OVERVIEW

Engage! *Engage?* Reflecting with Public Intellectuals

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Introduction

Wide-ranging and meaningful ideas leap out of the papers in this volume contributed by 27 API Fellows for the 11ᵗʰ Regional Workshop in Tagaytay City, Philippines. As the workshop directors, we marvel at the provocative issues discussed and debated at the 2012 event. To help crystallize them into a meaningful framework, we offer our reflections on the workshop theme, "Engage! Public Intellectuals Transforming Society".

The workshop was set up to help the Fellows reflect on the sociocultural realities they are exploring, encouraging them to integrate their professional knowledge and insights into discourse and action in rapidly transforming societies. Their range of concerns is broad, among them: peace-building, culture, meaning, memory, identity, adaptation, inclusion, performance and agency. Add to this: diversity, gender, ethnicity, child rights, religion, spirituality, local tradition, community, environment, and civil society. Nor can we forget migration, social entrepreneurship, alternative energy, localism, globalism, social movements and more. They form a breath-taking array.

Each contributor's knowledge is fascinating in its own right, dramatizing as it does intricate and complex aspects of people's everyday lives. That microcosm, however, is also situated in broader structural frameworks embedded in the macro-economy of power in a globalizing world.

Who are "public intellectuals?"

In Year 2000, founding fathers of the API Fellowships Program proposed this definition:

Public intellectuals are those—academics, mass media professionals, artists, NGO activists, and others with moral authority—who are committed to working for the betterment of society by applying their professional knowledge, wisdom and experience.

Our 27 public intellectuals have played out these roles by living for a time in one or more Asian countries other than their own. There, the API Fellows met people from all walks of life and attempted to apply individual and collective thinking to a better understanding of people's stories, situations, societies and the challenges these generate. To the Fellows' credit, most worked at grassroots levels, striving to link local realities to national, regional, global contexts and back. Their moral authority emerges from their drive to make people's muted voices heard.

A public intellectual must therefore be ready to embrace a never-ending struggle, sometimes praised, sometimes criticized, but often controversial. This means knowing when to stand one's ground but also when to capitulate, humbly acknowledging that there is room for alternate evidenced-based ways of understanding reality. In utilizing their privileged positions to compare findings across the region on political structures, economic systems, cultural norms, social behavior, art, or environmental perspectives with the equivalents in one's own country, public intellectuals would do well to remember Olivier Roy's (1994) note of caution about comparative approaches. He urges us not simply to accept the components being compared but to go beyond them by questioning also the original configuration. Astute reformers, adds Foster (1999:135, cited by Jackie Smith 2008) should be "less concerned with

the division of the pie than with the recipe for making it". It is in this context that we as the workshop directors, exhorted API writers not only to explore and reflect on their findings, but to venture beyond and Engage! Seeking social transformation means entering into partnerships with people that place knowledge within their grasp and that help organize them to utilize meaningful information for their own enlightenment and action.

New Forms of Social Movements

Peoples' efforts toward created social change embedded in new forms of social movements throughout the region demand our serious attention. With long-standing Marxist paradigms crumbling following the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites, and a concomitant disenchantment with the language of proletarian revolution, class conflict, and bureaucratic centralism, re-inventing societies takes on new meanings.

Nor have theories of "development" fared better. Critics, largely from the Global South, have challenged prevailing linear development theories that offer simplistic solutions in complex and diverse contexts. Increasingly vocal, they charge that after more than half a century of effort and despite significant economic growth in several countries, poverty persists and disparities widen. To appreciate the intensity of the debate, one only need scan the burgeoning literature and accounts of NGOs and academics pointing to "development aggression". They attribute fiascos of all kinds to misguided "top-down", outside-expert-driven strategies. Experts from outside—carrying what they believe to be universal knowledge—apply one-size-fits-all solutions to a plethora of context specific problems. Welcome alternatives appear in newer post-development findings that identify effective and sustainable community initiatives in which people call the shots. These underscore the importance of democratizing the production and dissemination of knowledge. For public intellectuals, already charged to speak truth to power, the democratic imperative requires listening to and interacting as peers with people and communities. It is the latter after all who, being closest to the problem, have the greatest stake in identifying emergent issues and finding solutions

that work. It is, as such, the dynamic interactions between researcher and community, theoretical and grounded knowledge, local and universal, that the Fellows have unpacked.

Reacting against both faltering paradigms of social reform—Marxism and Development—21st century discourse is turning optimistically toward new forces for change and even transformation. Central to the argument are the energy and imagination exerted by civil society organizations, particularly grassroots groups and NGOs. This "plurality of collective actors each struggling within their own sphere" includes peasants, workers, women, students, and ecology activists, among others (Melucci cited in Escobar 1992). The crisis of modernity, e, adds Colombian anthropologist Arturo Escobar, calls for "challenging and upsetting dominant codes leading to different ways of seeing the world". His exhortation remains pertinent into the 21st century. Are these the transformative roles that public intellectuals are expected and qualified to champion?

In response, the writers in this volumes probe emerging paradigms featuring networks, flat organization, social media, multiple voices, power relations, historicity, people's expertise and agency, community-initiated actions, civil society, participatory governance and climate change. An increasingly dominant element in their investigations focuses on people's everyday lives and how these relate to the overarching social problematic, or in Escobar's terms, the "daily living that produced the world".

Since many authors are examining revitalization and change through incipient or explicit social movements, let us explore these concepts further. A number rely on Tarrow's (1998:1) classic definition of social movements as "contentious collective action". Smith (2008), however, expresses reservations:

If analyses of social movements refer only to evidence of actual protest activities, they miss the bulk of the collective action in which social movement actors are engaged….Strong movements reach people in the spaces of their everyday lives, i.e.

the more informal and non-movement spaces where people socialize, recreate, worship and nurture their families and communities.

Moreover, adds Smith, where political spaces articulate with people's daily routines, democracy emerges in its strongest forms. Accordingly, the attention to organizations and actors in the analysis of social movements needs to embrace not only structures but much more deliberately, processes and interaction. This suggests that today's public intellectuals will not get far if they do not immerse themselves in people's everyday experiences. Through this immersion, they can discover how lived realities have shifted policies systematically biased against the poor into policies resulting in poverty reduction and the enhanced resilience of the poor. In whichever direction the pendulum swings, structure or process, the resulting mix can re-configure skewed power relations so as to create a more level playing field.

Thinking out of the box helps. Take the groundbreaking work of Egyptian anthropologist Asef Bayat (2010), who characterizes social non-movements as the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary:"

> …the diverse ways in which the ordinary people, the subaltern— the urban dispossessed, Muslim women, the globalizing youth, and other urban grass roots— strive to affect the contours of change in their societies, by refusing to exit from the social and political stage controlled by authoritarian states, moral authority and neoliberal economies, discovering and generating new spaces within which they can voice their dissent and assert their presence in pursuit of bettering their lives. The vehicles through which ordinary people change their societies are not simply audible mass protests or revolutions, even though they represent an aspect of popular mobilization; rather, people resort more widely to what I will elaborate as "non-movements"— the collective endeavors of millions of non-collective actors, carried out in the main squares, back streets, court houses, or communities.

While these arenas have not heretofore been regarded by scholars as significant in the struggle for citizenship and transformation, Bayat argues that the urban disenfranchised are in fact bringing new life to communities and redefining the meanings of urban management and participation. Largely excluded from formal institutional channels, poor urbanites have little choice but to assert their rights by taking direct action from within their zones of exclusion. They do so "quietly impinging on the propertied and powerful and on society at large". Generally missing in non-movements, he elaborates, are those elements usually associated with the more contentious manifestations like pivotal leadership, ideology and structured organization.

People's Agency

Bayat's pioneering urban research offers welcome new insights into the lives, preferences and prospects of poor people in cities the world over. A number of the contributors to this volume note, for example, that in addressing onsite environmental and livelihood or poverty issues in the villages of the region, external change agents are reckoning with and showing respect for people's indigenous knowledge and the everyday lives that "produce the world". Spiritual underpinnings and cultural integrity are thus woven into the development tapestry to mesh community efforts with sensitive external support.

Regrettably, the "outside expert" syndrome, which has long ignored or even denigrated community capacities, has infiltrated into the people's own self-images. Thus, newer post-development approaches emphasize enhancing people's consciousness of the meaningful patterns in their daily lives, the richness of their indigenous knowledge and the value of their aspirations. This in turn encourages communities to organize and chart their future with greater confidence and determination.

In post-conflict scenarios, displaced families' concepts of rights build on their memories of the everyday life which once nurtured them and to which most long to return. Their historical journeys as they recall them sustain their sense of identity and purpose. The Fellows' explorations in art, theater, museums, filmmaking, religious imagery,

and cultural integrity refashion the problematic by lodging it in the local culture. Combining humanistic approaches with empirical social science perspectives opens promising new windows to a fast changing world. Human agency in all its power surfaces in everything from life abroad as a foreign worker, or adapting a new science curriculum to local culture, or to indigenous people determined to affirm their ethnic identity.

Fellows display their creative advantage in exploring a single topic in one or more countries, and showing how previously ignored social processes and interactions are leading to alternative paradigms of society. Illustrative of this point is the account of how long-standing negative views about "squatters" in Asian cities have been transformed over decades first into the less pejorative terminology of "informal settlers" or "urban poor", and most recently "urban citizens" with rights to the city. Offering many fruitful lessons is the experience of policy reform generated by the urban poor as both silent and loud protesters supported by NGOs, academics and progressive government leaders.

Urban Informal Settlers Generating New Paradigms

In their quest for survival in the city, Southeast Asia's poor residents launch a variety of coping mechanisms. Street vendors occupy forbidden sidewalk spaces to sell their wares. Police raids come as no surprise to them and they readily escape, supplies and containers in tow, to head off confiscation and destruction of their wares. The routine is all too familiar: run and hide, wait a few days until the police have relaxed their guard, then reclaim the same or nearby space to continue hawking goods and services—until the next raid. Bayat terms this the "war of attrition—a temporary compliance in times of constraint while carrying on with encroachments when the right time arrives". One harassed Manila vendor baffled by what she perceived as the city authorities' unrelentingly vindictive actions against striving people once exclaimed in exasperation during an interview, "We're simply trying to earn an honest living. What's wrong with that? Would they rather we steal?"

As thousands of informal settler households realize that the State cannot or will not respond to their escalating social and material needs and expectations, like jobs, security of tenure, or housing, or that lobbying and appeals to state bureaucracies prove fruitless, Bayat warns that poor people may take matters into their own hands. The evidence emerges in their relentless proliferation on sidewalks and open land, putting into practice the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary".

Their basic weapon, he contends, is:

> …the "art of presence"— the courage and creativity to assert collective will in spite of all odds, to circumvent constraints, utilizing what is available and realized. The art of presence is the fundamental moment in the life of non-movements, in life as politics. The story of non-movements is the story of agency in the times of constraints
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> *(Bayat 2010:26)*

Passive networks, continues Bayat, are then formed which allow individuals routinely occupying public or vacant spaces to carry out their daily activities, all the while subconsciously building up connections with one another. Normally dormant, these incipient networks can, when threatened, solidify and erupt from their below-the-surface realms to become active and organized collective resistance.

This interplay is clearly seen in the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, where democratic political systems have emerged in recent decades. When non-movement crowds face imminent eviction, once passive groups now rise up to become active mobilized groups bent on countering these government threats. With the help of NGOs or political cadres skilled in community organizing, they learn the complexities of mobilizing to gain access to and use crucial information sometimes contributed by academics, and with growing frequency negotiating acceptable solutions. These movements in which people decide to defend what they perceive as their right, to occupy and utilize unused spaces at least temporarily when they are not otherwise being used, illustrate that

democracy is lodged not only in formal state processes but in the active participation of citizens in the art of governance. Through their exercise of human agency, new norms in government-urban poor interaction are taking hold. Although these successes are still far from the norm in Southeast Asia, that they have reached this level of achievement points to cracks in the stone wall of obsolete development paradigms and implacable government bureaucracies.

From Non-movements to Contentious Politics

When do non-movements turn into contentious politics and organized, demand-driven social movements? Bayat explains:

Neither organized activism nor passive networks develop into more widespread resistance just anywhere and anytime. They require a significant breakthrough propelled by some kind of political or economic crisis, international intervention, intra-elite competition that undermines existing mechanisms of control, or a more tolerant government gaining power.

API countries can attest to the effects of *coup d'etats*, popular uprisings or voter reactions as suddenly bringing about new political leadership and a modicum of structural change. All have experienced their share of dramatic transformations brought on by acute international financial crises in global markets, shifts from socialist to modified market economies, or widespread public indignation at open electoral fraud, massive corruption, and rapidly rising prices of basic commodities like rice and kerosene. Other countries have seen their political institutions shattered and rebuilt after a devastating tsunami, earthquake, flood, volcanic eruption and nuclear plant accident. Crises bring to a head widespread discontent over government ineffectiveness or profligacy, sometimes leading to organized protests and possibly a reform response. The role of social media in forging solid if temporary response networks introduces a new phenomenon on the social transformation scene.

Once again Bayat cautions that the transformative effect of non-movements should not be judged merely by their becoming organized social movements. Non-movements can still be transformative even if they continue to operate in the quiet encroachment mode because they can support or undermine the state's ability to govern:

For states rule not as external to society through mere surveillance but weave their logic into the fabric of society, into norms, rules, institutions and relations of power. The operation of non-movements challenges that logic of power… Should a state ultimately accommodate the claims of non-movements, it would in effect be a notable reform of the state itself.

For Asian public intellectuals, then, rethinking current paradigms in light of "evidence from below" will go a long way toward creating a new kind of knowledge-based society to which every person can gain access as well as contribute. Here "experts" are not primarily external consultants with advanced university degrees passing their insights on to community groups. It is the other way around. Community groups whose indigenous knowledge and historical experience guide their actions are recognized as adding to society's fund of knowledge. Being strategically located and motivated to formulate workable solutions, they are best placed to decide how to tap into the tools and skills of outside partners. External expertise thus becomes most useful when it interacts with local experts as partners in an egalitarian style that generates sustainable outcomes. Note here the growing use of the term "partners", implying peer relationships built on differential but equally valued inputs. It is reassuring to note that the unequally skewed "donors and beneficiaries" formulation is moving toward its long overdue demise.

Valuing indigenous knowledge and local cultures does not, however, deny the significance of overarching societal structures, the political economy, or the forces of globalization that affect grassroots developments. Given the interactive nature of state and society, these components necessarily figure in the analysis. Yet, because these overarching elements have long been studied, while the "quiet encroachment of the ordinary" has received comparatively little recognition as potentially

transformative, particular attention is due the latter, whether in urban, rural or other settings.

Examples abound. The search for livelihood and employment among rural households exemplifies the countryside's quiet encroachment and its art of place. Families build informal networks enabling members to solicit funds to obtain employment in the Middle East or caregiver jobs in Japan, Hong Kong and Malaysia. Small-scale miners persist in digging their tunnels despite government attempts to prevent or regulate them. Urban poor Filipino women with more children than they want opt for contraceptives despite the condemnation of the Catholic Church, or in desperation clandestinely undergo an illegal and unsafe abortion, as over half a million Filipino women have done each year over the last decade.

During the financial crisis of the late 1990s, role reversals formed part of family coping schemes to tide the members over until they could resume more familiar routines. Women became crewmembers on fishing boats or itinerant traders traveling for days leaving their jobless husbands home to do the household chores and mind the children. Many male farmers moved upland to cultivate cleared spaces even though the government had not declared the terrain "alienable and disposable". Teachers erased the answers written into the previous year's workbooks, salvaging them for re-use by pupils who could not afford to buy new ones (Racelis 2000).

Facing livelihood and other daunting challenges, with a government largely unable or unwilling to assist, beleaguered men, women, youth and children can become more daring about venturing into new roles. The pioneering ones among them may soon find their kin and neighbors following suit, legally or otherwise, reinforcing the security of all through their growing numbers. What was once extraordinary becomes ordinary. Eventually government recognizes that it cannot stanch the massive tide of collective coping strategies (social non-movements) and begins to look for alternative solutions more compatible with the realities of people's lives. In this sense the authorities too are forced into trying something new, changing the rules and,

usually grudgingly at first, creating policies more responsive to the needs of previously dismissed or even harassed marginalized groups.

Again, Bayat's observations resonate: "Despite authoritarian rule, there are always ways in which people resist, express agency and instigate change, rather than waiting for a savior or resorting to violence". Activists and reformers should not, therefore, wait for "an uncertain revolution", but adopt alternative modes that challenge political authorities to commit the state to carry out sustained social and political reforms. This essentially non-violent approach recognizes the validity of "poor people's encroachment" and accepts the active participation and reform efforts of civil society interest groups bolstered by democracy movements or genuine political parties.

Public intellectuals will appreciate Smith's contention that the expansion of a more formally organized and increasingly densely networked global civil society can lead to democratization of the global political system. A strengthened civil society, she believes, may well generate a united struggle for a world governed by principles of international human rights and social justice. Examples appear in robust global networks against land mines, child soldiers and discrimination against women, among others. International civil society networks flourish in actions around environment, global warming, disaster management, HIV-AIDs, social entrepreneurship, slum-dweller rights and many more. Closer to home, poor people with limited resources and leisure time participate more intensively in decision-making arenas through enlightened political education, discussion and action in the spaces of their everyday lives and through external links fostered by partner NGOs. The alternative is chaos, as the Middle East Arab Spring's gone awry tragically illustrate.

Clearly, Asian public intellectuals have wide-ranging options from which to choose in the life ahead. Given likely political maneuvers in the ASEAN region, a useful strategy would assess one's potential contributions in the context of the Global South but lodged in a globalizing world while remaining true to grassroots realities. This calls for them to

engage!—developing new paradigms, innovation and theory-building in interaction with marginalized people whose lives are most affected. Trying to figure out where and how to make their best contributions is a concern that may well become a lifelong commitment to transform our societies in ways that ensure citizenship benefits for all. In the course of that journey, recall Escobar's insistence on the need for "challenging and up-setting dominant codes, leading to different ways of seeing the world".

Affect and Encounters

Public intellectuals, then, are not detached observers of phenomena. Because they engage in knowledge-production to enhance public discourse, their writing brings in ethical elements. More importantly, the best public intellectuals contribute to the betterment of society.

But how do we achieve change in the context of heterogeneous societies? How do we propose grand solutions when different communities have different problems? And who is our public? The late historian Tony Judt (2012, 303) offers this reflection:

> Intellectual activity is a little bit like seduction. If you go straight for your goal, you almost certainly won't succeed. If you want to be someone who contributes to world historical debates, you almost certainly won't succeed if you start off by contributing to world historical debates. The most important thing to do is to be talking about the things that have, as we might put it, world historical resonance but at the level at which you can be influential.

In other words, Judt believes the public intellectual asks broad questions about humanity through engaging immediate realities. All API Fellows have done this, bridging the gap between concrete encounters and abstract ethics.

We encouraged Fellows to reflect consciously on their interactions. We have all been tempted to intellectualize our experiences in the field.

We conceptualize, and we think of our encounters with farmers, fisherfolk, NGO workers, government officials, etc. as data to be analyzed. But this approach is incomplete. Before we write texts and before we organize information, we first encounter people. This is an affective experience—one that involves our senses and our feelings.

The notion of affect and encounter was an integral part of the workshop. It started with the first session when participants introduced themselves, answering the question: Whom am I trying to influence? The workshop offered ample opportunities for further reflection on this point.

On the concluding day, the session, "Affect and Encounters", sought to enrich the group's experience, not for the purpose of crafting a document but primarily to discuss ethical issues rarely raised in formal academic fora. By participating in the reflection process, Fellows would be the ultimate initiators and beneficiaries of the group's collective thinking. We hoped that the ideas generated would have a profound effect on their lives and accomplishments as public intellectuals in the 21st century.

Out of this interchange should come a series of do-able actions representing individual commitments as well as networking and other possibilities that a public intellectual can carry out across expertise, generations and countries.

Engaged Intellectuals: Challenges for API Fellows at Tagaytay

The 2012 Tagaytay Workshop listed several goals: (1) exchange information through sharing the results of API Fellows' research and/or professional activities; (2) foster close ties among the fellows; (3) explore future collaborative work beyond individual research or professional interests; and (4) identify ways in which they singly or in groups might contribute to social transformation, and what this would entail.

The four-day program unfolded in a variety of dynamic learning sessions. After the welcome dinner, keynote address, and opening session statements,

the workshop sessions were devoted to panel presentations, intense discussions, and formal and informal interaction interspersed by a day to learn from communities. Fellows selected one of three field learning sites:

1. Fish farming/aquaculture on Taal Lake: people, environment and long-term sustain ability - Talisay, Batangas
2. Micro-finance and livelihood programs in relocated urban communities: partnerships and their impact on youth, women and poor households, Paliparan, Dasmarinas City, Cavite
3. Disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) in a vulnerable coastal community, Muzon 2, Rosario, Cavite

The whole-day Learning from Communities encounters offered an opportunity for interaction with local communities and the everyday issues with which they grapple. The evening before the visit, community leaders and partner civil society organizations oriented the respective participant groups to the issues at hand.

In the last session on Affect and Encounters the impact of these visits emerged from the informal conversations among participants beforehand followed by their final reflections. The Fellows were encouraged to address these questions:

1. What have been your most moving experiences during your time as an API Fellow?

2. Which of these experiences moved you to change the way you think?

3. Which of these experiences moved you to continue working for what you consider important?

Ultimately, the questions led the Fellows to reflect on what keeps them going and what allows them to continue their work as public intellectuals. Recalling the lessons learned from real people struggling with both large and mundane real-life issues in the everyday lives, participants sought to integrate these memories in ethical ways into their future

roles as public intellectuals. How could they "light or replenish the fire within" that will enable them to influence others?

The individual reflections of the participants paraphrased below range widely, generally expressing a cautious optimism or an "optimistic uncertainty":

- I will continue what I'm doing while recognizing that in the process my thinking about social transformation is evolving.

- I have no idea about the future, to be honest with myself. Where injustice clearly prevails, forgiveness and moving on are difficult; yet they must be done. Pushing for change is very tiring, so I can't answer the question yet.

- On returning home, I hope to transfer this enlightening experience of doing politically risky research on religion to younger generations as essential for their intellectual credibility.

- Our advocacies from the research process require significant paradigm shifts which are not likely to happen soon. I'm not sure my activities will change anything but I won't stop trying. At least there is a forum like this one in which I can participate to sustain my hope.

- I worry that my research may have led to the death of a shaman for sharing her secret knowledge with me. My research goes against mainstream norms and thus incurs risks of losing academic identity. But I must follow the heart more than the intellect, or be bound by structures and standards.

- Family values are important.

- Inspiring stories abound in human situations.

- I will return home with increased confidence.

- Learn more in order to retake the space for a peaceful society. Address the dominant structures – moral, ethical and political leadership.

- I appreciate that the communities welcomed us with great hospitality and no questions asked. Enriched by the interaction I was encouraged to continue learning from them while having fun and avoiding romanticizing them.

- I learned I can understand the other and why they do things the way they do, which we have not understood. I now see people as human beings, not as subjects of research.

- I gained an increased respect for people, their friendly outlooks and what they know.

- I learned not only factual information but how to adapt to different ways of life; it was exciting

- Urban poor people are smart; they know how to deal with their lives, especially Muslims who are greatly stereotyped. But my research brought out their many abilities.

- I feel more motivated to help the people I worked with, admiring their resilience and coping behavior. We need to reduce the alienation they feel from government. That means being more critical of our own cultures. Restructuring of society is needed and I must help make that happen.

- People don't want to fight injustices, but may be forced to do so.

- This chance to reflect pinpointed my anger at injustice and the determination to engage with people's actions. I will seek guidance from NGOs to legitimize people's rights and recognize their struggles.

- Activism is reinforced by grounded understanding. When you are discouraged, it is good to remember that although clouds and fog obscure the sky, underneath is beauty.

Ultimately, all of the Fellows agreed that it was people who kept them going: the people back home, the people they interacted with during their research and the people they will serve in the future. Motivation to continue one's work, as such, occurs when our goals are concretized through the realities of human experiences.

Responding to the reflections of the Fellows and in particular to the rice cooker story told by one woman participant, Fr. Jose M. Cruz, S.J. presented an analogy: "We are all called to be rice cookers". He explained:

Rice in its uncooked form is inedible. It has to be brought to fire. In Ilokano, rice is called inapuy, something to which you have to apply a fiery heat before it becomes edible. In the end, the final measure of whether applying fire is worthwhile is whether it results in aromatic cooked rice. For the Asian Public Intellectual, the equivalent question is: Can/Will my effort at engaging society transform it?

In bringing to the fore a variety of experiences and affective responses, the Workshop found Fellows in agreement about the essential contours of the public intellectual's duties. Thinking back to the opening plenary, they recalled that Professor Resil Mojares had set the tone for these reflections and influenced many of the ensuing discussions. On the surface, he explains, public intellectuals create networks and forge linkages. But to constrain their activities to these instrumental tasks may seem "morally barren". And neither do these terms explain "what causes bring people together". For Mojares, the public intellectual cannot forget "the affective values of friendship, respect, mutuality and community". The forging of Asian public intellectuals thus remains an open-ended ethical project.

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