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Puruyanan: The Waray Concept of Home in Selected Poems of Victor N. Sugbo

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Abstract

To examine how puruyanan, the Waray concept of home, is integral to the overall poetics of Victor N. Sugbo, this study appropriates Prospero R. Covar's concept of kapaligiran which is composed of three realms—namely kalikasan or the natural realm, the cultural realm, and the supernatural realm—as constituent parts of puruyanan. The Waray and English self-translations of the poems are read side by side and treated as liminal reflections that create a translucent layer of poetics. This layer together with the analysis of the works that are solely written in English as an innate bilingual text, enriches knowledge that emerges from the in-between space of Waray and English. What manifests in the examination, through situating the poems in a specific realm, are the many distinct articulations of the Waray for home. Kalikasan is often a space for solace. The cultural realm highlights the importance of relationships and interrelationships. And the supernatural realm is a sacred realm.

Keywords: *bilingual, home, kapaligiran, puruyanan, space*

Introduction

Waray literature, according to literary critic Ma. Luz C. Vilches (1982), is primarily poetry. Although there have been attempts at fiction writing in Waray, they remain underdeveloped (Alunan, 2015). Due to the lack of publications interested in other forms of writing in Leyte and Samar, Waray literature has been predominantly poetry. Early recordings of Waray poetry—those produced before and during the Spanish period until the mid-twentieth century—are characterized by its lyricism, adaptability to music, and performativity. Early forms of Waray poetry like the *ambahan, bical, sidai, parahan,* and *awit* were all performed for specific occasions (Vilches, 1982). These early form of Waray poetry was specifically "addressed to ears rather than to the eyes" (Luangco, 1982), having been performed in special occasions.

Waray poetry also exhibits a fine sensibility and keen sensitivity to the natural environment. Portrayals of colors, sound, and characteristics of birds are evident in many Waray poems (Luangcom 1982). There are several Waray poems that portray a deep love for home vividly drawing images that particularly refer to places and sensorial experiences in Leyte and Samar. Take the folk song "Isla han Samar" for example ("Lyrics of Isla han Samar [A Waray Song], *nd.*). The song enumerates cities, provinces, and towns in Samar and ends with a verse that asserts the persona's love of the place, saying that it is his land of birth and becoming. There is also the song "An Iroy nga Tuna" by Illuminado Lucente (1982) which depicts the motherland as a place so comforting and joyous but pitiful because it became slave to colonizers. The song ends with a verse affirming the importance of

unity so that people may never be enslaved again. In both Waray songs, the line "*tuna nga matam-is pagpuyan"* (land so sweet to call home) is found. The unaffixed word of "*pagpuyan*" is "*puruyanan"*, the root word being *puyo* or stay. The Waray refer to home as puruyanan*,* implying permanence in the living and dwelling space.

This study is primarily interested in examining Waray poems through the lens of *puruyanan* rendered through *kapaligiran,* employing it as an integral concept in reading Waray literature*.* Of the many Waray poems, works from *Inintokan* (2004), *Taburos han Dagat* (2014), and *Poems from Ground Z* (2021) by Victor N. Sugbo were selected for this study. This decision is driver by the researcher's felt need to provide translations of the poems written in Waray and what better translations to use than the self-translations by the author himself.

Literature Review

Since this study is concerned with reading Waray poetry through the concept of puruyanan, this literature review foregrounds previous studies on space in relation to home and previous studies on Waray literature. This literature review is divided into three parts. The first is Problematizing "scape". This part discusses studies that examines why *kapaligiran* is the appropriate framework to be used in studying spaces. It explores how it positions the discourse of literary analysis from an insider's perspective as opposed to Western frameworks such as landscape and islandscape which examine the study only in an ocular and distant perspective. The second part is titled Locating the Waray concept of Home. The essays in this part present facts about Waray food, drinking, and economic conditions which elucidate how there has not been a massive migration of the Waray outside of Eastern Visayas. The third section presents studies that discuss Waray poetics and situates Sugbo's poems in the Waray literary landscape as well as the Philippine literary landscape.

Problematizing "scape"

In "Landscape: Between Place and Space", Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon (1995) asserts that the notion of "landscape" serves as a standard framing device for analysis in considering a people's worldview, a sort of pictographic methodology of representing or symbolizing the surroundings of a community. The essay explains how a landscape can be used as a framing convention which informs the way the anthropologist brings his or her study into 'view' of particular people living in a specific place. Hirsch and O'Hanlon draw two aspects of landscape based on its conventional description in painting—the foreground and the background. The former presents the social life of a culture while the latter shows an ideal imagined existence, vaguely connected to, but still separate from everyday life.

Deeming the notion of landscape as an inappropriate framework in studying cultures residing, Ioannis N. Vogiatzakis, Maria Zomeni, and A.M. Mannion (2017) in their essay "Characterizing Islandscapes: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges Exemplified in the Mediterranean", assert that the only term which encompasses all constituent components of an island in a holistic manner, inclusive of seascapes and cultural impacts, is islandscape. In the essay, Vogiatzakis et al. (2017) categorize an island as a space that reflects a degree of isolation from the mainland. The sea becomes an explicit component in landscape characterization of any islands because it is both a barrier separating the island from the mainland and a conduit, becoming a catalyst of trade, and cultural exchange. "However, more often than not, this is neglected, and a piece of land on an island is characterized in the same manner as if it belonged to a mainland" (Vogiatzakis et al., 2017).

Using islandscape as a framework to examine the cultural impacts of super typhoon Yolanda in Eastern Visayas is Joycie Y. Dorado Alegre (2017) in her essay "Ethnopoetics of Resilience: Haiyan/Yolanda Ground Zero Philippines". Dorado Alegre's perspective oscillates between that of the onlooker and looked on—the perspective of a researcher and the perspective of people affected by the typhoon—through the concept of islandscape. Implied in her discussion is the absence of an English word that can fully capture an insider's point of view while remaining objective:

> For the purpose of this study viewing Haiyan ground zero, I would consider the concept of 'islandscape' as an appropriate lens of perception – as a countertext to the vagaries of political dynamics in discourse in life. But the islandscape ceases to be a "scape" when we shift position in the conduct of discourse, when the viewer is no longer a viewer but an actor/actress/ or agent in that world of ground zero. When the lens is minimized if not removed because one is of and in that world and not just being immersed in it (Dorado-Alegre, 2017).

In his essay titled "Words that Speak Worlds", Edilberto N. Alegre (1993) notes that English is a language of responsibilities and Filipino is a language of relationships. There is no existing word in English that can capture the standpoint when the study is positioned from the inside of a culture. Perhaps this absence has limited the Western framework to still use "scape" in examining spaces.

Dorado-Alegre (2017) elaborates on how spirituality and matters of the sacred are important to the people who reside in the space devastated by the typhoon. This part of her essay echoes two important points from Vogiatzakis et al. (2017)—islandscape reflecting people-environment interdependence as well as islandscape combining the physical environment and the human imprint .Using islandscape as an appropriate framework assumes the existence of the physical space and the cultural space, both interacting elements that fashion a clear picture of the islandscape.

Anthropologists, Prospero R. Covar (1998) in his essay "Laro at Kultura" presents the Filipino sense of space which does not just constitute the physical space and cultural space. Concomitantly, Covar's postulation of the Filipino sense of space addresses the limitation of islandscape in capturing the study positioned from the inside of a culture. According to Covar, there are three parts of *kapaligiran*. The first is the physical realm or the *kalikasan* which consists of three elements, namely animals, plants, and scapes. The second is the cultural realm where beliefs, faiths, and man-made things and objects reside. And the third is the supernatural realm where spirits are located.

Unlike landscape and islandscape, *kapaligiran* allows a cultural purview of an insider, so he no longer needs to oscillate between the point of view of the onlooker and looked-upon as Dorado-Alegre (2017) deems appropriate. *Kapaligiran* warrants the acknowledgement of beings in the supernatural realm, which are mentioned in the poems analyzed in this study.

Locating the Waray Concept of Home

To better understand the Waray concept of Home, a survey of cultural essays about the Waray is used in this section. Edilberto N. Alegre (2020) close reads the Waray folk song "Daw Nasusunog" in his essay titled "Getting to Know A Culture". Alegre's analysis enumerates a pattern of images that describe *kalikasan.* He argues that each image alludes to the behavior of the natural environment in everyday life. Alegre declares that the images are all directed towards the notion of going home.

Alegre (2020) also discusses in the essay how there is no massive migration of the Waray to anywhere unlike the Ilonggo, Ilokano, Cebuano, and other Visayan neighbors. Using food and drinking as cultural domain in exploring this fact, Alegre elaborates on the Waray value of mildness and balance in the essay. He first deconstructs the Waray dish *lawot-lawot,* pointing out how the dish uses only one herb—sweet basil or *sangig* in Waray, exhibiting the satisfaction of using limited ingredients. The taste of *lawot-lawot* gravitates towards the bland unlike the strong and densely concentrated flavors of the Ilocano *pait* (bitterness), the Bicol *anghang* (spicy), and the Tagalog *asim* (sour) (Alegre, 2020).

Alegre (2020) cross checks this tentative theory, the elaboration of mildness with the Waray vocabulary for drunkenness. There are a variety of words in Waray for the drinker's physical state: *patal* or *raol* means tired of so much drinking; *nalanglang* means "near one's limit"; *rigrig* means that the drinker moves and walks in zigzags; *nadaros* means the drinker is at a stage of trouble making; and *hubog* means that the drink has gone to the drinkers head, unable to comprehend anything or make sense of anything that is happening (Alegre, 2020).

Both the aesthetics of the Waray cuisine and the various terms for a drinker's physical state are highly elaborate. Both cultural domains in the Waray context manifest importance of quality and not amount, putting importance on the degree. The Waray value balance; *sakto la* they would express. No push for more or excess because that is imbalance.

In another essay titled "Tracking the Cebuano Trail", Alegre (2020) cites how the Osmeña Colony Act of 1912 seduced Visayans to migrated to Mindanao. Because the Americans could not pacify Mindanao, Alegre (2020) argues, they conceived of sponsoring a massive immigration of Visayans to Mindanao. Visayan families who opted to migrate were assured of a house, a carabao, a plow, food until the first harvest, seedlings, free schooling for the children, free medical care, and sixteen hectares of land (Alegre, 20200. In "Getting to Know A Culture", Alegre (2020) notes that the Waray did not migrate to Mindanao when the Osmeña Colony Act of 1912 was enacted. "By the time these migrations were taking place, which was from 1912 onward, Samar and Leyte already had a highly elaborated culture that did not emphasize nor depend upon material wealth. Neither did it push people to acquire more of what they already had" (Alegre, 2020).

There has been no massive migration of the Waray to anywhere outside of Eastern Visayas. Even with the seduction of the Osmeña Colony Act to migrate, promising better economic stature, the Waray did not do so. Perhaps because the Waray value balance—*sakto la*—they were not enticed by what the Osmeña Colony Act promised. Perhaps they were satisfied of what the flaura and fauna of Leyte and Samar provided for them and perhaps because they simply did not want to leave their homes.

Waray Poetics

In her essay titled "A Preliminary Survey of Waray Writing", Vilches (1982) argues that Waray literature is primarily poetry. She notes several local periodicals like Eco de Samar y Leyte, An Lantawan, and Leyte Shimbun existent in the early twentieth century that were mainly interested in Waray poetry. Majority of the poems produced in these periodicals dealt with an existential persona, loneliness, love, and solidarity. Few poems from the 1900s to the 1950's was published and only few innovations in poetry were made. Although the publications allowed Waray poetry to finally see print after years of oral practice, the development of the artform "has been like slow-flowing current" from

1900 to the 1950's (Vilches, 1982).

Vilches (1982) points out that the lack of sustainable publications that were interested in Waray poetry prompted a lot of poets and Waray writers to publish their own books (Vilches, 1982). This argument of Vilches is seconded by Merlie M. Alunan in her Foreword to *Sa Atong Dila: Introduction to Visayan Literature* (2015) where she suspects that fiction writing remains underdeveloped probably because of the lack of publication platforms. Agreeing with Alunan is Michael Carlo Villas (2017) in his essay "The Language Issue in the Evolution of the Siday" (2017) where he notes that fiction writing in Waray only became predominant in the latter twentieth century, citing that local papers and other periodicals were becoming more and more interested in prose forms written in languages from the regions.

Vilches (1982) cites Francisco Ignacio Alzina in her essay, enumerating six Waray poetic forms that Alzina recorded in the 17th century. There was the *ambahan*, a two blank verse in heptasyllabic meter sung during fiestas; the bical, same structural pattern like the *ambahan* but differed in intent, usually sang by a duo who performed in a satiric fashion with a strict musical time for one or two hours; the *sidai*, now known as the *siday*, was the most difficult of compositions, sung with an irregular meter often repeating long phrases; the *parahan,* a poetic form performed to mourn the dead; and the *awit*, composed of two verses without rhyme in a couplet and sung by fisherfolk to the rhythm of the oars (Vilches, 1982). Of the six poetic forms, Vilches (1982) notes that only the *siday* evolved from the oral form to the written form. Villas (2017) explains that the freedom from a strict meter and the catering to various themes allowed the transformation of the *siday* on the page. "With the coming of the Spanish colonizers, the Roman alphabet may have enabled the transformation of the siday into written form," (Villas, 2017). Today, as Villas (2017) claims, the siday is the generic terms term for Waray poetry.

Vilches (1982) notes that early Waray poetry was characterized by its adaptability to music. Agreeing with Vilches (1982) is Gregorio C. Luangco (1982) in his Introduction to Part Three of *Waray Literature: An Anthology of Leyte-Samar Writings* where asserts that Waray poetry has been written with musical scores. Luangco (1982) also notes that the kind of music rendered is happy and optimistic since "the Waray live in a world with little want" (Luangco, 1982). Luangco (1982) includes folk songs and songs composed by Waray writers like Illuminado Lucente and Norberto Romualdez, Sr. in the anthology. In the Introduction to Part One of the same book, Luangco (1982) notes that the Waray in the 18th until the 20th century, like other Filipinos, were not much concerned with preserving their writings because these were "addressed specifically to the ears rather than to the eyes".

The inclusion of these works show how Waray poetry is musical, performative, and occasional. The six Waray poetic forms Vilches (1982) mentions of Alzina's recording have structural patterns meant to be rendered for a specific occasion with a given theme: the *ambahan* during fiesta, the bical for romantic exchanges, the *parahan* for mourning. Because the poems were performed during specific occasions, they needed to be lyrical to capture and retain the attention of the audience.

In his essay "To the Very End of Our Islands", Edilberto N. Alegre (2020) claims that based on his many years of research, dance, music, literature, and theater are one comprehensive art form in the field, unlike the Western concept of art which studies these disciplines independently from each other. Luangco's curation of *Waray Literature: An Anthology of Leyte-Samar Writings* (1982) is a testament to Alegre's proposition. The inclusion of folk songs and compositions of Illuminado

Lucente and Norberto Romualdez, Sr. in a literary anthology show how literature is closely related to its music in Waray culture.

Luangco's edited collection is the only book that presents a comprehensive periodization of Waray literature. The book is divided into three parts. Part One, Folk and Pre-Colonial Period includes the literature before the Spaniards came to the Philippines. Several songs included in this part "show the Waray's interest in the different aspects of their natural environment such as the colors, songs, and characteristics of bird" (Luangco, 1982). Part Two, Spanish-American Period includes the literary works written from the Spanish era (from 1521 to 1900) to the American era (from 1900 to 1946). The range of topics in this part covered topics like Philippine tradition, history, religion, philosophy, literature, art, government, and politics (Luangco, 1982). Part Three, Modern Period includes the post-war literary works up to the 1980s. Works included in this part are characterized by the writer's innermost feeling and emotions as well as strong personal belief about life, love, death, and faith.

Although there are other anthologies on Waray literature, none have attempted to periodize or establish distinct common characteristics of Waray poetry like *Waray Literature: An Anthology of Leyte-Samar Writings* (1982) does. For instance, *Tinipigan: An Anthology of Waray Literature* (1995) edited by Victor N. Sugbo only arranges the works according to year of publication; if they were unpublished, according to the year they were written. And if they were orally performed, according to the year they were recorded. No establishment of common characteristics are made by the editor. Other anthologies on Waray literature published after 1995— *Lunop: Haiyan Voices and Images* (2015) edited by Joycie Y. Dorado Alegre, Daryll Delgado, and Phil Harold L. Mercurio; *Sa Atong Dila: Introduction to Visayan Literature* (2015) by Merlie M. Alunan; *Susumaton: Oral Narratives of Leyte* (2016) edited by Merlie M. Alunan; *Our Memory of Water: Words After Haiyan* (2016) edited by Merlie M. Alunan; *Tinalunay: Hinugpong nga panurat nga Winaray* (2017) edited by Merlie M. Alunan; and *Pinili: 15 Years of Lamiraw* (2019) edited by Merlie M. Alunan, Aivee C. Badulid, and Phil Harold L. Mercurio—also appeared to only collect works written in Waray. Some of these anthologies had common themes to thread the works included in their respective books but no comparative literary analysis was made. Merlie M. Alunan, editor of several Waray anthologies in the twenty-first century, in her essay "Latitudes of Intimacy: Waray Writing and National Writing" (2016), comments on the subject matter. According to Alunan (2016), the primary concern of many writers and scholars from the regions is to make their presence felt in the Philippine literary landscape, rather than establish an evolution and transformation of the literature from the respective regions. The lack of publications that caters to Waray writing today hinders the updating of Luangco's periodization.

While Waray poetry lacks an updated periodization, it is important to reiterate that Luangco (1982) characterized indigenous Waray literature to show different aspects of the Waray's natural environment, having keen observations of colors, songs, and characteristics of birds. Edilberto N. Alegre (2008) in "Subterfuge of Simplicity" his critical review of Victor N. Sugbo's *Inintokan* (2008), substantiates Luangco's claim. In the review, Alegre (2008) points out that Sugbo discusses "the ordinary, the everyday, the quotidian" with a kind of subterfuge. Alegre (2008) notes that a lot of the poems have a keen observation to detail, such as the formation of cloud when the persona looks at Amandewing Mountain Range, the blue waters of Cancabato Bay, and taste and smell of *paksiw* at the dining table. These observations are not fantastic nor 'otherly'; what makes them great is their subtle turn at the end, where the emotions of the persona are fleshed out, may it be sexual undertones, longing for home, or a comic anecdote. "It is the angle of seeing as simply fugacious with grace – and worthy of our remembering: the everyday becomes, is more than just the quotidian" (Alegre, 2008).

While Waray poetry lacks an updated periodization, there are two postulates about it asserted in Luangco's anthology: it is lyrical and can easily be adaptable to music. Equally notable is Vilches (1982) mention of the *siday* being orally performed during special occasions. Sugbo's poems follow this poetic tradition. His poems, as analyzed by Alegre (2008), discuss the ordinary with a subterfuge propelled by the enclosure of a different perspective of the everyday.

Methodology

In the early 1900s when the Philippines was a colony of the United States, Cebu and neighboring Visayan islands were burgeoning populations. The American government could not subjugate Mindanao because of its fierce indigenous warriors. To conquer Mindanao's fertile and mineral rich lands, they decided to take advantage of the overpopulation of people in Visayas as an opportunity to enter Mindanao. An act was passed in 1912 that sponsored massive immigration of Visayans to Mindanao known as the Osmeña Colony Act of 1912. The act provided Visayan immigrants free passage to Mindanao, a house, sixteen hectares of land, a carabao, a plow, seedlings, school for the children, free medical care, and food until the first harvest came in. The first "colonists" were tailors, carpenters, masons, fishermen—low middle-class, if not impoverished Cebuano who dreamt of owning land and having better opportunities. The children of these immigrants became professionals in Mindanao. Some third-generation Visayan immigrant even became politicians (Alegre, 2020).

In the book *Biyaheng Pinoy – A Mindanao Travelogue*, author Edilberto N. Alegre (2020) takes account of how the Maguindanao speak Ilocano in Kabacan, North Cotabato. It is considered the unofficial lingua franca there. Similarly, the second language and unofficial lingua franca of South Cotabato is Ilonggo. Binisaya is spoken in all public places and gatherings in Mindanao. There are also Boholano communities in Surigao del Norte and Valencia, Bukidnon. But nowhere in Mindanao is there a 100 percent Waray-speaking sitio or barangay; neither is there a Waray-only community in Luzon (Alegre, 2020). While neighboring Visayan communities migrated to Mindanao, the Waray remained in their homeland, Leyte and Samar. In Alegre's words, "To date, there has never been a massive migration of Waray to anywhere" (Alegre, 2020). By the time that the migrations prompted by the Osmeña Act were happening, The Waray already had "a highly elaborate culture that did not emphasize nor depend upon material wealth" (Alegre, 2020).

To explain the kind he describes, Alegre (2020) uses two cultural domains—food and drinking. The highly elaborate culture that did not depend on material wealth is embodied in the Waray dish *lawot-lawot* and the Waray vocabulary for drunkenness. Both cultural domains exhibit relishing of mildness and moderateness, an integral concept in explaining the Waray concept of home and understanding why there is no massive migration of the Waray to anywhere.

Lawot-lawot is a purely vegetable dish that uses only one herb—sweet basil or sangig. The taste of lawot-lawot is bland, mild, in fact. The Waray dislike strong and densely concentrated flavors like the *pait* of the Ilocano, the *anghang* of the Bicolano, and the *asim* of the Tagalog *sinigang* as Alegre (2020) noted. Alegre (2020) compared this mildness with the Waray vocabulary for drunkenness: *patal* or *raol* ("tired of so much drinking"); *nalanglang* ("near one's limit"); *rigrig* ("zigzagging because of drunkenness"); *hubog* ("the drink has gone to the drinker's head"); and *nadaros* ("the drinker is at a stage of making trouble"). Like the taste of *lawot-lawot*, drinking should be mild. It has to be *sakto la,* just right, moderate.

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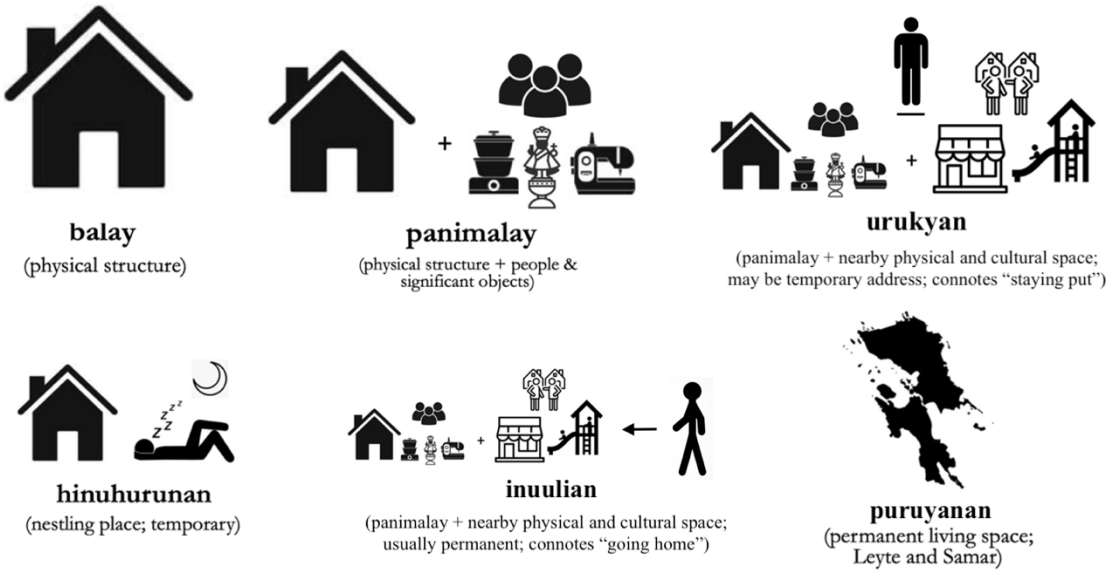
"Indeed, Samar and Leyte do not produce surpluses—no surplus products, no surplus money. They [the Waray] do not generate cash, in fact. So, they are poor. Yet people have stayed put" (Alegre, 2020). The Osmeña Act did not push the people of Eastern Visayas to acquire more of what they already had even if the opportunity to migrate in Mindanao meant a better economic stature for them. As embodied by the *lawot-lawot* and the various words for drinking, the Waray value moderateness. The Waray are satisfied with what the flora and fauna of Leyte and Samar provide for them. "What they had was enough for them. Excess was terrible no-no. A sin" (Alegre, 2020).

There is a slew of Waray words pertaining to living and dwelling place, each nuanced in either scope, time, movement, temporariness, or permanence. This Waray vocabulary for living and dwelling place expounds why the Waray did not have a massive migration to date. The concepts embedded in each word for living and dwelling place describes the Waray concept of home and shows why Eastern Visayas is the only place the Waray consider home.

Figure 1. Waray concept of home (scope, time, movement, temporariness, permanence)



The Waray word for house is *balay*. It implies a detachment of the speaker from the space and pertains only to the physical structure. *Panimalay* includes the people that live in the house and significant objects inside the physical structure such as the altar and kitchen ware (house + people and significant objects). *Urukyan* and *inuulian* extend the livable space outside of the house and includes nearby physical and cultural spaces. *Urukyan* and *inuulian* generally pertain to the same spatial construct in terms of scope. Although both terms are used loosely, they differ in terms of movement, temporariness, and permanence. The root word of *urukyan* is *ukoy* meaning "stay put". The root word of inuulian is *uli* meaning "go home". A student from Hernani who lives temporarily in an apartment in Tacloban to study can say "*Naukoy ak ha Naga-naga*" I live in Naga-naga, and "*Nauli ak ha Naga-naga*" I go home to Naga-naga. The latter does not necessarily mean Naga-naga is his home. It simply implies he has felt "at home" in Naga-naga and that is where he stays in Tacloban. In Hernani, he does not say "*Mauli na ak ha Tacloban*" I will go home to Tacloban. It simply feels wrong because Hernani is his hometown. Instead, he says, "*Makadto na ak ha Tacloban*", I'll go to Tacloban now. Depending on which place someone considers his hometown and the circumstances when he is

asked, one distinguishes where he goes home, *uli. Huron* is a verb that means to spend the night over. *Hinuhurunan*, a noun formed through the affixation of *huron,* "is a nestling place, or what the Badjao call 'mooring place' where one goes to sleep or spend the night over" (Alegre, 2020). One may spend the night over at a friend or relative's house. *Didi la ak anay kanda Maring mahuron.* I'll just spend the night over here at Maring's house. Thus, *huron* may not necessarily be where one lives, unlike *ukoy* or *uli*. *Huron* is a temporary space where one spends the night over and rests. Lastly, there is *puruyanan*. The last lines of the folksong *"*Isla han Samar*"* say *isla han Samar nga akon natawhan / tuna nga matamis pagpuy-an*—island of Samar, the place of my becoming / land so sweet to call home. *Puruyanan* is where one's *balay* and *panimalay* are. It is where one lives, *ukoy*, where one sleeps, *huron*, and where one goes home, *uli*. It is not a temporary dwelling place nor is it confined only to the physical structure. *Puruyanan* implies a sense of permanence in space that one calls home. Only Leyte and Samar are considered as the *puruyanan* of the Waray.

Puruyanan is the Waray concept of home integral to the reading of the poems examined in this study. In the Author's Notes to *Inintokan* (2008), the writer said he wrote the poems in Ormoc, inspired by his frequent bus trips to the city. The writer notes: the poems in this collection were "things that whirred in [my] mind as trees and houses quietly faded away from my bus window" (Sugbo, 2008). Although written in Ormoc, they either mention or talk about a different place in Leyte and Samar. In the Preface to *Taburos han Dagat* (2014), Sugbo (2014) notes that the poems were all about his home, his country, and places of memory. Because all poems in the collection were written in Egypt, a sense of distance from the homeland is felt in the texts. In *Poems from Ground Z* (2021), Sugbo (2021) recounts how he salvaged some of his manuscripts in the aftermath of super typhoon Yolanda in 2014. Sugbo (2021) notes, "It took me some more months before I could finally write my poems about Haiyan. I could not write them any earlier because my memories of the typhoon were quite raw, like wounds that still needed time to heal. My earlier attempts were futile. I had to wait for that moment when I could look at the events that happened with a calm mind and a certain degree of detachment." Home as recollection is the pervading sentiment in both collections.

Mary Doughlas (1991) argues that home is a kind of space that has a regular appearance and reappearance of furnishing. There is a difference between a house and a home, where the former pertains only to nothing more than the physical structure and the latter is an intangible-localizable idea (Doughlas, 1991). A person can picture out what a house, barangay, sitio, or city looks like even when he is not placed in its actual location in present time. The process of writing the poems selected in this study, as described by the writer in his author's note and preface, exhibit the recollection of the appearance of specific places in the *puruyanan*. The process of remembering what home looks like is an organization of space over time (Doughlas, 1991).

Puruyanan assumes a kind of space. Just like any space, *puruyanan* is occupied by tangible and intangible objects. The Waray, like all Filipinos, have a distinct sense of space. Understanding the nuances of the Filipino's sense of space allows a reader to locate tangible and intangible objects mentioned and discussed in the poems studied.

Prospero R. Covar (1998) identified three realms that constitute the Filipino sense of space, the *kapaligiran*. The first is the physical realm called *kalikasan* or the natural environment which consists of three elements namely plants, animals, landscapes, and seascapes. The second realm is the cultural realm where man-made things, objects, faith, and beliefs reside. The third, unique to the Filipino, is the *lihim na kapaligiran* (secret *kapaligiran*) or the supernatural realm where a link to spirits, non-human, and non-animal beings is made.

It is interesting to note that to foreign scholars the supernatural realm is generally accepted as just another part of the cultural realm. Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon (1995) consider only two parts in studying space as an anthropological purview: the physical space and the cultural space. For the Filipino however, there is a distinction between a mere belief and the supernatural space. Physical objects and spaces like rivers, rocks, and forests are said to be dwelt in and safeguarded by a *diwata* (nature spirit). Spirits of ancestors (*ninuno* in Filipino, *kaapuyan* in Waray) are said to be just a dream or thought away (Dorado-Alegre, 2017). The generic term in Waray for both the *diwata* and the *kaapuyan* is *mga diri sugad ha aton,* literally "not like us."

The three realms of the *kapaligiran* assume the constituent parts of the *puruyanan* since *puruyanan* is a kind of space conceived by the Waray. The three realms allow a critic to establish how tangible and intangible objects, located in various realms, are interconnected in the *puruyanan*. Take *apoy*, the unaffixed Waray word for ancestors, for instance. The writer mentions it in a couple of poems studied, assuming the existence of the supernatural realm and establishing a connection of the persona with his ancestor. The three realms of *kapaligiran* warrant a better understanding of the attachment of the persona in the poems with his *puruyanan*. The prefix "ka-" denotes oneness or a relationship with the *paligid* or the surroundings (Abueg & Catacataca, 2011).

The appropriation of the three realms as constituent parts of the *puruyanan* defines a Filipino perspective in studying his own culture. In her analysis of actors of agency in a local community setting. Waray culture and performance studies specialist Joycie Y. Dorado-Alegre (2017) notes that when a shift of position in the conduct of discourse occurs—when the perceiver is no longer a perceiver but a constituent of the world being studied—the insider's perspective blooms into being. While foreign scholars only consider two parts— the physical space and the cultural space— in the discourse of space as an anthropological purview, this study asserts the significance of the supernatural realm and argues that its existence is integral in analyzing the poems being studied. For the Filipino, more so for the Waray, the "*mga diri sugad ha aton*" are real. The Waray do not just conceive the existence of the "*mga diri sugad ha aton*" as a belief, but rather a part of their reality.

The concept of *puruyanan* within the context of *kapaligiran* in this study will be used to read the poems in Waray and their self-translated versions as well as those written in English. According to writer and translation studies scholar Thomas David Chaves (2016), self-translation "provides a voice to the other, less dominant language" and that the writer, usually bilingual, takes it upon himself to weigh the issues between two cultural systems by bringing them together in the self-translated text. Although there may be lost and found nuances in the self-translation due to the specific and different cultural valences of the two languages, there are greater chances that the sensibility of the poem is retained because the writer is also the translator. Also, self-translation challenges the concept of "original" because the text written in Waray, and the self-translated text may be considered both original since they are penned by the same poet.

Chaves (2016) also explains that works with self-translations usually target a bilingual audience proficient in the two languages used by the writer. This study situates the text written in Waray and the self-translated text in the bilingual space or what Chaves calls the "in-between," where the bilingual writer "gives voice to identities that span more than one place, space, culture, and context" (Chaves, 2016). The bilingual space or the in-between space allows the concept of *puruyanan* and *kapaligiran* to cross over cultures.

Treating the poems as bilingual in nature and situating them in the in-between space will require a side by side reading of the text in Waray and the self-translated text. This means that the works which have Waray and self-translated English versions will be read together as liminal reflection, mirroring not optically correct reflection of the other's image, but a funhouse mirror of each other where neither work is categorically the original (Chaves, 2016). The poems which have Waray and English self-translations are also compared with the poems written solely in English. Even when the writer is writing solely in translation—in English—his consciousness is actively shaped by the Waray and English in-between space. His consciousness is intrinsically bilingual. His work written solely in translation is not treated as a categorical English poem rather a bilingual poem. This method of comparison examines the interface where Waray and English co-exist as translucent layers originating from the same mind, the same writer.

Instead of reading the text written in Waray and its self-translation as linguistic equivalents—that they correspond accordingly to structure, semantics, and syntax—they are read side by side to compliment how *puruyanan* in the context of *kapaligiran* is integral to the overall poetics of the author. This methodology will allow *puruyanan* in the context of *kapaligiran* to be cross read in the poems written in Waray and their self-translated versions, enriching knowledge wrought out from the in-between space of Waray and English.

Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussion of this study is organized into three parts. The first is "*Kalikasan*: Natural Qualities of *Puruyanan*" which presents a survey of qualities found in the natural space of the *puruyanan*. It will give a close reading of selected poems aimed at describing what the *puruyanan* appears and feels like. It will focus on qualities of sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste found in the natural realm of the *puruyanan.* The second part is titled "The Cultural Realm: Forging Relationships with *Apoy, Igkasi/Kapwa,* and *Kalikasan"* which establishes the kind of relationships made with fellowmen within the peripheries of the *puruyanan* as well as the interrelationship between the persona and the natural realm. Lastly, the third part is "The Supernatural Realm: The Sacredness of the *Diri Mga Sugad ha Aton*" which **Aton** looks into the sanctity of the dwellers of objects in the natural realm as well as the ancestors that reside in the supernatural realm.

Kalikasan: Natural Qualities of *Puruyanan*

Covar (1998) describes *kalikasan* as the natural environment which consists of the flora and fauna as well as other *likas* or natural elements found in the physical realm such as land, water, and air. Contrary to the concept of "scape" which underscores mainly a visualization of the natural environment, *kalikasan* presents a holistic sensorial re-imagination of the realm. To re-imagine *kalikasan*, the perceiver must not just see the physical realm, he must feel, hear, smell, and in certain instance, taste it. In the "Author's Notes" to *Inintokan*, Sugbo (2008) expressed his struggle writing his poems in Waray. Because of his university education, English became a way of writing and viewing the world. Waray dictionaries have not been much of help when wanting to write in the local language because the collection of terms have never been adequate; neither fully appropriate nor precise in expressing what the Waray writer wishes to express on paper. To capture the Waray sensibility and infuse it to his writing, Sugbo took several bus trips to Ormoc, attentively listening to and keenly observing the environment around him. While in the bus, Sugbo (2008) took note of the strange and somewhat familiar words the ordinary folks uttered. He also noticed the natural environment along the way to Ormoc; he mentions the following in the "Author's Notes" of *Inintokan*

(2008):

> The landscape along the way to Ormoc has always been beautiful to me—the vast green fields in Alangalang, the quiet town of Jaro, the fire trees of Tunga, the *tabo* in Carigara, the rain trees in Capoocan, the cogon's white plumes on Amandewing's back in October, the hoses by the winding mountain road from Lemon to Kananga, and the sugarcane fields in Ormoc.

Notice how Sugbo paints a picture of *kalikasan* along the way to Ormoc; not only does he mention visual scenery, but also things which can be attributed to the sound and feel of the place. Take the description of Jaro, Tunga, Capoocan, and Mt. Amandewing for instance. Jaro is described as a "quiet town". Tunga has fire trees. Capoocan has rain trees. Mt. Amandewing has white cogon plumes. Jaro's quietness describes the sound of the place. The mention of specific plants render the ambience of the place. Even in the "Author's Notes" of his first book, Sugbo already shows a highly developed sense for natural stimuli. He is sensitive to his *kalikasan*.

Peter Gow (1995) asserts that the local environment is a lived experience known through movement within the space, seeing the traces of other people's movements, and through oral narratives. Sugbo and the locals he encountered in his frequent bus rides share the same space and are located in the same natural environment. To fully capture the Waray sensibility and overcome his English-influenced worldview, Sugbo exposes himself to the *likas*, his immediate natural environment, making his senses attune to *kalikasan*. With this exercise, Sugbo surfaces his local consciousness, that of the Waray, than the foreign view or his Western-influenced view of reality. Hence, the appropriation of words he heard from locals and the attention not only to scenery but also to sound, scent, texture, and touch. The imagination and recreation of the Waray writer's experience through poetry is no longer just a visualization of the landscape but rather a full-bodied sensorial communion with his *kalikasan*.

Interesting in the writer's travels is the movement from urban areas such as Tacloban and Ormoc to rural areas like Alangalang, Jaro, and Carigara. Tacloban and Ormoc house more coffee shops, restaurants, offices, hotels, factories, and bodegas compared to Alangalang, Jaro, and Carigara. Compared to Tacloban and Ormoc, Alangalang, Jaro, and Carigara have less buildings and pollution. Tacloban and Ormoc have malls like Robinsons, Gaisano, and SM. Alangalang only has J&F Department Store. Jaro and Carigara have neither.

Urban areas erect numerous man-made structures and edifices constructed for work, leisure, and entertainment. This results in the deterioration of the *likas* in cities and although there are some places where the *likas* can be seen in cities, they are often neglected. The ambience in urban areas, characterized by concrete and cement, coincide with the lifestyle it ushers—fast-paced, individualistic, and impersonal to the natural environment. Take the traffic problem for instance. Commuters and drivers are irritated with the congestion in the streets because it takes a longer time to get to their destination. They cannot work immediately. They are irritated because the atmosphere during traffic is polluted, congested, and altogether unnatural. Compared to rural areas where there is no traffic and congestion, the ambience is calmer, relaxing, and akin to *likas*.

Just like the many Waray from rural areas, Sugbo migrated to urban Tacloban for better opportunities. He is naturally sensitive to *kalikasan* because he grew up and lived in Hindang. Apart from his frequent bus rides to Ormoc, he has also stayed in his hometown from time to time. These practices allow him to commune with *kalikasan* even when he is in an urban area. Moreover, the

oscillation from urban to rural in the same island allows the writer to embody a holistic perspective of Waray life.

Unlike other poems about the city, where the portrayal is often focused on manmade structures like commercial buildings, houses, and streets, Sugbo writes of the urban with a keen observation of *kalikasan* in "Tacloban" (2021). Sugbo exhibits his sensitivity to *likas* elements despite being located in an urban setting. The poem opens with locating Tacloban with respect to the quality of the sea that surrounds it:

Tacloban is the city I live in.
On a clear day, the sea around it forms
rings of white waves dashing upon its shores.
The old wharf was my first acquaintance
of it. Father used to bring me there
by bicycle early in the morning. By the time,
we arrived, old men already sat on the stone's ledge
holding on to their fishing lines,
waiting for the tug at their hooks.

Tacloban is located at the northeast part of Leyte. The bodies of water that touch its shores are only San Juanico Strait, San Pedro, and Cancabato, all located at the eastern side of the city. Except for Mangonbangon River, which stretches from Anibong to Utap, there are no other bodies of water in the eastern part of Tacloban. Only in the eastern part can "rings of white waves" form. Although the bodies of water that "surround" Tacloban are only in the eastern part of the city, a circular form is imagined in lines 2 and 3 to describe the city's geography, "the sea around it forms / rings of white waves dashing upon its shores". The line "the sea around it forms" may not depict an accurate mapping of Tacloban's geography, but the shape used to describe its location reveals how the Waray conceive their world—*kalibutan.* The root word of the Waray word for world is *libot*, meaning surround. Implicit is a circular or spherical shape. The sea and the bodies of water, as depicted in the poem is imagined to surround the city, suggesting that the bodies of water are integral to the *kalibutan* of the Waray. "The island world consists of land and water where water contains the landmass and the winds are named depending on their directional source," (Dorado-Alegre, 2017).
In the proceeding lines, Sugbo mentions that he used to bike along the old wharf with his father early in the morning when the fishermen sat on the stone's ledge, waiting for a catch. It was, as he puts it, his "first acquaintance" of the sea. Sugbo ascribes a childhood memory with the sea thereby constructing his *kalibutan* with its influence. No longer is the sea a mere natural object of observation, rather a "subjective sensorial dimension with direct personal affect and effect" (Dorado-Alegre, 2017). The childhood full-bodied sensorial experience brought in by narrative recall reveals the intimacy between the Waray and his *kalikasan*. Even when he is situated in an urban area, Sugbo is sensitive towards shape and movement - "rings of white waves" and "dashing upon its shores", towards texture – "the stone's ledge", towards mundane gestures - "holding on to their fishing lines" and "the tug at their hooks".

The minutiae of details towards every natural stimuli continues in the succeeding lines. However, the focus of observation transfers from the natural to the artificial.

The sun on Cancabato would rise from the trees,
and swifts would slide the cold air cheeping.
The casas are still standing, old

and dilapidated on Trece Martines.
The flophouses downtown are gone.
So are the Macau cooks; their restaurants
used to feed the city with oodles
of salty noodles on Salazar and Zamora.

Sensitivity towards temperature is apparent with the sun's rise and the cold air. There is also the sound and movement of birds rendered through the cheeping of swifts as they slide with the air. Then, slowly, and gracefully, the stimuli become man-made, become artificial. First, there is the mention of casas that remain erect, "The casas are still standing, old". This line marks the start of the volta, the rhetorical turning point in the poem. The perception of Tacloban starts to shift from the natural elements, which are rendered as source of positive disposition, to artificial objects such as old and dilapidated houses. The sensitivity to the immediate environment is retained but it transfers to elements that are made of cement, concrete, and wood. From a melancholic and positive outlook articulated by "a clear day," "rings of white waves," and "swifts sliding in cold air," the city is characterized by decay and negation.

The disappearance of the flophouses in downtown provides an ironic undertone. It suggests that urbanization, which supposedly raises the standard of living, marginalizes those who could only afford as much. Flophouses use cheap material, are make-shift, and shabby. Their disappearance in downtown—the center of commercial activity—reveals the disregard of the city administration for small-time businesses. Then, there is the mention of cheap Chinese food which used to feed residents of Tacloban: "used to feed the city with oodles / of salty noodles on Salazar and Zamora". Notice that "the city" is a metonymy for the residents of Tacloban and that the noodles are mapped in specific streets in the city, Salazar and Zamora. These poetic techniques not only strengthen the rhetorical shift, but also indicate how popular and iconic the food was in Tacloban. Their disappearance exhibit the dramatic change of the poem. Their disappearance point out the sad reality of progress; that distinct characteristics of a city, the small town charm of Tacloban, disintegrate because the space left for the small and familiar become narrower and narrower when the city transitions to become highly urbanized.

On December 18, 2008, Tacloban City was officially reclassified as a Highly Urbanized City or HUC (Gabieta, 2008). This meant that residents would not vote for Governor and Vice-Governor nor would the city be under administrative control of the Province of Leyte. The pro-HUC campaign back then argued that the economy of the city would boom and that commercial buildings would stand tall. Opposing the plebiscite were councilor Wilson Uy and Vice Gov. Mimiette Bagulaya. Both, during a public forum mentioned the urban planning of Tacloban needed thorough consultation with experts; that opening the city to big real estate franchise businesses could congest the urban setup, amplify the mobility and transport issue, as well as disenfranchise small businesses.

Like the iconic Chinese restaurants and flophouses in downtown, the only cinema in the city, Cosmos, closed down. There was also the iconic Malaking Tiyan, Mernan's, Mandaue Fastfood, Video City, tailor shops along Gomez St. and small boutiques along Salazar St. that eventually ceased to exist. All these started when big malls like Gaisano Central, Robinsons Place Tacloban, and Savemore opened. People became more attracted to the infrastructures which landmarked the commercialization of Tacloban. People started to spend more time in airconditioned malls than in the small-local stores. Eventually, the popularity of the iconic shops decreased, forcing them to stop operations.

Apart from the closing down of iconic local stores and restaurants, congestion and mobility became a bigger issue. The next lines of the poem unveil the dangers of living in Tacloban. Continuous here is the full-bodied sensorial rendering:

Stranger, my city may be odd.
The buzz of trikes fill your ears,
The sidewalks are so narrow
that you court danger everyday,
the sideswipe by car. Living in the city is pleasant;
one November day, the greatest cyclone will come
with the sea drowning the city, 20,000 of us;
black iron sheets will fly like death birds;
Sagkahan Road will be strewn with dead bodies;
and the sea will leave our streets and walkways
smelling of mud, dead fish, shell and kelp.
I will still live in Tacloban

Sugbo imitates the anxiety one feels when simply walking in Tacloban. He appeals to the sound, the buzz of tricycles, a popular mode of commute within downtown. Then he renders visually the dimensions of the plain where one is walking, "the sidewalks are so narrow / that you court danger everyday,/the sideswipe by car." Irony again is used to prepare the reader for the geographical danger of Tacloban's location. The last lines pertain to super typhoon Yolanda which made landfall on November 8, 2013. Reports show how the water reached beyond six feet in coastal areas and the extreme high wind speed was almost at 300 km/h (World Vision, 2017). Sugbo likens the flying black iron sheets with death birds. Here, the writer's sensitivity to nature becomes apparent with the artificiality of the urban setting. Thus, accentuating the destruction. Flying black iron sheets compared to death birds is as powerful of an image as the wrath of super typhoon Yolanda.

There is a continuous depreciation of how Tacloban is perceived in the poem in terms of the full-bodied sensorial experience. Images rendered through various senses start with a positive portrayal of the sea. When artificial objects appear, the mood of the poem subtly declines. First is the disappearance of dilapidated houses, flophouses, and Chinese restaurants. Then, the emergence of urban problems such as noise in the streets, narrow sidewalks, and the susceptibility to typhoons. And finally, the natural is related to destruction and desolation. The "realness" of the lived experience situates the writer within the world depicted. "One is in that world, in that sphere, in the actuality of his or her own lived experience" (Dorado-Alegre, 2017). Sugbo becomes not just a viewer, but a participant of his *kalibutan*.

The qualities of living in an urban area are rendered through a holistic overview of the senses, not just the visual. Although there are places where one can find solace by being more attuned to nature in the city, they are hidden away in memory. Remember that the positive portrayal of nature early in the "Tacloban" (2021) is nostalgic. It is a childhood memory. The memory does not exist in the present like the Chinese restaurants and other iconic and charming places of Tacloban. Today, years after super typhoon Yolanda, the city is faced with traffic and congestion caused by lack of sensitivity to the natural. There may be public spaces in urban areas of Eastern Visayas where one can still commune with the *likas* but apparently, they are not integrated to the development design of the community.

Compared to the urban area, the rural area appears to be a more calming, less stressful, and peaceful place. The poem "Tirimad-on" or "The Sign" (2008) is set in Sta. Rita, Samar, the first town one reaches after crossing the San Juanico Bridge from the northern coast of Tacloban. The poem opens with a comparison of the *nagrarangrang* or loose flowering of the malimbin tree and the *kaguol* or tiredness of the week's end.

Kun ano man an nagpaparangrang
hinin pamukad
han malimbin ha may kusina
sugad man an pagguprang kagab-i han aton
nanonobol nga kaguol
kun Biyernes.

What coaxes the grandiose
malimbin tree
to bloom lushly by the kitchen
also uncoiled
the Friday heaviness
last night.

The temporal and spatial elements in the poem indicate the need to travel to a more placid environment. The "nononobol nga kaguol / kun Biyernes" implies that it is already weekend, "the Friday heaviness / last night". Weekdays are conventionally the time when people work. During weekends, they are expected to unwind and take time off the business of work-life. Sugbo's house is located in the heart of Tacloban, at corner Gomez St. and Sto Niño St. so it is important to note that he has a malimbin tree in his residence and surrounds himself with greenery because the area where he lives is always filled with pedestrians, tricycles, and all sorts of vehicles. Despite the business of the area, Sugbo has grown a tree, something *likas*, in his residence. This allows him to keep his relationship with the *kalikasan* intact even when he is in the heart of an urban area surrounded mainly by concrete and cement. But even with the greenery, the overall atmosphere of the area remains busy. Thus, the decision to travel to a mountain café in Sta. Rita.

Asya nga gindara mo kami ngadto
han kapehan ha bukid han Sta. Rita
ngan didto han beranda iginbutalag
an aton mga bughat:
an suol ha dughan
an pamaol han kalawasan
an kawaray himbangkaagan
an kangutngut han sinalikway.
Ngan aton ini ginhurip
ha uruestorya hin pananom
han pandakaki, sagingsaging, anis,
labi na an panaon.

The reason why you drove us to
the mountain café at Sta. Rita
and at the veranda, between sips of coffee,
we unbundled our unease:
the pain at the chest
the sluggish body
the feeling of emptiness
the feeling of being bereft.
And these we thatched with our
talk about growing
the pandakaki, the saginsaging, anis,
and the panaon.

There are various researches that prove how brain activity drastically intensifies in urban areas that have less green space, often resulting in states of anxiousness and stress (Thompson et al., 2016). Brain activity in rural areas which have vast well-taken cared of greenery tend to reach the theta and alpha states, the conditions of the brain associated to relaxation, suggesting a state of calm and ease (Yang et al., 2011). In Eastern mystical traditions, the natural environment is a great site for recalibration of the mind by centering and quietening it through meditation (Capra, 1991). The Waray have a word for a meditative activity which aims to center and quiet the mind, *pamahongpahong.* Sugbo and Iday Jitka—the person whom the poem is dedicated to—are doing exactly that, *nanmamahongpahong.* Sugbo mentions several aches they have felt due to the business in the past working day, "an suol ha dughan /an pamaol han kalawasan /an kawaray himbangkaagan /an kangutngut han sinalikway"*;* "the pain in the chest / the sluggish body / the feeling of emptiness / the feeling of being bereft". They travel to the mountain side where the sea is also felt in the hopes

of unburdening all these from their restless and tired bodies. Sugbo and Iday Jitka relieve themselves with numerous aches—*suol* (chest pain), *pamao*l (sluggishness), *kawaray himbangkaagan* (empty feeling), and *kangutngut* (piercing pains felt in the body) by unwinding at the veranda of the mountain café in Sta. Rita.

There are two methods in which the success of rendering the *pamahongpahong* is achieved in the poem. First is the actual exposure of the writer and his companion to the natural environment. Regardless of which mountain café this is in Sta. Rita, a Waray reader would know that the ambience is peaceful. Several species of birds can pass by the mountains at Sta. Rita where different kinds of chirps are heard. Any mountainous area in Sta. Rita would overlook Tacloban in the west and the greenery of Samar from the east. Compared to the area where Sugbo lives, the topography of the mountain café in Sta. Rita is less intense, as depicted in "Tacloban" (2021). The artificial in Sta. Rita like the mountain café and the veranda appear to be more harmonious with the natural compared to the topography of the city, where all the burdens and aches originate.

Second is meditation through conversation. Apart from being exposed to the natural elements in Sta. Rita, Sugbo and Iday Jitka also find repose in talking about tending plants, "Ngan aton inin ginhurip / ha uruestorya hin pananom / han pandakaki, sagingsaging, anis / labi na an panaon"; "And these we thatched with our /talk about growing / the pandakaki, the sagingsaging, anis / and the panaon". Evident in their conversation mentioning several species of plants which they wish to take care of is the desire to be more akin to *likas*. Being exposed to the *likas* sets the mood for the mind to be at ease. The habitual thought of also thinking and conversing about the *likas* while being exposed to it, enriches the relationship of Sugbo and Iday Jitka with the *kalikasan*. Their oneness with nature deepens because they continuously participate in the "growth" of the flora, constantly implanting in their consciousness how to take care of them. They become active participants in the quotidian life of the likas, thereby healing the aches they feel through *pamahongpahong*. The process of *pamahongpahong* is not necessarily the withdrawal from the world's everyday affairs. It is rather the meditation aimed at relaxing the mind to become harmonious with kalikasan (Capra, 1991).

In the last stanza, Sugbo notes that it took them long before realizing it was already night time.

Nagmaiha an aton paghinanggabon	*We took us quite a while*
han hangin ha bukid	*inhaling the cold mountain air*
ug didto nakit-an naton	*when we saw*
an nagbaras nga kabiton-an	*the stars spread like sand*
an aton nanhihilawig nga mga suol	*our fears unfurling*
duyog hinin bulan nga baga	*under this moon shaped like*
an sakayan	*a boat*
hin layag nakuhaan.	*without sail.*

The line/s "paghinggabon/han hangin ha bukid", "inhaling the cold mountain air" highlights the breathing in of a natural element into one's own body. This shows another significant process of *pamahongpahong.* The repeated *paghinggabon* or breathing in of the cold mountain air connotes the taking in of *likas* sustenance for the healing of the body and mind. Sugbo and Iday Jitka soon realize that it is already night time, the stars have already spread like sand. They need to go back to the city and leave their "*nanhihilawig nga mga suol*", "fears unfurling" in the rural area where the moon looks like a boat without sail.

The perception of how the moon looks is significant in understanding what has happened to

the aches Sugbo and Iday Jitka. The moon looks like a boat without sail. A vessel at sea without a sail usually drifts away with the movement of the waves. Metaphorically speaking, Sugbo and Iday Jitka cast away their aches in the rural area through *pamahongpahong*. They had already meditated, recentered themselves, and realigned with *kalikasan*. The stars and the moon shaped like a boat with a sail was the "tirimad-on" or "the sign" for them to return back to the city. They were then calmed—in a peaceful and restful state, ready to head on the coming weekdays.

In contrast with "Tacloban" (2021), the mood set in "Tirimad-on" or "The Sign" (2008) is therapeutic and meditative. The thematic trajectory in "Tacloban" (2021) is at a constant depreciation whereas in "Tirimad-on" or "The Sign" (2008) the thematic trajectory is at a constant alleviation. "Tirimad-on" or "The Sign" (2008) starts with a juxtaposition of the blossoming of a malimbin tree and the feeling of *kaguol* or tiredness from the previous week. It proceeds with elucidating how one can be unburdened of aches in a rural area and ends with an implied return to the city with a renewed sense of well-being. *Kalikasan* in the "Tirimad-on" or "The Sign" (2008) functions as a space where one finds solace *with* and *in* nature.

While Sugbo's perception of the likas and its function are apparent in "Tirimad-on" or "The Sign" (2008), its qualities surface more in "Uran" or "Rain" (2008), where a particular natural phenomenon is put in the spotlight—rain.

Hinin halawig nga huraw	*In this long drought*
Tigda an langit nanmarisbis.	*The sky suddenly drizzles.*
Ugtas nga mga kakognan nanngarasikas	*The dry cogon rustles*
Ha bungkog han Amandewing.	*On the back of Amandewing.*
Bisan usa la kadali pag-aruman	*Even with this brief rain*
Gudti nga mga tinudkan,	*The little kernels will sprout back*
Kababanhawan hin pula busag asul	*Resurrect orange, white, and blue*
Inin dako nga kamad-an	*In the cracked clearing*
Ngan magrarampag adton	*And once more will flourish all*
Hapit na hinbayaan.	*The almost forsaken.*

In this poem, Sugbo starts with an auditory exposition. He utilizes various sounds made by the rain to set the mood of the poem. "Hinin halawig nga huraw / Tigda an langit nanmarisbis / Ugtas nga mga kakognan nangarasikas"; In this long drought / The sky suddenly drizzles / The dry cogon rustles". The Waray vocabulary in describing a state of being and the quality of an object is highly elaborate (Alegre, 2020). The first three lines of the Waray version "Uran" (2008) end with words that stress a specific state and quality. *Huraw* means no rain (Dorado-Alegre, 1996). *Nanmamarisbis* imitates the sound of a drizzle and *nangangarasikas* imitates the sound of raindrops against the cogon.

The Waray have a variety of terms for the state and quality of the weather with respect to rain. There are two synonymous umbrella terms: *mauran*, the adjective, and *uranos,* the noun. Other adjectives include *madalumdom* (presence of rainclouds; about to rain); *maugdas* (prolonged heavy downpour without strong winds); *masulog* (heavy downpour with strong winds). Nouns include *nanunuro-turo* (fall of raindrops prior to a tarahiti/tarithi or uranos); *tarahiti/tarithi* (drizzle); *madlos* (quick passing of rain from the sea inland); *taburos* (the splash of rain felt against a surface); *bunok* (heavy downpour without strong winds); and *huraw* (absence of rain).

Huraw must be read in the spectrum of Waray terms that describe the state and quality of the

weather with respect to rain. There is no popularly known Waray word for "drought". *Huraw* is typically used to pertain to the departure of rain. *Sano daw la mahuraw?* When will the rain stop? In the case of "Uran" or "Rain" (2008), *huraw* must not be divorced with *halawig* or long. *Huraw* may not necessarily pertain to drought which is associated with the shortage or scarcity of water, but its attachment to *halawig* captures the quality of the atmosphere as depicted in the poem. "*Halawig nga huraw*" implies the extended period of dryness of the land, the lack or absence of water, and the experience of heat for a long time. Line 2 of the poem subtly expresses the relief felt from the rain's arrival. "Tigda an langit nanmarisbis", "The sky suddenly drizzles". For the Waray, "the ultimate is balance, and excess, of course, is imbalance. No push for more," (Alegre, 2020). The Waray do not relish long periods of *uran* (rain) or *sirak* (sunlight). There must always be a balance of the binary tropic weather categories. When there is a "halawig nga huraw", the Waray longs for the rain, so is it vice-versa.

Noticeable as well is the use of *nanmarisbis* in lieu of *nanunuro-turo*, *tarahiti*, and *uran*. The use of *nanmarisbis* emphasizes the sound produced by raindrops. It must be noted that instead of a noun, an adjective is used. It is the sky that does the *marisbis,* like the continuous sprinkling of water out of a watering-can. Stressed as well is the sound of raindrops against the cogon grass in line 3, *nanngangarasikas*.

The musicality sustained in the first three lines of the Waray version progresses from the alliteration of "h" in the first line "Hinin halawig nga huraw" to the alliteration of the "s" in the second and third line, *nanmarisbis, nanngarasikas*. In the English version, musicality is sustained from the alliteration of the "o" in the first line "In this long drought"; to the alliteration of "s" in the second line "The sky suddenly"; to the of syntactic and semantic structure of the lines 2 and 3 "The sky suddenly drizzles/The dry cogon rustles"; to the assonance and end rhymes of "drizzles" and "rustles". Although musicality is retained in the English version, the overall imagery is rendered through visualization. Whereas in the Waray version the lines are not just musical but also onomatopoeic.

Early Waray poetry is characterized by its "address to the ears rather than through the eyes" (Luangco, 1982). Sugbo may be a contemporary writer, but his aesthetics remain traditionally Waray. The overall high elaboration of the Waray and English version succeed through the concreteness of images regardless of address to the ears or eyes. The two versions read together unfold a clearer depiction of the Waray sensibilities. In "Uran" or "Rain" (2008), the importance of the balance between the season of *uran* and the season of *sirak* is portrayed. Sugbo finds relief in the brief rain because it will allow the little kernels to sprout and resurrect the colors *pula* (orange)*, busag* (white)*, asul* (blue), colors of the flora. Just before they wither, the rain arrives, and blesses them with water.

Like the value for the balance of the seasons surfaced in "Uran" or "Rain" (2008), the Waray value for *pamahongpahong* is evident in "Tirimad-on" or "The Sign" (2008). Like the former, the latter's Waray version is also addressed through the ears. Waray words found in the latter such as *nagpaparangrang, nanonobol, iginbutalag*, and *naghurip* echo the sounds produced by the respective objects they are ascribed to. Whereas in their respective English counterpart, words like "coaxes", "uncoiled", "between sips of coffee", and "thatched" paint pictures in the reader's head.

Reading the Waray version and the English version together generate an aural-visual experience where both complement each other's sensorial threshold, elucidating a clearer "virtual reality" portrayed on the page, where the reader assumes the role of receptor of the written world of *likas*. A "written virtual reality" embedded with the highly elaborated qualities of *kalikasan* unpacks

the primordial value of the Waray towards balance—balance of the natural and unnatural in terms of topography, balance of business and relaxation in terms of well-being, balance of the *uran* and *sirak* seasons in terms of weather. "The ultimate is balance, and excess, of course, is imbalance," (Alegre, 2020).

It is also important to understand that the natural elements may not always be beneficial to the Waray. At times *kalikasan* may even be a source of displeasure. Take the poem "Bugkot" or "Lost in the Mist" (2008) for example. Imploring the same framework applied in the previous poems—examining what the poem conveys through focusing on the qualities of *kalikasan* and its implications—one can see how the natural can also be unfavorable for the Waray.

"Bugkot" or "Lost in the Mist" (2008) starts with a depiction of the atmosphere's condition and the topography of Kambonggan then proceeds to identify the time of day through the activity of residents. It is early morning because the women who sell *puto* and *budbod*, local snacks, are still curled up in their beds.

Linulukot hinin burong	*The mist swaddles*
Inin mga bukid-bukid tikadto ha Kambonggan	*the hills going to Kambonggan.*
Nabayaw an kakawayanan	*Everything is still:*
Inin mga dapdap	*the bamboo, the dapdap tree,*
Pati an kabablayan.	*and the houses on the slopes*
An kababayin-an nga nanduduhol	*The women selling rice cakes and budbod*
hin puto ngan budbod hinin sagka ha Mahaplag	*at the road bend in Mahaplag*
nangingirogtol pa ha hagkot	*stay curled in their beds.*

Recognizable immediately is the onomatopoeic words in the Waray version like *linulukot* and *nangingirogtol* as well as the visualization in the English version found in lines like "The mist swaddles" and "stay curled in their beds". Reading the two versions side by side helps imagine the written virtual reality. The proceeding stanzas reveal the overall situation and emotion conveyed in the poem.

Bisan gitgit waray gud	*No gitgit bird has lost*
mahalisa	*its way here.*
Kami la, hi ako, hi Inton ngan hi Islao	*Only Inton, Islao and I stay along*
An nagyayatawyataw hinin mabatsi nga dalan	*this potholed mountain road*
sakay hanin awto	*riding a jeep that is constantly*
Nga gin-iinubo.	*coughing.*
Kahirayo man la kanda Tata	*So far to Tata's house—*
duha pa ka bungto	*two more towns*
ngan inin mga burong	*and this thick mist*
nga ha amon nag-iinuroalirong.	*girdling our way home.*

"Bisan gitgit waray gud mahalisa", "No gitgit bird has lost/its way here." signals the entrance of the poem's volta. In this stanza, the idea of *bugot*, also the title of the Waray version, is subtly introduced. *Bugkot* is an irritating feeling the Waray perceive as unacceptable. It is often affixed as a curse word, *burugkuton!*, to express dissatisfaction and irritation. Gitgit birds are endemic in Kambonggan, a barangay in Baybay, Leyte. The gitgit cannot be lost because they know the area. Only Sugbo and his

companions, Inton and Islao are the ones lost. Sugbo becomes more irritated because the road is *mabatsi,* rough or potholed, and the jeep they are riding can barely make it up the hill. The jeep is "*gin-iinubo*" (coughing). Sugbo has to endure the mist and the unfortunate conditions as much as there are two more towns, before they reach their destination, Tata's house.

In the Waray version, the feeling of bugkot is the highlight while in the English version, it is the *cause* of the unpleasant feeling. Consequently, the titling of "Bugkot" and "Lost in the Mist" (2008) of the respective versions. Treating both versions as liminal reflections present a poetic convergence of Waray and English where cultural nuances from both languages co-exist. The same can be said of the previously examined poems with self-translations.

As for the poem in this chapter which has no Waray counterpart, "Tacloban" (2021), it is read under the inference that the aesthetics of the poem are innately Waray since the poem originates from a bilingual consciousness exposed mainly to the *kalikasan* of the Waray speaker. "Tacloban" (2021) and the previously examined poems with Waray and English versions share a thematic tool. The act of remembering appears to be an integral element in creating a written virtual reality. In "Tacloban" (2021), the Waray writer recalls a childhood memory; in "Tirimad-on" or "The Sign" (2008), a memory with Iday Jitka; in "Uran" or "Rain" (2008), a time of long drought; in "Bugkot" or "Lost in the Mist" (2008), a commute with Inton and Islao. When Sugbo writes of the state of *kalikasan* in Eastern Visayas, there is always an ascription to a particular memory.

With the ongoing real estate development all over Easter Visayas, the *likas* becomes endangered. More and more areas, especially rural areas near a city, accommodate structures and infrastructures that are discordant to *kalikasan*. In the poem "Ha Akon Paglinakaton" or "In My Travels" (2014), Sugbo expresses his sadness of the poor urban development. The poem is a lamentation of "old Tacloban".

Ha akon paglinakaton	*Since I travel much*
Damo nga mga bungto in akon nakit-an:	*I have been to many cities:*
Zamboanga, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro,	*Zamboanga, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro,*
Iligan, Carcar, Bacolod, Calbayog,	*Iligan, Carcar, Bacolod, Calbayog,*
General Santos, Laoag.	*General Santos, Laoag.*
Han pagsinubaysubay ko han ira mga dalan	*Ambling around their streets,*
Say ko natad-an mga dalan han hadto nga Tacloban,	*I would find the paseos of old Tacloban,*
Daan nga balay, mga bintana nga capis,	*Ancient houses, capiz windows,*
Higluag nga banwaon nga mga laguerta,	*Wide grassy orchards,*
Mabukad nga mga beranda.	*Flowering vertandas.*
Dagos ko nabug-on an akon dughan	*Quickly my chest would tighten*
Kay didto ha amon di na kilala	*For at home I no longer see*
An bungto ko nga nahiaraan.	*The town I used to live.*
Ginhahandom ko na la	*Now all I can keep is*
An ginmat-an ko nga Tacloban.	*The old Tacloban.*

The description of the "old Tacloban" which Sugbo finds, *natad-an,* in the cities he visited underline a balance of the natural and artificial. There are "mga bintana nga capis, / Higluag nga banwaon nga mga laguerta, / Mabukad nga mga beranda."; "capiz windows / Wide grassy orchards / Flowering verandas." and even "paseos of old Tacloban". All these objects characterize a harmonious integration of *likas* elements with architecture. There are even paseos, walkways where people could have a nice

stroll. All these are gone in Tacloban. Today, there are no walkways where one can safely walk. As written in "Tacloban" (2021), "the sidewalks are so narrow/that you court danger everyday". Even in Magsaysay Boulevard where the road is relatively wide, one can be sideswiped. The narrow sidewalks are poorly constructed that they are often flooded and muddied. The lots where "Daan nga balay" or "Ancient houses", spacious and nature-harmonizing, are now either erected by commercial building or simply abandoned.

In his Introduction to *Poems from Ground Z*, Sugbo (2021) writes, "The old Tacloban is gone. I will always miss its quaint charm and the friends I lost." Sugbo can spot the characteristics of the old Tacloban in other cities like "Zamboanga, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro, / Iligan, Carcar, Bacolod, Calbayog, / General Santos, Laoag." but never can he go home to the old Tacloban due the drastic changes brought by commercialization. As Sugbo enjoys the features of old Tacloban in a different city, he feels a heaviness in his chest. For all he can do is remember. All he can do is *paghamdom*, vividly remember, not just the appearance but also the smell, fell, and sound of old Tacloban. "Ginhahandom ko na la / An ginmat-an ko nga Tacloban."; "Now all I can keep is / The old Tacloban". Interesting in this line is the word "ginhahandom", root word being *handom* or remembrance. For the Waray, remembering a significant memory through objects means not only to re-recognize its appearance but also the smell, sound, and most important, the feel of the memory, more so the place where it occurred.

By examining the qualities of *kalikasan* and identifying the nuances of numerous states and conditions of things and phenomena, the urgency to embody the intrinsic ability to be sensitive towards *kalikasan* becomes highly elaborate and clear. The poems in this chapter do not just showcase the Waray writer's sensitivity towards *kalikasan* but also reveal the reality the Waray needs to confront; that the disregard of natural spaces result in the preponderance of disturbing artificial stimuli like the overpowering buzz of tricycles and the potholed mountain road, as well as the disappearance of quaint and charming structures. The overall topography of Eastern Visayas, whether urban or rural, needs to improve for the natural and the artificial to harmonize. Otherwise, the Waray will just be remembering, *manhahandom*, their old hometowns, eventually reaching a time when all old has been characteristics of their hometowns are forgotten and lost.

Reading the Waray and English versions of the poems together, and treating the work solely written in English as an innate bilingual text, that its creation originates from a Waray-English consciousness, unravel the qualities of *kalikasan* as space for meditation (*pamahongpahong*), source of peacefulness, in some unfortunate occasions, a stimulus for distress (*bugkot*), and often, a reference for significant memories (*handom*). In examining the Waray and English versions of the poems as well as the poems solely written in English is a highly elaborate written virtual reality of the Waray, where the conventional imagery of the poems is no longer visual, rather a multi-dimensional sensorial experience.

The Cultural Realm: Forging Relationships with *Apoy, Igkasi/Kapwa*, and Kalikasan

Covar (1998) defines culture as everything and anything that is created by human beings. Culture may either be tangible objects like toys, furniture, and houses, or abstract concepts and ideas like faith, values, and belief systems. Compared to *kalikasan* or the physical realm which constitutes of natural elements, the cultural realm is everything that human beings *likha* or create. Language is perhaps the most elaborate *kalikhaan* or creation of a culture. It mirrors a culture's world view, thus, embodying its sensibilities and values.

In his study of the Filipino syntax, Alegre (1993) points out that foreign loan words like *radyo*, *magasin*, and *tibi* fill out a nominative slot preceding a prepositional marker (*ang, ng, sa)*: *ang radio, ng magasin, sa tibi.* Never is the noun without its prepositional marker in a sentence. From the viewpoint of syntax, the basic linguistic unit in Filipino is not a word (e.g., *radyo, magasin, tibi, kantam drawing*), but a market plus a nominative (e.g., *ng + radio; ang +* magasin; *sa + tibi*) expressed as "1+". What is fundamentally Filipino is a relationship, not just a word, but a marker plus a nominative (Alegre, 1993).

Relationships are central to the life of the Filipino. As he creates or *likha* other objects, say for instance, in the domain of food, he always perceives it as an object in need of a bond. Filipinos eat *kanin* (rice) with *ulam* (food partnered with rice). The Waray call it *kan-on* (rice) and *sura* (food partnered with rice). Rice always needs a partner for alone it is incomplete. Thus, rice can be expressed as "1+". A typical Filipino house has no walls between the dining room, living room, and kitchen. If ever spaces need to be defined, a divider cabinet or curtain is placed. The design of the interior space is appropriated to the social dynamics. There is always space, no matter how big or small, to accommodate family, relatives, and friends that come to visit expectedly or unexpectedly. The Waray call the interior flexible multi-purpose space as *ruwang.* Thus, the typical Filipino house can also be expressed as "1+".

The creation and evolution of Filipino culture is based on a relationship expressed as "1+". As the Filipino evolves, so does his relationship. Perhaps this is why in Article 149 of The Family Code of the Philippines, the basic unit of society is the family and not the individual (Official Gazette of the Philippines, 1987). Forging relationships with his elders, his friends, relatives, and even *kalikasan* strengthens the Filipino sense of being.

Each poem in his chapter is treated as a memory originating from a relationship-centered culture. Although the poems are not written in Filipino, they embody a similar characteristic; that relationships – expressed as "1+" – are a core value. "The inflexible core of our being is 'I' inter and intra-connected with one another and with others," (Alegre, 1993). The Waray, just like the Tagalog, also embody a culture of deep relationships. The Waray, after all, are also Filipino.

In the poem "To My Nephew Clint" (2021) Sugbo expounds on his relationship with his nephew. The first and the second stanzas establish the dramatic situation of the poem.

As you drive me in my car to
A far-off town I have yet to name,
You must wonder
How all the occasional drives end in
A distant mountain spring;
Breakfasts of rice and sweet meats
At a roadside resto named after a typhoon;
Brief stops along the sea in Tolosa;
A shift to Dagami and La Paz.

Of the mp3 player,
A Japanese baritone intones a bossa,
At other times, it is a husky voiced
Chanteuse pouring out her soul in French

Or the Neon Boy Band singing about blue electric eyes.

There are songs playing on the mp3 player—a Japanese baritone, a French chanteuse soul singer, and a Neon Boy Band. While on the road trip, Sugbo tells his nephew that he might be wondering why occasional drives end in/A distant mountain spring; /Breakfast of rice and sweet meats/At a roadside resto named after a typhoon;/Brief stops along the sea in Tolosa;/A shift to Dagami and La Paz. It is apparent that Sugbo and Clint go to these places occasionally. They are, as Sugbo writes, "occasional drives" with his nephew, which do not happen on a daily basis. It is implied that Sugbo and his nephew have work and other quotidian matters to attend to just like any other person. What is important, Sugbo implies, is that one makes time to bond with a younger relative--no matter how busy life gets, Sugbo makes time to travel with Clint, takes his time to bond with his nephew.

The third stanza reveals an important detail about the nephew; that he is shy, *awdunon* as the Waray would put it.

You are so quiet behind the wheel
Still the little boy who used to hide
When I called his name.

Clint remains quiet and rather reserved. Even when he has grown up and is able to drive his uncle around, Sugbo still sees him as a little boy, the little boy who used to hide when he called his name. Sugbo reminisces on how time has flown and how grown up his nephew has become. This is an important characteristic in understanding the advice given in the next stanzas.

Young man, traveling without a plan retires
All riddles. It stares us in the face like a mirror,
And puts to a test your sonhood
And the graying uncle I have become;

But the air is so bright and clear
And the rain trees are shaking in the sunshine.

Sugbo calls attention to his nephew. "Young man," he addresses, "traveling without a plan retires / All riddles". Traveling without a plan—just driving and going along—allows anyone to explore. It allows one to be present in the now and what is happening. It allows one to cast away the questions in his head, to "retire all riddles," and thus enjoy the places and activities Sugbo mentions in the first stanza.

Apart from the advice, Sugbo reiterates that traveling without a plan allows him and his nephew to bond. "It stares us in the face like a mirror, / And puts to a test your sonhood / And the graying uncle I have become." Not only will Sugbo and his nephew need to figure out where to go, but will also need to catch up with what is going on with their lives. Without a plan, the nephew, who is driving the car, will need to interact with his uncle. The occasional drives are the uncle's way of helping the nephew overcome his *pagka-awdunon* or shyness. It is the uncle's subtle way of deepening his relationship with his nephew. It permits the uncle to give advice and impart in the nephew wisdom.

Although time has made Sugbo a graying uncle, it has allowed Clint to mature. The stanza prior

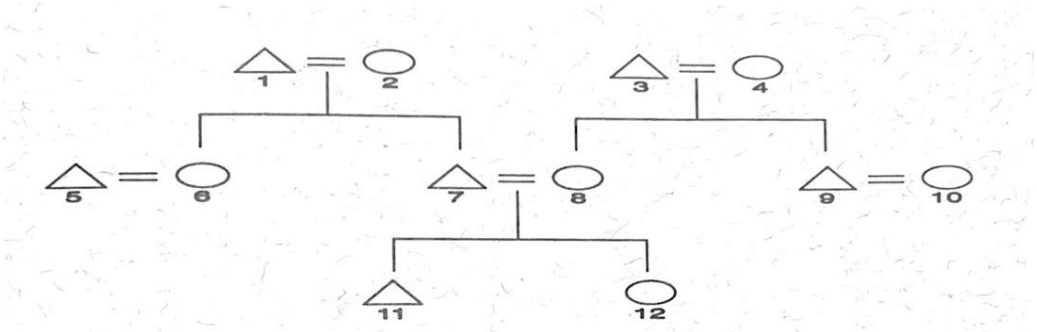
to the last two lines end with a semi-colon (;), indicating a pause and the continuation of thought about time to the last stanza. Time puts to a test the sonhood of Clint and Sugbo's old age. "But the air is so bright and clear / And the rain trees are shaking in the sunshine." Sugbo renders his point beautifully and poetically as if saying, "Look, Clint. Look at the rain trees. Feel the clear air. Look. Feel. You, we, are present."

One can imagine that the uncle points this out to the nephew as they pass by rain trees along the road in Leyte. As they drive through the scenery, one could imagine the foliage – leaves fluttering in the wind – shimmering with the sunlight. This image highlights the magical aura of presences: the presence of trees along the road, the presence of Clint driving, the presence of the uncle conscious of his senescence. All being present in the here and now. Simple things reverberate the beauty of fleeting moments. Like a mountain spring, breakfast of rice and sweet meats, and brief stops along the sea, the shimmering of rain trees is a passing phenomena. They are ephemeral but are forever in memory. To treasure them is to treasure the people with whom the experiences have been shared.

The poem is addressed specifically to the nephew. Even its title is a dedication, "To My Nephew Clint" (2021). One may read this as an epistolary poem, one that adapts the letter form. However, in the context of the Waray, the poem can be read more so as a *sagdon,* a subtle reminder usually given by elders to the younger generation, similar to the Filipino *payo* or *pangaral.* When the adolescents enter a serious romantic relationship, the parents or the parental figures usually give their advice, warnings, and reminders. *Sinasagdunan*. Occasionally, it can also be close friends who sagdon. When someone is in a complicated or worrisome situation, the close friends sagdon. *Pagsagdon* (the act of sagdon) and sagdon connotes an imparting of wisdom. Conventionally, it is the elderly who poses wisdom because they have lived longer, have endured the perils of life more, and supposedly understood what it means to live compared to the younger generation.

In a typical Filipino household, the people living under one roof are not just the mother, father, and children. Often, the grandparents, uncles, aunties, and in certain cases, in-laws live in one house. In "Pilipinolohiya", Covar (1998) notes that Filipinos have specific terms for in-laws, depending on the degree of affinity. Below is the visual representation from the Covar's essay.

Figure 2. Filipino family in terms of degree of affinity



1/2 and 3/4 are *magbalae* or *abalayan.* 8 is the *manugang* of 1 & 2; likewise, 10 is the manugang of 3 & 4. 1/2 are *biyenan* of 8 like 3/4 are *biyenan* of 10. 5 and 7 are *magbayaw,* so are 7 and 9. 10 and 8 are *maghipag*. 5 and 8 are *magbilas,* and so are 7 and 9 (Covar, 1998). In Waray *balae* or *abalayan* is *mag-balaye*; *manugang* is *umagad*; *biyenan* is *ugangan*; *bayaw* is still *bayaw*; *hipag* is still *hipag*; and *bilas* is still *bilas* (Dorado-Alegre, 2009).

In the American kinship system, all the relatives bonded through affinity are generally called "in-laws" (Covar, 1998). There are no specific terms to describe the degree of affinity. In the Filipino and Waray kinship system however, there are specifics. There are specific terms used to describe one's relationship with a relative bonded through affinity. What more for those bonded through consanguinity?

In a typical Filipino household, the extended family is always present. Naturally, the older people in the household care for the younger ones. Parenthood is not vested solely in the parents but shared with a wider circle of adults and elderly relatives (Costello, 1994). Hence, the importance of naming these relatives. Identifying their connection with the younger generation establishes a deep familial bond with the relatives.

Interestingly, Sugbo uses "sonhood" in the fourth stanza to define his relationship with his nephew. Although he is just an uncle, he treats his nephew like a son, as if his nephew is his own child. The uncle in this context assumes the role of a parent. He becomes a parental figure. He shares the same responsibility of a parent. As parents are obliged to take good care and guide their children through life, so is the uncle. The uncle, just like the parents, gives his sagdon. He imparts wisdom to the next generation of their family since it is an integral part of parenthood. Referring to his relationship with his nephew as "sonhood" mirrors the Filipino, more so the Waray sensibility, Covar (1998) and Constello (1994) pose; that parenting is vested not solely on the parents but also with other elders in the family, regardless of they are related through affinity or consanguinity.

While Sugbo takes on the role of the elder in "To My Nephew Clint" (2021), he assumes the role of the young in "Parada Han mga Sinya" or "The Parade of Zinnias" (2014). In the latter, instead of the person that gives the *sagdon*, Sugbo is the recipient. In the first and second stanzas of the latter, Sugbo expresses his amazement of the colorfulness of zinnias.

Kan Inse Agrinipina mga sinya	*Inse Agripina's zinnias*
Nga taga-Catandug nanunubol	*Used to live in Catandug. Now they dot*
Pula, dulaw, granate,	*Red yellow purple*
Hinin berde nga kadak-an	*This vast expanse of green*
Ha libong hinin kabalayan han Bitanhuan.	*In the yards of Bitanhuan.*
Kamaglakat hinin mga sinya ni Inse Agripina;	*How they travel, these zinnias!*
Hin-o daw la inin ira sinusunodsunod?	*Who could they be searching?*

The first and second stanzas carry a child-like undertone nostalgic of a child's wondrousness and amazement. There are three unique areas where the child-like undertone surfaces: coloration, travel, and personal association.

Coloration adds vibrancy to the scene of the poem. Like a child, Sugbo looks at the vast green expanse as a dull area, a space in need of color. Zinnias add the colors *pula, dulaw, granate* to the dull space. Multiplied by a hundred, the colorful blooming zinnias paint the dull canvass. The vast green expanse becomes dotted with red, yellow, and purple. A child knows a blank dull canvas needs color like how the *berde nga kadak-an* needs *pula, dulaw, granate*.

Where does this coloration occur? "*Ha libong hinin kabalayan han Bitanhuan",* "In the yards of Bitanhuan". It is in every home in Bitanhuan. From Cantadug, a barangay found in Hilongos, Leyte,

the zinnias travelled 43 kilometers to Bitanhuan, a barangay in Baybay, Leyte. Although both places are found on the south-west coast of Leyte, their distance is fairly far. Hence, Sugbo's amazement of natural coloration expressed in the second stanza, "*Kamaglakat hinin mga sinya ni Inse Agripina; / Hin-o daw la inin ira sinusunodsunod?",* "How they travel, these zinnias!"/ Who could they be searching?"

Most notable in the poem is the association of the zinnias to Inse Agripina, the grandaunt of the writer. Sugbo perceives the zinnias found in Bitanhuan as the same zinnias his grandaunt planted in Cantandug. Although, the zinnias in the yards in Bitanhuan may not exactly be the ones his grandaunt planted, they are, to Sugbo, the zinnias of a childhood with Inse Agripina. While he observes the natural coloration in the dull green expanse and imagines the distance from Cantandug to Bitanhuan, Sugbo remembers his Inse Agripina who once tended to zinnias of various colors, the grandaunt who took care of him when he was little.

The third and fourth stanza unravel what happened with Inse Agripina and how the writer feels towards her leaving.

Maiha na kami ni Inse waray pagkita,	*For a long time I have not seen Inse,*
Tagbantay hadton akon kalumatod.	*After she took care of me as a child.*
Diri na ha amon hiya nabisita	*She has not visited us since.*
Amo nga nailiw na hi nanay han binungkos	*This is why Mother misses her harvest*
Ni Inse nga mga sinya dara kabilin nga hamot	*Of zinnias, heavy with*
Han hagkot, kikidlat, adlaw ngan uran.	*The scent of lush cool nights, lightning, sun, and rain.*
Nabaroan ko nga binmaya hiya han Cantandug	*I learned she left Cantandug,*
Napulo na ka tuig ngan upat ka dulom na an umagi.	*Ten years and four quarter moons ago.*
May nasiring nga di na daw mabalik.	*They say she would not come back.*
Aanhi la tingale nagtitinago hi Inse.	*Inse could just be hidng here*
Kay inin mga sinya	*As these zinnias keep*
Duro man panmarada	*Parading*
Ha mga bungsaran hinin BItanhuan.	*In the yards of BItanhuan.*

It has been more than ten years since Inse Agripina visited Sugbo and his family. Whether she died or simply left their hometown is unclear. The fourth stanza stars with "*Nabaroan ko nga binmaya hiya han Cantandug",* "I learned she left Cantandug,". *Binmaya* could mean the passing of Inse Agripina. It could mean she left this world and unto the next. However, *binmaya* is loose translated into English as "left", connoting the vagueness of the dramatic situation. "Binmaya" or "left" in this case could also mean she left their hometown for good, perhaps relocate somewhere outside of Leyte and Samar. Moreover, the line, "May nasiring nga di na daw mabalik.", "They say she would not come back." suggests that Inse Agripina may have also refused, on her own terms, to come back. Perhaps something happened in her hometown that triggered her to refuse coming home, which may also explain why she did not visited Sugbo since, "Diri na ha amon hiya nabisita", "She has not visited us since.".

Nevertheless, it is implied that Sugbo and his family have not met or made contact with Inse Agripina for more than ten years. "Diri na ha amon hiya nabisita", "She has not visited us since." Because Sugbo has not seen her for years, his memory of her remains that of a childhood with zinnias. He imagines her hiding in the bountiful of zinnias in Bitanhuan, as if saying she remains to guide him

in his journeys.

Additionally, Sugbo never mentions that he misses his Inse Agripina in the poem. The Waray are well known to be indirect and non-confrontational when faced with emotions and social dilemmas. There is even a term used to describe the use of indirect references in lieu of a direct statement of one's feeling or thoughts: *paaliday* (Dorado-Alegre, 2009). In the third stanza, Sugbo mentions that his mother misses Inse Agripina's zinnias—"Amo nga nailiw na hi Nanay han binungkos / Ni Inse nga mga sinya", "This is why Mother misses her harvest / Of zinnias,"—and that the smell of zinnias absorbed natural scent— that of *hagkot* (the cold), *kikidlat* (lightning), *adlaw* (sun), and *uran* (rain). Instead of giving a direct statement of his feeling and thoughts about Inse Agripina leaving, Sugbo refers to his mother who misses Inse Agripina's zinnias and the scents has absorbed. He refers to zinnias, the central image, when he really means to write of his longing for his grandaunt.

The whole poem is a *paaliday*. While the zinnias are the central image, what surfaces beyond the literal is the longing for Inse Agripina. The coloration of the dull green expanse, the distance of Cantandug and Bitanhuan, and the scents absorbed by zinnias are all indirections that lead to the flourishing of the implicit. *Binmaya na hi Inse Agripina*. She will not come back.

In "Parada Han mga Sinya" or "The Parade of Zinnias" (2014), Sugbo takes off the role of the elder as portrayed in "To My Nephew Clint" (2021), instead he becomes the nephew who yearns for the presence and guidance of his ancestors. He looks toward his *apoy*, the elder in his family, for counsel. Reading the two poems in succession shows the passing on of wisdom and familial values from generation to generation. The succession of roles is quite apparent. Inse Agripina took care and guided Sugbo when he was little. To pay it forward, Sugbo takes care and guides his nephew Clint even in his adolescence. Evident in both poems is the centrality of family—the respect the young have for their apoy and the role elders play in parenting shared with the mother and the father. Family remains a core elements in the life of the Filipino, more so, the Waray.

"Parada Han mga Sinya" or "The Parade of Zinnias" (2014) ends with a bitter-sweet note. Although Inse Agripina will not come back, Sugbo imagines her hiding in the zinnia bushes as they parade the yards of Bitanhuan. This hopefulness reflects the Waray sense of *pagkamarig-on* or resiliency. In her analysis of Waray resilience manifested during super typhoon Yolanda, Dorado-Alegre (2017) writes, "And the only way to cope with this horrorful experience is to act – to get into the limen of the embodied knowledge of the sacred, into the physicality of space where the space is now empty because the loved one is missing or dead." Sugbo does just that, he acts, and therefore reacts to the going away of his grandaunt. He remembers her in the physical space, allowing himself to grieve and concomitantly, heal.

The Waray pagkamarig-on is even more evident in "Few Months After Haiyan" (2021). In this poem, Sugbo details post-Yolanda Tacloban. In the first stanza, Sugbo maps out the city, describing distinct characteristics of specific areas after the super typhoon.

My city at ground zero is
wrecked houses, steel frames,
wood trusses jutting in the sun;
and stone walls torn by the sea's battering.
Along the shores of Magallanes
and Independencia sprout lean-tos and huts.

San Jose is a ghost of makeshift dwellings
broken lampposts and felled trees.

Tacloban at ground zero is all destruction: wrecked houses, steel frames, wood trusses, torn down stone walls, broken lampposts, and felled trees. The setting depicted in the first stanza sets the mood of the poem. The types of wreckage paint a destroyed city, devastated and hopeless. Yet in the proceeding stanzas, the mood transforms into something sanguine.

And early this morning came
a young man
carrying a sack of the world's sorrows,
plastic bottles, crumpled papers, and torn
shopping bags;
he sat at our doorstep,
facing the street,
and with his black pen,
wrote on the pavement

eyes
bruise
feet
grandfather
flood
walk
breathe
wounds
death
woman
hope

The poem has an ominous tone. From a generic description of the ground zero, depicted in the first stanza, the poem progresses into a more personal account. The second stanza tells a story of a young scavenger, "carrying a sack of the world's sorrows, / plastic bottles, crumpled paper, and torn / shopping bags;". The characterization implies that Sugbo pities the young scavenger. Notice his description of the items inside the sack. The sack is full of "the world's sorrows". The stranger is unquestionably part of the urban poor population. He sits on the doorstep of Sugbo's house and vandals the pavement which the third stanza visualizes. Although it is a vandal, Sugbo simply puts it that the stranger "wrote / on the pavement". This indicates that he perceives the vandal as something harmless.

Unlike the portrayal in media, looting after the Yolanda was fairly "peaceful" in Tacloban. Sure, there were *bodegas*, groceries, department stores, and appliance shops that took a heavy loss in revenue but these cases were few. The ones that looted flat screen TVs, stereos, and other non-essential equipment, were perceived by the majority as mercenaries. Because they were taking non-essential goods, the public saw them as greedy. Majority of people in Tacloban looted only for the essentials like food, water, clothes, and gasoline. People who knew where to get these essentials shared the information to people they met on the street. In the looting areas, strong men helped the women acquire goods. The ones that could climb heaps of boxes gave some to the unable.

The Waray had a sense of community even when they were looting. To an extent, the Waray

were communal, sharing the little and big they had to those in need. This same sense of communality is found in how Sugbo tolerates the vandal on his pavement. Instead of antagonizing the scavenger, Sugbo examines the writing and translates that experience into a poem. Sugbo perceives the writing on his pavement as an expression of the stranger's suffering as written in the fourth stanza.

With sweeping strokes
he drew the spaces
of his lost home,
and rendered
a haze of his heart.

A blue-eyed tourist caught
the scatter of words,
took a picture,
then with his camera
left quietly.

Just a stride away:
a tiny weed's yellow bloom shines
on a crevice of the concrete floor.

Sugbo also notices how personal suffering becomes interesting to the foreign eyes. "Blue-eyed" connotes that the person who took the picture of the scavenger's writing is white. The title of the poem uses the term the international name of the super typhoon "Haiyan" instead of the local name "Yolanda". This signals that the audience of this poem goes beyond the borders of Eastern Visayas.

Nonetheless, the poem retains its local texture. The mapping out of the city in the first stanza indicates that the point-of-view of the poem comes from the insider of the culture being portrayed. It comes from a person who clearly knows the city and can deeply empathize with the young scavenger. Moreover, the blue-eyed photographer is described as a "tourist", a person not from Tacloban, a non-Waray. The use of "tourist" distinguishes the insider from the outsider. A role reversal occurs when the outsider, who presumes the role of the observer, becomes the observed. The writer makes his cultural identity know to non-Waray readers by locating himself in the chaos of ground zero. Even when he speaks of a language not innately his, the writer presents the local. He positions himself as a resident of ground zero, experiencing the recovery. Sugbo maintains a Waray consciousness even when he writes in English.

In the Introduction to *Poems from Ground Z*, Sugbo (2021) writes, "It took me some more months before I could finally write my poems about Haiyan. I could not write them any earlier because my memories of the typhoon were quite raw, like wounds that still needed time to heal." English warrants a writer from the region to distance himself from a raw and highly personal experience such as Yolanda. When the writer who experiences grief and sorrow writes in translation, a space to process his emotions opens up. This leeway is a catalyst for healing. It aids the writer from the region to come into terms with his experience, more so, his trauma. Perhaps this is why the entirety of Sugbo's third poetry collection is written in English. Perhaps he was writing to heal. "I wrote and will still write about Haiyan because I want to remember and make others remember the event, the irretrievable loss, and the well of goodness that spread throughout the city at the time," (Sugbo, 2021).

One of the many goodness that spread throughout the city after Yolanda is found in the last stanza attempts of the poem. "Just a stride away: / a tiny weed's yellow bloom shines / on a crevice

of the concrete floor." Here again is a *paaliday*. Not far away from the writing on the pavement is a small cracked opening on the concrete floor – a crevice – where one could imagine the slow and subtle opening of a small yellow bud as the sun shines upon the flowering of weeds. No matter how big a tragedy, a small and tiny ounce of the last fallen word from the young scavenger's writing sprouts. Hope.

Hope is the indirect feeling "Few Months after Haiyan" (2021) wishes to convey, the same cessation in "Parada Han mga Sinya" or "The Parade of Zinnias" (2014). It is the end-point behind the many shades of meaning in both poems. The being *pagkamarig-on* of the Waray is built on a strong sense of hope. Even in circumstances when longing and trauma are not necessarily present, the Waray remain hopeful.

In the poem "*Larang"* or "Annunciation" (2014), Sugbo shows how hopefulness is deeply embedded in the faith and belief system of the Waray. The poem talks about the Saint Anthony de Padua Church in Sulangan, Guiuan, Eastern Samar, where locals and pilgrims visit to make a wish. It is believed that a strong typhoon once came to Sulangan. In the midst of the typhoon and while a lot of things were about to be submerged in water, the statue of Saint Anthony de Padua was almost undamaged. It remained intact and whole. Since then, locals of Sulangan have prayed to Saint Anthony for miracles and thanked him for saving them from the typhoon. No matter how bizarre or impossible one's wish may be, it is believed that Saint Anthony de Padua would grant them. During the *desperas* of the feast day of Saint Anthony, people would go on a pilgrim walk from Guiuan proper to Sulangan with the belief that their penitence would cleanse their souls and attract more blessings.

In the poem, the belief that Saint Anthony de Padua grants wishes is alive. The belief of his miracle works is extant. The first and second stanzas sketch a melancholy and miraculous atmosphere of Sulangan.

Tubtub la ad akita dinhi
Ha baybayon han Sulangan.

Kahuman ha kapilya pandagkot
Pandiskarga han mga suol kan San Antonio:
An kawaray tipoy, waray liwat trabaho,
May sakit nga amay, lukat han prenda,
Ginpukan nga gugma, kasumo,
Adi kita hinin baybay
Nagpapataghom
Han at mga tiil
Nagpapatin-aw
Han panlantaw.

We can only stay up to this point,
The shore of Sulangan.

After lighting candles in the chapel
Unloading our burdens on Saint Anthony:
Empty pockets, no job,
An ailing father, a mortgage,
A jilted love, boredom,
Here by the shores we wait
To cool
Our feet
To rest
Our eye.

Pilgrims, tourists, and locals unload their burdens to Saint Anthony, Sugbo writes. They light a candle and pray to have money, to get a job, for the recovery of a dying father, to pay off debt, and to heal from heartbreak. Apart from the unburdening of sorrow in the church, the natural space of Sulangan also grants a person to meditate and recalibrate, to *pamahongpahong*. Similar to "Tirimadon" or "The Sign" (2008) in Chapter 2, Sugbo meditates, *namamahongpahong*. He sources his ease and relaxation from the natural elements of Sulangan—"Nagpapataghom / Han at mga tiil / Nagpapatin-aw / Han panlantaw", "To cool / Our feet / To rest / Our eyes". The writer's senses become heightened due to the exposure to the natural elements. He is able to notice the shape and

condition of Humonhon island.

Tabok hinin lawod	*Across this sea*
Hi Humonhon	*Humonhon,*
Himyang nga nahigda	*Lays calmly*
Sugad hin higante nga nakaturog	*Like a giant sleeping*
Hinin abohon nga banig han dagat.	*On the ashen mat of the sea.*
Tubtub la anay kita dinhi,	*Up to this point we can stay*
Ha baybayon han Sulangan;	*On the shore of Sulangan.*
Abot la dinhi	*Up here*
An aton mga mahihimo nga larang;	*We can make our wishes,*
Pagbinakho atubang kan San Antonio;	*Mumbling our misery to Saint Anthony;*
Kahimyang man la ni Humonhon.	*How sound Humonhon sleeps!*

As Sugbo gazes at Homonhon, he notices how sound and still the island seems and how the sea looks calm. He realizes that importance of casting his wishes to the wind. He thinks, "Tubtub la anay kita dinhi, / Ha baybayon han Sulangan;", "Up to this point we can stay / On the shore of Sulangan." Sugbo give his *larang.* He delivers his pronouncement. He and the person he is talking with in the poem can so much as lay on the shore, unwind, unburden themselves of sorrows to Saint Anthony, but they do not really know if their wishes will be granted. They hold unto faith. Whether or not Saint Anthony would grant their wishes, *bahala na*. Cast it to the wind. What is important is that they are able to *pamahongpahong*, to meditate and realign themselves with the world.

In this poem, Sugbo is not just an observer of the religious practice, of the pilgrimage in Sulangan and the faith that wishes will granted by Saint Anthony de Padua. Sugbo is also a participant of the culture depicted. He participates in the healing process. Like the prayerful wishers in church, he too lights a candle and unburdens his sorrows. *Namamahongpahong gihap hiya*. He too meditates. He stays on the shores of Sulangan, marvels at Humonhon, and practices self-reflexivity.

Humonhon—like the rain trees, the zinnias, and the flowering on the crevice—is a natural element which the writer references to indirectly convey his feelings and thoughts. Without these natural central images, a *paaliday* would not form. Apart from the deep rooted relationship with the *kaganak*, the Waray also forge a deep relationship with the *kalikasan*. Rain trees in "To My Nephew Clint" (2021) function to remind Clint to be present in the here and now. Zinnias trigger a childhood memory with Inse Agripina in "Parada Han mga Sinya" or "The Parade of Zinnias" (2014). The flowering on the crevice in "Few Months After Haiyan" (2021) symbolize hope. The stillness and calmness of Humonhon in "Larang" or "Annunciation" (2014) is source a realization; that the practice of *pamahongpahong* and the participation in the belief system is important to replenish strength.

Positioning oneself from the inside, as not just an observer of the culture presented on paper, rather as a constituent part of the world depicted, grants not only a deeper understanding of the culture studied but also the blossoming of the insider's perspective (Dorado-Alegre, 2017). To embody the culture is being part of it.

In "An Akon Inuoli" or "Going Home" (2008), Sugbo outlines how reflection, immersed in kalikasan, to the apoy and the *igkasi/kapwa* achieves total internal recovery. The poem opens with Sugbo exercising a *paaliday.*

Nag-aandam pa la	*As I prepare*
Paglakat para Hindang	*To leave for Hindang*
Masarit na ako ha akon bugto upod pasangil:	*I tell my sister a reason:*
Makikikigkita ako kan Na Talina	*To see Na Talina*
Kay inin naninig-a ko	*For the stiffness*
Nga abaga kinahanglan tuthuan,	*In my shoulders she needs to spit on,*
Inin akon kabutlaw tarayhupan.	*This weakness she needs to blow away.*

Filipinos do not quite say goodbye (Alegre, 1993). Often when someone takes leave he says, "Paalis na ako". I'll be going. Some say "bye-bye" of course, but the contraction rings not of the same finality or farewell as "goodbye". The Waray call it *panarit* or *pagsarit,* its root word being *sarit,* meaning to ask permission. Sugbo takes his leave for Hindang and asks permission from his sister. The *paaliday* transpires when he utters a *pasangil* or an excuse upon taking his leave. Sugbo does not reveal to his sister why he goes home to Hindang. The next stanza shows the writer's real purpose, *kayano hiya nauli,* why he decided to go home.

Pagabot ko ha Magallanes	*When I reach Magallanes*
An balay hilarom an pagbuot	*The house is in deep thought*
Kay hi Tata an nananagat pa.	*For Tata had gone out to fish*
Dayon ko pakadto kan Nanay humayan,	*So I walk straight to Nanay's ricefield*
Mag-iininaw hiton mga talabong nga kalasan.	*To watch the wild herons.*
Kna Na Trining kalubian liliputon ko liwat	*Round Na Trining's plam grove, I trace*
Rumbo an suba nga amon ni Okoy	*The path to the river we used to cross,*
Gintatanoktabokan hadton isdaan pa.	*Okoy and I, when it was still full of fish.*
Sirong han Talisay igpupuruko ko	*And in the shade of the talisay tree I sit,*
Inin dara ko nga mga ugmad	*Taking out these panic I brought with me*
Nga atubang hinin naglilinaw	*And looking out to the clear*
Nga dagat han Hindang	*Waters of Hindang*
Akon inuoli an tanan	*I give back everything*
Basi ako man maulian.	*That I may recover.*

Naugmaran hiya. The writer's soul was startled, causing an internal imbalance. *Ugmad* is translated as "panic". The soul panics when it is startled. The panic causes a disturbance in consciousness and an unsettling feeling. To aid this, Sugbo goes home to Hindang— goes to his mother's rice fields to watch the wild herons, to Na Trining's palm grove, and to the river he and Okoy once crossed. Under the shade of a talisay, he looks out to the clear waters of Hindang to *pamahongpahong.*

The Waray's relationship with *kalikasan* in this poem does not end with a *paaliday*. As established in the first part of the findings and discussions, the natural realm is a site for recovery, but what makes Hindang truly home to the writer is beyond the natural. The familiarity of the place and its precipitation to reconstruct spatial memory allows the writer to be at home. More than the natural, it is the cultural, forged with many relationships, that generates the sense of being at home.

By paying attention to the titles attributed to Talina and Trining, one can see the deep rootedness of relationships. Both are attributed with title *Na*, a contraction of *Mana*, a Waray term used to express respect for older women. Not only does the ascription of "Na" show respect for the elder but it also emphasizes on the relationship, on the familiarity instead of the othering. Na Talina and Na Trining are almost like family, like the apoy because they are elders. They are not others,

rather *kapwa* in Filipino, the unity of the "self" and "others" (Enriquez, 1978). In Waray, they are *igkasi.*

The writer is never alone. He is surround by his *kaganak* (parents), *apoy* (ancestors), and *igkasi/kapwa* (close friends). The Waray yearn not only to be part of the lives of his *kaganak, apoy,* and *igkasi*, but also to be together with them. And only in their togetherness can he be truly whole.

Relationships, whether with the natural or with the people dear to him, are always central to the life of the Waray. More than the physical, the cultural prospers. When the Waray experiences an unsettling feeling, *naugmaran,* he know he needs to go home. The last two lines of the poem summarize the ultimate of recovery, "*Akon inuoli an tanan / Basi ako maulian",* "I give back everything / That I may recover". *Maulian*—the Waray term used to refer to internal recover relates to the sense of going home. One gives everything back*, inuoli*, in order to recover, *maulian*. In other Visayan cultures, people strike gongs and drums or bang pots and pans to create a noise baggage, hoping that it attracts attention to a lost soul and find its way back to its abode (Mojares, 2002). When one experiences an *ugmad,* one must go home, *uli,* to be at home. No matter how strong the *ugmad* or how long the sense of self is lost, the soul can always return home. Only in the familiarity of home - the physicality of space and comfort of family and friends – can the *ugmad* be cast away.

What characterizes the cultural realm of the Waray most is its value for relationships. The depth of each relationship with the *apoy* and *igkasi/kapwa* is defined by the attribution such as Inse, Nanay, Na. Natural elements and places associated to a person such as rain trees, zinnias, a flowering on a crevice, Sulangan, and Hindang unravel the familiarity and intimacy in each relationship. Shared moments such as a drive, a childhood, a super typhoon, a pilgrimage, and going home nourish the intimacy between the writer and the people he wrote about.

Sugbo's cultural realm is a shared multi-dimensional sensorial experience. Behind every poem is a *paaliday* that points toward a relationship—relationship with a nephew, with Inse, with the apoy, with the *igkasi/kapwa*, with faith, and with *kalikasan*. Waray cultural norms and practices such as a *sagdon*, shared parenthood with other elders, *pagkamarig-on, pagsarit*, and *maulian,* are formed to reinforce the intra and inter-dependence among people and with *kalikasan.* Each norm and practice is a manifestation of the core value "1+".

Reading each poem as a memory in a relationship-centered realm trace the junctures of significant interactions the Waray writer cherishes. Each juncture is a unique bonding moment. Each moment evinces an honest aspect of his being and becoming. Through his poetry, such bonding moments are reified, creating emblems of genuine and deep human connection. The Waray writer is a caring uncle, a longing grandnephew, a loving son, and a concerned *igkasi/kapwa* altogether. His social identities are his selves. He becomes defined by them.

The cultural realm of the Waray is a world forged from relationships. To be in it means to create meaningful bonds, ones that last beyond lifetimes. Only in the bond can the Waray truly define themselves. Only then can they assert who they are.

The Supernatural Realm: The Sacredness of the *Mga Diri Sugad ha Aton*

Covar (1998) describes the supernatural realm as "lihim na kapaligiran" or the secret realm. It is a sacred space distinct to the Filipino and may not necessarily be as deeply and fully understood by foreign scholars. Hence, its "secretness". There are certain characteristics that Covar (1998)

associates with the supernatural realm such as *likas* (natural), *litaw* (appear), and *hayag* (surfaced). Filipinos know that supernatural beings exist. In certain instances, they appear, *litaw*, or make their presence felt through dreams (Dorado-Alegre, 2017). Like all cultures, the Waray create norms, customs, practices, and rituals to communicate with or cast away the supernatural. For instance, it is common practice among the Waray that when a person is lost, circling the same places he passes by, he must reverse his clothes and put it back on. Only then, can he escape the loop opened by a malevolent and/or disturbed supernatural being. While the reversal of clothes is a created custom, the existence of the supernatural is not. Like *kalikasan*, they too, are *likas*. The only difference is that they occupy a space beyond the natural. Hence, *super*natural.

Western scholars like Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon (1995) would usually categorize the supernatural as just another construct of the cultural realm, suggesting that the beings which permeate the former are just mere *likha* or creations of the culture that acknowledges its existence. However, for the Filipino, more so the Waray, the supernatural is real. It is not mere imagination.

To fully understand the supernatural is near impossible perhaps because it exists in a realm beyond the natural and cultural, a realm humans cannot enter unless dead. Although some can communicate with the supernatural like the *babaylan* (spirit communicators), they cannot travel to the realm (Dorado-Alegre, 2014).

Diwata is arguably the most common term used to refer to supernatural beings in Filipino folklore. There are mainly two types of *diwata*. First is the type of *diwata* that does not guard or dwell in natural objects. They are the *diwata* that simply occupy the supernatural realm and are often considered to be supernatural beings of a higher stature. Take for example *Laon*, the supreme ruler of many Visayan cultures whose name denotes antiquity, and the Tagalog *Bathala* who is believed to be the divine creator or maker (Scott, 1994). The second type of *diwata* is the one that guards and dwells in natural spaces like seas, rivers, trees, forests, fields, and the sky. The Waray refer to this type of *diwata* as *umurukoy,* the root words being "ukoy" or stay put. There are several kinds of *umurukoy* depending on the natural habitats they dwell in. The ones that dwell in the forest are called *kahoynon.* The ones in the forest clearings amidst felled trees and logs are called *batangnon.* Those in the ground are called *tunan-on* or *tagtuna.* The ones that dwelt in the water are called *tubignon.* There is a specific term for those that dwell in rivers, *tagasalog.* Likewise, the ones that inhabit grassy lands are called *tagabanwa* (Villegas, 1968).

In "Engkantada" (2008), Sugbo writes of a diwata that guards a mountain and once brought bounty to the forest it inhabited. The first stanza of the poem establishes the familiarity of Sugbo with the forest.

ha pagbinalikbalik ko	*each time I'm back*
dinhi hinin mga sarak-on	*on the slopes*
hanin kabubkiran	*of this mountain*
di ko na ikaw hinikikit-an.	*I don't see you anymore.*
say ko natatangbuan	*All I find*
inin mga bulod nga binungi-an,	*cleft hills*
mga dapdap ngan bantulinao	*the dapdap and bantulinao trees left*
nga daw pinanmayaan.	*Like children caught at the war zone.*

The first line implies that Sugbo has gone several times to the mountain. In all of the times that he went, he never saw the *diwata*. Instead what he found are the dapdap and bantulinao trees in the hills

were left to survive by themselves.

One can immediately identify the type of *diwata* in the first stanza. With the word *pinanmayaan* or "left", one can denote that the *diwata* is an *umurukoy*. The *diwata* once lived in the mountains and guarded the dapdap and bantulinao trees. Interestingly, the *diwata* is female. Notice that the last line in the English version likens the dapdap and the bantulinao trees to "children caught at the war zone". The war in this line may just be a hypothetical war, nothing specific. More significant is the likening of trees to children, as if saying that the *diwata* abandoned her dapdap and bantulinao children. Although fathers today are also expected to care for their children, conventionally, it is still mothers who look after them.

Apart from the children mentioned in the last line of the first stanza, the title of the poem, "Engkantada", also suggest that the *diwata* is female. Although anthropologically, *diwata* is ungendered, it has today become associated with the female. This is evident in the 2014 song titled "Diwata" by Abra featuring Chito Miranda where the description "ikaw ang pinakamaganda" (you are the most beautiful, alludes to a woman). The linkage to the female is caused by the "a" and "o" gender association in Spanish, where the former is female and the latter is male. Because there is no innate male counterpart to diwata, Filipino languages borrowed the Spanish *encanto*, the male conjugation of *encantar*, which means "enchanted". *Encanto* brough with it its female counterpart, *encantada*, to be adapted as well in Filipino languages which has now become synonymous to *diwata*. To appropriate the Filipino "ng" sound, *encanto* and *encantada* were re-spelled as *engkanto* and *engkantada* respectively.

The synonymity of *diwata* to the female sex, or in this case the *engkantada*, helps locate the poem in the many variations of an old Filipino legend found in thousands of folklore. This poem is perhaps a variant of the rich ensemble of tales that goes by several names like Mariang Makiling, Mariang Sinukuan, and Maria Cacao (Mojares, 2002). All versions have female protagonist who by some tragic event, leave their abode. The motherly features of the *engkantada* mirror the view of women in Philippine society; that they are essential to the growth and living of a nation, or in the case of the poem, the lives of people living in the mountain slopes.

As pointed out in the proceeding stanzas, the disregard for the *engkantada,* concomitantly, women, results in the vulnerability of the natural space to evil forces.

hadto, siring han ak mga kaapoyan,	*long ago, my ancestors used to say,*
maaram an kabablayan ha mga bakilid	*those, living on the slopes, knew*
kun nalugsong ka	*when you had arrived*
kay nanduduroy lugod	*for things flowed in excess:*
panmukad an kitikot, an surangga, pati sampaga	*the flowering of the kitikot, the surangga and sampaga*
nanrarangrang an tiyotes ngan burak,	*the swelling of the tiyotes and burak*
nagpaparumba pagkahinog an aslum,	*the extravagant fruiting of the pomelos*
mga saging upod an rimas.	*bananas and rimas,*
asya liwat an panngakak han kaugangan	*the loud cackling of the hens,*
panhuni hinin gangis, gitgit ngan kusi.	*the clear chirping of cicadas, the gitgit and kusi,*
yana bis lumatod di na ha imo nakilala.	*Now even the children don't know you*
mga lagas waray na iniindigan	*the old don't join gatherings any longer*
mga susumaton pinanwakay na	*they've lost the tales to time*

say mababatian initon-iton hinin kabablayan.	*One can only hear the squabbles spilling from these houses.*
uli na gad *ngan tambala* *inin kabubkiran pati kapatagan,* *taonga hin damo nga katingalahan.*	*come,* *and heal* *these mountains and plains,* *thread once more your spells and wonder.*

Sugbo's ancestors told him that the *engkantada* once brought bounty to people who lived in the mountain slopes. Upon the *engkantada*'s arrival was the blooming of plants and blossoming of flowers like the *kitikot, surangga, sampaga, tiyotes*, and *burak*. Fruits like *aslum* (pomelos), *saging* (bananas), and *rimas* would be in abundance. Endemic animals like the *ugang* (hens), *gangis* (cicadas), gitgit bird, and kusi bird would announce her arrival through loud chirps and tymbals. It is implied that the people worshiped and thanked the *engkantada* for the blessings she gave. Unfortunately, the *engkantada* left. The line "inin bulod nga binungi-an", "cleft hills", subtly hints at the desecration of the diwata's abode. *Binungi-an* literally means lost or missing teeth. The translation is "cleft", suggesting a split or gap. How else will hills look like they've lost teeth, *bunungi-an*, creating gap lines, if not for massive logging?

After the *engkantada* left, people started forgetting about her. Children do not even know of her. People stopped gathering for rituals in praise of her as expressed in the line "mga lagas waray na iniindigan", "the old don't join gatherings any longer". When Sugbo goes to the mountain, all he hears are the squabbles - the loud petty quarrels from residents of the mountain slopes. And so, Sugbo pleads to the *diwata,* "uli na gad", "come". Come home, he says, "ngan tambala", "heal", through your "katinghalaan", "spells and wonders", the destroyed mountains and plains.

An important characteristic of the supernatural realm surfaces in "Engkantada" (2008). When people violate certain interdictions in the supernatural realm, not only does the protector of the enchanted space disappear, but the space also becomes susceptible to evil forces; evil that manifests through a series of unfortunate events. For example: the baldness of hills, the non-fruiting of endemic plants, the death of flowers, the silence of animals, and the emergence of heated arguments. Hence, the sacredness of the supernatural realm. It is important to keep the realm untainted and its protector thanked, praised, and undisturbed.

The *engkantada* is an *umurukoy* of the forest and plains, perhaps a *kahoynon* or *tagabanwa*, but definitely not a *bantangnon* for she abandoned her abode when people conducted massive loggings to the hills. Where could she have gone? No one knows. Perhaps she chose another mountain to protect, some other natural space to guard. Perhaps she had enough and retired. No one knows. In many version of the folktale, people await her coming home. Like Sugbo, they plead for her to come back, to once again cast her magic upon the mountain. Often, people are in the state of "alert waiting", of the uncertain regretful future, as punishment for their destruction of the sacred space (Mojares, 2002).

Apart from the good *diwata*, there are those that deliberately cause harm on humans. In "Engkantada" (2008), the *diwata* merely left. In some version of the same legend, the protagonist seeks revenge upon the people that did her wrong (Quintos, 2018). She becomes a *madarahug,* a malevolent and/or mischievous supernatural being. The *umurukoy* can become *madarahug* once disturbed.

The Waray utter the phrase "Tabi, Tabi, apoy!" whenever they pass by the woods, a grassy field, or a knoll as a way of asking permission and announcing their presence to the supernatural. "Tabi" means "to give way". "Apoy" is a direct address to the ancestors. Because the *umurukoy* inhabit a dwelling usually invisible to humans, they and their houses can easily be stepped on, knocked over, or disturbed by noise. If a human being forgets to utter "Tabi, Tabi, Apoy!" and knocks over the invisible house of an *umurukoy*. The *umurukoy* can inflict harm on the offender through some physical ailment. They can *sabrag*, throw supernatural dust or particles over their human enemy, resulting in a skin ailment (Dorado-Alegre, 1994). They can also *darahug,* inflict physical or mental injury to their human enemy. Lastly, they can possess bodies of the human offender through the process called *ginsangkayan,* which literally means "befriend". It is important to note that past-human supernatural beings called *kalag* can also inhabit human bodies. This process too is called *ginsangkayan* (Dorado-Alegre, 1994). In some cases though, the non-*umurukoy diwata* is just mischievous than malevolent. For example, the *aghoy,* known for its far-away sounding whistling when near the human listener and vice-versa, would sometimes just whistle for fun. The *aghoy* would not inflict any form of harm on the human being. It would just poke fun on nearby human beings by making its presence felt.

In the poem "Pamabluan" or "Haunting" (2014), Sugbo explores the idea of *madarahug*. The poem talks of a haunted road that has claimed several *kalag*. It enumerates several unfortunate people who died on the street. Here is the entire poem:

Nakuha hin magtarabok inin Calle Real kada tuig	*Calle Real claims a passerby every year*
Kay damo in mga nambabalo nga nagbabantay.	*For its specters have grown in number;*
Hadto tumarabok ini hira;	*They too were passersby;*
Usa-usa hira nagkalakat nagkawara:	*One by one they went away and never came back:*
Pinanligsan o binunguan han awto.	*A jeep had bumped or run over them:*
May hi Inse Garet nakabelo tikang ha simbahan;	*There was Inse Garet coming from church with her veil;*
May gupon sigi an hiyomhiyom hasta nga tigda an pagkidyom;	*There was a clown who kept smiling and crumbled;*
May talaamay nagdadara hin pinalit nga isda ha San Fernando;	*There was a father and son who just bought fis from San Fernando;*
May man gutiay nga kabataan kappot pa an ira bag tikang eskwelahan;	*There were schoolchildren carrying their bags.*
May nira inaaro:	*Now they ask for something:*
Kanta;	*A song;*
Pangaraba;	*A prayer;*
Ngan plato puno hin prutas.	*And a plateful of fruits.*
An diri naamot	*Those who do not pay tribute*
Kinukuhaan hin buot,	*Lose their sense*
Tinutugwayan	*And are led*
Ngadto ha kawad-an.	*To the beyond.*
Kinalimtan man gud hira han kadam-an.	*Many no longer think of them.*

Every year, Sugbo writes, Calle Real claims another unfortunate pedestrian, a *magtarabok.* Calle Real, the main road that leads to downtown Tacloban, is personified. It is the road that collects pedestrians. The verbs "*nakuha"* in the Waray version, and "claims" in the English version, indicates the *pamabluan* or haunting in the poem. The whole line, "Nakuha inin Calle Real kada tuig", "Calle Real claims a passerby every year", implies that many deaths occur in Calle Real; that some malevolent force permeates the road and acquires the souls of the victims of road accident.

It is interesting that the reference to the haunting is a road, a man-made object. This signals that there is no *umurukoy* since they are believed to only inhabit natural spaces and objects. What type of supernatural being then can inhabit the road? Perhaps it can be a disturbed *kalag*, unable to fully crossover the afterlife due to the circumstances of its death in the human world. The *kalag*, unlike the *umurukoy*, can inhabit mad-made objects. Take for example the pedicab drivers who allegedly saw a figure of a lady in white inside an abandoned house owned by an Overseas Filipino Worker.

As indicated in the poem, there were several deaths by road accident in Calle Real. There was Inse Garet who was coming from church, a clown that perhaps came from a show, a father and son who just bought fish, and children coming from school. Perhaps the *kalag* of these departed human beings are the ones that haunt Calle Real. After all, the circumstances of their death are sudden and bereaved. But notice what the poem implies. The *kalag* ask for an efficacious ritual from the living. They ask that they be remembered through *kanta* (song), *pangaraba* (prayer), or *halad* (food offering) so that they may rest in peace. There is no indication that the *kalag* of the departed intend to harm the living. They only ask that they be remembered.

There may actually be no supernatural being in Calle Real. There may only be a malevolent force, unnamed, unidentified, but felt, that collects the *kalag* of unfortunate pedestrians. Thus, the personification of Calle Real. The place where the unfortunate deaths occurred function as an object of personification, thereby allowing the concept of *darahug* to be seamlessly conveyed in the poem. Calle Real may not refer to a specific supernatural being but it calls attention to the force that randomly *claims* pedestrians. Furthermore, the *kalag* do not haunt Calle Real. What is haunting is the many coincidental road accidents throughout the years in Calle Real. *Kada tuig*, every year, the road claims a *magtarabok.*

Unlike "Engkantada" (2008), "Pamabluan" or "Haunting" (2014) does not identify a specific type of supernatural being. "Engkantada" is set in a rural area, where, as established in the first part of the Findings and Discussions, the setting is more attuned to *kalikasan.* Usually, the *madarahug* conduct their horrendous acts in places where the setting is more natural than artificial. Supernatural beings like the *diwata* and *umurukoy* are more likely present in these places because they dwell in natural spaces and objects. "Pamabluan" or "Haunting" (2014) shows that even in an urban area, the *darahug* can occur. Even in places where the appearance is more artificial than natural, the supernatural is still present. It may only be a force felt and not necessarily an identified being.

The *kalag* in the "Pamabluan" or "Haunting" ask that the living conduct a ritual to commemorate them. They ask that they be offered a song, prayed over, and offered a plate of fruits. Through these rituals, the dead are remembered. Those that do not conduct rituals, Sugbo writes, lose their *buot* or "sense".

When parents allow their child to decide independently but do not fully agree with their decision, they say, "Pagsagdi it hiya. May buot na man ito," Let them be. They are of age. When parents want their child to decide otherwise or want them to realize the gravity of their decision, they tell their child, "Panmuruotbuot daw," Ponder upon your decision. Think about it again. The *buot* is similar to the Tagalog *malay* or conscience. It underscores a sense of moral compass, a kind of consciousness to discern right from wrong. The notion of not conducting rituals for the dead is culturally unacceptable for the Waray. It means losing one's *buot* because rituals are sacred and are basic rights of the departed. Forgetting the dead is sacred injustice. In a way, losing one's *buot* is also

losing one's "sense" to discern right from wrong. For the Waray, eliminating one's morality is like the deleting the genetic footprint that distinguish humans from other species. It makes less of a person, more so, less of a species.

The most important feature of a ritual is its nature of remembering the *kalag* of the deceased. Sacred acts are necessary to the Waray for they uplift the spirits of both the living and the dead. When performed, the bereaved feel that rituals open portals of renewal; renewal of life for the deceased in the supernatural realm, and renewal of strength for the living to move forward, to live on in the natural and cultural realm and give meaning to their own post-traumatic selves. The only way to cope with the pain of a horrific experience is through coming into terms with the loss, meaning to enter the threshold of the embodied knowledge of the sacred and face the inevitable truth: that death is an unapologetic law of nature, irreversible, ultimate, and final (Dorado-Alegre, 2017).

In the poem "At Cancabato" (2021), Sugbo expounds on the sacredness of remembering the dead. When physical bodies are lost, unable to be buried or cremated, the living create their own rituals to commemorate and pay tribute to the lives lost.

All day the waves sob softly
and below the liquid blue, they lie

hundreds of nights
hundreds of them
hundreds of mornings
hundreds of them
hundreds of dusks
hundreds of them
men women children

They no longer mind
the frail weeping
of weeping
of the little girl in green frock
on the once torn sea wall.

They do not hear the fishermen
in their lighted boats setting out nightly to sea.

They could be shells now
Bleached by salt and time.

Five weeks after super typhoon Yolanda made landfall, the confirmed number of deaths was more than 6,000, excluding the more than 1,800 missing (Cable News Network, 2013). Of the more than 6,000 deaths, all were caused by the high rise of water. Some corpses were taken by the sea, eventually washing ashore in other islands like Camotes which faces Tacloban (Sunstar, 2013). The first stanza of the poem references the Yolanda dead who were consumed by the sea. Waves paint an image of mourning in the poem. Waves – the movement of sea water – is likened to tears, those that burst and rush out of the human eye. And just like a sob, a sound at sea is produced, weeping for the faceless *kalag*. Faceless – because their physicality is lost at sea, perhaps somewhere below the deep, their bodies lie. The image is a lament, one that introduces the solemn structure of the second stanza which looks and sounds like a litany for the dead.

"hundreds of nights / hundreds of them / hundreds of mornings" and so, imitates the rhythm of a *pamatbat,* the Waray folk-Catholic nine-day prayer series that starts on the day immediately after the day of death and continues for nine days (Dorado-Alegre, 1994). The repetition of the line "hundreds of them" serves as the *sabat,* the response to the prayer leader similar to "Lord have mercy on us" or "pray for us". The line "men women children" serve as the end antiphon, the short prayer after a responsorial Psalm or in this case, a *pamatbat*. From a mere pronoun - "they" and "them" - unnamed, and unidentified, the dead are given identities, not too specific, but just enough to release them from a generalization. In this manner, the *kalag* of the dead at sea are remembered. Among the *kalag* in the supernatural realm, they know for whom the ritual is meant for. They know who remembers them. Unlike the nine-day prayer series however, which usually call unto God, saints, and angels, the second stanza speaks of the passage of time: nights, mornings, dusks. The stanza signals that the deaths of the hundreds have passed nine-days, perhaps even a year.

The identification of the dead and the calling attention to time make the points raised in the third, fourth, and fifth stanzas clearer. The third stanza identifies a sobbing little girl through her "green frock" and the place of her weeping, denoting that she remembers the *kalag* of her dead. The fourth stanza suggest that the *kalag* at sea are no longer disturbed. They no longer hear the fishermen nor see the light from their boats. This indicates that the *kalag* have already gone beyond the sea. The *tubignon* can enjoy a vaster space in their dwelling since the *kalag* of the dead have been permitted to travel beyond the *managbanag* or twilight zone. They have gone beyond the oscillation of the shared fragile overlap of the living who remain in the natural and cultural realm, and the dead who reside in the supernatural realm (Dorado-Alegre, 2017). This in-between zone is a sacred place of healing for both the living and the dead. On one hand, the living help their dead travel beyond the zone through ritual, consequently allowing their post-traumatic selves to heal—to remember, to cry and sob, to come into terms with death's finality, and eventually, move on, live, and let go. On the other hand, the dead aid in the moving on of their living by going beyond the transitory zone. Their living's remembering through ritual is their ticket to travel the beyond, where they can eternally rest, and hopefully, find everlasting peace.

Healing is the art of letting go. Only in the *managbanag* zone can the *kalag* of both the dead and the living achieve peace. Covar (1998) explains that Filipinos, regardless of which language they speak, know the concept of the human body as a vessel where a spirit can inhabit its biological form. Filipinos call the spirit allowed to inhabit the human body many names. The Tagalog call it *kaluluwa.* For the Waray, it is the *kalag*. The *kalag* leave the inhabited body when it reaches death.

In the beyond, the *kalag* attain a greater form. "They could be shells now", Sugbo writes, elements of the sea, "bleached by salt and time", since they last lived on earth at sea. Once they attain their greater form in the supernatural realm, the *kalag* send signs and/or symbols to their living as reassurance that they are at peace.

Those on the surface
worry themselves thin
waiting for word about them,
monarch butterflies winging
through their house windows on certain evenings.

So many months have gone
since the mightiest storm

yet so many still visit the dock
and peer into the water,
their faces like islands of white clouds
floating on this unceasing blue.

"Surface" in the line, "Those on the surface", is metonymical to the troposphere, where survivors of Yolanda continue on with their lives. The survivors wait for a sign of reassurance from their dead whose bodies decay by salt and time as suggested in the fifth stanza. Often, the sign that the *kalag* send is in a form of an animal harbinger like a butterfly (Dorado-Alegre, 2017). In the sixth stanza, the butterfly too is metonymical, a symbol of the *kalag*'s success in attaining greater form. The butterfly is at its last stage of biological metamorphosis. By appearing at the house window of the survivor, the dead are saying that they too, are at the peak of their evolution.

Long has it been, months, since Yolanda claimed more than 6,000 lives. Yet, even with time passed, survivors and the ones who lost their loved ones, visit the Cancabato Bay. They face the sea still looking beavered, unsettled, and worried. Perhaps no butterfly has appeared to them yet. Perhaps they have not yet received a signal from their dead. So they continue to visit Cancabato and remember their dead. They continue to practice their own rituals.

Highlighted in the last stanza is the importance of continuous ritual practice until the living let go. In lieu of funerary practices, the survivors and loved ones visited Cancabato. This too is a ritual. Because the dead's body were not found, the Waray created their own rituals to come into terms with their loss. Even if the bodies of the dead do not find peace, at least their *kalag* will. Funeral practices reassure the living that their dead are in transition to a better place. To see the body of a loved one being sealed in a tomb or buried underground symbolizes not only the end of their lives but also their return to the afterlife. Without proper burial, the living are deprived of a funeral's symbolism. So they create their own rituals like going to Cancabato Bay. They search for signs and symbols like a monarch butterfly to satisfy their yearning. Only when they are given a sign can they be rest assured. Until then, they remember and continue to practice efficacious rituals.

Some rituals are more religious than others. Unlike "At Cancabato" (2021) where the ritual is more animistic, "Ninth Day Petition After the Last Novena Prayer for the Souls" (2021) is evidently Catholic. In the latter, the Waray-Catholic belief of the *kalag*'s purification emerges. The ninth day after death is called *tapos han linusaran* or *pasiyam*, meaning the end of the fallen and the ninth respectively (Dorado-Alegre, 2017). It marks the end of the first stage of the *kalag*'s purification. Other stages of the *kalag*'s purification include *ika-kwarenta* (the fortieth), *tagmo* (one year), and *hinukasan* (nine years). Generally, all these, including *tapos han linusaran* or *pasiyam*, can be referred to as *tapos*, meaning "the end".

In "Ninth Day Petition After the Last Novena Prayer for the Souls" only the first stage of the *kalag*'s purification is discussed.

I count the our fathers for you each night
That I may carry these
Burdens of fruiting trees, the wide
Patches of open fields, our old house
Drowning in your memories.

In hum the psalms for you each night

That I may endure
The birdcalls in your garden,
The scent of evening flowers,
The dry sound of wood at the stairs.
I pray each night
That you may be released from them.

Unburdening seems to be a recurring motif in Sugbo's poetry. In "Tirimad-on" or "The Sign" (2008), unburdening is presented as a necessity brought by the need to unwind from the weekday's business. In "Larang" or "Annunciation" (2014), Sugbo and his companion unload their burdens in Saint Anthony. In "Akon Inuoli" or "Going Home" (2008), Sugbo surrenders his worries to his hometown, Hindang. Like these poems, Sugbo wishes to unburden his dead in "Ninth Day Petition After the Last Novena Prayer for the Souls" . Through praying "our fathers" and humming "psalms", Sugbo hopes his dead do not carry the same aches he brings when recalling moments shared with them. Ironically, the memories he mentions are pure and happy. Sugbo takes it upon himself to carry the burden of good memories, along with the emotional baggage it entails. He seeks to "endure" life without his dead. Endure – because as he remembers all the good, he cannot but fathom that his dearly departed are gone. In the mundane, such as birdcalls in the garden, scent of evening flowers and the dry sound of wood at the stairs, Sugbo is reminded of the emptiness in the physical space where the space has become empty because the loved one is dead (Dorado-Alegre, 2017). His pleas—to carry burdens and endure life—paradox the goodness of memories and the pain felt with the reminder of life lost.

The poem exhibits the emotional turbulence one experiences when entering the *managbanag* zone. It shows the aches that come with remembering and the difficulty of letting go. Sugbo prays that his dearly departed do not feel the same grief he feels. Saying that he wishes they be released of the burden of memory is saying he wishes for them to go beyond the *managbanag* zone, and leave him behind.

The thought is rather quaint and sad. The grief is sustained albeit being fresh. An important detail to remember is that the litany is prayed over after the last novena prayer, after the *mamaratbat,* the prayer leaders conducting the *pamatbat*, have said Amen. The continuation of Our Fathers and the humming of Psalms suggest that Sugbo refuses to let go. He does not yet want the praying over to end because he has to confront living without his loved one. However, he knows he has to. The *kalag* of his dead need to be released because only in the letting go can they cross the *managbanag* zone and enter the beyond.

The Catholic faith introduced by the Spanish missionaries were accepted into Waray culture. In time, distinct Catholic practices like the praying to saints and the novena utilized in "Ninth Day Petition After the Last Novena Prayer for the Souls" (2021) woven into animistic belief. Catholicism did not stop the Waray from acknowledging the *diwata, umurukoy, madarahug*, and the belief of the *kalag* going into the beyond; nor did it stop them from practicing age-old rituals. The Waray integrated Catholicism with indigenous animism and ancestral worship, forming a liberal and complex system of faith and devotion which were primarily expressed through prayer and rituals (Covar, 1998). "Ninth Day Petition After the Last Novena Prayer for the Souls" is testament to the communion of Catholic and indigenous animism. The integration of Catholic practices manifested in the poem shows how the Waray were not completely colonized, how the taking in of the Catholic faith did not stop the Waray from believing in the *kalag.* When one eliminates the Catholic, the foreign, what is left is the belief in the *kalag*, a purely indigenous knowledge of the sacred that survived centuries of colonization (Covar, 1998).

The belief in the *kalag* is precious indigenous sacred knowledge for the Waray. Its existence distinguishes the type of supernatural being that takes up human form from those that do not. Unlike the *kalag*, the *diwata* do not have *buot* (human conscience). Among the *diwata* are two main categories: the *umurukoy* which inhabit natural spaces and objects, and those that do not but are considered to be of a higher stature such as Laon and Bathala.

The *kalag* in "At Cancabato" (2021) and "Ninth Day Petition After the Last Novena Prayer for the Souls" (2021) do not identify with specific people who lived on earth. "Although "At Cancabato" (2021) identifies which *kalag* are prayed over in the supernatural realm, it only considers the *kalag* as a generic population. They are generally unnamed. So is the *kalag* being prayed over a novena in "Ninth Day Petition After the Last Novena Prayer for the Souls" (2021). The "you" in the poem is the plural second-person pronoun as clarified in the title. "Souls" suggest that just like the *kalag* in "At Cancabato" (2021), they too are taken as an unnamed generic population.

There are some *kalag* closer to the living than others. These *kalag* are the ancestors of the living called *kaapuyapuyan*. Like the boatman sculpted on top of the Manunggul Jar, the *kalag* of the *kaapuyapuyan* are believed to receive the *kalag* from the managbanag zone. In the natural and cultural realm, the *kaapuyapuyan* are believed to be just a thought away. When the living have a problem and seek guidance from their *kaapuyapuyan*, they can just call out to them for help and their response would usually come in dreams or in the form of signs from *kalikasan* (Dorado-Alegre, 2017).

"Taburos han Dagat" or "Sea Spray" (2014) depicts the Waray seeking guidance from his ancestors. The poem is set by the shore where Sugbo is taken in the beauty of the sea.

Dara han duro nga taburos han dagat,	*Along with the strong gust of sea spray,*
An lidong nga dahon ha ak palad iginlupad;	*The round leaf from the palm takes flight;*
Nagkakalilisang an mga kabakhawan ha may baybayon;	*The bakhaw trees rustle wildly;*
Naningog hin tigda an nananago nga tikbubulan.	*The tikbubulan birds suddenly make sounds.*
Usa ka palki han akon mata	*In a wink of the eye*
Usa pnga baroto diin	*A lone boat*
Nakalingkod hi Apoy Simo butnga hiton kahaluagan nga asul;	*With Apoy Simo sitting in the midst of the widening blue;*
Guba na an mga pilapil ni Apoy ha Hindang;	*The dikes of his paddy in Hindang have long crumbled;*
An asugi han salaming ha may iya katurogan maiha na nga napanas.	*The mirror in the room where he sleeps has faded.*
Dapit ha tampi may usa ka Inse nga naghihinuring ha katubigan	*At a nearby shoal an old woman whispers to the waters;*
Nga unta kada paghangkop han balud	*With every sweep of the sea, she would wish*
Magbabata an iya kalawasan, an mga uban magkawara:	*Her body would turn younger, her gray hair black.*
Usa pa kapakli han akon mata	*In one more wink of the eye*
Mga balinsasayaw sigi an pagsinuropsurop	*The balinsasayaw birds keep diving into*
Hinin mabaturos nga hangin nagsisinibotsibot	*The wind and sea spray, taking in*
Ha kaladnganan han dagat.	*The mood of the sea.*

The specificity of action in each line symbolizes the yearning to find a sign from the *kaapuyapuyan*. Sugbo first notices the gust of sea spray that blows the leaf off his palm. The "*taburos*" or sea spray is strong that it makes the bakhaw trees *lisang* - panic - or as translated "rustle wildly". Even the tikbubulan birds feel its strength. Strong winds inbound pass through Sugbo's face. It makes him wink, and alas he sees Apoy Simo sitting on a *baroto*, a makeshift boat, in the middle of the sea.

The winking of his eyes signal the uncertainty of the scenery. And in this dream-like state, Sugbo reminisces on the *pilapil*, the dikes and paddy, that have crumbled. He remembers the faded mirror in Apoy Simo's room. He thinks of the time that has gone since his passing. Then, he notices an old woman, also by the shore, wishing to be young again. Another *taburos* plays with Sugbo. He winks, stares at the spot where he saw Apoy Simo, and find nothing but a balinsasayaw bird that dives deep with the playful *taburos*. Just like that, by a quick and swift moment, Sugbo is given a sign.

Remembering the dead, especially one's own dead, the *kalag* of his *kaapuyapuyan*, is integral to the spiritual life of the Waray. Even when they have gone beyond the *managnagbag* zone, have become purer than a thought, the living can still ask them for guidance. Like a *taburos* or sea spray, their messages are quick and swift. It only take a moment to notice their presence. The living must be sensitive and heighten their natural senses, if they want to receive messages.

Remembering one's *kaapuyapuyan* honors their memory and acknowledges the supernatural wisdom they possess in the afterlife. Rituals, whether religious or not, Catholic or animistic, help the living and the dead find peace. Signs and symbols reassure the living that their dead have successfully gone beyond the *managbanag* zone. And while these interpretations may be cultural, the nature of their supernatural-ness stems from indigenous sacred knowledge.

Acknowledging the existence of the supernatural—the *diwata*, the unnamed, the *umurukoy*, the *madarahug*, the *kalag*, and the *kaapuyapuyan*—asserts the realness of the Waray's experience. Often, they may be invisible but they are undoubtably present. Some safeguard *kalikasan*. Others cause harm. Some travel beyond the *managbanag* zone while others guide their living. They are all in the supernatural realm, a dimension beyond the *likas* and the *likha*, where life 's meaning supersedes present biology and human creativity.

Sugbo's poetry touches on the Waray's understanding of the supernatural realm. It reveals that this realm is a source of power—power to either preserve or destroy *kalikasan*, power to inflict harm like the *darahug*, power to heal through ritual, and power to gain wisdom from the *kaapuyapuyan*. Sugbo articulates his lived experience well about the supernatural. His poetry is an eloquent elucidation of the meaning of the sacred in everyday life. Reading the poems, through the lens of the Waray—an insider of the world depicted—enriches one's understanding of his culture, identity, and most especially, his life. His poems are an articulation of what Covar (1998) calls "kaalamang hindi-hayag", unspoken knowledge. It leads to a passage of illumined realities where the supernatural are integral to the life of the Waray. It opens up portals toward an enlightenment of the Waray sense of self and life.

Concluding Remarks

"A highly elaborated culture that did [does] not emphasize nor depend upon material wealth" (Alegre, 2020) emerges from the appropriation of Covar's *kapaligiran* as constituent parts of *puruyanan,* the Waray concept of home. Along with such appropriation is the treatment of the Waray and English versions of Sugbo's poems as liminal reflections on aspects of Waray life rather than literal equivalents. The richness of *kalikasan*, the abundance of forged relationships with family and friends, and the sacredness of the supernatural, unpack what it means to be Waray. Despite the poverty in Eastern Visayas, where the poor are at more than 28.9% of the population as of February 2022 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022), and the material wealth offered by the American-colonial government as stipulated in the Osmeña Act of 1912 to migrate elsewhere, the Waray have

remained in their homeland.

While the Waray refuse to conduct massive migration, the Bisaya have moved to Leyte and Samar. Ormoc, Baybay, Maasin, and other parts of Southern Leyte speak Binisaya. Some even consider Binisaya the lingua franca more than Waray. Yet even with the Bisaya migration and attempts of the colonial government to allure the Waray to migrate elsewhere through the Osmeña Colony Act of 1912, Waray culture remains relatively intact. Majority of residents in Eastern Visayas still speak Waray. And where there is a language, there is a distinct culture. Since there are no places outside of Eastern Visayas that use Waray as lingua franca, its culture presumably lives only within the perimeters of the region. Only in Eastern Visayas – the islands of Leyte and Samar – is there a one-hundred percent Waray-speaking community (Alegre, 2020). Only in Leyte and Samar can the richness of the Waray's *kalikasan*, the abundance of forged relationships with family and friends, and the sacredness of the supernatural be properly articulated.

What materializes from reading the poetry of Sugbo, regardless if they have Waray and English versions or are solely written in English, is a "written virtual reality", a recreation of a personal account that embodies the Waray sensibility and makes the experience highly palpable to the reader. The three realms of *kapaligiran* constitute the written virtual reality, illuminating not just clearer still picturesque images of the experience but a captivating motion-picture where suspension of disbelief reaches the pinnacle of visceral reading. Found in each realm—*kalikasan*, the cultural realm, and the supernatural realm—are distinct manifestation of *puruyanan.*

Although at times *kalikasan* can be a source of displeasure and trauma, especially when a calamity occurs, often, the realm is a space for solace and the genesis of peaceful disposition. When a Waray feels everyday affairs have become nothing but a routine, he travels to a place where the flora and fauna can be experienced multi-sensorially as depicted in "Tirimad-on" or "The Sign" (2008). *Kalikasan* is treated also as a sacred space like the supernatural realm since it is believed to be inhabited by *diwata*. The *kalag* of the dead, when crossing a *managbanag* zone is believed to commune with *likas*, like the sea shells mentioned in "At Cancabato" (2021). When a Waray is in need of spiritual guidance and/or longs for the presence of his dearly departed, he can communicate through meditation and prayer. If fortunate, the *kalag* of the *apoy* appears in the form of a butterfly as depicted again in "At Cancabato" (2021). Sometimes, they also appear through ethereal manifestations like Apoy Simo who sat on a sail in "Taburos han Dagat" or "Sea Spray" (2014). When a Waray feels that being immersed in *kalikasan* is not enough for him to overcome his ugmad, he looks for his *kaganak* as shown in "An Akon Inuoli" or "Going Home" (2008). For a Waray to recover, he needs to go home, where his family is. He needs to find his quiet, pamahongpahong. One has to go home, *uli,* be in the presence of family and friends, immersed in the familiar natural and artificial surroundings, and connected to the kalag of the apoy, for only then can the Waray recover, *maulian.*

Home is where all these manifestations appear. It is in Leyte and Samar where these Waray concepts emerge. For the Waray, to feel *at home* one must *be* home. He must continue to live in the irreplaceable and irreplicable place of his becoming, immersed in the *likas, likha*, and supernatural elements that surround him, and to love and be loved by *igkas*i/*kapwa, kaganak*, and *kaapuyapuyan*. "It is not only that one could go home—it is that one goes home." (Alegre, 2020).

What Sugbo has accomplished in his poetry is the articulation of the Waray concept of home, *puruyanan*. He has accomplished this in both Waray and English, nothing short but masterful. Puruyanan's many distinct manifestations is evident in the selected poems examined in this study. A reading of *puruyanan* through the three realms of Covar's *kapaligiran,* reveal the qualities of the

world of the Waray. *Puruyanan* is multi-sensorial, loved, and sacred. Sugbo's keen attention to minutiae heighten these qualities, allowing them to glimmer – waver light faintly – so that one may clearly see its exuberance.

With just one powerful line in "To My Nephew Clint" (2021), Sugbo details the beauty of fleeting moments with loved ones. "And the rain trees are shaking in the sunshine". With just eight words, Sugbo is able to explain why he goes home to Hindang in "An Akon Inuoli" or "Going Home" (2008), " Akon inuoli an tanan / Basi ako man maulian.", "I give back everything / That I may recover." One line. Eight words.

The register that Sugbo uses is always ordinary. It is easy to enter the world Sugbo depicts not just because one is Waray, but because the world is neither fantastic nor an ounce of "otherly" (Alegre, 2008). It is a world that speaks of the sophistication in the every day. Sugbo lives the reality of puruyanan. To end this study, below are the last seven lines of "Tacloban (2021)". Notice the last line of the poem. It is both a promise and a declaration. The absence of the period (.) implies the continuous going on of life beyond the page, despite the many disasters, natural and artificial. As oppose to the first line of the poem, "Tacloban is the city I live in." which holds a matter-of-fact tone, the last line is a statement, a declaration to live, be, and remain home, *puruyanan.*

one November day, the greatest cyclone will come
with the sea drowning the city, 20,000 of us;
black iron sheets will fly like death birds;
Sagkahan Road will be strewn with dead bodies;
and the sea will leave our streets and walkways
smelling of mud, dead fish, shell and kelp.
I will still live in Tacloban

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