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Editorial Introduction

The simultaneous denudement of once healthy ecosystems and the chipping away of indigenous cultures are tandem outcomes of European, and today, Asiatic colonization. Sugar cane fields and palm oil trees, as far as the eye can see, are a logical parallel to run-amok and unabating urbanization and to psychological impoverishment. Museums and private homes, all around the world, are replete with pillaged cargo. Stripping away the remaining morsels of “traditional wisdom,” as another process of commercialization, is a final act of thievery. An obvious and necessary question and theme for this issue is to what extent are well-intended ideas bad culture, particularly for indigenous peoples? Levi-Strauss (1992: 20)¹ remarked, “*The first thing we see when we travel around the world is our own filth, thrown into the face of mankind.*”

The analogy to be explored here is one that comes from industrialization’s era of exploitation and ferrying of raw materials, most often on the broken backs of cheap or enslaved labor, to the colonizers’ factories, to then be shipped back to the “natives.” In a similar light, and phrased as a second question: Are “ecopsychological” ventures in the new world akin to foreign-made cotton shirts and woolly blankets, a returning, bastard reification of autochthonous, much more verdant, enigmatic, and original ideas about “self” and “nature”? For example, if totemism once operated, according to Levi-Strauss (1963),² as a bridge between culture and the natural world, what happens when totem animals are killed off to the point of extinction and their psycho-ecologically coherent stories lost or translated by foreign usurpers? To the point: What happens when animal cardboard masks are a substitution for an actual jaguar stalking one’s body-meat? What happens when we badly psychologize the indigenous mind—and our own?

The works selected for this issue address the above questions from different national and cultural perspectives. Their oftentimes unheard voices, expressing disbelief and admonishment, have been left unedited in their maximum original affect potency. Non-native writers proffer valuable insights from both *emic* and *etic* perspectives rooted in western European and autochthonous literature, naturalistic observations and anthropological field work. We are very grateful to all contributors for responding to our invitation to submit their work. A necessary editorial back-and-forth critical process left unpublished, but fully considered, other works that would have been quite appropriate within a different thematic context.

We are especially grateful to Dr. Fikes for contributing the keynote article. His past and present publications highlight the process of due diligence and critical inquiry necessary to evaluate the work of professional peers and correct the impetus to embrace, without questioning, far afield or extant ideas and narratives impossible to prove. To the extent that work in the social sciences can be unduly popularized--become new-age tropes--it is necessary to delve deeply into their “origin” stories with a critical perspective in mind. I am particularly thankful to the co-editors of this volume for their attentiveness and support: C. L. Brunold (US), Pablo D. Jochamowitz (ES), Ezequiel Alvarez Vega (AR), and Cinthia Méndez (VE).

Jorge Conesa-Sevilla, *Editor-in-Chief*, May 1, 2021

¹ Lévi-Strauss, C. (1992). *Tristes Tropiques*. Translated by John and Doreen Weightman. NY: Penguin.

² Lévi-Strauss, C. (1963). *Totemism*. Translated by Rodney Needham. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.