

Editor's Note

Imperative Thoughts

Nicholas J. Goetzfridt

In this issue of the *Pacific Asia Inquiry*, Anne Perez Hattori and David Atienza deal with colonial missions from two distinctive time periods. But imperative thoughts, reinforced by the hegemonic years of their own making, lead us also to important ideas about history as it is remembered or not remembered. Atienza calls our attention to the perusal nature of Pacific-wide histories when it comes to Guam and the Mariana Islands, using I.C. Campbell's fleeting four sentences on the colonization of the Marianas by the Spanish, beginning with Jesuit missionaries in 1668 against which resistance was sparked "almost immediately." Within a single sentence, the resistance is "subdued" and the "survivors" (leaving out the profound impact of foreign viruses on the depopulation of the Chamorro people) are all moved to Guam in 1695 and become "a peonized peasantry, working under the centuries-long somnolence of Spanish colonial rule." (Campbell, 1989, p. 130). Apart from a few light water touches in the rest of the text, that's what Guam was. Somnolence – essentially sleepiness – is relegated to the idea of these "survivors" – not inconsequential to the far greater attention given to societies in the "South Pacific" such as Fiji, Tonga, and New Zealand. This sleepiness abides however in the overall metaphysical nature of historical interpretations that rely too much upon our own geographical and social limitations – limitations that are perhaps inescapable but made more understandable by the actions of those that this history attempts to describe.

In Deryck Scarr's *The History of the Pacific Islands: Kingdoms of the Reefs* published in 1990 – only 24 years ago – a slightly larger, textual allowance is given to Guam when the author briefly recalls the atrocities Japanese soldiers committed against Chamorros ("as they liked to call themselves" – on the next page he refers to a "Chomorro [sic] past") just before the "21 July 1949" [sic] American landing on Guam, albeit an experience blended in with an equally economical discussion of Saipan's experience of the American assault (Scarr, 1990, pp. 283-284). The examples of Campbell and Scarr (and there are others) are not meant to diminish the value of their texts but to point out how the metaphysical shadow of thoughts in the evolution and nature of ideas plays out in our distinctive social and geographic environments and in the multifaceted influences of associated hegemonies – a phenomenon that can be far more pronounced and instructive when historians such as Hattori and Atienza bring us to their doorsteps. The wide historical swaths that they offer us – one of a both real and conceptualized Spanish colonial era and one of an American colonial era that much can be held to its present day endurance – are offered in historical frameworks that are rich and in one sense definitive in nature and conducive to tendencies of interpretation in our own time while at the same time vaulting beyond time to offer us essences of human and communal truisms that colonialism around the world has commonly exposed.

The Spanish and the American periods that these historians address have the common theme of colonialism buttressed by colonial need and by the assumptive nature of authority that histories within the nationalistic souls of each colonial power ultimately embodied over processes that justified not merely their actions but their thinking in its entirety. Hattori details the consummated belief by American naval administrators that through a series of edicts such as those restricting land use, the Chamorro language (according to one naval governor, speaking

English would improve the Chamorro “mental condition” and, as would be the steady trajectory of colonial intent, provide the navy with clerical support), religious celebrations, and education (before it destroyed the incentive to “follow agricultural pursuits”), Chamorros would one day achieve the heights of assimilation toward which they allegedly aspired. The “moral position” of Chamorros would also be improved as would their patriotism toward America and of course their Americanization. Yet practically every governor in the long parade of American officers who oversaw the administration of the island bemoaned the faltering progress Chamorros made in learning English. There are references in the *US Navy Report on Guam, 1899-1950* that Hattori draws upon which target not only the goal of assimilation and its deep attachment to social advancement but even a tenacious obsession with “hygiene” – consequences of imperative thoughts so organic to the colonial mind of the time. Petitions for self-determination and self-government nevertheless continued to emanate from Chamorro political leaders to naval governors and the U.S. Congress where they were inevitably ignored while, as Hattori notes, American practices and activities such as baseball and carnivals were simultaneously assimilated into Chamorro society but organized and developed under standing cultural parameters of the Chamorro people.

The needs of the Spanish administrators on Guam also drew upon their Chamorro subjects. (Reid’s 1941 study of naval educational efforts refers to a “Chamorro stock” – akin perhaps in the hegemonic commerce of imperative thoughts to Scarr’s unanswered alternative to Chamorro “as they liked to call themselves.”) Efforts to persuade Chamorros to increase agricultural production for the sake of the colony was indicative of the assumptive and the grounded world of imperative thoughts to which those of power centered themselves. Atienza however examines the integrative nature of this power in terms of the active role Chamorros nevertheless played in the development of and every day functioning in the Mariana Islands within the nexus of Spanish rule – in fact within the core of colonial organization through the almost semanticizing incorporation of indigenous leadership, clan structures and political systems in and upon ongoing, negotiated contexts of settlement under the Spanish *reducciones* policy.

Buschmann et al. (2014) in fact use an interesting harvest of connotative words for colonial domination, adherence, assimilation, and Chamorro continuities, beginning with the somewhat puzzling word “bewilderment” among the surviving Chamorros to encompass demographic change in the “third period” of the 18th century. “Bewilderment,” however, also encompasses Catholic epistemologies behind the Inquisition and Catholic Reformation which clearly impacted substantial fibers of the imperative thoughts of Spanish authorities. This “bewilderment” and demographic change are linked with the destructiveness of European diseases but not at the narrative cost privileged by “the Chamorro Wars.” The subjugation of the Chamorros by the Spanish is relegated to a “thirty-year interval” – 1668-1698 - characterized by the “violence” of “the Chamorro Wars.” Significant rebellion however didn’t commence immediately as “1668” would indicate and which in fact canonically marks the moment (forget the idea of a year’s length) of Father Diego Luís de San Vitores’ arrival on Guam. Blaz (1998) places the exact date in which significant rebellion commenced as July 23, 1670 when the Spaniards killed the *chamorri* Cha’fa’e. Apart from the “violence and overwhelming force [with which] the Spanish subdued the islanders,” Buschmann et al. also discuss a new “synthesis” upon the “road” of “fundamental changes” once the violence had ceased, using the historical concepts of “change and continuity,” “cultural negotiation,” “adaptation,” and “compromises” –

not to mention the evidence of “familial continuities” lighted by the historical evidence of Chamorro and Spanish naming practices of the 18th century.

Names can “ensoul” people (Buschmann et al., 2014, p. 111). This authoritative act of naming colonial subjects began at least with Father Felipe Maria Muscati’s 1727 list of 195 Inalåhan parish Catholics that included names such as Eugene Mangrove Crab, Gregory Lazy, and Mary Ask Question. The authoritative colonial practice of naming children with familial names did not exist in 1727 but appeared by 1758 and embodies rich contextual intrigue for understanding not only social and cultural dynamics but most importantly, an at least subtle challenge to imperative thoughts. Slipping out of this restless harvest of words denoting Chamorro challenge and adjustment to colonial authority – even in the fibrous acts and histories of “assimilation” – is the startling - but perhaps not at its moment of time all that remarkable - 1774 congregational name of Angela Matapan – matching the name of the man who killed Father San Vitores in 1672, Matå’pang (Diaz 2010, pp. 202-3). Then there are the Chamorro origin names of congregation leaders such as Taytingam and Ahya. At face value, Congregational lists on paper may not exude evidences of conquest, assimilation, or even of present-day concepts of social “poaching,” but they are nevertheless items of remarkable historical power in terms of how much closer we might one day come to the indigenous and colonial contestations of these times – an issue that all papers in this Volume 5 concerned with the Mariana Islands touch upon in one way or another.

In contrast to these asymmetrical lines of life that are often drawn in summarizations of the Spanish past in the Mariana Islands, Atienza’s work emphasizes that despite power’s asymmetrical nature – and perhaps in many respects we could say the delusional, imperative thoughts that that power’s fertile guidance cultivates – colonial encounters and struggles were both “dynamic and complex.” While the demand for agricultural production had in fact as its simple core the survival of human life in the Marianas, some governors attempted to encourage such production by increasing available agricultural land and others, such as Governor Mariano Tobías, used his own gardening efforts as examples (Carano & Sanchez, 1964, p.106). Required pledges toward Spanish authorities left a multifaceted pattern of exploitation of the Chamorro people, albeit with a somewhat less discernable supposition of yearly influences in these patterns than was the case with the American record toward which all naval governors seem to have uniformly and essentially without distinction, conspired. Hattori’s depiction of the U.S. naval government’s concern with keeping the majority of Chamorro men locked into “agricultural pursuits” so as not to become members of an educated, “unemployed scholarly group,” marks a more calculating, cynical strategy to control Chamorro destiny while “devotion to duty . . . [was] being imbued into the hearts and minds of the Chamorro people” (as cited in Hattori, p. 22).

Under these hegemonic-ally nurtured thoughts of the colonialist, more materialistic bound concerns are also colored by the pasts through which they have been derived. Carlos Madrid’s unique and important study offers reasoned conjectures on the location of the Spanish era *Vigía* lookout points on Guam used for spotting the all-important Spanish galleons or the unpredictable appearances of enemy ships. Madrid emphasizes the importance of historical and textual contexts to both date and apply the probable significance of each point that enabled Chamorro sentinels to peer out at the endless sea for these vessels. Chamorros were mistreated in the *Vigía* system as well. This abuse was highlighted by government’s demand for fresh farm produce as well as for tributes but for which, in light of the extreme depopulation during and after the *Reduccion*, Chamorros could substitute their labor for financial payments. Manning these *Vigía* points was part of this arrangement for which Chamorro sentinels apparently

received nothing but a pair of pants or a shirt as a prize for the person fortunate enough to first spot a galleon. Chamorro sentinels on these high points used bonfires to signal the capital Agaña or, later, Umatac to which the governor and his officers had moved to better access the arriving galleons.

Using a combination of Spanish records, Guam's toponymy, its geographic distinctions (and even contemporary derivatives from Google Earth) along with the very helpful illustrations accompanying his narrative, Madrid effectively places *Vigía* along Guam's coastline. Even in the naming of these lookout points, governors relied frequently upon the "logic of the time" (Madrid, p. 60) in honor of their superiors, some or many of whom had never even been to the Marianas. Madrid attempts to also conjecture the practical importance assigned to individual *Vigía*. The fact that only one apparent *Vigía* remnant has so far been located on Guam speaks to the skill and tenaciousness with which Madrid has given us a different, more concentrated portrait of a specific institution and practice in the Spanish colonial era throughout the island's coastline.

Tricia Lizama's and Tabitha Espina Velasco's contributions deal with issues of contemporary identities still impacted by histories layered in their multifaceted effects. They convey the unproductiveness of looking upon "identity" as a dualistic issue – one or the other – obtain or lose – do or don't – through which one might decide upon their simplistic cultural and social consequences. It behooves historians to instead resist their geographical, time, and metaphysical parameters to find the nuances of fate and action wherever and however they manifest themselves (Goetzfridt 2013). A simplistic reading of Lizama's paper, for example, might reduce the dilemma to a simple problem of finding Chamorros willing to become *yo'ámte siha* coupled with the idea of traditional healing as being a quaint, even exotic skill minimally accessed in light of contemporary medical technology. This could be like saying that the ongoing interest – indeed a renaissance – in traditional navigation in the Pacific is a quaint undertaking, given the availability of jet airplanes.

As even Epeli Hau'ofa once joked, many Pacific islanders might get sea sick the minute they stepped into a canoe. He emphasized however the irrelevancy of that possible truism given that the ocean is in the blood of every Pacific Islander (islanders cannot avoid the fact that "we remain very much under the spell of the sea") and as such, the idea of navigation – as it is indeed linked to the reality of the past – has as much relevance to identity and thus the substance of Pacific life now as it did in the depths of history. Not only does the ocean offer the basis for a regional Oceania identity, it constitutes history itself (Hau'ofa 404). The fact that *Kantan Chamorita* song challenges are no longer heard emanating from the open doors of Chamorro homes at night (Flores 2001) hardly has a negating impact on the positive reception given to a paper on the subject. And while this may seem like a stretch – the possibility of an "intergenerational transmission of historic community trauma in Chamorro society" (Pier 1998) may strike some as the antithesis to a reasonable acceptance of the present – the idea and the associated feelings nevertheless embody the essences of history to impact the present days and the lives that live and perceive them. And so "identity" as well as the recovery of a traditional practice is not limited to the simplistic notions that we are tempted to apply to them in the present but plainly represent all the complexities that the unavoidable marriage of past and present entails.

The imperative, the essential thoughts in the era of the colonialist are by no means bound to the past of course. Apart from touching upon the fragmented pejorative term "flip" as a term it had been used – at least as I remember it used perhaps two decades ago – toward Filipinos on Guam, Velasco pushes apart this fragment to reach a greater allusion to soul and identity

contextualized and grown on the basis of a struggle for such. But even more crucial for the context of the past and, if we could derive some positive but alas, essential thoughts from the canonical historiography of Guam and, by extension, the Mariana Islands, it would be the deafening absence, an extreme paucity of concern, that has so far historically limited Filipinos on Guam to “alien workers, catechists, convicts, soldiers, and migrants” (Velasco, p. 81).

The final two papers – Spennemann’s survey of Louis Becke’s negative portrayals of Germans as a fictional articulation of the “wider political transformations” occurring in the “South Pacific” and Nishino’s tracing of Japanese travel writer Kanetaka Kaoru’s impressions of indigenous female beauty supporting concepts of beauty held by her Japanese audience –center these imperative thoughts on the individual and upon the geographic and cultural milieus within which they are engaged. Spennemann’s depiction of Becke’s background in trading ventures and associations help readers better appreciate the “straightforward and down to earth” (p. 113) nature of Becke’s stories – stories that paint a “time where island life conjured up a romantic imagery of palms and dusky maidens, where traders were colorful individuals, and where a man could still become ‘somebody’, regardless of social status at home” (p. 107). It also represented the waning moments of an “independent” Pacific before “colonial control had become all encompassing.” One could however argue that this had already long since transpired in the Marianas, particularly in the colonial dimensions that Atienza details as does Hattori as she lays down a colonial road devoid of distinction. Spennemann focuses not so much upon the unfolding of colonial shadows of control – although it is certainly there – but upon Becke’s own background, the entrepreneurial clashes between the Germans, British, and others, Becke’s related anti-German stories that, as Spenneman describes them, were “literary contortions of true events, displaced in space and time” (p. 123), and indeed the palpable milieu of the time. Spenneman leaves us with a clear appreciation for Becke’s expression of his own imperative thoughts imbued from the world upon which his impressions were derived and anchored. This leaves us also with a broader sense of the social, political, and timely camaraderie that, despite all his personal struggles, Becke could ultimately depend upon.

Noting that Kanetaka’s travel writing for the popular Japanese program *Sekai no tabi* (“The world around us”), “appears lacking in ‘inner travel’ of self-reflection and meditation” (Nishino, p. 131), Nishino is acknowledging a not so unusual clash between the commercially bound enterprise of satisfying the surface, mass consciousness of an audience and the inevitable means by which one is bound, initially or forever, by one’s background and history. He refers to Jolly’s observation of a Polynesian-Melanesian spectrum upon which are placed the lightness and darkness of culture, being, and encounter with Polynesian women (usually) couched in enticing physical features that not only justify the weakness of moon-lit romanticism but which also historically “beckon[ed] the Western male conquest of Polynesia” (Nishino, p. 131). (See, for example, Nishino’s section on “A Typical Tahitian Woman” and Kanetaka’s efforts to feed the TV “tourists’ “Imaginary geography” of the “proverbial Pacific Islands.”) In Fiji, Kanetaka experienced perhaps the closest thing to self-reflection on native beauty (and on more universal values of humanity sans assumed authorities) than she apparently had ever experienced before in the South Pacific. Melanesia’s dark challenge to the Western or to the Eastern self in Kanetaka’s case and to one’s conditioned response to the darkness of Melanesian skin is likened not only to “darkness, danger, evil and cannibalism” but to an un-civilized denaturant of life that that self could understand and reject. Nishino notes the role of “salvage ethnography” in this travelogue narrative that seeks to witness “the islanders before colonialism and modernity destroy the timeless and the traditional” (Nishino, p. 133). Kanetaka’s efforts to convey the consumable

simplicity of native life for her Japanese audience constituted a natural conspiracy of sorts which also perpetuated the means and justification for the canonicalization of this reality in ways that are strikingly similar to the overwhelming consent of simplicity and its defense that we see today through the social consumption of “information” on the Internet. Kanetaka expresses, for example, an admiration for an “indigenous wisdom of simplicity” in appearances as embodied by the use of coconut oil as the single ‘cosmetic’ for Fijian women – this praise most probably coming as a “surprise” to her audience in its challenge to a “prejudice in Japan against people of darker hue that is said to date back to the Heian-era aristocrats” (Nishino, p. 133).

Kanetaka eventually begins to at least see the door into her own “inner travel” in relation to this authoritative-less humanity, beginning with an experience into the ethics of temperance displayed by Fijian women at a nightclub in stunning contrast to an abusive, intoxicated white woman – something that Nishino takes to be Kanetaka’s growing awareness of the role of personal character that has little bearing upon the imagination of dusky appearances. Kanetaka’s visions of Pacific feminine beauty take a further beating in Papua New Guinea although its results remain ambiguous. Kanetaka however begins to contemplate more consistently on the question of “what it is to be human” in the ongoing parade of disassociations with “the Other” as she stumbles along in villages. While wandering around one village in a *kimono* in the sweltering heat, she mentally demeans and characterizes the indigenous individuals she encounters as uncivilized, beginning with disappointment bordering on astonishment when an old woman fails to respond to the kimono clad Kanetaka who tells her that the bowl she is using is from Japan. Kanetaka’s presence is supposed to underline the joint superiority of the bowl and herself that have civilized and superior origins as opposed to that which, on a “linear historical queue of progress,” (Nishino, p. 137) is uncivilized. Even identifying the Japanese as the old woman’s former enemy failed to elicit a response from her. She later encounters a “monster” in the form of an extensively tattooed older woman, challenging Kanetaka’s fledgling progress toward recognizing the place of personal demeanor in native beauty. Her ingrained sense of “the trope of civilization” rescues her imperative thoughts and allows her the reassurance of the superiority of this “civilization” that she represents. There are other native encounters that continue to speak volumes (as does this same speaking occur in all papers of Volume 5) of the un-strippable but still the assimilative or at least self-questioning nature of imperial assumptions and the impact of history and its consequences for all present moments in time.

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