting personalities and issues in their cartoons. Paraphrasing Antonio, one of the workshop resource persons, Encik Railey said that editorial cartooning must adhere to the sacred principles of good journalism.

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

The 16 participants to the workshop represented leading newspapers and news magazines, as well as humour publications in the region. Several have published books of their works in their respective countries. copies were also exhibited during
the workshop.

The participants were:

Indonesia

1. Mr. Pramono R. Pramoedjo
   Cartoonist, Suara Pemberuan

2. Mr. Pryanto S.
   Editorial/Political Cartoonist, Tempo

3. Mr. Sudarta, Gerardus Mayela
   Cartoonist, Kompas

Malaysia

1. Mr. Mohamad Nor Khalid (Lat)
   Freelance Cartoonist
   Malaysia’s foremost cartoonist, Lat regularly contributes cartoons to The New Straits Times. One of his books, Mat Som, was translated into a multi-media play, a performance of which was watched by the workshop participants.

2. Mr. Lai Kin Thart
   Editorial Cartoonist, Malayan Thong Poh

3. Mr. Latchuman s/o Arunasalam (Lena)
   Editorial Cartoonist, Tamil Nassan

4. Mr. Zainal Osman (Nan)
   Creative Director, Ad Age Agencies

5. Mr. Zulkiflee Anuar-Ul-Haque (Zunar)
   Cartoonist, Creative Enterprises (M) Sdn Bhd

Philippines

1. Mr. Jess Abrera
   Cartoonist, Philippines Daily Inquirer

2. Mr. Severino (Nonoy) Marcelo
   Cartoonist, The Manila Chronicle

3. Mr. Romeo Togonon
   Cartoonist, The Daily Globe

Singapore

1. Mr. Cheah Sin Ann
   Artist, The Straits Times

2. Mr. Colin Goh
   Cartoonist, The New Paper
3. Mr. Lee Hup Kheng  
   Artist, The New Paper

4. Mr. Lim Siah-Tong  
   Specialist Artist, Lian-He Zao Bao

5. Mr. Tien Chung Ping  
   Artist, Lian-He Zao Bao

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

The participants were asked to evaluate various aspects of the workshop, using a 10-point scale where 1 is the lowest, and 10 the highest. In addition, they were asked give their comments on the selection of the participants, the workshop programme and organization, and their suggestions for improvement of similar workshops in the future. Out of the 16 participants, 13 returned their evaluation questionnaires.

Judging from the results of the evaluation, the participants rated the workshop very favourably. They found it relevant and valuable to their work, and endorsed the conduct of more similar workshops in the future. Below is a summary of the participants' assessment of the workshop.

Mean rating for each of the items in the scale:

1. Quality of the programme 9
2. Presentation by resource persons 8.5
3. Workshop facilities 8.5
4. Production facilities 8
5. Workshop organization 9.5
6. Hotel accommodation 9
7. Time allocation for presentations 9.5
8. Time allocation for productions 9
9. Participant contribution to the workshop 9.5
10. Discussions 8.5
11. Opportunities for exchanging ideas with fellow participants 9
12. Opportunities for exchanging ideas with resource persons 9
13. Cooperation with your group 9
14. Quality of media production 8
15. Relevance of the workshop to your work 9
16. Overall value of the workshop to you 9

All the 13 who returned the evaluation instruments said the right target group was invited to the workshop. Majority said that the number of participants was "just right". Specific comments regarding the participants were:

1. It was the right group since basically all came from one region and the problems discussed were more or less the same.
2. Participants are all of the same line; it was easy to communicate.
3. We were able to relate to each other professionally despite language barriers.
4. Participants were able to know each other and about what kind of problems they have in their country.
5. They informed us about the working environments of cartoonists in their country, giving us a better view of cartoonists in the region.
6. We really missed the Thailand group.
7. It is a waste that that the Thais didn't come; it would have been better.
8. There was a lack of media coverage to attract other participants.

Comments on the programme included the following:

1. It's a good programme and the participants really enjoy the sessions.
2. It is a good program, If only AMIC can do it regularly, more editorial cartoonists can benefit professionally from this program.
3. Why not include visits to see the cartoonists in the field? How they work in some mass media. How they develop their ideas, etc.
4. The programme is very good.
5. Good. (2)
6. Satisfactory. (2)

The participants had the following to say about the workshop organization:

1. Why don't the organizers make the cartooning workshop more frequently - at least help the ASEAN cartoonists to publish their works, help to publish a medium they are going to prepare.
2. More workshops on this programme and more experts to share their expertise.
3. Good. Give them more workshops frequently with other experts.
4. For a first time sponsoring such program, the organizer was able to conduct the objective quite successfully.
5. It was very well organised, good accommodation and good food, including the tea breaks.
6. Very useful; above all, helpful.
7. Very, very good.
8. Very good.
9. Good.
10. Fine.

The following were suggested to improve future similar workshops:

1. An additional resource speaker is needed and more visual aids by the speakers should be available for the participants in order to understand more of the speaker and his works.
2. More slide presentations from resource persons.
3. It would be better if there are few more guest artists so we could have better knowledge on their way of doing things in the region.
4. Need more guest artists.
5. More seminars like this, Asia region or international. Publish the participants' cartoons.
6. Publish participants' cartoons internationally.

7. Expand choice of participants.


10. Should have more such workshop.

CONCLUSION

That majority of the participants found the workshop a very worthwhile exercise indicate that it was successful in meeting its objectives. That many recommended a repeat of the workshop in the future reinforces this assessment.

The resource persons proved to be excellent and were able to mix well, and to share their talents generously with the participants; they were without airs, despite their international status. They were not only willing to teach; they were equally willing to learn new insights from their fellow cartoonists in the ASEAN region.

The participants, in the main, were well-selected and displayed a high level of enthusiasm and participation in both the group discussions and cartooning sessions. Their workshop outputs are impressive, both for their wit and design quality.

Without putting it in words, however, the actions of one participant indicated that he was bored with some of the sessions. This was quite understandable because he was not really that keen on attending the workshop; his paper sent him, with him knowing fully well that he was only the third choice of the paper for the workshop. The two previous nominees could not make it for certain reasons. Apart from this fact, the participant had also just returned from New York where he attended a course on cartooning; he probably thought the workshop could offer nothing new to him. He was enthusiastic about the exhibition, however, and brought many of his friends from Kuala Lumpur down to the hotel to see the show.

This unfortunate selection, fortunately, did not prove distracting to the rest of the group. As one of the participants put it: "One miss out of 16 possible hits is not bad at all. Too bad, he didn't make full use of the possibilities of the workshop. His loss, really!"

In sum, a repeat of this AMIC-TAF editorial cartooning workshop cum exhibition should be in order.
AMIC Secretary-General, Vijay Menon, opening the workshop

Senior Programme Specialist, Dr. Victor Valbuena, briefing participants on workshop programme
Ms. Kathleen O'Keefe, The Asia Foundation, opening the exhibition

Viewing the exhibits
Editorial cartoons from the Philippines

Cartoons from Singapore
Lat's Exhibits

Corky's cartoons and Antonio's caricatures
Resource persons Corky Trinidad, Antonio Antunes and Rui Paulo Da Cruz

Indonesian and Singaporean cartoonists "picturing" during Corky's workshop
Filipino and Malaysian cartoonists at work

Singaporean cartoonist, Colin Goh presenting his workshop exercise
Participants evaluating the outputs from Antonio's workshop

Participants caricaturing each other
Antonio Antunes making his statement on World Ecology

Encik Railey bin Jeffrey, Malaysian Deputy Minister for Information, closing the programme