On Paths from Angst to Redemption: Southeast-Asian Root Metaphors and Key Scenarios

*Hermel O. Pama, OP**

Faculty of Philosophy, Ecclesiastical Faculties,
University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines

Somahe kei kehage. [Bahasa Talaud]
Gelombang adalah tantangan kehidupan. [Bahasa Indonesia]
Waves are life's challenges. [Bahasa Inggris]

Abstract: The Javanese philosophy of *Kejawen*, translated loosely as 'worldview' promises, albeit not unproblematically, to be a meaningful paradigm in appropriating Southeast-Asian voices emerging from the shadows of modern forgetting. This is the type of forgetting which Connerton identifies as "constitutive in the formation of a new identity… providing a living space for new projects… not so much a retention of relatedness as rather a creation of relatedness between those who were previously unrelated" (Connerton 2011:36, 37). It needs to be re-appropriated and transmitted not just through the making of institutional memories but from the markings of the region's ancient past. If, as Ingold (2021) proposes, 'knowledge is forged through movements, through paths of life,' I trace these paths to look for answers as to why being alive is being thrown into a *walog* (Cebuano, that which is neither place nor non-place); a being-against specters of nothingness in the constitution of the colonial and postcolonial subjects in anthropological discourse. I question the darkness with which these post-this-life futures have been enshrouded. Were that veil lifted, one would glimpse at *kamurawayan* (Bikol, glory) aflame in indigenous souls; that light they are capable of. This aporia is explained by the context of places I have worked in, which I deem as *excelente zona social* (Taussig 2012): a human 'creation of nothingness' mirrored in projects

*Fr. Hermel O. Pama, O.P. can be contacted at hermelpama.op@ust.edu.ph.

• *PHILIPPINIANA SACRA*, Vol. LIX, No. 179 (May-August 2024) pp. 229-260.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

of industrial modernity, or in the exclusivity of nations or religions that spell out divides and differences; or movements that void the possibility of meaningful publics pursuing deeply-held truths. On paths that point to a deeper ontology, I argue that anthropology's 'ontological turn,' its current impulse, needs to recognize the persons' ethical demand, justifying life and living moments in forms of prayer: voice that transcends speech and, in *Kejawen* parlance, as manifest mercy. Such recognition comes from considering positionality and reflexivity not primarily as cultural relativity nor subjectivity, but as an attestation. It is an agent's exigency of habitus (*anad* [Cebuano, Bikol]) called *humilitas,* regarding (*pakighugoy-hugoy* [Cebuano]) the existence of the other (*tawo* [Cebuano, Bikol]) in exendence (Levinas 1935 in Franck 2000:5); regarding oneself, it becomes serenity and surrender. Pivotal in this explanation are root metaphors, categories conceptualizing the order of the world, understood in Ortner's (1973) sense. I shall treat as root metaphors *d/jalan* or path, *kejawen* or collective memory, and *gotong royong* as joy which I deem to be the cosmological tethering that articulate existential angst and spur movements through life. In tandem to root metaphors, I shall focus on key scenarios, understood as cognitive and affective experiences in relation to culturally-defined categories. These key scenarios are derived from a confluence of Austronesian languages- Bikol, East Miraya and Minangkabau, that bring us to the consideration of *rantau* as pilgrimage; *pagsadios* as gift and sacrifice, where the dialectic of feasting and fasting and the discourse of wellness and healing are rooted; and *langan* and *langnan* as union, surrender, losing and finding, being home.

Keywords: *jalan* (being on the way), *kejawen/pagsadios/kaalamang bayang teolohiya* (religious, indigenous worldview), *communitas* (liminality, marginality, joy)

Introduction

This article addresses the theme "listening to Asia: on faith, reason and dialogue."[1] As one among scholars of Catholic universities and institutions particularly situated in the region, I shall highlight what I perceive as a broad world lumped in the category, "Asia" by looking into a gamut of contextual specificities, through much smaller region, "Southeast Asia." I shall demonstrate that this region alone poses daunting challenges for the work of understanding. Propaedeutic to the discussion of these elements, the flow shall be marked by the usage of ritual parts of the Catholic mass, to frame thoughts on the subject. With this paradigm, I invite you to think through what I propose as three "root metaphors" (Pepper 1942 in Turner 1974:26). Trope, in literature, is a figure of speech. But in Victor Turner's usage, it is deployed in an anthropological analysis of

[1] This was originally delivered as a keynote address during the World Congress Manila of the *Conference Mondiale des Institutions Universitaires* **Catholique** *de Philosophie* (COMIUCAP) with the theme, "Listening to Asia: on Faith, Reason and Dialogue" at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines on November 16, 2022.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

social action. Moreover, "metaphors could forge a political intuition" says Gramsci, (Gramsci 1971, 1992: 252) in his reflection on Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution* (1954). Therefore, root metaphors could construct a vision of this vast region and understand the world from a southeast Asian perspective.

An overview of the vastness of Asia can be approached from at least three interlapping intellectual scenarios in current anthropology. These three discursive overlaps I shall return to and re-articulate in the mode of root metaphors, thereby appearing as iterations spiraling from this initial foray.

First, we are only beginning to disseminate knowledge on the Austronesian question in linguistic, migration, and maritime studies. Following the appearance of the *Melayu*,

> *…these [proto-Austronesian speaking] people were in Taiwan between 4000 and 3000 B.C. E….and migrated outward between 2,500 and 1,500 B.C.E, through the Philippines, the northern half of Borneo, Sulawesi, Central Java and Eastern Indonesia…then out to the Western half of Java and westward to Sumatra, the Malay peninsula and the central part of Vietnam* (Andaya 2001:316).

The concept of 'Asia' is thereby sea-based, and trade relations carried out through this passage linked the *dunia Melayu* (Malay world) to India and China. Moreover, this human feat of colonizing the Pacific that happened thousands of years ago overtakes the distance undertaken by European colonizers during the 16th century, as well as the model, mode, and motive of the movement. Austronesians moved with no prospects of return, and current studies in the archaeology of the Pacific attempt to reconstruct this Austronesian expansion *(Cf. Note A)*.

Secondly, we are struck by the realm and the reach of indigenous psychology, biology, and medicine, even as we are stuck in Western biomedical and psychological models and label the rest as 'folk,' a category which we shall interrogate later. In anthropology, there is a developing thought about an 'ontological turn,' following the 'linguistic turn' of the 1980s, which was in turn a departure from its positivist modern origins. In the last three decades of anthropological apprenticeship, I made those three turns, borne out of anthropology engaging philosophy, mentored by Prospero Covar in the *Pilipinolohiya* project. By this time, Albert Alejo, S.J. had started his reflections on *loob*, ('interiority'/*psyche*) working on Covar's anthropological linguistics from phenomenology *(Cf. Note B)*. The importance of this humanistic bent of anthropology could only be re-emphasized, echoing Eric Wolf's quip, i.e., as its being the most scientific of the humanities, and the most humanistic of the sciences. Nevertheless, the metrics of today's university rankings and research priorities hardly

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

harp on this bedrock, presumably because anthropology would puncture even the epistemic and political assumptions of the criteria for knowledge production.

Thirdly, the scientific community needs a consensus regarding the evolutionary implications of the archaeological discovery of the remains of *hominins* with an absolute date of 1.8 million years ago in Sangiran, within the territories of *Kabupaten Sragen* and *Kabupaten Karanganyar*, in *Jawa Tengah*, Indonesia (Sangiran, Central Java). The dome of Sangiran was a result of tectonic uplifts, or earthquakes millions of years ago. Subsequent erosion from the Solo River collapsed the dome in what is now a valley with an area of 56 square kilometers, emerging as one of the best archaeological sites in the world. It presents the history of early humans since about two million years ago until up to around 200,000 years ago (Widiawan 2022, cf. also Morwood 2004:364).

The impact of archaeological research to the science of humanity, carried out *in-situ*/ in this field even during the Covid-19 pandemic and global hiatus is significant. It may puncture the *Out-of-Africa Hypothesis* of the dispersal of *Homo sapiens*, in favor of a *Multi-regional Hypothesis*. A few decades ago, this prospect did not have as much empirical data buttressing it as it has now. Moreover, Sangiran reveals even older mammal species and their evolution, such as the tiger, the elephant and the water buffalo. These new realities and contexts: from Austronesian linguistics and migration to indigenous philosophies, beliefs and practices, and to scientific archaeology accounting for the presence of *hominins* in maritime Southeast Asia, all share in this regional provenance and geographic context.

Wrapping up this introduction, I must say Asia is too amorphous a concept: it begs for conceptual clarity. Earlier approaches use both synchronic and diachronic analysis to tease out various levels of societies, of that 'elephant in the room,' so to speak, in the mode of integrating both a positivist sociology and the promptings of an interpretive turn. But what I would attempt here is to move toward plural realizations of aspects of Asia in contemporary Southeast Asian contextual complexity by digging into types of an *anthropology of embodiment,* tracing the *tao/orang/anthropos, i.e., the human,* following the *tao*'s trajectory from its immanent tracks to its transcendent traits.

D/Jalan and the Project of Collective Soul

In this first iteration, we look at our reflections on movement in the root metaphor of *d/jalan*/[2] (path), in the metonymic character of a ritual journey.

[2] *Jalan* (Bahasa Indonesia) means road or path, is shared in *dalan* (Central Bikol, Philippines). I write *j/dalan* to mark the term's transgressive possibilities, contextual interchangeability and plurality.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

miserere nobis

Looking at the way humanity looks means looking at humanity in angst. Understanding the human condition in 'this valley of tears' means understanding its lapse into a forgetfulness of being, into a looking after lost things. The late anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, in his swan song, ascribed such to anthropology, *i.e.,* this "study of disappearing objects" (Sahlins 2022: xi). Seeking after lost things is both his fancy on fate and fatalistic fetish. Any movement that starts from the assumption that there is need to preserve things from oblivion, could be seen as that chasing after the vanished and the vanquished: a lost cause. How do we move from this pit of pity to chart new paths beyond the immanent- transcendental divide? As Sahlins, during his last days in immanence, damned monotheistic faiths, especially Christianity and Islam, arguing for immanentism as a *fait accompli*, as a rule by majority, how do we move beyond this *argumentum ad baculum* that does not anyway come from the language of his "most of humanity"?

Our quest takes us to the field of Bikol (Philippines) and Malay languages to find it like a console table where we could find some aid in store. This would help us define *d/jalan*. In Central Bikol language, and as shared by some other Philippine languages in various senses, as well as in Malay, *d/jalan* points toward five senses: first, a physical/geographic path; second, as means, or methodology; third, as looking, observing, and watching; fourth, as theory; and fifth, in the verbs that form *adalan* (Central Bikol) and *belajar* (Bahasa Indonesia), as study and contemplation. This dynamic compendium of meanings accruing to a single concept discloses a phenomenology of placemaking, resonant to Feld's conceptual moorings. For Feld, *"(a)s places are sensed, senses are placed; and as places make sense, so senses make place*" (Feld 1997:90; cf. also Casey 1996:19). The polysemy of *d/jalan*, or its potential conceptual part, in the concept of *rantau*[3] as shared by Bikol East Miraya (hence: Miraya) and Minangkabau (Sumatra, Indonesia) languages discloses words, and worlds on the way. They arrest and direct attention to a fundamental, ontological comportment as us being on the way, in the wake of being.

I think of five intermingling senses of *j/dalan* in the succeeding discussion as constitutive elements of the metaphor.

[3] The concept of *rantau* is shared by both *Minangkabau* (Sumatra, Indonesia) and *Miraya* (Bikol, Philippines). It refers to a person who undertakes a long journey and settling away from home. It also connotes either a sudden appearance or return from a voyage, or a departure for an exploration, usually life-changing, and is also considered as a part of a person's coming-of-age. A check on common contemporary usage in *Miraya* and comparing it to entries in Bahasa Indonesia dictionaries in the last century would obtain these shared meanings. It is not shared, however, by other Indonesian and Philippine languages, except perhaps the Cebuano language (Cebu, Philippines) where it is rendered in the concept of *langyaw* (*Cf*. Mojares 1997).

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

Being out-of-place, then, while contrary to the felicity of being on the way, remains a pedagogical, processual path. *Sala/h*[4] both in the Filipino and in the Malay sense, connotes this waywardness, or methodological error, or wrong/s. This 'otherwise-ness' of being is like the parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10) that reveals the other side of the coin; it is a parable of protraction, of prolonged searching, and the revelry of finding anew. In summing up Levinasian ethics, Handelman captures this pithily:

> *Getting the infinitude of others right… depends on getting it wrong, time after time, refusing the primacy of the selfness of the anthropologist, and refusing the capture of alterity that this primacy would enable… [S]elf-reflexivity is not done deep within the self in the solitudes of self-contemplation… instead [it] is done with otherness unmediated before oneself* (Handelman 2016:54-55).

Being on the way means all these: a recovery of senses, making storied meanings in spaces hitherto unattended, and, as 'wisdom sits in places,' a phrase from Keith Basso, it means a searing searching of the memories one has skewed from, to find words, and world: [f]or each time we express ourselves, we have to break with ourselves" (Paz in Rafael 2016:1) to arrive at another finding, founding moment.

To explicate on collective soul, we shall delve into Bikol language. There we discover that the ancients have invented a wonderful contraption; a gift to bipedal humanity, that protects the soles of the feet from being hurt by craggy earth. It was called *langan*, or in the contemporary concept, it is sandals, slippers, or shoes. In a wider sense, it could mean a shield that protects the body from attacks. In the sixteenth century, the Catholic missionaries melded this social imaginary in explaining the significance of the death of Jesus Christ, when in a marginal note in the Bikol dictionary, the concept was used with an exemplary statement: "*Si Hesukristo nagadan langan satuya* (Mintz 2019) *i.e.,* "Jesus Christ died as sandals for us," that is, the death of Christ is *langan* for the social body. Thus, it is in those beginnings of a Christian understanding that another comportment in life was melded, wherein our

[4] *Salah* (Bahasa Indonesia) and *sala* (Filipino and various Philippine languages) means error or incorrectness and thus, 'procedural error.' Christian appropriation equated it to transgression understood as a moral propinquity. Bahasa Indonesia uses the term *dosa* to denote sin, and also uses *keselahan* (mistake), in translating the prayer "Our Father" thus: *…dan ampunilah keselahan kami seperti kami mengampuni yang bersalah kepada kami* (forgive us our *keselahan* as we forgive those who commit *salah* against us), which is similarly rendered in Filipino: *…at patawarin mo kami sa aming mga sala para nang pagpapatawad namin sa mga nagkakasala sa amin* (forgive us our *sala* as we forgive those who commit *sala* against us). In the confessional part of the liturgy, the faithful recite: "through my fault, through my most grievous fault," which in Filipino is rendered as *sa aking sala, at sa aking pinakamalaking sala*, and in Bahasa Indonesia as: *saya berdosa, saya sungguh berdosa* (I sinned, I really sinned).

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

death was won over in that moment whereby death was taken over or worn. Mintz says that the concept did not survive into modern Bikol.

However, investigating Miraya *orosipon*/ orature, we discover a variant concept, *ka'langan,*[5] a cousin of *langan* in that it is a derivative concept, which retains in contemporary usage a specific reference to something that shields, interrupts, or blocks. Moreover, like *langan,* it is used in the concept of death and the afterlife. *Ka'langan* is thereby an ontological concept, in the phenomenological sense of its status as an existential being (*Cf*. Csordas 1990:6). *Ka'langan* arises with the event of death, but it is not from death, rather it is from life in the world. The event of death detaches it from becoming a culturally reified object- it is not a 'person'- and it is only such as what it immediately is, an existential dynamism towards transcendence, yet extricating from enmeshment in immanence. The soul's journey, which a *ka'langan* obstructs, is only guaranteed safe passage when those things that pose as obstacles, those impediments of memories, or lapses in love, are removed, when the path is paved. It then belongs to the province of ritual and religion, functioning as a meta-language, effecting an other-worldly process for the perfection of the human-on-the-way.

in excelsis

This linguistic foray into Miraya language affords us something even more: from the root *'langan'* where its cousin/variant *ka'langan* arises, another variant breaks upon the scene: *'langnan.'* This verb means treasuring one's favorite item, such that it attains a 'reserved' status for a special time of use. It moves a thing from the commonplace into the rare. It is the glorification of a gift, no matter how lowly, raising it to the heights of one's imagining and valuing. As a verbal, its present participle also functions as an adjective. Its form is further rendered as: *karulangnan*, to evoke the superlative, *i.e.,* an excellent *habitus*. The component particle *'ka'* marks its identity-in-relation, in a movement of transformation; and the particle *'ru'* marking its repetition and the reference to *habitus*. *Langnan,* then, refers to the making, to a creative transcendence, that does not pose as *ka'langan* (obstruction) to the path of the soul, rather, it ushers it into its excellence. It plays on memory and its limits, for it is an attempt to address and thwart memory lapse and cure memory loss in the ethical sense of revealing itself as a paradox (*para-doxa*) that prevents a fall into commodification. It is acquiring by not acquiring, a using by not using, a prolonging of the pleasure, of the *eros* of an absolute gift (*Cf*. Mauss 1950:10). For what is real is not the finite thing, nor its finite representations, but an indeterminate infinity interminably transforming thing, signification, and relations.

[5] The apostrophe in the orthography of the concept of *ka'langan* is introduced to mark both accent and pronunciation, as Bikol East Miraya is an oral language.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

Thus, the pessimism of forgetfulness is overcome by the triple paths of affirmations afforded by *langan:* first, as that which foils death by the safeguard of protective shields. Secondly, through *ka'langan's via negativa,* it uncovers death at the instauration of a paving, saving route. Lastly, it is that which meditates on a radically symbolic death by the sweet salve of *langnan-* transforming attachments into detachment; everydayness into ritual temporality, though not magically, but through decidedly difficult futural mediations where one hopes to wear them on high as festal garments.

Kejawen and the Project of Collective Memory

The second iteration reflects on indigenous science in the root metaphor of *Kejawen*/ Javanese philosophy. I shall again approach it metonymically in the rubrics of a Gospel text, homily and credo (with a small 'c').

homiletic interlude

You have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves did not enter, and you stopped those trying to enter. (Luke 11:52)

In the year 2021, the Philippine church celebrated the coming of Catholic Christianity to the archipelago five hundred years ago, prompting this gloss about the meeting of the Gospel and local cultures. Tangentially, in Karl Gaspar, CSsR's book, '*Handumanan,*' (Cebuano, 'remembrance') a discussion on the Synod of Manila of 1582 seems to indict Dominicans for the role he ascribed them in the colonizing agenda of the King of Spain. Implicitly, that role seems to be to take away the 'key of knowledge,' as ideologues of colonization. Gaspar revisits the question posed by Domingo de Salazar OP (1512-1594), the first bishop of Manila and the convenor of the Synod: "What right did Spain have to rule the Philippines?" Gaspar's narrative goes:

> *One answer that surfaced was that Spain had the duty to rule the Philippines because of her delegated authority from the Pope… the King's colonial agenda was provided an ideological justification on the basis of a religious… reason. It is interesting to note that what influenced this kind of dynamics within the colonization process were the teachings of Dominican theologians such as [quoting dela Costa 1967] Vitoria at Salamanca, Las Casas in the West Indies, and Zumarraga in Mexico… Their thoughts influenced the orientation of Fray Domingo de Salazar, the first bishop of the Philippines who was a disciple of Vitoria and a colleague of Las Casas* (Gaspar 2021:139, 141).

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

Gaspar himself may not have entered the social body of that text, as his narrative stops at that point where others have already entered. As early as 2014, Paul Dumol had already published his translation of the Acts of the Synod of Manila of 1582, juxtaposing two versions: one was the report of the Jesuit president of the Synod to the Jesuit General in Rome, and the other was the report of the Dominican secretary of the Synod to the parish priests of the Philippines. Bishop Salazar himself found the Synod's conclusion unacceptable, nurtured as he was in the theological reflections of his erstwhile confreres. He would journey to Spain and argue before the King and would die there without seeing the light to the question that he sought. It was Miguel de Benavides, the founder of the University of Santo Tomas, who held on and continued the quest (Gutierrez, O.P. in Schumacher, J., 2002:160).

This 'key to knowledge' has a threefold realization: First, the postcolonial approach that unmasks ideology also needs unmasking, to humble it of its pretense that it is not itself under the sway of another ideology. Second, it is in clutching the heart of the matter: the moment of concern for the plight of the people, which, after all, is the unifying element that drives an understanding of the text. Third, it is the recognition of the role the Dominicans had in promoting the intellectual flourishing of those same peoples, and that movement is the founding of the university (*University of Santo Tomas*), the first in Asia.

The humanistic question of Domingo de Salazar must be pursued, and not foreclosed, because it projects a listening posture and a concern for justice. Ironically, this friar in the sixteenth century, living in the context of Spain's golden age, demonstrated such position of deference, in the name of the Gospel he professed, that we in the twenty-first century may perhaps set aside, preferring instead idiosyncrasies of ideology.

credo

The encounter between the Gospel and cultures, couched as it is in the dialectical tradition, needs to be recast. Implicit in the use of tropes and key scenarios is an attempt to portray a method divergent even from the assumed divergences (from the dialectical tradition) of a proper phenomenology vis-à-vis a dialectical structuralism. Neither is it a merger of these incompatible approaches. Re-casting could be made by appealing to what anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano calls the "authorial third," (Crapanzano in Davies 2010) one that is neither at one nor the other pole, which by its soliloquy addresses our solicitations. The *kejawen* tradition offers this vantage. It represents an amalgam of popular Javanese philosophy and practice:

Kejawen in a universal opinion includes the arts, culture, rituals, attitudes,

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

> *traditions and philosophy of the Javanese people… it is also defined as the path of spirituality by the Javanese. Kejawen belief is different from monotheistic religions such as Islam and Christianity, [rather] it is an understanding of life, or an insight… a view of life… accompanied by worship behavior* (Pandika Adi Putra 2022).

In contrast, popular devotions in mostly Christian Philippines are largely regarded as 'folk religiosity' or 'folk Catholicism,' classificatory concepts that trace incipience in a rather unproductive analysis of a 'split-level Christianity' (Bulatao 1966). This tendency is reinforced in Chupungco's (1976) "Towards a Filipino Liturgy" (Hornedo 2001:130). Hornedo uses the distinction between "official" and "folk" as a point of consideration. For him, "it is the somberness of the official liturgy that kept the indigenous liturgies not only out of the church but also out of the official liturgy making them folk rituals" (*ibid.*). However, sociologist Randolph David opines:

> *…we must question the usefulness of these distinctions, because in truth, the history of Western Christianity itself is replete with examples of interweaving of the various Oriental faiths that had spread all over Europe in the later days of paganism… all spiritualities syncretically weave their unique fabric from every available material. And that material is necessarily historical* (David 1997).

Neither have current social scientists totally disengaged from the dialectic of folk and its assumed binary opposite, the orthodox. Its detrimental effect on culture is a destruction of a lifeworld that otherwise could enrich spirituality as much as political life. Already, indigenous *Higaonons* of Bukidnon, in the oral recitation of their *kepuúnpuún* (long narrative poem) are doubting if prayers could still reach *Magbabaya* (lord/God) (Edgerton 2008:23) even as their social history, and their balancing act to create a middle ground between the lowland, was swept behind during the rule of dictator Marcos' Martial Law (Edgerton 2008:273 and confer also McCoy 1998). Revisiting this field, I reported this curious oscillation among the indigenous Mandaya of Caragan Valley (*Cf.* Pama 2017, 2021), who insist that prayers do not indeed reach *Magbabaya*, rather only through the Bible, as their chief has become a Protestant pastor. The next day, however, on a cultural program, the same pastor led the *panawagtawag*, the opening prayer, in a ritual addressed to *Magbabaya*.

In an international conference during the Quincentennial commemorations at the University of the Philippines Diliman, I made the pitch for a *kaalamang bayang teolohiya* (roughly equivalent to 'indigenous theology'), drawn from fieldwork in Mt.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

Banahaw in Southern Tagalog and in Manila *(Cf. Note C)*. This is in accord with the proposal of Jazmin Llana of De la Salle University, in the same panel in that conference, for her use of the Bikol concept of *pagsadios*[6] as vernacular religion, drawn from her fieldwork in Camarines Sur. Were this level attained, the 'split-level' shall have been levelled indeed, and collective memory shall have attained a certain usefulness for social analysis, as the Javanese experience bears out. I am serendipitously situated in East Java, and like Taussig's insight when he encountered a signpost in his fieldwork in Bogota, Colombia, this social space could also be demarcated like the signpost '*excelente zona social.'* Taussig distilled from that signpost his recommendation to describe writing culture as: first, "allowing writing to take up the burden of theory;" secondly, "to practice an art of thought images," and lastly, "to create culture as well as describe and analyze" (Taussig 2012:515). Whereas Taussig's field site was a heavily militarized zone, Java is both heavily theorized and a deeply-religious center of the Islamic world in Southeast Asia, and both realities are thereby reflected in the thought images that frame this writing.

When the famed anthropologist of the linguistic turn, Clifford Geertz, did fieldwork in the 1950s in East Java, he identified three main cultural types, forming the theoretical scaffolding of his now-classic work, *The Religion of Java*. The Javanese society, "grouped according to their world outlook- religious beliefs, ethical preferences and political ideologies" yields these three general ideas of order: the *abangan*, (peasantry) the *santri*, ('true Moslems,' as they call themselves; or 'Javanese Arabs,' as their enemies call them) and the *priyayi*, (the gentry; cultural elite) (Geertz 1960: 123, 228-229 *passim*) wherein the Javanese farmer, laborer, or wage earner shape their behavior in all areas of life (Geertz 1960:5). Thus, Javanese village life, in terms of religion, has in its present form an integrated and evolved whole that comprises animism common until today among indigenous peoples even in Malaysia; the later influence of Hinduism, that came in 400 A.D., and Islam, which arrived in the 15th century.

Ensconced in social history, *kejawen* foments a heteronomous discursive tradition, though not totally insusceptible to Islamic hegemony. When the term appeared in 1984 (Koentjaraningrat 1984 in Nurish 2021:6) it is subsumed as a variant of Islam, that is, as an *agama* (religion) with Hindu and Buddhist influences. This Indonesian post-Geertzian slant critiques the dichotomies introduced by

[6] '*Pagsadios*' is used in the Rinconada Bikol language, devolving from Llana's research on the *dotoc* tradition (a Catholic ritual dance to the holy Cross in Nabua, Camarines Sur). The concept is shared by Bikol East Miraya, applied to various contexts. Generically, it is taken as a form of personal prayer. It could also mean forgiveness and forgetting offenses to one's person, and thereby abetting the prospect of revenge. It could also refer to a post-harvest ritual offering called *sagugurang*, a feast to honor ancestors. *Gugurang* is the term for the deity, and the affix '*sa*' indicates a movement toward. The Catholic liturgy translates "Lord" as *Kagurangnan*, rooted in the native concept for the deity.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

Geertz. Another movement[7] asserts autonomous knowledge, i.e., autonomous from the West, but in so doing, it appears trapped in the old dichotomy of mind-body, self-other, and that of orientalism.

Sed contra, Wasisto highly regards *kejawen* as an apex of mystical cultural teaching tradition in dealing with human suffering. He underscores *manunggaling kawulo gusti* (the principle of the unity of human existence) which,

> *… postulates the totality of world existence which connects the ontology of the natural world, with the notion of human thought and rationality, human existence, and the existence of the soul. This principle of oneness of all existence views human beings as micro-models ('jagat kecil') of wider existence and the natural world as macro-model ('jagat besar') [Asmara 2013:154]. These models are seen as a reflection of how everything is inter-connected, and 'Kejawen' teachings intend to explain the patterns involved, and in this way show the connections between 'everything'* (Wasisto 2020:12).

Insight into Javanese social structure need not necessarily scatter at its seams by approaching it as characterized by discursive overlaps about their view of the world, body, and society. It is their way of sensing the world, their "body hexis" (Bourdieu 1977:87). Otherwise, this historicity, embodied in a porous and evolving cultural tradition may be blighted and obscured. The manifest domination in subsuming all aspects of Javanese life under the religious category, "Muslim," (Nurish 2021; Amrozi 2022) by one group in the social hegemony (Gramsci 1971:245) is no different from the uppity in deploying the category "folk" or "split-level" Christianity within Christianity itself. Fundamentally, as shown in these twin scenarios, the people comprise civil society, bringing along with it the morals of religion, the interests of economic stability, and the peace of common good.

Thus, civil society (hegemony) plays the collective role wherein the group, *i.e.*, *church* or *umma*, alongside political hegemony, makes for an integral State (Gramsci,

[7] This is gleaned from an online conference, *Theorising From Elsewhere: Autonomous Knowledge and the Recovery of Lost Traditions* organized by the Departments of Sociology and Malay Studies, National University of Singapore on May 11-12, 2022. A plurality of voices were heard in the presentations, addressing the challenge of reconfiguring indigenous identities. Some analyzed the social sciences as colonial legacy vis-à-vis the challenge of developing a new way of thinking free from colonial and nationalist hegemony (e.g., Bambang Purwanto's '*Colonial Pleasures in Post Colonial Indonesian Realities*'). Others championed local knowledge and religious tradition, primarily, Islam in combatting "sectarianism," the opposite of which is Islamic ecumenism, understood as "*taqrib*," which is intra-faith reconciliation or Sunni-Shi'a *rapprochement* in the work of Ibrahim Kazerooni. The extreme position of Wahhabism was critiqued. So too, is Arab hegemony, not only Western hegemony. Nonetheless, one position calls for a "prophetic social science," (citing Kuntowijoyo 2004) founding knowledge on Quranic basis.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

ibid.). Rather than the undersides of *folk*, or its opposite overtones, understanding is face-to-face connection and communication with the people who hold the 'key of knowledge' over events that unfold in society. Moreover, *pace* Gramsci, civil society has the educative role in a humanistic formation of consent, not in a 'coercion into freedom' (Gramsci, *ibid.*) be it at the level of the *superstructure* or from the level of the *base*. The function of political hegemony is executive of the laws crafted by parliament and mediated by the courts.

A parallel path was taken by Dame Mary Douglas, reflecting on the problem of the theory of person in Western philosophical psychology. She was responding to the Frankfurt school's "idea of self as heavily locked into ideology," "the claims to knowledge about the human person… and "Christian claims to orthodoxy" that allowed "violent political coercion." The modern iteration of the same problem "was posed by Hume, who like Locke, denied the existence of self-substance… and the idea of a unitary, continuous, and responsible self." Douglas, echoing Bourdieu (1977) is in support of "the project for knowing the self through its activities" (Douglas 1992, 2003: 213-16 *passim*). From this theory of self, one arrives at a theory of culture:

> *If there is a suitable pattern of claims it is a cultural system. Culture is the point at which claims and counter- claims come to rest and where authority is attributed to theories about the world… Each culture is carried in a community, an intentional system connected by claims with its own sub-systems, the persons. Each culture produces, in the process of negotiating claims, its own compatible theory of the world and the self* (*ibid.*).

Thus, in the Javanese scenario, *kejawen* as socially embodied thought and practice is not only a repository of collective memory but a moral model of *kebangsaan* (nationhood). Whereas, in post-colonial Indonesia, "they sought to enshrine the *shariah* law in the constitution of the state, but they accepted the basic principle of global nationalism… and "it is also clear that Austronesian, Indic, Islamic, and bureaucratic models of the state exist in multiple forms… [thus], political leaders must also be deeply attuned to and be able to manipulate the unconscious symbolic archive of their culture" (Gibson 2007:208).

Among Philippine societies, *shariah* law is partially implemented in the legal system, supervised by the Supreme Court and applicable only to Muslims, in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). While the rest of the nation has embraced a *carnivalesque* (Bhaktin 1984:176) politics, waiting in suspended animation for our blooming amidst these intensities of real life, I would rather repair to Bikol's *pagsadios*, that religious moment and movement in our vernacular religion that forms the *tubod*, (spring) where the Bikol notion of faith/

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

pagtubod wells from. This *pagsadios* is not only worship but a political insight that could transform people's lives, including political hegemony itself, by speaking truth to power. Like *Kejawen*, because of this primordial anchoring in human ontology, science- be it politics, economics or religion, as a cultural system of *kaalamang bayang teolohiya*, becomes achievable.

Gotong Royong and the Project of Collective Joy

The third iteration reflects on *communitas*, in the sense used by Victor Turner (1974) and its soulfulness experienced as a sense of collective joy, as his wife Edith Turner (2012) propounded in her ethnography. This is articulated in the root metaphor of *gotong royong*, (Malay, literally, 'mutual cooperation') that is embodied in the value of *utang-budhi* (Malay, literally, 'debt- of- mind') or *utang-na-loob* (Filipino, literally, debt- of- interiority). I shall approach this theme metonymically in the rubrics of communion and blessing.

communion

The reflection on the *d/jalan* takes us more steps forward. Whereas *d/jalan* lends itself to mean journey, the Miraya concept of *agi* (from the Malay, *'kaki,'* 'foot') forms *agi-agi* (story/history), bespeaking of history-making presence as collective memory. Here, *rantau*, that concept shared by Miraya and Minangkabau, discloses a 'journey of journeys:' a life-changing movement that is staged as ritual and theater in Minangkabau society. *Rantau*, as a practice that marks a *rite-de-passage*, occurs along with its twin concept of *rendai*, its representation in a theatrical tradition. *(Cf. Note D)* In Miraya, the emphasis is on temporality and presence-absence, *i.e.*, the long duration of the journey, and an episodic-dramatic appearance in the backdrop of a poignant disappearance. Thus, in both Miraya and Minangkabau cultures, there is an ambivalence at the heart of this ancient journey, suggesting that the one who undertakes it "is not only a stranger in other lands; he may return a stranger to his own kind … crossing borders that can no longer be re-crossed" (Mojares 1997:72). The experience of Filipino overseas workers surely bears this out. So too, the life that two Southeast Asian women writers narrate.

Josephine Chia used the concept of *gotong royong* in her memoir to depict her experience growing up in the 1950s in backwater *'kampungs'* before Singapore's rapid modernization thereafter. Her memoir is a journey from illiteracy to become an award-winning writer. She characterizes *gotong royong* as a sense of community, of helping each other out (Chia 2013:13), a radical sense of 'humankindness' that makes no distinctions between Malay or Chinese, Christian or Muslim. Meanwhile, Filipino-Australian writer, Merlinda Bobis, an alumna of the University of Santo

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

Tomas in Manila and in Legazpi, in a recent podcast interview (2021) attributes her success not only as a poet, but as someone who has migrated into a foreign land, to her village at the foot of rumbling Mayon volcano, beautiful but violent. Recalling home, from where she learned fundamental values, she stresses this Bikol adage, *Mabubuhay kita sa tagilid na daga* (We can live on tilted earth) with a cheerfulness earned from lived environment and with the will to live.

Upon the death of Victor Turner, his wife Edith apparently found the remedy for her grief by continuing not just the academic study of *communitas* that Victor Turner started. While she diligently noted that Victor made the connection between the joy of *communitas* and *rites de passage*, or *liminality*, in his works in 1964 and 1969 (E. Turner 2012:2), it was her who embarked on a pilgrimage to experience *communitas* whenever and wherever it loomed in the horizon of human relationality in the disguise of a fieldworker's method. The stories she found among the Inupiat in snow-wrapped Alaska brings us full circle back where we have started:

> *The basic unaccommodated human being… seemingly a lonely figure- is actually gifted with an immediate and genuine sense of the other, the plural of beings… in accordance with the 'other-tending' nature of the universe* (E. Turner 2012:6).

This bound togetherness of *communitas*, which is a gift from *liminality*, is the moral imperative of anthropology. In this profound ecological communion,

> *once we recognize that human subjectivity, along with the subjectivity of all other species, is an aspect of the very constitution of ecosystems, we have a solid foundation for the conclusion that the destruction of meaning and the destruction of ecosystems are two aspects of the same process* (Hornborg in Descola 1996:53).

The human being, truly one with all other beings, is, in Aguas' Bikol translation of Heidegger's *DaSein*, truly *yaon*, (there-being). *(Cf. Note E)* This turn to ontology is expressed in the metaphor of *d/jalan* as a route of embodiments: *An yaon na dalan an dalan nin yaon. An yaon dalan, pagdalan sa yaon. An dalan yaon. Uya!* (That which is there as road is the route of being. There-being is passing through; beholding being. The way is there-being. There it is. There, it is being-beheld.) Thereby, this ontology functions, to use Wittgenstein's felicitous phrase in *Philosophical Investigations*, as 'forms of life,' which allow for a compromise between the opacity of meaning to oneself and to others:

> *Life is possible… and what we do is a matter of sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, senses of humor and of significance and of*

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

> *fulfillment, of what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else; what a rebuke, what forgiveness; of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation… human speech and activity, sanity and community, rest upon nothing more, but nothing less, than this* (Fassin in Das 2014:69).

This communing movement is not taught, it is made. It is an artefact. "[O]ne intuitively knows one's way around...[T]o live an artefact… [is]…to appropriate it… [to] make it one's own by making it one with ingredients in one's continuing life" (Connerton 2009:32). The *Mandaya* 'make' the human they meet on the way by saying: *madayaw na utaw*! *Utaw* means human, and *madayaw*, an auspiciousness about: the sheer joy of being by which they know their way around. On the other hand, the Javenese ideal of joy is *ikhlas*, a certain detachment accruing to the maxim: 'If you are happy, you will be unhappy; if you are unhappy, you will be happy' (Geertz 1960:228). In Bikol East Miraya, it also means detachability, *i.e.*, they are a property of *langan*, a detachable contraption; *ka'langan*, a removable condition, and *langnan*, a foregoing to attain at keeping, a forgetting to forge the unforgettable. This wisdom, borne out of *communitas*, is like Michael Jackson the anthropologist's prism that refracts…

> *…a perpetual oscillation between engaging with the world and seeking distance, respite, or release from it. No matter what vernacular idiom is employed to capture this oscillation- philosopher's hut, the open field, the contrast between town and bush, theological images of earth and ether, existential tensions between home and the world- the dilemma persists of how to balance and reconcile these competing imperatives or discover how one can live with their incommensurability* (Jackson 2016:204).

blessing

Through this anthropological detour, we have arrived at comparative epistemologies and inquiries into the human psyche; at comparative politics from an analysis of social structures; and at a comparative ontology of the good that gives way to an ethics of value. This is said, not in a manner of establishing a normative thought system, but rather, only as moments spent in struggling; in contemplating, *with otherness unmediated before oneself* (Handelman 2016:54). This posture of understanding, albeit imperfect, is what Maurice Bloch in '*How We Think They Think*' names as:

> *… (an) idiom of increasing powerlessness in relation to the supernatural… of their growing lack of control; but all these however is only a first step.*

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

> *[The second step] is engaging the superior in a negotiation, even if the exchange is unequal: to engage their pity, so one builds oneself up through the accumulation of accepted experiences, [the] basis for becoming a subject* (Bloch 1998:74-78 *passim*).

The voices from Bloch's fieldwork in Madagascar, uncannily jive with those of Fenella Cannell's fieldwork in Bikol, published at the same period as that of Bloch. Cannel's insight on the work of pity describes how the *sadit na tawo* (*small people*), ascribing themselves as *kaming mga mayong-mayo* (*we who have nothing at all*) relate to the *dakulang tawo* (*big people*) to lessen, if not totally erase, their gap. This is manifested performatively in the rituals surrounding the devotion to *Amang Hinulid* (in Cannell, translated as '*Dead Christ'*), and is epitomized in the Bikol funeral:

> *The entire cult is constructed as and emotionally identified with a Bicolano wake and funeral, and that participation in the events of Lent is felt, like participation in a funeral, as an experience of 'herak' (pity)* (Cannell 1999:95).

Upon revisiting Cannell's field a decade after, following her ethnography about the Dead Christ, I trod farther instead across Mt. Isarog, only to discover death and the '*ragpa nin pagkabago:*' the '*detritus of industrial modernity*' (Pama 2014) in the social 'body of Christ.' The 'detritus' here is one of abandonment and decay, a certain forgetfulness of the lifeworld, of that tenuous relationship between life and world. Contained in collective discourse, in the story of speaking subjects here, is a longing for the past during the operation of the logging company. It was their livelihood, and at the expense of the life of the forest. Traversing such expanse was a railway made for logs and the plywood products exported to Japan and the United States. The 'reject' products of poor quality, *i.e.,* the 'detritus,' were stocked in the bay called 'Manila Yard' for the local market. Being 'modern' is disclosed by a trope depicting their place as a 'city in the olden days.' Yet again, such utterance is juxtaposed by discreet tropes signifying intimacy and death.

Exploring the embedded Bikol emotional "acts-concepts" enriches this hermeneutical horizon. One may begin to reconstrue concepts like the notion of *hulid* (in Bikol and Hiligaynon: *to sleep together, evoking the intimacy of siblings or kin*) that Cannell is silent about except as it appears in the ethnography's title, and whereby *hulid* is translated as the wake of death. The same care takers of the image of the Dead Christ studied by Cannell speak about the image (*Ama)* in these terms: *Si Ama nagkakatorog lang. Nagpapasabot iyan sa pangatorogan*. (He is not dead; he is just asleep; he communicates through dreams.) They wake him up by speaking gently to him, asking permission in replacing the things ritually tucked under his pillow for

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

him to dream about and thereby bless these and the persons who brought them. This is remembrance in everyday life.

Similarly neglected in Cannell's ethnography is the Central Bikol concept of *muraway* (*joy; glory*, cf. Mintz and Britanico 1985:394) where there is heightened concern for the continuity of relations and the language of mutual benefit and beneficence (*Cf.* Calleja-Reyes 1992:25). These concepts constellate with *herak* to form a felt calculi of motives where darkness is contiguous with light. In the light of this conceptual archaeology, the meaning of *herak* will never be one of condescension, emotional passivity, or pessimism. Rather, *herak* becomes akin to a command to will an act. *Pace* Cannell, obviating this chorus of concepts eclipses the recovery of an authentic agency, and the recuperation of an indigenous notion of the afterlife and its psychosocial implications for healing, wellness, and comforting hope. This is blessing.

Moreover, this makes one refer to one's body with an 'outward intimacy' where, despite the specter of death or loss, one is not left aghast, rather, it is able to possess power in the language of the spirit world addressed to the social body. It is a capacity to be home and to be well. It is being-emplaced, as Taussig describes:

> *…being-in-place… in an 'intimacy… of landscape and body'…in an unconcealment of the being of beings* (Taussig 2004:205).

Nonetheless, Cannel's contribution to Southeast Asian discourse clarifies the "widespread historical fact of hostility between missionaries and local mediums, shamans and other practitioners…[Since] the ethnography of Southeast Asia has tended to focus on mediumship and possession as a discourse of the marginalized in relation to, especially Islam…[and] because Christianity is the least widespread religion in Southeast Asia, its relation to mediumship has been less discussed than that of Islam (Cannell 1995:377).

By looking into the intercultural embeddedness of the root metaphors in the *dunia Melayu*, one understands mediumship and spirit possession as social critique, expressed in the polyvalence of worldviews, embodiments, and emotions in the region. From the production of knowledge springing from life contexts, grand questions would arise akin to what moved Bishop Domingo de Salazar to convoke a synod right at the start of his ministry in Manila during the 16th century. And it happened that a quest consumes an entire life, like an unreachable star.

Or these could be trite questions. Edith Turner's firsthand experience of *communitas* was not fieldwork, but the 1968 university uprisings in the United States, which first broke out in Paris (Mentore 2009: vii). She also emphasizes that

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

"*communitas* resides in the poor and those considered inferior in their culture, a gift from below," or that *communitas* dwells with the powers of the weak, in sharing common experiences with one's fellows…" but in one big glance she would subsume all as joy: "…over us all was the friendship [that] made any environment possible" (E. Turner 2012 2-4 *passim*). Cannell reports the same experience with Bikolanos' "acceptance of the Spirit's logic," that is, that "healing is a gift for the poor" (Cannell 1995:91). Taussig, situated "in Colombia [where] some four million poor country people have been forced in the last twenty years to flee from the land they cultivated and regarded as theirs…living in the swamp…" where, while discussing with peasants a 'map of utopia,' on how they could create an alternative model if they were able to get back their territory, "it seemed tedious to [him] but there are guffaws and rippling mirth" (Taussig 2012:501-505 *passim*).

All these scenarios disclose to us our common ground that is human contingency and the striving for transcendence. *Pace* Giorgio Agamben, insisting that this is "how to endure with resignation a life that lost metaphysical sense…a 'night' of the senses- of hearing" (Agamben 2018:14), the embodiments that the root metaphors of *d/jalan*, *kejawen* and *gotong royong* afford to question this nihilism. Philosopher Tatjana Barazon, inspired by Turner's work on liminality, names these 'threshold experiences' as part of the contingencies of life. They are "this natural opening toward the other…break[ing] open the isolation in which the human condition often understands itself… [and, as in] Henri Bergson's *elan vital*, [this] tending towards life, toward a new viewpoint on the possibilities we are facing, [point us to] the depths of interiority, the '*cavum,*' [to] the *plenum*, the heights and reaches of transcendence" (Barazon 2010). This resonates with the *loob* that Covar and Alejo have dwelt on.

Thus, in the root metaphor of *d/jalan* it is a contingency of spirit to grasp the infinitude of the other, the propinquity of *sala/h*, and the paradoxes of *langan*, *ka'langan*, and *langnan*. In the root metaphor of *kejawen*, it is the contingencies of colonialism, historiography, and religion when it turns to power and hegemony. In the root metaphor of *gotong royong*, it is a reticence hidden in revelry.

Ite, Missa Est, in Conclusion and as a Bidding

Ite

How does one go, at the bidding that the rite is over? Under what condition, in the case of a ritual meal, as with everyday meals, may one go? It is ironic that the injunction at once, and once more, brings to the surface a question of method, whereas such *d/jalan* was set out as the discursive itinerary. Moreover, the irony is

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

doubled when one begins to realize that every conclusion is a retelling full of resolve that at each moment of bidding, nothing is resolved. To go means to proceed to take account of the *raison d'etre* of such bidding.

One could say that one goes, when one is satiated, when and everyone has had their fill. In that condition, one hesitates to go, as during prolonged celebratory meals. However, it may be that one is in a hurry to take leave. In some Philippine cultures, when one commits to leaving while others are still enjoying the meal, those left at table should turn their plates as a gesture to counteract the taboo, or the *ka'langan* of leaving a meal posthaste. Otherwise, they may suffer the fate of being unmarried! At stake here is larger than the meal, rather, that which it symbolizes. It is the route (*d/jalan*) of kinship, that structural relation of relations that was being shared, tasted, and hitherto tested. It affects not just the palates. Nor is it just about ranks and social structure at a table meant for all. Rather, it discloses the horizon of the bonding, of *gotong royong*, the joy of communion founded on an irascible passion of the soul. It is an appetite of hope that can only be rekindled by affirming common humanity, *sans* reluctance at an ineluctable kinship. This is disclosed by the trope of *kejawen*, a living practice that includes pilgrimages to sacred mountains, meditation, ritual baths and offerings.

Another condition in the wake of the bid to go, whereupon one takes leave, is that one hungers for more. The Miraya concept of *sagiapot* is hereby instructive, and the attempt to lay down its description takes us again to those root metaphors and their excess meanings. *Sagiapot* happens when one hobbles because one is fettered by a rope or an object that constrains one's feet along a path. It causes missteps, stumbling, or falls. In the function of Miraya's orality or as *orosipon*, one could break the concept down to show that it is a compound, a phrase that hides in a word: *sa agi apot*: a question/s, or a call (*apot*) while (*sa*) walking (*agi* [Miraya]; *{k}aki* [Bahasa Indonesia]), and it yields a new horizon of meanings. *Sagiapot*, taken a piece apart, are those questions that arise along the way, or biddings that send us to journey forth or sail on. When one surrenders to *sagiapot*, one fails to arrive at the destination or attain one's goal or enjoy the good. One falls out of the way. *Sagiapot* is a sheer reminder to bipedal humanity that to stand on one's feet is at best, limited luck, for as elsewhere and in our fettered everydayness, to stand is to set upon *walog*, that is, an astounding abyss. This meditation on premodern and pre-western thoughts fetters us, if not, pesters us with questions (*ka'langan*), like that nagging call over the horizons of our made-up certitudes and cultures that mask us (*langan*) and ask about what other traits we value (*langnan*) that we can afford to offer, like a gift. Entanglement and disentanglement are both moments that implicate each other: to go means to disentangle; to go means to get entangled. Both deculturation and reculturation (*pace* Bourdieu) go hand in hand, or in this case, are assignments afoot.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

Sagiapot is then a *felix culpa,* that paradox expressed in the Easter proclamation (*Exultet*), a 'happy fault.' It arrests us to bid us converse with and reinterpret the lifeworld, "as forms of a 'productive' assimilation of tradition." And further paraphrasing Connerton, *sagiapot* is the hermeneutic circle, which does not just fetter our feet, but unfetters understanding. *Sagiapot* is the beginning of wisdom (*cf.* Connerton 2011:105,107). It is the bidding to go past, and post, received wisdom to bequeath new ones. After all, they are age-old wisdom, sitting right there and right here in our places.

Missa

I adapted the dramaturgical, liturgical structure of the Catholic mass as a rejoinder to Victor and Edith Turner's usage of the dramaturgical structure of pilgrimage (Turner and Turner 1978) in exploring the enactment of social structure and anti-structure, which is *communitas*, in the major pilgrimages worldwide. Here, the structure foregrounds various embodiments as the finality of understanding; in turn, at the background, for Christians it is the Body of Christ, and for social scientists and philosophers, it is the social body as "existing understanding;" as lived, experienced, and emplaced. This would allow us to revisit the juxtaposing of indigenous modes of worship vis-à-vis the structures of monotheistic religions such as Christianity and Islam. Prescinding from Hornedo's recognition of the divergences in "substantive content" among and across these traditions, he nonetheless asserts, in a rejoinder to Chupungco, "that the use of the native language is the most significant step towards indigenization" (Hornedo 2002:137). This *d/jalan* charts an itinerary of this imaginary, where crossovers of native systems of meaning take on the task of indigenizing interpretation.

By way of revisiting interlocutors and observing the manners in Javanese *politesse* championed by Geertz' *priyayi* who value aesthetic externals so much that they become ethics, I follow the injunction of *sopan-santun*, to mean maintaining smooth interpersonal relationships. I disagreed with Agamben at some point in my refusal to conclude with a metaphysics of absurdity. Rather, I uphold the irreducibility of the cultural actors and a decentered view (*Cf.* Stroeken 2016:65 *passim*) where every meaning is cultural, that there could be possibly opposite perspectives, and that a network of these perspectives could be drawn. I also disagreed with friend and fellow religious Karl Gaspar in one aside, because of a conviction that the history of colonization cannot be solved even by 'decolonization' nor by critical theory deployed as 'revisionist' history brandished about by many aspiring dictators in Philippine politics here and now; excepting effective history-at-work-in-collective-memory. I also disagreed with friend and eminent anthropologist Fenella Cannell of

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

the London School of Economics for what I felt as spooking the Bicolanos attending a funeral with the million-pound sterling question as to where the *kalags* (souls) go after death, which might be the reason for the dark [*muraway-less*] riposte to the *ka'langan* (obstruction) of the question itself, subsequently calcified in her writing about Bicol and Philippine Christianity. However, during the Christmas season of 2019, just before the Covid outbreak, the friends of Fenella who called her the endearing title of *madi/kumare* (Spanish and Philippine form of ritual kinship established through the rites of the Catholic church) travelled ten hours all the way from Naga City to the university in Diliman, Quezon City not to attend our conference, but just to see her. They hugged, laughed, wept, and had dinner together; a "eucharist," a last supper before the global quarantines.

Est

As a capping, as a *langan* for all these, I agree with Agamben in that "[l]ove is a redemptive experience, a path that slowly but steadily unfolds from obscurity to conscience, loss to redemption, and speech to what transcends it." (Agamben 2018:63). Indeed, this inspired crafting the title of this ethnology. In the language of the new evangelization, its function, after all, "is to affirm that the indigenous thrives in us" (Zialcita 2020), and that the truth of the Gospel informs the process and embraces the end of our claim for, in Tuhiwai-Smith's rendition, "a space in which to recover our authentic humanity" (*Cf*. Tuhiwai-Smith 2010:94).

After all, these root metaphors are not methods, or technical practices. Rather, they are moments in the memory of these Southeast Asian communities. They are instantiations in time of what has been going on from the dawn of humanity, and are inscribed in their bodies as practices, and in their minds as certitudes. But they are not non-changing teachings: they change over time and after new imaginings, always occasioned by questions that mark being-on-the-way; questions that reveal that the human is not unaccompanied. Rather, only the accompanied human being could come to be, and could be bidden to go.PS

Tubod (Sources)

Agamben, Giorgio G. *Adventure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Alejo, Albert S.J. *Tao Po! Tuloy: Isang Landas ng Pag-unawa sa Loob ng Tao*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Office of Research and Publications, School of Arts and Sciences, 1990.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

_____. "Tao Po! Tuloy! Halina sa Loob ng Tao" *Arete Ateneo: Magisterial Lectures- Social Sciences*. January 25, 2020.

Aguas, Jove Jim. "The *Dasein* and *Yaon*: Preliminary Reflections." *Hingowa* Vol. VII (January 2002) 121-139.

Andaya, Leonard. *"*The Search for the 'Origins' of Melayu.*" Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32 (3) pp. 315-330. The National University of Singapore, October 2001.

Amrozi, Shoni Rahmatullah. "Keberagamaan Orang Jawa Dalam Pandangan Clifford Geertz dan Mark R. Woodward." *Fenomena* Vol. 21 No. 1 Januari-Juni 2021, pp. 45-60. Jember: Institut Agama Islam Negeri.
DOI: 10/35719/fenomena. v20i1.46. Downloaded April 12, 2022.

Barazon, Tatjana. "*Soglitude: introducing a method of thinking thresholds*." Conserveries memorielles reveue transdisciplinaire (7) 2010.

Bhaktin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and trans. by Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Bloch. Maurice. *How We Think They Think*. Colorado: Westview Press, 1998.

Bourdieu, Pierre trans. Richard Nice. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Bulatao, Jaime. "*Split-Level Christianity*." Ateneo de Manila University, 1966.

Calleja-Reyes, Jose. *Bikol Maharlika*. Published by the author and Goodwill Trading, Inc. Printed by JMC Press, Inc., Philippine Copyright 1992.

Cannell, Fenella. *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999.

_____. "The Imitation of Christ in Bicol, Philippines." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1995. DOI: 10.2307/3034694. Corpus ID: 143811569.

Casey, Edward. "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prologomena." In Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

Chia, Josephine. *Kampung Spirit-Gotong Royong*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Editions, 2013.

Cohen, Matthew Isaac. "Look at the Clouds: Migration and West Sumatran Popular Theater." *NTQ* 19:3, Cambridge University Press, August 2003.

Connerton, Paul. *How Modernity Forgets*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

_____. *The Spirit of Mourning: History, Memory and the Body*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Covar, Prospero. *Larangan: Seminal Essays on Philippine Culture*. Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 1998.

_____. "Paleolithic Cultures of Southeast Asia" (unpublished manuscript), 2000.

Csordas, Thomas. "Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology" in *Ethos* Vol. 18 No. 1, March 1990 pp. 5-47.

Davidsen, Katherine. *Compact Indonesian Dictionary*. Periplus editions. Hongkong: Tuttle Publishing, 2009.

Davies, James and Dimitrina Spencer, eds. *Emotions in the Field- The Psychology and Anthropology of Fieldwork Experience*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.

David, Randolph. "Split-level spirituality" (blog) March 30, 1997, http://www.randydavid.com/1997/03/split-level-spirituality/.

Descola, Philippe and Gisli Palsson. *Nature and Society: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Douglas, Mary. *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1992, 2003.

Dumol, Paul Arvisu, trans. *The Synod of Manila 1582: The Draft of its Handbook for Confessors*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2014.

Edgerton, Ronald K. *People of the Middle Ground: A Century of Conflict and Accommodation in Central Mindanao 1880s-1980s*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008.

Espinas, Merito. *Ibalong: The Bikol Epic-Fragment*. Manila: Published by the Author. Printed by the UST Publishing House, 1996.

Evens, T., Handelman, D., and Roberts, C., eds. *Reflecting on Reflexivity: The Human Condition as an Ontological Surprise*. New York: Berghahn, 2016.

Feld, Steven. "Waterfalls of Song: An acoustemology of place resounding in Bosavi,

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

Papua New Guinea. In S. Felds and K. Basso, eds., *Senses of Place* pp. 90-135. Sta. Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1997.

Fox, James, ed. *Inside Austronesian Houses: Perspectives on Domestic Designs for Living*. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2006.

Gaspar, Karl, CSsR. *Handumanan (Remembrance): Digging for The Indigenous Wellspring*. Quezon City: Claretian Communications Foundation Inc., 2021.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Religion of Java*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960.

Gibson, Thomas. *Islamic Narrative and Authority in Southeast Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Gramsci, Antonio trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers,1971, 1992.

Hornedo, Florentino. "Indigenous Aspects of Worship in the Church of the Philippines." In *Philippiniana Sacra* Vol. XXXVI, No. 106, January-April 2001.

Jackson, Michael. *As Wide as the World is Wise: Reinventing Philosophical Anthropology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.

_____. *How Lifeworlds Work: Emotionality, Sociality, and the Ambiguity of Being*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Mauss, Gabriel. *Essai sur Le Don in Sociologie et Anthropologie* (The Gift). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950.

McCoy, Alfred and Ed de Jesus, eds. *Philippine Social History*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998.

Mentore, George. "Interview with Edith Turner." AIBR. *Revista de Antropologia de Iberoamericana*. Volumen 4, Numero 3. Septiembre-Diciembre 2009. Pp. i-xviii. www.aibr.org.

Mintz, Malcolm. "The Philippines at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century with particular reference to the Bikol Region" *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, Monograph 1, Chapter 3. Australian National University, 2011. http://intersections.anu.edu.au/ Downloaded Dec. 9, 2019.

Mintz, Malcolm Warren and Britanico, Jose. *Bikol-English Dictionary*, 1985.

Mojares, Resil. *The House of Memory*. Pasig: Anvil Publishing, 1997.

Morwood, Mike. "Sangiran: Man, Culture and Environment in Pleistocene Times:

Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Sangiran, Solo-Indonesia, 21-24 September 1998. Truman Simanjuntak, Bagyo Prasetyo, and Retno Handini, eds. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia. 442 pp. 78 b/w photographs; 10 tables, bibliography. Softcover. ISBN 979-464-382-7." In *Asian Perspectives* 43 (2), Fall 2004:364.

Nurish, Amanah. "Santri and Abangan After a Half Century of Clifford Geertz." *Jurnal Ilmiah ISLAM FORTUNA* Vol. 21 No. 2, August 2021, pp. 226-239.

Pandika Adi Putra "Apa Itu Kejawen, Arti, Aliran Berikut Penjelasannya." *iNewsYogja.id* 22 February 2022. https://yogya.inews.id/berita/apa-itu-kejawen-arti-aliran-berikut-penjelasannya Downloaded July 7, 2022.

Pama, Hermel OP (unpub. doctoral dissertation) '*Ragpa nin Pagkabago': A Deconstructive Ethnography of the Detritus of Modernity in Bikol's Coastal Villages*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Diliman 2014.

_____. "Writing History in the New Ethnography: A Mandaya Case." Scientific paper read at the National Research Council of the Philippines' Scientific and Business Meeting. University of Santo Tomas, September 16, 2017.

_____. "'Tatsulok' Paradigm of a Kaalamang-Bayang Teolohiya (local theology): The Case of the Deo Community in Mt. Banahaw and Bathalismo in Manila." Lecture delivered in the panel, *PAGDIRIWANG: Christianity and Popular Devotion.* International Online Conference on Folklore and Heritage. University of the Philippines-Diliman. March 18, 2021.

_____. "Positionality ng Paring nagpi-Fieldwork sa Pinas" University of the Philippines, Diliman, March 10, 2021.

Paz, Victor, ed. *Southeast Asian Archaeology*. Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 2004.

Rafael, Vicente. *Motherless Tongues: The Insurgency of Language Amidst Wars of Translation*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2016.

Sahlins, Marshall. *The New Science of the Enchanted Universe: An Anthropology of Most of Humanity*. London: Princeton University Press, 2022.

Salazar, Zeus. *Liktao at Epiko (Ang Takip ng Tapayang Libingan ng Libmanan, Camarines Sur*. Lunsod Quezon: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 2004.

Schumacher, John. "Domingo de Salazar, O.P.: First Bishop of the Philippines, 1512-1594 by Lucio Gutierrez, O.P." Manila: University of Santo Tomas, 2001, xvi. In *Landas, Journal of Loyola School of Theology* Vol. 16 No. 1, 2002.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

Solheim, Wilhelm II. *Archaeology and Culture in Southeast Asia: Unraveling the Nusantao*. Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 2006.

Shellabear, W.G. *A Malay-English Vocabulary*, 2nd ed. Singapore: The Methodist Publishing House, 1912. Digitized by the Internet Archive in 2007 with funding from Microsoft Corp. https://archive.org/details/malayenglishvoca00sheliala#page/n3/mode/2up Downloaded Oct. 2, 2014.

Taussig, Michael. "Excelente zona social" in *Cultural Anthropology* Vol. 27 No. 3, August 2012.

_____. *My Cocaine Museum*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Tuhiwai-Smith, Linda. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. London: Zed Books, 2012.

Turner, Edith. *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966.

_____. *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974.

Wasisto, Muhammad Adiz. "Reflecting on Kejawen: Javanese Esoteric Teachings on Indonesian National Development." (Unpub. research paper for Master of Arts in Development Studies) *International Institute of Social Studies*, The Hague, The Netherlands, 2020.

Widiawan, Harry. "Sangiran Site: The Unfinished Story." *Traces ASIA Webinar Series III*. Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City. February 15, 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPwc0G_HSVI.

Zialcita, Fernando. "The Indigenous Thrives in Us." *National Quincentennial Committee Countdown to 500 Online Lectures*. Lecture No. 13. December 2, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wD1M6ob4S0&t=1527s> Subscribed December 2, 2020.

Podcast:

"Celebrated Filipino-Australian writer Merlinda Bobis shares her journey as a migrant worker and her aspirations for the future of literature" www.sbs.com.au March 19, 2021

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

https://www.sbs.com.au/language/filipino/en/podcast-episode/celebrated-filipino-australian-writer-shares-her-journey-as-a-migrant-writer-and-her-aspirations-for-the-future-of-literature/ykv6f6ei1
Accessed and downloaded March 23, 2021.

Pagdiriwang Conference 2021:

https://www.facebook.com/BagumbayanConference/videos/2797532877176844/

APPENDICES

Note A: Philippine Archaeology in Southeast-Asian Context: Looking back from its beginnings in Henry Otley Beyer [1883-1966], through the lens of Solheim's Nusantao (2006)

Henry Otley Beyer gave a significant impetus to archaeology in the Philippines. As the "father of anthropology and archaeology in the Philippines," Beyer primarily mentored young archaeologists who, under his tutelage, became established in the field.

One such student is Wilhelm G. Solheim II, who earned the monicker "Mr. Archaeology," and who would later propose an alternative periodization of Philippine prehistory, diverging from Beyer's European classification where the basis is the arrival of humankind in the Philippines and the formative process of what is known as the "Filipino." Thus, the four periods as proposed by Solheim are: (1) the Archaic period, from the first arrival of humankind in the Philippines to 5,000 B.C. (2) the Incipient Filipino, from 5,000 to 1,000 B.C. (3) the Formative Filipino, from 1,000 B.C. to 500 A.D., and (4) the Established Filipino, from 500 A.D. to 1521 (Solheim 1980 in Ronquillo in Paz 2004: 26, 28).

Solheim thus proposed a new model of the peopling of the Philippines, contrary to Beyer's "Wave Migration Theory." Moreover, the theory does not only focus on migration as the instigator for the spread of cultural patterns in Southeast Asia, but that this was brought about by an extensive trade network. This theorizing is based on his, and other current studies in Southeast Asian archaeology.

To his credit, Beyer was first to theorize on such a question and his theory has become very popular. It has also generated archaeological research by Beyer himself and his associates. This led to the identification of fossil mammals like the *Stegodon*, *Elephas*, *Bos*, *Sus*, and *Cervus* in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, and compared to that of Upper Trinil Layer at Sangiran, Central Java, in association with tektites that were confirmed to have fallen during the late Middle Pleistocene, and thus lending credence to the land bridge theory. (Covar 2000:14) However, there have been a number of objections to

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

his *Wave Migration Theory*, among which are Bellwood's *Austronesian Diffusion Theory*, which has also become a popular alternative.

Solheim's theory is imbued with much anthropological emphasis: it is about people, thus retaining a hint of the anthropological attempt of Beyer. These people of Solheim, the *Nusantao*, to use his own metaphor, do not consider the sea as a "barrier" but as a "bridge": "they were well-acquainted with life on land while having their life focused on the sea." (Solheim 2006:142)

These developments in archaeology are of specific interest for anthropological studies in the Bicol region, it being part of southern Philippines, Solheim's proposed homeland of the *Nusantao* (Solheim 1975 in Shutler Jr. 2004:5). Since Bicol is situated in riverine and coastal environments, boats figure extensively in Bicol's past and contemporary life. The peninsula is mainland Luzon's gateway farther south, into the Visayas.

Thus, it is important to put premium in the study of material culture and ways of life, not just on linguistic theory or an interpretation of symbols or designs, demonstrated in folkloric works like that of Merito Espinas' looking for the Bicol epic-fragment. Similarly, Zeus Salazar's interpretation of the Libmanan jar cover links it to the Bicol epic, but without being able to delineate the archaeological context of the artifact. Regarding the Bicol epic-fragment, it is preferable to consider it as what it is, a literary fiction, and that meanings inferred from artifacts without archaeological provenance ought to be deferred.

Note B: Prospero Covar and Albert Alejo, S.J. on Loob

The self, in Prospero Covar's metaphor, is like a *palayok* (earthen jar) that has exteriority and interiority (*labas at loob*) and depth (*lalim*). (Covar 1998:9) Albert Alejo's notion includes the element of expanse (*lawak*), derived also from the same metaphor. (Alejo 1999:170) Thus, as a horizon, the field discloses a world of significations from the depths of the self for the work of understanding. As process, it points to actions, at the helm of one's reaches, for the construction of culture.

Note C: Kaalamang-Bayang Teolohiya/ Pagsadios

From the paper presented at the International Conference on Folklore and Heritage, entitled *Tatsulok*: Paradigm of a *Kaalamang-bayang teolohiya*: the case of the *Deo* community in Mt. Banahaw and *Bathalismo* in Manila) UP Diliman, 2021

Ethnological reflection, derived from local fieldwork research interrogating, and interrogated by world ethnographies, could be a mode in articulating a model of local knowledge (*kaalamang bayan*) pertaining to theology (*pagsadios*), a Bikol concept derived from the work of Llana who sees it as "vernacular theology." *Kaalamang bayan*,

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

as a system of thought, in turn is derived from the perspectives of Prospero Covar, who insisted on generating emic accounts from the field.

Translating theology thus, and linking it with local knowledge, moves away from a conceptual apparatus that ties religion to an overt rationality. *Pagsadios* primarily refers to an emotional content and emotional context directing a valuing process undertaken by the human being in relation to divinity. It is thus both an action, and a passion: an affirmation of subjects' relation to a wholly Other, and a receptiveness to its movement affecting oneself in the world.

In the same manner, *kaalamang bayan* refers to understanding that is derived from intrapersonal and interpersonal memory articulated in a shared experience of place, power, and world. Taken together, I argue that *kaalamang-bayang pagsadios* is embodied and lived in the communal experience of- for want of better sociological categories- millenarian groups like *Deo* and *Lapiang Malaya* (Free Party) in their various reinventions such as *Bathalismo* in Paco, Manila. (Pama 2001) In retrospect, I would say that I chose these studies because they are the most othered; the most misunderstood.

Note D: *A Cross-cultural Context of the Concept of Rantau*

From an appendix of the poem "Miraya" (H. O. Pama, May 10, 2020)

Reviewed by Ma. Eloisa D. Sevilla-Perez (University of the Philippines Diliman) and Angela Lorenzana, Ph.D. (Bicol University, Legazpi City)

The concept of *rantau* in the East Miraya Bikol language in the Philippines, refers invariably to a wild animal, to a native gone away and suddenly returning, to a stranger, and even to a thief. The binary characteristic that links all these are the condition of a prolonged absence, and the facticity of a sudden appearance. A development of the same concept in Miraya is achieved by adding the prefix *ro* + root, i.e., *rorantau*, a gerund, which means the farthest reaches of one's travels. The same concept, used as a participle, describes a person as somebody well-travelled, thus implying a token of respect and a badge of honor in society.

In Cebuano language and culture, the concept is rendered as *langyaw* which means an outsider, a foreigner in a local place. It also means a visitor or traveler. This corresponds to the concept of 'stranger' in Miraya, but it removes the elements of subjective time that are expressed through a dialectic of absence and presence. Mojares articulates subjective disposition in what he describes as a certain 'ambivalence,' albeit accentuating the Malay meanings found in the concept of *rantau*. His description is reminiscent of the idea of liminality in Victor Turner's reflections on *rites de passage* and the role of ritual in the formation of society. Mojares says:

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

"(A)mbivalence lies at the heart of the journey. This is suggested in the indigenous concepts of *rantau* and *langyaw*. A key concept in Malay, *rantau* means 'to leave one's home area,' 'to go on a journey,' while the journey may be impelled by practical motives (to seek work, education, or wealth) it has the underlying sense of 'going forth to become a man.' Yet, at the same time, it also has the variant connotation of 'being a stranger'" (Mojares 1997:72).

One notices that the Miraya language has retained the Malay (Minangkabau) terminology and meaning. Both Miraya and Minangkabau are oral languages. The Cebuano usage is also reflected in another related concept in Miraya, which could be considered a 'slang' version of *rantau*, and that is the concept of *lantyagaw*, here reflecting a borrowing from, or a modification of the Cebuano concept. This variant of the Cebuano means, in Miraya, an aimless adventure, but a normal, tolerable activity, implying playfulness and in extreme, even a taciturn playfulness.

Among the Minangkabau people of Indonesia, in the Sumatran uplands at the heart of *dunia Melayu*, (I use the term *Melayu* in the same sense as Andaya's. [2001:316]) *Rantau* is an institution. In a relatively old Malay dictionary, *rantau* means "a reach in a river, a stretch of a coastline; the sinuosities [*sic.*] of a river or coast; to coast." (Shellabear 1912:107) In a more contemporary dictionary, *rantau* means "abroad, across the sea, shore …" and there are derivative concepts such as the concept of *merantau*, an intransitive verb which means "to sail away, seek your fortune, settle overseas." Then there are the related notions of *perantau*, a noun denoting "settler (in a foreign place)" and *perantauan*, a noun which means "abroad, in another place." (Davidsen 2009). Moreover, *rantau* has a twin institution, the theatrical *randai*, which is staged as a prelude to the performance of *rantau*. In fact, "*randai* prepares for *rantau*." (Cohen 2003:224)

The Malay meanings and cultural ritual, when compared with Miraya and Cebuano understandings, form a composite whole that affords the Filipino concept its moorings. As Fox summarizes this worldview,

(M)erantau (voluntary migration) is from the root word *rantau* (coastal/riverine areas), meaning to go to the *rantau*. Initially, *merantau* was undertaken in groups to extend to the Minangkabau territory and for trade. However, *merantau* has become an institutionalized practice where individuals go beyond their natal villages or the Minangkabau heartland, usually to urban centers, to seek livelihood. *Merantau* can also be regarded as a rite of passage to adulthood for young men. The commonly cited effects of *merantau* are the relief of the pressure on subsistence lands in the highlands, and the low ratio of adult men in the villages of the heartland. Up till the nineteenth century, *merantau* was undertaken by men, but currently women may also accompany their husbands to the *rantau*" (Fox 2006:142).

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3

Note E: *DaSein as Yaon*

Jove Jim Aguas, Ph.D. (2003) has developed a philosophical analysis aimed at linguistic translation. He demonstrates that the Bikol term *yaon* is equivalent to the German (Heideggerian) *DaSein*. In doing so, Aguas offers a better translation than Mintz and Britanico's (1985) Bikol lexical entries, translating it simply as an adverbial "over there" further giving several meanings depending on what noun/ locative marker is paired to it to form a compound, e.g., with *sa* to form over-therein, with *digdi* to form "over here," with *diyan* to form "over there" (which, I note, is a redundancy of the originally-provided meaning), with *duman* to form "over there yonder," and with *sain* to form "over where." It misses entirely to cover the simple principle: *yaon* is never only "over" even as it is almost always only "there." *Yaon* is not merely a pointer: it is the being pointed at, as it is the being pointing, and that is the point.

The justification for Aguas' translation can be found in Bikol usage. Yaon can stand alone, a substantive signifying a range of meanings. In Aguas' thesis it can accommodate a Heideggerian *Weltaunschaung*, an approach to an articulation of Bikol ontology. Understood with *dalan*, demonstrated in the catchphrases that I coined, i.e., *An yaon na dalan an dalan nin yaon. An yaon dalan, pagdalan sa yaon. An dalan yaon. Uya!* (That which is there as road is the route of being. There-being is passing through; beholding being. The way is there-being. There it is there, it is being-beheld), it opens to an ontological state, and stance. *Yaon* is thus a middle ground between flux and purpose, between the unruly and the rules by which a way of being, an *ethos*, is disclosed.

Acknowledgement

The author wishes to acknowledge the following whose invaluable help as translators and conversation partners during research for this article:

- *Rumah Santo Tomas Aquino*, Surabaya, Indonesia:
  Joseto Bernadas, OP, Marco Silaen, OP and Antonius Widhi Pramudianto, OP
- OP Awam- Surabaya Chapter
- *Santo Domingo Convent*, Quezon City, Philippines:
  Ramonclaro Mendez, OP, Ph.D.
- Ma. Eloisa D. Sevilla-Perez, Ph.D.
  College of Arts and Literature, University of the Philippines- Diliman
- Angela Lorenzana, Ph.D.
  Bicol University Legazpi City; CHED Commissioner for the Bikol Language

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55997/2003pslix179a3