

## Editor's Note

Isa Kelley Bowman

Women, gender, children, and the family in Asia and the Pacific: such was the vision of this special 2015 issue of *Pacific Asia Inquiry*. Our contributors address our special topic in a variety of ways and methodologies, including the literary studies of Paulette Coulter and Kimberly Jew, the anthropological approach of Rebecca Stephenson and Nora Chiang in their joint article, the sociological studies of Amanda Christie, Verna Zafra, and Gena Rojas, the international peace studies of Ronni Alexander, the cultural philosophy and ethnomathematics of James Sellmann and Nicholas Goetzfridt, the public health studies of John Moss, Crissy Kawamoto, Pallav Pokhrel, Yvette Paulino, and Thaddeus Herzog, and the anti-trafficking social-work efforts of Holly Rustick and Lindsey Posmanick-Cooper.

Mary Spencer, dean emerita of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and myself served as editorial mentor and editor for this special issue. For both of us, it is a subject close to our hearts. Years ago, Dr. Spencer edited a groundbreaking edition of the *Micronesian Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* on women. We sought with this issue to continue her work.

*Pacific Asia Inquiry* is a journal rooted in Pasifika and adjacent Asia, the premier scholarly journal of Micronesia, and our vision has always been to provide a platform for the pan-Pacific voice. As Pilar Lujan said, “We must Chamorricize education.”

Our contributors also employed a variety of methodologies — close literary readings, surveys, and traditional instruments — as well as materialist approaches, evoking Paul Amar’s “odor of the sewer” and “disease of the prostitute,” and decolonizing approaches, in the vein of Linda Tuhiwai Smith. Their work is political, human, and fraught with redolence and contamination. The needs, concerns, and lack demonstrated in the near-exclusive emphasis on employment and disease prevention in federal funding for Oasis Empowerment Center, the Bureau of Women’s Affairs, and Prutehi Hao, along with other social programs and organizations, form a crucial component. We cannot discuss women, gender, children, and the family in isolation from the social, political, and cultural context of *I Unibetsedât Guåhan*, our academic home. Our vision encompasses, as in Rustick and Posmanick-Cooper’s work, or Christie’s, the material conditions of human life, not simply the oral interview or written text. These approaches deliberately foreground the intersectional, transdisciplinary, and ethnographic.

Haole, hapa haole, mestiza, ‘afakasi, manuhiri: Haunani-Kay Trask, Lani Ka’ahumanu, Gloria Anzaldúa, Grace Teuila Evelyn Taylor, and Keri Hulme, among others, have discussed so personally and, unavoidably, politically, the patterns of belonging, difference, conditionality, and positionality that influence our social interactions and agency. Yet these are also terms and identities, for the pan-Pacific voice, that become enmeshed in a network of social relations, ethnic melting pots, and an Americanized diaspora. Our varied contributors represent the movement of academia toward a recognition of and a grappling with that complex, historically situated present.

Who is the individual, who the community? What does it mean to become or belong in a diasporic, colonized, Americanized Micronesia and greater Pacific where people flow from Asia and America into and through the indigenous worlds peopled by the descendants of the great Malayo-Austronesia navigators and seafarers who themselves flowed millennia ago from Asia to these island nations? What sovereignty, what self-determination is possible? As Vivian Dames usefully suggests, is our discourse too “Westernized” to represent a Pacific indigenous possibility for connection, mutuality, and care?

Micronesia is still so rich with ancient indigenous traditions flowering into the present. As I write this, we look ahead to the Festival of the Pacific Arts in the summer of 2016 which will bring delegates from island nations across the Pacific to Guam for a watershed celebration of Chamorro culture within the Pacific context. We look back to eminences grises of Pacific studies on Guam, such as Laura Torres Souder, author of the foundational *Daughters of the Island*, and Anne Perez Hattori, of *Colonial Dis-Ease*, along with champions of revitalizing investments in Chamorro culture and traditions, such as Anghet Santos of *Nasion Chamoru* or Hope Alvarez Cristobal of *Fuetsan Famalao'an*. Studies of indigeneity, class, queerness, motherhood, masculinity, and militarization continue to flourish in recent decades and today with the work of vital new voices: Vince Diaz, Christine Taitano DeLisle, Leiana S.A. Naholowa'a, Jon Guerrero, James Perez Viernes, Miget Lujan Bevacqua, Tiara R. Na'puti, Keith Camacho, and more.

Academia is never in isolation. This is true on Guam as well. The greatest work is done in full sociopolitical awareness of whose voice is privileged, whose agency, who speaks, moving beyond the bourgeoisie, the capitalist, the venal, the homophobic, the racist, and the criminal. We move toward the standpoint theory of Patricia Hill Collins or Kimberle Williams Crenshaw of African-American studies *gi Sanlâgu* (in the States): experiential, subjective; solidarity in the "global South."

We must look at what is disturbing, not only that which can be packaged neatly into the extant Procrustean. Most useful to me are studies such as that of Diane Thurber, Andrea Hartig, and Helen Thompson that look critically *within*, from the standpoint of Collins's "outsider within." This is the sort of academic activism that can speak to breastfeeding rights of students in class at the University of Guam (thanks to revolutionary Guam public law, the Nâna yan Pâtgon Act), the plague of sexual harassment at institutions of higher education across the West, the provision of daycare, and questions of parental leave. The politics of life in a region colonized, bombarded, polluted with Agent Orange and other toxins, and terrorized by the United States military over the course of generations must also be topics accorded the respect of academic freedom — and of academic attention.

It is no longer Margaret Mead but Dan Taulapapa McMullin who writes the book on Samoa. Samoan, and fa'afafine, McMullin's poetry, criticism, and art now must be at the forefront of our understanding of indigenous Samoan culture.

The new scholarship on the Pacific is materialist, socially conscious, collaborative, and intersectional. It is ethnically inclusive, particularly of communities targeted by xenophobia and colorism. It avows and privileges in its approach and methodology, not simply its language, but the matrilineal-avuncular heritage of these Chamorro islands, of indigenous genders and sexualities not necessarily in line with a Catholic Eurocentric patriarchy. It not only recognizes but emphasizes the inherited intergenerational trauma of war and colonization, as LisaLinda Natividad and Patricia L.G. Taimanglo', among others, have discussed. It is ethnographic and materialist.

We work in a world propped up on shaky white-supremacist political scaffolding. The indigenous Pacific subjectivity is hypervisible. An awareness of race as a relatively recent political construct intended and used as a tool of economic oppression, according to the recent statement from the American Anthropological Association, is required. Social justice and an ethical consciousness must undergird the stronger architecture of our studies in Pacific futurity in the *longue duree* or *unai dangkolo'*: in our lived and inherited experience of deep time and deep place.