Introduction

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Indigenousness is a slippery thing. Like water, it takes the shape of the container that holds it. And, like water, it can breach walls that were meant to keep it on course or in place.

After decades of debate scholars, activists, politicians and indigenous peoples do not agree on a definition, much less a unifying theory. One definition cannot possibly encompass the diversity of peoples around the world who call themselves indigenous. However, there exists a shared understanding (though not unproblematic) around indigenousness, and boundaries (though not static) around who can claim to be indigenous and who cannot. In other words, when someone says "indigenous" we somehow know what she or he means. It is this tenuous "knowing" that makes it possible for us to put together five papers with a wide range of topics and theoretical approaches, and call this an Indigenous Studies special issue. Despite their varied contents, the articles come together between these covers with surprising complementarity.

We begin in Mindanao. In the first article, Shiela Tampos-Cabazares writes about *ginhawa* and *pangayaw* among the Manobo of Agusan del Sur. Pangayaw refers to various forms of killing, such as revenge killings and armed revolt. Tampos-Cabazares asserts that pangayaw must be understood in relation to the building up of pain and rage, which in turn may be caused by a rupture among individuals or wider socio-economic and political contexts. Tampos-Cabazares takes us through historical, archival, and ethnographic material to show how socially inflicted pain disrupts the ginhawa or "thinking" and "feeling," of a person or people. If an offense, or the build up of pain is not addressed through conciliatory measures then it is released as rage. Tampos-Cabazares emphasizes that pangayaw is a last resort taken only when attempts at arbitration or assuagement are either lacking, or have failed.

Janus Cabazares and Tampos-Cabazares present the ethno-taxonomy of the Obo Manobo in North Cotabato, in which different elements of the natural world are classified as having life, giving life, or as being inedible and mere ornamentation. As in the previous article, the authors work with two key concepts: *umuu* and *koruan*. Umuu refers to things that not only have life, but give life. Thus, objects that may not be considered living things in Linnean classification, such as water or air, may be thought of as umuu by the Obo Manobo

because they give life to people and other beings. On the other hand, koruan is loosely translated as value, worth, significance, or purpose. It describes the value of a resource in terms of how humans relate to it. The authors suggest that the concepts of umuu and koruan show us ways of viewing natural resources that are not limited to their commercial value, but arise instead from their value in relation to other things and beings in the environment.

Similarly concerned with the life of objects, or rather, the place of objects in life, Roland Rabang writes about the *takba*, an otherwise ordinary woven basket made in Sagada that is imbued with sacredness through ritual. He begins with a manuscript on the material culture of Sagada prepared by the 1954 Junior Class of St. Mary's High School under the guidance of the historian William Henry Scott. Rabang then intertwines relevant sections of the manuscript with conversations with elders, fieldwork, and participation in several key rituals in Sagada. Rabang writes of how the takba—as a receptacle—holds within it more than ritual accoutrements. The takba is a family legacy, passed down through the generations. It signifies status as well as belonging to a *dap-ay*. It embodies responsibilities towards the community and the maintenance of relationships with ancestors and other spirits.

Also exploring ritual life, Mercedes Arzadon writes about indigenous peoples' education in two different modalities: the public school system and what she calls the *mambunong* knowledge system. She documents the history and role of each system in a Kankana-ey community in Benguet, and compares how knowledge, skills, and status are acquired and reproduced in school or in rituals. Arzadon also looks into how the public school system and the mambunong knowledge system intersect. She argues that they are complementary ways of knowing and are not necessarily diametrically opposed, as might be expected. Arzadon asserts that an understanding of knowledge systems such as that of the mambunong can deepen and enhance the contextualization and indigenization of the basic education curriculum.

Still in the sphere of education, Elizer De Los Reyes interrogates the ways in which indigenousness is described, constructed, and attributed in Philippine History textbooks used in private schools. Using critical discourse analysis, De Los Reyes finds two oppositional themes on indigenousness in the textbooks he studied. On the one hand, the "indigenous other" is described as backward and spatially remote. On the other hand, the "indigenous agent" is described as a stakeholder in development, a part of the Filipino nation with agency and rights. Furthermore, he finds that the textbooks attribute

indigenous identity and ethnicity in different, inconsistent ways. De Los Reyes traces how these inconsistencies and misrepresentations are overlooked and actually enabled by policy. In the end, De Los Reyes reaches a surprising conclusion on textbook production in the private sector.

In these articles we find ethnolinguistics, history, violence, arbitration, social change, policy, material culture, ritual, education, and representation. In the case of the latter, misrepresentation becomes a form of violence. It is not mere coincidence that common themes run through the articles gathered here. Although they use different theoretical lenses and research methods, most of them are ethnographic. They aim to deepen our understanding and appreciation of indigenous contexts in the Philippines, touching on issues and challenges that are felt across the archipelago. They describe commonalities as well as differences. In this way, this special issue invites cross-cultural comparison, further research, and collegial debate—all part of the process and project of Indigenous Studies.

We may all more or less know what Indigenous Studies is about. As for who should do the research, the teaching, and for what purpose—these matters remain as slippery as indigenousness itself. In the Lima Declaration of the 2013 World Conference of Indigenous Women, the participants endorsed the principle, "Nothing about us, without us," and added, "Everything about us, with us." The onus is on scholars, whether indigenous themselves or not, to respond to the challenge embedded within this statement. As the University of the Philippines Baguio carves out a niche for Indigenous Studies in the Cordillera region, perhaps open debates on participation, representation, agency, and the democratization of knowledge production will take centerstage. May this special issue play a part, no matter how small, in opening the floor for questions.

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