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Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito

Waiting just behind the curtain of this age

PHILIPPINE PAVILION



This publication accompanies the exhibition *Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito / Waiting just behind the curtain of this age*, the official representation of the Philippines at the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (Venice Art Biennale 2024). On view from April 20, 2024 through November 24, 2024 at the Philippine Pavilion at the Artiglierie in Arsenale, a major exhibition space in Venice, Italy.

Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito

Waiting just behind the curtain of this age

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PHILIPPINE PAVILION

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HERMANO PULI
FAITH, FREEDOM AND THE FILIPINO STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Victorino Mapa Manalo
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THE HISTORY OF THE PHILIPPINES is a complex fabric of narratives of bravery, selflessness, and struggle against the oppressive forces of colonial domination. Over the centuries, the archipelago has witnessed the indomitable spirit of its people rising against foreign rule, and carving out a legacy of resilience that remains a source of national pride. Heroes such as Jose Rizal, who harnessed the power of the pen to fight for independence; Andres Bonifacio, who led the mass revolution; and Lapu-Lapu, who valiantly defended Mactan against Ferdinand Magellan's expedition, have become exemplars of resistance.

Yet, amid these celebrated figures, countless heroes have had their stories unheralded. One such overlooked figure is Apolinario de la Cruz, otherwise known as Hermano Puli, whose pivotal role in the 19th-century struggle against Spanish colonialism and religious injustice, has, for too long, remained shrouded in obscurity. Puli's story is a testament to the depth and diversity of the country's courageous history. His sacrifices, determination, and unwavering faith was integral in paving the nation's path towards independence. While Rizal, Bonifacio, and Lapu-Lapu hold well deserved places in the annals of Philippine history, acknowledging the contributions of those like Apolinario de la Cruz further kindles the flame of freedom in the country. His story, once brought into the light, offers a nuanced understanding of the Philippines's enduring spirit of resistance.

The title of this year's featured exhibition of the Philippine Pavilion at the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, "Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito" (Waiting just behind the curtain of this age), is taken from Apolinario de la Cruz's correspondences. The exhibition, curated by Carlos

Quijon, Jr. and featuring the work of artist Mark Salvatus, revolves around Mount Banahaw, a three-peaked forested mountain located on the boundary between Laguna and Quezon, and Lucban, the artist's hometown located in southern Luzon. The exhibition provides the public with a chance to explore the life and legacy of de la Cruz, shedding light on his crucial role in shaping the Philippines's struggle against Spanish colonial conquest. Moreover, it delves into the elaborate relationship between Mount Banahaw and the communities living in its vicinity, and explores how the mountain's presence has profoundly mediated their artistic and cultural expressions.

To achieve a more profound grasp of the exhibition, one must closely examine Apolinario de la Cruz's life and what motivated him, as well as the social and historical circumstances that gave rise to the organization he co-founded. According to Reynaldo Ileto, a Filipino historian who specializes in Asian history, religion, and society, Apolinario de la Cruz was born circa 1814 to peasant parents in Lucban, and embarked on a path towards monastic life after receiving early religious education. At the age of 15, he made the decision to pursue this vocation, leading him to Manila in 1830. However, his aspirations to join the religious orders were dashed due to his status as "indio" or native. In due time, he found work as a lay brother at the charitable San Juan de Dios Hospital. During this time, he was actively involved with the Cofradia de San Juan de Dios, a brotherhood that welcomed indios and was connected to the hospital. With a keen interest in mystical theology, he eventually refined his skills as a lay preacher, becoming more adept at exuding charisma and persuasiveness when addressing congregants during services.

At the age of almost 17, de la Cruz, together with 18 fellow residents of Lucban who had relocated to Manila, helped establish a confraternity, the Hermandad de la Archi-Cofradia del Glorioso Señor San Jose y de la Virgen del Rosario (Brotherhood of the Great Sodality of the Glorious Lord Saint Joseph and of the Virgin of the Rosary). It was during this time when Apolinario was also known as Hermano Puli among his fellow *cofrades*. During this period, such associations were prevalent throughout the country and were believed to serve as vehicles by the Spanish authorities to further spread Christianity. Members of these fraternities were enthusiastic churchgoers and actively participated in various religious festivities and celebrations. As a relatively modest organization, the Cofradia remained inconspicuous and operated without attracting official attention for approximately eight years.

Eventually, the Cofradia experienced significant growth, attracting members from Tayabas, Laguna, and Batangas. Their membership expansion followed a structured and simple process: the organization sent out representatives who, upon successfully "enrolling" 12 individuals, earned the title of *cabecilla* (headman), each

of whom was granted one vote within the supreme council. Additionally, every member was required to make monthly contributions to support various activities, including masses and gatherings. Members would meet every 19th of the month for their "reunion" when they would celebrate High Mass, gather at the home of the cabecilla, prayed and read correspondences from Apolinario. Local religious authorities began to perceive such activities as potentially heretical, leading to a raid of one of their reunions on 19 October 1840.

In the following year, activities within and surrounding the Cofradia intensified, resulting in a heightened frequency of raids by and encounters with the Spanish authorities. Throughout these confrontations and battles, Cofradia members, described as being in a state of intense fervor, exhibited unwavering determination. Ileto further delves into the impulses that drove Tagalog peasants to join the Cofradia. The group crafted rituals aimed at initiating new members, requiring them to demonstrate their commitment and faith with seeking purification and inner strength. They would regularly engage in prayer, including the recitation of the *Dalit*, a 47-stanza poem initially published in 1645 by an Augustinian friar. This prayer painted a vision of an ideal and perfect state, reminiscent of Eden, with the promise of its restoration in Heaven. In the context of the Cofradia, Heaven was held as an inspiring ideal, where all would become "sources of light" or *liwanag*. The members' lives were deeply influenced by the teachings of the *Dalit*, which emphasized principles of equality, pure intentions, unity, and oneness. Furthermore, the prayer also dwelt on the concept of *anting-anting* (amulets), where individuals possessing specific amulets were believed to possess extraordinary potencies, including enhanced agility, speed, and strength.

Approximately a year after the initial raid on a Cofradia reunion in Lucban, a band of 300 men launched an assault on the Cofradia's encampment situated in Isabang on Mount Banahaw. The Cofradia, however, successfully withstood the attack. Subsequently, the group relocated the camp to Aritao, where Apolinario offered numerous prophesies and assured the group that during the time of battle, "invisible soldiers would be summoned, and the angels would swing the tide of battle in the Cofradia's favor... and a big lake would open up and swallow the advancing enemy troops."[1]

A divine intervention was forthcoming, and it was what the leaders of the Cofradia reiterated to its members: that there was a divine plan where there would be a series of "abrupt events" that would lead to Judgment Day. In one of his correspondences, Apolinario stated that Victory was "just behind the curtain of this age (*Nasa cabila ng tabing lamang sa Panahong yto)*. Before the curtain is finally drawn, all must trust in God, the Virgin, and the Cofradia's patron, St. Joseph."[2] Members of the Cofradia held the belief that in the midst of battle, they would confront their adversaries with unwavering courage and possess an immunity to bullets.

Less than a month following the assault on Isabang, a combined force consisting of about 1,000 soldiers and local peasants infiltrated the Alitao camp. A four-hour battle resulted in 300 to 500 rebel casualties, with approximately 500 Cofradia members captured and imprisoned. Apolinario was captured the next day, executed and dismembered, with his severed head placed on display along the roadside as a warning against involvement in heretical and rebellious activities against the Spanish government. On the same day, around 200 Cofradia prisoners were executed.

De la Cruz's rebellion is a significant episode in Philippine history because it underscores the complex and multifaceted nature of the country's struggle for independence. The movement demonstrated that the Filipino fight for freedom was not limited to secular organizations or military uprisings but was deeply intertwined with their religious and cultural beliefs. While de la Cruz and his followers ultimately faced brutal suppression by the Spanish authorities, their legacy endured, and their valiant stand against colonial oppression contributed to the broader discourse and practice of Philippine nationalism, setting the stage for future generations of Filipinos to continue the struggle for social justice and self-determination.

The lasting memory of De la Cruz's ideas on subsequent generations in the Philippines remains a testament to his visionary leadership and the principles for which he stood. He fused religion and nationalism. His emphasis on equality and justice, and his unwavering dedication to the cause of spiritual and national liberation have left an indelible mark on the Filipino psyche. His legacy and spirit can be seen in ongoing struggles for land reform, protection of indigenous rights, and the fight against corruption.

By remembering Apolinario de la Cruz in this year's featured exhibition of the Philippine Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, we honor his legacy as it resonates in the hearts of those who continue to grapple with the challenges of our times. Through this exhibition, we extend his legacy across future generations, encouraging them to take up the torch of change.

1 Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840–1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1979), 59.

2 Ibid., 60.

BEYOND BORDERS
FILIPINOS AT THE VENICE BIENNALE— GLOBAL IMPACT, LOCAL ENRICHMENT

Enrique A. Manalo
Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs
Republic of the Philippines

THE INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION of La Biennale di Venezia stands as a globally acclaimed and esteemed convergence of contemporary art and design. It provides a unique setting for nations to convey their narratives in art to a worldwide audience and serves as a space for dialogue and cultural exchange. It invites artists, curators, and designers to explore and engage with the imaginative and pertinent expressions of our time.

The Venice Biennale's longevity and global reach have cemented its reputation as a vital platform for the interaction of ideas and a fertile ground for innovation and artistic practice. Biennale Arte is not merely an exhibition; it is a catalyst for intellectual exchange, fostering discussions on current issues, cultural diversity, and the ever evolving nature of art itself. It represents a microcosm of the world's creative thought, as it continually redefines the boundaries of what is possible and challenges what we think we already know.

Since 2015, Filipino curators and creators have been making their mark on the global stage on a biannual basis, particularly through their participation in the Philippine Pavilion in the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. However, their effect extends beyond the confines of the international art scene; it reaches deep into the heart of the Philippines, where their artistic endeavors create ripples through cultural enrichment, community development, and a deeper awareness and appreciation of national issues and concerns.

One of the key aspects of Filipino involvement in the Venice Biennale is its contribution to the global art discourse. Filipino artists and curators bring unique

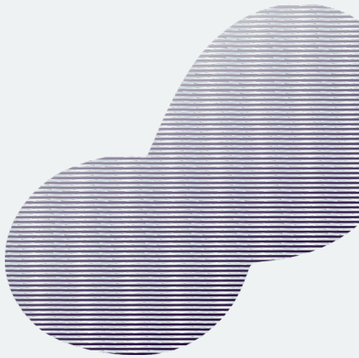
perspectives and cultural narratives to the global stage. Drawing inspiration from our rich cultural heritage, history, and local contexts, they introduce fresh narratives, aesthetics, and ideas that have caught the attention of audiences from around the world. This is exemplified by the Philippine Pavilion's featured exhibitions in the Venice Art Biennale since 2015, starting with *Tie a String Around the World,* curated by Patrick Flores, where the exhibition sought to initiate a conversation around the historical significance of the sea, its connections to today's global dynamics, ownership disputes, and the battles of nation-states over vast and fiercely disputed natural resources. Two years later, the featured exhibition of the Philippine Pavilion further drew from our local history and literature with *The Spectre of Comparison*, curated by Joselina Cruz, which examined the artists' perspectives on practices in both the Philippines and their host nations in the diaspora, akin to Crisostomo Ibarra, Jose Rizal's character in *Noli Me Tangere* (1887), who when looking at the Manila botanical gardens, had a dual perception. Enriching the conversation on identity and meaning, the featured exhibition in 2019, *Island Weather*, curated by Tessa Maria Guazon, sought to enhance our dialogues concerning various perspectives and modes of navigating geographies and temporalities.

Prompted by Philippine material culture, particularly the traditions of weaving in the Philippines, Yael Buencamino Borromeo and Arvin Flores, through the vision of Gerry Tan, (together with Sammy N. Buhle and Felidicad A. Prudente), took cues from indigenous textiles around the country with *Andi taku di sana, Amung taku e sana/All of us present, This is our gathering* in 2022, which pursued a depiction of the transformation of cultural knowledge into visual expression, collectively advocating the appreciation of Philippine traditions through global interaction.

The global art scene has witnessed the emergence of Filipino contemporary art as a dynamic and influential force, characterized by its rich cultural diversity, innovative expressions, and thought-provoking narratives. In this year's Biennale Arte, the country has once again contributed to the global discourse with *Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito/Waiting just behind the curtain of this age*, curated by Carlos Quijon, Jr. It features the work of contemporary artist Mark Salvatus and centers on the ethno-ecological aspects of Mount Banahaw and Lucban, which is the artist's hometown. It also takes inspiration from the mountain's role in animating local music and spirituality. The exhibition title derives its name from the words of Apolinario de la Cruz, also known as Hermano Puli, who served as a guiding light for the people of Lucban in their resistance against the discrimination imposed by the Spanish Catholic Church. The concepts it seeks to explore encompass the interplay of mysticism and modernity, the profound historical past and the imminent future, and the convergence of cosmopolitan and vernacular elements.

Through its international nature, the Venice Biennale has played a significant role as a catalyst for Filipino artists and curators to engage and ground themselves more deeply in their local contexts. This international exposure, combined with critical reflection and cross-cultural interactions, encourages artists to enhance their Filipino identity in more profound and nuanced ways.

Through the sustained effort of the Department of Foreign Affairs with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Office of Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda, a collective endeavor such as the participation in Venice is surely an artistic and diplomatic initiative. But it is also a call to action, a way to prompt Filipinos not only to exalt their heritage but also to come to grips with contemporary issues and propose a dynamic, multifaceted identity to a vastly volatile world.



SACRED LANDSCAPES
THE CONVERGENCE OF FAITH, NATURE, AND HISTORY ON MOUNT BANAHAW

Loren Legarda
Senate President Pro Tempore
Republic of the Philippines

APPROXIMATELY THREE HOURS from Metro Manila, Mount Banahaw stands as a prominent natural landmark in the Philippines. Beyond its breathtaking natural beauty, this mountain holds great cultural and spiritual significance for Filipinos. In addition to being a habitat for natural ecologies, it is a dynamic hotspot of cultural ecologies and creativity, where the natural environment and cultural traditions converge and synergize to shape a vibrant artistic life.

In 2009, Republic Act 9847 was passed, declaring Mounts Banahaw and San Cristobal in Laguna and Quezon as Protected Area, and designating the sites for management, protection, and preservation. Standing approximately 7,080 feet above sea level, the mountain is a common destination for spiritual wayfarers, travelers, hikers, and trekkers.

Fr. Vitaliano Gorospe, S.J., a theologian and a university professor who has studied popular Filipino religion, explains that the mountain is home to important ecosystems that serve as a "resource-base both to human and ecological systems" as it serves as a habitat for the wide range of flora and fauna, as well as a catchment basin for potable water supply for the residents in the vicinity, and a haven for pilgrims and their devotions.[1]

It is not uncommon for Filipinos to have a profound affinity with their environment. Pre-conquest Filipinos were known to hold a deep spiritual bond with it. The mountain is felt and imagined to possess great animist energy. It is a widespread belief that spiritual beings reside in caves, trees, mounds, streams, and other natural features. Tagalog communities regard Mount Banahaw as the dwelling place of divine beings, with rituals and ceremonies performed

1 See Vitaliano R. Gorospe, "Mount Banahaw: The Power Mountain From Ritualism to Spirituality," *Philippine Studies* 40, no. 2 (1992): 204–18. Read the essay in this volume, 96–115.

to honor these spirits. Prior to and during the Spanish colonial period in the country, religious and military groups sought refuge in the mountains, where they continued to pursue their endeavors toward spiritual enlightenment, purification, and political liberation. This convergence of beliefs has fostered a unique and intricate confluence on the slopes of Mount Banahaw, making it a spiritually charged landscape.

The religious beliefs and practices associated with Mount Banahaw have profoundly defined the cultural landscape of the surrounding region. Over the centuries, the mountain has become a focal point for devotion and pilgrimage, which has left an indelible mark on the traditions, architecture, and way of life of local communities. The landscape abounds in numerous sacred shrines, grottos, and chapels, a testament to the enduring faith of the people. Furthermore, the symbiotic relationship between spirituality and ecology has led to efforts to preserve the mountain's natural beauty, resulting in conservation initiatives and environmental awareness among the locals.

Therefore, it is fitting and inspiring to foreground Mount Banahaw as the scenario of this year's exhibition at the Philippine Pavilion in the 60th International Art Exhibition at la Biennale di Venezia.

Lucban, a town in close proximity to the mountain, boasts a wealth of cultural traditions that provide a rich context for exploration. The vibrant energy emanating from the mountain finds resonance in the vibrant cultural and artistic expressions of its community. While Lucban is renowned for its colorful Pahiyas Festival, an annual celebration in honor of San Isidro de Labrador, and is celebrated for its distinctive culinary offerings such as *longganisa*, *pancit habhab*, and *hardinera*, the town also stands as the hometown of significant historical and cultural personalities.

The exhibition, *Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito / Waiting just behind the curtain of this age,* curated by Carlos Quijon, Jr., presents the work of Filipino artist Mark Salvatus and explores the discourses of life force and mysticism surrounding Mount Banahaw and how these discourses affect surrounding communities and cultures. These discourses are explored through three histories: the figure of Hermano Puli, a revolutionary lay preacher hailing from Lucban; generations of Lucban-based marching bands; and the Salvatus family archives. This thematic approach delves into the interconnected ideas of how nature constellates artistic and cultural life.

One of the elements of the exhibition probes the life and revolutionary pursuit of Apolinario de la Cruz, better known as Hermano Puli, who founded the Cofradia de San Jose (also known as the Hermandad de la Archi-Cofradia Glorioso Señor San José y de la Virgen del Rosario) in response to his people's experiences under the influence of the Catholic Church. The Cofradia was a religious and nationalist movement that sought spiritual renewal, social justice, and resistance against Spanish colonial rule. Regarded as a form of spiritual purification and a way to commune with God, members of the organization would make pilgrimages to the mountain, often undertaking arduous journeys to reach its sacred sites.

Further, the exhibition features the work of Mark Salvatus, a Lucban-born contemporary artist who has researched the vernacular histories of Mount Banahaw and Lucban, gathered from his family archives, as well as from popular culture and historical and cultural narratives. For the exhibition, Salvatus brings together Lucban-based artists, musicians, and filmmakers, fostering a creative synergy deeply rooted in the local context. Among the musicians are the Young Banahaw Orchestra, Banda Banahaw, and the Babat Orchestra, which present a "proto-history of the migrant Filipino musician that in the contemporary time has become an exceptional cosmopolitan figure."[2] The Babat family that hails from Lucban has travelled around the country and some members continue to perform in international cruise ships. Moreover, the narrative touches on the work and life of Abbo de la Cruz, a film director and actor known for the film, *Misteryo sa Tuwa,* portraying the mountain as the backdrop for a plane crash while probing into themes of greed, poverty, and corruption. Drawing from the spiritual and mystical spaces in Mount Banahaw, Salvatus creates fiberglass rock formations, alluding to the *puwestos*, or natural formations serving as shrines which are believed to be inhabited by spirits and unseen entities.

2 From the curatorial proposal text of Pavilion curator Carlos Quijon, Jr.

With the dynamics surrounding Mount Banahaw at the center of the Philippine Pavilion's exhibition in this year's Biennale Arte, it underscores that the convergence of nature, spirituality, culture, and art serves as a vivid testament to the braided relationships that are woven in our world. Mount Banahaw stands not just as a geographical landmark but as a spiritual epicenter, a cultural hub, and a source of artistic inspiration. This exhibition invites the global audience to contemplate the interconnectedness of these facets within the Filipino experience. It reminds us that nature is not just a backdrop but an active participant in our cultural narratives, that spirituality is an intrinsic part of our subjectivity, that culture is an index of our deep-rooted beliefs, and that art is the medium that enables us to communicate and celebrate these truths. The gathering of these elements stands as a reminder of the power of art in fostering a deeper understanding of the world's lush cultural and environmental landscapes – simultaneously threatened by extraction and sustained by devotion to their spirits.



AN ASSEMBLY, A SCENOGRAPHY OF SYMPATHIES

Carlos Quijon, Jr.
Curator

A BIRD'S TRILL flits past us. We look around and follow its sound to locate it. Curtains of translucent textile calm the light that cascades into the space of the pavilion. The sound of breath is discernible as instruments transform it into the rich density of drone or bright staccatos of pulsing sound. A keener ear will hear pursed lips vibrating, varying intensities against the instruments' mouthpiece that create music in the ambient air. Steep stone formations stretch this scene—crests peeking behind curtains, peaks adorned with brass instruments, growing out of them. In *Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito / Waiting just behind the curtain of this age*, Mark Salvatus explores the ethno-ecologies of Mt. Banahaw, a three-peaked forested mountain located on the boundary between Laguna and Quezon, and Lucban, the artist's hometown.

The term "ethno-ecology" foregrounds an assembling of ethnography and ecology, an animated relation between culture and the surrounding more-than-human world. It looks into how ecological knowledges interface with cultural imaginations: from how people perceive and act on the environment to how environmental considerations shape cultural life. For the Philippine Pavilion, Salvatus prospects the centrality of Mt. Banahaw in the cultural life of Lucban, from a revolution that aimed to encourage the native folk to find their own vernacular way of religious discernment, a history of marching bands and musicians, a film of mystery and joy, to Salvatus's very own practice of assembly and salvaging that discloses a planetary political spirit. *Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito / Waiting just behind the curtain of this age* is a proscenium in which the mystical vitality of the mountain is made material through a mise-en-scène of sound, light, and stone sculptures; where stories are the rich culture of the music of its surrounding communities that it has enlivened and that enlivens it are shared; and, where the reverberations of its place in vaster constellations of revolutionary and political life in a planetary scheme of things are rendered palpable, undeniable.

The pavilion's title is taken from Apolinario de la Cruz (known as Hermano Puli), a lay preacher born in 1814 in Lucban who founded in 1832 the Hermandad de la Archi-Cofradia del Glorioso Señor San José y de la Virgen del Rosario (Brotherhood of the Great Sodality of the Glorious Lord Saint Joseph and of the Virgin of the Rosary), hereafter referred to as the *Cofradia*. The Cofradia was a popular religious formation, the membership of which was exclusive to native men and women (i.e. excluding Spaniards and mestizos). Puli's attempts to have the organization legalized failed as the colonial authorities found such an exclusion suspicious. Because of its continued operation even after being denied legal status, the Cofradia's activities were deemed illegal and subversive by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Faced with the forces of the government and the clergy, the Cofradia transformed into a "militant rebel army by a process which took place on such short notice as to be almost spontaneous."[1]

In anticipation of the encounter with the Spanish military, in what has been considered the "Tayabas rebellion," Puli delivered one of his most rousing declarations before the Brotherhood's rebel frontline and declared that the "abrupt events" that were about to transpire "can be anticipated by the faithful through certain signs."[2] Part of Puli's pronouncement was his promise to the members of Cofradia that bullets would not wound them and that if worse came to worst, Puli would "cause the earth to open and swallow the enemy forces."[3] As the historian Reynaldo Ileto annotates: "Apolinario was probably pointing to these when he advised the cofrades always to be aware of the 'meaning of the times.' Victory is '*just behind the curtain of this age*' (*nasasa cabila nang*

1 David Sweet, "A Proto-Political Peasant Movement in the Spanish Philippines: The *Cofradia de San Jose* and the Tayabas Rebellion of 1841," *Asian Studies Journal* 8, no. 1 (1970): 108.

2 Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840–1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1979), 60.

3 Sweet, "A Proto-Political Peasant Movement in the Spanish Philippines," 110.

tabing lamang sa Panahong yto). Before the curtain is finally drawn, all must trust (*panalig*) God, the Virgin, and the Cofradia's patron, St. Joseph."[4]

The nature of this rebellion has puzzled historians, including David Sweet, especially with how accounts written by Spanish chroniclers portray Puli as "a swindler and his followers fanatics."[5] For Sweet this is the primary reason the rebellion "has been slighted in the books of Philippine history."[6] He continues: "In the context of a search for the 'origins of national independence,' the Tayabas rebellion must seem embarrassingly futile and 'irrational'."[7] The Cofradia ended up losing its final front with a number of its surviving members fleeing into the lush forests of Mt. Banahaw, "assisted by a terrible thunderstorm which broke at the critical moment."[8] Puli was captured and killed by the Spanish forces. His body was quartered and disposed of in different areas in the vicinity of the mountain.

Puli's enigmatic turn of phrase speaks to a threshold between the present and a promised future. Sweet considers the rhetoric that propelled Puli's rebellion as "proto-political," an understanding of the possibility of social change emanating from an imagination of an "other-worldliness" rather than political change, that gave it "organizational and revolutionary potential."[9] It was an understanding of reality as "magical as well as instrumental," further foregrounding the mystical conditions surrounding Mt. Banahaw as locus of this revolutionary moment.[10] Sweet explains further:

> The religious character of the movement was a strength, rather than a weakness...The peasants were politically helpless and have no experience of politics. There was no area other than religious activity in which they could express the creative impulse to determine the quality and conditions of their own lives. A religious organization might be tolerated, moreover, in an authoritarian society which had no place for popular secular organizations of any kind. The religious mode facilitated communication between leaders and followers, and allowed the creation of new forms of authority, new statuses, new avenues of mobility, new definitions of legitimacy—a "practice run" in organization to build the basis for a viable movement. It was also a bridge between past and future, on which traditional behavior could be experienced in new contexts, and old issues invested with new meanings.[11]

This imagination of a threshold ("nasasa cabila nang tabing lamang sa Panahong yto"), a way through predicament by way of faith, illuminates a new temporal order—a millenarian or postmillennial time—that the anthropologist Mary Louise Pratt defines in terms of "crises of futurity" and planetary *subjectivity* rather than global *agency*.[12] This shift in emphasis is drawn from theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's seminal work on planetarity. For Spivak, rather than "continental, global, or worldly imaginations" where imaginations of time and space rely on abstractions of commensuration, evenness, and similarity, "the planet is in the species of alterity... [t]o be human is intended toward the other."[13] She explains:

> If we imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities, alterity remains underived from us; it is not our dialectical negation, it contains us as much as it flings us away. And thus to think of it is already to transgress, for, in spite of our forays into what we metaphorize, differently, as outer and inner space, what is above and beyond our own reach is not continuous with us as it is not, indeed, specifically discontinuous.[14]

In this exploration of planetarity as an idiom of reconfiguring the operations of subjectivity, embodiment, and knowledge with which we attempt to grasp a vaster world, Spivak conceptualizes planetarity as a way of "render[ing] our home uncanny."[15] In many ways, the tenor of mysticism speaks to this planetary imagination of alterity and the uncanny. Spivak's planetary turn places alterity

4 Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 60.

5 Sweet, "A Proto-Political Peasant Movement in the Spanish Philippines," 113.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 111.

9 Sweet, "A Proto-Political Peasant Movement in the Spanish Philippines," 113.

10 Ibid., 116.

11 Ibid., 113.

12 See Mary Louise Pratt, *Planetary Longings* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022).

13 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 72–3.

14 Ibid., 73.

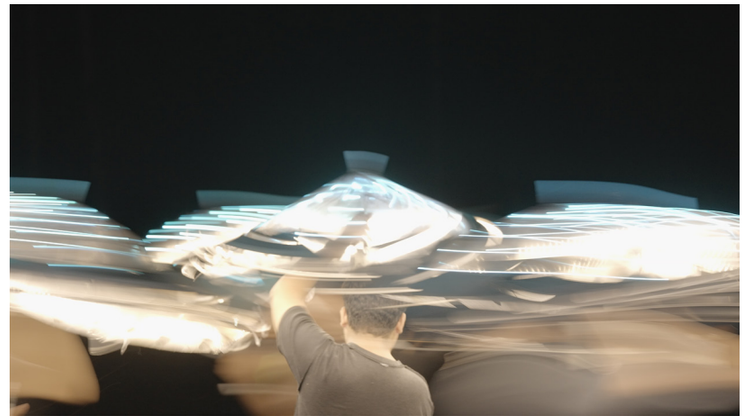
15 Ibid.

as simultaneously familiar and strange, simultaneously inherent and alien. It discerns a subjectivity that is neither completely psychic nor inalienably material. Alterity, the inclination toward the other, is always constituted in these ambivalences. To speak of the planetary is to acknowledge and account for this inclination.

Mt. Banahaw occupies a pertinent place in these imaginations of millenarian time. Sweet's conceptualization of the "proto-political" as "other-worldliness" becomes resonant in this schema as it presents a breaching and bridging of the distinctions between the real and the uncanny. The mountain becomes a site for mediating these distinctions, exceptionally playing out a planetary subjectivity and further mapping it out onto how this ethno-ecology shapes artistic practice and formation. Mt. Banahaw has become a holy place for a host of mystical and religious sects and cults, including the Suprema de la Iglesia del Ciudad Mística de Dios (Supreme Church of the Mystic City of God), who "live a fervent religious life in preparation for the prophesied Armageddon, which, they believe, will happen right in their midst."[16] It has also become an important post for anti-imperialist and anti-colonial movements, such as The New People's Army, the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Furthermore, it has played an important part in vernacular accounts of the existence of extraterrestrial life forms, which purportedly have chosen the mountain as a refueling stop. In all this, Mt. Banahaw offers a mystical lifeworld of vitality and renewal that these formations tap onto.

16 Rene Somera, "Pamumuwesto of Mount Banahaw," *Philippine Studies* 34, no. 4 (1986): 437.

Within this framework, *Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito* situates itself as speculative intimations of the contemporary condition and its possible futurities animated by the life force of Mt. Banahaw itself. It is an assemblage of vernacular and popular histories that sketches out the contours of the contemporary at the cusp of a post-pandemic world. The pavilion weaves together Salvatus's ongoing research on the vernacular histories of Mt. Banahaw and Lucban convened from family archives, popular materials, and different historical moments and mythical motifs. It looks at several trajectories of discourses on millenarian renewal that converge in Mt. Banahaw as mystical topos: from ecological



crises; the cosmic and cosmological aspects of extraterrestrial life; ideological imaginations in anti-colonial movements; to accounts of earthly transformation and reconfiguration, and how these are embodied in imaginations of locality and the vernacular lifeworlds of musicians and other cultural actors based in Lucban, including Salvatus himself. Salvatus's research discloses further constellations of this motif. In one of his grandfather's stories, when Lucban was threatened by a bandit attack, the forests surrounding it became a stretch of sea with waves as high as its surrounding mountains. In popular cinema, such as in the film *Misteryo sa Tuwa* (Joyful Mystery, 1984), the mountain is the site of a plane crash that sets out an allegory of human nature and the political situation of the Philippines during the time of the Marcoses.

Throughout the articulations and iterations of Salvatus's works on Mt. Banahaw and Lucban, the artist has delved deeper into what it takes to think about history and identity and belonging in complex and transverse ways. For the artist's *Museo ng Banahaw* (2017-ongoing), Salvatus has presented an ongoing archive of anything about the mountain, especially things related to its Lucban side. The artist assembled materials from the collection of his grandfather, objects sourced from popular culture, and even photographs of the mountain from his family members, all constituting a discursive trove that showed the place of the mountain in familial, popular, and vernacular imaginations. For

Araw na Nakapitapita (That Day Most Eagerly Awaited, 2020), the artist created a video installation from his home, shaped by the lockdowns during the coronavirus pandemic. From this domestic context, he wove the archives and stories of folklore and revolutions that he had collected into a narrative of hope and anticipation for better days.

Salvatus's artistic impulses are exceptional in this regard. He is a fabulist working across times and themes, materials and memories. This exhibition extends Salvatus's work on Lucban and Mt. Banahaw as ethno-ecological contexts capable of recasting the contours not only of community and belonging, but also of systems of knowledge and the agencies that animate and are animated through these. Through family stories and archives, popular media and vernacular mythos, and extending to various forms of migrant labor embedded in other ethno-ecologies, such as maritime entertainment and manpower, Salvatus's practice cultivates different ways of understanding and embodying the category of the national, encouraging the proliferation of attitudes, energies, and experiences addressed to or problematizing ideas of the nation and the national.





The inaugural moment of the pavilion prospects configurations of the contemporary age through the place of Lucban-based musicians in the imaginations of vernacular history and modernity. Salvatus takes inspiration from the popular sonic lifeworlds of the post-war archipelago through Lucban-based musicians, such as the Young Banahaw Orchestra, Banda Banahaw, and the Babat Orchestra, active from the 1950s. From archival materials and speculative turns, Salvatus draws out a proto-history of the migrant Filipino musician that in the contemporary time has become an exceptional cosmopolitan figure. This involves the career of the generations of the Babat family of musicians. The Babat Orchestra traveled to other provinces in Quezon as early as 1953. In 1978, the artist's grandfather Ramon Salvatus wrote words for a hymn to Lucban, for which Rustico Babat, an original member of the Babat Orchestra, composed the music. Continuing this lineage, Bong Babat, one of the younger generations of the Babat family, taught music and band in one of Lucban's high schools. The artist's brother studied clarinet under him. At present, the contemporary

generations of the Babats still perform for commercial cruise ships. This is a conversation that expands on performance studies scholar meLê yamomo's research on the role of migrant municipal bands from Manila and other musicians who were crucial in the imaginations of the "acoustic experience of modernity" in Asia-Pacific that "ensured the global contemporaneity of a city's soundscape…The local kingdoms and European colonies gained access to the sounds of modernity when they employed the Manila musicians, who became, as it were, the medium of modernity."[17]

As the pavilion's titular trope, "Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito" signals imminence. It alludes to a liminality which, in Puli's turn of phrase, anticipates an anticolonial or even postcolonial condition. The mystical is placed in the affective horizon of advent and anticipation, a space wherein something is yet to take place, a promise yet to be fulfilled. In these terms, the pavilion proposes an experience of passage and disclosure. Light, sound, and space coincide as a dramaturgy of the mystical. In the space of the exhibition, silhouettes are other people sharing this passage or else mere mirage that tricks the eye; a sudden tremor is the sound of the mechanical rumbling of an engine of a plane flying low overhead or a thunderstorm announcing its imminent landfall. All these are cues that entice the exhibition visitor to proceed, with either caution or excitement, deeper into the pavilion where behind draped textile walls is the story of the mountain, music, and the dynamics of nature and culture that reach behind and beyond this age. Informed by ethnographic, historical, and literary accounts of the mystical experience of Mt. Banahaw, what *Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito* presents is a mise-en-scène where propositions of the mystical mesh with its performative signals. The mystical constitutes a scenographic method in which the conditions of alterity and identity, the uncanny and the universal are allowed to inflect each other in a space that slowly unfolds as it is traversed.

17 meLê yamomo, "Brokering Sonic Modernities: Migrant Manila Musicians in the Asia Pacific, 1881–1948," *Popular Entertainment Studies* 6, no. 2 (2015): 27. Read his essay in this volume, 118–53.

The mystical in this exhibition then is experienced as one is thrown into the world of the exhibition. This is a theatrical notation in which the scenographic aspect of the pavilion calls

out its own aesthetic logic and its own constructed presence. The scholar Samuel Weber offers a way to think about the tenor of the theatrical and the kind of mediation it performs: "When an event or series of events takes place without reducing the place 'taken' to a purely neutral site, then that place reveals itself to be a 'stage,' and those events become theatrical happenings."[18] From the curtain panels playing with light to the atmospheric environment of bird calls and songs, the pavilion converses with how given the mystical experience is typically understood, while leaning onto the way the exhibitionary space manufactures for itself this air of mysticism. In this sense, the exhibition is aware of its artifice. It is through this self-awareness of artifice that the mise-en-scène of the pavilion imbues the scenic encounter and the passage through the exhibition space with an exceptionally poetic potential. The artifice then makes room for the transformative milieu of the mimetic, where the relations between alterity and identification are discerned and cultivated. The encounter is ecological in the way these are transformations that emerge from our situation in this passage, alongside and among the various elements of the exhibitionary experience. The scenographic and mimetic are potent procedures that the pavilion plays out in conversation with the mystical contexts that Salvatus's research opens up.

18 Samuel Weber, *Theatricality as Medium* (New York: Fordham University Press), 7.

This exploration of the discursive trajectories of the mystical necessarily speaks to its fraught history in the Philippines and in Southeast Asia, particularly during the Cold War. The critic Alice Guillermo has argued how mobilizations of mysticism have been ideologically instrumentalized in discourses of counter-insurgency. For Guillermo, imaginations of the mystical have been key in the instrumentalization of indigenous traditions in the service of the imperialist agenda of the United States of America across Southeast Asia. Scholar exchange programs supported by the Ford Foundation, for example, brought about new studies in the fields of anthropology, history, and other social sciences on indigenous, traditional, and folk belief systems, which in turn became pertinent considerations in conceptualizing counter-insurgency strategies centered on "psychological warfare" and "civic action."[19]

19 See Alice Guillermo, "Mga Istratehiyang Ideolohikal sa Katutubong Tradisyon," in *Mga Idea at Estilo: Komposisyong Pangkolehiyo sa Wikang Filipino*, edited by Lilia Quindoza-Santiago (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1995), 21–39.

A study on the pragmatics of these kinds of intercultural programs during the period clarifies these strategies: "The distinguishing features of the intercultural program—its Cold War orientation and its willingness to undertake projects from which the government felt a number of other programs supported by the Foundation during these years…projects to strengthen religious ideologies when they complemented its political goals."[20]

The figure of Colonel Edward Lansdale, Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay's (in office from 1953 to 1957) adviser on counter-insurgency, is infamous for successfully integrating indigenous traditions in this ideological battlefield. Lansdale was an important figure in the defeat of the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon (People's Anti-Japanese Army, Hukbalahap, hereafter referred to as *Huk*), a peasant-led communist guerilla movement based on the mountains and in the jungles of central Luzon and active in the transition period between the Japanese and the American occupation. Against the Huk, the colonel led the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) campaigns that centered on the lore of the *aswang*, a blood and viscera sucking creature based on local legend. After killing a Huk rebel and draining him of his blood, CIA personnel poked two holes in his neck, resembling fang bite marks, and left him lying by the roadside. The CIA spread the rumor that aswangs were on the loose, "destroying men with evil in their hearts."[21]

This interfacing of myth, legend, and lore with imperialist counter-insurgency methods trickles down to how discourses around history and historical change have been fleshed out in relation to indigenous figures and traditions. Guillermo's critique of Ileto's *Pasyon and Revolution* (1979) is cogent in this case:

> Ayon kay Ileto, ang takbo at hugis ng kasaysayan ay linilikha ng isang diwang absoluto na sumusunod lamang sa kanyang sariling lohika. Ang banal na plano sa kasaysayan ay nagpapahiwatig sa tao sa pamamagitan ng mga talinghaga, senyal at babala na bumubuo sa isang mitong unibersal na paulit-ulit lumalabas sa kasaysayan.

20 Quoted in Guillermo, "Mga Istratehiyang Ideolohikal," 23.

21 Vincent Bevins, *The Jakarta Method* (New York: Public Affairs, 2020), 61.

> Sa ganitong pananaw, si Adan, Kristo, Bernardo Karpio, Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, Felipe Salvador, Apolinario Cruz at iba pa ang mga banal na tao o propetang nagbibigay-buhay sa mga modelong istruktural ng kasaysayang walang pagkakaiba sa unibersal na mito… Ayon na rin kay Ileto, ang nararapat gawin sa panig ng mga tao ay ang humanap o makiramdam sa mga banal na tao o propeta ng mga signos at talinghaga na kanilang pagbulay-bulayan upang sila ay magbagong-loob at sa ganito ay makibahagi sa pagsasakatuparan ng banal na plano ng kasaysayan. Sa pagiging mitong unibersal ng kasaysayan, naglalaho sa tao ang kanilang kapangyarihang lumikha sa kasaysayan sa paggawa ng kongkretong hakbangin tungo sa pagbabago ng lipunan.[22]

For Guillermo, this notion of history as mythical, cyclical, and universalist, borne out of an internally self-sufficient logic that displaces popular and democratic agency in lieu of the prophetic figures like Puli, performs a foreclosure of radical and revolutionary societal change. She explains further:

> Sa halip na gamitin ang kaalaman upang lalong maunawaan ang ating sarili at timbangin ang ating lakas at kahinaan upang mas madaling ilunsad ang kilusan ng pagbabago, ang lumalabas na intensiyon ay ang magbuo ng alternatibong istrukturang ideyolohikal na susupil sa mga puwersa ng pagbabago.[23]

While taking heed of Guillermo's critique of the mystical, the pavilion attempts to delay the immediacy with which its ideological instrumentalization is staged by mapping out the discursive and tropological tenors of the mystical, particularly through the vantage of cultural practitioners and ordinary citizens who profess the importance of Mt. Banahaw and what it represents in relation to their lifeworlds, artistic labor, and craft. What this procedure prospects is an understanding of the mystical that while

22 Guillermo, "Mga Istratehiyang Ideolohikal," 25–6.

23 Ibid., 28.



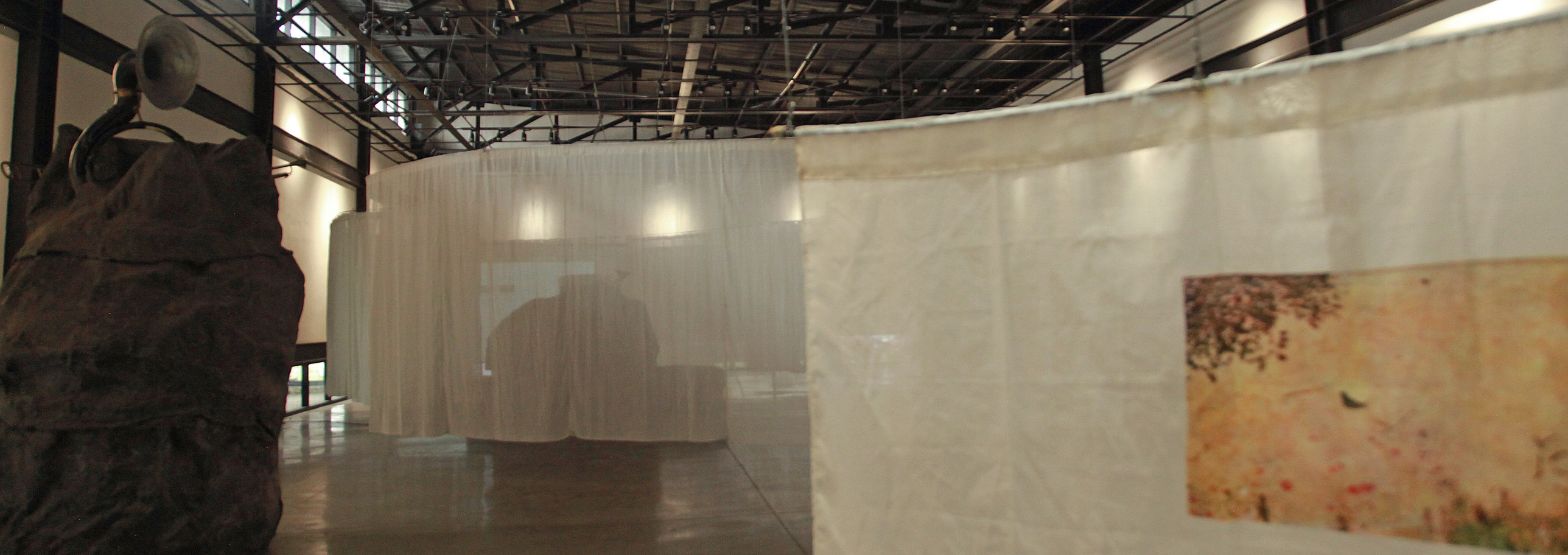
prone to ideological capture and instrumentalization, nonetheless plays out prolific poetic and transformative agencies. The primacy of the mystical in making sense of the world around us and situating human agency vis-à-vis a vaster ecology of more-than-human actors and conditions takes precedence in this presentation. The mystical constitutes not a unitary disposition of magic and subterfuge, but is entangled not only in imperialist and colonialist networks of power but also in the cultivation of indigenous and vernacular lifeforms and lifeworlds alongside with and apart from these networks.

Salvatus's artistic logic of practice that builds on methods of assembly is a compelling procedure with which to draw out these trajectories of the mystical. Keen on how the mysticism of Mt. Banahaw has inspired and is constituted by various rhetorics, Salvatus foregrounds, on the one hand, the constructedness of such narratives around the mystical mountain, which encourages a more playful and poetic disposition towards these accounts. This approach puts forward the mediations of the mystical in a way in which the immediacy of distinctions of real/imagined or fact/fiction are interrupted, thus opening an intermediary space for us to hear and experience these stories. On the other hand, this approach also underscores how sources such as folklore and history have ramified into contemporary appropriations such as in terms of commerce and marketing (Banahaw mineral water, Banahaw massage). In contrast with Guillermo's critique of the ideological instrumentalization of the mystical, Salvatus foregrounds the mystical as always already mediated. In this case, the critical moment is materialized in this interruptive, intermediary stage where the mystical is recognized as generative and poetic despite and while being fictive or fabulous.

This turn from assemblage to assembly deserves further annotation. Assemblage refers to the juxtaposition of heterogenous materials and things that comprise a discrete, singular artwork. This juxtaposition takes cue from cubist collage and has art historical affinities with futurist, surrealist, and dadaist aesthetic convictions.[24] This tendency informs and is transformed throughout Salvatus's practice, which he terms "salvage projects"—a riff off of his surname. From the early work *Wrapped: Traces Project* (2007-ongoing) to more recent ones like *C_rafts* (2011/2014/2020) and *Arrangements* (2018), the artist has created artworks from gathering found materials and fabricating sculptural and installative works using them. *Wrapped* expands on this method and recalls Salvatus's initiations with street art by asking people to trace an object that they own onto a public wall, which the artist would "wrap" by filling in the traced silhouette with woven patterns using graphite. Assemblage becomes the assembly of people participating in its process.

24 See William Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961).





Assembly becomes a way to render the mystical in terms of the participations, activities, conditions, and effects that constitute it. It renders the mystical as a coming together of myriad materialities and affects that in turn materialize it as animated and ever emergent. For this exhibition, these methods of assembly take shape across configurations of form and scale—from the material forms convened in space: the intimate collection of prints, the surrounding bursts of sound, the immensity of rocks, and the immersive address of the video in the navel of the exhibition; to the various articulations of exhibitionary form: as museological collection and presentation of objects, as encounters with spectacle, and as the overarching theater of people, things, and situations in the space of the pavilion; to the very labors that went into the creation of each aspect of the exhibition which were developed in collaboration with different people—an assembly of artisans, designers, musicians, other artists, from trained practitioners to hobbyists and amateurs, including his uncle Reynaldo Nañez, who worked as a seafarer for 25 years and whose personal collection of photographs of his travels and workplace Salvatus used as part of his video work.

The pavilion offers the scenographic and the mimetic as methods to engage with this particular trajectory of the mystical. These two terms' theatrical inflection shapes an experience based on "the continuous activity of living people"[25] in which the mystical is reconfigured as a thriving vital form that eludes such easy instrumentalization. This is a conceptual configuration that finds a compelling corollary to how theater scholar Hans Thies-Lehmann considers "postdramatic theatre":

> Theatre rediscovers its unique chance of direct communication because–contrary to all other art forms–here the moment of producing the art is also the moment of its reception. The audience of the new theatre finds itself as addressee of a personal history, it finds itself interwoven in ritual-like processes, it experiences its own presence sharply because it is confronted with extreme length of performances or unusual places, has to deal with provocations of many kinds...If theatre used to be defined as a kind of fictive cosmos presented to a public by means of theatre signs, theatre now tends more and more to be defined as a special and unique *situation*...[26]
>
> (Emphasis in the original)

25 Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, translated by Karen Jürs-Munby (New York: Routledge, 2006), 17.

Thinking about the pavilion as a postdramatic theatrical form involves a moving away from the linearity of the textual dramatic instrument, "dissolving the logocentric hierarchy and assigning the dominant role to other than dramatic logos and language,"[27] and proffering instead "performance situations."[28] Through this theatrical, and in particular postdramatic, transposition, the exhibition form is instilled with poetic possibility that becomes an opportunity to annotate the mystical. The scenographic and mimetic work together in the conceptualization of the mystical that the pavilion aspires to simulate. The mystical in this case discloses a moment of mimetic configuration that unravels in the experience of the scenography and our performance in it. This interface becomes one of the prominent aspects of the pavilion—from the songs of unseen and unidentified birds punctuating one's traversal of the space, to the intuitive traffic of visitors following this sound or the slightest of shadow that creates the experience of moving across a thicket or a grove, to the gigantic rocks that mark areas of the space and that convey a gamut of uncanny sound elements that add sonic textures enriching the experience of the exhibition, a proscenium for the experience of the mystical reveals itself.

26 Hans-Thies Lehmann, "From Logos to Landscape: Text in Contemporary Dramaturgy," *Performance Research* 2, no. 1 (1997): 58.

27 Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 93.

28 Ibid., 4.

The pavilion presents a mimetic scenography, an atmosphere of likeness and similitude. Taking cue from the title's weaving of the natural (*panahon*, age or climate) and the artifice or the theatrical (*kabila ng tabing*, curtain or screen), the exhibition presents a scenography of props, sound effects, and stage direction.



Ambient sounds are heard at intervals across different parts of this passage. A chorus of cicadas, erratic machinery, atmospheric disturbances. The sources of these sounds are nowhere to be found

and yet they hover in the air enough for us to try to look for the warblers, the traveler forging her way through an uphill climb, the visitor unable to contain a cough. The choreography of aural elements is complemented by the use of diaphanous textile panels as the space's walls, refracting light not only as a visual cue but also dramaturgical annotation. While the experience of the exhibition allows for multiple ways of navigating the space, the translucent scrim orients the space and the traffic of people, and curatorially annotates the experience of the exhibition while allowing atmospheric light and sound to pass through and drift across the space. Light and sound become ephemeral and intuitive cues in traversing the space, which is designed to cultivate unusual vistas and points of visual interest: scrim panels by the windows diffuse outdoor light; slight slits and breaks from the panels allow one to peek into other parts of the space; delicate shadows accompany viewers as they explore and complete their pilgrimage alongside the musicians in the video work and the other elements of the pavilion. The exhibition is not totally engulfed in these material phantasms, however. The industrial textures of the Arsenale still come through, foregrounding simultaneously the subterfuge in the exhibition's staging and the necessity to imagine a present light, open, and mystical against the venue's characteristic grit. In Salvatus's words, Puli's metaphorical curtain is "both the stage and the backstage at the same time."[29]

Fiberglass rock forms alluding to the phenomenon of the *batong buhay* or the *puwestos* of Mt. Banahaw are strewn across the exhibition space. The "puwestos" are natural formations (rocks, springs, caves, and hills) that are used as shrines allowing access to the immense mystical vitality of the mountain.[30] The rocks also reference a landslide that happened in March 2020, at the start of the nationwide lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, which displaced boulders from Mt. Banahaw. People in the nearby areas mistook the landslide as one of the mountain's active volcanoes erupting—a fortuitous natural occurrence that seemingly annotated the worsening pandemic. Brass instruments protrude from Salvatus's rock forms, which take the form of at once larger-than-life sculptures, aspects of exhibition design or stage props, vectors of sound, and pieces of furniture. They guide the visitors into their own pilgrimage inside the pavilion. The fiberglass boulders double as simulated spectacles of nature, speakers playing music in intervals, and stools—to take a seat, take a breath.

This mimetic impulse is a way to bridge alterity, a way to act upon another at a distance through sympathy, or what the anthropologist and folklorist James George Frazer nominates as "sympathetic magic."[31]

29 Conversation with the artist, 30 March 2023.

30 See Vitaliano Gorospe's essay in this volume for a conceptual and historical account of the *puwestos*.

31 See James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Literature* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1890).



This recalls Spivak's discussion of the "teleiopoetic": "one of the shocks to the idea of belonging, to affect the distant in a *poiesis*—an imaginative making—without guarantees, and thus, by definitive predication, reverse its value."[32] But while Spivak's notion of the teleiopoetic aspires to reverse the value of the distant, the mimetic transforms the other intimately, through familiarity or through "palpable, sensuous connections." Anthropologist Michael Taussig expands on this discussion of the mimetic as operations of copy and contact: "[1] a copying or imitation, and [2] a palpable, sensuous connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived."[33] He further explains:

> Copy and contact, image and bodily involvement of the perceiver in the image, a complexity we too easily elide as nonmysterious, with our facile use of terms such as identification, representation, expression, and so forth–terms which simultaneously depend upon and erase all that is powerful and obscure in the network of associations conjured by the notion of the mimetic.[34]

Crucial in these elucidations are the mystical implications of the mimetic. It is both magical and mysterious, powerful and conjured. Indeed for Taussig, the mimetic has the power to reenchant the world. Although critical of Taussig's deployments of the mimetic filtered through "quasi-anthropology,"[35] the scholar Martin Jay captures Taussig's theoretical project in a very succinct manner:

> [Mimesis is] a powerful force capable of challenging capitalist reification, instrumental rationality and the fetishism of the modern state. It does so by restoring embodiment and tactility to our knowing of the world, by undermining the absolute difference between ego and alter, and by giving nature and the object their due against the imperialist power of cultural constructivism.[36]

The restoration of "embodiment and tactility to our knowing of the world" proffers a mimetic theory that is premised on viscerality

32 Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, 31.

33 Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 21.

34 Ibid.

35 Martin Jay, "Unsympathetic Magic," *Visual Anthropology Review* 9, no. 2 (1993): 81.

36 Ibid., 78.

and vicariousness. In order to clarify these connections, Taussig turns to Walter Benjamin's formulation of how sentience informs any conceptualization of the mimetic: "'Sentience takes us outside of ourselves'—no proposition could be more fundamental to understanding the visceral bond connecting perceiver to perceived in the operation of mimesis."[37] Against these, the exhibition embodies a scenography of imminence between alterity and recognition. Mimesis's sympathetic magic plays out encounters where conditions of foreignness dissipate, not because of identity or sameness, but through mimesis's animation of kinship to amorphous feelings that are discerned through the diffuse affects of light and sound and the spectacular scale of the totems of stone. In imagining how the mimetic faculty is enabled by sentience taking us outside ourselves, Taussig proposes as parallel the prowess and the *task* of the storyteller: "the fundamental move of the mimetic faculty taking us bodily into alterity."[38]



Salvatus's artistic disposition—as fabulist, intuitive chronicler, improvisational ethnographer—materializes a space where instead of the closure of complete recognition or identification, we are faced with the openness of relating to alterity by way of analogy or sympathy. The pavilion does not aspire to transport its visitors to Mt. Banahaw. What it attempts is to communicate, in ways that are prone to failure and misrecognition, the mystical vitality that the mountain creates for the people that find themselves in its midst.

Music's potency to enact this kinship to amorphous feelings is a prominent aspect of the pavilion that relates to this. The pavilion fleshes out the capacity of music as a medium that plays out formative qualities: as atmosphere and as the magical transformation of resonances of breath and lip-vibrations into aesthetic experience (by way of brass instruments). This is a transformation that Salvatus leans into when he declares that "musicians are magicians":

> In the 1950s, a time in which the archipelago was slowly recovering from the world war, picking up the debris of its previous empires, music played an important role in the

37 Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, 38.8

38 Ibid., 40.

restoration and restructuring of the world or even creating the hope for a new world. Mt. Banahaw has been witness to all of these and the people try to live and shape our own reality.

The musicians were people who can emanate vitality coming from within their bodies using musical instruments, specifically wind instruments. The musicians picked up the skills from the popular culture brought by America, and became the entertainers of the colony, they also regrouped, playing in small celebrations with fellow locals after the war, an ensemble of expressions and hopes. In contemporary times, Filipino musicians also radiate as entertainers abroad–playing in jazz bars, cruise ships, music clubs all over.[39]

This relationship between music and magic leads us to another aspect of sympathy as the central impulses of the mimetic faculty. As the music theorist Guiseppe Gerbino explains:

Already in antiquity musicians observed that the strings of an instrument can vibrate without being touched. For example, if two strings are tuned at the unison and we pluck one of them, the second string will respond to the vibration, producing the same sound. The phenomenon is known as sympathetic resonance or sympathetic vibration. What causes the second string to resonate with the first, with no direct physical connection between the two, is the transmission of energy carried by sound waves traveling in the air. However, the term "sympathetic resonance" reveals a different worldview, one that postulated the existence of a hidden force, sympathy, operating throughout nature and binding the universe in all its parts. In such a world, the two strings

39 Conversation with the artist, 30 March 2023.



respond to each other's motion because of a mysterious affinity that can be conceived by the mind but cannot be directly perceived by the senses.[40]

The planetary discloses itself in this worldview, foregrounding through sound, vibration, resonance, a way to attune to alterity. The choice to showcase brass instruments proves persuasive in this mise-en-scène. Brass instruments offer a different operation of creating sounds from wind instruments. While in wind instruments breath passes through a tube or a reed that then creates a column of air that becomes music, brass instruments do not rely exclusively on airflow to create sound. Vibrations from the musicians lips create oscillations that create sympathetic reverberations through the

40 Giuseppe Gerbino, "Music and Sympathy," in *Sympathy: A History*, edited by Eric Schliesser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 102.



chosen instrument. The musical instrument mimics the sound that the human mouth makes.

The mystical element of the exhibition is brought together by activities of the mimetic and the scenographic in a procedure that proposes a sympathetic kinship with the planetary. The philosopher Jacques Derrida draws out different inflections to how we can understand the mimetic as a poetic faculty. He explains:

> Mimesis signifies the presentation of the thing itself, of nature, of the *phusis* that produces itself, engenders itself, and appears (to itself) as it really is, in the presence of its image, its visible aspect, its face: the theatrical mask, as one of the essential references of the *mimeisthai*, reveals as much as it hides. Mimesis is then the movement of the *phusis*, a movement that is somehow natural (in the nonderivative sense of this word), through which the *phusis*, having no outside, no other, must be doubled in order to make its appearance, to appear (to itself), to produce (itself), to unveil (itself); in order to emerge from the crypt where it prefers itself; in order to shine in its *aletheia*. In this sense, *mneme* and *mimesis* are on par, since *mneme* too is an unveiling (an un-forgetting), *aletheia*.[41]

41 Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session," in *Dissemination*, translated by Barbara Johnson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 193.

What Derrida's re-envisioning of mimesis foregrounds is its nonderivation. In this revision, the mimetic condition is one of a reality that presents itself and by presenting itself, produces, engenders, and appears as itself. This is quite a radical reconfiguration that retains the marvelous power of mimesis as sympathy that discerns and is disposed to alterity. We can recall from this conceptual choreography how the planetary is mobilized by way of an alterity that "remains underived from us." This reconfiguration of the mimetic from mere imitation or second-order signifier to an agency that produces and presents itself in a self-reflexive prospect and that which resonates with Lehmann's postdramatic conjecture, presents us with a particular staging of our relationship with the mystical and by extension, the milieu of Mt. Banahaw as its exceptional topos. Furthermore, this revision allows Derrida to revisit the tenor of mimesis's translation as imitation. He further comments:

> This translation seeks to express (or rather historically produces) the thought about this relation. The two faces are separated and set face to face: the imitator and the imitated, the latter being none other than the thing or the meaning of the thing itself, its manifest presence. A good imitation will be one that is true, faithful, like or likely, adequate, in conformity with the *phusis* (essence or life) of what is imitated; it effaces itself of its own accord in the process of restoring freely, and hence in a living manner, the freedom of true presence.[42]

As a theoretical object, Puli's *tabing* offers further reconfiguration of Derrida's work on mimesis. While mimesis for Derrida signifies "the presentation of the thing itself" and the "appear[ance] of [phusis] as it really is," the *tabing* exemplifies conversion or converseness—"converse"—a turning about.[43] The liminality in how architectonically the *tabing* plays out the converse relationship between this age and what lies behind it relies on the materiality of the said *tabing*, a stretch of textile that allows some light and sound to move through from source to the other side, or vice versa: how echoes and reverberations

42 Ibid.

43 I am thankful to my conversations with literary scholar and poet Jaya Jacobo in shaping this particular insight.

recode what is originary. It becomes a membrane that traffics the ante and the post, here and beyond. Derrida's rhetoric of revelation ("to appear [to itself], to produce [itself], to unveil [itself]") then does not quite capture this movement as it is not merely a question of visibility or disclosure but a question of passage, a ferrying across, by extension, metaphor. While Puli's *tabing* references the discernment of signs and the meaning of the times, their decoding relies on passing through the tropical curtain. This idea, Ileto annotates, is resonant with apocalyptic tropes. As such, Puli's "prophecy of a great flood and the appearance of the Yglesia from the depths of the mountain" that Ileto traces back to the Apocalypse also informs the trope of the *tabing* and its potent metaphorical and transformative capacity.

This turning about renders the *tabing* as a mimetic apparatus that speaks to Derrida's reworking of mimesis from its typical understandings as merely imitative or second-order. From the *tabing*'s reconfiguration we can derive a comparable formulation of the mimetic. A newly commissioned video work by Salvatus located in the pavilion's navel draws out these attunements. The artist worked with members of a Lucban marching band—men, women, young members, seasoned performers—inviting them to traverse Mt. Banahaw. On the mountain, in its dense forests, musicians played their chosen instruments. They listened and made music conversing with the mountain's sonic landscape. What starts as musicians playing actual instruments becomes—in the duration it takes to travel through the mountain—an abstraction of each instrumentalist's graceful embouchure, approximating the shape of their mouths and the sound they make when playing their instruments. This is a relay of analogical substitutions motivated by the sympathetic disposition of the mimetic faculty. The relay ends with the musicians holding onto musical objects that are made of forest debris but which assume the form of their chosen brass instruments—each a mimetic object. Improvisation as an exceptional mimetic disposition: from the mouthing and humming and breathing to the contraptions of mossy branch and twisted twigs. The mumbling vibrations of each musician's mouth become music, natural matter and milieu their medium.





This mapping out offers us an opportunity to think about the mimetic faculty as an exuberant vitality, capable of lively presence. The philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy extends Derrida's conceptual paradigms for mimesis by introducing the concept of *methexis*, or the desire to participate in and carry out this sympathetic condition and transformation. Annotating theorist Nancy's theorizations on the mutual implication of mimesis and methexis, the scholar Žarko Paić clarifies the scenographic potency of the mimetic agency:

> Mimesis primarily indicates the possibility of reorganizing objects in creating a new situation and context. Bodies that represent and represent possible events of change in observation are not frozen in time. Their "essence" is a creative projection of the possibilities of radical change. What changes is nothing external or internal. It is an imminent change of perspective from which a work gains the status of an exceptional event at its own time.[44]

Thinking about mimesis via its scenographic, and here in particular its architectonic capacity, leads us to an exploration of Puli's tenor of the *tabing* vis-à-vis other material cognates that speak to its tropology. One can think of the ontological and the performative contexts of the "screen" in Chinese screen painting in the work of the art historian Wu Hung. Hung proposes the screen as, in different instances and across contexts, an architectonic form, an art medium, and a mode of pictorial representation.[45] In this schema, we can find comparable material possibilities between the *tabing* and the *screen*, simultaneously accounting for the sharing and separation of space, a surface on which images are made to attach and observe, as well as a particular procedure of image-making with its own art history.

Another material cognate is the *telon*, theatrical backdrops to *zarzuelas*, a Spanish dramatic form that transformed to the vernacular sarsuwela in the 19th century.[46] In the extant

44 Žarko Pać, "The Dark Core Of Mimesis: Art, Body And Image In The Thought Of Jean-Luc Nancy," *Tvrđa: Theory, Culture and Visual Arts*, published 20 August 2022, accessed 8 December 2023, https://tvrdja.com/visual-arts/the-dark-core-of-mimesis/#_edn1.

45 See Wu Hung, *The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996.

46 See Nicanor Tiongson, "Palasyo ni Valentin: Radical Transformation of the Sarsuwela," *Philippine Humanities Review* 10 (2008): 1–12.

historical effects of telon-making in Iloilo in the Visayas, art historians have traced how the aesthetic of the telon extensively draws from the tendencies of *miniaturismo*, a stylistic category in Philippine colonial art that proceeds from the careful delineation of detail and ornament, particularly in relation to depictions of textile, jewelry, and other miniature objects.[47] The telon-painter Vicente San Miguel in Iloilo is one of the foremost figures whose practice has been historicized. As the scholars Edward Defensor and Ma. Zenaida French describe San Miguel's work:

> Despite such limitations as the demands of the zarzuela script, the time constraint and the size of the stage, San Miguel's telons astounded his audiences. He was devoted to perfecting his telons...San Miguel would not leave a leaf... until he was sure it blended naturally with the branch or with other leaves in the composition...San Miguel has developed a particular technique for producing a three-dimensional effect with minimum use of colors...[T]his technique produced outstanding telons which, in spite of their almost black-and-white appearance, looked alive and perfectly natural when struck by stage lights.[48]

San Miguel carried this tendency towards the delineations of detail and the demands for "'naturaleza' or verisimilitude on the stage"[49] in his venture into creating *fondos*, photographic backdrops. The rise of other forms of entertainment, such as silent movies and the *bodabil*, forced telons to migrate from sarsuwela to plaza stages, "where it was displayed on occasions such as town fiestas or carnivals, and at church celebrations such as Lent and Christmas."[50] Like the telons, the fondos were visual portals to other times, spaces, worlds, planets. Where the telons provided a spectacle through which actors moved and that which transported them to different scenes and places, the fondos provided this experience to the paying public themselves. The photographic studio became a theatrical

47 See Patrick Flores, "Miniaturismo and the Aesthetic of the Figurine," in *Transpacific Engagements: Trade, Translation, and Visual Culture of Entangled Empires, 1565–1898*, edited by Florina Capistrano-Baker and Meha Priyadarshini (Makati: Ayala Foundation, Inc.; Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute; Firenze: Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz [Max-Planck-Institut], 2020), 133–45.

48 Edward Defensor and Ma. Zenaida French, "Telling the Telon Tale," *Pananaw* 3 (1999): 17.

49 Ibid., 20.

50 Ibid., 21.

mise-en-scène and its customers the very actors. In the telon and the fondo we see different scales and perfomativities of the mimetic and the scenographic in breaching the binary of the natural and the cultural. One actor that worked with San Miguel shared that the telon used in one of the stagings that he participated in inspired his acting as they made him "feel as if he were really in a Sultan's palace."[51] The mimetic moment of stagecraft and dramaturgy is transposed into the self-consciousness of scenography, bodies learning to situate themselves and participate in a different theater.



It is through the mimetic technology of the scenographic, both in the way it traffics in alterity and its recognition or misrecognition and its cultivation of the self-consciousness of being situated in a space, that the mystical is made sensible. This dynamic between the mimetic and the scenographic is further transformed by the mystical in this pavilion, through the material and the trope of the *tabing*. Through the mystical, the trope of *sa kabilang tabing lamang sa panahong ito* becomes a milieu of mimetic transformation. This alludes not only an imminence through what is beyond or behind (or through, as in the apocalyptic), nor is it just a matter relating to the architectonic, nor the surface or the superficial and other related material contexts such as translucency or permeability. Exceptional is the way this context becomes in itself a milieu of analogy and alterity.

In one of the stories about Mt. Banahaw, a bird's flight guided the constituents of the Suprema through the thickets of the mountain. Following the bird led them to the puwestos before which members of the Iglesia offered prayers. In realizing how the bird guided their passage through the habitation of the mystical mountain, the members believed that the bird was "God in a *balatkayo* or disguise."[52] The mystical locus of the mountain encourages this kind of transformative condition—natural formations become altars, birds become God. The interfacing of analogy and alterity is compelling in how this particular historical episode unfolds.

Balátkayô gestures toward a unique theoretical juncture. *Balát* is skin, while *káyo* is textile: "Nombre de pieza de lienzo, propiamente ropa de algodón."[53] "A name of a piece of linen, more appropriately cotton clothing."[54] In this sense, balátkayô offers a coming together of nature and the facture that encapsulates the mimetic project that the pavilion is keen to investigate. The *tabing* becomes not only screen or surface but becomes skin. Textile transforms from screen to skin to an embodied moment of mimetic transformation: a bird that is God. The accomplishment of alterity's thriving theater beyond discernment and dissipation.

51 Ibid., 20.

52 Somera, "Pamumuwesto of Mount Banahaw," 440.

53 Virgilio Almario, ed., *Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala* (Manila: Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino, 2013), 144.

54 I owe scholar, poet, and translator Christian Benitez for this translation and the conversations that led to the development of this thread.

This leads us to a third moment beyond the burdens of the binary of the imitated or the imitator, or the realist or the mystical, and beyond the conception of alterity as an object of commensuration. It is through this third moment that a discourse of revolutionary politics through the figure Puli and his place in the national imaginary of emancipatory political life comes through, countervailing what has been the apparent inescapable instrumentalization of the mystical. As a technology and procedure of sympathetic scenography, the theater of the mimetic that unfolds in the pavilion opens to various articulations of sympathy. On the one hand, the mimetic mobilizes sympathy as "a palpable, sensuous connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived." On the other, it marshals sympathy as a way to discern a vaster planetary condition shaped by the vitalities of place and phenomena. This is where Spivak's planetary converses with Derrida's mimetic revision with Salvatus's work on the mystical vitality of the mountain and the music of marching bands. In all three, alterity remains undissipated as the aspect of the planetary, a pulsating force that keeps this home uncanny and living, thriving.

Through the performative situation of the scenographic and the improvisational analogies of the mimetic, the mystical is rehabilitated as an inchoate and amorphous kinship with planetary alterity. Our participation in its theater becomes a way to keep this kinship generous and generative. In this formativity, kinship does not emerge as a natural state. It is instead kept alive, animated, produced and presented, felt, performed, embodied.

Closing our passage through the exhibition, we are presented Salvatus's *Human Conditioned*, a work comprising of images culled from Google Maps that the artist started in 2017. The images are of different locations where revolutions happened from 1980, the artist's year of birth. Remarkably, each image has captured traces of human bodies—feet, legs, shadows, other material paraphernalia—that blend with the landscape. As the artist explains: "These images are a result of a 365 degrees un-proportioned stitching of the uploaded image to the web—an automatic process done by Google Maps—making them distorted by technology."[55] Bodies permeate landscape, which transforms it from screen (as a virtual interface) to surface (where these traces mark their presence) to a theater of trace and totality, fragments of life in a planetary scheme of political life. This time presented as silkscreen prints on translucent textile, the series of images plays out the potency of Puli's *tabing*: through and beyond the curtain of this age is a planetary kinship despite distance, an inalienable intention toward the other that rests underived from us, and a sympathetic scenography that situates us in this shared mystical world.

55 Artist statement, *Salvage Projects: Mark Salvatus*, accessed 8 December 2023, https://cargocollective.com/marksalvatus/Human-Conditioned-2017-2018.







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PLAYING WITH THE WORLD
A CONVERSATION

Mark Salvatus
and Pristine de Leon

Mark Salvatus sits down for a conversation in the middle of an unfolding process. We first saw each other on Zoom as he was preparing for a shoot with the musicians, then met again a few weeks later at the fabrication studio. While inspecting the shapes of the fiberglass rocks, he recalls his ambient encounters with Mt. Banahaw, the atmospheric rumbles and hisses that seem to rise and drift everywhere from boulder to boulder. Salvatus has long been a witness to the mountain's vitalities. In this conversation, he reflects on the exhibition in light of recurring artistic concerns and experiences that have grounded him in Lucban and Mt. Banahaw's rich affective worlds.

PRISTINE DE LEON:

Your video looks into the role of the mountain in the life and art of Lucban musicians. How did you start to think about music and how did you approach the musicians for this project?

MARK SALVATUS:

Seeing and hearing marching bands play is part of the cultural life of the small town where I grew up. Their music tells locals that there is a special occasion being celebrated. They perform in official and civic functions, religious functions like processions, and funerals. Musicians in Lucban are not professionally trained, but they teach each other. Playing music is a communal activity. The instruments are also shared with and passed down through generations.

I remember one line in my grandfather's short story, *Ang Ermitanyo at Torong Ginto sa Bundok Banahaw* (1993), which describes a hermit and a golden bull who live in Mt. Banahaw, the hermit watching processions from afar as his pastime.

I imagine Mt. Banahaw emanates some kind of energy that connects all life forms. Musicians gather the energy from the mountain and transform it into the vibration of air. The sound produced by the musicians' bodies and their instruments is a manifestation of the energy.

I reconnected with my friend Vincent Villaverde. He is an artist and a trombone player in a local band called the Lucban International Band. He suggested five active musicians who play brass and wind instruments from local marching bands who might be interested in my initial idea.

I was also drawn to the aspect of walking in their performance, because people walk up Mt. Banahaw as a form of folk Christian devotion. This practice of walking is linked to the life of Apolinario de la Cruz (Hermano Puli) from Lucban, who walked to preach, assemble, and lead a group of followers towards the dream of freedom from the colonial empire.





You have worked largely within the visuals arts, while the musicians have a different background. Could you tell me more about your working dynamics and how you influence each other?

We traveled together to the mountain and I asked the musicians to create sounds by responding to the surroundings while acknowledging their feelings. At first, my request was confusing to them. They wanted to have music sheets, or a particular song reference, because that is how they would usually play. I asked them to play individually; so it was no longer about creating harmony with other players but blending with the natural surroundings in the mountain. Having no audience must have been challenging for them, too.

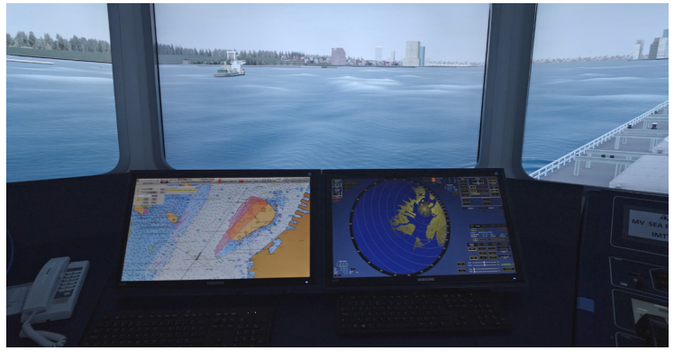
The duration of their performance was not set by musical sheets. I kept the camera rolling, which captured the moments of pause and rest. The sounds of deep breathing seemed to ground their body in the land, nature, and alongside other life forms. Because of this groundedness, I felt the lightness of the bodies of the musicians. It is not anymore walking but gliding. They also seem to disappear and become small with the mountain and nature as their background, in which you can only hear the sound. This was something I could not imagine before the interaction with them.

Your exhibition references the Cofradia de San José's uprising against Spanish troops in 1841. It is an interesting connection because in a way it is a refraction. You are injecting another aesthetic into it, the bodily experience of music and walking, from breath to feet. How did the subject of migration enter into this cosmology?

Indeed, some of the musicians who are part of marching bands in Lucban also travel to play for the world as migrant workers. The idea of migration entails detachment of body and mind.

While I was researching for this project, I found a training facility for seafarers who go on board on commercial and cruise ships in Manila. It is a simulation of an actual ship. It is interesting that while you are still in your homeland, you are already transporting your mind to another place.

That relates to music. When you play music or when you sing, you imagine yourself in a different place or context, or even imagine yourself as a different person. When a Filipino singer covers a winter song in the Philippines, the singer and the audience mentally teleport themselves to a winter landscape, welcoming the feeling of being cold. They are no longer covering a song but embodying it.





It is through their performance that they transport themselves elsewhere and transform themselves to different aspirations and illusions.

Your collection of footage hints at these different contexts. When making videos in the past, your method was closer to collaging than producing a narrative film. Could you describe your current process of assembling this video alongside a production team while tapping the archives of your uncle who was a seafarer?

I am interested in the circulation of images, objects, texts, and sounds that I find. These materials, which are personal, cultural, and social, have been produced, circulated, and interpreted in different possible ways. It is not my intention to look for materials; I find them because I am interested in fragments of time felt through different encounters and experiences. I see them as drifting echoes contributing to my art process. These fragments are then mixed, reconfigured, re-assembled to suggest multiple meanings and new lives. In the video, I included travel and workplace photographs taken by my uncle, Reynaldo Nañez, who worked as a seafarer for almost 25 years. When my uncle sold his laptop to me, I found digital photographs which I mounted as part of an installation work titled *Souvenirs* (2013). It was also

coincidental that he was part of a local marching band in his adolescent years.

I also included movie stills from *Misteryo sa Tuwa* (1984), a narrative film shot at the foot of Mt. Banahaw directed by Abbo de la Cruz who is also from Lucban. The still images that were used to promote the film were from the personal collection of Abbo's family and they were kept in a folder inside their house. These disconnected fragments of different past lives reminded me of how Hermano Puli was executed by the colonizers with his body dismembered, the parts displayed at different locations. The body might not be whole again but the spirit tries to transform into another body in another place and time. The entire production team was also aware of the life of Hermano Puli since I told them about his importance in the project. Re-interpreting these fragments, I am trying to bridge the past, present, and future with a plurality of experiences and interpretations, which continuously shift and appear like a moving collage.

There is also a pronounced scenographic element in this exhibition or an inclination to assume likeness and atmosphere. How did your fabricator and your sound designers come in to mediate this process?

Mt. Banahaw can be encountered differently depending on where you are viewing and experiencing it. The familiar view is from Lucban as it is the natural background of the town. Once you are in the forest, it creates a different intimacy. For me, experience in the mountain cannot be replicated; it can only be imagined. It is impossible to transport these energies elsewhere and a hope of an unelevated "stage" with complex components of video, sound, and handcrafted props can be productive and reflective. I suggested the initial title of our pavilion to Carlos Quijon, Jr., "(Ang Tagumpay ay) nasa kabila nang tabing lamang sa panahong ito" based on Hermano Puli's desire for a revolution. I picture the pavilion as a rehearsal, a preparation for a performance, a strange act that will transpire. I have this idea of rocks that are singing—"batong buhay," as I described it to Aki Saligumba, the main fabricator for the boulders.



He and his team were behind some of the full-sized diorama exhibition at the geology gallery at the National Museum of Natural History of the Philippines. The shape of our boulders is strange, and not stressed to be real. The cuts and lines are visible, indicating that it is in pieces. It reveals a feeling of an "assembly." It also has brass instruments that grow out of its surface as I imagine it whenever I think of the mountain singing. I worked with Teresa Barrozo for sound design and IC Jaucian for the audio system. Teresa was in Mt. Banahaw for the shoot and I asked her to capture the mystery of the mountain through sound recordings. I described it to her as someone or something whispering behind my back—it is weird but familiar at the same time; the sound can be heard here or elsewhere. Is it real or an illusion? I imagine the stage with random acts.

I remember until around 2016, when you became one of the participating artists at the Philippine pavilion in the Venice Architecture Biennale, writers would usually frame your works around ideas of the urban and the social. What struck me about your current project were its leanings on the mystical. How did the mystical or the otherworldly figure in your childhood in Lucban?

My grandfather was a poet, writer, and elementary school teacher. He had a lot of short stories about Lucban and Mt. Banahaw, like the one I mentioned earlier. It had themes of mysticism and folk Christian religiosity that he would connect to the natural environment. At the end of the story, there would be a message to protect the mountain. I used to always see his typewritten stories. He used to keep his typewritten short stories and clippings of his published poems on his desk under a protective sheet of glass.

The mysticism of the mountain created a big impression on me when I was in high school. One night while my classmate and I walked from school to our homes, we suddenly saw a light moving very fast in different directions. We ran home because we were terrified. Maybe it was a UFO. Eventually, I got curious about this other world that I could not explain. During the 90s and early 2000s, Mt. Banahaw became famous for UFO sightings.

I moved to Manila to study advertising in a Catholic university. My creative practice started with the street. I used the *agimat* (amulet) imagery in my graffiti that could still connect to the mysticism about Mt. Banahaw. The imagery made me feel like I was still in touch with my hometown even when I was far away. Stickers, graffiti, and street art were ways of creating my territory while walking around Metro Manila. I was not in Lucban but the iconography of the agimat allowed me to feel the magnet of the mountain. Hermano Puli and his followers also used agimat to protect themselves against the Spanish troops.

These stories really show the syncretic imagination to which you were exposed. It is a mix of folk beliefs, Catholicism, UFOs, mysticism, which then evolved into popular culture and street art. At what point did Mt. Banahaw and Lucban become central or at least more visible in your art projects?

Throughout my practice, I consider the tradition of the Pahiyas festival an influence on how I create works. The Pahiyas festival is public, community-based, and also temporary. Materials are installed around Lucban for a day.[1]

Installation carries a Western context when it comes to art, but the curator Ray Albano has contextualized installations in terms of our local experience of space. In the Philippines, he said, there were already installations in the form of hangings using everyday objects.[2] One tradition he mentioned was the Pahiyas festival. My childhood is connected to this form of temporariness, and a state of being unfixed and constantly changing.

In 2010, I began collecting things related to Mt. Banahaw, like T-shirts with Banahaw silkscreen prints. Our family used to sell souvenir shirts with those prints during the Pahiyas festival. My grandfather had his own archive of stories and pictures of the mountain. When I was invited to

1
The Pahiyas is an annual festival held in Lucban and other towns in the province of Quezon. Now a popular tourist attraction, it evolved from a community's celebration of harvest in honor of San Isidro de Labrador, the patron saint of farmers. Townsfolk decorate their houses with colorful ornaments and various produce, which are then taken down at the end of the festival to be shared communally. For its influence on Mark Salvatus's artistic and curatorial practice, see Mayumi Hirano and Mark Salvatus, "Almost Curating: Tensions and Hangings," in *Writing Presently*, edited by Renan Laru-an (Quezon City: Philippine Contemporary Art Network, 2017), 206–25.

2
See Raymundo Albano, "Installation: A Case for Hangings," in *Raymundo Albano: Texts*, edited by Patrick D. Flores (Quezon City: Philippine Contemporary Art Network, 2017), 17–18.

do an exhibition in Project Space Pilipinas in Lucban, I proposed to make *Museo ng Banahaw* (2017-2019) and I started to show these materials I gathered. It then grew into a collective project as many of my family members and friends sent me their pictures of Mt. Banahaw as their contribution to the *Museo*.

There is a reference to the museum form in your previous explorations of Mt. Banahaw, and you were more of a collector than a custodian. In your other exhibitions like *Notes from the New World* (2015–9) and *Crackling for a Piece of the Moon* (2022), you have tapped into your father's collection of vinyl records and photographs. Even in your video now, the ethnographic inclination is rooted in the impulse to unearth and collect. What makes you curious about people's collections of everyday objects?

When you keep souvenir items, you want to extend the time you traveled to a place. I want to see a fluid connection from object to people and vice versa, and that can create different outcomes and experiences.

I am curious about how people—especially my family—have created a world within a private space by gathering things as signals of desires. Be they vinyl records, photographs, or stories, this micro-universe could be connected to a larger context: the history of the Philippines and of the world.

l work with materials that found me. I am interested in materials and things that have insignificant value. Value for me is about the curiosity that you want to extend.

You have worked with different materials because you have been in different situational contexts. Your practice has been enabled by mobility since you have also taken many artist residencies in the past. How has locality and mobility shaped your view of the contemporary?

There were no museums or galleries in Lucban when I was growing up, and I would say the Pahiyas festival was my first exposure to art. Readily available natural materials are used by the locals for

the festival. The instinct of putting things together and the Filipino attitude of *diskarte* or *uwido* (resourcefulness or cleverness) was part of the milieu.

When I moved to Manila and eventually when I had my first artist residency experience abroad, the *diskarte* strategy was very handy. Mobility is about fluidness and openness to unexpected encounters with people and the place. Those encounters shape the idea of movement and migration in most of my works. The aspiration is multiple but our body is just one. Mobility is also about privilege but at the same time, about necessity. We move for leisure and also we move for survival.



This seems to tie into what you said earlier, that the body is bound to one place but the mind can be elsewhere.

I am also curious about the imagination of being something else like turning into an animal or a rock. I am interested in the idea of gentle blending. It is in music and in sound. Perhaps this blending of things can create enchanting forms and flow.

At your 2017 residency in Gwangju, you conceptualized *Human Conditioned* (2017–ongoing), a project that explored landscapes, technology and revolutions. These images, previously activated

as video projections, are now re-worked as silkscreen prints on translucent textile. What led to the decision of revisiting this project and presenting it in this current form?

Human Conditioned (2017-ongoing) is an apparition in this iteration for the pavilion. The images found on Google street view are an inquiry into the body and the space—actual and virtual as supposed sites of uprisings and revolutions. When I was doing the residency in Gwangju, I looked into the 1980 Gwangju uprising and traced the locations and sites of the demonstrations. It led me to different sites around the world. There, I found images of cropped bodies and shadows made by 360-degrees stitching glitches on Google. Hermano Puli's body parts were dispersed in different locations in Quezon province and it is puzzling where these exact locations are. I am drawn to spirits and shadows that drift across the landscape and virtual bodies blending into the two-dimensional space as ghosts from the past. I created banners or flags with these images to recall the ongoing struggles of our times. It is the landscapes, streets, and plazas that remain and the banners attempt to reclaim these aspirations.

Your images transform with you and find diverse crowds alongside you. Since you are no stranger to Venice, could you tell me how your participation at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale shaped your view of a biennale's publics and contexts?

For my participation at the Architecture Biennale, the Philippine pavilion presented a group exhibition. I worked within the curatorial theme which was "muhon" or markers; it was very specific. I focused on Binondo, Manila's Chinatown. Each work conversed with other participating architects and artists at the pavilion, and the different markers they were articulating. It had several voices. The biennale context is about representation; it is also a privilege. Who can represent? Who are you representing? What to present in the current context of the world we are living in? I reflected on these questions when I was chosen for a solo presentation at the Philippine Pavilion.



In this presentation for this year's Biennale Arte, I wanted to play with the possibility of dreaming—how to present a dream or a desire for something that is almost there. The title, *Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito*, implies that the aspirations or dreams are just there; you just need to grasp it. It is a simulation for the future and a rehearsal for us to act together.

Earlier, you mentioned the phrase "playing for the world." What I understand is that through this exhibition, you are not just playing for the world but proposing possibilities.

I see the pavilion as a stage, our lives as a stage. It is both the main stage and the backstage. The viewers can also be the participants while walking around the imagined stage. I can also propose "playing with the world" rather than for the world to be able to survive and live.

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HERMANO PULI IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY

Ryan V. Palad

On the night of
19 October (1840), Father Sancho
set out with the gobernadorcillo and several
principals to raid a reunion of the Cofradia.
This resulted in the arrest of 243 people and the
confiscation of the cash box, the correspondence
of Apolinario and two large portraits of the
leader done in the style of popular
images of saints.

Reynaldo Ileto,
Pasyon and the Revolution



This essay is an updated version of a paper presented on the occasion of the 200th birth anniversary of Hermano Puli and the 119th year of the Casa Boix in Manila on August 14, 2014 at the San Juan de Dios Poly Clinic, Quiapo, Manila upon the invitation of the Kapitbahayan sa Kalye Bautista.

ONE OF THE THINGS reported by Father Manuel Sancho, the curate of Lucban, was the retrieval of the two portraits of Hermano Puli.[1] These were taken from the house of Francisco de los Santos, where a meeting of the members was held. Regularly, members would convene to pray the rosary, after which the letters of Puli were read; then this was followed by a meal. Just imagine the setting: you have the altar, then the portraits of Puli, members praying, members listening to the letters of Puli being read by Octabio Ignacio de San Jorge, Puli's right-hand man, then a fraternal meal. Transposing this scenario to the present, we cannot see any wrong-doing in those actions. Today, you can have portraits, banners, tarpaulins on display any time you can form a group, gather the people, have a shared meal. If one wants to preach, one can do so freely. You can form a group anytime. But not during the time of Puli. Yet our current freedom was among the concrete contributions of Puli.

1 *Apolinario dela Cruz 1840-1841*, Tomo I, Exp 1-100, Folio 9-10 (Manila: National Archives of the Philippines, n.d.).

When the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines in 1521, the colonizers used art as a tool to propagate the Catholic faith through beautiful images. With communication as a problem, the friars used images to explain the concepts behind Catholicism, and to tell the stories of Christ's life and passion. Images of the Holy Family and the saints were introduced to the Filipino psyche through carved *santos*, the *via crucis* (Stations of the Cross), engravings on *estampas* and *estampitas*, and through paintings on church walls. Since most art produced during the first two centuries of Spanish occupation were for the church, the friars enforced strict supervision over their production. Until the 19th century, art was only for the church and for religious use.[2] Hence, his two large portraits were already illegal. There were however propaganda artworks during the time of Puli, like the paintings of the Basi Revolt of 1807 by Esteban Villanueva of Vigan, Ilocos Sur. The paintings show the defeat of the Ilocanos by the military forces of Spain. But with what Puli did, he already paved the way to claim the right to commission his own portrait even if such move had to be sanctioned first by the friars.

2 Eloisa May P. Hernandez, "The Spanish Colonial Tradition in Philippines Visual Arts," National Commission for Culture and the Arts, accessed 20 August 2014, www.ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/articles-on-c-n-a/article.php?igm=1&i=171.

Interestingly, the portraits were commissioned on 14 June 1840 when Octabio Ignacio de San Jorge gave

Juan Abila de Santa Gertrudis one peso and 12 quartos to buy the canvas for the portrait of Señor San Jose and that of Puli.[3] The very reason this was done was to inform the many members of the Cofradia on the status of Puli who was then in Manila. The decision was also made by Puli and Padre Ciriaco de los Santos. If the friars then were using images of saints to tell their stories and of Christ's, Puli's portraits were reminders to members of his presence in their midst. With the many members of the Cofradia by 1840, many would not know what Puli looked like, hence the portraits.

WHO WAS PULI?

Puli, or Apolinario de la Cruz, was born in Lucban on 22 July 1815,[4] the feast day of San Apolinario. The son of Pablo de la Cruz and Juana Andrea, he was baptized in the Church of San Luis Obispo, also in Lucban. Puli's early education was in Lucban where, as early as 1749, there was already a school building made of stone. This eventually gave rise to two schools, one for boys and another for girls. Instructions were given on reading, writing, counting, playing musical instruments, praying in Spanish and Latin languages, as well as on assisting the Holy Mass as sacristans.[5] It is not surprising that Puli could speak Spanish. One should also know that Puli had healing power. He was an "esculapio" as seen in a letter dated 29 July 1841 from his right hand man Octabio, to Puli, asking Puli to teach him how to heal his broken arm.[6] It was also noted that Puli had a copy of the book *Instituciones Metódicas de Cirugía* (1820), by the French medical doctor Joseph Capuron, in his possession when his locked baggage was confiscated and eventually checked on 01 December 1841.[7] This showed his sound knowledge on medicine. And perhaps, being a healer, he already attracted many followers and believers. He was also a mystic, a visionary.[8] Those were some of the factors

3 Setsuho Ikehata and Lilia F. Antonio, *Cofradia de San Jose Mga Tala ng Kasaysayan* (Quezon City: Unibersidad ng Pilipinas Sentro ng Wikang Fiipino, 2007), 325.

4 The date came from a libro de la partida based on Gabriel Beato Francisco's "Kasaysayan ni Apolinario de la Cruz na may pamagat na Hermano Pule" (N.p., 1915). Also in "Declaración Indagatoria del preso ex-donado Apolinario dela Cruz ante el Fiscal en el pueblo de Sariaya escoltado desde punto por la partida de Infantería y Cavalleria, las varias preguntas y correspondientes respuestas," *Apolinario dela Cruz 1840-1*, Tomo II, Folios 157-72 and158 (Manila: National Archives of the Philippines, n.d.). This date is still different from E. Arsenio Manuel's *Dictionary of Philippine Biography* (Quezon City: Filipiniana Publications, 1970).

5 See Leandro Tormo Sanz, "Lucban: A Town the Franciscan Built," (Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1971) and Pablo Fernandez, *History of the Church of the Philippines*, 1521-1891 (Manila: Navotas Press, 1979).

6 Setsuho Ikehata, "Popular Catholicism in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines: The Case of the Cofradia de San Jose," *Reading Southeast Asia*, edited by Takashi Shiraishi (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 134.

7 See Giuseppe Magliozzi, "The Tragic End of the First Peaceful Sit-in of the Philippines," *Re-examining the History of Philippine-Spanish Relations: Selected Papers, Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day Conference* (National Historical Commission of the Philippines, 2016), 219–54.

8 See "Historia de la Cofradia que fundo el Hermano Apolinario de la Cruz en el pueblo de Lucban trabajada y puesta en Verso por mi, para poder major estimular los corazones y animos devotos sus Hermanos o la insinuada Cofradia dedicado a nuestro padre san Jose," *Apolinario de la Cruz, 1840-1*, Tomo IV, Folio 852-927 (Manila: National Archives of the Philippines, n.d.).

that contributed to his founding of the Cofradia de San Francisco del Santissimo Rosario in 1832, which would eventually be renamed Cofradia de San Jose y voto del Santissimo Rosario in 1837.[9] The group attracted many followers, which elicited the serious attention of the church. This was aside from the fact that members willingly gave monthly dues, in contrast with the alms being given by members inside the church on Sundays. The group run even without the supervision of a priest.

9 Ikehata and Antonio, *Cofradia de San Jose*, 139.

There were stories that Puli was in Manila within 1830-31, then went back to Lucban to establish the Hermandad de la Archi-Cofradia del Glorioso Señor San José y de la Virgen del Rosario. It was Gabriel Beato Francisco who mentioned that Puli went to Manila, particularly to Sampaloc[10] perhaps to undergo discernment. It was already mentioned by the historian Setsuho Ikehata that the prevailing view among historians that the Cofradia de San Jose was established and rose in revolt because Puli was denied entrance to a religious order owing to racial discrimination, was erroneous.[11] There has to be an archival document that will directly say and quote Puli to have experienced that discrimination; yet as of now there is none. The former head of the local chapter of the Order Hospitaller de San Juan de Dios in Manila, in which Puli officially became an Oblate, stated that Puli was aware of the impossibility of becoming a Professed Religious, and the only option for a native was to be an Oblate. The only lay order in the Philippines was the Hospitaller Order.[12] This narrative is contrary to the notion that "it was forbidden for natives to become a

10 Francisco, "Kasaysayan ni Apolinario de la Cruz," n.p.

11 Ikehata, "Popular Catholicism in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines," 116.

12 Magliozzi, "The Tragic End," 225.

lay-brother at the Hospital of St. John of God."[13] The story that he went first to the Dominicans in Intramuros and was turned down (despite the fact that he came from Lucban which was under the Franciscan Order) was also refuted because Dominicans accepted native Filipinos only in the 1930s.[14] The book of Ikehata and Lilia Antonio shows that he established his Cofradia in Lucban (after his discernment from San Juan de Dios) on 19 December 1832. They then went to Manila to ask for permission for his Cofradia on 4 October 1833,[15] proving that he had no intention of hiding his group. The tradition of going to Mount Banahaw for a pilgrimage was started by Puli in February 1834,[16] as well as the reading of the *Pasyon,* the vernacular retelling of the Passion of Christ, during the Holy Week of 1834. By 20 April 1835, he announced his departure from Lucban to be with the convent of San Juan de Dios (as an Oblate) and that he could not refuse a friend.[17] From 1835 to December 1836,[18] Puli was assigned at the *cumbalicincia,* then at the Hospital of San Juan de Dios inside Intramuros until 1841. While Puli was with San Juan de Dios, the Cofradia flourished. Holy masses were offered left and right by Puli and the members in Laguna, Tayabas, Manila, and even in Antipolo. Eventually the group caught the ire of Father Antonio Mateos, the Vicar Forane of Tayabas, who directed Father Manuel Sancho to investigate and eventually conduct the raid. That was the time when the portraits of Puli were confiscated. By March 1841, he was dismissed from San Juan de Dios. By September 1841, another raid was conducted, this time in Majayjay where Octabio and his parents were eventually arrested. With this situation, Puli was already a fugitive, and he opted to escape by traveling from Manila to Bay, Laguna, then to San Pablo, Tiaong up to Isabang, near Tayabas poblacion where he made his temporary camp.[19] He was allegedly preparing to hold a novena in Tayabas church, but he was not permitted.[20] In October 1841,

13 Benigno Beltran, Jr., "The End is Nigh: Militant Millenarianism and Revolutionary Eschatology," *Old Cultures Renewed Religions: The Search for Cultural Identity in a Changing World*, edited by Leonardo N. Mercado (Manila: Logos Publication, Inc., 2001), 100.

14 See Rolando de la Rosa, *History of the Filipinization of the Religious Orders in the Philippines: Beginnings of the Filipino Dominicans* (Manila: University of Sto. Tomas Publishing House, 2014).

15 Ikehata and Antonio, *Cofradia de San Jose*, 19.

16 "Historia de la Cofradia."

17 Ikehata and Atonio, *Cofradia de San Jose*, 173.

18 We can see from his entries in 1835 until December 1836 that his report on Cofradia originally was written from "cumbalicincia" aside from Lucban. By 1837, aside from Lucban, the report on Cofradia was written from the convent and hospital of Nuestro Padre San Juan de Dios.

19 Magliozzi, "The Tragic End," 238.

20 Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 58.



Alcalde Mayor Joaquin Ortega attacked Isabang. Unfortunately, Ortega was killed. Puli's group transferred to Alitao, on the slopes of Banahaw/Cristobal. On 1 November 1841, government troops under Colonel Joaquin Huet attacked Puli's encampment. Puli fled. Again, many Cofradia members were killed. Puli was eventually caught, then sentenced to death. He was killed and decapitated on 4 November 1841 in Tayabas. It was on the massacre of Tayabasins and members of the Cofradia de San Jose that the Spanish government concocted stories to malign the image of Puli that continue to exist even today. His alleged title as "Rey de Tagalo" was not his, but a joke made by Apolonio Purgatorio, one of his leaders who also placed a crown made of rattan on his head.[21] As part of government propaganda, such joke was used to discredit him.

PULI IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY

Puli's struggle is included in our history textbooks among a number of revolts leading to the Philippine Revolution. But his struggle was not quite simple.

First, if there were indeed uprisings, revolts, like the Revolt Against the Tribute (1589), the Sumuroy Revolt (1649-50), the Dagohoy Revolt (1744-1829), the Agrarian Revolt (1745-46), the Silang Revolt (1762-63), and the Basi Revolt (1807), how can we categorize Puli's story as a revolt, when his group did not attack a town or soldiers? They were just forced to fight, but within their area, within their "territory." Other revolts showed that these were planned and towns were attacked. Yet in Puli's case, from 1832 to 1841, the members were praying, attending holy masses, soliciting support, and doing humanitarian work. The case in Isabang was one of no turning back, as they were forced by circumstance to fight back. Puli's group isolated their community and constructed their own chapel instead of attacking the *cabecera* of Tayabas or Lucban or Sariaya, for that matter. Yet they were attacked by government troops; hence, the need to fight back. His situation was not like the Basi Revolt nor the Novales uprising in 1832. The historian Giuseppe Magliozzi pointed out that Puli never had the intention to start a revolution and that their weapons were only for self-defense to avoid having all of them put in prison.[22]

21 "Declaración Indagatoria del ex-donado Apolinario dela Cruz," *Apolinario de la Cruz, 1840-1*, Tomo III, Folio 176 (Manila: National Archives of the Philippines, n.d.).

On one hand, if Puli's story was not important in the early part of Philippine history, why then did books, like that of John Bowring in 1858, consider Puli's event as a very serious uprising.[23] Jean Mallat, in his book dated 1846, five years after Puli's death, would mention Tayabas as the theater of the revolt of Puli.[24] John Foreman, in his 1890 book, would also mention the event of Puli.[25] This only shows how critical the event of Puli was in our history. Governor General Marcelino Oraa issued notices around the country announcing the death of Puli.[26] One of his memoranda referred to Puli's event as the most dangerous movement.[27] If this was just a petty occurrence, why would Oraa issue several *avisos*? Puli's revolt put another dimension on ways to attain independence.

22 Magliozzi, "The Tragic End," 238.

23 John Bowring, *A Visit to the Philippine Islands* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1963), 40.

24 Jean Mallat, *The Philippines: History, Geography, Customs, Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce of the Spanish Colonies in Oceania*, translated by Pura Santillan-Castrence (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1983), 172.

25 John Foreman, The Philippines (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1980), 105.

Second, early in the 19th century, with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the development of the agricultural export economy, native *indios* acquired economic wealth and became what would be called the "ilustrados," meaning the enlightened and educated. These recent developments paved the way for Filipino ilustrados to send their children to universities in Europe. The rise of the ilustrado class (i.e. Filipinos with money and education) was inevitable. They became the new patron of the arts. These events led to the secularization of art in the 19th century.[28] Indeed, Puli's bold move to commission his own portrait, also with the image of San Jose incorporated in the artwork, was way ahead of the secularization of art. Yet Puli, the *pobre* hermano did it.

26 *Apolinario de la Cruz, 1840-1*, Tomo IV, Folio 557 (Manila: National Archives of the Philippines, n.d.).

27 *Apolnario de la Cruz, 1841, 1843, 1847*, Tomo II, Folio 53-6 (Manila: National Archives of the Philippines, n.d).

28 Hernandez, "The Spanish Colonial Tradition."

Third, while it was true that Padre Ciriaco only came into the scene in 1839 or after seven years of Cofradia existence,[29] the Cofradia was being served by Filipino coadjutor priests in Lucban, Tayabas, Sariaya, and Majayjay from 1833 to 1841.

29 Ikehata and Antonio, *Cofradia de San Jose*, 265.

We can, therefore, see now the link of Cofradia to the issue of secularization. These coadjutor priests benefited from the services being requested by the Cofradia. Between the years 1832 and 1840, one can discover that the coadjutor priests from different towns offered masses for the Cofradia, such as Padre Gregorio Juan de Luna (Lucban), Padre Andres de San Juan (Lucban), Padre Francisco de Agustin (Tayabas), Padre Silvino Santiago (Tayabas), Padre Mariano Villaraza (Majayjay), and Padre Eufracio de San Juan (Sariaya), among others. Puli also offered masses in Sta. Cruz (Maynila) on different dates in 1839: from March 31, April 19, June 19, June 29, July 19, to September 12.[30] Puli's group capitalized on the familiarity of these Filipino coadjutor priests with local situations. While these seculars took their oaths of chastity and obedience, they did not include the oath of poverty, as the regular priests did. And why would these coadjutor priests refuse the "arancel" or fee given by the Cofradia, considering that within their assigned parish, they had a lower salary, no pension, and no security of tenure. They could easily be removed.[31] The situation of the coadjutors reached Puli, and even became more familiar when Father Ciriaco, a secular, joined the Cofradia. Puli and his Cofradia supported the Filipino priests. Father Ciriaco was eventually arrested and sentenced to six years of exile in the Marianas.[32]

Fourth, the Cofradia did not accept mestizos and Chinese as members. The exclusiveness of the Cofradia was already marked. Ownership of the group was exercised within their own status. For Puli, these mestizos and Chinese did not work in the fields to earn their food, unlike their members who had to work day and night in order to feed themselves.[33] In a way, the concept of equality had already crystallized in Puli's group. Members joined the Cofradia because they felt oneness with each other. Their condition as *pobre* was given importance by Puli. The segregation was not practiced inside the group.

Fifth, of all the revolts or battles during the Spanish period, rarely was there a high ranking official among the casualties. In the case of Tayabas, and of Puli, the Alcalde Mayor Don Joaquin Ortega, attacked the encampment of Puli in Isabang, only to be defeated and killed by the Cofradia members. An Alcalde Mayor was killed in a battle by the indios.

It also did not stop the Tayabasins from avenging the massacre of their fellow Tayabasins. By January 1843, the Tayabas Regiment stationed in Malate staged a mutiny. They captured Fort Santiago, the headquarters of the Spanish army. This had never been done before. While they occupied Fort Santiago for only a day, one consul witnessed how, during the fighting, Tayabasin soldiers were heard encouraging other soldiers to join them for *independencia*. The consul reported, "This was the first time that the word independence had been uttered in the Philippines as a rallying cry. It is a milestone, Your Excellency, on the road to freedom."[34]

THE LINK OF PULI IN 1872

When Puli was killed in 1841, there were important personages who were arrested and imprisoned in Manila, like Padre Ciriaco de los Santos, Don Domingo Roxas, Don Jose Ramirez Florentino, Don Felipe Morifosque, and Don Teodorico Pantoja. Those were the supporters of Puli. Florentino, Morifosque, and Pantoja were lawyers asked by Don Domingo Roxas to assist Puli and Padre Ciriaco in their application for the recognition of Cofradia. Roxas (1782-1843) was a known businessman and from his line came the Roxas-Ayala–Zobel clan. This was actually the 3rd time Roxas was imprisoned. He was released from prison on May 1842. He was again arrested after the Tayabas Mutiny on January 1843. This time, Doña Margarita (1826-69), his daughter, went to Spain and pleaded to Queen Isabella II for the release of her father. The queen granted her request; but unfortunately, Roxas had already died in prison on 10 June 1843.[35] (Doña Margarita married Don Antonio de Ayala in 1844.)

If a secular priest like Padre Ciriaco delos Santos was imprisoned, it would have been impossible for Padre Pedro Pelaez,[36] eventually a prime mover of the secularization campaign, not to take notice of

30 Ibid.

31 See Luciano Santiago, "The Hidden Light: The First Filipino Priests," *Philippine Studies* 31, no. 2 (1983): 129–88.

32 *Apolinario de la Cruz, 1840-1*, Tomo III, Folio 393 (Manila: National Archives of the Philippines, n.d.).

33 *Apolinario de la Cruz 1840-1841*, Tomo I, Folio 1261 (Manila: National Archives of the Philippines, n.d).

34 See Horacio de la Costa, "Birth of a Nation," *Readings in Philippine History: Selected Historical Texts presented with a commentary* (Manila: Bookmark, Inc., 1965), 213–30.

35 See Carlos Quirino, "The Colorful Mogul," *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation*, edited by Alfredo Roces (Manila: Lahing Pilipino Publication, ca. 1977-8), 1457-63.

36 Roberto Blanco, Renán Prado, and Filomeno Aguilar, "Pedro Peláez, Leader of the Filipino Clergy," *Philippine Studies* 58, no. 1/2 (2010): 3–43.

and know of this plight. In fact, Pelaez was the interim *canónigo magistral* of the Cathedral when he submitted his story on the Cofradia de San Jose on 4 December 1841. Prior to that, or as early as 16 September 1840, Pelaez would write a sort of endorsement to the Bishop of Nueva Caceres on the application of the Cofradia de San Jose. Pelaez then was *mayordomo* and *secretary capitular* of the Cathedral from January 1840 to June 1844.[37] Again, it would have been impossible for Pelaez to simply forget, ignore, or dismiss the events on Puli and that of de los Santos.

We know from Pelaez himself he was in close contact with Father Mariano Gomez. And when Pelaez was among the casualties of the 1863 earthquake, it was Padre Jose Burgos who took up the cudgels for the seculars. Then the Cavite Revolt happened in 1872 where Fathers Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora were eventually sentenced to death. With them were the other supposed accomplices, such as Joaquin and Felix Pardo de Tavera, Antonio Ma. Regidor, Ambrosio Rianzares Bautista, Crisanto de los Reyes, Maximo Inocencio, and two Tayabasins, Enrique Paraiso[38] and Jose Maria Basa y San Agustin.[39] Again, it would have been impossible for Paraiso and Basa not to know anything about Puli and the massacre of their *kababayans*, more so about the mutiny the Tayabas Regiment staged in 1843. In fact, their friend Antonio Ma. Regidor would write later:

> The Filipino Revolution is traceable de facto and de jure to the armed protest in the Ilocos in 1814. It is absolutely untrue that during any time thereafter Filipinas enjoyed peace, whether moral or material. The ardour might have intensified or subsided but the struggle persisted, without any solution...The tide of discontent was on the rise, the September Revolution (1868 in Spain) gave hope to the liberal-minded Filipinos, and even sectors that had been indifferent began to interest themselves in the problem. Drastic action and exemplary punishment thus became necessary: to intimidate one and all, to re-enact the period of Oraa and to flood the fields of Filipinas as in Tayabas in 1841.[40]

37 *Apolinario de la Cruz, 1841–3, 1870*, Folio 229 (Manila: National Archives of the Philippines, n.d.).

38 Zolio Galang, *Encyclopedia of the Philippines: Biography*, Volume III (Manila: Philippine Education Company, 1936), 509–10.

39 Jose M. Basa (December 19, 1839 – July 10, 1907), son of Don Matias Basa and Doña Joaquina San Agustin from Binondo, Manila. The San Agustins of Dona Joaquina came from Tayabas. Please refer also to Manuel, *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*, 47–54.

We can then surmise that the presence of Paraiso and Basa had an impact in making the struggle of Puli and the Cofradia known within their circle. On one hand, the sons of Roxas, Jose and Mariano, were also part of the Comite de Reformadores, together with Burgos. Was this not a continuation of the fight initiated by Puli? Were the inclusions of Paraiso and Basa in the 1872 revolt inspired by what they learned about Puli and the Tayabas Regiment? My great great grandfather, Joaquin San Agustin Villapando, was studying for priesthood at the University of Sto. Tomas when the Cavite Revolt happened, leading to the arrest and execution of Gomez, Burgos, and Zamora. He might have been in contact with his cousins, the San Agustin-Basa in Binondo. Too afraid, he opted not to pursue priesthood due to the tragedy and instead immediately went to Tayabas. If the event in 1872 was very simple, why would my great great grandfather abandon his studies for priesthood? The eventual deportation of Paraiso and Basa was a clear manifestation of the seriousness to fight for our freedom, just as Puli and his Cofradia did. Such was manifested in the 1872 event.

40 Manuel Artigas Cuerva, *The Events of 1872: A Historico-Bio-Bibliographical Account*, translated by OD Corpuz (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1996), 68.

CONCLUSION

Around 1847, the cumbalicincia where Puli worked at the Hospital de San Juan de Dios transferred to the Isla de la Convalescencia. Puli worked with the San Juan de Dios from 1836 to 1837. In 1862, by royal decree, Queen Isabella II of Spain sent the Daughters of Charity to the Philippines; and by 1865, the nuns were asked to take over the management and internal administration of this institution.[41] Such take over was requested by no less than Doña Margarita Roxas de Ayala.[42] It was with goodness in her heart that she supported

41 "History," Hospicio de San Jose, accessed 11 June 2023, https://hospiciodesanjose.ph/history/.

42 Galang, *Encyclopedia*, 41–6.

the Hospicio de San Jose, regardless of the fact that it was the same *convalescencia* was where Puli worked and through which her father Don Domingo Roxas became involved with the Cofradia de San Jose, leading to his imprisonment and death.

In 1870, the Cofradia de San Jose was resurrected. This time it was named "Cofradia de San Jose, San Apolinario de San Apolonio."[43] The leaders were Januario Labios and the wife of Apolonio Purgatorio. Again, the government was alarmed. Many were arrested and some were banished to farflung areas of the country.[44] Among the documents captured during a raid on Mt. Banahaw were several notebooks of Tagalog writings on the life of Christ and some medicinal prescriptions and prayers. Some of the other prayers, however, were utterly incomprehensible to the authorities who examined them. Although containing some Latin and Spanish words, they were in reality neither Latin nor Castilian. They were scraps of prayers from some breviary or missal, badly copied.[45] If we insist that Puli's story was already forgotten by many, the Labios group thirty years after would prove that it just picked up the legacy of Puli. This time, it highlighted the need to make a pilgrimage to Mt. Banahaw. The use of amulets was also tolerated, if not encouraged. And from 1879 to 1886, Laguna and the towns near the slopes of Banahaw and Cristobal would be disturbed by a certain Mariano Montemar,[46] still inspired by Hermano Puli.

During the 1896 revolution, Tayabas province did not immediately join being "maki-kastila" or pro-Spain. By June 1897, the group of Sebastian Caneo staged a procession which was an attack on the Tayabas cabecera. Their group had amulets, yet they lost and many of them died.[47] That same year, on September 3, another group staged a similar procession organized by Caneo, this time led by Inang Quika. (An obelisk now stands along Trese de Agosto St. in Tayabas commemorating this event.[48]) Again, members wore amulets, but they still lost and many died. Tayabas province was the supplier of amulets to Manila even during the Filipino American War in the 1900s.[49] The use of amulets and the alleged "holy voice" (or *santong boses*) in Banahaw were remnants of Puli's Cofradia. Philippine Independence was attained in 1898. A Filipino Church, the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, was established in 1902. The vision of Puli was achieved with the resolutions of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican in the 1960s, which allowed to conduct the holy Mass in vernacular languages. Another vision of Puli was achieved.

Mt. Banahaw now has over one hundred religious groups, free to worship.

43 Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People* (Manila: R. P. Garcia Publishing Company, 1990), 108.

44 *Apolinario de la Cruz 1841–1843, 1870*, Folio 494–6 (Manila: National Archives of the Philippines, n.d.).

45 Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 64–5.

46 See Rhina Alvero Boncocan and Dwight David Diestro, "Isang Pitak ng Kasaysayan: Si Mariano Montemar Bilang Tagapagpatuloy ng Paniniwala ni Apolinario de la Cruz," *Puli: Paniniwala, Ugnayan, Lipunan at mga Imahe sa Panahon ni Apolinario de la Cruz*, edited by Ryan Palad (Tayabas: Atagan, Inc., 2012), 121–38.

47 See Santiago Alvarez, *The Katipunan and the Revolution*, translated by Paula Carolina Malay (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1992).

48 See Ryan Palad, *Si Omer at ang Kwento sa mga Bayani ng Taaw* (Quezon Province: Tayabas Publication, 2003).

49 See Elsie Ramos, "Tayabas sa Panahon ng Digmaang Pilipino-Amerikano," Tayabas: Pagmumulat sa Kasaysayan, Himagsikan at Sentenaryo, edited by Atoy Navarro and Ryan Palad (Manila: Limbagang Pangkasaysayan, 1998), 109–23.

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"Historia de la Cofradia que fundo el Hermano Apolinario de la Cruz en el pueblo de Lucban trabajada y puesta en Verso por mi, para poder major estimular los corazones y animos devotos sus Hermanos o la insinuada Cofradia dedicado a nuestro padre san Jose." *Apolinario de la Cruz, 1840-1*. Tomo IV, Folio 852-927. Manila: National Archives of the Philippines, n.d.

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MOUNT BANAHAW
THE POWER MOUNTAIN

FROM RITUALISM TO SPIRITUALITY

Vitaliano R. Gorospe, S.J.

Nagtalik ang hangin
at ilog sa dilim

Nagpugay ang mga
dahon

Nanawan ang
kayumangging lupa

Umaalingawngaw ang tinig
sa bundok Banahaw

THESE POETIC LINES from a Banahaw folk song describe very well the magical lure of Mt. Banahaw which echoes a mysterious voice that invites and haunts travelers and entices visitors. In the tradition of Egypt, Jerusalem, and Tibet, a mountain of spiritual power is emerging in the Philippines. It originally gained popularity through reports of miraculous cures. But Mt. Banahaw continues to expand its influence beyond the

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rituals of structured religions and religious cults and has attracted psychics and mystics, thousands of pilgrims, and in growing numbers those who seek to develop and enrich their prayer life and spirituality. Unlike enchanted Mt. Makiling, Mt. Banahaw is not only a sacred place of prayer and worship but it has become the center of religious pilgrimages, of physical and spiritual healing, and of Filipino popular religion and spirituality. In short, it has become a "Power Mountain."

THE PLACE AND THE PEOPLE

Located in the province of Quezon close to the eastern borders of Laguna province, Mt. Banahaw rises 7,350 feet or 2,100 meters above sea level. It was once an active volcano but now is believed to be the "holy land" (Santa Tierra, Santong Lugar). It is the highest of many peaks in the area like Mt. San Kristobal, Mt. Masalacot, and Mt. Kalbaryo, and is surrounded by San Pablo City, Tiaong, Candelaria, Sariaya, Lucena City, Tayabas, Lucban, Majayjay, Liliw, and Nagcarlan. It is known as the "rain mountain" for no dry season touches it throughout the year; also "water mountain" because it is blessed with many natural springs, waterfalls, running streams that are even bottled and sold. It is also the one mountain that has not been ravaged by legal or illegal logging, although small areas at the lower levels have been burned by "kaingeros." The ambiance of Banahaw is a combination of mountain slopes and peaks lush with vegetation in a dazzling variety of patterns and colors, ancient giant trees bearded with moss and hairy vines, waterfalls and volcanic caves, gurgling brooks and crystal clear pools, waters that tumble down over huge boulders, rain clouds that cover the peak and even an early morning haze that hovers now and then to this mountain an enchanting place for people from all walks of life to come and pray and rest. Even the way to the remote barrio Kinabuhayan blooms with the healthiest and reddest bougainvillas and poinsettias. Banahaw's *amihan* breeze serves as a cool respite for Manila pilgrims and other visitors.

The most popular starting points for a religious pilgrimage (*pamumuwesto*) are Dolores, 1300 feet above sea level, 100 kilometers from Manila, and 15 kilometers southeast of San Pablo City, and its barrio Kinabuhayan, Quezon. During Holy Week Mt. Banahaw attracts thousands of people including dozens of religious sects who flock to Dolores or Kinabuhayan. The Holy Week pilgrims either begin at Sta. Lucia River and Falls and culminate at Mt. Kalbaryo. At Kinabuhayan, pilgrims pray at the *Yapak ni Kristo* (a clear pool with a rock supposedly bearing the footprint of Jesus) or *Pinaggapusan* (a massive rock where Jesus was supposedly bound before crucifixion) or *Santos Kolehiyos* (grotto of different saints). One can also follow a scenic route along Sta. Lucia River through *puwestos* (places of ritualized prayer) to Kinabuhayan and from there climb to Kristalina Falls and Suplina Falls and end up at *Kuweba ng Diyos Ama* (a "cathedral" cave which is the ultimate goal and dream of every pilgrim). The more energetic climbers can continue a three- to four-hour trek to the summit Durungawan to view the *Ilalim* or extinct volcano crater.

Historically the legend of Mt. Banahaw apparently started with a few historical mystics among whom was a man named Agripino Lontok, from Taal, Batangas, an "insurrecto" or rebel who in 1886 went to the mountain to hide from the Guardia Civil and to acquire secret powers (*anting-anting*) from the mountain. The story goes that everytime he would try to leave the mountain, he would go blind. This phenomenon made Agripino stay in Mt. Banahaw to become its first hermit and caretaker. From 1886 to his death in 1930, Lontok developed an intimacy with Mt. Banahaw and became its conduit to the human race. The spirits of the mountain, through a voice now popularly known as "Santong Boses," revealed its secret and special natural places to Agripino, identified the holy beings or patrons of each special spot or puwesto, and dispensed power prayers (*tigilpo*) mostly for healing and protection. The secret language dictated by the spirits was *Bornay*, an old vernacular which is colloquially unintelligible today. A few other individuals also found their way to Mt. Banahaw, linked up with Lontok and became co-disciples of the mountain. However, these disciples went back to their places of residence after their pilgrimage and became largely responsible for introducing the mountain to their



communities. The best example of these co-disciples is Inang Goring, whose husband was a contemporary of Lontok and whose religious community now resides in Cardona, Rizal. Although their *Sentral* and *Dasalan* are located in Cardona they are Mt. Banahaw devotees and make regular pilgrimages to the sacred mountain.

Other followers of the Banahaw legend settled in Banahaw either in Sta. Lucia, Dolores, or Kinabuhayan. This explains the origin of the hundreds of religious sects and cults that made the sacred mountain their place of residence and worship. Fr. Vicente Marasigan, S.J. wrote an essay about his own spiritual experience of the dream of whispering spirits in Kinabuhayan[1] which he incorporated into his book entitled A *Banahaw Guru* (1985) which is about the life, teaching, and symbolic deeds of Agapito Illustrisimo, founder and father of the religious community of Samahan ng Tatlong Persona Solo Diyos (STPSD). A *Banahaw Guru* (1985) is about the symbolic deeds of Agapito Illustrisimo. More than half of this book is a translation of the document "Mga Dakilang Kasaysayan ng Amang Illustrisimo" (MDKAI), which is a pioneer contribution. However, Fr. Marasigan's writings about Mt. Banahaw are limited to the Samahan Tatlong Persona Solo Dios of Kinabuhayan. He uses Bernard Lonergan's theological insights to understand Banahaw religiosity. Based on the history of STPSD as found in the MDKAI Document, Agapito Illustrisimo was first a

1 See Vicente Marasigan, "Tatlong Persona Solo Dios," *Philippine Studies* 30, no. 4 (1982): 552–62.

pulahan rebel in Limutan, Cebu, then was converted into a man of peace, and became an itinerant preacher in Luzon, and finally founded the STPSD. Teresita B. Obusan, in analyzing the STPSD's oft repeated prayer for peace, "Amang Makapangyarihan," notes the two themes of God's personal and intimate love ("tunay na nagmamahal sa amin") and peace for our country as God's gift ("pakamtan ang kapayapaan"). Moreover her study shows that their beliefs in the Trinity and the Virgin Mary are orthodox Christian beliefs.[2] This prayer for peace is translated into the culture of the group which can be described as *mahinahon*, defined as being "calm in one's speech, action and conduct." The present leader of the STPSD is Jose Illustre, the son of the founder.

2 See Teresita Obusan, "The Mt. Banahaw prayer: Amang Makapangyarihan," Philippine Studies 37, no. 1 (1989): 71–80.

Today the disciples who guard the secret revelation of Agripino Lontok are his daughter, Lola Titay, and his grandson, Ka Esing. The granddaughter of Lontok is Inang Justay who heads the Anak, Ina at Ama ng Santissima Trinidad. Mention has already been made of Inang Goring of Cardona. Long before the arrival of Lontok, Mt. Banahaw was already the mountain refuge of revolutionaries (for instance, the eighteenth century Apolinario de la Cruz who revolted against the Spaniards) and colorums, the place of different religious leaders and cults and the center of forms of Filipino popular religion and spirituality. Most of the numberless religious sects at present believe that Mt. Banahaw is the altar of brave Filipino heroes like Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, Emilio Aguinaldo, Gregorio del Pilar, Agapito Illustrisimo, and Bernardo Carpio. Hence their nationalistic character. Because of their autonomy and self-sufficiency they are independent or isolated from the official Catholic faith or Church. Suffice to mention just a few of these religious sects. On the Kinabuhayan side, besides the STPSD, there is the Watawat ng Lahi (Rizalistas) who believe that Jose Rizal is the Holy Spirit of the Trinity; Iglesia ng Diyos na Buhay inspired by Titong Banal. On the Parang, Dolores side, there are Cinco Vocales, Siete Virtudes and Dolorosa headed by Rogelio Alinea. The Suprema of De la Iglesia Mistica Filipina is Isabel Suarez; Maria Bernadez Balitaan is the saint of Mistica. The cult of the Ten Commandments (concrete tablets at the entrances of barrio Parang and Santong Lugar) was introduced by Litos Baleros of La Union. These are some of the more important religious people

who inherited the legacy of Lontok and who pass on the secret of Mt. Banahaw.

The people living at the foot of Mt. Banahaw believe that the Holy Land (Santa Tierra) was transferred by *Dios Makapangyarihan sa Lahat* to Mt. Banahaw and the *Santong Lugar*, the *Ciudad Mystica de Dios*, was finally established atop the holy mountain. Tradition says that four angels transported Calvary from Jerusalem to Mt. Banahaw, which for some believers is Mt. Ararat where the ark of the righteous will survive the last floods on earth, or the new Mt. Sinai where the Covenant and the Ten Commandments are renewed for sinful mankind. In the meantime, while awaiting the Ciudad Mystica de Dios, the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ is relived and ritualized by the devotees and pilgrims as a form of sacrifice and prayer in the context of nature. Hence, the Dolores side of Mt. Banahaw signifies the Passion of Christ while the Kinabuhayan side signifies His Resurrection.

THE *PUWESTOS*

According to University of the Philippines Professor Prospero Covar the ritualized pilgrimage to Mt. Banahaw is called "pamumuwesto" and it is this religious pilgrimage that has made the sacred mountain very popular all year round but especially during Holy Week.[3] There are four kinds of puwestos or natural shrines: *bato* (rocks), *bukal* (springs), *kuweba* (caves), and *taluktok* (peaks).

Rene D. Somera has made a scientific study of "Pamumuwesto of Mount Banahaw," and has already given us a sequence of the traditional puwesto-trek and an adequate classification of the puwestos and their symbolic significance.[4] What follows is a selective description of puwestos that, with the guidance of local *pators* or local guides, I have experienced as natural shrines of prayer and worship. The spiritual journeys (*pamamakas*) into the Santong Lugar anchored on Matthew 7:7 ("Ask, and you will receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you") followed the route of the traditional and most popular puwestos, chosen with the help of experienced pators.

3 See Prospero Covar, "Prayer in Mt. Banahaw context," *Ministry Today* 2 (1986): 24–30.

4 See Rene Somera, "Pamumuwesto of Mount Banahaw," *Philippine Studies* 34, no. 4 (1986): 436–51.

DOLORES: PASYON AND SIN-PURIFICATION RITES



No one enters a home by the back door and a guest or visitor must first pay his respects (*pag-galang*) to the elders (*ninuno*) of the house. So pilgrims who come for the first time to Mt. Banahaw must begin their pamumuwesto at the front door which is Sta. Lucia Falls. This mountain stream is a portion of the Lagnas river that winds from Kinabuhayan, around Mt. Kalbaryo, and down to San Bernardo. Before anyone can visit the other puwestos in order to climb Kalbaryo, he must be cleansed and purified from sin. Catholics confess their sins to God through a priest (Sacrament of Reconciliation), but according to the Banahaw folk, pilgrims must bathe in the waters of Sta. Lucia (both the stream and two falls) to be cleansed of sin. Sta. Lucia river is below the town level of Dolores and about two hundred and sixty concrete steps lead down to the river shrines, hidden by tall trees and a dense forest. The Sta. Lucia complex is guarded by San Miguel to whom a candle is lit and placed on the huge boulder at the bottom of the steps. After prayers are offered, the pilgrims bathe first at the *Tubig ng Amah* (*nunong lalake* falls) and secondly at *Buhok ng Birhen* (*nunong babae* falls). Then one takes a dip in the cold but refreshing mountain stream of barrio Sta. Lucia. Sin purification or cleansing is a long, never ending process of symbolic ritualized *paliligo* in all the springs and waters of Banahaw. Thus Santa Lucia symbolizes physical cleansing; Santong Jacob, emotional cleansing (from fear); and, Husgado, mental cleansing (from lack of faith and trust in God).

The entrance to Santong Lugar is marked by the Ten Commandments inscribed on two concrete slabs. Pilgrims light candles and pray at the grottos of San Jacob on one side and San Isidro on the other side. On the way to the shed of *Santissima Trinidad* there is a subterranean spring called *hilamusan*. The water catchment is made out of split bamboo tubing about a meter long that sticks out of the side of a mound. Through the bamboo trough ooze droplets of drinking water. One accumulates these droplets in his cupped open palms, and drinks or washes his face with it. It is a refreshing balm after the ascent from Sta. Lucia Falls.

Normally the first puwesto after Santa Lucia is the *prisentahan* where pilgrims must present their cleansed bodies before the twin kuweba inside a pit about seven feet deep. Entrance and exit are provided via an iron ladder that has been permanently installed in the puwesto to facilitate the pilgrims going in and out of the twin grottos. The pilgrim prays inside the kuweba of San Pedro and then in the kuweba of San Pablo. Depending on the number of pilgrims, the second puwesto is the *Balon ni Santong Jacob*, a subterranean spring at the bottom of a steep rocky descent. Santong Jacob is a geological fault that has sulphur water underneath. It is about twenty feet deep in a cave-like structure below the entrance. It is refreshing to take a cool dip in Santong Jacob's sulphur water. It is believed to be medicinal against many forms of disease. When the smell of the water becomes strongly odorous, "amoy bangkay," some people claim that the spirits of the dead are taking a bath in the pool. If this happens, prayers transform the bad odor to the fragrant smell of coffee tree blossoms and incense. Santong Jacob's well is so mysterious that some pilgrims find it bottomless, while others easily touch the watery floor.

INA NG AWA TO *HUSGADO*

The third puwesto is the cave *Ina ng Awa* where pilgrims offer lighted candles and prayers to the Virgin of Perpetual Help inside the massive cave. The opening of the cave is guarded by a massive overhanging boulder which is kept in place by a tiny rock. Although it has withstood the test of time and even the 1990 earthquake, one wonders what would happen if the huge rock which hangs precariously suddenly slipped. About ten feet above the shed of Ina ng Awa is the fourth puwesto which opens into a tortuous and labyrinthine passageway about twenty feet in length from entrance to exit, but seems much longer because of its snake-like structure. No first pamumuwesto is complete without going through this cavernous route called *Husgado*. From the name, the sinner is judged repentant or not, depending on whether he can go through the cave. Husgado is the ultimate sin-purification test because the unrepentant sinner cannot negotiate the tunnel even with a pator or guide. Pilgrims on different occasions who panicked were able

to go through the cave only with extreme difficulty. For one pilgrim the experience was so traumatic that he decided to drop the pilgrimage and immediately went back to Manila by himself.

The entrance to Husgado, both threatening and dangerous, frightens not a few visitors from attempting Husgado the first time. Pilgrims must remove all shoes, watches, rings, eye glasses and any other object that might impede a smooth passage. Each one is provided with a candle to light the way through the pitch black tunnel. One enters the cave in an inclined standing position by sliding down through a vertical funnel and resting one's feet in niches until one enters through the side. The narrow passageway lined with sharp rocks and pointed stones that protrude from the cave walls impedes an otherwise smooth passage. One negotiates Husgado in a prone position crawling inside the maze with lots of candle drippings whose smell provides an eerie atmosphere. Body language and the instructions of the guide are essential. The passageway swings upwards towards the exit. The manner of negotiating the exit is to jump astride a huge boulder. The final stage is achieved when one finds himself on the wooden floor of the roofed shed of Ina ng Awa with one's guide and companions smiling and ready to offer a word of congratulations.

SANTISSIMA

For pilgrims who wish to spend the night on the mountain there is a long meandering route leading to the fifth puwesto of Santissima Trinidad, skirting Batang Kiling, a puwesto manned by the Samahan Cinco Vocales, Siete Virtudes. Pilgrims can stay overnight at this puwesto where there is a protective shed in case of rain. One can take a bath at a hidden spring made into a concrete reservoir with an iron pipe as an outlet. The water flows continuously. With this contraption, which is five feet high, one can take a shower standing up. The drainage water flows into the Lagnas river about thirty to forty feet below and then down to Sta. Lucia, San Bernardo, and beyond.

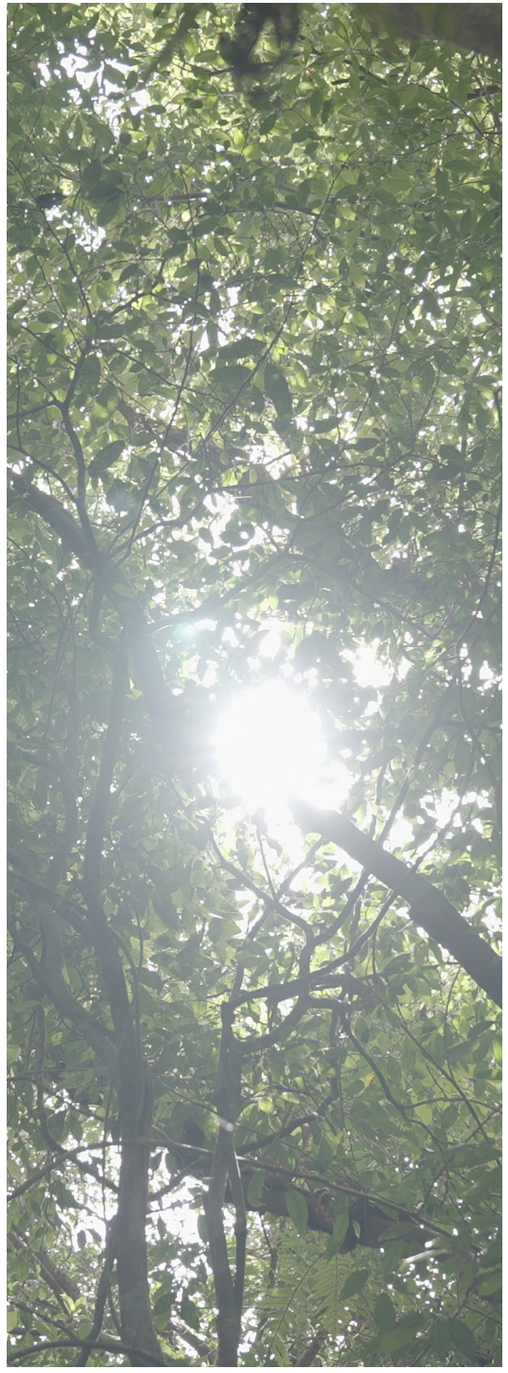
Another source of drinking water is the spring called *Balon ni San Isidro*. One scoops water from the clear clean mini-spring with a dipper. About ten feet away from this spring is a flat sandy surface where a pator sometimes pours water three times over a pilgrim's head as a symbolic baptism of water.

SANTOS KALBARYO

Every pilgrim who is able to negotiate the difficult labyrinthine passageway of Husgado is forgiven his sins and is given a new lease on life that qualifies and prepares him for *pangangakalbaryo*. The climax of any religious pilgrimage on the Dolores side is the difficult climb to *Santos Kalbaryo* where Jesus is believed to have been crucified. Santos Kalbaryo is a rocky mountain that is about 704 feet above sea level. It has three wooden crosses at its highest point. The trek from Husgado to Santos Kalbaryo is initially gradual, becoming steeper as it nears the peak. The elevation has some shady trees, but the higher portion has only grass as cover for reddish volcanic rocks. The barren rocks are especially rough and inhospitable to barefoot-worshippers. But the more painful the trek, especially under the scorching sun, the more meritorious the *pagsasacrificio*. Following the custom, each pilgrim carries a stone or tiny rock from the beginning of the trek to the summit. These stones are laid at the foot of the three crosses as a token of the sacrificial climb. Candles are lighted there and, together or singly, the pilgrims make their *panalangin*. There is a magnificent panoramic view of the surrounding lowlands from the top of Santos Kalbaryo.

KINABUBAYAN: RESURRECTION RITES

It is believed that after three days, Jesus Christ rose from the dead and resurrected at *Kinabuhayan*. Hence the name of barrio Kinabuhayan—"muling pagkabuhay o bagong buhay." Like Dolores, Kinabuhayan is a complex of rocks, waterfalls, caves, peaks, and a running river. But most important of all are the most popular puwestos of *Pinaggapusan* (rock of the scourging), *Tubig Kinabuhayan* (clear pool with rock underneath bearing the "yapak," or footprint of Jesus), *Pinagburolan* (cave where Jesus was interred with a figure of the Risen Christ) and *Santos Kolehiyos* (grotto of the saints).



The central *kapilya* of the Samahan ng Tatlong Persona Solo Dios (STPSD), which is the subject of Fr. Marasigan's book, is located in Kinabuhayan, a stone's throw away from the mountain stream where both the Pinaggapusan and Yapak are found. A visit to the *Sentral* or chapel of STPSD reveals on the mural above the altar what looks like three Christs, but really represents *Tatlong Persona*. There is a smaller but similar painting of the "Triune Christ" on the right side of the altar. In the wide front yard fronting the chapel is a statue of Agapito Illustrisimo. Stone steps leading to the stream bring the visitor or pilgrim to Pinaggapusan where Christ is believed to have been bound and scourged. It is a huge rectangular shaped rock lodged in the dry river bed bearing the imprint of four parallel lines of rope which apparently tied Jesus to the rock, together with the imprint of a horse's hoof, which is said to have missed hitting the body of Jesus. A visiting German scientist studied this hard rock of the scourging and concluded that it was impossible for human hands to have chiseled or carved the imprint of the ropes and the hoof. Another extraordinary puwesto—Tubig Kinabuhayan—is the crystal clear pool of water whose transparency was made possible by filtering rocks constructed by the Banahaw folk. It is believed that Christ walked here and left the imprint of a footstep ("Yapak ni Kristo"). The rocks around the pool of Yapak are bedecked with fresh and wilted flowers and candles that have been lit and relit by visitors who also throw coins into the pool and make a wish.

The most popular Kinabuhayan puwesto, especially during Holy Week, is the Pinagburolan, a cave which is believed to be the burial place of Jesus after the crucifixion. Inside the cave, after getting used to the dark, the visitor will see the figure of the Risen Christ. A huge living rock (*batong buhay*), oozing with moisture, stands guard by the figure. The water when applied to the body has curative powers. One tragic story about this cave is that it was once

covered by a flood as punishment for sin, and so what remains of the cave today is man-made.

Pilgrims can then continue at the shallow portion of the Lagnas river which changes into a reddish color and tastes like soda water, and then follow the long meandering mountain stream, hopping from rock to rock, wading knee and waist deep, and finally swimming the last stretch of the river to the puwesto of Santos Kolehiyos—a half-dome cavern covering a flat earth landing believed to be the assembly of the saints. Even the saints have to learn new things about the next life in school. Hence, the name of the puwesto—Santos Kolehiyos. Not a few pilgrims recall how they felt the presence of spiritual beings in the cave.

TUBIG KRISTALINA, *SUPLINA* AND *SALAMING BUBOG*

What is the religious significance of the collective puwesto-trek embracing Ina ng Awa, Santos Kalbaryo, and Kuweba ng Dios Ama? The devotee or pilgrim cannot proceed to the Son at Santos Kalbaryo (Christology) except by passing through the Mother and Ina ng Awa (Mariology) but the Son is the only way to the Holy Spirit and to the Father at Kuweba ng Dios Ama (Trinity). Just as the climax of the pamumuwesto at Dolores is Kalbaryo, so the peak and ultimate pamumuwesto in Kinabuhayan is Kuweba ng Dios Ama. Once again, one must be further cleansed for the new life (*bagong buhay*) by the waters of Kristalina and Suplina Falls along the more scenic ascent to the Kuweba ng Dios Ama. The alternative but very steep and therefore more difficult route is by way of *Tatlong Tanke*. On the trek above the Lagnas river there is an open field with all kinds of vegetables. Beyond this rolling vegetable patch is a rainforest that is damp and shady, the sanctuary of different varieties of butterflies, cicadas, and birds. After a thirty minute hike under cover of a semi-dense forest, a crystal clear waterfall cascades a bridal veil. Hence the name Kristalina Falls. Ferns, orchids, and moss cling to the cliff forming a mantle of multi-shaded green that climbs about thirty feet high and extends about fifteen feet wide in a semicircle. Here is natural beauty at its



best. At the bottom of the waterfall is a crystal clear pool whose clean waters provide a refreshing drink for the thirsty traveler. To take a dip into this pool is a soothing relief after a back-breaking climb that counts as pagsasacrificio. A deep peaceful silence pervades the cascades and the banks of the mountain stream as well as the surrounding forest. All nature in silence puts the traveler in a meditative and contemplative mood at *Tubig Kristalina*.

The next puwesto is *Suplinang Tubig*—a more than a hundred feet high waterfall, dropping as long strands of water. Below the falls there is a natural rock platform, like a sacrificial table, on which one's whole body can lie prostrate under the falling waters. After the pounding of water on one's back, the flesh becomes tender and pinkish, not unlike the actual effect of *pagsusuplina* using a metallic whiplash at Ciudad Mistica de Dios. Suplinang Tubig strengthens the spirit for the *Kapangyarihan* at *Salamin ng Bubog*. Whereas Kristalina symbolizes man's aesthetic taste, Suplina symbolizes the sacrificial or penitential spirit of man.

The pool of water in the area at the foot of Suplinang Tubig forms a mirror-like floor in which one's whole being is reflected. The Salamin ng Bubog mirrors whatever blemish still remains after all the water-cleansing before presenting oneself to Kapangyarihan at the Kuweba ng Dios Ama. The way to the ultimate cathedral cave is a treacherous trek amidst deep precipitous ravines. At one point,

each pilgrim has to hold on to a strong vine or rope along a very narrow path over a cliff beyond which is a sheer drop to the rocky stream below. A midway stop, or *papirmahan*, is a rectangular structure that has a bedlike narrow platform cliff that serves as an altar for a wooden cross. Around it everyone is enjoined to sign his name symbolically for posterity.

KUWEBA NG DIOS AMA

The crowning point of a pamumuwesto in Kinabuhayan is the natural cathedral *Kuweba ng Kapangyarihan o Dios Ama* almost at the summit of Mt. Banahaw. As one approaches the one-hundred-foot-tall cave entrance, decorated and festooned with giant hairy ferns, overgrown moss of all shapes and colors, and overhanging orchids, the Kuweba looks like a gigantic gaping black hole in the side of the mountain. Contrary to all expectations, it is a very shallow cave whose opening is both wide and very high. The natural floor or platform is narrow, about eight feet from the cave walls. At the center is a sculptured rock and, before it, a wooden cross. Candles are lit and prayers are offered by the *mananalangin*. There is a mysterious spring inside the cave and it is said that on rare occasions when clear, crystal water miraculously oozes from the spring, one must immediately get rid of whatever drinking water was brought or else the magic spring will dry up. After a seven-hour mountain trek the weary pilgrims can rest a while and say a prayer of thanksgiving for having reached the goal of their search for the Absolute—the All Powerful—which, in the context of the sacred mountain, is God the Father. The more energetic travelers or mountaineers can proceed about three more hours to *Santos Durungawan* and finally to the extinct volcano crater or *Ilalim*. On the summit of Mt. Banahaw on a clear day, one can see the provinces of Laguna and Quezon and both the China Sea and Pacific Ocean.



THE PILGRIMS

Who are the people who go to the sacred mountain and why do they go there? Why has Mt. Banahaw become a centuries-old center of year-round Filipino religious pilgrimages and the origin of indigenous prayer and spirituality? Why is Mt. Banahaw a Power Mountain? In more recent times why has it become a way from ritualism to spirituality. Under the general heading of "Pilgrims," the people who go to Mt. Banahaw fall under the following categories: (1) those looking for a place of religious pilgrimage in the tradition of Lourdes, Fatima, Medjugore, Akita or Manaoag, Peñafrancia, Antipolo, and Lipa; (2) those seeking all kinds of healing, physical and spiritual, including faith, herbal or pranic healing; (3) those interested in mediums, mystics and trance-possession (*langkap*), para-psychic phenomena and the occult; (4) those looking for anting-anting or occult powers.

Most pilgrims go to Mt. Banahaw not as tourists, but to pray and offer whatever fatigue, discomfort, and hardship they endure as a form of sacrifice or penance to obtain a special grace or favor. This is true of the religious sects and hundreds of pilgrims who go to Mt. Banahaw during the Lenten season and participate in the Holy Week rituals. Many visitors, both local and foreign, among them psychics, yogists, and a new breed seeking new forms of spirituality have frequented Mt. Banahaw. Tourists go to Banahaw not because God dwells there but out of curiosity, recreation, adventure, or to escape boredom and pollution. Fr. V. Marasigan, S.J. recounts two miraculous interventions of nature that stopped the plans of a business syndicate in 1968 to construct a public swimming pool at the site of the miraculous spring, and in 1981 of the tourism industry in cooperation with multinational corporations to convert Mt. Banahaw into an "international center of psychic and spiritual research" which was just another gimmick for a recreation and amusement national park.[5]

Apart from the traditional *manggagamot*, *hilot*, and *arbolario*, today pranic healing has become the popular vogue and a new Center for Pranic Healing has been opened in Parang, Dolores. In the past, Banahaw was famous for many reported miraculous cures,

5 See Marasigan, "Tatlong Persona Solo Dios," 552–62.

either from the natural waters of Banahaw or the local mediums and healers. Today, Mt. Banahaw has become the center of holistic healing not only of body, mind, and spirit but of the whole person. Modern health and medical care is highly specialized. The poor cannot afford specialists. That is why the arbolario or hilot is the poor man's doctor. A specialist cures only one particular part of the body, but the new concept of arbolario means a holistic healer who cures the whole person ("ginagamot hindi lamang sakit kundi tao"). Fr. Bulatao describes three models of Philippine faith healing; namely, healing that is effected through the mediation of a charismatic figure, or of a manggagamot, or of a sacred place or object (statue or nature).[6] It is the faith of the subject to be cured, not the healer, that mobilizes the subconscious to come up with a cure. Therefore from a psychological viewpoint, the subconscious is mobilized to do the healing through the curative waters or the medium or faith healer. From a theological viewpoint, healing was part of Christ's ministry and it requires faith on the part of those to be healed.

6 See Jaime Bulatao, "Philippine faith healing," *Ministry Today* (Jan-Mar 1981): 31–86.

Almost a decade ago, Fr. Bulatao wrote an article on "The New Mysticism in the Philippine Church."[7] Mysticism is as old as Mt. Banahaw and certainly the sacred mountain is the locale of Filipino mystics, old and new. The hypothesis of altered state of consciousness (ASC) is the psychological explanation behind the trances (langkap), possessions, reading of hearts, clairvoyance, foretelling the future, communicating with the dead, speaking in tongues, and other wonders that the Filipino mystics perform. Whether it is truly God, the Virgin Mary, or one of the saints speaking to the church and to the world through the mediumship of the mystics is a theological question. Truly the gift of prophecy has scriptural basis and its authenticity is the fruit of prayerful discernment. The majority of the Banahaw pilgrims are the poor. The lives of many mystics in Mt. Banahaw are paragons of faith and complete surrender of the self into the hands of God. They lead poor lives and their teaching and healing ministry is mostly among their fellow-poor.

7 See Jaime Bulatao, "The new mysticism in the Philippine church," *Witness* 1 (1981): 14–31.

Finally, it must be recalled that Agripino Lontok went to Banahaw not only to hide from arrest but also to look for power hidden in



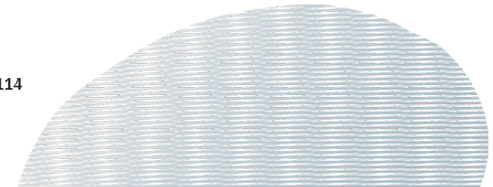
the anting-anting. Boy Fajardo who is an authority on Mt. Banahaw explains how occult powers of three kinds of anting-anting in the context of Mt. Banahaw make it a Power Mountain.[8] The first kind of anting-anting are derived from nature and are called *mutya*, e.g. stones, *santong cahoy*, carabao's tooth and certain insects. The mere possession of this natural anting-anting bestows upon the bearer the quality of the essence of the particular mutya. For instance, langka fruit makes its owner "mabango sa ibang tao." Whoever possesses the lightning mutya inherits the quality of being swift and forceful. The second kind of anting-anting is the triangle *medalyon*, the *solo mata*, and the medalyon with three A's (Aram, Akdam, Aksadam or three archangels who guided Jesus Christ). Possession of the medallion allows the bearer to invoke the guidance of these angels and receive their assistance. Likewise one can activate a handkerchief with the drawing or Latin symbols of deities and communicate with the deities, thereby making the amulet work for him. Another means of activation or a third kind of anting-anting is the *pabaon* or *pakain*. These

8 Jake Agregado, "Boy Fajardo goes into the soul of the anting-anting," *Mr. & Ms. Magazine*, January 1990, 16.

amulets or talismans are imbedded in the human body, either by ingestion or burying them under the skin. This application renders the individual invincible to knives and even bullets. Another function is to make an individual invisible or enable him to walk on water. Do anting-anting have power? It is said that an anting-anting that is given is more potent than an anting-anting that is bought. There is no doubt that the effectivity of an anting-anting is dependent on the consciousness of the person using it. If a person's consciousness deteriorates, the amulet becomes useless. Involvement with the anting-anting and with occultism can lead to fanaticism or can be the stepping stone to the discovery of a person's spirituality. Power can be misused for evil or material gain. But true power is only given when the individual learns to be compassionate to others. I know Boy Fajardo as a personal and faithful friend and can bear witness that his involvement with Mt. Banahaw and the use of the anting-anting has only served to open the door to spirituality.

In conclusion, the pilgrims who frequent Mt. Banahaw, whether for reasons of a religious pilgrimage, for healing of body, mind, and spirit, for prayer and meditation, for involvement with mysticism and the occult, should in the end discover that all these structured religious sects and ritualized forms of prayer are stepping stones from ritualism to spirituality and the true God.





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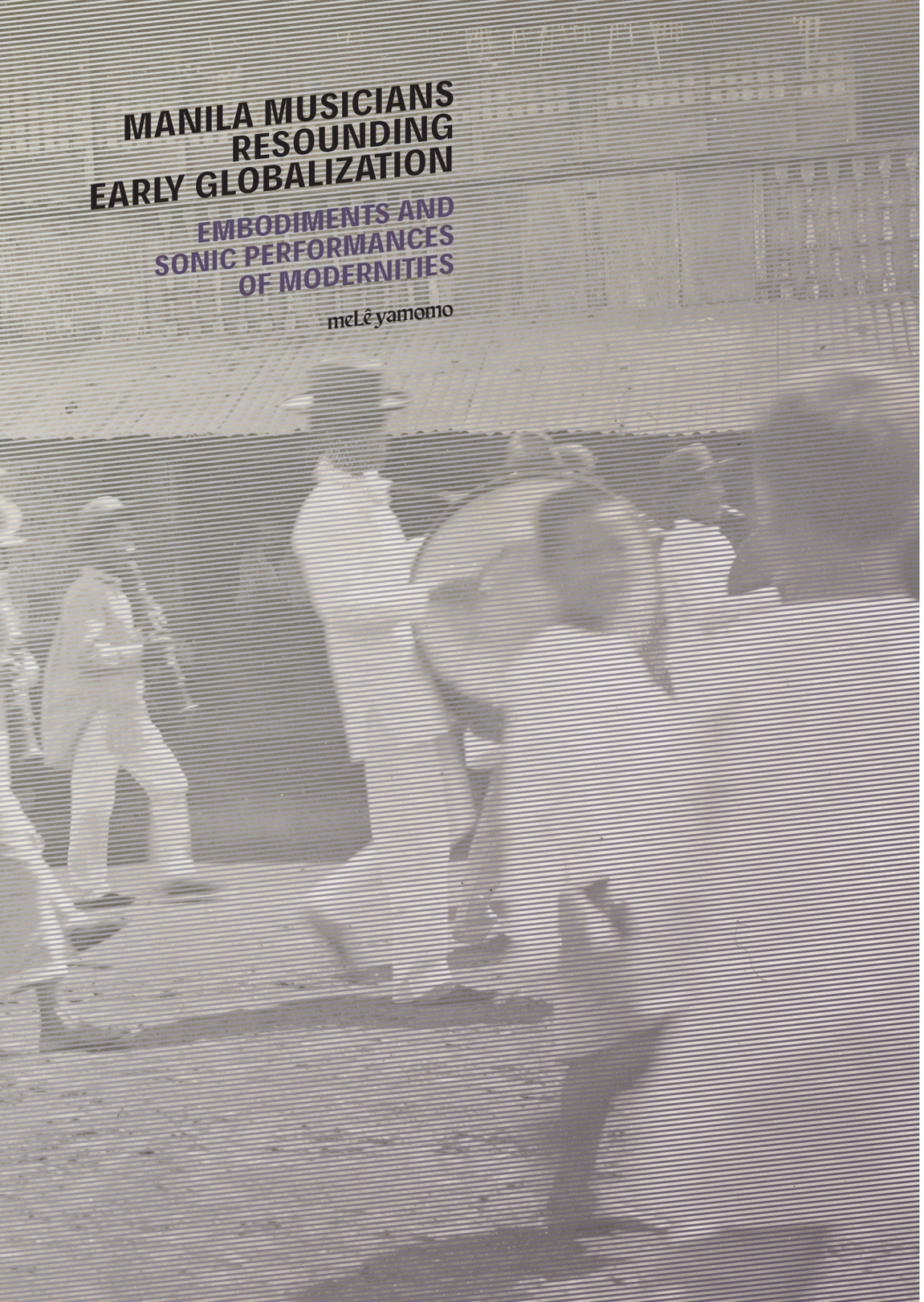
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SUPER
SPECIAL
NEW ENGLAND

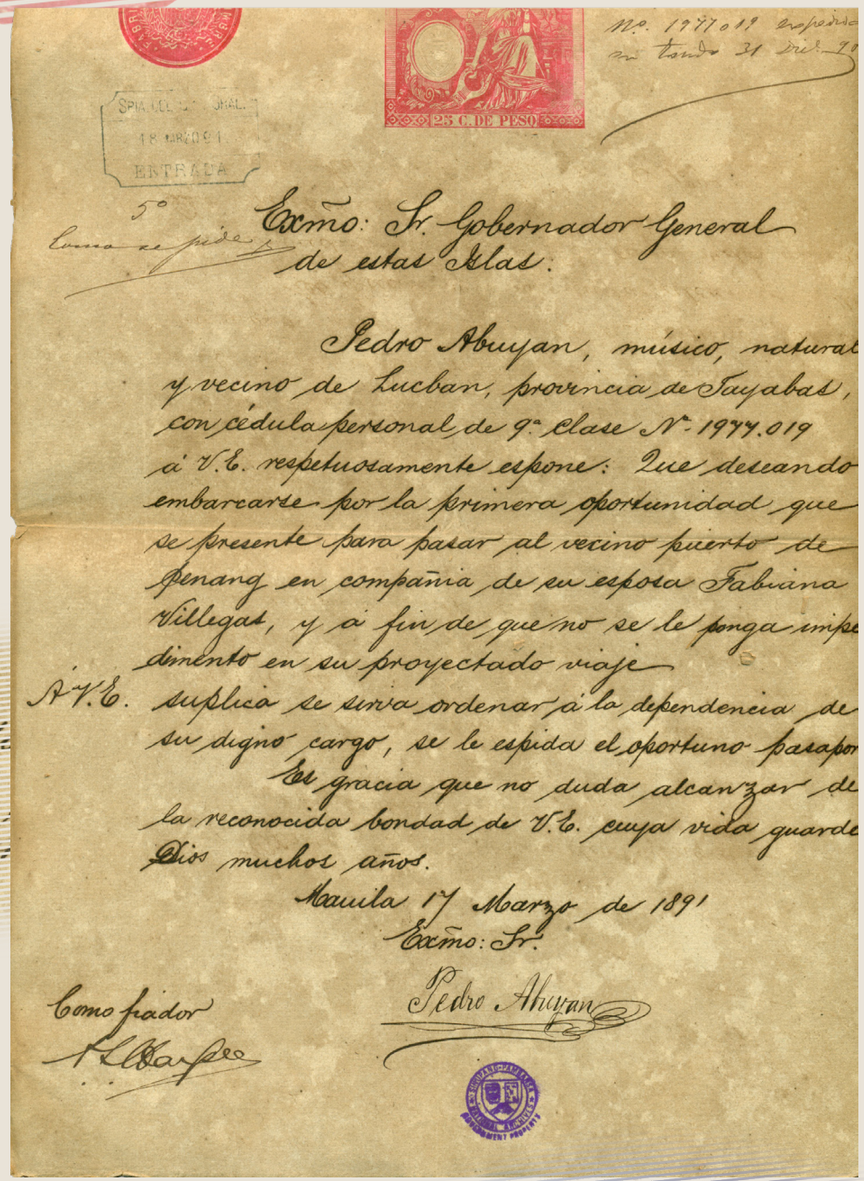


I.
"PEDRO ABUYAN, MUSICIAN, NATIVE AND RESIDENT OF LUCBAN PROVINCE OF TAYABAS... WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, STATES HIS WISHES TO MOVE TO PENANG IN THE COMPANY OF HIS WIFE FABIANA VILLEGAS"

ON 17 MARCH 1891, Pedro Abuyan, a musician, native, and resident of Lucban, province of Tayabas, lodged an application to travel to Penang to join the Penang State Band, composed mostly of other Manila musicians (FIGURE 1). Accompanying him on the journey was his wife Fabiana Villegas. He was among the twelve musicians applying for passage to Penang (Straits Settlements).

On 18 March 1891, twelve musicians submitted passport applications for passage to Penang (Straits Settlements). Among them, Cecilio Mañalong was a veteran Manila Band musician. His application indicates that his previous addresses included Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, where he was already involved with the local Manila bands of those cities (FIGURE 2).

Unique in these collections of passport applications (in the National Archive of the Philippines) are the 1892 letters of request for the post of Sta. Cecilia Band in Singapore, such as in the case of Blás Cortés. These letters included an added line in the motivation for emigration: "to dedicate their lives to a profession in the arts" (FIGURE 3). This is the nineteenth century Romanticist notion of the social autonomy of the music and the arts entangling itself with Manila musicians who were re-imagining themselves as "artists."



Courtesy of National Archives of the Philippines.

FIGURE 1. Pedro Abuyan's passport application letter.

Pedro Abuyan's Passport application:

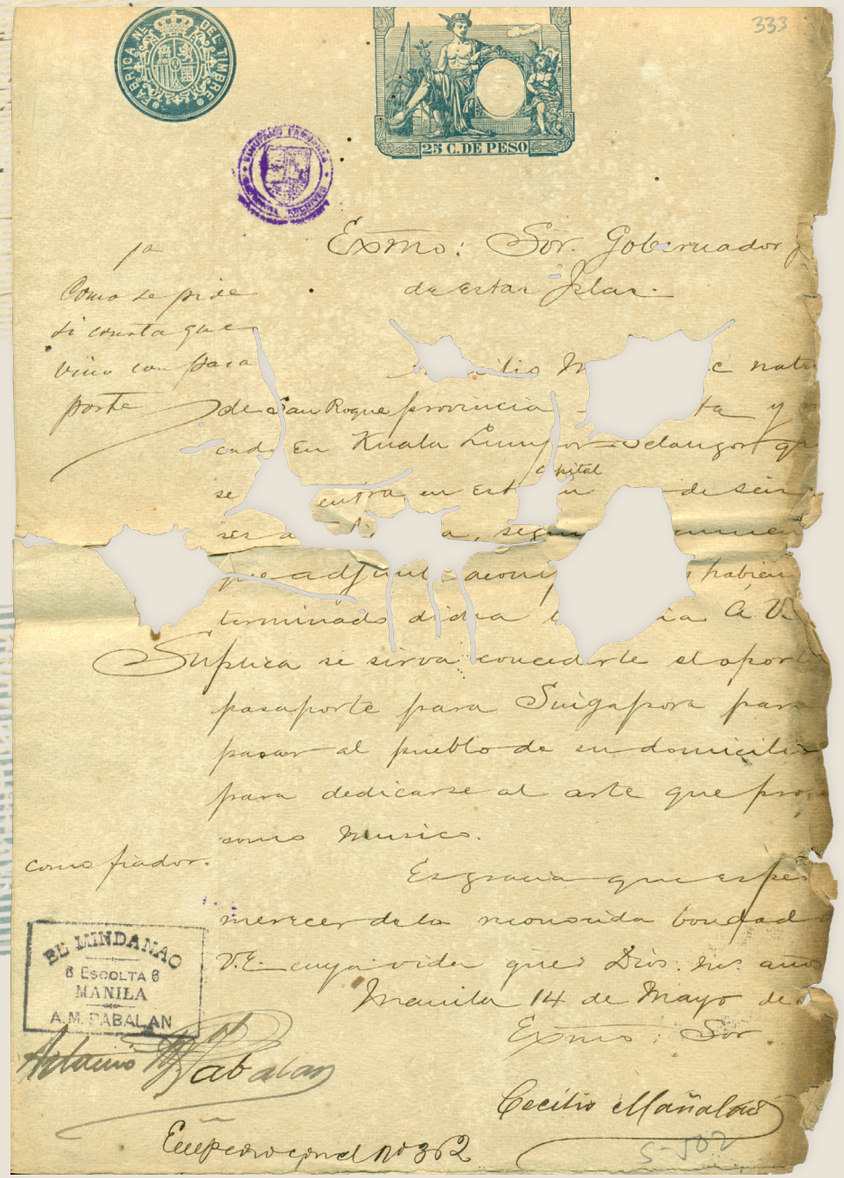
His Excellency Governor General of these Islands

Pedro Abuyan, musician, native and resident of Lucban province of Tayabas with 9th class personal ID number 1977019 to Your Excellency. He respectfully states that he wishes to embark at the first opportunity that presents itself to go to the neighboring port of Penang in the company of his wife Fabiana Villegas, and so that his planned trip is not hindered, he begs you to order in the dependency of his worthy position is granted by the opportune passport.

It is grace that he does not doubt the recognized goodness of Your Excellency. whose life God preserves for many years.

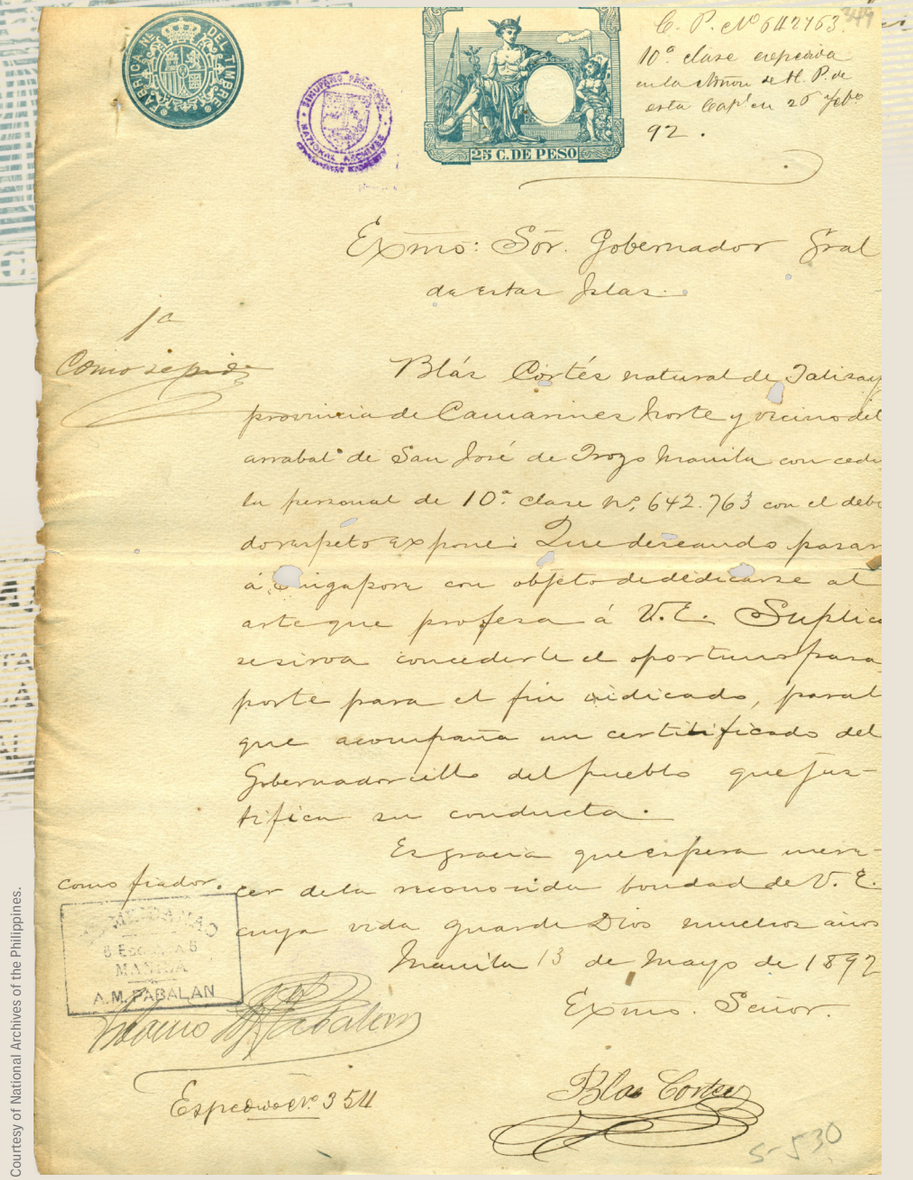
Manila March 17, 1891.

(Author's translation)



Courtesy of National Archives of the Philippines.

FIGURE 2. Cecilio Mañalong's passport application letter.



Courtesy of National Archives of the Philippines.

FIGURE 3. Blás Cortéz's passport application letter.

Blás Cortés natural de Talisay provincia de Camarines Norte y vecino del arrabal de San José de Trozo Manila con cédula personal de 10.a clase numero 642763 con el devodo respeto expone que deseando pasar a Singapur *con objeto de dedicarse al arte que profesa.*

(Transcription. Author's emphasis)

Blás Cortés, a native of Talisay, province of Camarines Norte and resident of the suburb of San José de Trozo Manila, with 10th class personal ID number 642763, with all due respect, states that he wishes to move to Singapore in order to dedicate himself to the art he professes.

(Author's translation)

II.
ORCHESTRATING EARLY MODERNITIES: MUSICAL MISSIONS AND SONIC DIPLOMACIES



Courtesy of University of Michigan Library Digital Collections. "Filipino band; 17: 1900/1902." https://quod.lib.umich.edu/s/sclphilimg/x-17/phlk122. Accessed January 25, 2024.

FIGURE 4. Philippine Band, ca. 1900–1902.

In 17th century Philippines, the Spanish colonial government began recruiting Philippine *indio* soldiers to expand the Spanish military in the colony. Initially, this was made up of infantry from Spain and Nueva España (Mexico). This ensured sufficient armed personnel to defend Spanish towns from regular pirate incursions from Mindanao, which at that time was not a part of the Philippines. To sustain its imperial presence in Asia, the Spanish colonial authority continued to draft native indio soldiers for its armed forces over the course of the following two centuries.

In the 19th century, the military began training its own brass bands. Towards the second half of the century, every regiment of the Spanish armed forces had its own band composed of native Filipino musicians. These military bands did more than just support military and governmental functions during this period; they also gave free performances twice a week in Manila's public parks.

Upon completion of military duties and returning to civilian life, the military musicians found employment as professional musicians in the growing music and theatre industry in Manila, and eventually in other cities in Asia.[1]

1 meLê yamomo, *Theatre and Music in Manila and the Asia Pacific, 1869–1946: Sounding Modernities* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 75.

The phenomenon of native Filipino musicians' migration and cross-cultural musical entanglements with their Asian and Pacific neighbors was not without historical precedent. In the three centuries of Spanish colonial rule, native Filipino musicians have always been entangled in the shifting systems of competing globalization and empire-building. Their sonic labor served the 17th century religious missions, the 18th century imperial military expeditions, and the 19th century colonial corporate capitalism.

Under Spanish rule, the colonial government highly regulated intra-migration between settled territories. Movements between the Philippine islands and territories were forbidden. Exempted from this rule, however, were ecclesiastical workers, which often included native Filipino church musicians. Incentives were offered to musicians of certain reputations to entice them to migrate to other mission sites.

From the 17th until the 19th century, native Filipino musicians were also entangled in Spanish Catholic mission efforts outside the Philippines. In 1688, the Spanish Jesuit mission to Guam deployed three native Filipino musicians: Juan de Santiago (cantor), Felipe Tocsan (cantor), and Andres de la Cruz (boy soprano).[2] In the 17th century, a Spanish priest, cartographer, and ethnographer, Pedro Murillo Velarde, wrote that the native Filipino musicians were the best diplomatic "tools which the King can use in the Indies."[3] Ambassadorial reports also detailed the role of musicians and performers in intercultural communication and in solemnizing the diplomatic missions to neighboring Asian rulers and European colonial settlements, as was the case in Siam in 1718 and Mangalore in 1776.[4]

2 D.R.M. Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 59.

3 Ibid., 62.

4 Irving, 63.

III.
PERFORMING MODERNITIES: *INDIOS* LOCALLY, MANILA MUSICIANS ABROAD



Courtesy of University of Michigan Library Digital Collections. "The Imus band: Imus, Cavite - - 1899; 527; 1899." https://quod.lib.umich.edu/s/sclphilimg/x-527/phla553. Accessed January 25, 2024.

FIGURE 5. The Imus band in Imus, Cavite, 1899. There are few extant photos of local Manila bands and orchestras, but this photo gives an impression of what the local musicians would look like in the nineteenth century.

In the second half of the 19th century, every district of Manila had its own orchestra or two. When opera and sarswela companies arrived in Manila in the 1850s, 11 orchestras were available for hire for the traveling and local theatre ensembles. Due to the increased demands for musicians, the Union Artistico-Musical was established in 1885 to regulate the monopoly and abuse in hiring and of musical ensembles.[5] All orchestras were composed of *indios* trained in the military or churches.

5 Sociedad De Conciertos, "Union Artistico-Musical," *Reglamento de La Sociedad de Conciertos 'Union Artistico-Musical'* (Manila, 1885).

Under the Spanish casta (racial and social identification system), "indio" was a general term for indigenous peoples of the Philippine islands. Within the colonial society, indios occupy the lowest race and social class. The term Filipino referred exclusively to Spanish citizens of European descent born in the Philippines until 1898.

At the end of the 18th century, the Spanish empire allowed the recruitment of indios into the military. Certain infantries received musical training and served as musicians providing public service. After eight years of required military duties, these musicians became part of professional orchestras in Manila; or, like many others, they were recruited to form the municipal bands of other Asian cities.

Outside the Spanish-colonial Philippines, migrant indios assumed different identities as they entered other territories. Natives of the Philippines who jumped the galleons in the Americas were called chinos in Mexico. In the Dutch East Indies (contemporary Indonesia), they were categorized in the general group of Malays. In the 19th century, migrant Philippine indios in British territories were recorded in the immigration censuses as "Manila men" or "Manillamen." In the absence of a nation-state identifier, migrant Philippine indios (even those who came from other cities, regions, and ethnolinguistic groups) were identified with Manila, the emblematic capital of the colony, as a term of reference recognized outside the Spanish empire. Thus, the migrant Philippine indio musicians were called Manila musicians in other Asian cities where they migrated.

IV.
"THE PHILIPPINE BAND IS ONE OF THE CHIEF ARTICLES OF EXPORT FROM MANILA"

Manila-based American expatriate Joseph Earle Stevens, Eurocentrically wrote in his 1898 auto-biography that "the Philippine band is one of the chief articles of export from Manila, and groups of natives with their cheap instruments are shipped off to Japan, India, and the Spice Islands, to carry harmony into the midst of communities where music is uncultivated."[6] 19th century European and American ethnographies and memoirs are replete with these underhanded compliments to Filipino musicianship.



Courtesy of University of Michigan Library Digital Collections. "North shore of the Pasig River: 892; 1896/1900." https://quod.lib.umich.edu/s/sciphilimg/A-892/phlc003. Accessed January 25, 2024.

FIGURE 6. Manila-port, entrance from Pasig River, ca. 1896-1900.

As Manila was intertwined with the 19th century global trade motored by steamships and steam trains, raw materials from the colonies and manufactured products from Europe were not the only wares moving across the imperial boundaries and the continents. The same ships that delivered postal mail, books, fashion, home appliances, and musical instruments also transported concert musicians, drama and opera companies, and circus troupes. As independent commercial enterprises, itinerant music companies established a cultural sphere autonomous of religion and the monarchic state. The globalizing commercial music shaped the modern sonicscape of the 19th century, and Manila was not just on its receiving end. The Manila musicians were crucial in disseminating acoustic modernity in the Asia Pacific.

Stevens's account adds: "All in all, it is extremely curious that out of all the peoples of the Far East, the Filipinos are the only ones possessing a natural talent for music, and that the islands today stand out unique from among all the surrounding territory as being the home of a musical race."[7] Celebrating the Strauss-playing indios as the yardstick for "civilized" brown bodies buttresses the delusions of the European civilizing mission. Forfeited in these self-laudatory compliments are three hundred years of Philippine entanglement in global history and the unaccounted labor of Filipinos in the construction of the contesting histories of modernity.

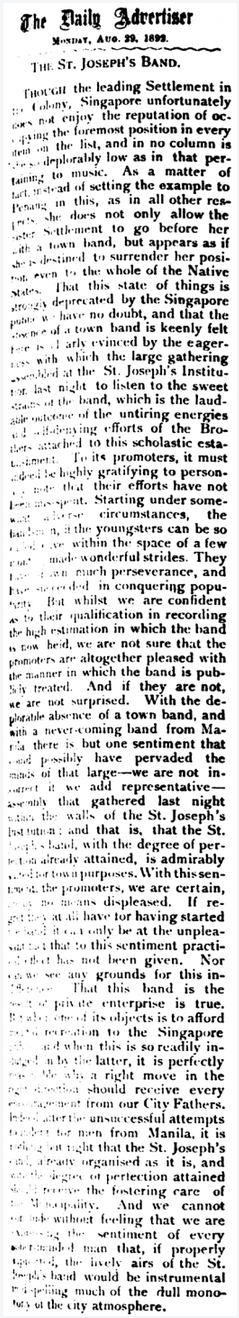
In casting the native Filipino musicians as cultural and historical anomalies, their sonic labor was expediently indentured for the Dutch, British, and French imperial projects in surrounding Asia Pacific territories. Here, I also trace parallel histories of Manila musicians engaging and performing their own acoustic modernities and how they mediated in the modernist aspirations of the neighboring subaltern communities.

V.
"FOR THE MANILA MUSICIANS, THEIR ENGAGEMENT WITH MODERNITY, WAS, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, GLOBAL BEFORE IT BECAME NATIONAL."

Conventional (i.e., Eurocentric) music history privileges local Filipino musicians from the upper economic class who have

6 Joseph Earle Stevens, *Yesterdays in the Philippines: An Ex-Resident of Manila* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), 31.

7 Ibid.



The Daily Advertiser

MONDAY, AUG. 29, 1892.

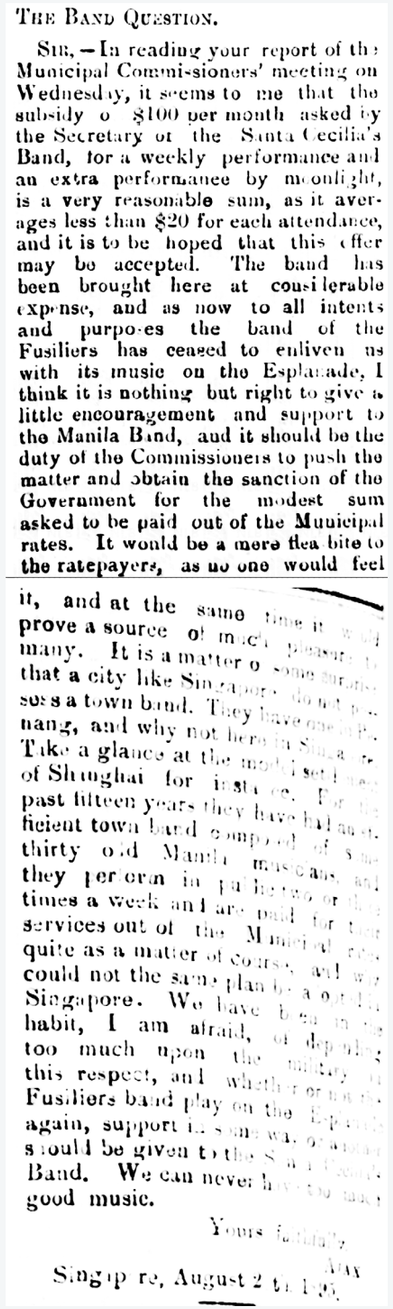
THE ST. JOSEPH'S BAND.

THOUGH the leading Settlement in the Colony, Singapore unfortunately does not enjoy the reputation of occupying the foremost position in every item on the list, and in no column is she so deplorably low as in that pertaining to music. As a matter of fact, instead of setting the example to Penang in this, as in all other respects, she does not only allow the sister Settlement to go before her with a town band, but appears as if she is destined to surrender her position even to the whole of the Native States. That this state of things is strongly deprecated by the Singapore public we have no doubt, and that the absence of a town band is keenly felt here is clearly evinced by the eagerness with which the large gathering assembled at the St. Joseph's Institution last night to listen to the sweet strains of the band, which is the laudable outcome of the untiring energies and self-denying efforts of the Brothers attached to this scholastic establishment. To its promoters, it must indeed be highly gratifying to personally note that their efforts have not been misspent. Starting under somewhat adverse circumstances, the band, as the youngsters can be so called, has within the space of a few years made wonderful strides. They have shown much perseverance, and have succeeded in conquering popularity. But whilst we are confident as to their qualification in recording the high estimation in which the band is now held, we are not sure that the promoters are altogether pleased with the manner in which the band is publicly treated. And if they are not, we are not surprised. With the deplorable absence of a town band, and with a never-coming band from Manila there is but one sentiment that could possibly have pervaded the minds of that large—we are not incorrect if we add representative—assembly that gathered last night within the walls of the St. Joseph's Institution: and that is, that the St. Joseph's band, with the degree of perfection already attained, is admirably suited for town purposes. With this sentiment, the promoters, we are certain, cannot be by means displeased. If regret they at all have for having started it could only be at the unpleasant fact that to this sentiment practical effect has not been given. Nor can we see any grounds for this inaction. That this band is the result of private enterprise is true. But also one of its objects is to afford public recreation to the Singapore public: and when this is so readily indulged in by the latter, it is perfectly reasonable that a right move in the right direction should receive every encouragement from our City Fathers. Indeed after the unsuccessful attempts to obtain for men from Manila, it is nothing but right that the St. Joseph's band, already organised as it is, and with the degree of perfection attained should receive the fostering care of the Municipality. And we cannot conclude without feeling that we are expressing the sentiment of every well-minded man that, if properly supported, the lively airs of the St. Joseph's band would be instrumental in dispelling much of the dull monotony of the city atmosphere.

FIGURE 7. *The Daily Advertiser*, Singapore, 29 August 1892.

Though the leading Settlement in the Colony, Singapore unfortunately does not enjoy the reputation of occupying the foremost position in every item on the list, and in no column is she so deplorably low as in that pertaining to music. As a matter of fact, instead of setting the example to Penang in this, as in all other respects, she does not only allow the sister Settlement to go before her with a town band, but appears as if she is destined to surrender her position even to the whole of the Native States. That this state of things is strongly deprecated by the Singapore public we have no doubt, and that the absence of a town band is keenly felt here.

(Transcription)



THE BAND QUESTION.

SIR,—In reading your report of the Municipal Commissioners' meeting on Wednesday, it seems to me that the subsidy of $100 per month asked by the Secretary of the Santa Cecilia's Band, for a weekly performance and an extra performance by moonlight, is a very reasonable sum, as it averages less than $20 for each attendance, and it is to be hoped that this offer may be accepted. The band has been brought here at considerable expense, and as now to all intents and purposes the band of the Fusiliers has ceased to enliven us with its music on the Esplanade, I think it is nothing but right to give a little encouragement and support to the Manila Band, and it should be the duty of the Commissioners to push the matter and obtain the sanction of the Government for the modest sum asked to be paid out of the Municipal rates. It would be a mere flea bite to the ratepayers, as no one would feel it, and at the same time it would prove a source of much pleasure to many. It is a matter of some surprise that a city like Singapore do[sic] not possess a town band. They have one in Penang, and why not here in Singapore. Take a glance at the model settlement of Shanghai for instance. For the past fifteen years they have had an efficient town band composed of some thirty old Manila musicians, and they perform in public two or three times a week and are paid for their services out of the Municipal rates quite as a matter of course, and why could not the same plan be adapted in Singapore. We have been in the habit, I am afraid, of depending too much upon the military in this respect, and whether or not the Fusiliers band play on the Esplanade again, support in some way or another should be given to the St. Joseph's Band. We can never have too many good music.

Yours faithfully,

AN

Singapore, August 2[illegible] 1895.

FIGURE 8.
Mid-day Herald, Singapore, 20 August 1895.

It is a matter of some surprise that a city like Singapore do [sic] not possess a town band. They have one in Penang, and why not here in Singapore. Take a glance at the model settlement of Shanghai for instance. For the past fifteen years they have had an efficient town band composed of some thirty old Manila musicians, and they perform in public two or three times a week and are paid for their services out of the Municipal rates quite as a matter of course, and why could not the same plan be adapted in Singapore.

(Transcription)

These clips from opinion articles in Singapore newspapers establish the zeitgeist of the colonial Asia Pacific in the late 19th century. By the late 1880s, the Manila musicians became requisites for modernizing Asian cities in the Age of Empire.

mastered the European canons and performed on the European stages. This account traces a parallel history of musicians outside the elitist and hegemonic narrative. The Manila musicians who formed and performed in the nineteenth-century town bands in Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Phnom Penh, Sarawak, Penang, and Medan were indios, the lowest casta in Philippine colonial society.

As occluded characters of neither the national nor the hegemonic telos of globalization, it is easy to present the Manila musicians as the unsung orphaned heroes of the nation, or victims of monolithically imagined empires, both of which are roles that would remove them from their agencies of imagining their own modernities. Unlike the history-conscious ilustrados and pensionado elites, who are the protagonists of Philippine nationalist history, the migrant Manila men were unencumbered by how they would be written in history.

For the Manila musicians, their engagement with modernity, was, in the first instance, global before it became national. Philippine historian Filomeno Aguilar Jr.'s writing on Filipino migration during the "Age of Empire" argued that the migrant laborers

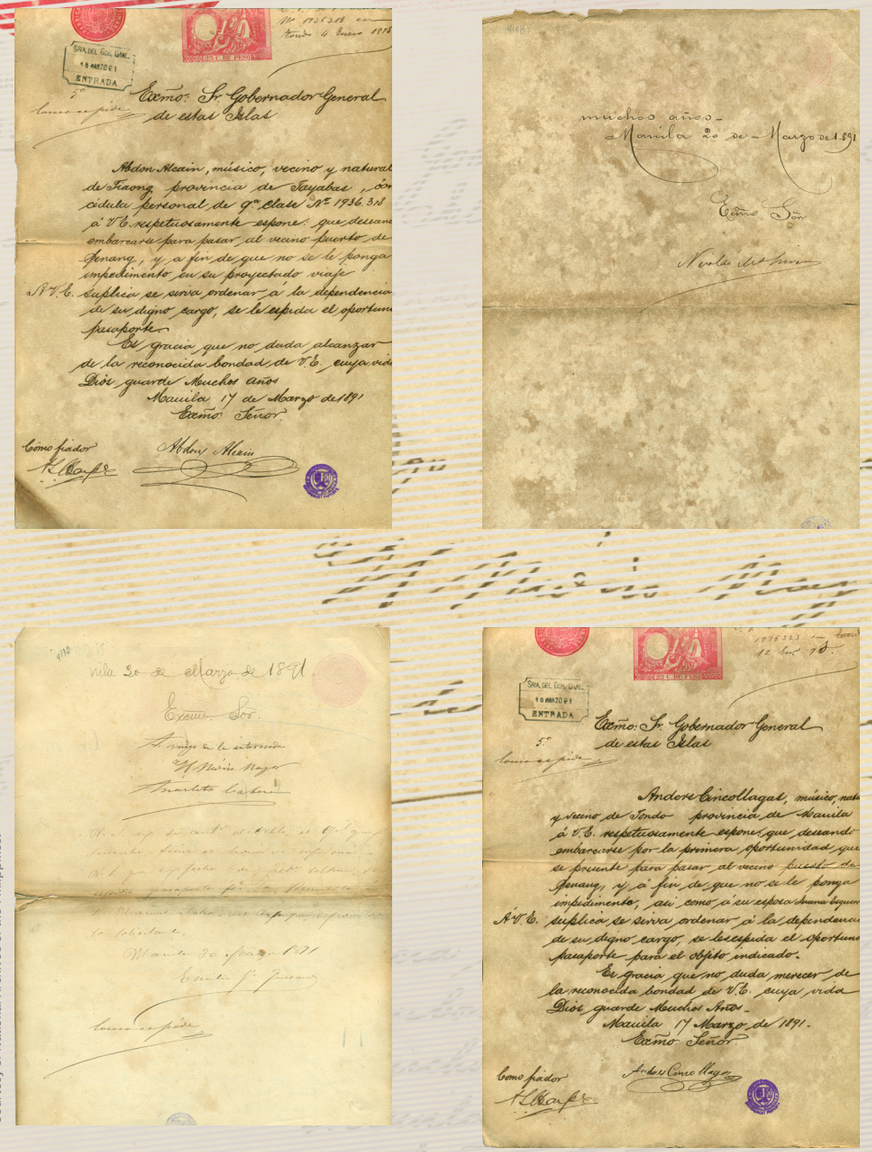
> did not always represent a sense of nationhood, but nonetheless held a sense of origin, the identity of which would be determined by bigger factors to which collectively they contributed and which, in turn, determined the identities by which they lived.[8]

And while the Spanish Empire intertwined with the global system, Aguilar asserts: "these Manila-men were immersed in the vortex of global capitalism…[T]heir journeys formed a way of transcending, or bypassing, that state."[9]

Concomitantly, neighboring urban capitals wagered their modernist aspirations through the ensoundment of the global contemporaneity of their city's soundscapes in

8 Filomeno Aguilar Jr., "Routes to Modernity: Philippine Labor Migration in the Age of Empire," *Filipinas, Un País Entre Dos Imperios*, edited by Maria Dolores Elizalde and Joseph Delgado (Barcelona: Edicions Bellatera, 2011), 88.

9 Filomeno Aguilar Jr., "Global Migrations, Old Forms of Labor, and New Transborder Class Relations," *Southeast Asian Studies* 41, no. 2 (2003): 142.



Courtesy of National Archives of the Philippines.

FIGURE 9. On 18 March 1891, twelve musicians submitted passport applications for passage to Penang (Straits Settlements). The applicants were: Abdon Alcain (born in and resident of Tiaong, Tayabas); Andres Cincollagas (Tondo, Manila);

employing the Manila musicians. Asian kingdoms and European empires readily invested in the economic symbols of the emergent musical modernism and the musicians' covetable performance of cultural assimilation into modernity.

VI.
ECHOING MODERNITIES: MANILA MUSICIANS ACROSS THE ASIA PACIFIC

Before the invention of recording technologies and the emergence of the music reproduction industry, town bands were the means through which the public accessed music. Cities aspired to have their resident music ensembles, a role that Manila musicians would assume from the second half of the nineteenth century.

CIRCUS IN MANILA

The arrival of the Giussepe Chiarini's Circus in Manila in May 1886 was well-publicized. Their daily shows appeared in all major newspapers in the city. During their stay in Manila, local musicians were recruited to form the company's musical ensemble to accompany their performances. The band subsequently joined the troupe to Macau and the rest of its China tour. At the end of July, thirteen Manila musicians were included in the company's request for permission to enter Yokohama.[10]

BRASS BAND IN SHANGHAI

In Shanghai, the first interest to form a municipal band began in 1872.[11] However, it was not until 1881 that nineteen musicians were recruited from Manila to form the Shanghai municipal brass band.[12]

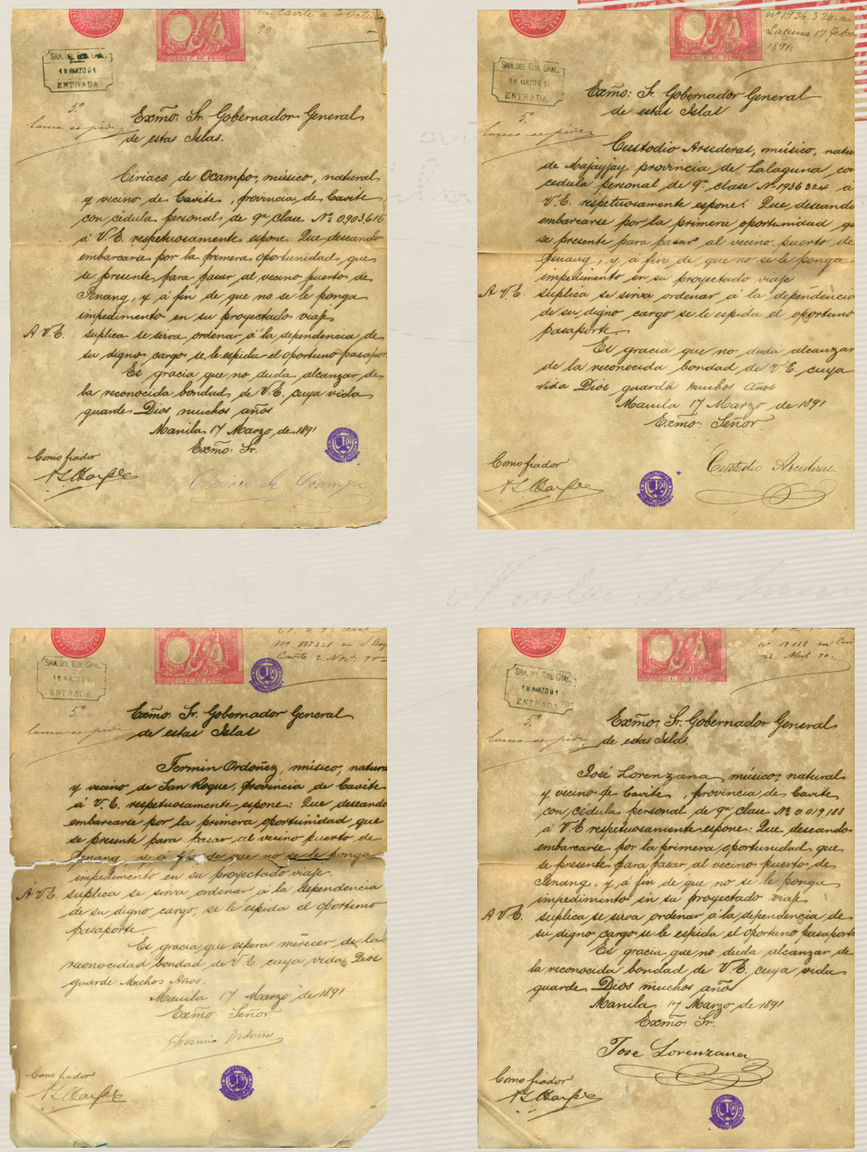
Throughout the 1880s, new musicians were continuously recruited from Manila due to members passing away or absconding duty.[13]

10 Circopedia, "Giuseppe Chiarini," last modified 2011, accessed January 10, 2011, http://www.circopedia.org/Giuseppe_Chiarini. This is the only source available at the moment; more research is needed to find and verify this data.

11 See Robert Bickers, "The Greatest Cultural Asset East of Suez: The History and Politics of the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra and Public Band, 1881–1946," *China and the World in the Twentieth Century*, Volume 2, edited by Chi-hsiung Chang (Taipei: Institute of Modem History, Academia Sinica, 2001), 835–75.

12 Ibid., 843

13 Ibid.



Courtesy of National Archives of the Philippines.

FIGURE 9. Cariaco de Ocampo (Cavite, Cavite); Custodio Arsederas (Majayjay, La Laguna); Fermin Ordoñez (San Roque, Cavite); José Lorenzana (Cavite, Cavite);

Aviso a los müsicos.

Se necesita para la banda municipal de Shangai un clarinete primero, uno id. segundo. Se les darà muy buen sueldo. Los que quieran contratarse pueden entenderse con los encargados. Elzinger Hnos.

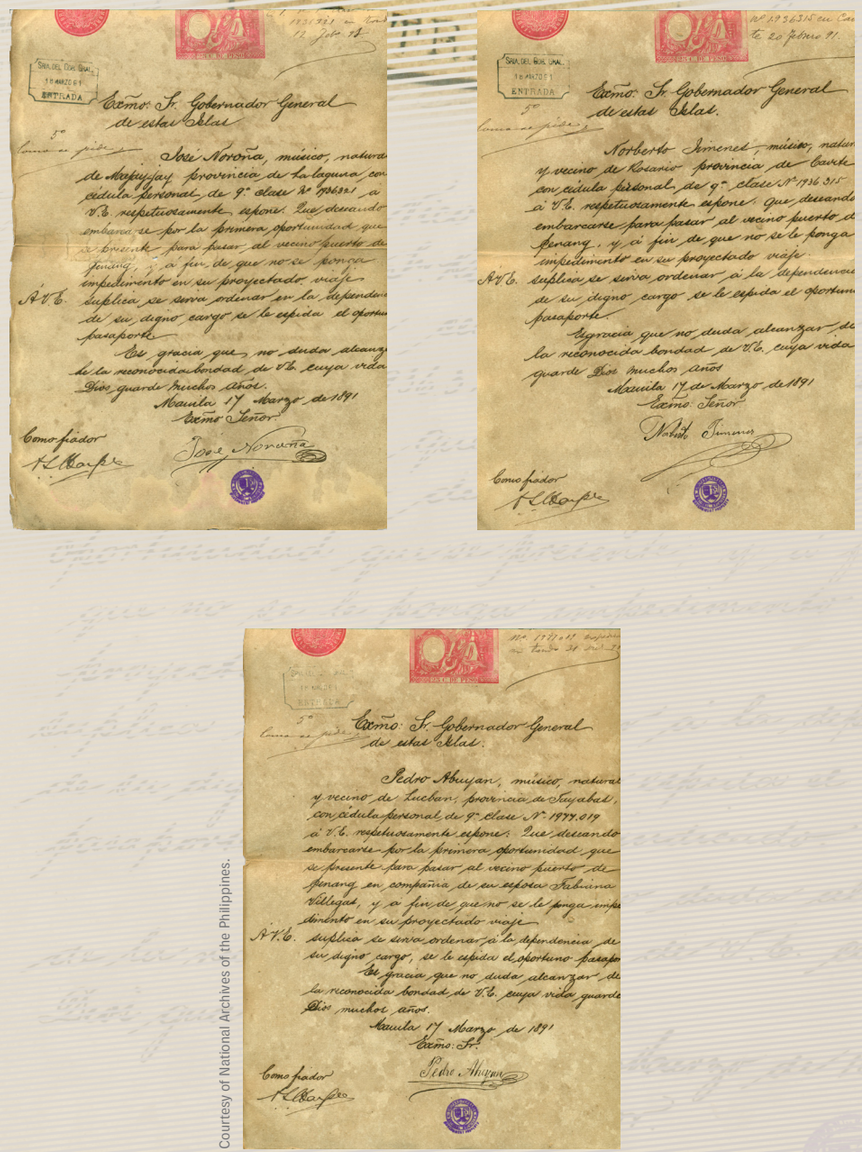
(Notice to musicians.

Wanted for the town band in Shanghai, one first clarinet and one id. second. Good salary is provided. Those who are interested to be employed can make arrangements with the agent.

Elzinger Bros.)

Author's transcription and translation of a notice from *La Oceania Española* (Manila) 11 July 1882.

Announcements for replacement musicians for the Shanghai Band regularly appeared in Manila newspapers, such as this one on *La Oceañia Española* dated 11 July 1882. This advertisement suggests that further musicians were recruited in Shanghai by way of Elzinger Hermanos, a music store in Manila, whose owners served as intermediaries.



Courtesy of National Archives of the Philippines.

FIGURE 9. Jose Noroña (Majayjay, La Laguna); Norberto Jimenez (Rosario, Cavite); Pedro Abuyan (Lucban, Tayabas);

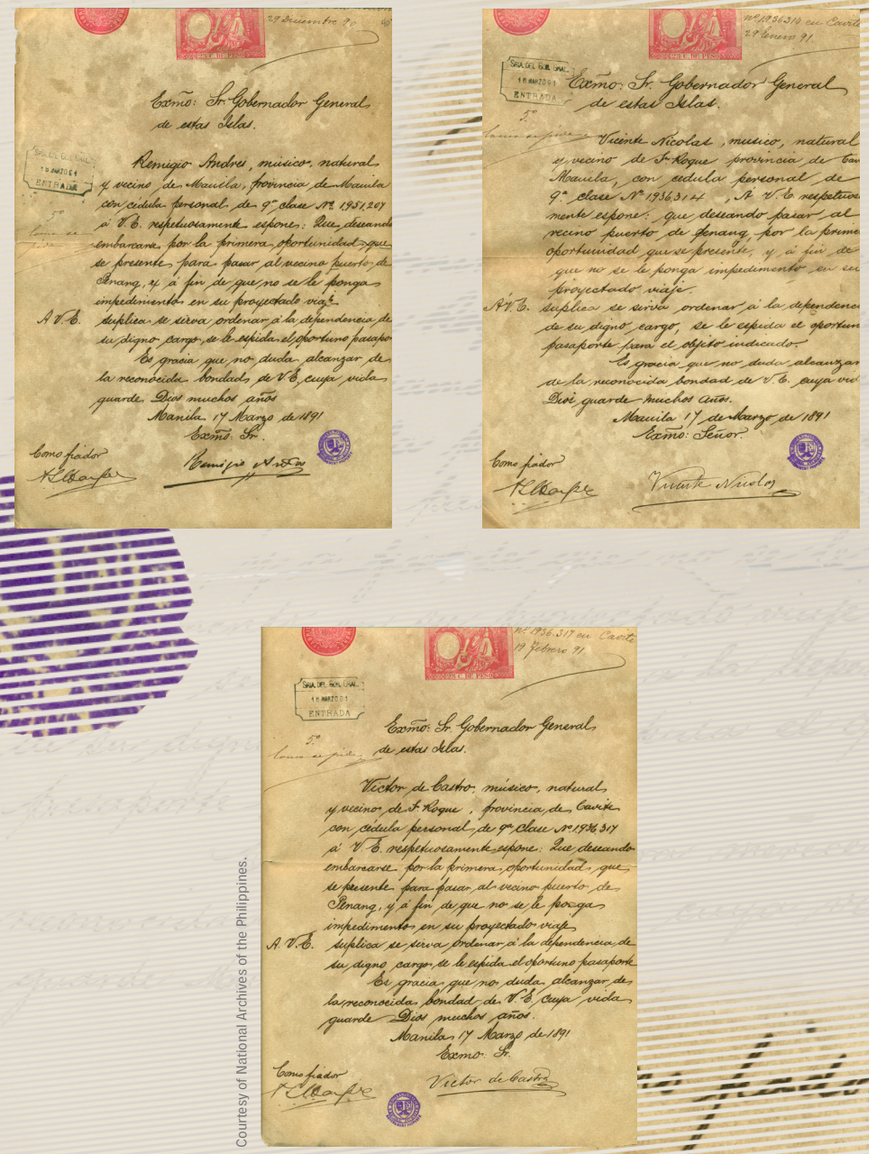
By 1885, Bickers reports that the Shanghai Municipal Band

> had a repertoire–increased monthly as new music was received from London or bought in Shanghai–of 25 Overtures, 78 Selections, 72 Marches, 82 Waltzes, and 28 Polkas, as well as Quadrilles and Galops. It played in: the Public Garden on the Bund, and in the French Concession garden; at the race course, at regattas; and at the cricket, athletic and country clubs. Private work, supporting visiting troupes or performing at balls produced a steady stream of work, and encouraged the development of the string band, which in 1895 had 33 repertoires of 464 pieces and played at over 100 engagements that year.[14]

The Manila musicians were initially only heard by the European colonial community, save for the occasions when they played in public events wherein the Chinese community could listen to their music.[15] As the state funding dwindled, the musicians started offering their services for weddings, birthdays, and private events both to the British expatriates and wealthy locals. As music became commodified, the imperialists lost the monopoly in the acoustic modernization projects in the cities. Locals who were able to afford the fees of the band had the Manila musicians heralded as their "modernity."

14 Bickers, 845.

15 Ibid., 846.



Courtesy of National Archives of the Philippines.

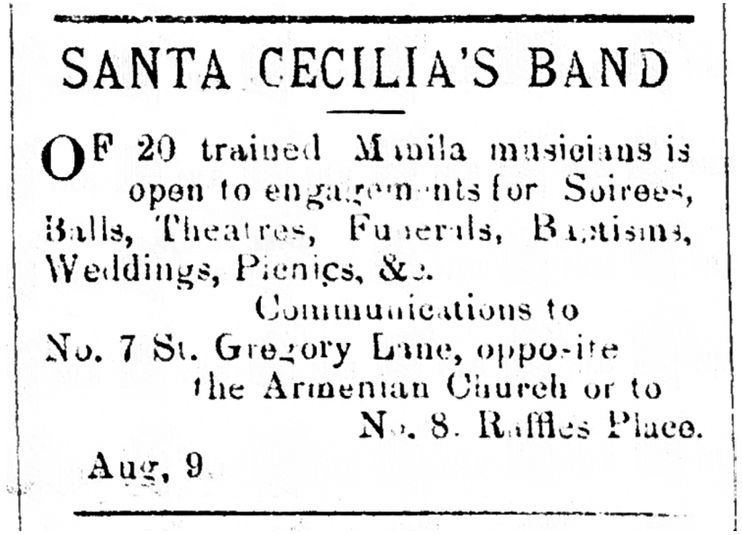
FIGURE 9. Remigio Andres (Manila, Manila); Vicente Nicolas (San Roque, Cavite); Victor de Castro (San Roque, Cavite).



Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

FIGURE 10. Unnamed band, 1913 (presumably a Manila band).

Rather than state-organized and subsidized, the Singapore Sta. Cecilia Band was formed in 1895 as a commercial enterprise by a certain Mr. Urrutia, a local Spanish merchant and member of the Singapore municipal council.



SANTA CECILIA'S BAND

OF 20 trained Manila musicians is open to engagements for Soirees, Balls, Theatres, Funerals, Baptisms, Weddings, Picnics, &c.

Communications to No. 7 St. Gregory Lane, opposite the Armenian Church or to No. 8. Raffles Place.

Aug, 9

FIGURE 11. Newspaper advertisement for the Santa Cecilia Band in Singapore, *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, Singapore, 25 September 1895.

The regular newspaper advertisement in 1895 offered the services of "20 trained Manila musicians open to engagements for Soirees, Balls, Theatre, Funerals, Baptisms, Weddings, Picnics, &c."

For the succeeding decade, the Sta. Cecilia Band became a household name for musicians accompanying all cultural and social events in Singapore. The band's name appeared in reports of their various performances in public and exclusive venues, or in advertisements by theatre companies who contracted their service, as well as in wedding announcements and obituaries. The band was an attraction in the British golf courses, as well as in Chinese funerals. In 1907, the band added string musicians, increasing their number to cater to the growing demands of professional music services. In the same year, when silent films began in Singapore, the Manila musicians accompanied the screenings with live music.

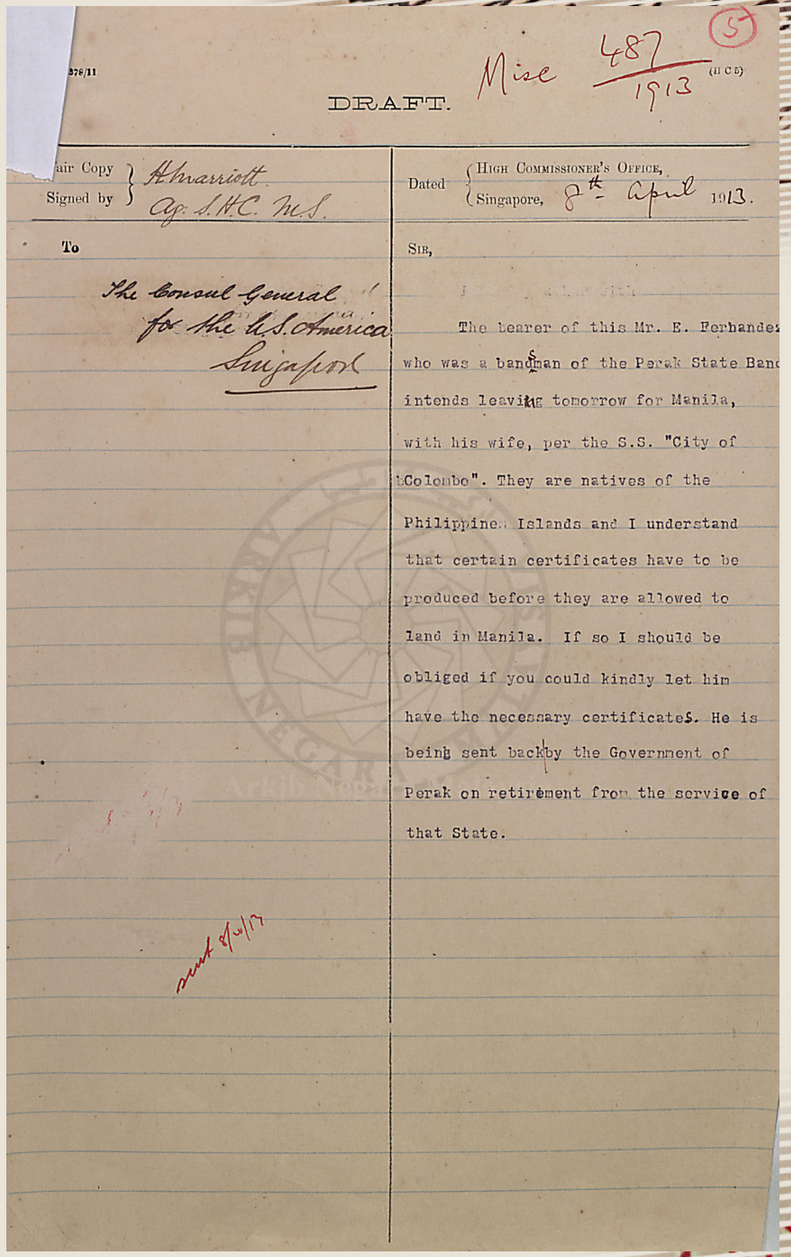
POLICE TROUPE IN KUALA LUMPUR

In Kuala Lumpur, the Manila Band was formed as a police troupe and was directly under the jurisdiction of the state police superintendent.

All the musicians were under the supervision of the bandmaster. The bandmaster was also responsible for receiving and dispensing the musicians' salaries. The musicians were required to rehearse every day, except on Sundays from 10 AM to 12 NN and from 4 PM to 5 PM. They were required to perform in front of the clubhouse on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 5 to 6:30 PM. And at the Botanical Garden every Thursday at the same time. Additionally, they were required to perform during official state parades and when officials from Singapore were visiting.

Their employment contracts provided information on their salaries and benefits. The cost of their passport application, administration fees, and transportation to Kuala Lumpur were all covered by the municipality. Musicians were also provided accommodations at the police barracks. Married musicians also brought their wives and children. The Kuala Lumpur municipality covered the dependents' fares. The contract typically ran for three years, according to which they received a return fare to Manila at the end of the term, or their contract could be negotiated for extension with a raise.

During the 1898 Manila insurrection, what we now consider the Philippine Revolution against Spain, many Manila musicians, due to return home, opted to cash out their return fare and look for jobs in Kuala Lumpur or Singapore to avoid the social unrest in Manila.



DRAFT.

Mise 487/1913

Fair Copy Signed by H. Marriott Ag. S.H.C. M.S.

Dated High Commissioner's Office, Singapore, 8th April 1913.

To

The Consul General for the U.S. America Singapore

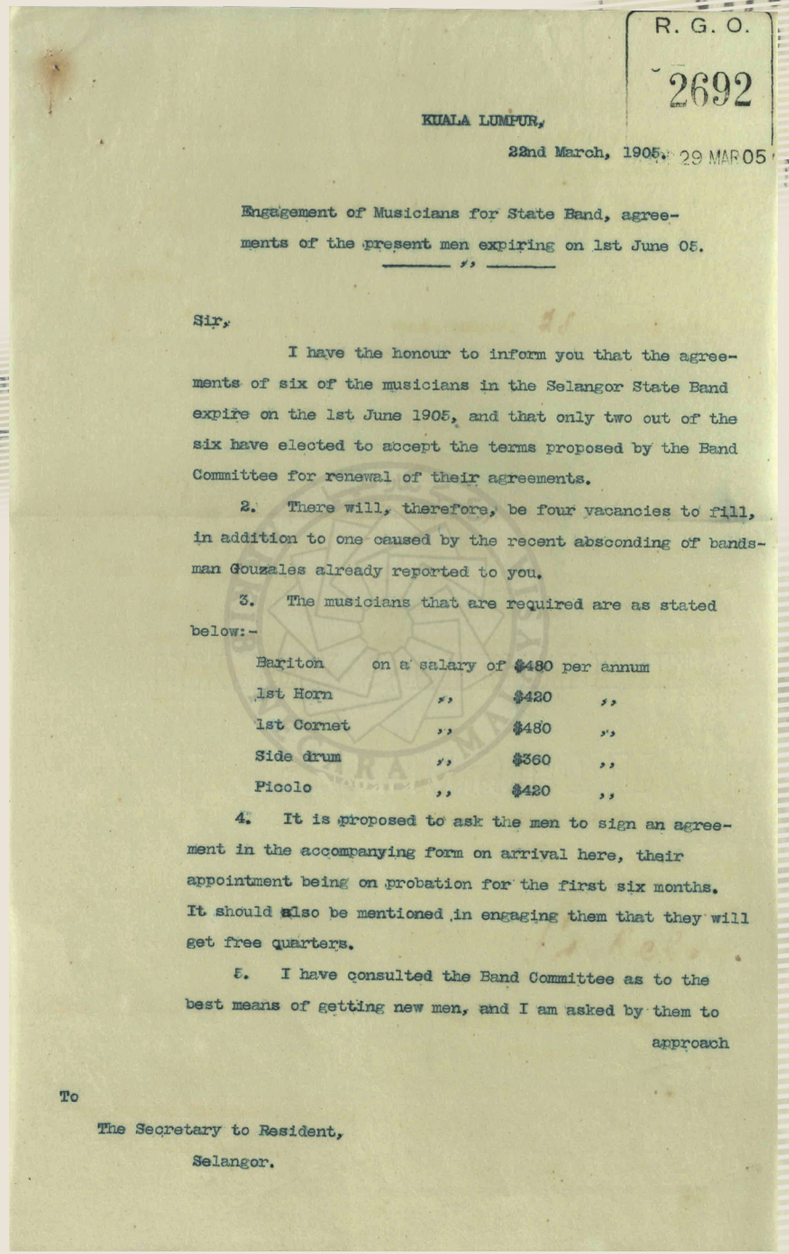
Sir,

The bearer of this Mr. E. Fernandez who was a bandman of the Perak State Band intends leaving tomorrow for Manila, with his wife, per the S.S. "City of Colombo". They are natives of the Philippine Islands and I understand that certain certificates have to be produced before they are allowed to land in Manila. If so I should be obliged if you could kindly let him have the necessary certificates. He is being sent back by the Government of Perak on retirement from the service of that State.

sent 8/4/13

Courtesy of Arkib Negara Malaysia. Accesssion No. 1957/0596677

FIGURE 12. Letter requesting a return ticket to Manila for a retiring musician.



R. G. O.
2692
29 MAR 05

KUALA LUMPUR,
22nd March, 1905.

Engagement of Musicians for State Band, agreements of the present men expiring on 1st June 05.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the agreements of six of the musicians in the Selangor State Band expire on the 1st June 1905, and that only two out of the six have elected to accept the terms proposed by the Band Committee for renewal of their agreements.

2. There will, therefore, be four vacancies to fill, in addition to one caused by the recent absconding of bandsman Gouzales already reported to you.

3. The musicians that are required are as stated below:-

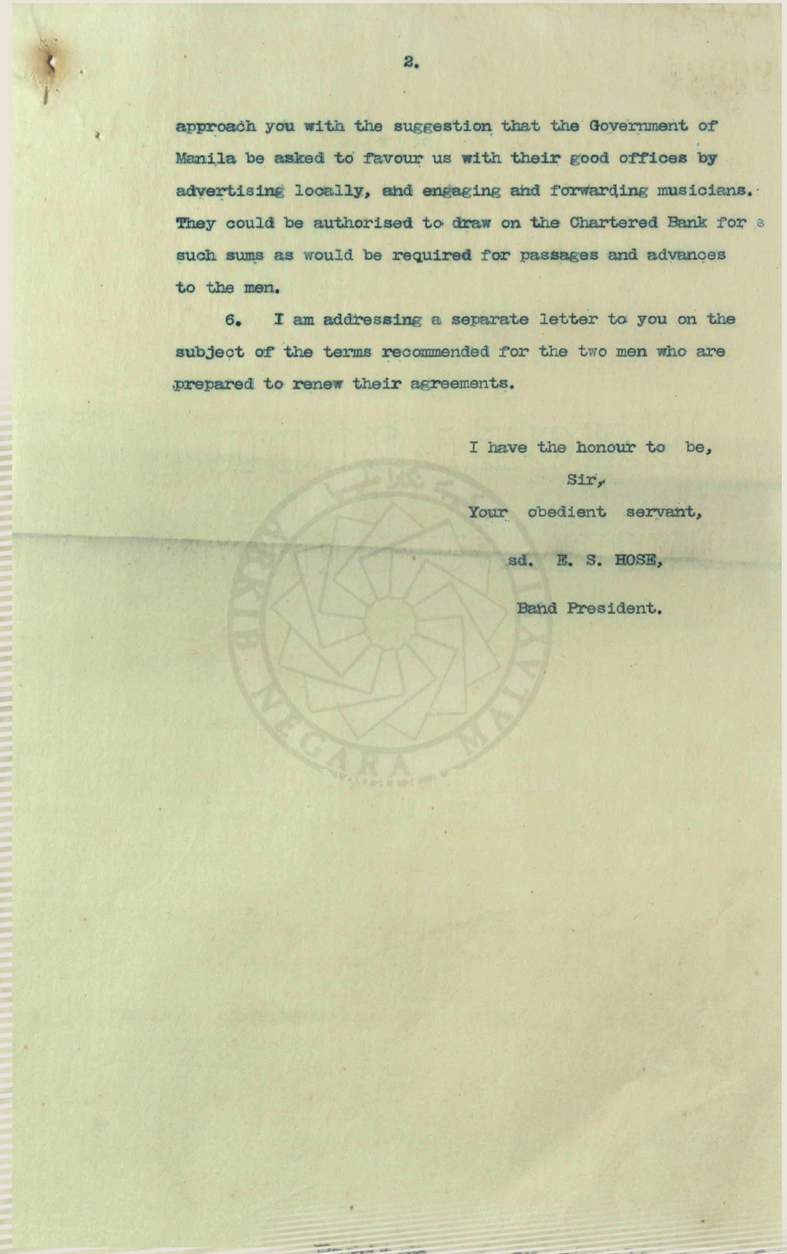
Bariton	on a salary of	$480	per annum
1st Horn	,,	$420	,,
1st Cornet	,,	$480	,,
Side drum	,,	$360	,,
Picolo	,,	$420	,,

4. It is proposed to ask the men to sign an agreement in the accompanying form on arrival here, their appointment being on probation for the first six months. It should also be mentioned in engaging them that they will get free quarters.

5. I have consulted the Band Committee as to the best means of getting new men, and I am asked by them to approach

To

The Secretary to Resident,
Selangor.



approach you with the suggestion that the Government of Manila be asked to favour us with their good offices by advertising locally, and engaging and forwarding musicians. They could be authorised to draw on the Chartered Bank for such sums as would be required for passages and advances to the men.

6. I am addressing a separate letter to you on the subject of the terms recommended for the two men who are prepared to renew their agreements.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
sd. E. S. HOSE,
Band President.

Courtesy of Arkib Negara Malaysia. Accesssion No. 1957/0586340

FIGURES 13-14. Letter requesting a return ticket to Manila for a retiring musician.

ROYAL ORCHESTRA IN CAMBODIA



FIGURE 15. King Narodom I recruited Manila musicians to become part of the Khmer royal orchestra in Phnom Penh in 1869.

In 1869, the Cambodian King Norodom I recruited Manila musicians, including the bandmaster Cosme Buenaventura. They became part of the Khmer royal orchestra in Phnom Penh and assisted in the modernization of the Khmer court musical repertoire.[16] Buenaventura, a native of Sampaloc district of Manila, came from a family of musicians. His father was a church musician and singer. Before moving to Cambodia, he was a musico mayor (head musician) in the Spanish infantry.[17]

16 See Gabriel Beato Francisco, "Ang Mga Pilipinong Nagsidayo Sa Kotsintsina," *Sa Labas Ng Tahanan at Sa Lilim Ng Ibang Langit* (Manila: Limbagan ng La Vanguardia at Taliba, 1916), n.p.

17 Gabriel Beato Francisco, *Casaysayan Nang Bayan Nang Sampaloc* (Manila: Imprenta de Santa Cruz, 1890), 82–3.

During the courtesy visit of the Spanish battleship Marques del Duero in Cambodia, they were welcomed with a performance of the Khmer royal ensemble of Manila musicians.[18]

In private homes, the piano became a ubiquitous music machine. The rising middle class eagerly sounded their modernity with their installment-plan-paid pianos.[19] Manila musicians in Hanoi and Phnom Penh were hired to teach piano playing to the emerging middle-class piano owners.

CONCERT BAND IN MEDAN



Programma

ESPLANADE — CONCERT

Zondag, 5 November 1899,

des namiddags ten 6 ure,

DOOR DE

MANILLA-BAND

TE MEDAN.

1	Wiener Schwalben Marsch. .	L. Schlögel.
2	Mazurka d'Amour.	Ivanovici.
3	Der lustige Krieg Potpourri .	J. Strauss.
4.	Herzensdieb–Gavotte	E. Gillet.
5	Ein Walzer ist mein Leben. .	R. Vollstedt.
6	In der Waldschmiede, Charakterstück.	R. Eilenberg.
7	Potpourri populaire No. 1 . .	F. Renaud.
8	Der schneidige Marine Lieutenant	Hugo Kloss.

De Administratie der
MANILLA-BAND.

FIGURE 16. Newspaper announcement of the concert program of Manilla Band te Medan.

Newspapers publish the weekly programs of the Manila Band te Medan which included marches, waltzes and other popular dance music of the time, as well as opera melodies from Strauss, Verdi, and Bizet among others.

18 Ibid.

19 Music stores across Southeast Asia advertise different piano brands and most offer installment plans.

In the Dutch Indies, a twenty-piece Manila band was contracted for a year in Medan (Sumatra) starting on 13 April 1899 to perform on a weekly basis.[20] De Sumatra Post on 7 February 1899 announced the importation of the Manila musicians. On 11 November of

20 *De Sumatra Post* (Medan), 7 February 1899.

the same year, a story came out on De Sumatra Post about the incident of a Mr. Warren (owner of a bankrupted miniature circus) who confronted two of the Manila musicians performing in the esplanade. Reputedly, the musicians who moved to Medan from their previous post in Japan were paid 30 Gilders deposit for a two-year contract to perform for the circus's concert band.[21]

VII.
EMBODYING MODERNITIES: THE MANILA MUSICIANS BECAME FILIPINO MUSICIANS

The anti-colonial movement in the late 19th century recast the term Filipino from Philippine-born white Spanish Europeans to everyone born in the Philippines. In 1898, the US Empire disregarded the Philippine declaration of independence and, in doing so, established a new colonial administration co-opting the Filipino elite and the Filipinos-as-all-Philippine-born-subjects ideology. This meant that the previously called Manila men and Manila musicians would now be called Filipinos, albeit as US colonial subjects.

In the new century, the Manila musicians' sonic labor would continue to be entangled in the local histories of their host countries.

Music historians Patricia Matusky and James Chopyak noted that the Selangor State band, established in 1894, was composed of Manila musicians. The Manila band would eventually become the Malayan state and police band.[22] The nine-member Filipino dance band led by L.F. Marcial was popular in the cabaret club circuit in British Malaya. In 1946, they performed at the Great World Cabaret in Singapore and became a resident at the Lucky Cabaret in Kuala Lumpur.[23] In 1949, Alfonso Soliano formed the Orkes Radio Malaya and conducted the ensemble until 1965.

21 *De Sumatra Post* (Medan), 11 November 1899.

22 See Patricia Matusky and James Chopyak, "Peninsular Malaysia," *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Volume 4: Southeast Asia (New York: Routledge, 1998), 401–43.

23 *Music Makers* (Dunellen), 20 June 1947.



FIGURE 17. Alfonso Soliano formed the Orkes Radio Malaya and conducted the ensemble until 1965.

Lee William Watkins's dissertation wrote on the Manila musicians who formed the Macau town band that solemnized the city's official ceremonies, and religious festivities. They kept this role in Macau until the 1930s.[24]

In the early twentieth century, Filipinos were hired as musicians in the royal courts and nightclubs of Cambodia. In French colonial Hanoi and Saigon, Filipinos worked as orchestra and dancehall musicians and teachers to the Vietnamese elite.[25] Among them was Juan de Sahagon Hernandez, who was recruited by the French Ambassador in Manila to become the Music Director and Orchestra Leader at the Café dell Musique in Hanoi in 1902.[26] Jazz and popular music bandleaders and producers traveled to Manila throughout the first part of the 20th century to find musicians for theaters, clubs, and entertainment venues across Guam, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore, and the Middle East.

24 Lee William Watkins, "Minstrelsy in the Margin: Re-Covering the Memories and Lives of Filipino Musicians in Hong Kong" (PhD Dissertation, University of Hong Kong, 2004), 14.

25 Jason Gibbs, "Nhac Tien Chien: The Origins of Vietnamese Popular Song," Things Asian, July 1, 1998, http://thingsasian.com/story/nhac-tien-chien-origins-vietnamese-popular-song.

26 Millie Gonzalez Martelino, *The Forgotten Maestro: Juan de Sahagun Hernandez* (Virginia: Mind and Heart Books, 2010), 9.

In the 1930s, Filipino jazz bands were sought after in Shanghai.[27] Music scholar Stephanie Sooklynn Ng notes that Chinese and Japanese jazz musicians credit their craft to Filipino band musicians.[28]

27 Stephanie Sooklynn Ng, "Filipino Bands Performing in Hotels, Clubs and Restaurants in Asia: Purveyors of Transnational Culture in a Global Arena" (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2006), 47.

The Filipino pianists in Shanghai were known as "foreign piano devils," who worked for labels such as Pathé (now EMI).[29] The genealogy of the *Shi dai qu* (songs of the times) is traced by music experts Wong Kee Chee and Lee William Watkins to the Filipino bands who brought Latin and American popular music to the city. Shi dai qu were adaptations of western pop music and Chinese folk songs extremely popular until the Chinese Cultural Revolution in 1966.[30]

28 Ibid., 9.

29 Watkins, "Minstrelsy in the Margin," 15.

After the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949, the entire culture and entertainment industry (along with all the Filipino musicians working in it) relocated to Hong Kong where Chinese mass media flourished. The rise of popular music that fused Western and Cantonese music was made possible by Filipino arrangers, according to the research of music scholar 黃湛森 (James Wong Jum Sum).

30 黃奇智 (Wong Kee Chee), *The Age of Shanghainese Pops 1930-1970* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 2001), 15.

VIII.
POSTCOLONIAL MODERNITIES



FIGURE 18. An all-Filipino guitar trio serenades lobby guests on a cruise ship from Penang, Malaysia to Phuket, Thailand. August 2013. Photo by Anjeline de Dios.

After the Philippines's independence from the US in 1946, Filipino musicians continued to migrate and resound new sounds of auditory modernities in the post-colonial world.

The global hype of Latin music in the 1950s and 60s was filled in by Filipino musicians in Asia, the Middle East, and Australia. Filipino bands also dominated the onboard stages of cruise liners during this period.

Prodded by the revised labor export policy of the Marcos administration, the 1970s-90s saw the exodus of thousands of Overseas Filipino Entertainers following the growing demand for live musicians in hotels, pubs, clubs, theatres, and cruise ships in the Asia Pacific, the Middle East, North America, and Europe.

After formal decolonization in the second half of the twentieth century, the new regime of international/interstate relations re-shifted the socio-economic framework of postcolonial migration. Social class structures will be subsumed within exclusive national issues, weakening transnational solidarities and, as a result, exacerbating class and racial inequalities.

The institutionalization of art and music in the Western world will draw new epistemological boundaries instrumentalizing aesthetics to segregate the Global North from the Global South. The 19th century Manila musicians' cultural hybridity, once perceived as the embodiment of sonic modernity, will be reinstated in their indentured colonial worker statuses as the postcolonial state takes over the middle management of the neo-colonial global capitalist market.





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IYÁK
VOICE, TEARS, AND THE PRACTICE OF SOUND/HEALING

Anjeline de Dios

SOMETIMES I HEAR A VOICE that brings tears to my eyes. This movement within yet beyond my known, ordinary self catches me off guard. The triggers come from nowhere, like a long forgotten melody or an abrupt question. As the sound materializes in the air, an uncanny certainty emerges. It dawns on me that I'm not who or where I thought I was. I am astonished to find a vast open secret I was unaware of all this time. It has a vertiginous quality, like a voice or a teardrop on the verge of breaking.

We dismiss crying, "iyák" in Tagalog, as a feeble, irrational deficiency of the individual personality, forgetting that it is older than humanity. We also take for granted its dual nature as sound and substance. Scientists surmise that crying evolved from animal vocalizations to elicit empathy. So-called emotional tears are denser, with more proteins and hormones, than reflex tears (induced by external irritants) or basal tears (which maintain ocular moisture). To me, our bodies are reservoirs of these ancient, heavy tears, carrying the primal energies of sorrow, rage, wonder. What interests me most are tears that feel queer: the ones provoked not by a distinct emotion but by an intimacy with the basic paradox of being-human. It is a limitless feeling, connected to all other lifetimes; and a corporeal certitude, a knowingness of the body and its secret history of hurt. In lived experiences of trauma, this paradox brings us past the threshold of logic and language to a place where inflictions suffered do not disappear, but accrue to a larger sense of being alive. It feels sad and full of love.



A drawing I made on the poster for "Tuning Into Resonances," my first European performance with Isabel Gonzalez-Toro for the Decolonial Frequencies Festival at the Ballhaus Naunyanstrasse, Berlin in May 2022. The drawing was made on the reverse side of the poster which, when illuminated from behind, reveals an accidental overlap with my face.

There is something in the voice that causes this affect to spill over. Immersed in water before birth, we hear the sound of our mother's voice and learn we are not alone. Out in the world we learn iyák: to cry in sound and substance. It is a deep instinct of disclosure that voices our paradoxical self: at once autonomous and dependent, living and dying, wounded and healing. Voicing—not having a voice but *being* one, a dynamic of sounding from and as oneself—bridges iyák from its inward, preverbal terrain to an articulable territory of symbolic language, where it gains new resonance through shared myth, story, and song.

The engulfing nature of iyák makes it difficult for our voice to cross the abyss from psychic inwardness to shared discourse without cutting off the vital source of ancient affect. The societal censure against crying and its mysterious mess of messages urges us to tame this swell as quickly as possible. In our anxious drive to contain the irruption of pain, we shift the song to another key, swerve the conversation to safer ground, and hold back our sobs to go on living as we always have. Gradually the surge recedes, but its subtle frequency thrums in the throat. It waits for resolution through the voice.

This description of iyák and its translative function of intra- and intersubjective healing echoes well established insights gleaned from scientific research and spiritual inquiry. My interests, however, lie outside strict theorization, dwelling neither in psychology nor theology, but in a more tentative place of knowing. I write from a proximate experience as someone who has a history and now a practice of following my voice: first into the reservoir of tears locked in my body; then outwards, into spaces of healing with others who resolve their own iyák through acts of listening.

As an infant, I had been routinely left alone in a closed room by a caregiver, while the rest of my family was away at work and school. I was told that I would bellow until I grew hoarse with despair—*pumapaláhaw*—until my cries penetrated the walls of the house, reaching the neighbor's ears. Later still, I learned to sing for myself. In my earliest memory of singing I am five years old, sitting alone

in the humid high noon of my aunt's garden. I am humming under my breath a song I have never heard before.

Growing up in a family of musicians, in a self-consciously musical culture, meant that my voice soon funneled outward into singing for other people. I learned to breathe with others in different contexts of listening-together: recitals, rehearsals, funerals, parties, the long hours of Manila traffic, steeped in Top 40 and easy rock radio. As I sang with and for others I learned that "tínig", the unique vibrational signature of a voice, gained potency in the transportive gesture of reaching towards others' ears. At times, my tínig would induce people's tears when I sang songs that contained the specific frequency of their private longings and losses.

My upbringing in this sound-world taught me that there are shared spatialities of voice that persist in spite or perhaps because of the echoes of colonialism, consumerism, and capitalism. This collective self is articulated in local, ethnic, and sociopolitical mythologies, and is activated in the singing of hymns and anthems. Yet submitting to these public spaces of song did not allow me to voice interior depths for which I didn't, or couldn't, have language; depths which touched both solitary extremes of anguish and bliss. Neither did these sonorities of fellow-feeling leave room for iyák in its grating nakedness, its inconvenient sonic anarchy, its irresolute contradictions. There was little place to explore the voice as anything other than an utterance of a monolithically discernible, publicly acceptable, sonically pleasing exteriority. Its enshrined values of technical virtuosity, aesthetic jouissance, and religious potency were suited for the economies of art, faith, and leisure, not the existential solitude into which we are all unwillingly thrust, at one point or another.

The "Filipinoness" of this vocal outwardness and its concurrent public cultures of auditory affect felt so complex and ubiquitous that I pursued a PhD to understand it. I followed the voices of overseas Filipino musicians entertaining guests in hotels, cruise ships, and theme parks around Asia. These musicians fascinated me because their labor of sounding is devoted entirely to the other: singing other people's songs for other people's entertainment to

ensure other people's survival. Sarita Echavez See recalls a similar memory of listening to Philippine tínig harnessed for musical service work:

> I usually hate being serenaded under any conditions. But as soon as this restaurant singer started, I lost it. She really had the soaring voice of an angel, making everything sound so true and meaningful despite the sticky heaviness of the sentimentality that necessarily pervades these tunes and lyrics. And I was embarrassed to find myself tearing up about the whole scenario, the conditions we live and work in that curtail and take advantage of the potential of the voice and that convert living song into living labor. Yet time and again that voice comes through.[1]

Unlike the migrant entertainers I studied, I did not have to sing for my family's supper back home. I faced a different paucity, an inward one. My voice would not come through. My loved ones admired my singing, but I did not want to sound what they wanted to hear. It was a secret dissatisfaction that grew and grew until I could no longer avoid it. What was my voice for? What was I to do with it? How could I know, when I couldn't even bear to hear myself? In the absence of an answer, I stopped singing for a number of years. The living source of my tears felt covered over by a tombstone.

1 Karen Tongson, R. Zamora Linmark, Sarita Echavez See, and Theodore Gonzalves, *Migrant Musicians: Filipino Entertainers and the Work of Music Making* (Durham: Horse and Buggy Press 2013), 30.

I know now that this *via negativa*, a refusal of inherited and conditioned sonic exteriority in order to keep vigil beside open silence, was a path of healing. In the tomb or womb of solitude I wandered back to child-song through a private game I devised for myself. I would lock myself in my bathroom, so the sound would not leak out. There I would sing from nothing a song I had never heard before. I would do so for as long as I could until I cried tears that had no reason. Line by line I broke my tínig until a new sound seeped out like a thick sap. It was neither my originary howl of abandonment,

nor the distilled soprano of my training, but a timid wail that shuddered as it rode on a ragged exhale of grief and relief. Clear tears poured out from my eyes. Sadness shone from my heart in aching waves.

As I sang this way, longer and longer, I heard in my mind one note, then a series of tones. Other times images or words arose while iyák unearthed itself from inside my body. And so I would glide my tínig, searchingly, towards these psychic contents. Refusing to default to sedimented frameworks of established meaning and correct form, I learned the modality of improvising: dialoguing with intellect, impulse, and intuition as they simultaneously arose when I listened and sang to myself. As I poured my sound into these imaginal contours and symbols, the crying gained a form. It became a chant. It posed a question and resolved itself in a circuit between the hearing and the heard.

In the course of this chant practice over months and years, parallel tendencies of composition began to emerge. I learned to use a vocal looper, which allowed me to create my voice in layers, tonalities, and structures materializing in time. I found myself condensing the textured movements of my chants—long and light breaths, extended and punctuated tones, tight harmonies and dissonances, unspooling oscillations, wordless questions and pleas, confessions and declarations—into marks on a page. Since my attention was devoted almost entirely to vocal improvisation, I was often surprised by the images I had created. Though not symbolic representations strictly speaking, these gestural transcriptions meandered into patterns of meaning. In these moments my tears dissipated, no longer a hardened lump in the throat but a reverberation that would spread out as a gentle tingling pressure through my whole body. There was a feeling of transparency, a gentle fatigue that found its place of rest.

Time and again, a voice comes through. Sometimes that voice is our own.



A drawing I made while listening to live recordings of my sound/healing sessions in Hong Kong from 2021 to 2022. 25 October 2023.

Keeping vigil with my voice through its silence has led me to heal through sound: listening to remember the sense of life within myself, and listening to respond to its vibrations in other living bodies and beings. I approach healing not as a self-imprisoning dictum to "fix" myself or anyone, in both senses of pinning down and sorting out, but an exploratory act of participation in a sacred logic of living through, and living better through, our inevitable fate of wounding. Listening to this listening opens the question of healing as a sonic practice that is in service to others, yet still and always for myself. To heal my sound through sound, I have had to make choices concerning the tínig that emanates from my body, the scales of meaning that render meaning unto this sonic subjectivity; and, in the end, the greater spaces of listening beyond and beside the inward self that is my home.

> To speak of healing as a desire and a value is to recognize not only that as humans we manifest an intrinsic potential for subsisting, for going on living, but that we can also cultivate a capacity for living in more life-enhancing ways. Ideally this might be what politics and economics attempt to do.[4]

These choices, the fruit of a practice undertaken in solitude, now compose the provisional repertoire of my public practice as a facilitator, performer, and researcher of sound/healing in my home country; and increasingly in transcultural contexts of art practice and knowledge production in Europe and Southeast Asia. In dividing sound/healing this way, I mean to stake my claim: not all sound is healing, and not all healing is sound. How do we respect this? If healing is innate but not a given, then how can an intentional practice of sound transform this inherent desire into a value? What does listening have to do with this practice?

Healing is a dynamic, numinous tendency of life itself that we, in living, participate in, rather than consciously control. It requires a level of humility for attending to iyák as an embodied

4 Ed Cohen, *On Learning to Heal, or What Medicine Doesn't Know* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2023), 7.

manifestation of healing—resisting the immediate impulse to rationalize, psychologize, aestheticize, or dramatize it.[5] If the voice of one's deep wounding does not want to come out, then its reticence must be honored. If it does come out, then the task is to follow it on its own terms. Sound/healing demands that we use whatever modicum of agency we do possess to pursue a deliberate politics of iyákin—a discipline of psychosonic disclosure, rooted in the act of listening to and through an inmost self.

My proposition for sound/healing, however partial, is an interdisciplinary one. It has been eleven years since I began singing to myself, and seven years since I began my public chant practice. I now assume many roles and names not only to represent myself professionally, but also to hold space that is open enough for new affinities, yet secluded enough for my own iyák, whose secret agenda I will never fully know. I am a singer because I deploy my voice in a melodic and tonal way, improvising chants to build spontaneous compositions that encircle my inward subjectivity around the intuited resonances of my listeners' bodies. I remain a scholar because I persist in questioning the economic, cultural, and institutional dynamics that shape this work of converting my living song into the living labor of listening-together. I have become an artist because I experiment with the material, aesthetic, and spatial contexts of listening in dialogue with other mediums and voices. I am a healer because I do not conceal my ambition to dedicate my voice, with its quantum of life force, to the work of collectively attending to the paradox of our vulnerable being: broken and whole, alone and together.

5
Even now, as I write, I know these words can only go so far.

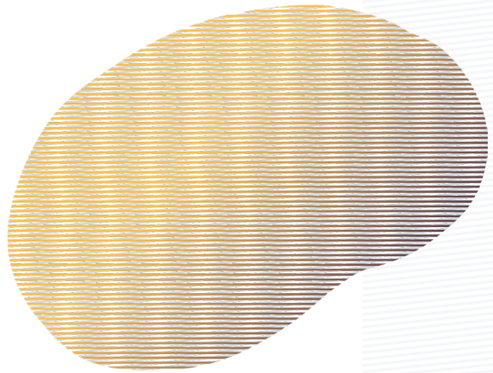
I melt
myself to the street,
I hear freedom of the people
even the sound is too loud, I hear our
sound inside at that moments and my tears
come out. Now I'm listening our sound
of your recording along my
sleeping, I'm smiling.[6]

A message from artist A. N. after listening to a live recording of our sound improvisation in Jogjakarta. 28 October 2022.

If there is indeed a politics to this work, it is ambivalent and intimate. On the one hand, I must resist the exoticization of my voice in a new age caricature of the global South shaman or pre-colonial *babaylan*. I am too far gone in my own disillusion as a subject embedded in the global culture and wellness industries to revert to an uncritical stance towards the discourses which make my work legible to the demands and needs of a listening exteriority. I am also alert to the dangers of narcissism, fundamentalism, escapism, and projection that plague psychospiritual endeavors on every scale.

Maybe I might bypass the worst pitfalls of aspiring towards a scientifically proven, economically lucrative, creatively original, or culturally authentic body of work by situating myself in the margins of art and research, rather than the industries of neuroscience, self-care, or cultural heritage. But even now I am afraid that acquiescing to larger and larger sonorities might eventually recolonize the tenuous freedom I have earned for myself through this simple practice of following my voice and honoring my tears for no one and no reason other than my own sanity.

On the other hand I cannot deny that I am learning to heal. This queer radiance is my prayer. This practice itself is my ancestor. It is a practice that leads me to witness other people as my kin. When others welcome me to the inner sanctum of their listening, something dawns in them as it dawns on me. They shed my tears. I sing their song.

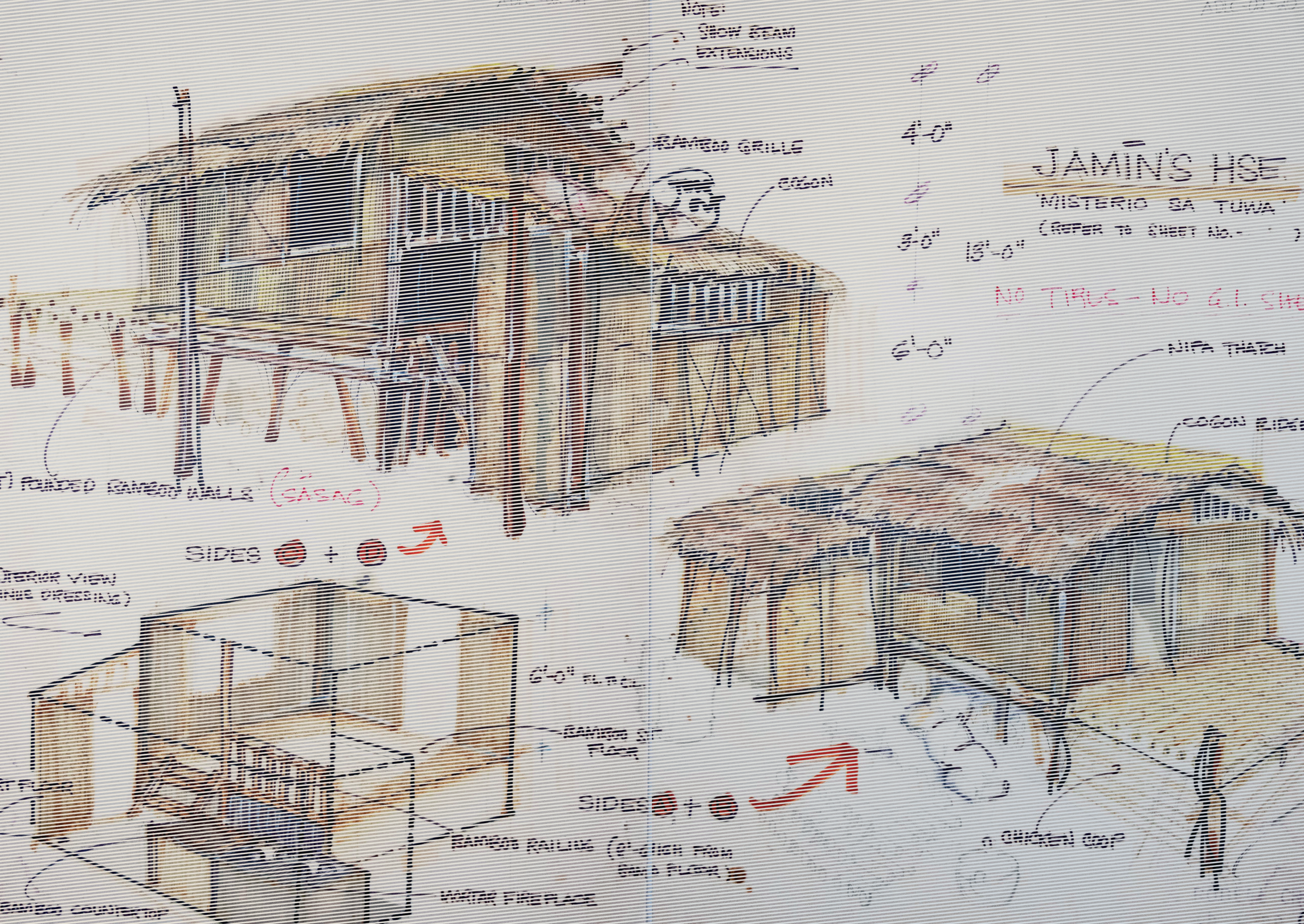




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Show Beam Extensions
Bamboo Grille
Cogon
Jamin's House
Misterio sa Tuwa
(Refer to Sheet No.
No Title - No G.I. Sheet
4'-0"
8'-0"
13'-0"
6'-0"
Nipa Thatch
Cogon Ridge
Sides
Interior View
(Wine Dressing)
6'-0" Ht. to Ceiling
Bamboo Slat Floor
Bamboo Railing
(Railing from Ground Floor)
Mortar Fireplace
Bamboo Countertop
A Chicken Coop

A JOYFUL MYSTERY

MRS. TERESITA DE LA CRUZ ON THE LIFE AND WORK OF DIRECTOR JOSELITO "ABBO" DE LA CRUZ

Abridged conversation between
Teresita de la Cruz and the
Philippine Arts in Venice Biennale (PAVB)
Translated by Phillip Kimpo

I AM MRS. TERESITA VILLEÑA DE LA CRUZ, the spouse of Director Joselito "Abbo" Quibedo de la Cruz. I am a teacher, and in the course of being a teacher for a long time, I have attained my postgraduate degree of Doctor of Education. I have been a classroom teacher of Science, an adviser, and a research director, before becoming a principal; after which I was Dean of the College of Teacher Education, as well as Dean of the Graduate School. After being retired for the last six years, I have been invited by the Dean of Studies of the seminary here in Manasas to teach there with them, because the current curriculum for priesthood of AB Philosophy, Major in Classical Philosophy, is now required by CHED (Commission on Higher Education) to have 18 units of Professional Education Subjects. These are subjects that are in the curriculum of would-be teachers both in elementary and secondary education courses. So, since it was a priest who came to this house, naturally, I couldn't decline just because I was already retired. I accepted it wholeheartedly; it was like being once more part of an academic institution, so to speak. But the atmosphere this time is different because I'm teaching to would-be priests, so the experience is different. Right now I just turned sixty-nine years old, but still going strong and still inspired to be teaching.

My husband and I are of the same age, the difference being just months. He was born in January 2, and I, in October 2, 1954. So, we were in elementary school at the same time, but I didn't know him yet. I only got to know him in second year high school. We were batchmates in the Lucban National College, which is now the SLSU (Southern Luzon State University). Back then there was no college yet. The college at the time seemed small. It was just like the Lucban Community College. There were barely 50 college students in those days. As for us, we were in the Lucban National High School. So, I remember that there were like eight or ten sections. Of course, I was in Section 1. Abbo and the other band players were in the tail-end section because all the band members were kept together.

This is because Abbo was in a school band, the Lucban National High School Band. All the bands had to be in one section, so that there would be no problems when it came to their practice time. Also, I had no prior knowledge about him. Maybe of his brother, Uro (de la Cruz), the eldest. Because Uro was really noted for his talents. He could answer questions in class even without bringing a notebook. That's how Uro was, if I'm asked to describe those times. And Uro ran for President of the Government Council. As for those like us, we were also fond of such things. Ah, so we were in second year then. Uro was in fourth year. Ah, and Abbo was also in second year. For those like us, we kind of aspired for extra curriculars because one of the requirements to be in the honor roll was extra curriculars. So we were really eager to become officers of the sophomore class organizations. Now, as for the general elections, of course, Uro was noted, and he carried Abbo with him. So the latter ran. We only had two parties. I think the position I ran for, which belonged to the group, was that of the representative of the entire second year, because the only ones allowed to run in those levels were the class officers. I was already the secretary then, but when you were asked to run for a higher position because you would be serving more people, you didn't say no. So, being in Section 1, of course I was expecting to win at that time. Ah, but no. I lost. And it was Abbo who won.

It never crossed my mind that he would end up [in filmmaking]. Probably I might have, before him, because I was a member of our

school paper. For his part, he wasn't in the school paper since what he knew, again, was to play in popular music "combos" (bands). Their band master let him tagalong since the band master had an orchestra. Back then, the orchestra was famous. You got invited to a lot of things. He organized the other students to form a combo so that whenever the orchestra was resting, there was an alternate music group available to perform. For them, it was the combo. Ah, so he got in because he knew how to play the guitar, and to sing. He was the lead guitarist and vocalist, which is maybe why I further took a liking to him, because if you sang in a combo, you were famous. Ah, so it appeared that he was more famous than I was. Because I seemed to lean towards academics. Ah, maybe indeed he was more famous than I was. I can admit to that; in those times, he had more friends than I had. My friends were only those in my circle, so to speak. Like my schoolmates, no one else. Which is why when we got together, I added more friends—his friends. Ah, he had many; he had lots of friends from different walks of life, with various interests.

Our interests only intersected in The Beatles. Since he sang in a combo, right? Number one among those he wanted to sound like when singing was Tom Jones. Which is why I can never forget "...got a good job in the city." What was that? "Proud Mary." Why that song? Well, at the time he was courting me, we had a school program. I was in a dance troupe, while he, on the other hand, was singing in the combo. He sent me a note: "My first song is dedicated to you." Back then there was no text messaging; ah, it was just a small piece of paper. Something torn off, then sent to someone already. I kind of raised my eyebrow, "What, just a scrap of paper? What, you'll give me a note like this?" In those times, something sent in courtship would be on pink linen paper. Which is why we would know among our schoolmates who had a suitor, since she would be receiving notes on pink linen paper; [that is] what it meant. And his note was just on a torn piece of paper! He wasn't fussy. That was his character. He really belonged to the masses.

On writing his script [of *Misteryo sa Tuwa / Joyful Mystery*], he had been telling me for a long time, "I'm coming up or conceptualizing



a story," in which he would enrich what actually happens when a plane crashes into a mountain. That's what he said. He would enrich it. But he also did interviews. It's said that there were interviews, supposed interviews, since these were already old, in 19-something, I don't know. In any case it's there in the movie exactly which year it was. There were those who indeed obtained the airplane's contents, something like, I find it hard to use the word "looting" since I can't really know that. Someone got something from the crash, the debris on the mountain; someone had gone up there, in other words.

Yes. So it's really from that news, actual news of what happened [the helicopter crash], that he enriched it. Because what he said was, "I will enrich this. What I know is that the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines," of which Imee Marcos was the head, "will be having another script writing contest." That's already the second. The first was the one with *Oro Plata [Mata]*, I think. That is, as far as I can remember. On my part, since Uro was also joining—ah, Uro was the talented writer. He was the gifted one in their family. And he was also the renowned writer. A multiple Palanca awardee. Which is why I said, "Go ahead, develop it. Develop it." I didn't know that he knew how to write. I only knew how once he told me, "Nanay, please have this typed as I'm running out of time. I need to beat the deadline." He was in danger of missing it. What we did was to go somewhere out of the way. So there would be no disturbance. We went to the countryside, to an inn. I brought my portable typewriter, I think it was an Olympia. I had used it in writing my M.A. thesis during that time. I wasn't a doctor yet. Indeed, I was still taking my Masters degree. So, I saw the scripts. Ah, the script had a scene 1, like that; exterior, interior, and so on. But in one part, there was a title, and there was a cast, the characters, things like that.

It wasn't my talent—it was a script, a script, where you could read the conversations. Like, was it daytime? It described if the scene took place in the day, or at a different time. And so I said, "Hey, this is a lot." And the question, "Tatay, did you really write this one?" "Huh, of course! Who else would write this?" he replied. "And how did you learn this?" I asked. He said, "Ah, where else but

at my work," since his work was with Uro, who was instrumental in bringing Abbo to *Metro Magazine* during that time. In *Metro Magazine*, they were really making a magazine, and they were also making a TV documentary for Channel 4. They were mostly featuring Metro Manila. During that time, First Lady Imelda (Marcos) was the Metro Manila Governor. That's it. I didn't expect that he knew how. What I only knew was that he was directing.

Because while he was in his work, they would be filming his documentaries. Sort of "way of life." Whenever Imelda had no project that they needed to shoot, they had to show something weekly. And so, he would feature how to make *kiping*, because this leaned towards Lucban. How to make copra, things like that. He also featured his style. It happened that he liked to go bait fishing, for *bakli*, the small fish in the river. And that's when I realized, "Hey, you're better than me." Because my section in school was an honor section. With him, almost no chance to get honors. What I knew was that he would just sing and sing, play and play the guitar and drums, just that.

One time, when we were in our rented apartment at Dominga in Manila, we happened to be with the children and we wanted to treat them by going to Harrison Plaza. We had dinner. He then said, "What can be a good title?" It was a Wednesday when he asked. For my part, after doing this and that, I would be praying the rosary. On Wednesdays, it would be the Joyful Mysteries of the rosary. And so, he was narrating to me piecemeal. Like what we did everyday, we had casual conversations, "I'm going to do this and that," "Wait, what's your synopsis," I said. "Ah, so there's this plane crash, there are three farmers who stumbled upon it, but they had many companions. It just happened that those three farmers picked up a suitcase full of cash." So, from that evolved—I don't know the proper term—the cinematic, how to expand it into a true film, so to speak. With villains, that sort of thing. "So how," I said. "What's the ending?" "No one will know that the suitcase was in their possession. Because what will happen is that the villains will fight among themselves. Villain against villain. Like that. In the end the story is that no one knows the money is with them. And one of the farmers, a bachelor, will get married to a maiden," he said.



That's how it would be shown. There will be a wedding; he said that that would be the ending in which he will show how weddings are done here in Lucban.

There will be dancing, in the barrios of Lucban and nearby towns. Because it's different in the town proper; weddings are different there. The ones in the barrio are the typical, that's the ending. "Joyful? But no one will know that they have the cash..." And so I remembered, "Tatay, what if this and that. And wouldn't they be joyful that they escaped their predicament? Aha! And so there indeed is the mystery, and the money is never found. Their barriomates will never know that there indeed was money. And so it's a mystery!" "And why would they have cash, why would others say they have lots of cash," muttered Abbo. "In the end they found themselves with money, and they had something to pin on and offer to the bride." "And so it's really a mystery! Ah, make that already 'Misteryo sa Tuwa,' like something casual. 'Misteryo sa Tuwa,' Tatay, since no one will find out," so I said. Ah, he mulled it over, and after some time, I don't know, maybe the next day or evening, or in the wee hours, he muttered, "Yes, Nanay, it seems right, that 'Misteryo sa Tuwa'." "Once you're done with it, we will really know," I said.

And so he kind of used “Misteryo” temporarily. But he mentioned, he muttered, “This might be it,” because he had another title for it. “But no, this one seems a better fit.” I forget which was his original title. Based indeed on the rosary.

“Joyful Mystery.” Once screened abroad, it already carried the title “Joyful Mystery.”

So when we went away, I hammered away at the typewriter. No time was to be wasted since we were rushing in time for submissions. One time I had done typing something, he would ask to revise it. Something like, “Nanay, this and that would be better, this, that, and so on.” Oh well, I’d let him, I’d type it. I’d give it to him, he’d read it. He said that as long as we had enough food, as long as no one would disturb us, that’s the only thing we’d be doing.

Afterwards, around that time, [Abbo] called me up. During those days we already had a telephone. It was 1983 and the telephone was in vogue. We could make long distance calls, things like that. He told me the news, so what happened was that I immediately looked for a newspaper, if it was really true. That was the beginning—Abbo already had many friends, and began to be noticed. After his triumph, say one week, two weeks, for sure less than a month, he told me, “Nanay, Miss Imee told me that since I’m directing documentaries, since I’m doing experimental, let’s try to do this.” Which is why it was made experimental; it caters to another group, you’ll notice that they’re not all celebrities or popular actors. Someone new, like that. Which is why it’s experimental. And so he was likewise made director in experimental fashion, since they said he was already directing documentaries on Channel 4, the People’s Channel, the government channel, I think. And so I kind of felt anxious, with a mix of happiness and nervousness, “Does my husband have what it takes to direct on a larger scale?” I thought, “To direct a movie, in which the pay is, well, his price was bigger than his directorial fee?” I can remember I felt that way.

So, he was 27 years old [when his script won] and when he also first directed. Something like 27? 28? In any case it’s either 27 or 28, wait,



I will count. I will count. Because my baseline is Misty (de la Cruz). I was pregnant then with Misty.

At the same time that Abbo was here, he conducted an acting workshop here in Lucban. It was conducted in SLSU during that time. It wasn’t a university then. It was still a college. It was the Southern Luzon Polytechnic College at that time. And so a lot of people attended the workshop. After which, I can remember someone arriving, also a director, Lore Reyes. He was kind of the manager. I’m not sure if he was the production manager, because the production manager was the wife of Peque (Gallaga), Maddie (Gallaga). What’s the right term—she would be in the know of everything, of the budget, of this and that, she was the next in rank after Charo Santos. Imee Marcos, then Charo, then after Charo would be Maddie. That’s it, I really don’t know about these things. After everyone had arrived, the first thing to do was the setting, to create the location, the set.

I’m not sure how many sessions he conducted in what do you call this, this workshop. Because what he did first was to hold the workshop in SLSU, for all the youth; then he also workshopped the adults that he would be employing. In any case, he made several workshop groupings; he prepared in that manner. Then came the castings: the extras, the others—ah I couldn’t understand the rest. As I said, I’m just teaching. Always house-and-school. Whenever people were there, I’d entertain them, that was just my role. I didn’t fully grasp what they were doing. Something like, the production staff members were there, then we had casual conversations about life. But not about the film.

It was kind of instrumental in making Lucban more known for its *longganisa*, *habhab*, and San Isidro, because they managed to catch the San Isidro feast.

In terms of shooting, I didn’t see any problems. The sole problem they had was towards the end. Because there was a storm. Quezon was ravaged by a storm, which was really a super storm. Some of their props of houses on the mountain were ruined.



And so I think Maddie requested for additional budget, because they needed to erect again the storm-downed set; and that was also a cause of delay in the timeframe. Which is why the shooting time lengthened a bit. That's the only problem I saw. But, as I can say, since I was in school during those times, Abbo was always the talk of the town. *Misteryo* was always the talk of the town, even in our school. Because I had students who were graduating and who attended the workshop, they were talking about their experiences there, what they went through. And the residents of Lucban, those who became part of the film, they were very proud. The word was, "So it's like that. The film challenges the mind. Like the police are chasing among themselves," Was it the army? Yes, the army. The word was, "We just went round and round; we were just going around one thing. Why there? Ah, but when we watched the actual film, when it was done and there was a screening, aha, there it is. In the end, what you see isn't what it seems. You'd think it was a huge forest. But the space was actually small." And my high school students were also sharing stories, "Ah, turns out that we were just there. Doing this, like that." Ah, they said the film had many tricks.

And I also saw the prosthetics being done in the house, of those plane passengers. Which is why I said, we got ideas on how a shooting or this and that goes on. Each to his own, they were busy with their different roles. The prosthetics were very good, according to those who saw them. And they also allowed people to watch, as if it was in a seminar.

Many local talents were recruited [for the film]. Then, truth be told, Abbo was able to help many Lucban residents indirectly. Because, the non-Lucbanin kept on buying longganisa before going home. Pancit habhab, too. They also kept on buying delicacies. The jeeps during that time were servicing the artists, and local talents, bringing them up the mountain. And so many had additional work and additional income, mostly with regard to food. That's it. Lucban's local craft shops grew in number.

He became more renowned [in Lucban]. If he was already popular even before making films, especially among the fisherfolk, those related to music, the bands, Abbo cemented his fame. Many more became familiar with him. Indeed, more people knew him and in addition, many organizations such as the Rotary of Lucban awarded him with honors. He was given a citation or a Plaque of Appreciation, something like that. Then the municipality likewise conferred upon him a Plaque of Appreciation.

We're the typical Lucbanins. Our parents are typical Lucbanins. Which is why it never entered our minds to relocate to other towns. We really settled here since my work is here. Before marrying Abbo, upon my graduation I already became a teacher in SLSU during its pre-university days. And so we are Lucbanin to the core.

It can be said that he took an early retirement from showbiz, because he deeply wanted to be always in Lucban. His feet were certainly turned towards returning to Lucban. Which is why sometimes, Robbie (Tan) got angry. *Why are you idling here? You have lots of opportunities in Manila.*

When he passed away, first, I can say that he seemed to be more famous than a mayor who had died. Because, upon his

passing, Abbo had accomplished many things. Abbo at the time of his passing was a member of the SLSU's Board of Regents. He represented the alumni, because he was the president of all alumni. He was in his second term. And so he was given a necrological service. His remains were brought to SLSU. Aside from that, he also became a councilor, so he was likewise given honors. Which is why he went to several places. He was brought to the municipal hall; the municipality made Abbo spend one night there. And since Abbo was a band and combo player, the youthful combo bands proposed, "Ma'am, can we serenade Abbo? But to the tune of his favorite songs during your time." That's because we're of the same age. "Ah, no funeral songs. Kind of the songs of the 60s, 70s, and 80s." And so there were crowds. The municipal hall was sizeable since there was also a wake there.

Seven days. Abbo died on a Monday, he was buried on a Sunday. He spent a week. So he had a long wake here, before he was to be transferred to the municipal hall. But the SLSU requested that he pass by them, since he was being given honors. Then he was brought to the municipal hall, where they requested for him to spend a night. Which is why Abbo was not here anymore on Saturday, even if his interment was on Sunday. Then his burial. Since we were the ones who kept watch, I couldn't understand anymore. You do become absent-minded. But they said, "My God, it's a large crowd!" Because the church was crowded, they said. Abbo filled the church to overflowing. There, the other people couldn't fit in anymore. Abbo was already there at the peak of that place; in the direction of Palola was the cemetery, the San Luisa Memorial Park. Ah, he was already there, but [the procession] was not yet done.

Abbo's love for Lucban, for the nature of Lucban, for the beauty of Lucban—these never left him. That's what I witnessed.




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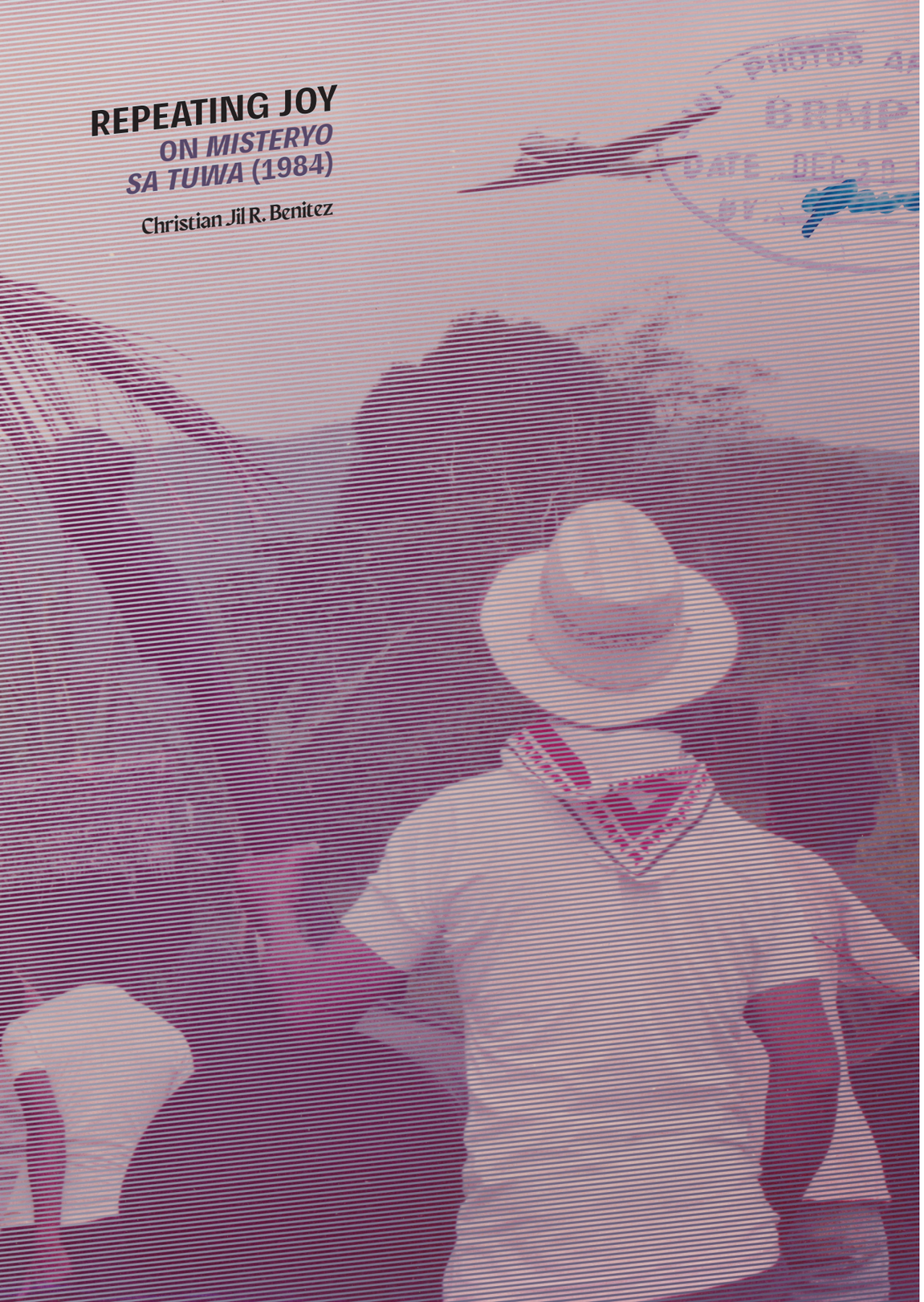





PHOTOS APPROVED
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REPEATING JOY
ON *MISTERYO SA TUWA* (1984)

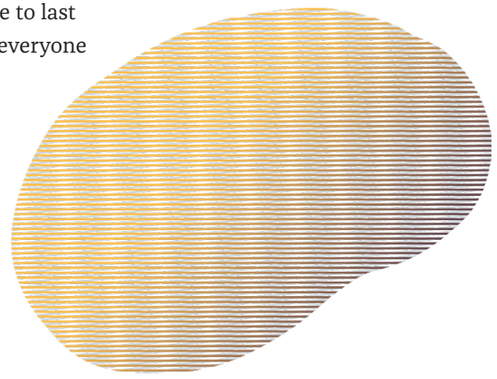
Christian Jil R. Benitez



TWO TREES TOPPLE TO THE GROUND, one after the other, indicating life in the seemingly unchanging Mount Banahaw in the very first still. After the title of the film—*Misteryo sa Tuwa*—imposes itself in red on a backdrop of black-and-white cliff, the culprits behind the fall were revealed: first, a man wearing a salakot, swinging a hatchet on another tree; and then, another man pulling down a thick vine; a woman hacking the branches of a small tree; two men sawing together an already felled trunk; a man beheading a monitor lizard, preparing it for a meal; another woman slashing the leaves of an anahaw palm; another woman, the youngest among them, washing rice in a pot; and then, as the camera moves farther away, several more men and women working on the mountainside filled with fallen trees, the sky clear and bright above them, with no more canopies casting shadows on their toiling bodies. Soon, these people all trek down, the men carrying the collected wood back to the village at the foot of the mountain, to their cluster of few huts lit by gas lanterns and a lone campfire at the center. Joy in the countryside is such a repetition: night soon falls, and as color finally animates the screen, the roosters also begin their crowing. Suddenly, it is morning in Lucban once again.

It is 19 August 1950, and ten days prior, more than 80 kilometers away, in the capital of Manila, President Elpidio Quirino has declared the day as a national holiday commemorating the birth of the previous president, Manuel L. Quezon. But here at the foot of Mount Banahaw, the cause of celebration is the baptism of a child, the youngest son of Ponsoy (Tony Santos, Sr.) and Ada (Amable Quiambao). This fills the village with the sound of rondalla that has all the people clapping and dancing, including those sitting by the table, gathered around the bounty served on a spread of banana leaves, who seem to eat with their bare hands in rhythm with the gleeful music. This synchrony, of course, is choreography rehearsed, but diegetically, an emergent harmony that only points out how this joy can be all too familiar for these people: what seems an event, the sequence asserts, is a custom, a habit that happens every so often here, as eventually repeated by the end of the film. But for now, this: even if the festivity will be interjected by the cursing of

the hungry Castro (Lito Anzures), the prisoner-turned-assistant to Captain Salgado (Robert Antonio) of the local patrolling soldiers, when someone spilled rice on his shoulder, which he had mistaken as someone's piss, the laughter would only go on again, quickly dissolving the momentary awkward. The merriment merely pauses one last time for Ponsoy to pour the rice wine on a glass—first, for the devil, spilling it to the ground; and second, for himself and his wife, for their son to grow up wise and their marriage to last longer—before ultimately becoming even merrier, with everyone finally standing up to dance under the noontime sun.



What shortly follows this festivity has been already prefigured in the film, as if mystically signalled by previous moments: first by the opening sequence of falling trees; and then, by the immediately prior sequence, namely, when the truck borrowed from the captain to visit the town proper for the baptismal ceremony breaks down, to the wonder of the soldiers driving the vehicle, forcing the group riding the truck—Ponsoy and his family, his friends Mesiong (Johnny Delgado) and Jamin (Ronnie Lazaro), with the former's wife Pinang (Alicia Alonzo) and the latter's girlfriend Ising (Maria Montes), who will all be central to the narrative—to walk the rest of their way back to the village. This latter mechanic mishap is further hyperbolized, scaled up exponentially, with repercussions that will affect not only this particular group, but as well as their entire community in the countryside: as the people dance happily, an airplane can be seen flying low, engine whirring too loudly, tailed by black smoke. Upon realizing that the aircraft is about to crash somewhere near on the mountain, the rondalla stops, and all the people—even those bathing, coming out of the *batalan* with soap suds all over their bodies—now stand still, their mouths agape both in awe and terror of what they witness next: the verdure of the mountain slope suddenly abloom with a bright red cloud that quickly becomes gray, then black. The village people scramble screaming, with many children and women running back to their huts, only for them to all go out again eventually to look for the crash site.

The beginning then of discord that is, after all, bound to arrive amidst such an idyllic joy: after walking past boulders, crossing a shallow river, and making their way through thick foliage, the people finally arrive at the wreckage. There, parts of the ruined airplane are still aflame, scattered among wounded and burnt bodies, opened boxes, and littered round fruits. And as the people survey the scene, a young boy slips under a torn wing of the aircraft, and starts to gather gray cans. Not long after, he comes out again, begins to call his mother, and shouts, *Kuwarta, kuwarta—andaming kuwarta!:* amid the rubble, there lies a lot of money, and thus other treasures too, waiting to be found. Upon realizing this, the initial shock of the people is quickly dispelled, instantly replaced with the impulse to sift through the debris. And so, as the captain orders his heavily breathing men to go down back to their camp, to call to the capitol to report on the incident, the people waste no time to scavenge for anything worth keeping. A woman opens a suitcase, takes the couple of blouses she finds inside; and even as she shrieks upon the horrifying discovery that a dead body hangs on a tree directly above her, she nevertheless runs away carrying the suitcase. Nearby, Castro plays tug-of-war with another woman over a box, claiming he saw it first when she had laid hands on it first. Others similarly jostle one another to collect clothes, canned goods, fruits, and stuff still usable. And boldly frenetic as all the village people are, the captain can only feel frustration: he shouts at them, asks them what they have become now, seemingly no different from animals, in their utter irreverence at the dead. Later that evening, however, the same people could have never been happier: in one hut, a family opens one can after another, their first time to taste such food; in another hut, another family tries on the watches they gathered, the excited children wearing two each on either forearm.

Meanwhile, in yet another hut, Ponsoy, Mesiong, Jamin, and their families gather around a black briefcase, which the three have found in the clutch of the sole American corpse. To their joy, it holds stacks of cash worth half a million pesos—an amount revealed the following day by the two Chinese businessmen, who arrived in the village, accompanied by Mayor Valle (Mario Taguiwalo), to ask the captain to help them recover the briefcase

owned by their lost American business partner. The money was supposed to pay for another piece of land that the foreigners have acquired, but knowing how unlikely it would be to get the money back, the businessmen would already be content with the retrieval of the important documents in the bag. The mayor, however, remarking that such a sum is way more than the worth of an entire town—and more so, of this particular town, small and remote at the foot of a mountain—started plotting to find the briefcase for his own gain. And soon enough, he found an unexpected ally for his plan: Castro, who previously chased the three men as he claimed to be the first one to find the bag, tells the mayor about their possession. The two quickly agreed on how to split the money once they get it all back—60-40, in favor, of course, of the mayor—thus officially beginning their scheming together. The latter half of *Misteryo sa Tuwa* sees then the unfolding of this plot, beginning with one night, when armed men, whose heads are covered with bayongs with eye holes, seize Ponsoy, Mesiong, and Jamin from their homes, taking them up to the mountains to be tortured into confessing where they hid the coveted briefcase.



The event crucially cleaves the earlier joyful idyll, revealing the village to be immersed in a conflict that is much larger than itself. The first firing of the gun in the incident, which kills the son of a villager to everyone's rage, critically frames the film within a grander socio-political reality: the on-going campaign of the government at the time against the Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon (People's Anti-Japanese Army, Hukbalahap, hereafter referred to as *Huk*), a communist guerrilla movement formed by peasants from Central Luzon in the 1940s to fight primarily against the Japanese occupation in the country, but eventually, after World War II, even against the Philippine government itself. This operation would further intensify by September 1950, less than a month after the film's setting, with the appointment as the Minister of National Defense of Ramon Magsaysay, a former United States Army Forces in the Far East guerrila himself and eventually the Philippine president succeeding Quirino. Magsaysay deployed alternative counterinsurgency methods to eventual success. Earlier in the film, this battle against the Huks was seemingly alluded to, albeit metaphorically refracted, in the mayor's launching of the Anti-Rat Campaign, where he described the animal to the townspeople as a creature made by God to roam free, although—or: therefore—potentially harmful to the existent order; thus, these rats, asserted the mayor, should be eliminated by the people without any hesitation. And so, even without any concretely incriminating proof, it was the Huks who were first suspected by Captain Salgado to be the culprit behind the abduction of the three men. After all, he and his soldiers were stationed at the foot of Mt. Banahaw precisely to keep an eye out for these guerrillas, and as such, could only be expected to indict the latter at every opportunity.

The apparent presence of the Philippine anti-communist campaign also situates the film in a global discourse, for indeed, such was an operation that has unfolded historically alongside other iterations of the same political disposition across Southeast Asia and beyond. Therefore, *Misteryo sa Tuwa* can be seen as a marginal narrative in the midst of an international war—namely, the Cold War, or that long period of seemingly temperate tension between the American and Soviet superpowers—that would shape not only the trajectory of the Philippine nation but also that of the rest of the world in succeeding decades. Being so, the film can then be staged in a conversation with other works such as Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, released in 1979 and five years prior to *Misteryo*. It is an epic film that translates Joseph Conrad's 1899 novella, *Heart of Darkness*, from 19th century Congo

to the then recently concluded American War in Vietnam, and was shot beginning 1976 in the island of Luzon, where Abbo Q. Dela Cruz also made *Misteryo* in 1984. The connection between *Misteryo* and *Apocalypse*, if not their outright entanglement, is arguably made most perceptible in an emblematic moment that appears in both films: the burning of tropical verdures, due to a napalm strike at dawn in the latter and the crashing of an aircraft in the former, which both equally signal how the ensuing Cold War was, in fact, scorching hot. Indeed, taking such a comparative motif to the extreme, it could be as if these two burnings take place at the same time on either side of the same mountain range: the 1969 of *Apocalypse* might as well be the 1950 of *Misteryo*, an annihilation of time that is, in the first place, engendered by the violence of the global war.

It is crucial to underscore, however, that despite the comparability of *Misteryo* to other films concerning and set during that time, the particular ecology it projects on-screen also insists on its utmost singularity: after all, being such a historically considered holy mountain and a persistent destination for many pilgrims even at present, Mt. Banahaw inflects the understanding of a global war through folk intuitions. The fall of an airplane on a nearby location, for example, is almost seen as an instance of providence, and so, must be another opportunity that ought to be seized, scavenged through regardless of the scattered dead bodies. A gun is not only a weapon that simply signals danger, but something that can possibly be a plaything, just as when a father, after hearing his son speak of his curiosity of that big metal thing carried around by the soldiers, instead of warning him about it, promises him instead that he would buy him ten of it. And money, especially for Ponsoy, Mesiong, Jamin, and their families gathered in that one hut, appears to be not a mere material representation of economic value, but also, and more importantly, a gift from the divine itself, which allows them all to imagine finally getting whatever they dream for themselves—as if the amount that they stumbled upon were indeed infinite, or at least enough to buy them, as Pinang suggests, a whole mountain for themselves. After all, the pinnacle of joy for them, it easily appears, is that their families would never need to move places again.

With the recognition then of money as such a serendipitous present, if not a form of divine intervention, it only becomes clear why toward the end of the film, after Ada and Pinang, through the help of a young boy, have located and successfully defeated Castro and Mayor Valle's other henchmen, and saved the tortured Ponsoy, Mesiong, and Jamin, they all ultimately decide to leave among the dead bodies the American's briefcase, with the stacks of cash seemingly intact inside. After all, as Jamin reflects earlier, as much as it brings them joy to imagine what they could do with all the money before them, with all the tension that suddenly arose in their village not long after their lucky find, *Parang ipinahihipo lang tayo sa salapi, at saka mawawala*: it was as if they were all being given only a feel of the money, letting them touch it with their hands, before it vanishes just as quickly—a material, in other words, no different from water slipping or wind passing through between one's fingers. And certainly, such is the fate that befalls the villainous mayor in the end: after the group has left the place of encounter, the mayor finally has his chance to take hold of the much desired bag, only to be shot shortly after by Captain Salgado and his men who also arrive at the scene. The captain then sifts through the bag and finds there the essential documents that the two Chinese men asked him to help retrieve.



By the ambiguous look on the captain's face, whether the stacks of cash is also there inside the briefcase remains uncertain, but the conclusion of the film seems to suggest that the group has indeed resolved to leave it there in the forest, giving it back to where they first found it. In the penultimate sequence, the village at the foot of Mt. Banahaw now appears to be destroyed, only for the following sequence to reveal that the same community has only moved elsewhere presumably in the same mountain—a nomadism that Ponsoy, Mesiong, Jamin, and their families had hoped to escape, with the money that they once held with their own hands. And in this new village, just like in the beginning of the film, another instance of merrymaking is taking place, this time to celebrate the marriage of Jamin and Ising. Therefore, just like the money that the three men chanced upon and decided to

put back to its most exceptional circulation, so did the community have to lose its steady rhythm, if only to allow an anticipation—and more importantly, the actual arrival—of its eventual return. In other words, a moment of syncopation, however tormenting, makes itself necessary to the over-all choreography of things, if only to ironically insist even more the vitality of the mundane, or precisely why the ordinary warrants to be cherished and spoken of at length. This is the realization that makes a life that is right beside the banality of suffering still livable then: that after all, simply on the other side of present sorrows is finally an uneventful, and thus happy, tomorrow. Certainly, another agony also awaits, but at the same time, is no more. In many ways then, time unfolds, but also, somehow, it already has done so; and all the while, the mountain sits and perpetually watches over. There is a happiness to be had in such a repetition, and the folk have long understood this: nothing is really mystical about it, or at least, nothing should; instead, only wonder that has always been entwined with—or perhaps, can only be, even, itself—joy.




BANAHAW
BANAHAW
BANAHAW
BANAHAW
YOUNG BANAHAW
ORCHESTRA
LUCBAN, QUEZON

ARTIST

MARK SALVATUS (b. 1980) works and lives between Lucban and Quezon City, Philippines. He studied Advertising (cum laude) at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila.

Calling his overall artistic practice “Salvage Projects,” a name that corresponds to the meaning of his surname, Salvatus has presented his works in different exhibitions and venues including the UP Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Research Center, the Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, and the Metropolitan Museum in Manila; Mori Art Museum in Tokyo; MMCA in Seoul; Asia Society and ISCP in New York; Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien in Berlin; CHAT and Osage Art Foundation in Hong Kong; Hong-gah Museum in Taipei; Kamloops Art Gallery in Calgary, Alberta; La Trobe Art Institute, Bendigo; and Brunei Gallery, SOAS, University of London.

He has participated in several art festivals and biennales including the Asian Art Biennial, Taichung (2021); Lahore Biennale (2020); Sharjah Biennale (2019); PCAN Pavilion, Gwangju Biennale (2018); Thessaloniki Biennale (2017); Philippine Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale (2016); SONSBEEK International, Arnhem (2016); Prologue Exhibition: Honolulu Biennale (2014); Singapore Biennale (2011); Guangzhou Triennale (2011); Jakarta Biennale (2011 and 2015); and Koganecho Bazaar, Yokohama (2011). Salvatus is also part of *Notes for Tomorrow*, a traveling exhibition from 2021–2025 organized by Independent Curators International.

Salvatus had residencies in Asia Culture Center (ACC) Gwangju; Rijksakademie, Amsterdam; IASPIS Umea, Sweden; Art OMI, New York; Common Room Networks Foundation, Bandung; and, Goyang Art Studio, South Korea. He was also a recipient of the 13 Artists Award from the Cultural Center of the Philippines (2012) and Ateneo Art Awards (2010).

In 2012, he co-founded 98B COLLABoratory, a multi-disciplinary site for creative sharing, discussion and collaboration. He also founded Load na Dito in 2016 with Mayumi Hirano, a curatorial and research project based in Manila.

CURATOR

CARLOS QUIJON, JR. (b. 1989) is an art historian, critic, and curator based between Manila and New York. He is the C-MAP Fellow for Southeast and East Asia at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He was a fellow of the research platform Modern Art Histories in and across Africa, South and Southeast Asia (MAHASSA), convened by the Getty Foundation’s Connecting Art Histories project. He has written exhibition reviews for publications such as *e-flux*, *Frieze*, *Artforum*. His essays are part of the books *Writing Presently* (Manila: Philippine Contemporary Art Network, 2019) and *From a History of Exhibitions Towards a Future of Exhibition-Making: China and Southeast Asia* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2019), and *SEA: Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia* (Berlin: Weiss Publications, 2022). He has published in *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art* (SG), *Afro-Asian Visions* (UK), MoMA’s *post* (US), *Queer Southeast Asia* (Singapore), *ArtReview Asia* (Singapore), *Art Monthly* (UK), Asia Art Archive’s *Ideas* (HK), and *Trans Asia Photography Review* (US), among others. In 2017, he was a research resident in Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul and a fellow of the Transcuratorial Academy both in Berlin and Mumbai. He was a curatorial resident at the International Studio and Curatorial Program in New York (funded by the Asian Cultural Council) in 2023 and the Singapore Art Museum in 2024. He curated *Courses of Action* in Hong Kong in 2019, curated *a will for prolific disclosures* in Manila, co-curated *Minor Infelicities* in Seoul in 2020, and the traveling exhibition series *Afro-Southeast Asia: Pragmatics and Geopoetics of Art during a Cold War* in Singapore (2021), Manila (2021-2), and Busan (2022). He is the curator of the research, publication, and exhibition platform *Archipelagic Futurisms* (2022-).

WRITERS

CHRISTIAN JIL BENITEZ is a poet, scholar, translator, and educator from the Philippines. He earned his AB–MA in Filipino Literature from the Department of Filipino, Ateneo de Manila University, where he teaches literature, criticism, and rhetoric. Currently based in Bangkok, Thailand, he is pursuing his PhD in Comparative Literature at Chulalongkorn University. His first book, *Isang Dalumat ng Panahon* (Ateneo Press, 2022), which attempts to articulate a Philippine notion of time, received the 41st Philippine National Book Award for Literary Criticism/Cultural Studies.

From Manila, Philippines, **ANJELINE DE DIOS** is a musician, teacher, and writer, whose sonic practice builds connections between art, meditation, and decolonial research. Since 2015, she has worked in transcultural contexts of alternative and higher education, meditation training, and collaborative performance in the Philippines (Listening Biennial), Hong Kong (Lingnan University), Singapore (Asia Research Institute), Germany (Ballhaus Naunystrasse), and Indonesia (lifepatch, Damalung Blueprint), among others. Anjeline also publishes research on music, migration, and labor, and is the co-editor of *The Elgar Handbook on the Geographies of Creativity* (2020). She holds BA and MA degrees in Philosophy (Ateneo de Manila University, Linköping University), and a PhD in Geography (National University of Singapore). Previously Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies at Lingnan University in Hong Kong, she was a resident artist of the Goethe Institut Indonesien's REFLEKT Residency, hosted by SAVVY Contemporary in Berlin (2023). Her website is anjeline.net.

TERESITA VELEÑA DE LA CRUZ is a retired professor and former dean of the College of Teacher Education in Southern Luzon State University. She finished her Doctor of Education at the Philippine Normal University with a major in Educational Administration in 2002. She was also a former visiting professor under the program of Master of Arts in Educational Management and Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management at the Thai Nguyen University, Vietnam.

De la Cruz's research contribution stretches from administrative to instructional areas. Her research works were included in different publications such as in the *SUCTEA Journal* (2013), *JPAIR Multidisciplinary Journal* (2012), and the *Siyasag Journal* (2007), to name a few. She has also presented her research papers in various research conferences such as for the 16th National SUCTEA Convention in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan; World Research Festival 2012 in Cebu City; 3rd National Research Forum on Convergence of Arts and Sciences Research in Cebu Normal University, Cebu City; and National Research Seminar Workshop Forum on Research in Jose Rizal Memorial State College, Dapitan City.

She was recognized as the world's best oral research presenter in the World Research Festival 2012 and received the Southern Luzon State University Outstanding Faculty award in 2013. By the time of retirement in 2018, she held the position Professor IV.

PRISTINE L. DE LEON is an art critic, researcher, and educator based in Manila. Since receiving the Purita Kalaw-Ledesma prize for art criticism at the Ateneo Art Awards in 2016, she has written reviews and features on visual art and theater as an art columnist in *The Philippine Star* and a contributing writer for *ArtsEquator*.

In 2018, she took part in the Curatorial Development Workshop organized by the Philippine Contemporary Art Network, the Japan Foundation and the Vargas Museum, from which she received a grant to curate an exhibition on spatial politics, titled *Built on Sand*.

Her fascination with the shape-shifting figure of the art critic led her to become part of the first Asian Arts Media Roundtable convened by *ArtsEquator* in Singapore in 2019 and of the Critical Ecologies | Critical Anomalies collective, an online residency hosted by Centre 42. In 2020, she was the recipient of the Emerging Writers Fellowship organized by *Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia*, which published her research on public art and collaboration.

Currently, she teaches at the Fine Arts Department of the Ateneo de Manila University, while pursuing an MA in Art Studies: Art Theory and Criticism at the University of the Philippines.

VITALIANO GOROSPE, S.J. † is an author, professor, scholar, and Jesuit priest. He was former Chairperson of the Theology Department of the Ateneo de Manila University where he introduced the Theology of Liberation course during his time. He obtained his Licentiate in Sacred Theology from Woodstock College and his doctorate degree in Philosophy from St. Louis University, Missouri. He also studied ethics at Harvard University in Boston.

His research mostly focused on areas of Moral Philosophy and Theology, Social Justice and Liberation, and Environmental Spirituality. Gorospe took part in a month-long immersion among poor farmers in Laguna which led to the foundations of the Office of Social Concern and Involvement, the principal implementing arm of the Ateneo Immersion Program. He was able to produce around 113 publications which range from articles, books, and journals. Among his published works are: *Catechism on the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church* (1954); *Banahaw: Conversations with a Pilgrim to the Power Mountain* (1992); and *Forming The Filipino Social Conscience* (1997). He was honored with the creation of the Gorospe Professorial Chair in Theology at the Ateneo de Manila University in 1993.

RYAN V. PALAD works as a Department Manager at the Corporate Social Advocacies Department in GSIS Museum and is a registered author, writer, and editor by the National Book Development Board. He previously worked as President of ATAGAN ,Inc. or the Tayabas Studies and Creative Writing Center (2018 – 2023); President of KABANSA or the Kapisanan ng mga Bahay Saliksikan sa Bansa Inc. (2014-2016); and ADHIKA (Asosasyon ng mga Dalubhasa). Palad is a member of The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH) since 2021; of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) since 2007; as well as the International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (CAMOC). He is the author of the books: *Bayan ng Tayabas: Kasaysayan at Kalinangan 1575-1985* (2016), and *Tayabas: Documenting Heritage* (2024). Palad served as the editor or co-editor of the following books: *Tayabas: Pagmumulat sa Kasaysayan, Himagsikan at Sentenaryo* (1998); *Hermano Puli sa Kasaysayan* (2001); *Cofradia de San Jose at Rehimentong Tayabas* (2004); *PULI: Paniniwala, Ugnayan, Lipunan at Imahen sa Panahon ni Apolinario de la Cruz* (2012); *Independencia 1843: Ang Rehimentong Tayabas Sa Daloy Ng Kasaysayan Ng Mga Kilusang Mapagpalaya* (2019). He was also a writer and contributor for the 2017 *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art - Architecture* (Second Edition, Volume 4) and for the 2022 Kaibigan Pratele Czech Philippine Cultural and Diplomatic Dialogue. Palad is a participant at the Transborder Capacity Building Workshop: Museums, Cultural Mapping and Heritage Tourism in Southeast Asia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Vientiane Lao PDR last 2006. He is a recipient of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Mentoring Grant during the 21st General Conference and 22nd General Assembly held in Vienna Austria last 2007.

MELÊ YAMOMO has lived in Lucena City, Los Baños, Manila, Seoul, Bangkok, Warwick, and Munich, and currently resides in Amsterdam and Berlin. He is Assistant Professor of Theatre, Performance, Sound, and Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam; a member of the Amsterdam Young Academy; and author of *Sounding Modernities* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). He is the project leader and principal investigator of the EU-JPICH project, Decolonizing Southeast Asian Archives (DeCoSEAS), and the Dutch Research Council project, »Sonic Entanglements«. meLê is the fourth winner of the Open Ear Award, the most prestigious composer prize in the Netherlands, and one of the 2020 KNAW Early Career Awardees by the Netherlands Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is also a resident artist at Theater Ballhaus Naunynstrasse, where his creations, *Echoing Europe*, *sonus*, and *Forces of Overtones*, are on repertoire. meLê curates the Decolonial Frequences Festival and hosts/produces the Sonic Entanglements podcast. In his works as artist-scholar, meLê engages the topics of sonic migrations, queer aesthetics, and post/de-colonial acoustemologies.

WORKFORCE

THE PHILIPPINE ARTS IN VENICE BIENNALE COORDINATING COMMITTEE (PAVB-CC)

The participation of the Philippines at the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (commonly known as Venice Art Biennale) is a collaborative undertaking of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), and the Office of Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda. As the highest arts and culture government institution in the Philippines, the NCCA leads the Philippine participation in Venice Art and Architecture Biennale – of La Biennale di Venezia. NCCA Chairman Victorino Mapa Manalo is the current Commissioner of the Philippine Pavilion.

Since 2014, country participation in Venice Biennale is being managed by the NCCA's Philippine Arts in Venice Biennale Coordinating Committee (PAVB-CC) under the NCCA Office of Deputy Executive Director for Operations Bernan Joseph R. Corpuz. It directly coordinates with the Office of the NCCA Chairman. PAVB-CC is tasked with the planning and implementation of all the activities of the PAVB Project, from Open Call to the homecoming exhibition. It plans and implements all the activities relative to the participation of the Philippines in Biennale Arte and Biennale Architettura of La Biennale di Venezia, including the whole cycle of:the launching of an Open Call for Curatorial Proposals; deliberation and selection of the official entry to La Biennale; production of the Exhibition; shipment to Venice; the mounting of the exhibition at the Philippine Pavilion in Venice; the opening and the management of the exhibition for at least six months.

Within the six-month run of the exhibition to the public, collateral activities are planned in close coordination with the curators and exhibitors, and implemented in the Philippines, Venice, Italy, and other parts of the globe. PAVB-CC proceeds to prepare and implement the exhibition's *finissage*, closing, packing, and shipping of the exhibition back to the Philippines. The PAVB-CC work extends to the preparation and mounting of a homecoming exhibition in the Philippines.

With the lean core team composed of: Aurea Brigino Lopez (Head, PAVB-CC); Manuel Agustin Z. Singson (Exhibition Manager); Jeanne Melissa R. Severo (Overall Coordinator); and, Ana Lorraine I. Manalaysay (support staff), the PAVB-CC structure expands, depending on the tasks at hand. Public education program, PR, and social media concerns are handled by Bai Salina Pendatun-Ilagan. All the tasks in Venice are accomplished in collaboration with Darwin Gutierrez (Venice-based Coordinator and Head Docent). Dr. Patrick D. Flores, Project Adviser, provides the creative direction to all PAVB-CC works.

Since 2017, and due to the increasing number of activities, the PAVB has sought the partnership of organizations to co-implement all its activities. For the preparatory phase of the past and current editions, PAVB-CC partnered with the Metropolitan Museum of Manila Foundation Inc. (Met Foundation). With the guidance of President Tina Colayco, the Met Foundation team is composed of Nelda Sansaet (Director for Administration), and Nicole Anne Mojica (Accounting Officer). The entire Met Foundation is mobilized and in full force to implement the PAVB activities.

The PAVB Coordinating Committee (PAVB-CC) directly coordinates with the Office of Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda, with the continued and generous support of Kristine Sheree Mangunay. The support of Secretary Amenah Pangandaman of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is significant to the Project.

In carrying out this important undertaking in Venice, the PAVB-CC collaborates with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), specifically with the Philippine Embassy in Rome, currently under Hon. Ambassador Nathaniel G. Imperial, and with the Philippine Consulate General in Milan through Consul General Elmer G. Cato.






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MANILA OBSERVATORY Jose Ramon Villarin, S.J. Anne Stephanie Nilo Mariel T. Uy Randell Teodoro and the staff

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Celine Joy Siy Jose Tence-Ruiz Joanne Valebia Jun Villalon

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It could only be the nurturing spirit of Bundok Banahaw (Mt. Banahaw) that cradled us through the entire process of realizing the *Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito / Waiting just behind the curtain of this age*, the Philippine exhibition at the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. In full reverence, we deeply offer our sincerest gratitude to the famed, mythical, and mystical Mt. Banahaw. It is in the same spirit that we truly thank the exceptional partnership of Carlos Quijon, Jr., curator and Mark Salvatus, the featured artist of the Philippine Pavilion. We were comforted, at the same time awed by their brilliance, dedication, humility, and most of all, their respect towards Mt. Banahaw. We especially thank Mark Salvatus, for sharing his work, his stories, as well as stories from his hometown, Lucban, Quezon, through his meaningful works. Quijon Jr. and Salvatus's partnership has prompted us to revisit the life of Hermano Puli, a folk hero from Lucban, Quezon.

This nexus of this exhibition is Mt. Banahaw, and in this light, we greatly appreciate the support of PASu Josephine Barrion of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) CALABARZON, Protected Area Management Office, and to the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) of Mt. Banahaw-San Cristobal Protected Landscape-for giving the PAVB the opportunity to present the project and for their kind permission to conduct a video shoot in Mt. Banahaw de Lucban. We extend our gratitude to the Southern Luzon State University, whose professors offered their invaluable insights on Mt. Banahaw and Lucban during the exploratory phase of the project in Lucban. We express our special gratitude to Dr. Francisco N. Beltran, Head of Mt. Banahaw Protection and Conservation Unit; he brought together the PAVB team and DENR CALABARZON and informed us of the process entailed in seeking permission. We thank Dr. Beltran for being with us every single moment of the shoot at the foot of Mt. Banahaw de Lucban. His generosity and care will remain in our hearts. Thank you to the rest of the SLSU team who facilitated the Memorandum of Agreement between NCCA and SLSU, which engages both institutions to further research on Mt. Banahaw, Hermano Puli and Lucban: Dr. Nicanor L. Guinto, Director, Office of Research Services; Dr. Shiela M. Manzanilla, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; and Prof. Brian D. Villarde, CAS Research Coordinator. We also grateful to the frangers who assisted our visit: Necitas Salumbides, Vevencio Abrigo Jr., Efren Narinay Jr., Nomuel John Cadao, Leogin Salvan, and Joshua Saludes.

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We give our most sincere appreciation to the esteemed Lucbanin musicians who participated in the video work: Vincent Villaverde, Edson E. Babat, Dexter I. Igloria, Leonardo Vito, Jose Mari Abulad, and Catherine Abulad, whose contributions were crucial to the exhibition.

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We thank the National Archives of the Philippines (NAP): headed by Victorino Mapa Manalo, for giving the team access to the Hermano Puli exhibition in Villa Escudero set-up by the NAP, which greatly aided in enriching the research for the exhibition content: Von E. Abella; Maureen Janet G. Mercado, Supervising Records Management Analyst; Aileen S. Vergonio, Archivist II; and Reina Fatima B. Gongon, Archivist I. The Escudero Private Museum likewise allowed our team to view the exhibition in person and experience Hermano Puli's *lakaran*. All the materials were later acquired by the PAVB from NAP to be used in the catalog and video work. Thank you to Aaron Escudero, Group Head of Sales & Marketing of the museum; and to Koko P. Pataunia, Cultural Heritage Preservation Office-Tayabas, who accommodated the PAVB during a short visit in Tayabas, and shared what he knew about Hermano Puli and his life and demise in Tayabas, and who also provided the team with reading materials on Puli.

The challenge of exhibition mock-up, realized for a limited period from Dec. 16 to 21, 2023, was magically accomplished through the dedication and hard work of Renz Sevilla, the foremost Stage Manager, in cooperation with his equally hardworking team: Dexter Hernandez, Roldan Espino, Rolly Bobis, Amado Bonifacio, Richard Galvero, Lardz Gonzales. Jerry Glory, Vilmer Reyes, and Jhomar Dela Cruz. Similarly, we are thankful to Jason Sangtiago, a musician who generously shared his expertise and doing urgent tasks during mock-up, and Ab Turejas for being our all around go-to person. Heartfelt appreciation is extended to Elver Bañares, the head and director of the documentation team for generously sharing his creativity. We thank his team, King Juanico, Prince Kenneth Rufino, and Alexis Bacallo.

During the course of the exhibition mock-up, the presence and guidance of John Brian de Asis was very comforting. We thank Brian and the rest of the exhibition design team, Lucas Mangulabnan and Jose Ibarra Cunanan. We recognize the talent and effort of Maria Teresa Baroso, for delivering the best sound design possible during the mock-up; and Ian Carlo Jaucian, for his efficient installation of all technical components of the sound.

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As with any project of this scale, the PAVB Coordinating Committee relied on the guidance and support of all concerned offices at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). We deeply appreciate the support of: NCCA Chairman Victorino Mapa Manalo; Executive Director Oscar G. Casaysay; Deputy Executive Director for Operations Bernan Joseph R. Corpuz; and, Deputy Executive Director for Administration and Support Services Marichu G. Tellano. The helping hand of each officer and staff member significantly contributed to ease the tedious government process that the Project needed to go through: Ms. Susan Dayao (administrative head); Sherlyn G. Tan (GAA head), Mhaja Tabili, JC Equipaje, and Ruth Penullar (GAA); Herencio Y. Llapitan (chief accountant); Marites Pitalbo and Marilyn Estrella (NEFCA); Ms. Lourdes Musngi, Ms. Loida Olegario, Aaron Veloso and Jun King B. Mendoza (OC); Emma Parada, Magz Dimalanta (OED); Atty. Jose Vincenzo Vizcarra Jeremiah Mallari (Legal Office); Mariel Nini, Klauden Serrano, and LA Manansala (SRICAO); Teresa Jarabelo, Sharry Talens, Karlo Cleofas, Vanny Banico, and Vanessa Yu (Cashier's Office); and, Johnny Mendoza and Catherine Salvador (Admin). Special thanks to Renee Talavera (Head, CCTAS) for sharing their office space with us.

We deeply appreciate the warm partnership of the Metropolitan Museum of Manila Foundation and its very efficient team: President Florentina Colayco; Nelda I. Sansaet (Director for Administration); Ian Kenneth Gines (Deputy Director for Exhibition Programs and Operations); and, Nicole Mojica (Accounting Officer).

Despite the innumerable tasks, the professional guidance and coordination of La Biennale di Venezia through Arch. Manuela Luca-Dazio and Micol Saleri is constantly and patiently extended, for which we are deeply grateful. Appreciation is accorded as well to our efficient partners in Venice: We Exhibit Srl led by President Giovani Dantomio and his team composed of Tommaso Sartori, Anna Scoretti, Susanna Busatta, and Luana Sitta, who ensured that the exhibition is mounted at the Philippine Pavilion efficiently and on time; and Interlinea Srl through Barbara De Zorzi, Fine Arts and Exhibition Manager. Special thanks to Andrea D' Altoe whose boundless support to the Philippine Pavilion has gone beyond work assignments.

We sincerely appreciate the round-the-clock effort and talent of Dino Brucelas in accomplishing all our design and lay-out needs. Our confidence to print all essays in the catalog is drawn from the competent copyediting of Thelma Arambulo, whom we appreciate for having been our copyeditor since 2015. Likewise, we sincerely acknowledge the encouraging energy of Karen Capino, Loen Vitto, Mark Cabrera, and Mikka Cabangon.

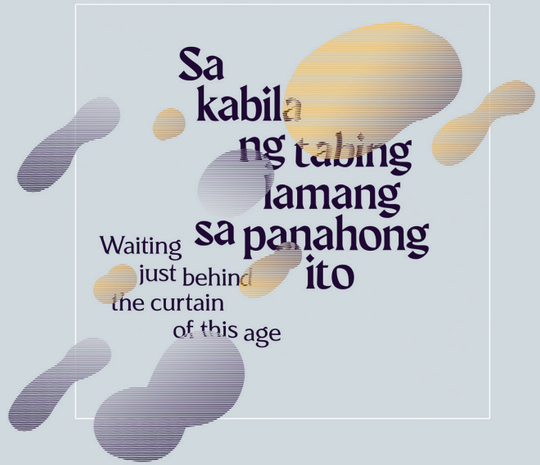
We recognize and acknowledge the warm support of Kristine Sheree Mangunay. We are truly grateful to Secretary Amenah Pangandaman of the Department of Budget Management (DBM), and to LBRMO Director General Eireen Palanca, and Reza Ruedas for their recognition of the significance of the Philippine participation in Venice Biennale. This recognition is very inspiring.

Our adviser, Dr. Patrick Flores has remained our strength, our guide and our light through the course of the implementation period, from the Open Call to the realization of each edition of the Philippine participation at Venice Biennale platforms. His intelligence, wit and sense of humor keep us alive and going (physically and intellectually).

We are grateful for the cooperation of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), for its partnership and support through the years. We especially acknowledge the support of PCG Milan and PE Rome. We appreciate the warm support of the Filipino communities in Venice, headed by President Quintin Malinay. Our sincerest appreciation to Darwin Gutierrez, Venice-based Coordinator, and Fe Corpuz for making Venice our home during the Biennale, where we can work happily, efficiently, and productively. The support of all the officers and members of the Filipino communities in Italy is highly appreciated.

Lastly, and most importantly, we give our deepest gratitude to our principal supporter, Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda, for her steadfast commitment to advancing cultural work locally and internationally. Her trust given to NCCA-PAVB-CC is cherished dearly in our hearts.

We thank and honor the Supreme Creator! *Ang kumikilala ay tunay na pinagpapala!*



ABOUT THE IDENTITY

Carlos Quijon, Jr. and Alexandra Paredes

AN ASSEMBLY OF AMORPHOUS BLOBS recurs throughout the Pavilion and its collateral materials. The blobs allude to cloud formations, droplets of water, or else graphic representations of small stones. Adding texture to these amorphous blobs, an overlay of moiré is used. Moiré is a pattern of repeating horizontal lines that disrupts how light travels and is typically used for analog animation through optical illusion. Throughout materials related to the Pavilion, these blobs transform and play out a range of design dispositions: clouds float across spaces (as in the catalog cover), droplets leave marks on surfaces (on the inside pages), stones displace textual material (as footnotes). In some instances, this design element becomes all three at once. The moiré translates the potential of Puli's *tabing* into graphic terms: as the moiré cloud hovers across texts and images it transforms them—interrupting our typical ways of apprehending them.

Unlike the usual approach to visual identity that relies on a singular image, the design for the visual identity of the exhibition *Sa kabila ng tabing lamang sa panahong ito / Waiting just beyond the curtain of this age* offers a metamorphic motif that recurs in different guises throughout. In considering the aspirations of the Pavilion itself as an encompassing scenography, the conceptualization of a visual identity as motif presents a compelling conversation. Motifs are atmospheric. They exist alongside and surrounding material, constituting an ambience, a mood, a milieu. In this sense they are environmental. Instead of creating a conspicuous central image around which all visual elements revolve, the exhibition identity leans into an amorphous and ever formative ornament, transforming in relation to the context in which it finds itself.

