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Cordillera Historiography

in the last 30 Years

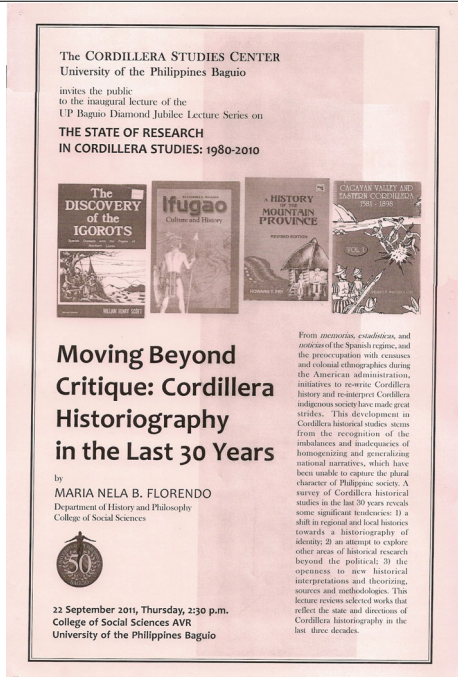
■ By Narcisa Canilao *“Peoples in the Cordillera locate their aspirations in various levels of collectivity”*

Dr. Nela Florendo

CSC Reflects on its Goals at 31

The Cordillera Studies Center launched a tribute to the University's 50th year, the UP Baguio Golden Jubilee Lecture Series on September 12, 2011 with the theme: "The State of Research in Cordillera Studies: 1980-2010." In his opening remarks at the launch, CSC Director, Prof. Delfin Tolentino, Jr. announced that the lecture series

will have two components: a year-long series of lectures on key areas of research conducted under the rubric, Cordillera Studies, and the publication of those lectures in a volume. Experts will lecture on a breakthrough research or the general state of researches under the key areas of: historiography, material culture and oral traditions, local governance and indigenous political institutions, economics and institutions, natural resource management and biodiversity, traditional medicine and health practices, and a final lecture that



will ruminate on what Cordillera studies has been, could have been, and/or might be.

Tolentino set the tone for the lecture series when he remarked that Cordillera studies has clearly been the niche of UP Baguio, from the time of its founding, and yet this field now called Cordillera studies has not so far been interrogated. Finding out if indeed Cordillera studies is a field, what are

its parameters and distinctions as a field, and its contributions to understanding Cordillera communities - were identified by Tolentino as the main aims of the Golden Jubilee commemorative project. Conducted at a time when the UP is configuring itself to become a research university, CSC's initiative to take a critical look at what it is a center of research in, is seen as urgent and timely. The CSC was established in 1980 as a research institute under the College of Social Sciences,

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Biology professor receives 2011 International Publication Award

Dr. Teodora Balangcod of the College of Science here at UP Baguio was granted the 2011 International Publication Award for an article entitled "Ethnomedical Knowledge of Plants and Healthcare Practices among the Kalanguya Tribe in Tinoc, Ifugao, Luzon, Philippines," published in the *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge*, 10 (2): 227-238, April 2011.

The study documents indigenous knowledge and healthcare practices among the Kalanguya in Tinoc, Ifugao and also cites possible threats to ethnomedical traditions. The Kalanguya have a long tradition of using medicinal plants; the paper describes the ethnobotanical importance of 125 plant species as cited by 150 informers ranging between 16-90 years. Common diseases treated by the identified medicinal plants include headache, stomach ache, toothache, cough and colds, and skin diseases; more serious ailments dealt with by these medicinal plants include urinary tract infection, dysentery and chicken pox. Differing modes of preparation are called for in the use of these plants. For instance, immediate treatment for cuts was demonstrated by using crushed leaves of *Eupatorium adenophorum* L. Increased efficacy was noted from mixtures of certain plants.

Most of this ethnobotanical knowledge is owned by the older generation and has not been completely passed on to their migrating youth. These plants have also not been cultivated or domesticated except for some crops and ornamental plants with medicinal value. If left unchecked, deforestation and land conversion will likewise impact on indigenous health management. ■

and was transformed into the university's research center when UP Baguio became the 7th autonomous unit of the UP System.

What has been the state of Cordillera historiography in the last 30 years?

Dr. Ma. Nela Florendo, History professor and former Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, delivered the inaugural lecture, tackling the first key research area - Cordillera historiography. The paper's title "Moving Beyond Critique: Cordillera Historiography in the last 30 years" indicates Florendo's assessment that - 'initiatives to re-write Cordillera history and to re-interpret Cordillera indigenous society' from 1980 to 2010 had 'made significant strides' beyond criticizing Cordillera history as colonial history.

The timely question then is: Have we moved beyond critique? Historiography is 'the end of historical research,' and 'the sum of the historian's perspective, handling of evidence, use of sources, interpretation.'

Against the backdrop of this understanding of historiography, Florendo tried to group history materials written within her period of study, warning however that hers is neither a categorization, much less, a typology. Rather she followed a schema that loosely 'clustered' or 'grouped' works together. Under the **first** cluster are works that look at the history of the Cordillera as a geographical region. Prototypical of such works were the colonial histories that started to delineate the distinctiveness of mountain-dwelling peoples from lowlanders. To her, W.H. Scott's *The Discovery of the Igorots* (1974), is not only the most comprehensive history of the Cordillera during the Spanish period. It has also corrected the myths of a 'pan-Cordillera,' and 'highlander-lowlander dichotomy' constructed by colonial his-

stories. H. T. Fry's *A History of the Mountain Province* (1983) covering the American Period to post World War II, G. Finin's *The Making of the Igorot* (2005), and the Cordillera Schools Group's *Igorot: A People Who Daily Touch the Earth and Sky*, Vol. 2 (1986) notable for its 'insider view',



Dr. Nela Florendo delivers a comprehensive survey of Cordillera historiography

are examples of regional histories from the period of study. Regional historians face many challenges: the daunting breadth of the geography one has to cover, the necessary linking of regional to the national lest the regional history is prone to isolationism, and critical examination of politically motivated 'territorialization' or 'spatialization' of ethno-linguistic groups.

A **second** thematic grouping is seen by Florendo in the histories written for centennials within the three decades of her study, for instance, Baguio City's centennial (2009), preceded or followed by other centennials - of educational landmarks (The Teachers' Camp), and missionary schools (SLU). 100-year histories were mostly written out of that 'historical emotion' called nostalgia. Furthermore they became occasions for 'memory-making', and thus are grouped under the motif, 'Nostalgia, Memory, and History.' About these centennial histories, questions of interest are 'What is distilled about the past?', 'What is highlighted about the past?', and 'Does memory coincide with

history? Other centennials that generated historical memoirs were those of the St Louis Trade Fair (2004) which evoked retellings and recollections fond or otherwise, the Japanese pioneers (2003) and of course the centennials of the Philippine revolution (1996) and the Philippine Independence (1998).

Under the **third** group are the ethnohistories and local histories, which far outnumber other histories. Ethnohistories study contextualized accounts of 'rituals, practices and other characteristics of a people', their causation, and their changes through time, in contrast to ethnographies that tend to give accounts of those datasets in the 'ethnographic present'. Noticeable in the ethnohistories and local histories written in the past three decades, is a reversal of roles

whereby the object known has become a subject knower, in the words of Florendo:

"Appropriating ethnohistory by the former subjects of ethnohistory is a major paradigmatic shift. Significant ethnohistories have been produced by those who belong to their cultures. Coming from an inside view, the assumption is - this is us, this is what we are, this is what we want the world to know about us."

To that end, Florendo believes *A People's History of Benguet* by A. Bagamaspad and Hamada-Pawid (1985) is a 'nodal point in local history and ethnohistorical research in terms of method (that blended archival with oral history - specifically interviews that resulted in the construction of genealogies), perspective and social purpose.' Ethnohistories coalesce around a common social purpose - 'to present a sense of identity for a people and a locality'. Ethnohistories and local histories are confronted with their own challenges of: going beyond representation of cultures,

providing particular causal connections, timelines and contexts, and delineating history from memory. The dissertation of history professor, Dr. Leah Enkiwe-Abayao (“Mayoyao, Ethnohistory and Death Ritual Practices: Continuity and Change 1857-1990,” published in 2009 in the *Journal of History* as “Mayoyao Ethnohistory, 1857 to 1960”), is another exemplary ethnohistory for demonstrating ‘how the history of a people may be captured through death rituals through time.’

Biographies and prosopographies constitute the **fourth** cluster, exemplified by the biographies of three men (Juan Villaverde, Dean Worcester, and E.G. Halsema), and a prosopography of the ‘white apos’ – American governors of Ifugao. Florendo challenged biographers to resist the ‘great man theory’ that ‘individuals make history’, and to write instead life histories of multiply located actors in ‘dialogical relation’ with their social context. Thus, Macli-ing Dulag’s life was interwoven with the community’s struggles to resist the damming of the Chico river, in E. Javar’s masteral thesis. The **fifth** cluster consists of institutional histories. Those written in the past three decades usually follow a standardized format: ‘the beginnings, which trace arrivals, foundations and founders, then the period of building/establishing presence, concluding with a highlight of what the institution has achieved.’

The **sixth** group covers ancient to pre-colonial Cordillera history relying on the combination of history and archaeology. Ethnoarchaeological studies provide probable information on the peopling of the Cordillera, pre-hispanic Igorot identity, indigenous lifeways and belief systems and participation in trade. Under the **seventh** cluster are other types of history, such as the indigenous Cordillera economic histories of the Ibaloi cattle industry (Bienvenido Tapang, Jr.), the vegetable industry (Rowena Reyes-Boquiren), and the reinterpretation of Abra historical texts thru the postmodern lens of dis-

cursive construction, in the Ph.D. dissertation of College of Social Sciences Dean, Dr. Raymundo Rovillos.

A Historiography of Identity?

In concluding her extensive research, Florendo suggested that a point of convergence can be identified in the Cordillera histories of the past three-decades: ‘Cordillera historiography has been and will continue to be a historiography of identity.’ However, identity is not without its own array of issues – it is both empowering and constraining, rather than real and discrete, it is a malleable construction. Most of all it marks off the identified from many other possibilities and opportunities. Florendo hinted at the many elisions that can be committed by identity markers like the replica of an Ibaloi couple at the welcome arch to Kayapa, Nueva Vizcaya, along the newly constructed Aritao highway. What are we to make of this representation? Emotions evoked would vary depending on what one sees as inclusions or exclusions of the marker. But just as identity politics elsewhere call attention to the ethical primacy of recognition of differentially located persons and communities in the world, Florendo is hopeful:

“... through historiographies of identity . . . peoples in the Cordillera locate their ethnicities and aspirations in various levels of collectivity, trace inter and intra-community relations, understand the relations of the Cordillera to other regions and to the Philippine nation-state.”

During the open forum the audience composed of historians, history teachers, development workers, and UP Baguio faculty and friends, asked questions or offered comments. Chancellor Macansantos wanted to know if there could be any historical basis of Cordillera autonomy, and if the language has effect on the history represented. Dean R. Rovillos, asked if there were any epistemological shifts in the move beyond critique. Vicky Tauli Corpuz from Tebtebba Foundation, if there is any standard historians can recommend to save local histories from domi-

nation by the elite or politicians. Dr. Erlinda Castro-Palaganas if there are ways of devolving history-writing skills to grassroots men and women, and NGOs.

CSC Director Tolentino informed the audience that trainings used to be conducted by the UP Baguio history discipline for history teachers, while Florendo responded that this extension work of the discipline can be pursued. Adonis Elumbre, a colleague from the history discipline, inquired if Cordillera historiography is inclined to complement or deviate from national history. Dean Wilfredo Alangu of the College of Science noted that the paper missed out on Dr. Florendo’s own research, and he wanted to know how the author would assess her own contributions to regional history. Analyn Salvador, social anthropology faculty, asked about the feasibility of alternative approaches to Cordillera history to which Florendo responded, there is a whole array of alternative methodologies, such that ‘no documents, no history’ is no longer true. In response to the other questions, she noted the difficulty of different actors in coming to terms about what is truly involved in the autonomy bid; Cordillera history in the local languages would be interesting, though to her language is a non-issue – take her dissertation for instance - Zeus Salazar who was in her dissertation panel wanted it in Filipino, while Cordillerans wanted it in English; the writing of Cordillera history is best when allowed to flourish in many forms – contestations and debates make history vibrant; historians should avoid the trap of looking for the ethnographic present. Histories reflect more and more a pluralist epistemology where many forms and norms of knowing are utilized, and while Florendo would want to believe that her works have followed the same openness, their critical validation is a task for someone else. ■

*Part II TIMEK***Governance and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)**

■ By Alejandro Ciencia Jr.

*Philippine presidents' commitment to mining has run counter to the welfare of indigenous peoples*Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-2010)

In 2002 at the end of his term as presidential adviser, Dee submitted to Pres. Arroyo a report which contained the following statements:

“... the effective implementation of the IPRA law is the litmus test of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration and the President is relying on the newly constituted NCIP to make good her promise of awarding ancestral domain titles to 100 indigenous peoples communities every year for the next three years to complete this process in 2004” (PANLIPI 2005: 25)

It bears noting that Dee's statement had set a closing date for the issuance of ancestral domain titles which was the year 2004. This suggests that Pres. Arroyo's commitment to IP rights was actually more of a concession and a fleeting pursuit – one that would eventually give way to her real priorities.

The OPAIPA was formed to reorganize and revitalize the NCIP and to rationalize the implementation of the IPRA. But like its predecessor, the Arroyo administration provided little financial support for the NCIP. AITPN (2008: 20) reports:

Upon assumption of office, the Macapagal administration too neglected and refused to provide adequate funds to the NCIP to fully implement its programs and projects. NCIP's budget for FY 2002 went through a rigorous budget process before the Congress finally approved it. Although, NCIP proposed P1.03B for FY 2002 to fully implement IPRA but after deliberations in the technical budget review, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) recommended a Budget ceiling of Pesos 390 Million. Later, the NCIP budget for FY 2002 was approved to P 408,846M which was al-



most 60% reduction from the proposed budget.

On November 13, 2003, Pres. Arroyo announced that the policy of her administration “is no longer just mere tolerance but active promotion of sustainable mining” (PGMA, Speech during the 50th Anniversary of the Philippine Mines Safety and Environment Association and the Annual National Mines Safety and Environment Conference, Nov 13, 2003). On January 16, 2004, Pres. Arroyo issued Executive Order 270 which aimed to streamline mining-related applications and procedures and called for the drafting of a Mineral Action Plan (MAP) (“Special Report: Mineral Mining Industry,” *BW*, Jan 22, 2004). Pres. Arroyo's aggressive promotion of mining would lead the NCIP in 2006 to revise the guidelines governing the processing of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) applications, shortening the period for completing the FPIC process from 180 days to 90 days (AITPN 2008: 29)

Arroyo's enthusiasm for the revitalization of the Philippine mining industry would be dampened by the Supreme Court's January 27, 2004 ruling which declared the FTAA provisions of the Mining

Act of 1995 to be unconstitutional. But Arroyo would not be deterred in her desire to promote the mining industry. She instructed her lawyers to file a motion for reconsideration before the Supreme Court. Government and the pro-mining bloc thus prepared for another legal battle at the Supreme Court. She also mobilized every possible department of government to engage in activities that were consistent with her policy of actively promoting mining. Given that the Supreme Court's January 2004 ruling on the constitutional-

ity of the Mining Act was not yet final, the DENR, and other pertinent agencies “carried out their business as if provisions of the Mining Act had not been invalidated in January 2004” (Ciencia 2010:174).


In April 2004, the DENR came out with a final draft of the Mineral Action Plan. Earlier in February 2004, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) announced its commitment to making mining a priority investment area in the country. In mid-2004, the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) issued its Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) which declared support for the revitalization of Philippine mining. The involvement of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) was enlisted as well. Pres. Arroyo instructed the DFA to “encourage foreign governments and businessmen to invest in mining in the Philippines” (Ciencia 2010: 175). As for the NCIP, given Pres. Arroyo's all-out support for mining, the NCIP played a subordinate and mostly acquiescent role in her government.

But in late 2003 and early 2004, Philippine society was gripped by claims about an impending “fiscal crisis” (“RP is suffering from fiscal crisis”, *BW*, Dec 11, 2003; “ADB



SELF-GOVERNMENT UNDER THE IPRA

RA 8371 - INDIGENOUS PEOPLES RIGHTS ACT:
**“An act to recognize, protect and promote
 the rights of Indigenous Cultural
 Communities/ Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/Ips),
 creating a National Commission on
 Indigenous Peoples, establishing
 implementing mechanisms, appropriating
 funds therefor, and for other purposes.”**



warns of fiscal crisis”, *BW*, Jan 27, 2004). In August, Pres. Arroyo would acknowledge that the Philippines was in “fiscal crisis” (“Gov’t in ‘fiscal crisis’ (Sets cuts in local governments’ share)”, *BW*, Aug 24, 2004). Quite interestingly, the fiscal crisis of 2004 would become the pro-mining bloc’s rallying point for the revitalization of Philippine mining. Some pro-mining advocates actually called on the Supreme Court to reverse its original Mining Act ruling in light of the crisis. In December 2004, the Philippine Supreme Court reversed its original Mining Act ruling and upheld the constitutionality of the FTAA provisions of the Mining Act. It is debatable whether it was the “fiscal crisis” of 2004 which explains the Court’s reversal. In any case, the events of 2004 lend some support to the finding that Pres. Arroyo was strongly committed to the promotion of mining.

The Arroyo presidency also saw the transfer of the NCIP to the Department of Agriculture (DAR) on September 27, 2004, and the DENR on May 23, 2008. Executive Order No. 364, as amended, justified the move to the DAR on the basis of the need “to consolidate in (the DAR) all concerns regarding asset reform which cover, among others, ancestral domain reform” (EO 11 2010). It appears that the transfer was also

motivated by the desire to make the registration procedures for ancestral lands and ancestral domains consistent, if not compliant, with those of the Land Registration Authority (LRA) which is under the DAR. Executive Order No. 726, on the other hand, stipulated that the transfer to the DENR was based on the need to “help preserve the cultural and natural heritage of ICCs/IPs” (EO 11 2010). As in the previous case, the transfer to the DENR appears to have been prompted by Pres. Arroyo’s desire to make NCIP policies consistent with the pro-mining policy of her administration.

On August 1, 2008, Executive Order No. 746 provided for the temporary transfer of the NCIP to the Office of the President for a period of six (6) months due to “developments in the local and international socio-political landscape at that time which required priority attention from the highest government authorities” (EO 11 2010). It appears that EO 746 was issued in light of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) which was being forged at the time by the Arroyo administration with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). In any case, the NCIP would later revert to the DENR. On November 2008, by virtue of Executive Order No. 11, the NCIP was again transferred to the Of-

fice of the President to “ensure concerted efforts in formulating and implementing policies, programs, and projects geared towards the protection and promotion of the rights and welfare of Indigenous Communities/Indigenous Peoples” (EO 11 2010). This cursory narration of the NCIP’s transfer from one office to another underscores the point that the NCIP is hardly the independent agency described in the IPRA. Past administrations have tended to subordinate the NCIP’s mandate to the priorities of other departments.

The foregoing discussion raises the important point that the NCIP’s ability or inability to successfully implement the IPRA was significantly shaped by a factor that is outside its control – i.e., presidential leadership. Fidel Ramos was at the end of his presidency when the NCIP was created. He did not have the opportunity to leave a lasting imprint on the NCIP apart from signing into law the bill that created it. Joseph Estrada had the opportunity to interact with the NCIP a little longer than Ramos but he did not seem truly committed to the goal of advancing IP rights. He also seemed to lack the appropriate leadership style required for a chief executive. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had a more professional approach to policymaking unlike Estrada and she seemed very committed to her policy positions. But unfortunately for the IP sector, Arroyo was strongly committed to the promotion of Philippine mining. It thus appears that the IP sector in the Philippines has yet to meet a president who will champion the cause of advancing IP rights.

Past evaluations of the NCIP have mostly attributed the NCIP’s poor performance to lack of finances, logistics, qualified personnel, etc. It appears that these are attributable to a deeper reason - lack of presidential commitment to IP concerns. The ambivalence of past administrations to IP issues especially when juxtaposed against the issue mining begs the question why the government has not abandoned altogether its support for IP rights. There are reasons to believe that the availability of international financial assistance for IPs provides the answer but this will have to be discussed elsewhere. ■

Social media for social change

■ By Jimmy Fong

How about using Facebook or the social media to write a new Philippine Constitution? This is one possibility hinted at by Maria Ressa, former CNN Jakarta bureau chief, in a meeting before the Move.Ph Chat Series at UP Baguio in September 28, 2011. In her actual chat session, Ressa presented cases around the world that showed how the social media can be harnessed to effect social change, and not only for self-promotion which is how most people use them now.

Ressa, also former ABS-CBN News and Current Affairs head and now Author-in-residence at the International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at the National University of Singapore, is among the founders of Move.PH, an Internet-based media outfit that is focused on enabling people to tell stories that move them, towards effecting change in society. She works with other Philippine journalists like Glenda Gloria, executive director of Newsbreak, Gemma Mendoza, editor of Newsbreak, and Patricia Evangelista, documentary producer and writer, among others.

The chat series at UP Baguio was organized in coordination with the deans of the College of Social Sciences and the College of Arts and Communication, through the networking efforts of Voltaire Tupaz, a UP Baguio alumnus who is also now working with Move.PH. Because of the relevance of the activity theme to the current environmental concern of UP Baguio, the chat series was also supported and attended by members of the Balili River System Revitalization Coalition.

The first part of the chat series included presentations of actual use of the social media in UP Baguio and in the Cordillera. JP Alipio, UP Baguio alumnus and executive director of the Cordillera Conservation Trust, showed how his group used email and then later on Facebook to gather international support for their forest building efforts in the region. He said it is now possible to give instant updates to all their partners and donors about their projects and activities. CSS Dean Raymundo Rovillos gave the audience an orientation on the ongoing activities of the Balili River

System Rehabilitation Coalition, a broad alliance in Baguio and Benguet that is now busy working on cleaning up the Balili River system as the rallying point for a wider public consciousness and positive action on garbage management. This river movement still needs to engage social media in the process of this ambitious project.

Newsbreak editor Gemma Mendoza identified the areas where the Balili project may use social media. She said the project may use the social media for public information, for monitoring the progress of the project, for research activities, etc.

Before Ressa's presentation, international speech champion and now media personality Patricia Evangelista did a front act storytelling where she showed her way with the audience, wit and views on youth and Philippine society in general. She said she is telling stories not because she is good, which she said she knows she is not, but because of a slim chance that positive change might come about.

Ressa said that there is wisdom in using the social media for social change. She pointed out that there are more people on Facebook than the audience of ABS-CBN. She also said that the combined knowledge of a group of people would be better than Einstein alone. Crowd-sourcing may not be a bad idea in information sharing as a reasonable truth may be arrived at and vetted by the public. (Just imagine how this story could be much, much better if those who attended the chat series contributed to the writing of this report!)

Ressa also said that the public may already be addicted to social media and to the tabloid nature of information from mainstream media. She presented research on dopamine, the substance that causes addiction, which may already be present in people and which, Ressa thinks, is causing the public to want more of Facebook and other media.

The chat series also included a workshop where 50 volunteers from the audience were subdivided into smaller groups. After a briefing from Chay Hofeliña, journalist and professor at the Ateneo de Manila University, each group proceeded to produce, using whatever media technologies were available that afternoon to tell "stories that move them." The short video outputs were then presented at the end of the program.

Marshall McLuhan fellow Glenda Gloria said everyone must be warned that the social media not only contain a wealth of information but that they also constitute a virtual archive. Anything that is posted or uploaded there could then have the potential to be retrieved and used against those who irresponsibly use them. ■



Media forum speakers: (from left) Glenda Gloria, Maria Ressa, Gemma Mendoza and Patricia Evangelista

Part I

Awakening Indigenous Consciousness

■ By Jerry Bangcawayan and Jonardine Briones

The Program for Indigenous Cultures (PIC) has launched a year-long series of seminar-workshops focusing on indigenous peoples studies. The series aims to provide lecture-discussions on indigenous research methodologies, frameworks, and perspectives; share completed or on-going researches centering on indigenous peoples; and provide a cultivating venue for students to be more exposed to IP studies, especially those who are interested in doing IP studies themselves.

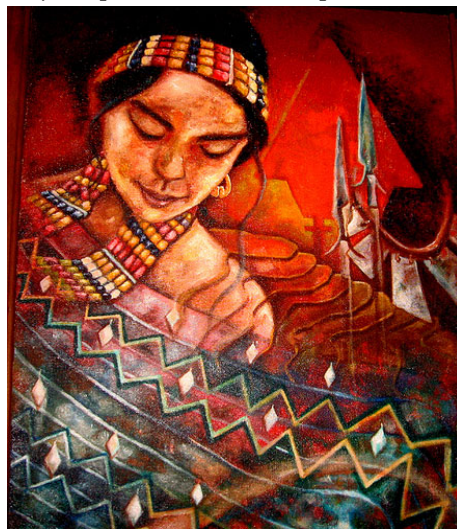
Dr. Narcisa Canilao, chair of the Department of History and Philosophy in the College of Social Sciences, commenced the series of lectures with her talk on “Indigenous Research Methodologies and Frameworks,” held last September 19, 2011 at the PIC office before students of the university, and members of the PIC committee.

In her lecture, Canilao highlighted the relevance of learning, developing, and applying indigenous research methodologies and frameworks. She centered her lecture on one of the hotly-debated issues in academic research, the long-standing dominance of Western theories and methodologies in the academe. In general, “western” would refer to an established intellectual point-of-view embedded in the works of scholars or academics from Europe, particularly from former colonial powers such as Great Britain, France, and Germany. Many of the academic disciplines that are studied at present including Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Philosophy, Economics, Anthropology, and Sociology trace their roots to European scholars. Hence, majority of their theories and methodologies can be considered as derived from germs of thinking that have been propagated in the West.

Additionally, Western theories and methodologies have for a long time been treated as the mainstream or conventional tools of discourse, research, and analysis in the academe. Western thinking, there-

fore, has had a stable base of power in the academe. This now is where Dr. Canilao jumpstarts her call for why we need an indigenized focus in research.

She shared that the overly-universalizing view of Western thinking imbued with such aggrandized concepts of modernity as positivism and empiricism has



Painting by Joey and Dexter Simsim

pushed to the sidelines, let alone obfuscated the stature of other modes of thinking indigenous to other parts of the world.

The rationale here is that the structure, propositions, and aims of non-Western cognitive modalities are deemed as insufficient in contributing to the generation of an objective truth, a non-relative and frontward epistemological direction of knowing, and the achievement of an encompassing state of knowledge system which could apply to any people irrespective of their creed or ethnicity.

Indeed, Canilao’s lecture was specifically pertinent to young students who have been born at a time when the general structure of Philippine society had long been permeated by the ideals of colonial powers. These students readily acquire and process forms of knowledge heavily influenced by Western reasoning. Predicaments on the fragility of national-

A talk on western ideological hegemony as a spur to indigenized research

ism and the never-ending questions on the authenticity of Filipino identity arise from this gridlocked position.

Canilao thus called on the students to engender studies and researches which are rooted in their indigenous identity. She encouraged them to seek forms of knowledge traditionally scorned by Western dogmas for being unsound or unscientific but which are actually representative of their history, their indigenous culture/s, and the bequests of the very people from which they have sprung.

This aim can be understood as a pedagogical redemption for although these studies are seen as unnecessary and irrelevant in Western eyes, these are actually the kind of studies which could spur the strengthening of a more relevant understanding of local and global issues. Indigenous identity that has been hitherto side-swept can be thus awakened and a stable and unambiguous consciousness shielded from Western ideological enslavement is established.

As examples of growing theoretical and methodological trends which are alternatives to Western-dominated research, efforts to revive and re-learn languages which have been annihilated by colonialism have been done in linguistics; history from below and ethnographies from below/community-led ethnographies which give voice to and empower marginalized peoples have been developed in History and Anthropology; indigenous philosophies/metaphysics have been explored in the discipline of Philosophy; and multi/interdisciplinary studies have been conducted in documenting and analyzing Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS).

These academic developments are starting grounds in subduing Western academic imperialism. In the long run, the inaccuracies of a monocentric academic standpoint can be corrected and the contributions of other forms of knowledge recognized. ■

Retirement tribute

Send-Off Party for Prof. Gene Abedania: “The start of 25”

■ By Aris Reginaldo

A send-off party was held for Prof. Hermogenes “Gene” Abedania on October 18 in appreciation of his contribution to the University, after rendering 36 years of fruitful service. The event was attended by Chancellor Priscilla Macansantos, Dr. Wilfredo Alangu, Dean of the College of Science, representatives from the different offices of the University and other personnel. Two of UP Baguio’s retirees, Ben Tapang and Betty Palima, also graced the gathering.

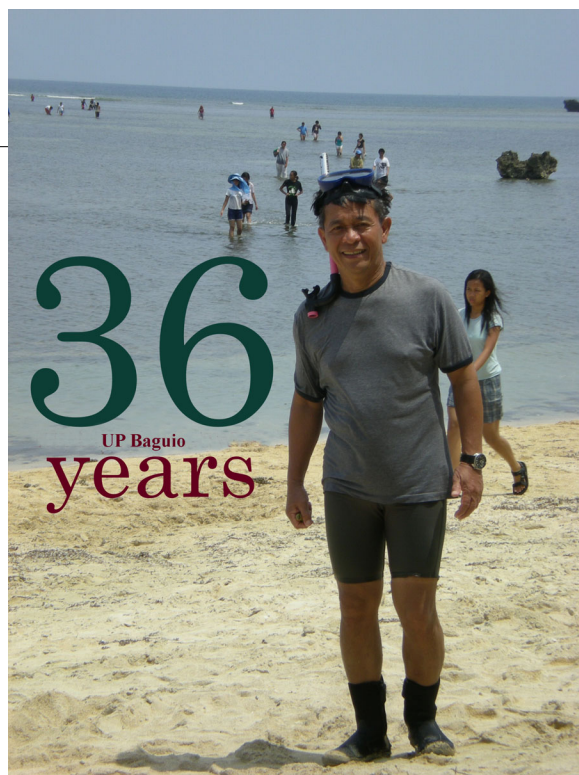
Dean Alangu presented the academic history of Prof. Abedania. Prof. Abedania graduated with an AB Biology from Saint Louis University in 1968. He has an MAT Biology from UP Diliman, obtained in 1973. Among researches undertaken by him are those on algae distribution and the reproductive biology and sexuality of *hydroclathrus clatharus*. He retires as an associate professor in biology. Prof. Abedania’s role as “crush ng bayan” was highlighted. The Chancellor expressed her acknowledgment of Prof. Abedania’s contribution to the life and growth of UP Baguio. She noted: “Prof. Abedania and I were among those who were here when UP Baguio was young, and we grew old with it. We treasure the friendship and the memories.”

Many who attended the event also

shared their personal account of Prof. Abedania – as teacher, colleague, friend, crush and brother. Some friends who were not present also sent their message for Sir Gene. They were Prof. Rosemary Gutierrez, who is on a postdoctoral program at Pennsylvania State University; Prof. Paul Medina, who just finished his term as Balik Scientist at UP Baguio last summer; and Prof. Abel Villafana, another retiree of the University.

“I’d like to be formal,” announced Sir Gene before he started delivering his response. He remained calm throughout and revealed at the end of his talk that he had been nervous because that was the last speech he was to deliver to the UP Baguio community. On the other hand, everybody smiled when he said, “... for me, 65 is the start of 25.” And it was a touching moment when he concluded: “After 36 years of working and living with you, all in the service of youth, our community and our nation, I can say that my life has been made complete and overflowing with joy and gratitude.”

Prof. Gene Abedania entered UP



Baguio in June 1975. He celebrated his 65th birthday last September 30, marking retirement. ■

“There is only one Gene Abedania at UP Baguio. He taught us everything, from biology to love.”

Edeljoy Quinto



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