Breaking Barriers of Ethnocentrism: Re-examining Igorot Representation through Material Culture and Visual Research Methods

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The material culture found on the body is physical evidence of human experience, an indication of the physical body's designation as the site for constructing identities through the use of distinct markers of difference and similarity. It provides a reified object for analysis that captures the markings in the work of identity construction and representation. Turner (1986, 17) sees the body as an indicator of cultural capital. Any visible markers or investments on the body may be interpreted as carriers of a system of signs that stand for and express relations of power. As such, Turner contends, the body can be construed as a repository—an archive of sorts—for these systems of signs that are bearers of social meaning and symbolism. Processes that involve making changes on the body (body decoration) play an essential role in representing identity and knowledge, and provide an important basis for understanding various aspects of the past as well as contemporary culture. Nash (1989, 10-15) contends that body decorations are boundary mechanisms and cultural markers of difference. The differences among groups are index features that are easily seen, grasped, understood, and reacted to in social situations where there are minimal cultural items involved in the membership of the group.

In the Philippines, very little is known about traditional tattoos, tooth blackening, and other forms of irreversible and permanent alterations of the body. There are Spanish accounts of a few and isolated examples of such practices in the early 18th century. There is also some documentation in archaeological collections and ethnographies written during the American period. On the whole, however, the subject is not well-documented, and existing literature is quite limited and unrevealing. Most accounts are ethnocentric, unable to fully explain the complicated interactions of people and things involved in these practices. The markers on the Igorot body, when regarded in the context of the culture itself, provide a clear notion of the Igorot sense of logic and beauty; however, in most of the literature, these markers are frequently interpreted as deviations associated with the themes of otherness and difference.

Photographs depicting images and scenes from the colonial setting were taken almost exclusively by the colonists or their agents and

beneficiaries, intended largely for circulation in Western metropoles (Harris 1999, 20). Thousands of photographs of unknown men and women have been published, presenting the "native body" for colonial consumption. The photograph of the "body," removed from its original surroundings, was often singularly uncommunicative about the culture. The anthropological "body," in fact, included much more, extending outwards from the person to include the social group, physical setting, fields and pastures, dwellings, implements and other possessions.

Postcolonial theory has enabled interpretations which reveal that colonial photographs and written accounts bear witness to inequities in modes of representation (Mongia 1996, 3). Increasingly, the term 'postcolonial' has been used to describe that form of social criticism that exposes unequal and uneven processes of representation by which the historical experience of the once colonized Third World comes to be framed by and through the perspective of the West (Bhabha 1991, 63). The theory problematizes the nature of representation itself, and disputes the claim of various historical material, i.e., texts and photographs, that they provide transparent access to reality. The postcolonial perspective also enables an examination of how knowledge about subordinate people is produced and used, and reveals the ways in which colonial powers justify colonialism through the perpetuation of the images of the colonized as the inferior other.

In this paper I discuss the use of visual research methods (photography and video) in understanding the material culture of people in my area of research, the Cordillera, north Luzon, Philippines. I begin with a general description of my research using physical evidence from the practitioners of the tradition, followed by a brief comment on its place in the context of understanding the people's experience and its role in the contemporary period. Further, the role and importance of archaeological sources will be discussed in re-examining and unmasking the pretensions of colonial collections, photographs and ethnographies. Conceptual and methodological issues will also be presented.

In this paper, I use Barthes' method of structural analysis in studying the photographic message. I apply the method to selected photographs with "ethnic signifiers" or distinct markers of identity like tattoos, blackened teeth, and other forms of adornment to decode their meaning in the context of Cordillera culture. The photographs analyzed are mostly from the Worcester Photographic Collection. As the collection is quite extensive, and because I have studied living Igorot society in some detail, I will focus largely on the photographs depicting Igorot material culture. Supplementing this is a set of illustrative cases based on photographs of the Negritos of Luzon.

Artifacts and Photographs of Colonial Encounter

The Igorots are the indigenous peoples of the Gran Cordillera, north Luzon (see Fig. 1, map of the Cordillera region). They are usually classified into six major ethnolinguistic groups: the Isneg (Apayao), Kalinga, Bontoc, Ifugao, Kankanaey and Ibaloy. During the Spanish period, the term *'Igorrote'* was used as a collective designation for the peoples in the unpacified *commandancias politico-militar* of the Gran Cordillera. Keesing (1962) and Scott (1974) have discussed the etymology of the word, said to have come from an ancient Tagalog word '*golot*' which means "mountain range."

Massive collections of Igorot artifacts, photographs, and ethnographic material attest to the fact that the Igorots have been the subject of extensive colonial scholarship from the Spanish to the American period. Spain's subsequent turnover of the Philippines to

Figure 1. The Cordillera , Northern Luzon, Philippines. (National Economic and Development Authority, Regional Physical Framework Plan: 2004-2034)

the United States had a profound impact on scientific and scholastic activities in the Philippines. The American colonial administrators were in need of precise and detailed information about the islands and populations in their charge, and for this purpose created a variety of institutions to collect the desired data (Hutterrer 1978, Jenista 1987). One of the major institutions created for this purpose was the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, renamed the Bureau of Ethnological Survey in 1903 . The bureau was charged with the task of reporting on the condition of the Muslim and pagan tribes, recommending legislation for their governance, and accumulating knowledge of Philippine ethnology (Report of the Philippine Commission to the President 1900, 11-16). Dean Worcester, who became bureau chief in 1903, took interest in the archipelago's tribal peoples, particularly the Igorots whom he described as "savages, primitive and illiterate" though "perfectly harmless and peaceful, and honest" (quoted in Sullivan 1991, 146).

Worcester journeyed through the mountains of northern Luzon in 1903, 1905 and 1906, recording the peoples' appearances, customs and material culture. From these visits, he was able to compile an extensive photographic record of Philippine tribes (Hutterer 1978, Sinopoli and Fogelin 1998). These photographs, many of them published in *National Geographic*, had political impact when the issue of Philippine independence was revived in 1912. "Headhunters of Northern Luzon," an article written by Worcester and published in *National Geographic* in 1912, contains 85 photographs of tribal Filipinos, and their implicit theme is the unreadiness of the Filipinos for independence. At least 20 photographs of bare-breasted women with tattoos, photos of headhunters, and the famous photograph of a headless Ifugao served well to put on show not only the colonized subject but the ethnocentric stance of the eye behind the lens. Worcester's Philippine legacy was complex and was much debated during his life and long after his death. He left behind, among other things, some 16,000 black and white photographs taken between 1890 and 1913 (Sinopoli 1998) and a massive collection of artifacts. The Worcester photographs span a period of dramatic changes in the Philippines.

Sinopoli and Fogelin have put together on CD-ROM an impressive collection of photographs taken by Worcester and the photographers who worked with him between 1890 and 1913. These photographs capture a disturbing period in the history of the United States, American anthropology and US-Philippine relations. Informed by Worcester's passionate vision of American progress, the doctrine of "manifest destiny," and the justness of the colonial project, the Worcester collection succeeded in constructing images of the Philippines and the 'colored' Filipinos which were in accordance with the late 19th-early 20th century paradigms of social evolutionism, racism and paternalism. While many aspects of the collection are disturbing to us today, the

Worcester photographic collection nonetheless provides a lavish entrée of Worcester's and his contemporaries' "imperial imaginings" and a vivid tableau of this important period in the histories of the United States and the Philippines (Sinopoli 1998).

The Sinopoli and Fogelin CD-ROM begins with three brief introductory chapters: (a) on Worcester and his role in the Philippines; (b) on the place of photography in the early 20th century Philippines; and (c) on various issues as they were played out in the Philippines and as they influenced Worcester's view of Filipinos. The second chapter explores photography as a tool and promoter of colonialism since many of the photographs, informed as they are by Worcester's approach to the non-Christian tribes of the Philippines, are based on 19th and early 20th century conceptions of race and evolution. The authors note that the views presented in each of these chapters provide only cursory introductions to other complex topics. Though informative, the collection does not provide a detailed discussion of the colonial photographs that present a visual record of the different forms of material culture found in different groups, specifically among the Igorots. Through access to primary data and field experience I have been able to provide additional information on the significance, purpose, meanings and symbols of the practices depicted in the photographs. Research I have done thus far has enabled me to read the meanings in the context of the people's culture. The process involves not only a recovery of the past but also, through the re-examination of these photographs, a re-articulation of Igorot identities. An inspection of the representational mode of the photographs will reveal how Igorot identities are positioned by and within the photographs and within their narratives. In a way there is a process here of authenticating the people's culture and an affirmation of a postcolonial idea, that the "native is the site of authenticity and true knowledge" (Chow 1996, 140).

In October 2004, as a visiting scholar at the University of Michigan, I was fortunate to examine closely more than 5,000 black and white photographs in the Worcester Collection, both at the Museum of Anthropology and at the Hatcher Library Rarebooks Special Collection. The Worcester photographic collection is particularly important because the "ways of seeing" that the photographs represent directly fed into a major metropolitan project—the 1904 St. Louis Exposition in Missouri, more popularly known as the World's Fair. In 1904, the colonial government transported over a thousand Filipinos to the US to participate as living exhibits in the St. Louis Exposition, held to celebrate the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Exhibit catalogs reveal that among the people taken from northern Luzon were 70 *Bontoc Igorots* (Mt. Province), 20 *Lepanto Igorots* (Benguet) and 18 *Tingguians* (Abra), who were lumped together as *Igorrottes*. On the occasion of the fair's centennial in 2004, photographs of the Igorots at

the 1904 St. Louis Fair resurfaced in books and Internet sites. After a hundred years, the repercussions of the misrepresented, commodified Igorot body at the 1904 Saint Louis Fair can still be felt. The Igorots remain as "exotic peoples" or mute and anonymous subjects.

There are divergent opinions about Worcester's legacy (Hutterer 1978, Sullivan 1991). What has not perhaps been given adequate attention is how his photographic records came to form the basis for a major exhibition in which the American people were presented with a very distorted and racist representation of the Igorots. Tagg (1988, 64) suggests that the repressive functions of photography in the context of modern states—surveillance, identification, criminalization, typologisation, and pathologisation—were transposed to and enlisted in the service of colonial interest. The Worcester photographs, as ethnographic recordings of people with no available written records, were 'anthropological documentation' that became valuable to the American colonial administration.

Perhaps, the first major systematic archaeological project in the Philippines was that undertaken in 1922 to 1925 by Carl Guthe of the University of Michigan on the invitation of Dean C. Worcester who was Chief of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes at the time. The project started in 1921 when Worcester returned to the United States with his private collections, consisting mainly of porcelain wares, artifacts, and photographs. These materials aroused enough interest for the University of Michigan to send Guthe to the Philippines for three years of fieldwork. Guthe's visit to the Philippines yielded about 31 cubic tons of archaeological specimens from 542 sites (Evangelista 1969, 100). Most of these are now deposited at the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology.

There were other foreign collectors, like Alexander Schadenberg (German) and Meerkamp van Embden (Dutch), who gathered specimens of material culture from the Philippines in the second half of the 19th century. These ethnographic collections are now at the Rijkmuseum voor Volkenkunde (National Museum of Ethnology) in Leiden, the Netherlands (Muizenberg 2004) and at the Dresden National Museum of Ethnology in Germany. Roy Franklin Barton, an American schoolteacher who spent more than eight years in the mountain provinces of Luzon beginning in 1906, also wrote extensively on the Cordillera region. His early manuscripts, unpublished papers, photographs, and ethnographic collections (carved wooden spoons and figures, baskets and tools, musical instruments) are kept at the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in the USSR (Stanyukovich 2004).

Looking for Clues: Redefining Meanings through Visual Research Methods and Archaeological Sources

The data on which my studies are based come from early travel writing by foreign visitors in the Cordillera, museum collections, archaeological reports, and archival materials, specifically old photographs from libraries, archives, museums, and the Internet. Substantial input also came from field research through participant observation in research sites. The conceptual framework is as follows.

The Igorot body as portrayed in colonial writings and photographs

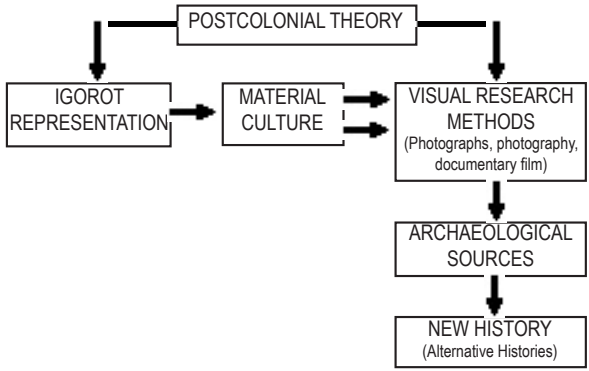


Figure 2. To examine the problem of Igorot representation, one can look at the material culture of the people through a combination of visual research methods and use of archaeological sources. Both supply the '"explanatory bridges" to the formation of "alternative Igorot histories."

calls in notions of an inferior culture. However, rather than markers of difference and otherness as projected by those who are not accustomed to Igorot forms of body embellishment, the markings found on the bodies of the Igorots can be seen as a visually powerful rendering of their sense of symmetry and unity. More than this, they represent the social practices of the group and serve as a means of conveying significant information to people within and outside the communities. According to Albert Jenks (1905, 187), the great permanent decoration of the Igorot is the tattoo. Today, the tatooed body continues to present a distinctive record of the organized set of social practices that are relevant to the articulation of Igorot identities. We must now look at colonial photographs again to find deeper meanings crucial to the understanding of Igorot culture.

A. Photographs and Visual Research Methods

According to Barthes (1985, 4), the "photograph is not only a product or a channel, it is also an object endowed with a structural autonomy." There is a need to break down the "reality" in the photographs into units and to constitute these units into signs substantially different from what they literally represent. Recent studies on ethnography still partake of a discourse of representation that moves between the rigid boundaries of truth and falsity of representations and the notion of the "mirror image" of reality. Marcus and Fischer aim at a more "accurate view and confident knowledge of the world" (1986, 14-15), while Clifford (1988) proposes that ethnographic accounts are merely "partial, dialogical truths" representing negotiated identities. There are approaches to photography that somehow parallel these ethnographic concerns.

Photographs acquire denotative meanings by, it is assumed, objectively presenting the stock of elements in the image (e.g., gestures, arrangements, pose, color). In doing so, however, photographs come "to signify something other than what is shown" (Barthes 1985, 7). As Barthes has shown in his analysis of the photographic image, one must go beyond the literal surface of the photograph to seek its implicit or covert meanings. From the denotative surface, one must proceed to the layers of connotations that lie beneath it. "The connotation," says Barthes (1985, 7), "is not necessarily apprehensible on the level of the message itself (it is, one might say, both invisible and active, clear and implicit), but we can already infer it from certain phenomena occuring on the level of the message's production and reception." It can be derived from an analysis of signifying units and procedures such as the deployment of the images on the photograph, the context of the photographic event, or the photographic techniques and production. Further, corroborative information derived from sources such as historical documents, archival materials, and living culture can contribute to the understanding of what photographs contain.

Consider the photograph in Fig. 3, taken during the early American colonial period, which shows a distinct arrangement of Bontoc men. On the left are men in their traditional garb, with spears (*balbeg*) and shield (*arasag*) used in warfare; on the right, men recruited into the Philippine Constabulary, in white duck uniform, with rifles. They are lined up with the mountainous landscape as backdrop. More than what is objectively captured by the photograph, what is there in it? Further meaning can be derived by considering the context of its production. In her correspondence Maud Jenks (1951, 124), wife of the famous anthropologist Albert Jenks, wrote of the enthusiasm of the Bontoc Igorot men about their recruitment into the Constabulary. The recruits were given material benefits (salary, armaments, and clothing)

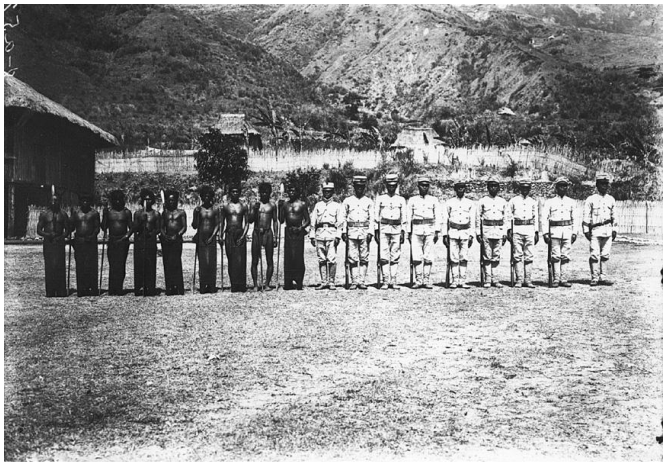


Figure 3. Bontoc men in native attire and military uniform. Through the arrangement of the subjects of the photograph, the image comes to mean more than what it simply denotes. (Worcester Photographic Collection, Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan)

and a different sense of "legal power" by the colonial administration. With Worcester's (1912, 1913) acknowledgement that this "civilizing process" ought to be done from head to toe, the men were made to discard their native hats and were given haircut, and in place of their loincloth (*bahag*), they were made to wear the white duck trousers of the constabulary uniform. Thus, the photograph of Bontoc men is not just an innocent group portrait but an image that embodies an evolutionary perspective.

During the colonial period, the Igorot body became an object of curiosity and a subject of degradation. Turner (1986) says it is typically the surface of the body that is the focus of stigmatization. Many of the photographs in the Worcester collection show the ethnic body markers or signifying properties, e.g., tattoos, scarification, clothing and adornments, that inform the viewer of the otherness of the Igorots and other "tribal Filipinos." These cultural items of ethnicity were turned into "evidence" used by Worcester and other colonial photographers to show the incapability of the Filipinos for independence and self-governance. Drawing on his Philippine experience, Worcester proposed that tribal peoples represented evidence of evolutionary retardation or even degeneration (Sullivan 1991). However, an alternative trajectory of inquiry opens up the possibility that these same photographs can also offer insights into the lives of the people who have left little or no record.

In the set of photographs in Fig. 4, we see the transformation of a Bontoc Igorot into a civilized member of the Philippine Constabulary. This perpetuates racist stereotypes. The improved posture of the man and the changes in his clothing convey the positive effects of the civilizing process. Again, this illustrates an evolutionary taxonomy, as it shows the development of the primitive from a state of "savagery" to "civilization" (cf. Vergara 1995).

Some photographs emphasize the distinction between the "tribal other" and "The Big White Brother" (Figs. 5-5.c). In Fig. 5, a photograph

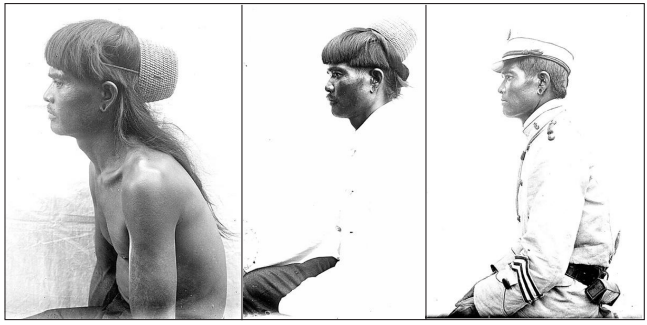
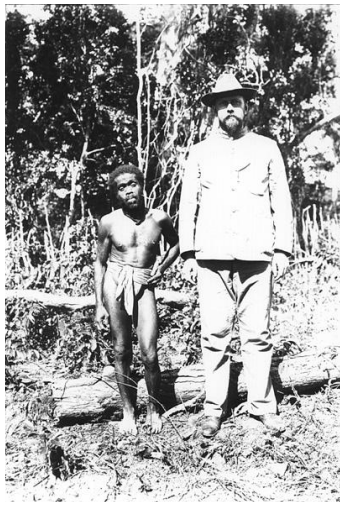


Figure 4. Captioned as "The Evolution of a Bontoc Igorot Man," this set of images perpetuates the evolutionist perspective of the colonizers. (Worcester Photographic Collection)

of a Negrito man beside Worcester presents the difference between the civilized and uncivilized. Images of size and heft are deployed in the interest of illustrating racial superiority in terms of physical attribute. The Negrito man in Fig. 5.a was brought to the St. Louis Fair in 1904 to represent the lowest racial type in the Philippines. Photographs such as these were used to illustrate physiognomic and phrenological theories which held that the shape and size of the human body, particularly the human head, served as an outward indicator of inner characteristics which helped to define the deviant and pathological other (Harris 1999, 20).

The images of Negritos in Figs. 6-6.a record the process of *ta-bad* or scarification as an irreversible form of aesthetics (Reed 1904, 36). Scarification among the Negritos is also known as *hibit*—small cuts made on the skin with diagonal patterns and found on the back, breasts, and upper arms of both young men and women (Fox 1952, 374). The process is done through the use of a bamboo instrument with a sharp point. *Ta-bad* is painful and the wounds are left open to heal. Reed (1904, 67) reports that scars function as markers of beauty, and that the



Figures 5 and 5.a. Left: Captioned as "*A typical Negrito man with Secretary Worcester*." This photograph shows the size of the Negrito in relation to the "6-foot American." (Worcester 1906, 1912). Right: Captioned as "The Missing Link." The photo was taken by the Gerhard Sisters in 1904 (Breitbart 1997).

Figures 5.b and 5.c. Photograph on the left is captioned "The Tribal Others." (Worcester Photographic Collection, Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan)

Figures 6 and 6.a. The original caption: *"Making Ornamental Scars Patterns. The man has just had numerous cuts made into the skin of his chest, into which dirt will be rubbed. The woman holds between the thumb and forefinger to her right hand the piece of the bamboo which she did for cutting."* (Worcester 1912)

Negritos believe that sickness, particularly fevers, departs from the body where the scar is located.

The *ta-bad* is a rite of passage and a popular mark of identification from other groups. In Fig. 7, a young woman has scars on the belly, said to promote fertility. The same woman appears in many other photographs in the Worcester collection where she is shown with young men about her age with similar scar patterns on the belly and chest. It

Figure 7. The original caption reads: *"A Negrito woman. Note the ornamental scar patterns. In her left ear she has medicine for headache, and around her neck bands for a sore throat."* The scars on the bellies of the women are for fertility and are believed to have curative values. (Worcester 1912)

can be assumed that the scarification is performed when young people reach puberty. Reed says that scarification is usually done between 15-16 years of age to indicate maturity (1904, 36), although in Figs. 6-6.a, it is an old man who goes through the scarification process. Worcester's graphic description of this scene seems to suggest that this is a barbaric practice. The suggestion of savagery is another instance of how the colonizers set racializing discourses and constructions of non-western bodies as differentiated from the "civilized."

Another important ethnic marker in Northern Luzon is the practice

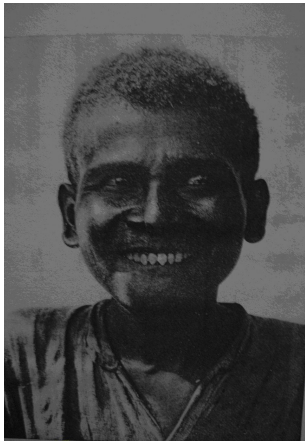


Figure 8. Tooth filing was a pre-hispanic practice. Filed teeth were viewed by the colonizers as a deformity. (Worcester 1912)

of tooth filing and blackening. In Fig. 8, a unique feature of this man is his filed teeth, which Worcester described as "*pointed front teeth like a saw.*" The Negrito custom of finely 'chipping the teeth' is called *tayad*. The front six teeth and/or the lower front six teeth are chipped to a sharp point with a knife or bolo. This is usually done by men, but the women may perform the operation on young boys following the appearance of their permanent teeth (Fox 1952, 373). In the photograph, notice how the man's smile seems forced or artificial, making the person look demented. The photographer apparently asked this man to smile that way so he could show his unusual pointed dentition. What is made to appear infantile is however culturally meaningful. English businessman Ralph Fitch noted in 1591 that the idea that only wild animals and demons of the underworld had white teeth was widespread in southeastern Asia (Moriyama 1994, Scott 1994). Humans were distinguished by "cosmetic refinements" like filed and stained teeth.

In another context, consider the photograph of Demeyna (Fig.

9), identified as one of the Suyoc Igorot women at the 1904 St. Louis Fair. According to Malek Aloula, "physical differences and cultural practices, such as tattooing, were considered signs of degeneracy.... In this context, photographs like that of a [tattooed] Igorot woman [Fig. 9] are not only ethnographic records but evidence of innate criminality" (cf. Breitbart 1997, 26; Fermin 2004, 161). Here, note how the pose is primarily designed to enable the viewer to see the tattoos—the pose is done in the service of the "gaze." Another case from the St. Louis Fair shows Antonio, designated as "chief" by the exhibition organizers, whose elaborate tattoos on his chest became an object of curiosity among fairgoers. These marks articulated the indigenous concept of beauty, and for the Suyoc group who participated in the Fair, the *batek*

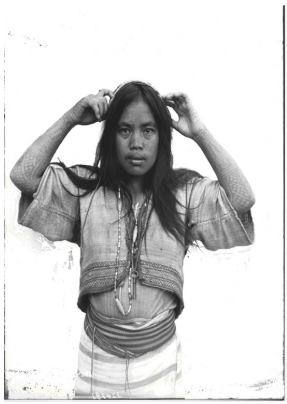
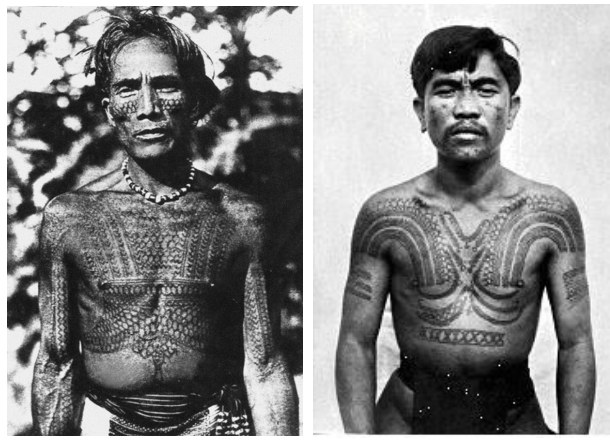


Figure 9. A photograph of Demeyna at the 1904 St. Louis Fair showing her tattooed arms. The marks on the skin of the Igorots proved to be one of the main attractions at the Fair. In the colonial period, tattoos were usually regarded as signs of degeneracy and criminality. (Photograph by Jesse Tarbox Beals, St. Louis Public Library, in Breitbart 1997)

(traditional tatoo) was an important means of identification. Found on Demeyna's arms are geometric patterns from the back of the hands that extend above the elbows. In my fieldwork in Banao, Mountain Province, an informant with similar tattoos said that the *batek* on their arms is a sign of membership in the affluent class and purportedly serve to memorialize the land properties that the family holds. A tattoo marking of X found on the upper arm of the woman is called the *pinapanga*, a term that refers to the jawbones of the water buffalo butchered during community feasts. This animal is a status symbol that only the affluent class could afford in the past. Today, these feasts are no longer held

as frequently as in the past because of the poor economic conditions in the area.

Worcester photographed many of the tattooed men and women in the Cordillera region and made the general observation that these tattoos were "common and typical to both sexes." Though they must have realized the prestige attached to tattooing in local culture, Worcester and his photographers disapproved of it and labeled it as "criminal." The American colonial administration banned headhunting, with which tattoos were closely associated, because it was perceived as a 'barbaric' practice. In one of the photographs (Fig. 10), Worcester has this caption: "*A Kalinga Chief. Note his high cheek-bones and wealth of tattooing. This man has taken many heads.*" In the 16th century, tattooing was already a common practice among the major warrior groups in the Cordillera, i.e., the Bontoc, Ifugao and the Kalinga (Worcester 1912, Willcox 1912, Keesing 1962). At the time of the arrival of the Spaniards, headhunting and tattooing were being practiced more extensively than at the time of the coming of the Americans (Krieger 1926, 89). Foreign ethnographers reinforced the idea that tattooing was done primarily and solely in connection with the practice of headhunting (Schadenberg 1887, Worcester 1913, Antolin 1988).



Figures 10-11: Left: The elaborate tattoos of a Kalinga warrior on his chest and cheeks mean that he enjoys high social standing in the community, as *mu'urmut* (revered warrior) in the *kamaranan* or warrior class (Worcester 1912). The tattoos command both respect and fear among the villagers. Right: The tattoos of a Bontoc warrior is a record of engagement in tribal warfare, and they are accumulated like "medals of valor" for acts of bravery (Jenks 1905).

For the Bontoc men, tattoos constituted a record of engagement in tribal warfare. Tattoos were symbols of male valor: these were applied only after a man had performed in battle with fitting courage. Warriors accumulated tattoos with each act of bravery, somewhat like modern military decorations (De Raedt 1969, 95-100; Scott 1994, 20). Up to the present time, tattooing and tattoo designs in the Cordillera are usually understood in the context of headhunting and of the *mai'ngor* (warriors) (Roces 1991, 153). Headhunting was the only known reason for tattooing and to this day little else is known about it.

In the course of my studies on traditional tattoos in the Cordillera, I was able to arrive at some insights on the role and function of the tattoos, and the meanings of distinct and various markings. The tattoos, as cultural symbols, are related to the intricate social and cultural relations of the people (Salvador 2002). Through my research, I have been able to determine the specific ethnic origin of the tattoos and the sets of meanings that accrue to each design.

Specific tattoo designs evoke an imagery that is instantly understood by members of the *ma-armet* or *maingor* class (the bold, the brave and the fierce) and by the rest of the community as well. The specific designs of various tattoos are cultural referents of particular ideas. The tattoos reveal an individual's social standing in the community. For instance, profusely tattooed men are those who have participated or killed an enemy in the *faroknit* (inter-village conflict). In the Bontoc *ili,* if the neophyte warrior comes from a family of warriors, he is required to get his tattoo when he has already participated in battle or has accomplished the act of taking an enemy's head. In some cases, there are warriors who are more qualified to get tattooed but who postpone the process and opt to have their tattoos done later in life (Prill-Brett 1985). This is due to the fact that one should be prepared to have a victory feast and to pay for the services of the tattoo artist.

In relation to warfare, the most prestigious tattoo is the *bikking* (in Kalinga) and *chaklag,* or the chest tattoo, for a Bontoc warrior who has taken three or more heads and has helped in killing others. According to Prill-Brett (1985), there are three types of minor tattoos found among the Tukukan Bontocs. The *tinakray* (arm tattoo) is found on the upper arms only. This indicates that the person has helped in killing an enemy and therefore is entitled only to the lesser tattoo symbol. The second type is the jaw tattoo *(pinangar),* indicating that the warrior has helped in killing an enemy but was not responsible for the fatal blow. The third type is the *tiniktik*, characterized by x-marks tattooed on the nose and both cheeks, indicating either a hack on the body or a spear thrust at a victim. The qualification that entitles a warrior to a chest tattoo is the taking of at least three heads to complete the symbol of the *chalikan* or the three cooking stones—a triangle symbol. Other tattoo symbols are the *kuli-ing* (serpent eagle), *lafaan* or *fanfanawi* (eagle), *owa* or *ulleg*

(snakes), *ginayaman* (centipedes), *taku* (human figures), the *khayaman* (scorpion), and the *tangkil* (lines on the upper arm).

The tattoos of the female are called *pongo*. This tattoo begins close to the back of the knuckles on the back of the hands, extends to the wrist and from there entirely encircles the arms all the way to a point above the elbows (Jenks 1905, 189). Females are allowed to get tattooed

Figures 12-13. Left, the tattoos of a Bontoc woman (Robertson 1914) and right, those of an Ifugao woman (Worcester 1912).

but only on the arms *(tinakray)*. However, this does not indicate that they have participated in a killing. It is claimed in Bontoc that the only occasion that will qualify women to have their arms tattooed is when the *ator* of their father or male kinsmen celebrates a *tumo* or victory feast (Jenks 1905, Prill-Brett 1985). The function of the tattoos on the female body are purely aesthetic, i.e., to make the woman *kagawisi* (beautiful). Tattoo designs usually represent the leaves of the fern *(inal-alam or atifangan),* the g*inayaman* (centipede), *finalfalatong* (black beans), *tinik-tiku* (geometric lines), *sinardichao* (lines with Xs), *tinat-talaw* (stars), *ag-agto* (human forms), and *agdan* (ladder) on female arms, which according to the informants who are tattooed, do not signify anything other than what has been mentioned earlier.

In some cases, however, one can always be tattooed as long as the person is able to pay the *manbatek*'s fee for tattooing. The presence of a *manbatek* (traveling or resident tattoo artist) in the village fosters reverence for the skill of tattooing. Tattooing with specific designs is based on the internalization and transformation of prior experience to specialist knowledge. Further, tattooing serves not only as an indication of social standing but also as an equalizing factor in the context of

painful rites of passage. Anyone can get tattooed, whether they belong to the rich or to the poorest class. Being tattooed is a concrete realization of the sense of social unity of the members of the group.

In analyzing photographs, their secondary attributes must also be considered in order to get a fuller sense of their signifying procedures. Thus, it is important to look the text or the captions where the message of the photograph is constituted in words. Barthes notes that the caption burdens the photograph with a culture, a moral, an imagination that directs the audience to a particular reading. The caption assists the audience in choosing a level of perception and encourages a particular, specific focusing of not only the gaze but also of mode of understanding (1977, 39). Further Barthes (1977, 8) notes that "the message does comprise a level of expression and a level of content, of signifiers and signifieds: hence it requires a veritable deciphering." They present an unspoken narrative constructed, consciously or unconsciously, by the photographer that contradicts, manipulates, alters, enhances, or distorts the "straightforward nature" of the photographic image (Castellanos 1998).

One has to train the critical eye on the captions or texts that accompany the photographs. Original captions and geographic context or location are crucial in piecing together the dynamics of colonial representation, and the latter's circuits of dissemination and reproduction (Hayes 1999, 7). In the case of the Worcester collections, the people, culture or society represented in the photograph have been reduced to surface reality, and a highly ethnocentric wording of the text can be discerned. The captions contain implicit repressive valuations of the subjects captured on film and of these people's culture. "The text constitutes a parasitical message intended to connote the image, i.e., to enliven it with one or more secondary signifieds" (Barthes 1985, 14). In this sense, there is a historical reversal; the image no longer illustrates the words, it is the words, which, structurally, are parasitical on the image. It is not only the photographs that are fragmented; even the captions render a fractured cultural representation of the people.

Recall, for instance, the photograph of Demeyna (Fig. 9), which comes with the caption: "*Igorot woman showing tattooed arms as evidence of innate criminality*"; and the photograph of a Negrito man (Fig. 8) showing his teeth, whose caption describes the subject as "*[a] Negrito who, like many of his tribe, has pointed his front teeth like a saw.*" Likewise, many of the captions of other photographs depict the tattooed subjects as "wild, fierce and backward headhunters." In another photograph (Fig. 14) published in the *National Geographic*, the image of a tattooed Bontoc Igorot is given the caption: "*The primitive's most prized possession is the key.*" In calling attention to and putting the stress on this single detail, the caption renders "invisible" the full import of the man's hard earned tattoos.

Another connotative procedure involves the imposition of secondary meaning on the photographic image proper. This is elaborated at different levels of photographic production (selection, technical cropping, and layout) (Barthes 1985, 9). Manipulations of the visual text are done through cropping of the final image and "posing" of the local people chosen as subjects for various photographs. The subjects of the colonial photographs are thus reduced to objects for detailed scrutiny.

Before the invention of photography, missionaries, scientists

Figure 14. Photograph of a Bontoc Igorot with the caption "*The primitive's most prized possession is the key.*" (Worcester 1912)

and early explorers created illustrations of tattooed parts of the body— hands, arms, legs, and faces in isolation, to further guide the viewer towards the "object of interest" (i.e., the tattoos). Tattoos were frequently represented in late 18th-19th century engravings through disembodied body parts: arrays of buttocks, arms, legs and faces (Thomas 1997, 68). The cropped images show the patterns in detail where the tattoos are placed on the body. Although the illustrations are "disembodied," they could serve for the contemporary viewer as a form of evidence of the prevalent tattooing practices in the past. They could give an idea of how the tattoos looked like, supplementing the textual description of tattoos in the past and of similar tattoos that can still be found among elders in the Cordillera.

The fragmentation and objectifying style was continued in later

photographic representations of tattoos (Wright 2003, 148). For example, the most arresting photograph taken by Worcester is a picture of the tattooed arm of a woman, with the body cropped out (Fig. 15). The impact of isolating parts of the body in the photograph thereby drawing attention to the "criminal skin" of the Igorot, specifically the

Figures 15-17. Examples of cropping to focus the "object" in the photograph, removing the context and features of the subject. (Sinopoli and Fogelin 1998)

Lepanto, Kankanaey or Suyoc people, is eerie. This is a manifestation of the distancing of the photographer and subject. Similarly, in Fig. 16, the cropped image of a newly tattooed hand of a woman is juxtaposed against a white background. In these instances, the subjects become objects. These photographs illustrate the argument of Edwards (2001, 93) that photographs offer us evidence that clearly contradicts the view of early anthropology as non-participant, culturally distanced and

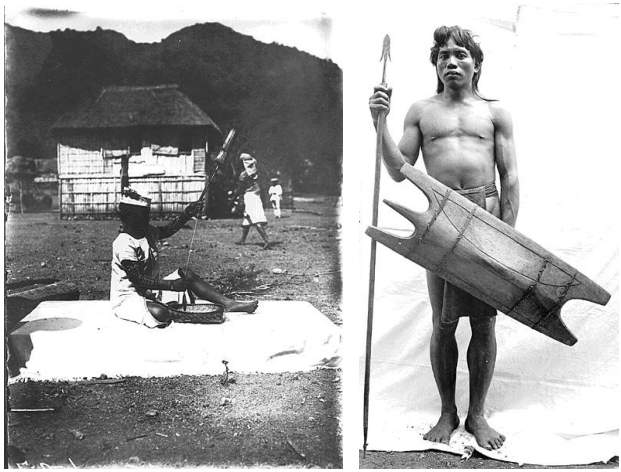
objectifying at the moment of inscription. The style of objectification or depersonalization, i.e., cropping the body from the arm, is more about drawing attention away from the human subject, than focusing attention on the intricacy of the tattoo designs.

In Fig. 15, the tattoo patterns are the same as those found on Demeyna's arm. The elaborate tattoos of the women have the *talaw* (stars), *pad-padanga* (carabao jaw bone), *asungan* or *pinat-pattu* (rice mortar), *inak-akbu* (basket weave), *tiniktiku* (lines), *pinak-paksey* (*finaratong* leaf/seeds) and *binak-batikua* (zig-zag lines), and *bana-ey* (lines or farm trails). The original meanings of these tattoo designs might have been lost through time, due to the decline of the tattooing practice. Similar tattoo patterns are also found on the mummies of Kabayan, Benguet, which proves that the practice of tattooing goes back to the pre-Spanish period. The x-marks found on the cheek of the young woman in Fig. 17 is the first marking that the adolescent female gets upon reaching the age of puberty, after which the upper and lower arms are tattooed.

Photographs of tattooed men and women appear like mug shots and are accompanied with labels which are replete with themes of otherness and deformity (Figs. 9-14). This technique was pioneered by the 19th century French photographer Alphonse Bertillom. Many St. Louis photographs show front and side view close-ups—the "*portrait parle*" or "spoken image" technique that would enable criminologists to use photographs and a complex classification system as a means of identifying criminals (Breitbart 1997, 25). There are also white labels found on the "native body" for identification and typing. White sheets were used as a background to force the viewer to focus on the physical traits of the subject (Figs. 18-19). Technically, it is also used as a contrast to dark-skinned people in photographic techniques. Limbs and body parts were photographed in isolation to further guide the viewer's gaze towards racialized physicality and criminality (Castellanos 1998).

Most of the subjects in the photographs were asked to pose with a "resisting gaze." The gaze is an imposition desired by the other. Barthes (1985, 10-11) says that the actual pose of the photographed prepares the reading for connotative meanings. The politics of posing refers not only to the placement of the photographs on the page but also to the arrangement of elements within the photograph. Clearly, postures, clothing and facial expressions, eye contact and positioning are all culturally stylized (Hayes 1999, 115). There are stereotyped attitudes present in the photographs, as seen in eyes shying away from the camera, in looks of anger or confusion, frightened expressions, eyes raised, hands raised, and others. Nevertheless, although there is distortion and decontextualization of images, the photographs have revelatory potential about the irreversible and permanent aesthetics of the Cordillera people.

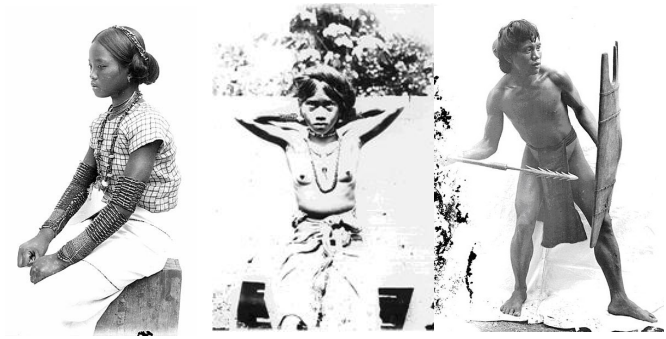
The reading of photographs also includes a rigid examination using knowledge based on the present. This means that further research should be done to see variations in meaning. The anthropological method used in studying material culture with the use of photographs is referred to as *photo elicitation* or *photo elucidation* in visual anthropology (Collier and Collier 1986, Geffroy 1990, Banks and Morphy 1997). Photo elucidation involves an assembly and use of archival photographs that will serve as visual evidence. The chosen photographs should be contextually complete and sequentially organized. Further, for photographs to become meaningful, they are shown to key informants to elicit response and gather information. The photographs can then be used as document and illustration to form a basis for unearthing systematic knowledge (Collier and Collier 1986). The method also combines the use of deliberately open and structured/unstructured questions that will enable one to discover the full capacities of perception



Figures 18-19. The white sheet forces the viewer to focus on the physical traits of the subject. (Worcester Photographic Collection, Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan)

while defining the images through careful reference to specific visual evidence. The research combines anthropological methods in visual anthropology and photography in written texts and photographic essays. It studies and analyzes material culture through visual cultural forms (photographs) and uses visual media (photography) to describe and analyze material culture.

The analysis includes articulating the visual components (e.g., symbols in tattoos, designs in textiles) in verbal (usually written) forms



Figures 20-22. Posing for the camera to show the fierceness or passivity of the subjects. (Worcester Photographic Collection, Museum of Anthropology, Ann Arbor Michigan).

of communication. This means that a translation process called *open procedure in visual research* must be pursued to provide the opportunity for discovering all the potential insights and information that the photograph and information may provide (Collier and Collier 1986, 170). The visible signs may be important in defining people in relation to oneself, in relation to each other, and in relation to the objects that they use in their practices.

Old photographs and postcards became conversation pieces for many of my informants who were able to recover, retell and rediscover aspects of their material culture (e.g., the tattoo instruments or tools made them recognize the availability and/or the scarcity of the materials in their environment, or the shift from the use of thorns to needles in tattooing), and define the functional (e.g., tattoos for aesthetics, fertility; tooth blackening for dental prophylaxis) and artistic needs these practices served.

Engaging photographs in the construction of the oral histories of the people proves very helpful in articulating and renewing the Igorots' conceptions of themselves as a people and it is indeed fortunate that the practitioners of the tradition are still alive. Oral histories provide an important resource for recording a people's material culture for these allow for the discovery of deeper meanings of representations and provide room for the interpretation of a people's disappearing culture. For an anthropologist, the documentation of this aspect of culture is substantially significant, and new photographs are taken to examine this further. Other forms of visual methods like video/film documentary are important in capturing the process (actual manufacture) of the people's material culture.

Today, the photographs of Worcester are the basis of meaningful

textual analysis and interpretation, not to show "how it was" but to unravel the deeper meanings and metaphors of cultural beings (Edwards 1997). In my own photographs, I seek to reveal the interconnectedness of the social and cultural identity of the people with signs and referents that connote cultural and material expression, as such current photographs can also create an interpretative space for reflexive analysis and reading, an openness in the active reconstruction of culture and history. It is important to note that like what Edwards (1997) says, it is not only about the visual per se, but about the range of cultural relationships encoded in the visual.

B. Archaeological Sources

Recent methods in archaeology reject the traditional notion that "archaeology must dig for data and archaeological data must be old." This bold rejection left archaeology with a single defining characteristic: "a focus on the interaction between material culture and human behavior and ideas, regardless of time and space" (Rahtje 1979). Archaeologists and anthropologists do examine physical evidence as a source of information, and relates this to human behavior. This shows an appreciation of the relevant and critical role of material culture in the study of history and culture. I also recognize the desirability of a pluralist methodology, i.e., the employment and convergence of alternative strategies and possibilities which work hand in hand to contribute to the expansion of archaeological research.

In my studies of traditional tattooing and tooth blackening in the Cordillera, I put together and expanded investigations ofdocuments, photographs and artifacts that were collected in the past or material culture that were collected in different periods, which are now deposited in local or international ethnographic museums. Second, I observed the way people use material culture (e.g., technological processes and changes) in the contemporary period. I also noted that there are devastating effects on the behavior of people in introducing policies and changes through various programs put in place in the interest of "development." Education, technology, religion, and mass media, for instance, have effected changes in traditional concepts of beauty. Today, unlike in the past, a tattooed body or blackened teeth are no longer considered beautiful.

The Guthe Archaeological Collection in the Museum of Anthropology in Michigan proved vital in my study of material culture. I also looked at other archaeological finds (Maher 1986) in the Philippines to complement my discussion and analysis of the use of archaeological sources in re-examining Igorot representation. The Philippine Collections of the Museum of Anthropology includes a set of some forty human teeth possessing small holes into which gold disks

Figure 23. Kayhapon, a Bontoc elder 2003.

Figure 24. Chekwaten, Bontoc, 2003.

Figure 25. Kalinga elders performing the *pattong* (gong) during the Ullalim Festival in Tabuk, Kalinga province, 2004. (Photographs by the author)

or plugs were inserted for decorative purposes (Guthe 1934). There were also blackened teeth which would be worthwhile to study. These artifacts were part of the contents found in a grave in the Visayan Islands. Likewise, among the hundreds of assorted human teeth were variously discolored specimens and teeth which showed evidence of having been filed, either to bring them to a point, or to flatten them on their labial surface (Guthe 1934, 9). Stoneware, glass, stone and gold beads of several

varieties, native pottery and ornaments were likewise included in the collection.

The Guthe collection has archaeological relevance and has generated meaningful data complemented by extensive field research. The archaeological materials were supplemented by research in the other disciplines, where the subject of my study crosscuts other fields of studies (like biochemistry, botany, anthropology, dentistry). For instance, the National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, University of the Philippines Los Baños has subjected the ingredients used for teeth blackening to several antibacterial tests. These ingredients, as it turns out, do have anti-bacterial properties and prophylactic effects.

In another case, the relation of material culture and archaeology can be pursued to understand the dynamics of Igorot culture.

The German scientist Hans Meyer was perhaps the first to provide a detailed drawing of Igorot tattoos in the late 1890s (Fig. 26). His tattoo drawings are accompanied by his description of the tattoos among the Igorots of Benguet. The custom of tattooing the whole body with decorations exactly like a coat of mail with breastplate and backplates

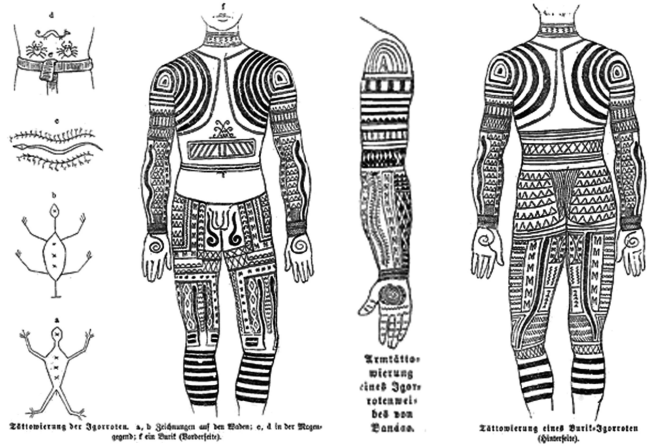


Figure 26. The *burik* of the Mountain Province. The earliest Igorot tattoo illustration done by the German scientist Hans Meyer in the 1880s. *Burik* is also the name of a tattoo design translated as "spotted." The tattoos have figurative designs (man, lizard, snake and scorpion) and geometric designs (lines, circles, stripes and zigzags). The designs usually found on the arms are on the thighs and buttocks, while the chest, back and legs have parallel stripes making the body look like a sailor's striped jacket and the legs like Tyrol stockings. (Meyer 1885)

was widespread in the early 16th century and confirmed that tattooing did exist and was extensively practiced during the pre-historic period. Meyer's drawings show designs that are identical with tattoo patterns which date back to an earlier period (14th century or earlier), as they appear on the mummy Appo Anno (Fig. 27), estimated to be 500 years old (Keith and Keith 1981). The mummy is clad in body tattoos: from fingers to buttocks, chest, back, and legs. Allegedly stolen by a pastor near a cave in Natubling, Benguet around 1918 to get rid of a pagan symbol, the mummy ended up as part of a sideshow in a Manila circus (http://nmuseum.tripod.com/anno1.htm, accessed December 4, 2007). It changed hands a number of times until 1984, when an antiques collector donated it to the National Museum. In 1999, the mummy was brought by the National Museum to its original burial

Figure 27. Appo Anno, the seated mummy of Kabayan, Benguet is clad in elaborate body tattoos. (Photograph by Art Tibaldo)

site in Kabayan, Benguet. The Kankanaey in Nabalicong, Benguet celebrated Apo Anno's return with a re-burial ceremony, complete with local rituals. The burial cave where the mummy was deposited is now secured by iron grills put up by the local people. There are also mummies in some Benguet areas that bear tattoos very similar to those in Hans Meyer's drawings and the photographs of tattoos in Fig. 15. Attempts to explain the meanings and symbols of the tattoos found on the mummies have been largely speculative. In-depth research and investigation must be done to understand their distribution and

association. These cases in Benguet support Thiel's (1984) archaeological discovery of tattoo instruments in the Arku cave in Cagayan province, an indication of the widespread practice of tattooing. In this case, past and current archaeological evidence serve as "explanatory bridges" in understanding people and culture.

Further, there are archaeological finds and early photographs of material culture that are deposited in many museums outside of the Philippines that call for investigation and curatorial work. For instance, Worcester photographed and collected traditional wooden coffins from the Benguet area. These photographs and artifacts could be used in understanding mortuary rituals in relation to material culture. The movement of objects from their original sites to different museums and markets makes the study of these urgent.

To place objects, photographs and film in the context of interpretative purposes, preparations for an exhibit through university museums, research centers, or community museums must be an abiding concern. Interpretations and findings of the research communicated through classroom/community film viewing, and print and electronic media can be effective tools for education and dissemination of vital information.

Conclusion: Reflexivity, Remaking of Identities, and Alternative Histories

Whereas Worcester's photographs transformed the Igorot subjects into spectacles of physical, cultural and racial difference during the colonial period, contemporary photographs, such as what I have taken, may serve as vehicles for a deeper understanding of the culture of the Igorots. It may be inevitable that old and new photographs will be used in the future as sources of information and these may even draw critical comments from various sources, as I myself have done in this paper in critiquing Worcester's photographs for their racializing discourses.

Further, there are alternative ways of representing the people's voices in the photographs; the emphasis may be marked on photographic innovations such as providing opportunities for the people themselves to document their own culture by taking their own photographs or footages using modern technology (camera, tape recorder, video camera) in the process of research and documentation. In this way, there is a self-enclosed mode of vision of "looking at their own." This could make the people active participants in the photographic process, empowering them through this visual medium. Departure from some connotative procedures of photography (lay-out, cropping, posing) may open spaces for reciprocity and respect for the individuality of the people's culture.

The method that I have described in studying material culture is experimental and currently appreciated for its rigorous examination and thoughtful analysis. Involving a cultural inventory of artifacts in their original context, the methodology shows the range of information that can be retrieved from archaeology's unique perspective and the contribution of research visual methods. Applied to the study of Igorot material culture, this method has allowed me to get a fuller sense of the markers on the Igorot body. In colonial times, these markers were seen as deviations associated with the themes of otherness and difference. The method I have employed enabled me to see the "colonial gaze"which concentrates on the unequal power relations implicit in the photographs. The photographs of the Igorots from the Worcester collection and from the St. Louis Exposition have succeeded in creating "Other stories," distorted identities, and persistent misconceptions about the Cordillera people. Despite this, they could be used to gradually open spaces for reconstructions of Igorot identity. Ultimately, this could lead to the breaking down of what were, once, unyielding barriers of ethnocentrism.

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