



Figure 1. The other representation of a village community in Naic, Cavite.
 [Source: Zayas 2010]

BÍNASËT, PALLYËN, MARIIT, TEMPAT:
PLACE-BASED NOTIONS OF CONSERVATION
AND RESOURCE RIGHTS

Cynthia Neri Zayas

There is more in the world beyond ‘what one can see’. ‘Others’ need to be acknowledged. The terms binasët, palyën, mariit, and tempat – which belong to the Casiguran Agta or Dumagat, to the Pinatubo Ayta, to the Bisayan peoples, and to the Sama D’laut – refer to spaces that signify prohibition, sacredness, and danger.

Keywords: Binasët, palyën, mariit, tempat, sacred spaces, indigenous places

Introduction: Indigenous places and their inhabitants

“A territory is a social and cultural space as much as it is a resource or subsistence space.”

- B. Nietchmann, *Traditional Sea Territories, Resources and Rights...*, (1988)

The town of Naic, in Cavite, is located along the Southern portion of Manila Bay 30 minutes away from the city of Manila. There is an Export Processing Zone that was established more than three decades ago in the northwestern portion of the town. The area is highly populated and dotted with factories and business establishments. Despite the semblance of “modernity” however, people who are natives of the place still perceive their surroundings to include other dwellers of the town— various creatures that inhabit particular areas, from the sea to the mountain. My companion for example, a native of the place and who incidentally was taking up a degree in Landscape Architecture, could point out twelve such beings (Fig.1).

Such creatures exist not only in Naic. In my childhood in Jasaan, Misamis Oriental, I grew up hearing stories about other creatures inhabiting the landscape from my parents and grandparents. Generically these beings were called “*tag-lugar*”, a Bisayan word that signifies the original ‘beings of the place’. Some of them are malevolent, so we avoid traversing their territories at certain hours of the day and even certain days in a week. Our parents taught us to utter particular words in a whisper – “*Tabi tabi apo.*” [‘Old dwellers of this place, please let us pass’] – and to always ask permission in this manner when taking unfamiliar pathways, entering a forest, or even throwing water out of the window.

Later, as a university student, I found out that an epic singer always ‘asks permission’ before she begins when I was sent to the field to record among the Bukidnon of Southern Philippines by the late ethnomusicologist Dr. Jose Maceda. I learned that performance of the epic “*Ulaging-on*” entailed that *pamara* should be sung first. Inay Miyangga explained that *pamara* is an invocation for permission to sing the epic, as the spirits may be affected by its performance, and the singer and her listeners may become objects of revenge by malevolent spirits (Zayas 1976).

Securing consent from the *apo* or *anito* (spirits and ancestors), has been our way of acknowledging that other beings are among us. Of course this is not unique to the Philippines; it is a common feature of Asian cultures, including Japan. Like peoples of these countries, we acknowledge the original inhabitants of the places we now occupy. This paper is an effort to put together or express another visual and imaginative construction of the modern world. In a nutshell, what I wish to convey is that: *There is more in the world beyond what one can see.* ‘Others’ need to be acknowledged and heard. Humans co-habit with “*dili ingon nato*”, the ‘not like us’ beings who must be taken seriously and treated properly, for they, too, have feelings.

In the current age, we, native islanders, should have expanded notions of the environment which we inhabit. Without taking into consideration the existence of ‘other’ environmental spirits, spirits of our ancestors, etc., we are unable to plan for a sustainable inclusive progress. Through an ‘indigenous map’, I also want to show how state-dictated cartographic representation of spaces can be interpreted locally and more appropriately reflective of local people’s understanding of their own environment.

Intervention for “development”, often critiqued by anthropologists as founded on a Western ethnocentric idea of a ‘better life’, is an outsider’s worldview which is not necessarily supported by the desires of the natives. As

a review of past UGAT conferences observes (Roldan 2015)¹, we see this in how external policies disrespect local traditions in managing fisheries, or how *kaingeros* [‘slash-and-burn’ swidden farmers] were unfairly blamed for deforestation without a holistic understanding of other environmental stresses, to name some of the issues explored.

We have argued that external development strategies comprise palliative measures, and the total disregard for local knowledge. Thus, these strategies alienate the given population. Two decades after the adoption of “Sustainable Development” as the watchword for national and local development among countries worldwide, sustainability continues to be a challenging goal at both local and regional scales of planning and decision-making. Conventional models of progress pioneered by developed countries have turned out to be unsustainable due to their high dependence on non-renewable resources, adverse environmental impacts, and the inequitable distribution of benefits and negative impacts of development (Martinez et al. 2015).

Resource management in Asia and the Pacific is one case in point. Because the region is populated by native peoples or indigenous populations, traditional law may address issues over spaces in both the land and the sea. Local practice relating to common property resources is key in the understanding of the *commons*. In times of crisis, local agency and group resilience restores the sense of community, provides the required endurance to survive disasters and the fortitude to rebuild one’s life. The adaptive character of indigenous peoples’ lifestyles, in the landscapes they inhabit through time-tested technologies and local knowledge is the essence of ‘sustainable development’.

The problem of resources arose when the “developed world” realized that the fast-growing population of the underdeveloped countries had become a threat to them. Foreign intervention into the Third World spaces considered as “last frontiers” for their resources like raw materials and minerals comprised intensified foreign plunder and a form of contemporary colonialism. The Malthusian justification was also used so that the same population would become a source of cheap labor. For instance, as early as the 1920s, Filipino farmers were exported to plantations in Hawaii and California. Through the

¹ The scope of the review included programs and abstracts of these UGAT conferences: “*Kalikasan in Flux: Indigenous People’s Creativity in a Changing Natural Environment*,” [2010 in Manila]; “*The (Re)Making of Cities and Their Consequences*,” [2009 in Cagayan de Oro]; “*The Anthropology of Crisis*” [2005 in Miag-ao, Iloilo]; “*Anthropology of Disaster*” [1995 in Nueva Ecija]; and “*Sustainability of Development: the Anthropological Perspective*” [1993 in Cebu].

'50s and the '60s, the thought of legislating conservation of resources as a justification for the plunder of those very same resources was in vogue among corporate developers and advocates alike.

Back then anthropologists and other social scientists were not active in the study of coastal communities. Literature on sea and land tenurial systems in this region were limited. Little was known about traditional land tenure, much less the sea tenurial arrangements among indigenous peoples of Asia and the Pacific. Despite the few papers on artisanal fisheries, scholars, (mostly anthropologists), began to realize the importance of indigenous maritime tenurial system towards the 1980s (Tawa 1996:81). Of late, many native scholars tackling resource management have begun to speak about local practices which most often have been set aside in favor of Western marine science biases.

A classic example is the idea of delineating a part of the sea as a 'Maritime Protected Area' (MPA), with very limited consultation with stakeholders and village elders. It should be remembered that Asia and the Pacific is inhabited by numerous indigenous peoples whose ancestors have lived in the islands for thousands of years. The accumulated knowledge of the environment and its management of indigenous groups cannot be taken for granted, but instead must be the basis for any policy about the management of natural resources that deals with the notion of the commons. The problem arises when the commons is legally defined based on colonial laws of Spain and the USA. Ignoring centuries-old notions of ancestral domain of indigenous peoples will result in conflicts of interpretation of resources and their management.

The indigenous peoples (IPs) in the Philippines are those who have continuously inhabited the same territory for hundreds of years. They have tenurial systems, traditional use rights, and customary laws governing resource use and dispute settlement. In the Northern Philippines among the IPs of the Cordilleras, rights to land are based on the notion of *primus occupans*, i.e. the first to occupy the land through clearing and use (Prill-Brett:1993).

In the 16th century, there were clearly rules governing the use of land and the sea. Juan de Plasencia, O.S.F. observed that the *dato* or leader, may command people to row his boat or to plant for him. He also provides land for people's habitation and subsistence. There are lands held in common for use by anyone, including those from neighboring villages:

“when the dato went upon the water those whom he summoned rowed for him. If he built a house, they helped him, and had to be

fed for it. The same was true when the whole barangay went to clear up his lands for tillage. The lands which they inhabited were divided among the whole barangay, especially the irrigated portion, and thus each one knew his own. No one belonging to another barangay would cultivate them unless after purchase or inheritance. The lands on the *tingues*, or mountain-ridges, are not divided, but owned in common by the barangay. Consequently, at the time of the rice harvest, any individual of any particular barangay, although he may have come from some other village, if he commences to clear land may sow it, and no one can compel him to abandon it.” (Plasencia [1589]1903:165-166)

The village chief also had control over certain demarcated areas within his territory, such as the market place and the fishing areas, with dues clearly delineated for the utilization of the said spaces:

“The chiefs in some villages had also fisheries, with established limits, and sections of the rivers for markets. At these no one could fish, or trade in the markets, without paying for the privilege, unless he belonged to the chief's barangay or village.” (Plasencia ([1589]1903):166)

However, under Spanish colonialism from 1521-1898, customary law, local protocols, and use rights gave way to land grants awarded to Spanish settlers. The favored few – religious orders, and others who served the Crown – were given *encomienda* or estates in which tribute was exacted from peasants. Eventually the peasant response was expressed in revolts. The period of peasant emancipation was brief as American colonizers took over Spanish control. From early 1889 to 1945 under the idea of public domain, all public lands underwent government control including the vast tracts of friar lands. In the name of social justice, the new Philippine Republic included the notion of ‘public domain’ in its constitution. Public domain included all “uncultivated” forests and meadows, and bodies of waters. This however stepped on indigenous peoples’ territories, specially when hundreds of hectares of land were granted by government to plantations, mines, and ranches operated by private individuals and or corporations. The 1987 Constitution however gave a sort of reprieve by recognizing the right of the indigenous people to their ancestral domains and to practice their culture, which also led to the passage of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 in which it is stated that

- b) The State shall protect the rights of ICCs/IPs to their ancestral domains to ensure their economic, social and cultural well-being and shall recognize the applicability of customary laws governing property rights or relations in determining the ownership and extent of ancestral domain;
- c) The State shall recognize, respect and protect the rights of ICCs/IPs to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions and institutions. It shall consider these rights in the formulation of national laws and policies (*R.A. 8371* 1997:Sec.2)

Despite these promulgations, there are still problems of understanding culturally appropriate resource use. The IPs or indigenous peoples are currently victims of land grabbing and are also experiencing denial of access to their traditional fishing grounds or territorial waters as a result of the neoliberal policies of the government. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have been enacted to enable legal access to the remaining territories located in the ancestral domains of the IPs.

Indigenous peoples have a sophisticated dynamic utilization of the environment that clearly demonstrates holistic ecological approaches as they engage climate change and natural disasters. With the uniqueness of their ecosystem and their independence from the lowland population, they have had a long history of coping with the natural and cultural impacts of disasters. This includes as well coping with the arrival of in-migrants and invaders like the Spaniards, Americans and Japanese.

I would like to demonstrate simple examples on how native notions of spaces are reckoned. I shall illustrate this in the next section with examples of traditional resource management practices in the Philippines that are still in use. These need to be considered in planning for establishing “common sanctuary”, i.e. for everyone and not only for a specific group of people, using notions of the commons as named spaces which are governed through prohibitions. It is my hope that these three examples, which are currently practiced in four different communities, will illustrate various ways the environment is protected and embodied still in the cultures of the native peoples of the Philippine Archipelago.

Prohibited, sacred and dangerous places

The terms *binasët*, *palyën*, and *mariit*, as well as *tempat*, refer to spaces that signify prohibition, sacredness, and danger. These native ideas come from the

indigenous Agta, the Ayta [Aeta], from Bisayan peoples, and from the sea-oriented Sama D'laut, of the Philippine archipelago. I shall use these native ideas from the Philippines in order to illustrate how erudite native people's knowledge is with regard to managing environment. These too are heuristic devices to explain resource conservation and utilization.

From these cases can be gleaned at least 3 points: (1) despite prohibition of non-kin or neighbors to use and enter the designated areas, one can have permission to do so provided that the catch or plant resources obtained are shared with the people who have rights to the place; (2) there is no excuse for disrespect of the prohibition on the forest or 'marked spaces', outsiders are indeed persecuted for transgression into the space; and (3) local fishers definitely are in the know of the 'dangerous places'.

The Agta of Casiguran Quezon who recognize *binasët*, and the Ayta of the eastern slopes of Mt. Pinatubo of Pampanga who have the forest *palyën*, are said to be the aborigines of the Philippines in classical theory of the peopling of the Philippines. The mobile Bisaya fishers that give birth to the *mariit* or 'dangerous places' are likewise native peoples of the coasts. The Sama D'laut make their home in the southernmost waters of the Philippines and likewise tend toward a mobile lifestyle. All these groups practice small-scale subsistence activities: slash and burn agriculture, hunting and gathering, as well as artisanal fisheries.

Binasët. The Agta Casiguran are an ethnolinguistic group who once lived in the foothills of the Sierra madre mountain range and roamed the forests in the north-eastern region of the Philippines. One of their homelands is Casiguran located in the province of Aurora (Fig. 2). Thomas Headland has mentioned that they numbered about 800 in the 1960s but by the 1980s, only 600 remained. From foragers and hunters in the '60s, the Agta Casiguran are now landless peasants (Headland 2003). This situation resulted from the destruction wrought by lowland loggers and miners.

According to interviews conducted by my colleagues,² the Agta in Dimagipo, at the San Ildefonso peninsula, used to live further inland near the forest where they cultivated their crops. The said place was once a densely forested area, which the Agta 'improved' by replanting some trees and cultivating clearings to vegetables, creating seasonal camps close to the

²Andre Ortega and Kristian Saguin, from the Department of Geography, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. Please see the acknowledgements at the end of this article.

cleared areas. However, the Agta were pushed down to the sea by migrants who claimed lands even up to the riverside³.

In 2014 in Barangay Cozo there were 30 families in Sitio Dimagipo and 53 families in Sitio Dipuntian. These families undertake fishing and swidden farming as well as gathering orchids, and honey hunting for a living. Fishing was done by hand line and spear fishing. From their narratives, we learned that in the '60's their food was hunted wild pig and root crops that they gathered. They now cultivate root crops, bananas, coconuts and cassava and undertake swidden farming during rainy season. They catch fish from both the river and the Pacific Ocean. They now co-exist with in-migrants – Tagalogs, Bicolanos and Visayans – also intermarrying with them.

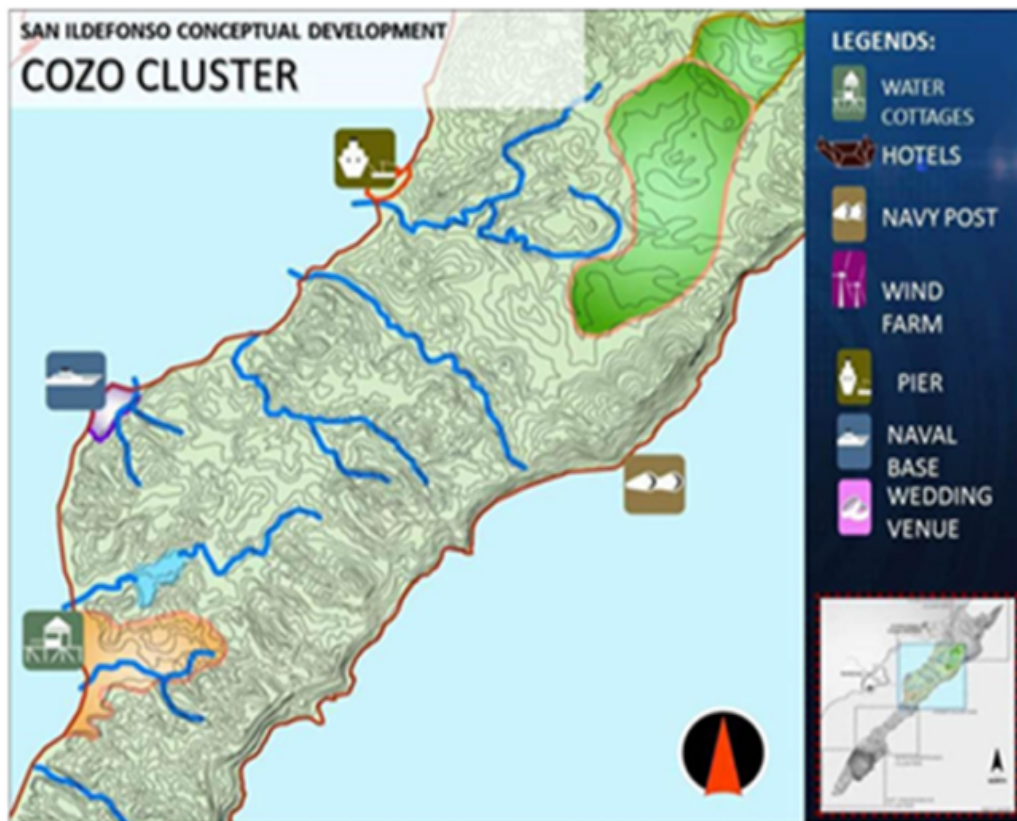


Figure 2. The Agta homeland located in the Province of Aurora.

³It was said that the Agta are also referred to as “Dumagat” as they have been pushed towards the coast. [Another hypothesized etymology for the term is “du Magat” meaning ‘originating from settlements along Magat River’ in an early Austronesian expansion (Reid 2013:335).]



Figure 4a, 4b, and 4c.
 The Aurora Pacific
 Ecozone and Free Port
 Authority (APECO).
 [Source: Ortega & Saguin
 2014]



Marking a map with the *bínasët* ‘prohibited zones’ is an act of articulating indigenous spaces into a cartographic space. *Kawakawa* (Fig.3), which literally means ‘cauldron’ is said to be a *bínasët*. *Kawakawa* according to our research is a hunting ground for the people of Dipuntian. Outsiders can enter the place with conditions. If an outsider asks permission to hunt in this area, *panable* is practiced. This means that an outsider’s hunt should be shared with the stewards of the reserve. In the case of two hamlets (Dipuntian and Casapsapan) which both share use of *Kawakawa*, the hunters from the latter give a token share for the food of the seven households of Dipuntian, this is called “*mag-papaulam*”.

There are many kinds of *bínasët*. The famous healer Boboy Bangkol was buried in a place called Cadel. It is a *bínasët*. The Bungkal River is also a *bínasët*. Here Dada Olivia is buried. A burial ground, hunting ground, or some space used to regenerate nature are reasons that define the area of *bínasët*. Only relatives can visit the place, otherwise one may be harmed by cold air entering the body, causing immediate illness to the rule-breaker.

The land of the Agta or Dumagat in Casiguran, Aurora has now been claimed and designated as a Special Economic Zone, in this case the APECO or the Aurora Pacific Ecozone and Freeport Authority. As planned by APECO, San Ildefonso Peninsula is to be surrounded by water cottages, hotels, naval base, wind farm, pier, wedding venue structures (Fig.4a,b,c). When indigenous spaces were articulated in cartographic sketches by geographers, they discovered that the Dumagat and other people were completely unaware of the APECO land use plans. Only as a result of being shown the maps did the Agta learn of the locations of proposed APECO projects in their very own land and waters (Ortega & Saguin 2014).

Palyën. The best-known Negrito peoples of the Philippines are the Pinatubo dwellers. Among the indigenous peoples of the Philippines their knowledge of the forest has been excellently documented by Robert Fox (1952) in his classic work on the useful plants of Mt. Pinatubo. The Ayta are very much attached to their forest environment which provides them with food, shelter, serves as their pharmacy, and is source of spiritual well-being under the care of the Supreme Being Apo Namalyari (Ragragio et al. 2013). I have argued that the Ayta spirit of survival amid disasters is rooted in their deep intimacy with the land, enduring kinship ties, and knowledge of the environment (Zayas 2016).

In 1991, the Ayta were displaced by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. Previously their lowland contact had been limited to obtaining salt and sugar,

but with the Pinatubo eruption, their traditional lifeways have come under stress. For many years they have lived in different evacuation centers until finally being “permanently” resettled in some public land. While this was going on, everyday life was constrained— forbidden to return to their homeland, they were unable to undertake *kaingin*, river fishing, or forest hunting. Crammed in hot settlements with very little mobility, children and old people suffered measles, dysentery, and illnesses such as dengue, malaria, fever and colds. Some even suffered nervous breakdown, melancholia and psychological disorder. Despite the food rations there was rampant malnutrition in the refugee camps since Ayta prefer to eat their own food over canned goods and grains. Many years later, nature renewed itself and they were able to return to their former daily life.

Among the Ayta of Pinatubo there is a mental construct called “*palyän*”. Certain places could be tagged as *palyän*, meaning a space where flora and fauna are not to be gathered or hunted. One will suffer retribution, “*dilawän*” or sickness for such violation. As an example, our informants narrated how while they were hiking back to their hamlet from their hillside *kaingin* [swidden], they spotted a wild rooster under a tree. They felt tempted to catch it. But fear of turning *dilawän* [literally ‘turning yellow’] stopped them from doing so. In this case, the space beneath the tree where the rooster was spotted has turned *palyän*.

Since the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, which devastated the forest cover and its flora and fauna by its pyroclastic flows, the resources of the Ayta have severely diminished. Many animals can no longer be found in the forest. But when rarely seen fauna suddenly appear, the Ayta hesitate to hunt them for they believe that the animal must belong to a *palyän*.

In these few examples, *palyän* is demonstrably ‘an identified space that is sacred, relatively forbidden, distinct, cherished/precious’, ‘one that is cherished more than the others’. [“*itinatangi ng higit sa iba*” in Tagalog] (Raymundo 2014). Disrespect to *palyän* could have disastrous consequences (*dilawän*). Those who are not of the place, like mining prospectors, loggers, hunters, are forewarned.

Kinship, knowledge of their environment, and belief systems intersect in the Ayta notion of *palyän* as ‘sanctuary, forbidden space, sacred region’. Sarah Raymundo observes that

“the Aetas of Central Luzon have been using relational concepts of the ‘sacred’ (*palyän*) and ‘disastrous consequence’ (*dilawen*)

to manage their resources after the Mt. Pinatubo eruption of 1991, and to make sustainable livelihoods vis a vis the struggle for ancestral domain. The Aetas' folk belief are self-evident conceptual tools that have historically been put to use to manage their resources. (Raymundo [forthcoming])

JC Gaillard (2012) states that Ayta resilience is based on their communal perspective. Hiromu Shimizu (1989) has commented on the flexibility, and durability of the Aeta social system, and that their resilience comes from their intimacy with the land, their enduring kinship ties, and their vast knowledge of environment.

In 2012 we [my research team] surveyed a hill called Tibungbung to delineate family ownership for a reforestation project the Ayta themselves were engaging in (Fig.5.). I also made a longitudinal study of the Ayta's of Central Luzon and their attachment to a place, a connection that is strengthened by their deep knowledge of every nook and cranny of the mountain, including everything that grows in it, and most of all, the very relations that bind the community together as manifested by their kinship ties, both ceremonial and blood (Zayas 2013).



Figure. 5. Places surrounding Tibungbung Hill, a palyën space according to the Ayta of Barangay Kamias. [Photographed by Norman King, with annotation by Cynthia Neri Zayas]

From a folk knowledge perspective, numerous families access the hill with an area of about 20 hectares which is actually owned by only two clans. The names of these two clans have symbolic meanings. The clan name Abuque comes from the word *abukay* meaning ‘civet,’ an important fauna in the forest for it is one of those responsible for scattering seeds. The civet cat is also a sensitive creature as it cannot be domesticated nor live outside of the forest. For the Ayta it is the most delicious animal protein found in the forest. The other clan is named Saplala, which means ‘to offer’; the term describes a human hand stretching to the sky in a gesture of offering. These clans are reminders that the Ayta will never leave the forest. The civet or *abukay* can only survive in the forest and will never leave it. Saplala reminds the Ayta that when they harvest from the land, they should not forget to thank Apo Namalyari, the creator of all things (Zayas 2016).

Mariit. The island communities of central Philippines are located within the expanse of the Visayan Sea which ranks third in the Philippines for resource productivity. The navigable space between the Visayan islands makes it possible for fishers to shift fishing grounds seasonally based on the monsoon winds. In this central region of the Philippines one can find the largest number of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in the country, including the first successfully community-managed marine reserve (Flores 1994). As communities are now slowly reclaiming their ancestral fishing grounds in the formalization of the MPAs, the demarcated areas have become contested spaces between fishers who seasonally shift fishing grounds and the communities legally sanctioned by national policies to conserve the marine resources in these areas.

From the outside, development workers perceived the possibility of creating models for community-based fishery resource management. However, unknowingly they have ignored local ideas of prohibition in fishing spots, mangrove sites where fish spawn, and other places. The opposition from local fishers stems from existing ways of circumventing prohibitions or ‘closed seasons’. Fishers who are not residents may make use of village resources through proxies— “*abay nga mau mudawat*” (‘one who accepts catch on another’s behalf’), which defeats the purpose of fish sanctuaries to prevent outsiders from utilizing local resources (Zayas 2014:87). If only the MPA could be patterned after the idea of “*mariit*”, top-down prohibitions would not be so harsh and restrictive of the fishers.

I will now introduce the concept of *mariit*, a game changer for the fishers. In the Visayan sea, any space that is believed to be inhabited by spirits is *mariit*

or 'dangerous'. Visayan fishers understand that spirits dwell both in the land and sea. However, those from the sea are far more malevolent [*"kun mariit sa lupa mas pa gid sa tubig"*] (Magos 1994:334). Among the Dalaguit fishers of Panay, *mariit* places are associated with deep waters.

An annual communal ritual called *sambayang* is undertaken to ensure safety and good catch for fishers. The fishing areas in the estuary, inshore, offshore, all the way into the deep, are inhabited by "*lawudnon*," whose literal meaning is 'deep sea spirits'. There are also mischievous sea spirits whose appearance is half man-half fish. As one goes into deeper water, *mariit* spaces become more dangerous (Fig.6.). Magos notes that *mariit* is 'stronger' on land than in the sea. However, the strength of *mariit* is greater in deeper waters where diving is undertaken. For those who live in cantilever coasts [where there is a sudden drop in sea floor], the area is 'highly *mariit*' thus needing a *maaram* to undertake rites. The *maaram* [shaman or ritualist] is often called upon whenever 'proper conduct' at sea is violated, such as by catching prohibited species, shouting or making noise, throwing bloody things, and other behaviors. This is because malevolent spirits can bring havoc or pestilence to the community. Those who sometimes become disobedient of prohibitions because of their greed, staying too long in the bottom of the sea to gather more mother-of-pearl risk experiencing hallucinations and suffering the 'bends'. The victims of *mariit* transgression require intervention of the *maaram* to heal them. Appeasement requires the performance of rites and food offering through the *maaram*. As for outsiders, they might remain unaware that they have fallen victim to the unseen beings in the sea or on the shore.

Mariit space oftentimes are liminal, ambivalent spaces. Fishers might consider them to be spirit-inhabited, that is why it is forbidden on certain seasons or times. But what is actually happening under the water, in some mangrove areas, is spawning time for marine dwellers. In some cases, the marine life is feeding on plankton. Thus, this particular area should not be disturbed, so that the natural cycle of nature may be completed unhindered. If only 'resource management' (RM) people could listen to 'folk or local knowledge' laced in the language of *mariit*, we can enlarge our understanding of observed phenomena. What RMs need to do is to interpret the meaning of *mariit*, case by case.

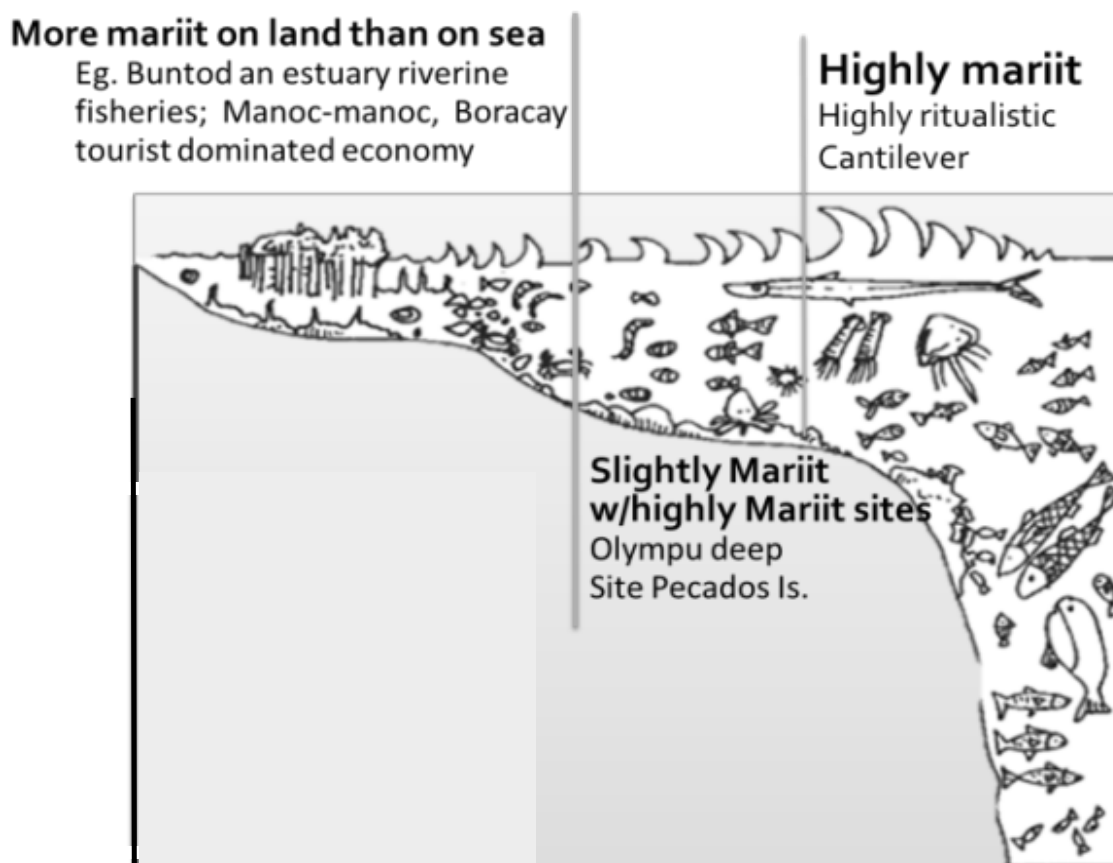


Figure 6. Transect showing mariit spaces.

[Using modified transect by Cynthia Cruz Paz & Suyen Rodriguez from Ferrer et al. 1994:41).]

Tempat. As an offshoot of our previous studies in the Visayas, my research partner Hamka Malabong and I mapped out “*tempat*” or sacred spaces in the waters of Sitangkai in Tawi-tawi. With the help of the shaman we were able to pinpoint certain spots (often shoals), which are actually productive fishing spots (Zayas 2018a, 2018b). Local people do not build houses on stilts nearby nor make the area a moorage of extended house boats.

If we translate this to local development planners, definitely the areas identified as *tempat*, often contiguous with each other, cannot be planted with seaweeds for it will hamper the natural flow of current and pollute the place with fertilizers, thus killing marine life that dwells underneath. This is one example of how local knowledge may concretely inform ‘resource management’ efforts.

Final thoughts

When the hidden plan of APECO, an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) created by a government act in Congress, was finally unmasked to the Agta/Dumagat (Ortega & Saguin 2014) we learned how state maps and plans embody different aims and notions of development from the lived spaces defined by the indigenous people and their uses for the land. The state map represented by the APECO Master Plan was very different from the conceptual map of the indigenous people of Casiguran. The indigenous peoples' practice of reckoning spaces varies from place to place, and government notion of MPAs or of 'legal' land use are not in tune with the land uses of the indigenous population.

Showing indigenous lived spaces is a way to resist the power of abstracted space of the state cartographies. There is a need to consider that IP places that are named are also places that are used. Although stakeholders are unable to control the utilization of the space, the knowledge related to its access is held in the body of learning passed on from one resource user to another such that control can be achievable (Tawa 1996). In the final summation, the *magic* of sustenance is found in the long tradition of practice by the aboriginal residents and 'correct engagement' with the 'others' [the *tag-lugar*] or the original inhabitants of a place. An outsider could not possibly negotiate such relations unless they learn the rules of engagement.

The notions of *binasët*, *palyën*, *mariit*, and *tempat* inform us about certain places being considered dangerous, sacred, prohibited. These spaces are inhabited by plants and animals often deemed to be in a magical state. They are in the forest, caves, stones, huge trees, along the shore, or under the sea—dangerous places especially for trespassers; even those who do not know or respect the rules will be punished. These are meant to be places where life is reproduced without human intervention; sanctuaries for plants and animals in the balance of nature formula. We never believe in this knowledge possessed by the Agta, Ayta, the Bisaya, and the Sama D-laut, we cannot imagine it, so we continue to desecrate these places with our own ideas of what is good for us.

Acknowledgements

This paper is an expanded version of the paper presented during the 2014 Pacific History Association Conference in Taitung, Taiwan, entitled "Binaset, palyen and mariit: endangered Philippine indigenous peoples"

ideas of conserving resources. I would like to thank Prof. Paul D'Arcy for organizing our panel.

Special thanks to my colleague Prof. Sarah Jane Raymundo for her insightful and critical comments for this paper. We have undertaken collective research in Pinatubo in 2012.

For research on *Binasët* I would like to acknowledge Professors Andre Ortega and Kristian Saguin, my colleagues from the Department of Geography, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of the Philippines. From May 29-31, 2014, they, with the help of Enteng Bautista, a member of the NGO Kalikasan working with the Agta of Casiguran, Aurora, conducted interviews and documented specific places that are important to the Agta of San Ildefonso Peninsula, through narratives, photos, and GPS coordinates. Without their initial input, I would not have been able to conceptualize the forest management of the Dumagat of San Ildefonso. Subsequently, with their permission, I validated some of their data in December of the same year. Our fieldwork was made possible through a collaborative project entitled "Unrest" which ran from June 2013 to December 2014 with Ms. Paloma Polo. I would like to state however that should there be any misinterpretation of the data the fault is mine alone.

References

- Ferrer, Elmer M., Lenore Polotan-dela Cruz, Suzanna R. Rodriguez, Aaron I. Jayme, and Marissa D. Moron. (1994). *Tagaporo: The Island Dwellers | Coastal Resource Profile of Barangay Dewey, Bolinao, Pangasinan*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines, College of Social Work and Community Development Participator Action Research for Community-Based Coastal Resources Management (PAR C-B CRM) Project. Available at: <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/46518/132992.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- Flores, Efren. (1994). Community-based coastal fishery management in the Philippines: a review of small island coral reef fishery management. In Iwao Ushijima and C. N. Zayas (eds.), *The Fishers of the Visayas [Visayas Maritime Anthropological Studies I, 1991-93]*. CSSP Publications Office and the University of the Philippines, pp.357-370.
- Fox, R. B. (1952). The Pinatubo Negritos: Their useful plants and material culture. *The Philippine Journal of Science* 81:173-414.

- Gaillard, J.D. (2012). People's response to disasters: vulnerability, capacities and resilience in Philippine context. Pampanga: Center for Kapampangan Studies
- Headland, Thomas. (2003). Thirty endangered languages in the Philippines. *Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session, vol. 47*. Available at: http://https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248078736_Thirty_endangered_languages_in_the_Philippines.
- Magos, Alicia. (1994). The concept of mariit in Panaynon worldview. In Iwao Ushijima and C. N. Zayas (eds.), *The Fishers of the Visayas [Visayas Maritime Anthropological Studies I, 1991-93]*. Quezon City: CSSP Publications Office and the University of the Philippines Press.
- Martinez, Ma. Simeona, C. N. Zayas, and A. Torres. (2015). The Philippine Social Sciences Engaged: Responding to the challenges of the Sustainability Agenda. *Social Science Information* 43:4-17.
- Nietchmann, B. (1989). Traditional Sea Territories, Resources and Rights in Torres Straits. In J. Cordell (ed.), *A Sea of Small Boats*. Cambridge: Cultural Survival Inc.
- Ortega, Andre and Christian Saguin. (2014). Counter-mapping abstract state space –lived spaces of the Agta of Casiguran. [Power point Presentation presented to Casiguran Community].
- Plasencia, Juan de, O.S.F. ([1589]1903). Customs of the Tagalogs (Two Relations by Juan de Plasencia, O.S.F.). In Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson (eds.), *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898, Vol VII*. Manila: Cacho Hermanos. Also available at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/13701/13701-h/13701-h.htm#d0e1500>
- Prill-Brett, June. (1993). Sustainable Strategies in Natural Resource Management in the Cordillera Highlands. Paper presented at the 3rd National Social Science Congress, "Empowerment and Accountability for Sustainable Development: Towards Theory-Building in the Social Sciences". Philippine Social Science Center, Diliman Quezon City.
- R.A.8371. (1997). Republic Act 8371, "Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997". Available at: <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1997/10/29/republic-act-no-8371/>.
- Ragragio, Ma. E. M., C. N. Zayas, & J. Obico. (2013). Useful Plants of Selected Ayta Communities from Porac, Pampanga, Twenty Years after

- the Eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. *Philippine Journal of Science*, 142:161-189.
- Raymundo, Sarah. (forthcoming). Making space for indigenous knowledge, sustainabilities, and futures. In Ligia Lopez and Gioconda Coello (eds.), *Taking place: Indigenous perspectives on futures and learnings*. New York: Routledge.
- Raymundo, Sarah. (2014). Science in Folk: folk beliefs as science of resource management and disaster risk reduction among the Aetas of Central Luzon, Philippines. Paper presented in the X Asia Pacific Research Universities Conference, held at the University of Chile in Santiago, Chile, November 2014.
- Reid, Laurence A. (2013). Who Are the Philippine Negritos? Evidence from Language. *Human Biology*, 85(1-3):329-358
- Roldan, Suzanna. R. (2015). "Philippine Anthropology's Developments and Trends". Report submitted to Uganayang Pang-Aghamtao, Inc (UGAT/Anthropological Society of the Philippines), July 15, 2015. [Unpublished MS].
- Tawa, Masataka. (1996). Reef tenure of Western Province in Papua New Guinea. *Senri Ethnological Studies*, 42:81-87.
- Zayas, C. N. (1976). An Ethnomusicological Survey, Bukidnon. [Unpublished MS].
- Zayas, C.N. (2010). "Can we all be part of the picture?" Paper presented at the Setouchi International Symposium – Inujima Working Session, Kagawa Prefecture, Japan. August 7, 2010.
- Zayas, C.N. (2013). "The Demography of Disasters: Implications for future Policy on Development and Resilience", Paper presented at Australia National University, Canberra, Australia, September 17-22, 2013.
- Zayas, C.N. (2014). *Abay nga mau mudawat*. Customary arrangement between local and sojourning fishers in the Visayas, Central Philippines. In C.N. Zayas, M. Kawada and L. dela Pena (eds.), *Visayas and Beyond: Continuing Studies on Subsistence and Beliefs in the Islands*. Diliman: Center for International Studies Publications, University of the Philippines.
- Zayas, C. N. (2016). Land is Life and Life is Land: Development, Resilience, Family and Knowledge for the Ayta of Mt. Pinatubo. In Helen James and Douglas Patton (eds.), *The Consequences of Disasters:*

Demographic, Planning, and Policy Implementations. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C Thomas.

Zayas, C. N. (2018a). Lessons from Sama D'laut cultural practices of conserving tempat, marine sacred natural sites in Sitangkai, Philippines. Paper presented during the 14th International Conference on "Asia Pacific Cultural Values: Cultures, History and Pride", December 20-21, 2018. Angkor Century Hotel, Siem Reap City, Cambodia.

Zayas, C. N. (2018b). Sama D'laut Reef World and Its Sacred Spots, Tempat, as Sites of Resources Management. Paper presented for the panel: "Experiences on Coastal Resources Management". During the 40th UGAT Annual Conference, Palawan State University, Puerto Princesa, 8-10 November, 2018.

***Cynthia Neri Zayas** completed her PhD at Tsukuba University in Japan. She is a retired Full Professor of the Center for International Studies, University of the Philippines where she continues to lecture on global issues, Japan Studies and Southeast Asian Studies. As the current Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Philippine Social Science Council, she is promoting the study of the indigenous peoples. Her most recent research in maritime studies centers on the women divers of Japan and Korea, known as ama and haenyo respectively.*

Email: cnzayas@yahoo.com