

THE 'GIFTS OF THE WEAVER' AND THEIR BECOMING AT THE TURN OF THE 21st CENTURY

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For an approach to the creativity of indigenous cultural communities in the flow of time and space, the Palawan myths of the origin of the earth, *tuturan át lugtaq*, will provide the basic reference. We shall enter the Palawan highlanders' world through their orientation in space focusing on the temporal keys that regulate their life. This will open a path to their rituals as a testimony of their worldview: the possibility for communication between all beings in Nature and the overall link between various realms. Several universal processes of thinking shall be emphasized in this lecture. Finally, as we celebrate the 'Year of Biodiversity' under the auspices of the United Nations, we shall confront today's economic policies that are dramatically affecting the whole island of Palawan.

Il faudrait poser au départ une sorte d'humilité principielle: l'homme commençant par respecter toutes les formes de vie en dehors de la sienne, se mettrait à l'abri du risque de ne pas respecter toutes les formes de vie au sein de l'humanité même.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le Monde*, 21-22 janvier 1979.

From the start, we must propose some kind of a fundamental humility: if man would start to respect all the forms of life beyond his own, he would be protected from the risk of not respecting all the forms of life at the very core of humanity.

(Translation N. Revel & R. de Santos del Rosario)

Palawan Worldview

Tuturan ät Lugtaq, *The Myth of the Earth*

In the beginning there was only emptiness, and a Man of Dust, Taw ät Puräk, floating in the wind.

He had no home, he was wandering restlessly because the wind and not the earth was his dwelling place.

He looked upward towards the zone between sky and emptiness called Anduwanän, the abode of Ämpuq, the Master.

Ascending to this celestial level, Taw ät Puräk confronted the one called Nägsalad, the "Weaver".

The flaming breath of Ämpuq burned him to ashes several times. On the seventh he resisted and then the dialogue could begin.

Taw ät Puräk asked the Master about his painful and restless condition.

Ämpuq inclined his head, and went into deep reflexion.

"It is not his hand nor his body which creates, but his thinking mind. By his own, he thought for a long time."

And his thought wove a Universe with seven levels.

He had created the earth for Taw ät Puräk at the second level of the universe.

But, in this place, he discovers that he is in solitude.

"He looked downward, the universe still had five levels, but all of them absolutely lonely."

Taw ät Puräk turns once more towards Suminalad who by his thought created Diwata, Bintalunän, all the Däränagan, and even Human Beings.

"He made the light appear, the waters and the stars, the sun and the moon, the thunder and the sea. He created everything including the Länggam or Saqitän."

With seven golden threads he wove the world. After creating everything completely, the Weaver retired.

"I will go to the highest level. You, you stay here and watch over everything. If someone commits a mistake, stop him. As for me I will not be able to come down anymore, but if you need something in this world, you can always come up to me."

However, Taw ät Puräk only agrees to watch over what is near him, in the level immediately below him.

Ämpuq entrusts him with the task of beneficent care. A cascade of protections flows from level to level.

And Ämpuq himself goes down to the median space where Diwata is, and gives him the task of watching over Bintalunän and all the Good Doers. He

will be the intermediary for Men on Earth, Taw ät Dunyaq, who dwell in the last of the seven levels.

Ämpuq gave Taw ät Puräk two companions, a man named Puruwan, and a woman.

After thousands and million years, they had multiplied and filled up the Earth. When Nägsaled created the world, all the things and human beings the Länggam also appeared, they came out of the axis of the world.

And the Länggam proceeded to create the bugs, beasts, snakes, scorpions, centipedes; everything that stings and bites. And he ordered them to kill the children of Puruwan. All the descendants were killed and only Taw Puruwan and Taw ät Puräk were left. Seeing their coming death, they wondered about all these things that killed, including mosquitos.

Searching for help, Taw ät Puräk went up to Änduwanän, the abode of Ämpuq.

He sees him bending with his eyes cast downwards on the earth.

He asks his question, but he is reduced to ashes several times. On the seventh, he stands up and explains that on earth, men were being killed by beasts.

Ämpuq answers him:

"I have created the axis of the world, which generated the Länggam, who in turn created the beasts.

"It is you who has to remake the earth by shouting."

Taw ät Puräk went to the central pillar of the world. In this place, the water was teeming with beasts. Then he shouted seven times. Everything was reduced to ashes, and the beasts were annihilated.

Going back to Ämpuq he is entrusted with the recreation of the earth and the human beings. But this time, Ämpuq watches over him and a vine is weaving a rakar. This object is dropped in space and becomes the earth.

Then he created Tambug, Bintalunän, Däränagän, Limbunanän, all the Good Doers, Mänugang Taw.

He said: "I am your Master, but above me is Nägsaled, the Weaver."

The error was the Länggam had a high ambition. They wanted supremacy. This fault was punished by annihilation.

But when Taw ät Puräk recreated the earth, the Länggam reappeared.

(Revel 1991)

In Palawan cosmogony, *Ämpuq* wove the world and first created the 'Man of Dust', a lonely and wandering Being carried away by winds; then several kinds of Beings, a universe with seven levels above and seven levels below. *Ämpuq*, 'the Master' or *Nägsaled*, 'the Weaver', has his abode in the highest level, *Änduwanän*, whereas the 'earth', *dunyaq*, is the lowest of the levels

above. Invisible now in this ultimate abode, he is carefully watching over us, the 'genuine human being', *Taw banar*.

In the descent of celestial realms, he is helped by *Diwata* who dwells in the middle space. This deity protects by watching over us and granting us his mediation. *Āmpuq āt Parāy*, 'the Master of Rice', *Linamin āt Barat*, 'the Lady of Monsoon Winds', *Linamin āt Bulag*, 'the Lady of Dry Winds' and *Upuq Kuyāw*, 'Grandfather Thunder', are the other deities directly involved in Man's destiny on this earth. They command natural phenomena and rule the world. But the respect of *Adat*, or the various customs and the good behaviour of mankind, are equally responsible for it.

Innumerable beings, *Sāqitan* or *Lānggam*, animal-like creatures, dwarves, ogres, and giants are also present on this earth. However, they are invisible (since a mistake was committed). They hunt together with the Masters of Trees, Plants and Animals, for they are in quest of food, just as mankind is. Hence, if we commit a wrongdoing they attack us and capture our souls. Anguish, sickness, and death can therefore be explained by referring to this extensive and inevitable chase between the Masters of Things and Men.

As for *Tandayag*, the 'dragon-fish', his abode is *Basad*, the last of the seventh levels below this earth, in the abyss. In the past the Thaumaturgical Shamans were the only ones powerful enough to perceive him. Peaceful and benevolent, *Tandayag* watches upon our actions. He is the 'Pillar of the Earth', *Sungkuq āt Dunyaq*, and controls calm or violent waters, always related to good or wrong human actions. He is infuriated if a wrongdoing is committed.

Simultaneously and constantly, our 'Ancestors', *Kāgunggurangan kay*, watch over our lives on earth. They request a respectful and affectionate remembrance. Troubles of the self, of society and the whole of nature, are the consequence of any misbehavior towards them and the Masters of Things.

The myth complex of the creation of the earth is inseparable from the creation of various beings and ends on the theme of the origin of disease, distress, and death. It manifests the deep metaphysical anxiety inherent to our human condition on earth. It attempts to give an answer to the continual questioning about human destiny, about Life and Death.

There is another set of myths related to the creation of mountains and valleys, rivers and seas, and highland and coastal landscapes. On the one hand, the Weaver cools down one of the two stars of light, a male and a female Sun that turns to become, after an immersion, the sun and the moon.

On the other hand, other demiurges lift up the celestial vault. This is also linked to the mythical set of the Drought and the Deluge. The reiteration of the prohibition of incest is omnipresent in this mythology (Macdonald 1988).

These narratives, *tuturan* (rootword *turuq*, 'to inform, teach, relate an event, transmit an experience, a knowledge on the world'), are not an entertainment, nor a sacred secret story. *Tuturan* provide a collective answer to a metaphysical anxiety of Palawan' life and death in the cosmos. Human beings are part of a particular living world, with natural resources, limitations and constraints, risks and contracts. Tightly woven into this cosmos that is theirs are rituals, the art of making the Voyage, of chanting epics, and of living in society.

This *doxa* favors a non-critical and fixed transmission of knowledge about the origin of things and all beings. It intercepts the possibility of other quests and queries, of a speculative thinking; a scientific thinking in particular. We are in the presence of a cosmogony and we have to describe it (cosmography), then analyze it and bring to surface its coherence (cosmology).

Palawan Highlands religion is characterized by a rather fuzzy pantheon with a Supreme Deity, *Āmpuq*, as well as many Masters of Things and Deities of every component of the phenomenal world. This religious thought is polytheist and shamanism is at its very core.

I am going to contrast two approaches to natural phenomena, *lālangāw*.

Physics has analyzed the components of this aerial middle space. The 'atmosphere' surrounding us has an altitude of no more than 50 kilometers above the ground. It is composed of invisible gas, mainly nitrogen and oxygen (99%), greenhouse gases (water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, ozone, nitrogen oxide), and rare gases (helium, argon).

The Highlanders apprehend this invisibility of the components of the air on a totally different register. *Lālangaw* is conceived of many layers, *lapis*, abodes to many people: *Tāw*, *Genii*, Good Doers and Evil Doers, whom we can no longer perceive after a major mistake was committed following the *Sāytan*'s instructions. Since then human beings are faced with adversities and are affected by an irreversible blindness.

On this level, *dunyaq*, in the daily activities, how can the Genuine Human Beings, *Taw banar*, be protected from anguish, sickness, and death?

For the Palawan, the answer is clear. It is necessary to avoid all excesses in hunting, fishing, gathering forest products, and cutting trees. It is

necessary to maintain what is right when taking from Nature not only by respecting time, place, and territory, but also by providing the Genii with compensatory offerings, like small wooden replicas of birds or wild boars as an accompaniment to some cooked rice. Actually, the offerings are a semblance of a full meal given to the Masters of Trees and the Master of Animals in order to give them a counterpart, keep a balance, and prevent their retaliation (Revel 1991:ch.1 & 3).

Āmpuq's abode at the 7th level above, in *Anduwanān*.

Kuyāw is the middle Space <i>Lālāngaw</i> in the clouds, <i>Kunām</i>
Lightening Thunder Torrential rain
Taw banar , Human Belings & Mānungang / Māsamang Taw , Good / Evil Doers, are on this earth, <i>Dunyaq</i>
Geiser Foam Tsunami Deluge
Tandayag's abode at the 7th level below, in the abyss, <i>Basad</i>

(Revel 2008)

Space as lived: Orientation keys. In the steep sloping landscape of South-eastern Palawan, in order to go upstream towards *Kābātangan*, Mount Mantalingayan (2.085m), people follow very narrow pathways, *dalan*, and have meeting points where they smoke a cigarette or chew a quid while resting for a while, a nexus between two segments of an itinerary. Toponymy reveals that rivers and streams are the main axis between hamlets and placenames have reasons. *Amas*, 'Copper River'; *Mākāgwaq*, 'Sad Solitude'; *Kā-nīpaq-an*, 'Nipa Palms'. Type of vegetation is predominant in place names and designates a *sitio* or a forest: *Kā-kawayan*, 'Bamboo Grove'; *Kā-nyug-an*, 'Coconut Grove'; *Kā-bāktik-an*, 'Dammars Forest'; *Ka-(a)ngri(y)-an*, 'Angris Forest' (Dipterocarp). The morphology of soils, a cliff, a rock in the river; *Byāk* 'Wild Boar'; a stream, *Nāg-siburān*, '*Jar's Stream*'; or a pool of water, *Nāg-daridiq*, 'Swirling Water', designate features and shapes of the landscape. When a man walks through the landscape, there are many familiar signals. Objects of daily life or a prominent tree near a salient point in landscape are referents for naming hamlets and places: *Lāsung*, 'Rice Mortar'; *Bungsud*, 'Termites' Nest'; *Taruwān*, 'Waxy Tree'; *Māngkupa*,

'*Syzygium*'; *Tāwlāy*, a Tree of Ulmaceae family; *Māgi*, 'Erythrina'; *Tabingalan*, 'Smilax'; and many markers in vegetation along the pathways. Mineral formations indicate danger as they are the abode of Evil Doers, *liydn*, and heavily charged emotionally. This code of landscape refers to the visible and invisible, to nature and supranature as perceived by the senses, known by experience, interiorized, memorized, captured by imagination, and explained by the Ancestors in the cosmogony.

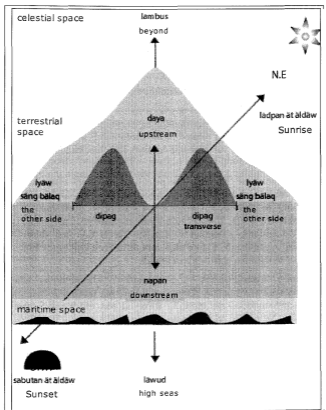


Figure 1. Categories of space in Palawan

The toponyms form a system of indices. Sometimes short mythical or anecdotal vignettes are related to them, and turn them into a visual icon in the landscape. They manifest a symbiotic life with the Genii. When crossing the island of Palawan, whether coming from or going to the other side, Palawan highlanders locate themselves by looking at rivers and mountains, the oriented axis 'upstream/downstream', *dayaq/napan*, and the non-oriented axis that cuts the former perpendicularly: the 'transversal axis', *kaligtik*, or 'on the other shore of the river', *dipag*.

This very precise observation of the morphology of landscape and the related toponyms transmitted to them helps the Palawan in their movement, as markers and signals for a route or 'a predetermined set of trajectories' (Revel 1990:ch.1, 2007a, 2007b).

Time as Lived, Temporal Keys. The Palawan observe the sky by the naked eyes. Three temporal keys regulate their partitions of time:

Āldāw, 'Sun' and 'Day'. Its positions in the celestial vault and intensity of light, provides the Palawan the eleven partitions of the day. At night they refer to three partitions related to the sleep habits of a child or of an adult, and then three other partitions up to daybreak. Cocks and insects then act as clocks.

Bulan, 'Moon' and 'Month'. The phases and positions at waxing and waning of this male sun that had been immersed in water to lessen its intensity according to the myth, provide the partitions of a month. A precise nomenclature is used in order to convene the date of social events (marriages, jural discussions, judgements, rituals). It is the first draft of a lunar calendar¹. The moon, and its trajectory, is not relevant to the time frame of a year but to the time partition in a month.

Pāryama, 'Constellations' and 'Almanac'. There is no analogy, nor equivalence, between the Western and Palawan constellations, although the same constellations are partially involved and are located mainly on the Ecliptic. Out of 106 relevant stars, 19 constellations are perceived and form sets relevant to objects and tools related to the living activities of the people, namely: hunting, fishing, planting rice and tubers, and also housekeeping. There are 11 constellations relevant today (hence 8 are named and perceived as distinct, but are not functional in the time partition of a year cycle). Could these constellations have been relevant a long time ago? If so, they would

¹ However each month is not named as in the Ifugao lunar calendar (Conklin 1980:13).

give us some indices about ancient time almanac and today's almanac in relation to the Precession of the Equinox and related shift of 30° or one zodiacal sign.

There are 3 planets: *Buntatalaq* (Venus); *Anak Datuq*, 'Datuq's Children' (Saturn and Jupiter); and *Binawagan*, 'Ashy Python' (our Milky Way). Their trajectories as well as the positions of the constellations in the celestial vault and also their vanishing away, for the Palawan 'signal' *indanan*, to begin or to have finished the work in the swidden. Two collective rituals are associated with this. They also mark the best season to hunt, to fish, and to collect forest products.

In the dry season, *Bulag*, when the sky is clear, the Palawan observe the trajectories of five compact and correlated constellations with a fast progression: their ascent at evening dusk, their transit to the meridian in the morning dusk, and their descent are the motions and positions the Palawan focus on. Then, the presence of the constellation is relevant.

However, during rainy season, the relevant constellation is the absent one, the one that fell 'behind the mountain', *lyaw*, (the Central Cordillera), plunging into the South China Sea. It will remain relevant up to the day the constellation emerges again as an heliacal rising, in the east at the same time as the sun, above the Sulu Sea. Hence a spatial gliding perceptible on the celestial vault at night governs time and the various partitions of the year.

In fact, it is the work in the swidden that determines the times in the year and not the reverse. Therefore in the yearly sequences of the times the partition is non-equitemporal. What comes first and is constant is the constellation, but it is marked only because it is linked to a stage of the work in the swidden, and each stage is of a variable length in time. This is a stellar agronomy.

The constellations are drawn from five sets of motifs: hunting boars motif, sea fishing motif, work in the swidden motif, raising chickens motif, and home tasks motif. They are woven from the myths telling in various short stories the main human activities and they link 106 stars into 19 configurations.

Obviously myths, constellations, work, and days are correlated within the geo-climatic constraint in which the Palawan are living. These celestial images in constant motion function as a clock; they signal times of the yearly cycle when the people have to do certain tasks in the swidden as well as other activities in nature in order to survive. All these activities are depend on the alternation of the 'Wet season' and the 'Dry season', *Barat / Bulag*.

From the earth, a Palawan observer connects the apparent motions of constellations to the objects and the technics of acquisition that surround them and identify them. This nomenclature projects an image of the earth in the vault of the night sky: the presence of seven tools and two personal objects, five characters, the prey par excellence *Byäk* ('Wild Boar'), the marine prey *Buntäl* ('Globe Fish'), and insects *Bungsud* ('Termites' Nest'), the agro-alimentary technics *Nigu* ('Rice Winnover'), Sweet-Potatoes, ('Chicken Breeding'), *Punggur* ('Dead Tree') of the forest that will be cut and burnt, and *Nyug* ('Coconut'), the planted tree that will be protected.

It seems that their myths account for a reality observed and captured by the senses as valorized by swidden cultivators at their latitude. *A posteriori*, they came to illustrate, explain, and justify by way of some characters and the stories they weave, the trajectories of the constellations (Revel 1991:ch.9).

Rituals

In the Palawan Highlands, in contrast to Ifugao where 24 rituals are linked to a lunar calendar and can take place simultaneously or in succession in different houses with the harvest of the various rice fields or *payoq* (Conklin 1980, Dulawan, 1985), there are only a few collective rituals in the annual cycle of human activities and they are related to human activities in the swidden and in the forest. In daily life there are many more intimate rituals linked to actions and events in each family household.

Besides *Tamwäy ät Ämpuq ät Paräy*, the 'Commemoration of the Master of Rice', performed with the collective consumption of rice wine, *tinapäy* and *lutlut*, and with the music of gongs and the singing or jar songs, *karang ät siburan*, there is a ritual honoring *Ämpuq ät Burak*, the 'Master of Flowers'. It is performed together with the preparation and ritual consumption of the 'Mead', *Simbug*, the singing of 'songs for honey', *kärang ät dägäs*, and 'gong music', *basal*. In 1982, I was able to attend this major ritual followed by a shamanic curing session in the large meeting house of the shaman Panu, by the Mäkägwaq river, close to a single tree with a trunk as white as 'wax', *taru*, hence the hamlet's name: *Taruwän*.

Confronted by so many threats and such vulnerability, the shaman, *bälyan*, gifted with clairvoyance, is able to mediate between the 'genuine Human Beings', *Taw banar*, and other Beings, 'Benevolents / Malevolents'.

The shamanistic 'Voyage', *Ulit*, is the ritual moment when the soul or the 'double', *käruduwa*, of this outstanding man, escorted by his various

'protective souls', *lapis*, takes all possible risks, overcomes all kinds of obstacles in quest of a captive soul and is capable of negotiating its return to the community of kin and friends. This experience is accompanied by a trance, followed by a return to a state of clear consciousness marking the return of his 'double'.

A complex set of 'appeals', *tingkag*; 'invocation', *sāgina*; 'magic formulae', *tāgtag*; scoldings and prayers; together with an encyclopedic knowledge on medicinal plants and an empirical attitude toward therapeutic trials, always open, are transmitted from generation to generation by way of demonstration.

Keeping a Balance. *Adat āt tabang*, the 'Curing Tradition', develops according to a precise and constant pattern. In order to cure the sick, an invocation, *sāgina*, is first articulated in a clear voice. It consists of an appeal, *tingkag*, to *Nāgsalad*, to the Master of all, *Āmpuq*, to the deities of the middle space, and finally to the *Lapis*.

Ancestors are never called, as they only address reproaches and complaints provoking 'dizziness', *sablāw*, among the living. *Āmpuq*, *Diwata*, the Deity of the middle space, *Kātungkulan*, the 'Shamans', *kāruḍuwa*, 'the soul-double' of a person, and *Lapis*, various protector souls or 'Tutelary Spirits', are invited to come down and join the occasion. The *Lapis* come and rest on the shaman's shoulders and sides, as they are benevolent, protective and mediating entities.

As the cure is reaching its peak, the soul-double of the shaman leaves his body by way of the voice, his soul-double assisted by his protective souls, and the mediation of *Diwata*, turns into a *sound wave that moves in the middle space* in order to negotiate in the style of a jural discussion with the Evil Doers, for the return of a captive soul.

As the *Kāruḍuwa* turns in a sound wave moving in the various levels of the atmosphere, *it is liberated from gravity* therefore it is able to move in the verticality of the twice seven levels, seven realms, and to enter in communication with Other Beings (In physics we do know that in the propagation of an acoustic wave, the law of gravity has no direct incidence [Revel 2008]).

Tingkag át Linamin át Barat

Appeal to the lady of Monsoon

Sägina (Invocation):

At this moment, I call upon the all powerful *Tuwan*, shamans/wonder-makers, here up in the middle space, for You were able to learn the words of *Āmpuq*, at the very origin of all generations.

That is why we keep all our knowledge, it is You who has taught it to us, who has made us learn: for You were the first to receive the teachings of *Āmpuq*.

Since then you have ascended up there and *Āmpuq* has made you his interpreter.

Well, today, I have a purpose in calling you, for you will be the bringer of my message to *Āmpuq*, since you are his interpreter.

You will tell him to listen to our words if our reasons for calling him are valid:

Tingkag (Appeal):

Presently, the world is in the wrong.
 We are all wondering
 Because the Monsoon winds are too strong,
 the rains too much...
 Here is my wish,
 Lady-Sweeper-of-Clouds
 Who surveys
 the globe of the sun,
 listen to my words
 this very day...
 for we are going to *perish, here on earth*,
 there is too much rain
 there are too many typhoons!
 therefore it is necessary for you to listen today
 so You can come to our aid
 so You can bring us your help
 For it is indeed You who watches over the sun
 Indeed it is You, the guardian of the rain
 And that is why it rains
 And that is why it is hot,
 It is You indeed the giver of edible plants
 For us all down here.

So my wish is this
 No matter what the rains are,
 Since it is You
 Whom we have made our guardian
 Whom we have made our interpreter,
 (I wish) as far as I am concerned
 That You give us your aid
 Come to our help once again,
 We are perishing
 Down here, under your abode.

My wish is
 To recover past time
 The beautiful universe,
 May there be no more rains
 May there be no more typhoons.

That is what I ask for
 As we are perishing
 If you want it to be hot, let the Heat be!
 If you want it to rain, let the Monsoon come!

For the Rice to grow abundantly in the upland field:

Ungsud ät Ampuq ät Päräy
Offering to the Master of Rice

I invoke the One who has been giving me help for a long time; today I try once more to reach you, even if it is wrong to connect with you.

The same with the Being-who-helps-me, Gunu-Lana-Bungsari-Bulana, come and alight on the ridge-beam, I need you, oh Thou, the healer of men, I will be presenting an offering to the Master of Rice...

...What is the reason of our works when we take care of you, Oh Master of Rice?

Lady of the Master of Fresh Water, descend, hear my words, while Sarip Datuq is alive, rich or not rich, you are essential, you, Water.

I invoke you Grandfather Thunder, creator of all that turns around the earth, Grandfather Thunder, you are the one responsible, you accumulate the clouds, thanks to you we know rain, thanks to you our paddy grows, of rains you are the gatherer.

I make an invocation with this offering of minälmäl, because I need you, without you we would not dare to begin, for, in fact, You will be the one to start.

And all you, the Ladies of the Child-cut-in-parts, here is what we have prepared, our accomplishment, so that our works, our paddy fields – even if it is a failure this year, even if there have only been landslides – will not diminish, will always be fertile, will bring forth beautiful ears, thus have we invoked you.

About ways of thinking. In ancient societies, animals, plants, rocks, caves, rivers and cliffs, winds, stars, sea currents, and peoples are not separate realms. They are constantly interacting; in fact, all realms are interacting in one socio-cosmic relationship.

As it is experienced, observed, imagined, developed, played out, and fully lived, physical objects and natural phenomena are likely to interact with human beings. The Palawan Highlanders who observe such interaction and are familiar with it elaborate representations, making it possible to see relations of 'partial equivalence' (Revel 2005a; Revel 2005b). For the Palawan Highlanders, this relation is one of communication. Messages are uttered, sent, received, and exchanged. Thus there is a relation based upon hunting, playing, eating, and mediating with birds for instance; affection, emotion, and fear are shared as well as an aesthetic relation which unites human beings and birds and many other beings of the phenomenal world, the Lady of Monsoon Rains, the Master of Rice, the Master of Flowers, The Master of each species of Trees, the Master of Wild Boars, the Master of Fishes, Grandfather Thunder in the Middle space, *Tandayag* in the depths of the sea, etc.

We are in the presence of an anthropomorphical projection, but also of a mimetic relation of human beings towards animals. This reciprocal relation creates an intense space of communication. An interpenetration, an empathy, brings all the beings of nature together. Hence it is a principle of ability to communicate among these diverse beings that is encapsulated in the Palawan worldview, the seal of their presence in a world that is theirs (Revel 2009, Revel 2005a).

At a more abstract level, we are in the presence of a relationship of resemblance discovered by thinking or imagination. Reasoning by analogy is a highly productive universal process. Before leading to a metaphor, the analysis reveals a real similitude of relationships, of function, or of ends.

Ethnologists are highly attentive witnesses to the complex play of perceptible metaphors operating in daily life, and the synergy of their encounter as expressed in ritual performances or in customary law, for instance. 'Metaphor' is to carry beyond, to transport; it brings together what is far apart, what is distant, and invisible at first sight. Hence it is creative (Ricoeur 1975).

Among the Palawan, we are in the presence of two types of metaphor: *lexical metaphors* and *sentence metaphors*.

The deep truth value of sentence semantics is greater and fuller than that of word semantics. Looking at the world, man generates metaphors that are potentially in his consciousness. Through a living experience, emotions and stories that man creates by setting all the entities composing the world into a relationship, the human mind grasps the world intelligently. The collective mind internalizes and validates these spoken words, these narratives, and

these gestures, for through them it sees itself, it understands itself, it recognizes itself (Revel 2011).

To understand the valence of a metaphor, its cosmogony, social, ideological, and ethical content, anthropologists have to work not only at the level of the sentence, but also of the poem, the narration of a myth, or the singing of an epic, of any discourse about the world. We must work also at the level of landscape (Revel 2007c), of all the components of nature, cult objects, as well as various ritual actions that set into synergy all the performing arts, speech, music, and dance (motions, movements, gestures, mimicry) (Revel 2001; Revel 2005a; Revel; 2006b; Revel 2010).

The Palawan, their Becoming in Today's World

In the cosmos that is theirs, the Palawan appear to me as having been for so long, up to the 20th century, good stewards, good keepers of nature. In fact they are not separated from nature by subjectivity. Any greedy behavior is considered as unethical and they are contained by this view that unites all the beings in a relationship of parity in exchanging, and a moral of non-excess as three fundamental values are being actualized, namely: *Tabang*, 'mutual help'; *bagi* 'obligation to respect an equalitarian sharing'; *gantiq*, 'parity in exchanging'. This is not the 'fair trade' of today.

Palawan Highlanders' empirical knowledge about Nature implies a vast mastery, a regulation by a moral code of non-excess and a balanced, equitable relationship to other beings. A century later, Palawan still has a very rich cultural and ecological heritage with a unique scientific value and is known in the country as 'the last frontier'. It receives special attention from the national and international community.

21st c. threats. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Palawan was an archipelago with pristine nature—primary forest vegetation related to the "cultural cradle" of Flora Malaysiana. Various ecosystems of tropical humid forest with coastal marine components, a low population density with three autochthonous groups (food gatherers, hunters, and swidden agriculturists), Islamized trading groups living in coconut plantations on the coastal areas of the south, and a Christian population, natives of Cuyo archipelago and Taytay in the north, were the main components. Hence there were various languages, distinct worldviews, and social organizations.

The Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), the Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP), the Department of Environment and Natural

Resources (DENR), and an Environment Critical Areas Network (ECAN) have been instituted to protect the Palawan environment and develop its agriculture and natural resources. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) is also there to defend the national cultural communities and their Ancestral Land Domain. *Palawan as 'Ecotourism Capital of the Philippines'* (99-148 Resolution) was proposed to the President as a label to ensure its reputation as a tourist pole while *'The Palawan Biosphere Reserve'* including two UNESCO World Heritage Sites are also there to protect the various natural and cultural components that make Palawan unique.

Several decades since, new populations with other attitudes, values, and cultural practices in relation to the forest, river, mangrove, and sea have come in and have kept on coming in. More will come. North and south landscapes reveal the lucrative cut of the dipterocarp forests, the diminishing of mangroves, and more recently the development of plantations for biofuel.

The Nickel Rush. Since 2003, new industrial policies on the main island have been stimulated under the Arroyo Presidency. Raw soil rich in nickel, cobalt, gold and other precious metals for new technologies are exported to China, the powerful neighbour that is conducting a vast industrialization. Since the 1970s, the Bataraza Nickel Corporation as well as nickel mines in New Caledonia were exclusively sending to Japan as this country was industrializing.

In order to exploit these open pits, building up the necessary logistics (roads and harbors) will be indispensable and will affect not only forests, fields, rivers, and seas, but also various human habitats in the Highlands, the foothills, the coastal plain, and the shorelines. This is going to have a tremendous impact on the ancestral land domain of the Palawan who have not yet received their land titles since Republic Act 8371 (The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act) of 1997 was proclaimed by President Fidel Ramos.

The Palawan Highlanders assert their right to land by referring to pathways used by their forefathers, inherited *alamaciga* trees, (*Agathis dammara*), forests, sites of former swidden, springs, and hunting areas. Their claims are based on memory and ancestry, not on land private ownership. They do not master the notion of Ancestral Domain in terms of national law; when they do have a certain acquaintance with it, most often they have no voice in governance. The very notion and implementation of boundaries is an intricate matter, generating anxieties and conflicts among the indigenous people. In this respect, we can say that the highlanders of Palawan and particularly of Mantalingahan area are subjected to Power.

Global demand for nickel has been growing from 2% to 8% every year since 2001. Nickel demand for batteries has grown dramatically in the world since 1995 and the economic growth of China intensifies the pressure on the Philippines as a nearby country. Hence there is in Asia an important increase in the consumption of non-fuel minerals by China and India and also by resource-poor industrialized countries and other countries in Southeast Asia with growing economies.

The Philippines has large resources of copper, gold, and nickel. According to reports, the Philippines ranks third after Cuba and Indonesia as the top exporter of nickel laterite. Aside from Palawan, these deposits are present in Mindoro, Negros, Samar, Zambales, and Surigao del Norte. There are laterite development projects by Coral Bay Nickel Corporation (CBNC) in Rio Tuba, where nickel has been extracted since 1972 and sold to Japan since 1976. There are others in Samar and Surigao del Norte. Nickel consumption in China is expected to increase in the next several years, while in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan it is predicted to decline).

Today a dramatic spectrum is materializing in Palawan: in recent years, mining prospecting has been conducted all along the central mountain ranges. And in spite of strong opposition at the level of the local *panglima*' and the highlanders, at the level of the provincial government in Puerto Princesa, at the level of the Church, and at the level of many NGOS, in spite of the moratorium last July 2010, months later in September the DENR granted the right for large multinational companies to start operating. Existing laws and frameworks, previous agricultural policies and various levels of national and international proclamations are in contradiction, and in fact are totally violated by this new policy.

The case of Palawan is linked to other cases in different parts of the Philippine islands (Luzon, Mindoro, Mindanao), of Indonesia, of Papua New Guinea, and farther in the Pacific. National and local policies could benefit from these previous experiences.

Meanwhile all countries are faced with global warming. During the 21st c., the local consequences of global warming will be marked by the predominance of the sea. Climatologists foresee between +1.5 to 4° percent, this is an average between lands (with low thermic inertia) and seas (with high thermic inertia). In island environments, one expects a rising of temperatures lower than the average. However the thermic dilatation of water and the melting of continental ice will have as a consequence the rising of the sea and displacement of coastal populations.

Instead of addressing this problem with realism and wisdom, an extractive mining policy in the name of "development" is starting to be implemented at a large scale, the highlanders, the lowlanders and the coastal people are threatened in their very life and the island of Palawan, the *last* ecological frontier, is facing a dramatic destruction.

This would be an immense loss, not only for the present and future of the Philippines and its people, but for the whole world.

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