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# **THOUGHTS ON INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE**

**Julius D. Mendoza, Ph.D.**

# **THE SHAPING OF A CORDILLERA WOMEN'S HISTORY RESEARCH PROJECT**

**Athena Lydia Casambre, Ph.D.**

## **CSC Working Paper 29**



**CORDILLERA STUDIES CENTER**

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## CSC Working Paper 29

**The CSC Working Paper Series makes recent research on the Cordillera available in order to stimulate comment and discussion**

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## PREFACE

In June 1998, the Cordillera Studies Center sponsored the Research Dialogue Series of 1998-1999. In eight monthly fora commencing in August 1998 and ending in March 1999, faculty members from different academic divisions of the College discussed results from completed research projects.

In contrast, the papers by Julius D. Mendoza on *Thoughts on Indigenous Knowledge* and Athena Lydia Casambre on *The Shaping of a Cordillera Women's History Research Project* were **originally** prepared specifically for the Research Dialogues, 1998-1999.

In choosing to feature these papers as Cordillera Studies Center Working Paper No. 29, the Center hopes to contribute to the growing research literature on **indigenous knowledge** and **women and gender studies**.

Lorelei Crisologo Mendoza  
Director, Cordillera Studies Center  
1998-1999

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## THOUGHTS ON INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Julius D. Mendoza, Ph.D.

This paper on thoughts on Indigenous Knowledge (IK) will consist of three main parts. The first part will focus on the nature of IK; the second part will reflect on one particular ethical problem that is created by the scientific perspective itself in the study of IK; and the third will raise a few questions on the status of the social science discipline involved in the study of IK, i.e., Anthropology, particularly in a global set-up.

The word INDIGENOUS comes from

L *indigena* - native

L *Gignere* - to beget

OL *indo/endo* - in, within

Indigenous Knowledge has to do with origin. It means 'having originated in and being produced, growing, living, or occurring naturally in a particular region or environment.'

The word INDIGENOUS highlights the fundamental 'situatedness' of all existents.

*Sitz im Leben*. To be, to exist, is to be located in a particular locale; is to exist in a particular time. Being is spatio-temporal. It has a *here* and a *now*. The human being is situated, too and Heidegger expresses this in the phrase *being-in-the-world*. A region or an environment is basically the *setting*, the setting of activity and being, the locale of operation, the unique material and biological possibility condition of life. This is not all. The term 'setting' implies that locale is made into locale by human activity. Being temporal, situated humans are historical. To say that humans have a *Sitz im Leben* is to say that their past and their place explain their present.

The significance of INDIGENOUS CONCEPTS or INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE in social-scientific study and philosophy derives from the ontological insight that *being* is spatio-temporal in general and in particular, that *being-in-the-world* is linguistic. But language must be understood properly. Contemporary philosophy of meaning and language rejects a simple but powerful model of language as a collection of words corresponding to an independent set of objects, of words naming or referring to pre-existent, fixed meanings or ideas. The conceptual world in this view is assumed to consist of an independent set of fixed universal meanings. This is also the case with the world of objects. Language is assumed to be an instrument for designating and describing ideas and objects in the conceptual and objective world. The many different systems of languages all over the world are conceived

of simply as many different sets of *signifiers*. The world of the *signified* is fixed and remains the same.

Contemporary thinking on language says that a linguistic community articulates not only its own signifiers but also its own world of the signified. This whole of signifiers *and* signified forms a system in which all the elements fit together, and in which the *value* of any one element depends on the simultaneous coexistence of all the others.

Contemporary thinking on language moreover repudiates the taken-for-granted view that designating, describing, and referring are the paradigmatic linguistic activities. Rather, contemporary philosophy of language holds that the myriad of activities that human beings engage in is equally primitive. This implies that the meaning of terms and expressions can only be understood and made clear in relation to the context of activities in which they occur. Language as a whole must be attached to the *Sitz im Leben* of its users. Language is the vehicle of modes of consciousness and practices; it is part and parcel of man's being-in-the-world. But this view goes deeper. Language is not merely an instrument for the commerce of those who interact. Rather, language is thought and being come to themselves for the first time in words and sentences.

Indigenous concepts and indigenous knowledge usually refer to conceptualizations of the world that flow from the intentionality of consciousness or mental acts. Brentano says that mental states are distinguished from physical states by intentionality, from the Latin term, *intendere*, to aim at. Mental acts essentially refer themselves to, are directed to, their corresponding object. The words 'of' or 'about' are often used to describe the mental. Whenever Juan is afraid, he is afraid of something; whenever he imagines, he imagines something, the object of his imagination; whenever he thinks, he thinks of something. 'Something', that is, the intentional object. The world of intentional objects is called *Lebenswelt*, the life-world. The intentional object is not the thing as ordinarily conceived. Rather, it is the correlate of mental acts, the object just and only just as it is intended by the mental act. For example, the intentional object of imagination is just what is imagined in the imagining act, the imagined object, apart from whether this imagined object exists or not. In seeing, the perceived is presented in the act of seeing, just as it is seen. One is often said to be hearing something even as there is not any sound there. That there is no sound there does not remove the fact that one is hearing something. When the child is afraid of the masked man, his fear is real and true even if the masked man turned out to be his father and he is not afraid of his father. The intentional object of the child's act of fearing is the masked man, not his father.

Human beings are for sure set apart by their mental states. Intentionality reflects the fact that mental states are conceptions and interpretations of the world. A study of the mental realm is also a study of the intentional realm—the world as we conceive it in experience, the *Lebenswelt*, the world as it appears to us, the world just as it 'strikes' us, as it feels to us, the world subjectively presented to us, or presented to us in our collective understanding of it. The *Lebenswelt* is the world of meanings that we give and find—regardless of whether they are true or not. The *Lebenswelt* is the *cultural world*.

Here lies the peril. The world as we imagine it, desire it, conceive of it, perceive it, believe it to be, etc., can turn out to be inadequate or even false. This *Lebenswelt* constructed

of intentional objects is also the world of appearance, and consequently can be falsified. However, this is not to say that this cultural world is by nature false. Rather, this is to say that human beings are capable of arriving at a level of awareness wherein they recognize their conceptions as inadequate or even as illusions.

The issues that can be addressed as a result of this are legion.

Let us focus on one. The cultural world, points out Roger Scruton, is often incompatible with the world of science. Science can falsify the meanings that we project in our lives as we experience it. Even further than this, science is the enterprise of explaining appearances, at the same time that it goes on to rapidly replace them. Science can contradict everyday beliefs and correct them. Of course, certain indigenous practices and indigenous knowledge are sometimes shown to be more sound and valid than the scientifically based analyses and recommendations of scientists. Sustainable agricultural practices are a source of several examples of this. But this is an issue that still belongs to the scientific enterprise. The question at stake concerns good or bad science. It is often forgotten that ordinary social actors should be thought of essentially as skilled social scientists in their own right, who are knowledgeable about their social world; otherwise they would be incapable of operating in it. Some display extraordinary technical know-how. Here, the concerns of indigenous knowledge and scientific research coincide.

But the problem of the conflict between the *Lebenswelt* and the scientific worldview is at its high peak when the question of *meaning* is at stake. In this case, the worry is not just scientific but spiritual. The meaning of the world is enshrined in conceptions that science does not endorse, conceptions like beauty, goodness, fate, fortune, destiny, the soul, the spirit of ancestors and gods, and many more. An enchanted grove of literary ideas or of images passed on in folklore and folktale creates and protects these conceptions. In this *Lebenswelt* or cultural world, people live happily or miserably. They respond with affection, anger, love, contempt or grief. In this world, there is agony, anxiety, awe and wonder. When the concepts and images of this world are swept away by science, science cannot give a substitute. This world cannot be replaced with the unmoralized concepts of science because it has evolved in answer to a different need, the need for meaning.

The scientific attempt to explore the 'depth' of human phenomena is accompanied by a singular danger for it threatens to destroy our response to appearances. Yet it is in the intentional world that we live and act with fascination. The reckless desire to scrape it away, a desire which has inspired all those 'sciences of man' with their 'hermeneutics of suspicion', deprives us of our consolation. *One task of philosophy is to describe and explore the Lebenswelt and maybe even to vindicate it against the world of science.* Philosophy is important as an exercise in conceptual ecology. It endeavors to preserve conceptual variety. 'It is the last-ditch attempt to 'save the appearances'.'

Let us go back to what has been said about IK and language. What was earlier said, that language-concept should be seen as part and parcel of activities, must be distinguished from the use of the *linguistic model* to understand features of societal totalities. In this model, social life may be studied in terms of differential or oppositional relations and media of exchanges. These are governed by conventions and rules. The linguistic model projects

society as a closed unity, having boundaries that mark it off from other, surrounding societies.

Though societal totalities are typically associated with definite forms of locale, most societies are not clearly delimited. They are not closed systems. Societal totalities are found only within the context of intersocietal systems. A society is more like a 'figure' that emerges against the 'background' of a range of other systemic relationships in which it is embedded. Societies are not necessarily unified collectivities. (They should not necessarily be modeled after the modern nation-state.) In this respect, the linguistic model finds its limits. The structural properties of social systems, and their institutional as well as spatio-temporal articulation do not necessarily resemble language. At any rate, the coherence or unity of a societal whole is itself a contingent matter, not one that societies necessarily have.

If societal totalities are not closed, unified unities, then 'endogenous' or 'unfolding' models are not valid since they presume that the main structural features of a society, governing both stability and change, are internal to that society.

How do we think of the local in the late twentieth century and the beginning of a new millennium? The local and the global, the global and the local—two terms that express radical changes in the articulation of time and space in conditions of modernity. To understand this, we can look at anthropology as index. Anthropology is the social-scientific discipline widely known to be concerned with exotic, non-modern, non-western, non-scientific cultures. (The term 'primitive cultures' is now considered by many as unfortunate). What is the fate of the science of the local in the contexts of expanded time-space distancing?

Giddens traces three general phases in a process that moves away from one-sided interrogation to mutual interrogation.

- a. Viewed from the beginnings of social science and the place of origin of the social sciences, i.e. 'The West', there are 'other' cultures and civilizations. The first phase is the one-sided interrogation carried out by the West of other cultures. Anthropologists, in the words of Giddens, 'used to deal with individuals and groups who by and large didn't answer back.'<sup>1</sup> Social science is no different from the fundamental attitude of natural science, namely, operating in the manner of a 'single hermeneutic.' By this, Giddens means that anthropology or the science of the local is an endeavor that is of significant concern to the anthropologist alone and not at all of any concern to the people they study. Anthropology is a discourse that concerns only the anthropologist. In the investigation, the 'other' culture is subjected to interrogation but the anthropologist's own self and world are taken for granted, not subject to scrutiny in the anthropological study itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Giddens. *In Defense of Sociology: Essays, Interpretations, and Rejoinders*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, p.121.

- b. Anthropology enters the second phase characterized by what might be called the discovery of the essential *intelligence* of other cultures or traditions. The other is discovered as one just as 'knowledgeable' as 'us' although in a different way. An implicit claim of equality is made. In this recognition of the 'other', however, interrogation is suspended rather than carried out. Why? The reason is that intelligence is seen as strictly contextual. This takes the form of cultural relativism. Relativism drops the very possibility of interrogation and confrontation, nay, of discussion in holding that truth or value is relative to milieu or that intelligibility is entirely contextual. In the second phase then, neither the 'other' nor the 'same' is interrogated. Each can continue to live on its own in its own terms, leaving the other to live on its own and in its own terms. In face of disappearing cultures, anthropology becomes a task of preservation in much the same way as protected relic is preserved. Anthropology is a testament to a way of life to which we can no longer directly bear witness.
- c. In the third phase, it is the anthropologist who becomes self-conscious in the process of confronting people whose lives he studies. In a global world where no one is 'outside', isolated, or inaccessible, the local is permeated by the far-fetched. In the anthropologist's own fieldwork, he meets tourists and other anthropologists. Anthropology becomes a narrative of the anthropologist's own self-interrogation and self-doubt that is triggered by his work in the field in unfamiliar surroundings. The everyday world from which the anthropologist comes loses its obviousness and it becomes as baffling and problematic as the one he sought to study. In the third phase, it is the 'other' who interrogates the 'same.'

The natives of a place are social scientists in their own right. They observe the anthropologist who observes them. Using their own forestructures and armed with their own interests, they categorize the anthropologist and do interpretations for him. They can use the anthropologist's own anthropology to theorize the anthropologist. In a world of developed reflexivity, the people who are subjects of anthropological treatises are likely to be interested in reading these treatises, in reacting and criticizing these, or in using them to promote their interest or to wage their own local or global political battles. Local communities use the work of anthropologists as guide to the reconstruction of their own traditional cultures.

Even as the connections between anthropology and colonial expansion and administration are complex, it cannot be denied that anthropology has drawn much of its sustenance from colonialism. With the advent of developing social reflexivity, and hand in hand with it, the global spread of democratic ideals, colonialism has been unmasked and anthropology has become suspect. We must point out, however, that to the extent that democracy is premised on autonomy, to the extent that anthropology has been a staunch defender of non-modern cultures, it has promoted the spread of democratic ideals, and hence contributed to the demise of colonialism.

The distinctiveness of anthropology as a discipline when placed alongside the other social science disciplines has been specified substantively in terms of its concern with non-modern societies. With the globalization, however, modernity is everywhere. The societies and cultures that are customarily considered the specialized 'field of study' of anthropology—exotic, alien groups and communities—have now disappeared or have

transformed themselves into societies that do not fit the mold of anthropology's 'subject matter.' To save anthropology, one may invoke the distinction between developed and less-developed nations or between the First World and the Third World. In this, one assigns the latter half of these dualities to anthropology. But would this do? To insist on a substantive definition of anthropology as about non-modern societies and cultures, says Giddens, would mean 'turning the subject into a version of museum studies. The anthropologist would be a sort of curator of an historical museum of humanity's past.'<sup>2</sup> And indeed, nowadays, anthropologists and historians in less developed countries cooperate in research work, or else compete for the same 'turf.'

Could the distinctiveness of anthropology be defended methodologically? Anthropologists are usually marked by their devotion to intensive field-work and ethnography. An argument can be made that intensive field-work is a form of research method which is used across the social sciences rather than by anthropology alone. Could a defensible identity of anthropology be established on the basis of its theoretical tradition? Evolutionary anthropology, structural-functionalism, American cultural anthropology—these are all marked by limitations. 'Each tended to picture the theoretical object of anthropology as the self-contained local community. Neither develops sophisticated conceptions of power, ideology or cultural domination.'<sup>3</sup> Anthropology is deficient in its core theoretical traditions and it has drawn from philosophy and other disciplines in order to correct these deficiencies.

Do all these reasons indicate that we should now abandon anthropology in order to turn to the other social science disciplines? But the other social sciences are not in a more advantageous position. All the social sciences have as much difficulty in grasping the changes now transforming local and global social orders as anthropology. Giddens mentions certain phenomena that require the need for anthropological understanding: the resurgence of ethnicity, the revival of 'tribalism, the continuing importance of religion and ritual.'<sup>4</sup> With their training and the intellectual tradition of anthropology, anthropologists are in the best position to confront these and similar phenomena. The conventional form of the anthropological enterprise, the classic intensive study of local social arena may often be of practical importance. Many development policies and efforts formulated and done with the best of intentions have failed due to the mistaken or inadequate understanding of the groups for whom they are targeted.

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<sup>2</sup> Anthony Giddens. *In Defense of Sociology*, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Giddens. *In Defense of Sociology*, p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Giddens. *In Defense of Sociology*, p. 123-34.

**REFERENCE:**

Giddens, Anthony. 1996. *In Defense of Sociology: Essays, Interpretations, and Rejoinders*.  
Cambridge: Polity Press.



## THE SHAPING OF A CORDILLERA WOMEN'S HISTORY RESEARCH PROJECT

Athena Lydia Casambre, Ph.D.

My presentation this afternoon, strictly speaking, will not be a research report, but a presentation of where I have been to, and where I seem to be headed, in regard to the research topic Cordillera Women's History. In this presentation, I will be offering a narrative that will touch on at least three chunks of work written up in some paper or other.

I start by referring to my professorial chair lecture in September 1994, where I tackled the question of addressing the women question in the context of ethnicity, e.g. the Cordillera context. In that paper I worked my way to the central suggestion that the task of addressing this question in the context of ethnicity is considerably clarified by a perspective in which gender has been decentered. I picked up this suggestion principally from Kamala Visweswaran (1994). I took this to indicate that when gender is decentered, then one can engage in women studies in contexts in which ethnicity and/or indigeneity appear/s to be a primary category of identity. The suggestion to decenter gender is a postmodernist critique of a prevalent feminist analysis which states that gender—understood as a social construction—was a vital element of the pervasive patriarchal ideology of society and had caused the effective invisibility as well as silencing of women.

Two projects in which I became involved at a later date were an aborted Women's History Project of the National Centennial Commission Women's Sector, to have been spearheaded by the history discipline, and a Local History Project, also spearheaded by the history discipline, which aimed to produce a Local History Sourcebook. For the aborted NCCWS project, I was asked to give the presentation on the methodologies for women's history at a training seminar for potential field researchers; for the local history project, I co-authored (with R. Rovillos) a module on Women's History to be included in the proposed Sourcebook. To my knowledge, our second draft is with the project leaders, awaiting a new round of critiques and editing.

My preparations for these two history projects are major markers of what I am calling the shaping of a potential Cordillera women's history project. In being asked to give a training presentation on methodologies of women's history,\* I focused on the ways in which feminist research methods were distinct. For that presentation, my main source was Shulamit Reinharz (1992). In addition, I recall that I had just read Mary Catherine Bateson's book recounting the lives of five of her women friends. The thesis of Bateson (who is the daughter of Margaret Mead, and who had lived and taught for a brief period in the Philippines), was that a woman's life story should reveal how a woman had "composed her life." Subsequently, in writing the Local History Sourcebook module, I relied on an article I found on the Internet on a perspective on women's history as presented by Gianna Pomata (1993).

To speak of embarking on, or being engaged in, the shaping of a Cordillera Women's History project is to make the claim, first of all, that there is such a thing as "women's

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\* NCCWS Seminar-Workshop on Life Histories Project, July 6-7, 1996, Ating Tahanan, Baguio City.

history.” Let me use a wonderfully confounded illustration of my understanding of what counts as ‘women’s history.’ Some—I hope, many—of you may have viewed the recent movie, Rizal. (There are at least three different ways of referring to the movie: director Marilou Diaz Abaya’s Rizal; lead actor Cesar Montano’s Rizal; and production outfit GMA’s Rizal. Notice how each manner of reference conveys a distinct message in itself.) Many of you may be aware of the criticisms and controversies spawned by the movie. I, myself, first took notice of the movie upon reading newspaper columnist Adrian Cristobal’s criticism of the historical veracity of Diaz Abaya’s rendering. This was soon followed by other commentaries, and as I recall, only Gerard Ramos of the daily newspaper Today has been sympathetic to the film, unbothered by flaws in the historical narrative. As I viewed the film at its premier presentation here in Baguio, I found myself mildly bored, impatient with the larger plot line—the one that some critics have called the old story line that all of us know from grade school and high school, never mind being bored out of our minds by the same thing yet one more time in P.I. 100 in college. In any case, thereabouts of the last third or quarter of the film, I had this flash of insight: I knew what Marilou Diaz-Abaya wanted to do, what she was doing. And if I was right, then Adrian Cristobal’s and the other history pedants’ criticisms of historical veracity were beside the point, that is, they pertained to a different project. Marilou Diaz-Abaya, I decided, was doing a feminist history of Rizal. Meanwhile, Cristobal et al. were mired in the details or strokes of a masculine history of Rizal. At this juncture, let me acknowledge the point at which this observation strains—i.e., the question of whether one can speak of a feminist history of a male figure. So far, I have suggested that Abaya takes a feminist perspective on the narrative in which Rizal, a male, figures prominently. An easy answer that occurs to me is to acknowledge the difference in scope between “feminist history” and “women’s history,” where the latter take women as their subject, and the former include the feminist author in the writing of history.

One of the delightful moments of Abaya’s film was Rizal, in Madrid, chancing upon a student demonstration as he left his professor’s office on campus. Bemused, the youthful Rizal appeared to try out the motions of political mobilization on himself, tentatively raising a fist as he receded into a dip in the wall, and trying out the demonstrators’ grito, “Libertad!” This was not a film moment of comic relief, I thought, but an essential portrayal of the shaping of Rizal’s politicized persona, which climaxes in his being made a hero at Bagumbayan.

Close to the end of the film, Abaya’s portrayal of Rizal’s anguished confusion on the eve of his execution is a much more emotive attempt to present the shaping of Rizal the political hero. Abaya shows how Rizal battled the devil of great personal fear of death, and how he triumphed, in the form of the magnificent *Mi Ultimo Adios*.

Abaya’s film project, it seemed clear to me, was to show how Rizal the hero was shaped. Or, more accurately, how Rizal the hero is the result of Rizal’s receptivity to the forces, circumstances, and opportunities which culminated in heroism. Rizal, according to Abaya’s portrayal, was not out to become a hero. He became one as experience layered over experience. Abaya’s feminist history of Rizal is precisely how, inside himself, Rizal was shaped into a hero. In contrast, the historical narrative which Cristobal et al. insisted on looking for is a different one: it is the narrative that claims, “there was no collusion with revolutionary forces!” “there was no retraction!” “there was no legally binding marriage!”

The differentiation between the character of Abaya's intended narrative and Cristobal et al.'s preferred narrative seems to me to be the differentiation that Gianna Pomata (1993) makes between women's history and the larger tradition and convention of history. Whereas the latter are focused on story lines that aim to trace the rise and fall of gross (i.e., macro) political entities such as empires, nation-states, governments, and armies, the former are focused on the story lines that precisely aim to recover the presence of women in society through time. Where histories of the larger or mainstream tradition of history tended to focus on the men (military and political leaders) who figured in the rise and fall of large political entities, social history, of which women's histories are one kind, allowed for the surfacing of "minor" characters whose lives nevertheless were to be seen as meaningful and interesting.

Pomata traces the project of women's history back through the traditions of social history, to the Plutarchean, after Plutarch who wrote the Lives, which is a compilation of biographical studies. Pomata contrasts the Plutarchean tradition of social history to the Thucydidean tradition, after Thucydides, the historian of the Peloponnesian wars. Thucydidean history, therefore, is essentially political-military. In addition, Pomata cites a quote, attributed to the greek orator Pericles, which indicates the cultural effacement of women in ancient society: "for a woman, the greatest glory lies in being named by men as little as possible; whether that be for good or bad reasons."

The disappearance of women from history was completed with history's turn to positivism in the nineteenth century, according to Pomata. The positivist search for large patterns in events, which might be developed into law-like generalizations, strengthened the Thucydidean tradition which takes history to be "general." The requirement of "hard evidence" in the positivist tradition led to the non-acceptance of, for example, literary sources for the writing of history. It has been noted that women had been most visible in these literary sources, e.g., memoirs, histories of religious congregations, family or dynasty histories, historical novels.

A project on women's history can be described in terms of the dimensions of content and method. In terms of content, it can be described as aiming "to make women a focus of inquiry, a subject of the story, an agent of the narrative" (Joan Scott 1988). Thus, women are made visible by directly inquiring after their presence, and further, by seeking their voices in the narrative. These objectives imply methodologies that will elicit these voices and presence. Some of these include oral history, in particular, life histories; use of sources other than official documents of public life, for instance, documentations of daily life, including the minutiae of daily life; and narratives.

In 1994, I joined a research and book writing project of the Diliman-based University Center for Women's Studies. Three of us from UP College Baguio (Norma Lua, Luisa Carino, and myself) agreed to work up life-stories of mother-daughter teams in the Cordillera. My subject was Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, then head of the Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center (CWERC) and now of Tebtebba Foundation Inc., the Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education, while Norma Lua took Petra Mac-liing and Luisa Carino did Hamada women. The research question for the project was on the transmission of feminist values among Filipinas. Women from different circumstances of geography, occupation and age or historical generation were identified and interviewed in mother-daughter tandems. Since these were meant to be brief

life histories to be compiled in a volume, I spent one afternoon with Vicky at the CWERC office, and another afternoon with her daughter, Jennifer, at her aunt's house in Quezon City. At the time Jennifer was in high school at the Philippine Science High School.

My interviews with mother and daughter were informed by the research question of the project. I was therefore looking for information about the upbringing in the home, experiences in school, interactions with friends and colleagues, work experience, domestic arrangements and family practice that would reveal underlying principles about the differential valuation of males and females. Striking landmarks appeared as we developed their life histories, such as Vicky's mother being one of the first generation of professionals from the Cordillera, and her personal style as a garden rather than home and kitchen, person; Vicky's experience of early independence, first as her mother's frequent emissary in the village, then as a high school scholar in Manila; Jennifer's experience of a more home-bound father compared to an organizationally active mother; and Jennifer's own experience of early independence as a high school scholar in Manila.

In view of Vicky's being originally from Besao, Mountain Province, her having grown up in the Cordillera (Mountain Province and Baguio), her being raised by parents who were Cordillera natives, and her subsequent settling in the Cordillera area to do her professional work in organizing, her life story, as written, may be claimed as an exercise in Cordillera women's history. Setting aside the fact that her life history was written in this instance as part of a larger project on transmission of feminist values, it nonetheless constitutes a contribution to an unspecified, unarticulated Cordillera women's history. On several levels, Cordillera women are made visible, their role in Cordillera history brought to the surface, through the writing of these life histories. A little too easy, I am willing to admit, since Vicky is, undoubtedly, an achiever in the area of political organizing in the Cordillera, in particular, organizing women whose visibility and voice now reach to international arenas and regimes. On the other hand, it may all the more be significant to present Vicky's life history, as it shows that she indeed went through the experience of "subordination," which is the common lot of invisible and voiceless women; in addition, her story reveals her growth into the consciousness of "composing a life" (Guerrero 1997). Heilbrun (1988) suggests that the issue in "writing a woman's life" is to be able to write it so that "alternative stories" and "new narratives" can be offered for new women. Heilbrun asks, "How many new narratives for women enter texts and then other texts and eventually women's lives?" (p.38)

Our interviews, with the exception of Luisa Carino's, were finally published by the UCWS in 1997 (Guerrero 1997). Let me note here that I have always disagreed with the project leaders' and editors' decision to force the first person voice on all the interview reports. I regard it to be a violation of the basic principle of "recovering voices" in women's history, to present a false first person voice. It is also a violation of the principle of intersubjectivity, since it has the effect of confounding the woman researcher's voice in the manuscript with the interview subject's voice.

Still scratching on the surface, this time on another front, I lit upon another remarkable Cordillera woman. As a personal research project (supported by minimal research leave credits) embarked on sometime in 1997, I began combing through Cordillera ethnography and history volumes, to retrieve and reconstitute the presence of women in the Cordillera. A look at histories like Scott's (1975) *History on the Cordillera*, *Collected*

Writings on Mountain Province History, confirmed Pomata's observation about mainstream history as concentrating on the political and military narratives in which women were largely absent. Other histories, such as Fray Angel Perez's (1902), carry mostly ethnographic descriptions of the customs and costumes of Cordillera men and women. Thus it is possible to sift through these descriptions and compile ethnographic materials on courtship, marriage, children, divorce, as well as ritual life, in which the presence of women can be discerned.

An amazing find comes from R.F. Barton's classic *Autobiographies of Three Pagans in the Philippines* (1963, orig. publ. 1938). One of Barton's three key informants was an Ifugao woman, Bugar Nak Manghe, an irrepressible 65-yr old woman who, "everybody agreed...had had a more eventful life than any other woman living in [our] valley stream." She was also, apparently, a leader type; Barton explained that he chose to record Bugar's story because "none of the other old women would tell their life stories until Bugar had broken the ice." (p. 142)

My report on this find became the core of a paper I submitted to the International Federation for Research in Women's History conference in June 1998 at Melbourne University. The theme of this conference was, Women and Human Rights, Social Justice and Citizenship. My historical-ethnographic data not being about human rights or social justice, I presented Bugar's account of her seven marriages as historical material for understanding the notion of citizenship as it applied to Ifugao women.

Without the context of the IFRWH conference theme, Bugar's life story ostensibly provides ethnographic information on the culture of courtship, marriage, and divorce among the Ifugao. From Bugar's account, we learn the Ifugao pattern: when a man was interested in marrying a woman, he sought the consent of her parents, who conducted a ritual to check the chicken bile omen before agreeing to the marriage. A woman without a husband—unmarried or widowed—slept in the *agamang* with other marriageable women, where they could be visited by men in search of a wife. Each time that Bugar was widowed, she went back to the *agamang* until a man successfully hurdled the steps which included getting her consent, asking her parents' permission, and getting good omens from the bile reading.

Given the question raised by the IFRWH conference theme, I suggested that the sense to be read from this ethnographic information would be that the notion of citizenship of women in Ifugao has to be appreciated in the context of the primacy of kinship as a determinant in the social practices among the Ifugao. One cannot say plainly that Ifugao women were deprived of citizenship rights; one had to say that the claims of women in Ifugao for (self)-definition were to be made within the reality of kinship. On one hand, citizenship is an attribute of social life in a civic body; Ifugao social life, on the other, is organized and defined by filial virtue, not by civic virtue.

Another portrait of Ifugao women emerges from Frank Jenista's (1987) colonial history of American Governors in the Central Cordillera. Jenista, obviously, is not writing a women's history; in fact, his subjects are male functionaries of the American colonial government. Nonetheless, once more, as an initial step in constituting a Cordillera women's history, one can sift the nuggets of women's presence from these non-women's histories.

For someone whose history project is to portray the male colonial governors in Central Cordillera, Jenista, in fact, succeeds in making visible a particular group of women. These are Ifugao women who had entered into liaisons with these “White Apos,” ranging from freely engaged-in commercial sex to long-term relationships entered into without formalities. Jenista notes however that, “Banaue Ifugaos in particular insisted on performing the appropriate sacrifices and *baki* (often a one-step process combining engagement and marriage rituals) after the results of Daniel Cappleman’s relationship with Lingayu became known.” It appears that Lt. Cappleman’s failure to provide means of support for their son when Cappleman was transferred away was seen as “an act of abandonment... condemnable by Ifugao standards.” Fearing that this would become a pattern, “thereafter relatives of women in the Banaue area were careful to have marriages formally solemnized, thus committing the father (in Ifugao eyes at least) to providing support if transferred away.” (pp. 212-213)

At the time that I picked out Jenista’s account which, he said, was based on “personal accounts” of “a number of Ifugao women,” I noted, apropos the IFRWH conference theme that:

In a ‘funhouse mirror’ sort of distortion, we see in Jenista’s accounts the negotiation of the rights of Ifugao women as they enter into relations involving men who were the bearers of an alien legal system, where the foreign men adapted to the native custom. These same men, however, were likewise the agents of the ‘violation’ of the native custom of ‘protecting the virginity of their women’—a phrase used by Flattery (1968)—when they engaged Ifugao women in commercial sex or other short-term liaisons (Casambre 1998).

Combining data from several sources—aneccotes, survey results (SWS-CSC 1996), review of ethnographic literature like Barton (1963) and Jenista (1987), I suggested a thesis on negotiating the character of women’s rights in the Cordillera. Our survey results had shown some form of forum-shopping in the redress of grievances where the aggrieved party is a woman; there was a tendency to choose state institutions as venue for rape complaints on one hand, and the choice of customary institutions as venue for adultery and divorce cases. The ethnographic-historical data provide a context for better understanding these survey results. The primacy of the kinship group in Ifugao society means that the attempts to redress grievances involving women as victims of misbehavior do not stem from a recognition of “rights” of the women as individual persons, but rather, from the inviolability of a kinship group. It must be said that the same is true for men; Barton notes that “it cannot be too strongly emphasized that husband and wife are never united into one family. They are merely allies. The ties that bind each to his own family are much stronger than the ties that bind them together” (p. 25).

The case of rape, on the other hand, can be understood in the context of the Ifugao (as well as Bontoc and northern Kankanaey) practice of sex segregation of the youth, in e.g. agamang dormitories. The strict taboo on sexual relations and consequently, marriage among “brothers” and “sisters” (to the third degree of kinship) provides an explanation for the alien

nature of rape in traditional Cordillera society, hence the absence of customary means of addressing it as a violation. In particular, there is no mention of rape of unmarried females; what we find in the ethnographic accounts is that of rape of married females—the term used is “stealing from”—which calls for the ultimate revenge from the woman’s husband.

By way of rounding up this report on preliminary work on Cordillera Women’s History as a potentially larger project, let me summarize what I take to be important markers indicated thus far, as well as issues that require further or continuing attention. First, the project is informed by a concept of “women’s history” as a project. This involves keeping abreast of the discussions and debates on the topic. The now vast amount of literature in and on women’s history in fact articulates diverse parameters. For instance, the objective of women’s history, while generally accepted as the recognition of the role of women in history, is variously articulated. The implications for subject, focus, and method are correspondingly varied. Hence, women’s history projects can range from the simpler though tedious project of combing through previously accomplished ethnographies and histories to recover the presence of women in the ethnographic descriptions and historical narratives, to more self-consciously initiated history projects taking women for their subjects, to extremely self-consciously intersubjective, reflexive projects in which the presence and voice of the researcher/writer of women’s history is inextricable from the recovered presence and/or voice of the women subjects.

Second, oral history and life histories are popular methodologies for women’s history, as ways of recovering women’s presence and voices. Apart from these, however, there are other methodological strategies particularly apt for women’s history. The dearth of public documentation of the lives and activities of women, often leading to the omission of women in mainstream histories, is addressed directly by turning to the artifacts of daily life that are in the possession, or within the domain, of women as “documents” in the construction and writing of women’s histories.

The turn to artifacts of daily life is consistent with the turn to what is relevant, what is salient to women. Women’s history is replete with research on topics such as health knowledges and practices, social relationships, including marriage, sexuality, fashion, work. Writers of alternative histories, such as women’s history, when confronted with the issue of historical periodization would have to be able to respond with a periodization that has been determined by the women’s lives, demonstrated in these unofficial, often private documents or artifacts.

In the Cordillera, some of these alternative periodizations may be investigated in the transitions from subsistence agriculture to cash cropping; the introduction of development programs; the introduction of state law and state judicial institutions; the introduction of new religions. There are many studies on these topics (See for example, R. Rovillos 1997; Deidre McKay 1993; Lynne Milgram 1998; CSC-SWS 1997). Few, however, are consistently historical studies.

Finally, I would like to remark on the question of who is in the best position to write Cordillera women’s histories. Women in the academe, no doubt, have something to contribute toward such a project. In particular, the link of the continuing discussions and debate on the nature of women’s history, conducted among professional academics, is vital to

sustaining a disciplined project. However, it is also the case that the women in the Cordillera, and the women of the Cordillera, are ideally the best recoverers of the presence and the voices of Cordillera women, that is, their own presence and voices. This observation would imply the need for continuing collaboration between academic women and Cordillera women.

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