

Sa inyo, Mamay Anghel, at sa mga nagtatanggol sa inyong lipi...¹

MANGYAN INTERNAL REFUGEES FROM MINDORO ISLAND AND THE SPACES OF LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT IN THE PHILIPPINES²

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Abstract

In 2002 and 2003, groups of disparate Mangyan [upland indigenous] peoples from Mindoro island sought refuge in nearby provinces to escape escalating military operations in the island. The Armed Forces of the Philippines stepped-up their operations as part of a 'clean-up' drive on insurgency, following the US-led 'Global War on Terrorism'. The low-intensity nature of the operations has had cataclysmic effects on those residing in the island, most especially the indigenous peoples living in the central highlands. This has entailed absorption into a national body politic and a global world order. It also raises the possibility of exploring avenues for the regeneration of culture among peoples like the Mangyan, caught in the mainstream of change and marginal conditions in the country.

Key words

Mangyan, Mindoro Island, Internal refugees, conflict, Iraya-Mangyan CD

Mamay Anghel's *Marayaw*⁴ calls out to an army of spirits to engage intruding spirits in battle. It alludes to a world that only a few could ever reach: one that involves loud incantations like army bugle calls, ghostly warships and spirit commanders that are as bright as lightning, so powerful as to protect their settlements from intruders. In the late 1950s the Iraya-Mangyan people of Caagutayan were to lose the war of remaining within 'zones of escape.' The coming of Christian missionaries, along with the encroachment of illegal loggers, gold panners, and lowland settlers, have displaced and brought the people into material destitution.

This article is, however, set within the context of a broader war of displacement. It attempts to look further into the socio-political construction of space in relation to an ongoing US-led 'War on Terrorism.' An outcome of the 9/11 attacks in New York City, the war has now grown in global proportions, and has directly and indirectly impacted on a number of indigenous peoples from the Philippines. Here I focus on those referred to as the Mangyan 'internal refugees,' who have to escape the escalating military operations in Mindoro Island in the Southern Tagalog Region. In 2002, military operations of 'low-intensity' character were stepped-up in Mindoro Island, following the US-led 'Global War on Terrorism'. 'While the Visiting Forces Agreement' (VFA/2002 to the present) between the Philippines and the United States appears to be a separate issue from military operations in Mindoro Island, this article examines the connection between the VFA and the 'clean-up' and anti-insurgency operations made by the Philippine military. Those military operations in Mindoro have brought so much terror as to cause indigenous peoples living in the central highlands to

leave behind their ancestral domain and livelihood to find refuge in other provinces of the region.

'Mangyan' is a label for the different indigenous peoples living in the central highlands of Mindoro Island. The word Mangyan means 'mountain dweller,' a label originally ascribed by the various indigenous groups to a specific group in the southern part of the island, the Hanunoo-Mangyan (i.e., the 'real' Mangyan). Perennially marginalised, the various mountain dwellers of Mindoro Island are among the relatively isolated groups of peoples who resisted Spanish colonisation and Christianisation from the 16th century. The influx of mainstream Tagalog ('lowland-Christian') settlers in the coastal towns of the island beginning from the period of American subjugation at the turn of the twentieth century not only drove the indigenous peoples deeper into the central highlands, but also placed them further into a marginal position within the social milieu of the national body politic.

The word Mangyan subsequently became a derogatory label for any mountain dweller in Mindoro Island and carries the negative connotation of 'backward' or 'primitive.' From the schema ascribed by the mainstream Filipinos (Tagalog) to this mountain group emerged certain discriminatory statements like, for instance, that these people had tails, or that they could cast evil spells on anyone who went into their dwelling places.

Seeing that common social adversities confronted them, politicised individuals and community-based organisations from the different 'tribes' in the island formed a pan-Mangyan umbrella group, the Samahang Pantribu Ng Mga Mangyan Ng Mindoro (SPMM) during the 1970s. Today, about three decades since the institution of the SPMM, the word 'Mangyan' has been transformed in meaning. Now it connotes unity among the disparate groups of indigenous mountain dwellers in the island. In this paper I make reference to specific Mangyan individuals and their families who, because of their involvement in the SPMM for the protection of their rights and their ancestral domain, have sought refuge for having been targets of elements of the military. And just as the SPMM intended to transcend delineations of culture, society, and ethnicity, dealing with the issue of internal refugees and low-intensity conflict, I believe, should also transcend cultural, social, and ethnic delineations. As so-called indigenous societies (or what the state sometimes refers to as 'cultural communities') progressed and were incorporated into the mainstream of Philippine society, such delineations related more to the mapping out of populations intended for the collection and identification of ethnographic data. The colonial approach to traditional ethnography denies the states of crisis of its interstitial subjects, especially as these crises are induced from the outside. In the process, traditional ethnography may also be blind to the volition of the people to mobilise in response to these external pressures. Indigenous peoples like the Mangyan internal refugees must be seen, therefore, in light of their position in the struggle for self-determination.

This article attempts to fill the void of about twenty years from the groundbreaking work of Adelaida Reyes-Schramm (1986) on music among refugees. But rather than presenting a mere description of how tradition appears in the guise of innovative forms, as in the case of Vietnamese refugees described by Reyes-Schramm, my article will not hide its activist stance, but will explore possibilities of how scholarship could be transformed into a kind of advocacy. In a way, it attempts to progress from the mere 'atavism' that might seem to characterise the various approaches in 'traditional' anthropology to some kind of activism. Commencing from an ethnomusicologist's gaze, my initial intentions in the writing of the article were to explore the dynamics and the sociology of lost music among the Mangyan internal refugees. However, with constant field exposure and engagement with my resource persons, I have gone deeper into the issues of power and the global order; and how the Mangyan internal refugees see themselves caught in the middle of an ongoing war on terror and its cataclysmic effects on those people. This article therefore deals with internal refugees and low-intensity conflict, a subject that is rarely, if ever, dealt with in ethnomusicology or in the social sciences.



Figure 1 – Map of the Philippines showing location of Mindoro Island

Low-intensity conflict (LIC) is a military concept designed to advance the interests of superpowers on third world situations (Hippler, 1988). The concept involves the use of local authorities and military resources to do the ‘dirty work’ or ‘clean-up drives’ with minimal or no direct use of forces coming from those superpowers. The concept appears in a number of labels such as ‘anti-insurgency,’ or ‘national security,’ creating a mechanism to topple any group, armed or otherwise, that would go against the interest of the superpowers, in conjunction with those of the local state. It is a tool that advances the interests of the superpowers, be they capitalist ventures or militaristic agendas, without the presence or

direct involvement of those superpowers, and having as its site the peripheral backlands and terrorising local populations. What I deal with in this article is indeed a case of geopolitics.

Internal refugees are those who escape the armed conflict occurring in their localities to find safety within the country without crossing any international boarder. The Philippines has had internal refugees for more than a century. Internal refugees become so either by (1) forced evacuation, where people flee because of terror and harassment arising from armed conflicts between the government with any other armed group (the Communist New People's Army, or any Islamic extremist groups, for instance), or (2) strategic hamletting, which involves forcible relocation of communities to deny guerilla access to their mass base (Christian Conference of Asia, 1991). The latter was a device used by American forces during their invasion of the Philippines in the late 1890s, and re-used during the Vietnam War in the 1960s. With this military tactic, homes and localities become spaces of insecurities, terror following the refugees even into the refugee camps, as attested in reports of other cases of internal refugees (Christian Conference of Asia, 1991). In this article, I will be dealing with three spaces of low-intensity conflict, two of them 'real,' and one of them rather 'metaphysical.'

I write of any space, physical or otherwise, as a space of low-intensity conflict if it is where the annihilation of the very lives and/or the interests of interstitial peoples caught in the crossfire takes place. First, I write of the island of Mindoro and echo the narratives of those who have lived out the horrors and the experience of militarisation. I posit that this section is significant for those interested in small island geopolitics involving inclusion/exclusion of peripheral spaces in the global order. In the section that follows I write about the sanctuary of their refugee centre as a paradoxical space of 'insecurity,' most especially in the eyes of the internal refugees. In this section, I present the refugee centre and sanctuary as spaces that pose a criticism to the state and the culture industry in their projects of cultural 'regeneration' like the 'schools for living traditions' that cater mostly to tourism. In the last section I attempt to transcend those physical spaces by speaking of market spaces in relation to a compact disc production of Iraya-Mangyan music, which the internal refugees have intended for a livelihood project. To attempt to further push the limits of dealing with those spaces of LIC, I project some of the voices of the indigenous internal refugees, but in so doing, also illuminate my own voice and my own struggles along the lines of those internal refugees. Research for this paper was conducted in 2003, 2004 and 2006.

(All quotes in this paper are direct translations from Tagalog, and are culled from personal interviews with the individuals concerned, from group discussions (*huntahan*), and from forums conducted by internal refugees and non-governmental organisations.)

The sites and sounds of the LIC 'blood baths'

At a solidarity meeting among internal refugees in a shelter in the province of Cavite, Southern Tagalog in April 2003, an ageing Alangan-Mangyan strongly asserts "the pains of loss and death occurring to us is part of a grand scheme by the forces around the world, that for its mere existence would overpower the already powerless (*mga mali-liit*)". The assertion reflects a deep understanding of the world around those like the 'indigenous' refugees who have been perennially marginalised, and whose very lives are now threatened even within their immediate environments.

The Mangyan internal refugees are conscious that the events occurring to them in their island are driven by a global order. They attribute their plight to the miasma of US military and multinational capitalist interests in the Philippines. In the evening celebrations following the solidarity meeting, the indigenous internal refugees clad in traditional dress take turns in symbolically hurling bamboo spears and shooting arrows at a cardboard drawing of 'Uncle Sam'.

This global order is made very explicit especially in conditions of crisis. After the 9/11 attacks in New York, for instance, most Asian nations did not need to think twice before siding with Washington (Acharya, 2002). While I do not wish to question the veracity of the terrorist threat around the world, I am one with those Mangyan internal refugees in stating that it is the Philippine government's international policy of protecting US interests that impact so much on peripheral peoples in an island rather out-of-reach from the setting of the 9/11 attacks. The events of 9/11 have buffered and even justified military presence in Mindoro Island in unbelievable proportions. It is a situation that has, as geochemist Aloysius Baes comments, "legitimised terror" (cited in Araya, 2003: online). It is one that I believe is even more horrifying than described in Anna Louwenhaupt Tsing's *Friction* and exceeds what she has described as "awkward, unequal, unstable (and) creative qualities of interconnections over difference" (2004: 4) because the situation I am describing involves direct military coercion, abuse by soldiers and para-military elements (vigilante groups) who actually hold weapons and threaten or even put individuals to death. In other words, while the cultures of forest destruction and "environmental advocacy" become apparent in the situation in Indonesia, described by Tsing, the more extreme cases of military abuse will be described here.

If the 9/11 attacks revealed the centrality of the superpower/s (the US), the conditions of military presence in Mindoro Island are more complex, and therefore, the 9/11 attacks should not be seen as the sole cause of militarisation in the island. It is the peripheral position itself of the Philippines in the global political economy and the long history of neo-feudalism that should serve as a backdrop for the militarised conditions in Mindoro Island.

As the Mangyan internal refugees know from experience, the military concept of LIC existed long before the 9/11 attacks as an effective tool for 'clean-up/clear-up drives' against any kind of mass action, and also, directly related to their case, to effectively advance other interests such as tourism and transnational mining. In the eyes of the Mangyan internal refugees therefore, militarism has been used as a mere tool to serve the agenda of transnational corporations, and local industries (such as tourism). With the shift of the venues of conflict into the so-called 'backlands,' the brutal behavior of military and para-military units is largely due to the fact that information is generally inaccessible to media and other channels connecting with the mainstream population and sectors of civil society that are critical of the government and of government policies. The employment of para-military units or vigilante groups instead of regular service personnel not only serves as direct contact with the local population, but also serves as a mimesis of the invisibility of superpowers. It must also be clarified that such behavior is not exclusive to government forces, as the Christian Conference of Asia reports in 1991 that Communist guerillas has also caused mass evacuations because of firefights. The trend, however, in which government forces seem to be used to quell any mass action against transnational corporations (mining and logging included) has also been noted in the 1990s, for instance in Marag valley (see further Parel, 1991).

During the Marcos dictatorship (1972-1986) LIC was used in Mindanao Island and the Cordillera mountains, particularly to quell any efforts from indigenous peoples against transnational geothermal, mining and logging projects.⁵ Paradoxically, this situation greatly increased with the institution of para-military units, and vigilante terror and cultist groups in the regime of Corazon Aquino (1986-1992), in her 'all-out war' against insurgency, and the Oplan: Thunderbolt campaign (1990/91). It emerges again in the Estrada government's all-out war campaign in Mindanao Island (Gaerlan, undated). In the last few years, especially after the 9/11 attacks and the Visiting Forces Agreement between the Philippines and the United States, the scenario of alleged military barbarism re-emerges in the island of Mindoro, and more recently (2006), in the central region of Luzon Island.

Following the US's declaration that the communist New People's Army is a terrorist group (2002),⁶ nine battalions of soldiers were deployed in Mindoro in 2002. This 'overkill' was accompanied by military abuses of the population, especially those the establishment has identified as left-leaning human rights groups and non-governmental organisations. Summary executions, illegal detention, and other forms of harassment have occurred, especially affecting those in the central mountains (*Southern Tagalog Exposure*, 2002/1:2; Special Issue). However, news reporter Dabet Castaneda of the online newspaper *Bulatlat* reports in 2004 that Mindoro island was "touted by government as the laboratory for its counter-insurgency program, that Mindorenos have several tales of terror that have haunted them since 2001" (Castaneda, 2004 online). The more recent terrors only continue from decades of militarisation since the US-sponsored Martial rule under the dictator President Marcos.

As aforementioned, the Mangyan internal refugees see beyond the anti-insurgency drive as reasons for the militarisation of Mindoro Island.⁷ "There is more to these (political) killings in Mindoro," comments an Iraya-Mangyan. "These just happen because we refused a (Norwegian) mining (firm) [in 1999-2000]. They are trying to scare us off our (ancestral) lands." Another argues, "the other reason might be that the government has agreed with the Americans to hold their joint military training in Mindoro. We are not communists, why should they attack us? Do they only want to clean-up Mindoro for the tourists, like in Puerto-Galera?" Those off-hand comments I have captured from various Mangyan internal refugees during that solidarity meeting show how much they understand their situation from an even broader perspective.

I met Bapa⁸ and his wife Nana in 2003 during a visit to their refugee centre Kanlungan located in the Southern Tagalog region. With their children, they were among several families of Hanunoo-Mangyan, Alangan-Mangyan, and Iraya-Mangyan, and individuals coming from the Batangan-Mangyan and the Tagalog who escaped the atrocities in Mindoro. They were with Unduy, an Iraya-Mangyan, an NGO worker who introduced Bapa to me. I told them my name, and said that I usually collected music in recordings, but I also said that I had no intention of recording music, but only wanted to visit some Iraya-Mangyans who I heard were from Caagutayan, where I did research in 1983 up to 1987. Immediately Unduy, a man in his late twenties remembered me from his childhood, saying "ikaw yung si taga-Maynila." ('You were that one we called 'one from Manila!'). Then Unduy and I conversed about Caagutayan and about Mamay Anghel, a very respected man in the village.

Bapa, a man of few words, then said "it is unfortunate (*sayang*) that we should meet each other here. I myself play the *git-git* [a Hanunoo-Mangyan string instrument], but I think you know this place, and why we are here. There is no Hanunoo or Iraya music here". Although Bapa is generally a soft-spoken person, those comments were so powerful as to make me feel rather uncomfortable. In those comments was the sense that people like me would look at them only in a certain way, that is, 'culturally,' for lack of a better term. I asked him about the Mangyan Research Center run by priests of the Order of the Divine Word, and located in Mansalay, where he comes from. I wanted to know if the people there were in any way helpful to the Hanunoo-Mangyan in their plight. He answered with a simple "no, they did not (seem) to care."

"My name is written in the list of the order of battle," says Bapa. "The military claims that I am a member of the [Communist] New People's Army. My family and I lived in fear knowing that (soldiers) could shoot me anywhere, anytime. My eldest son was put under surveillance, so he had to refrain from going to school." One afternoon, soldiers barged into Bapa's home, asking him to give up and to surrender his weapon. Bapa then realised that "we had to escape, and leave our livelihood behind". Bapa tends a *kaingin* (swidden) with his wife and children in Mansalay, at the Southern part of Mindoro. At times, Bapa works as a *cargador*

(one who carried produce) for local market entrepreneurs in their town. “All I know is to work hard for my family and for the land that I inherited from my ancestors”, Bapa claims, denying any connection with the leftists groups. “I am part of the SPMM because I feel I must take part to defend our rights to our ancestral lands. Land is our life.” While staying in Kanlungan, Bapa learned that elements of the military had burned down his house, crops and farm.

Not long after, Aman, a Tagalog from sitio Ibuyi (not far from Caagutayan) joined us in the conversation. Together with Bapa and Unduy, the three tell me of what they refer to as the ‘Martial Law-like’ conditions imposed by the military in Mindoro. “The curfew starts from six in the evening, we are not allowed to carry flashlights, and are not allowed to talk to strangers, nor shake hands”, says Aman. Unduy adds, in Caagutayan, “we are not allowed to buy and store food in the house that would last for more than three days”. Those impositions were to be strictly complied with, and these were punctuated by fear of the intermittent gunfire heard in the dark of the night or the early hours of the morning. Aman’s parents, both workers for advocacy groups were dragged from their home, and taken to an isolated place and shot point blank. Unduy’s family was in shock when gun-wielding paramilitary elements pointed their M-16s at all of them while interrogating them in front of his two siblings, one of them a child of four. “These are the sights and the sounds of the LIC bloodbath”, says Unduy, responding ironically to an almost similarly worded ‘touristic’ t-shirt (“Feel the sights and sounds of the island!”) that another visitor was wearing.

Kanlungan: where there is no music

Having discussed Mindoro as site of the LIC bloodbaths, and ultimately driven by Unduy’s off-hand, ironical comment in response to tourism in the island, I now look into this other space of low-intensity conflict: the Kanlungan (‘sanctuary’). It is the place that Bapa Aynong referred to initially as one that “has no Hanunoo or Iraya music”. My initial thoughts of this sanctuary were that it was a place where refugees would find ‘peace’ and relative security. I realised however that though they may have some degree of security, even caretakers of the refugee center attest that along with the fears and the trauma that the refugees carry with them, there is so much depression among them in the sanctuary. I tried to understand what Kanlungan meant to the people who have yet to feel that the Martial Law of the 1970s has really left them.

Often described as a ‘sanctuary’, Kanlungan is paradoxically a place where depression and uncertainty resounds from the Internal Refugees. While the best efforts were made by the various Church Groups, NGOs and people’s organisations to ease the refugees’ situation while in this temporary shelter, refugees are confronted by countless anxieties and fears. Their dependence on the organisations that help them is cause for much concern. It is, as one Dumagat internal refugee expressed, “where [they] feel so depressed for not being able to work [feeling useless] that all [they] could do was to sleep so as not to feel the passage of time”.

Solidarity celebrations, especially with those involving people from the outside make them forget their troubles momentarily. “It is when people have left and we are just among ourselves that we feel so depressed,” says a Remontado. True to their words, the scenario of concluded celebrations was a depressing site. When I first arrived in Kanlungan in February 2003 for instance, I still found remnants of a Christmas celebration from the previous December. “Nobody cares to remove them; they make me feel sad that the [celebrations] are over,” says a Dumagat. A tall, makeshift Christmas tree made of bamboo with already torn-out decorations adorned the central meeting place (*pulungan*) of the ‘village.’ Small vegetable gardens are located at the peripheries of the area, while a makeshift schoolhouse is seen on one side. At the centre are groups of makeshift houses that seem to delineate different groups of people: Iraya-Mangyan, Alangan-Mangyan,

Hanunoo-Mangyan, Batangan-Mangyan, Tagalog, Dumagat, and Remontado. It was about ten in the morning, but most if not all internal refugees were still asleep.

The refugee center would, however, certainly challenge with great irony the ‘artificial villages’ of the ‘Schools for Living Traditions’ (SLTs) instituted by the culture industry and the Philippine state to ‘regenerate’ culture among so-called indigenous peoples. SLTs were instituted by the state through the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and various Local Government Units and other corporate sponsors since 2000 as a project to regenerate culture among indigenous peoples and also for tourism. SLT programs include the creation of ‘artificial villages’ where indigenous artists and craftsmen are to be seen weaving, making pottery, or conducting workshops in music and so on. The idea fosters regeneration as younger members of an indigenous community learn arts and crafts that are disappearing because of change. However, one might question the impact of international tourism that goes hand-in-hand with the program.

Those ‘artificial villages’ are to my mind the greatest examples of how so-called anthropological time and space dimensions, critiqued by Tsing (1993), and so-called indigenous peoples are made into ‘culture objects.’ Even more importantly, those artificial villages manifest how the state defines and locates those so-called culture bearers for its citizens. ‘Artificial villages’ are like museum artifacts whose significance lies only in the ‘death’ and ‘loss’ of such artifacts. And just as Bennet argues (2005) that museums objectify for the sake of, and in line with, the agenda of governance, so I see SLTs as a means by which the Philippine state could map out for its citizens its location of the so-called indigenous cultures and communities as repositories of the ‘past.’ Kanlungan, then, a temporary shelter for the so-called indigenous peoples who have ‘lost their culture’ and whose lives are threatened by conditions created by the same state that seeks to regenerate indigenous culture, makes the SLTs appear rather awkward or even horrifying.

I arrived with several groups of visitors that included Roman Catholic nuns, college students, NGO people, cultural workers, and seminarians. “We are very happy whenever people from the outside would come to us; usually it is very lonely here when we are just among ourselves. We just spend the day mostly sleeping so that it [time] would just pass unnoticed”, commented several women from the Dumagat and Remontado. One Dumagat woman even said, “Our makeshift houses are just like our makeshift lives.” Most of the time, the centre is just silent. But it is a silence that is also filled with fear and anxiety, says Unduy. Since Kanlungan is within the compound of a school campus, the citizen military training conducted by the army for students every Saturday brought fear among the residents. “All the children here are terrified at the sight of green army uniforms,” comments Unduy.

To help cope with the depression at the uncertainties of their lives and future, a number of concerned artists and cultural workers have conducted workshops, especially for the children of the center.⁹ Others have helped them start small livelihood projects by donating beads and other materials to make necklaces, cellular phone holders, or purses that are sold to visitors or during public forums. “The small gardens that we have are not enough to provide food for all of us; we will go hungry,” said Bapa. Nanay Adeling, a Dumagat even said, “this makes me feel very sad/depressed because for the first time in my life, I cannot work; I have no means to provide food for my children, we will all starve here, and our friends say that we cannot stay here any longer.” It was at that point that I thought of a project that might in some small way ease a little bit some of the difficulties in their lives. In the next section, I begin by reflecting on the praxis of cultural studies, zooming-in on the production of a compact disc of Iraya-Mangyan music, and how it found its way among the Mangyan Internal Refugees in Kanlungan.

Nostalgia in a denuded rainforest

Scholars like ‘us’ interested in what we label ‘small-island cultures,’ at most times position ourselves only within the periphery of the states crisis of our chosen subjects and their locations. We are only beginning to develop the kind of scholarship that has as its ontology the advocacy for the interstitial people we have chosen as our *subjects*, and the natural environment occupied by those people. Academic praxis, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, and the like seem to enjoy the privilege of informing about cultural difference, with their gaze on the cultural constructions of meanings from sound impulses and images, to cite an example of current theoretical perspectives, and this act of informing is necessarily done by means of a discourse that befits mostly, if not exclusively, just ‘us.’ In effect, our academic praxis leads to what may be termed “cultural objecthood” (Baes, 2005), and in line with the state (Bennet, 2005), paradoxically reinforces the schema of the indigenous culture bearer set by the culture industry and that same state. The praxis is also very vulnerable to what E. San Juan describes as “First world theorizing” (San Juan, 1995).

What I therefore wish to suggest, as I have attempted to suggest a few times before (Baes 2001; 2002; 2004), is a critique of this mode of knowledge acquisition, and an invitation towards the action mode of research as exemplified in the work of anthropologists Poncianno Bennagen, or Levita Duhaylungsod, or the environmental advocacy of Aloysius U. Baes (eg Baes, A. 2006).¹⁰

The production of the compact disc of Iraya-Mangyan music entitled *Nostalgia in a Denuded Rainforest* was induced by a personal advocacy, stimulated by the first ‘Trajectories’ colloquium in Sydney in 2001.¹¹ The CD is one aspect of my efforts to keep a promise to elderly Iraya-Mangyan, Tiyo Kiko and Mamay Anghel in the early 1980 that any research on the Iraya-Mangyan should ultimately benefit the Mangyan. I was at first very hesitant to produce this CD even some months before production. I had been consulting with Philip Hayward and Steve Feld regarding the marketing of this production, who both gave me very significant glimpses into the complexities of the market forces.

My underlying concern was to produce a CD whose sales would directly go to the Iraya-Mangyan. Hayward spoke of how this rather ‘idealistic’ intention would be very difficult to achieve, considering that fees have to be paid and working staff would have to be given salaries. Such expenses would at most times cover the entire sales, leaving net profits to amount to entirely nothing. Feld, who I understood had had a similar intention for the Bosavi people much earlier, simply told me that it was a very complex process—how complex he did not elaborate. Thinking of the rigors of the market forces that took control of this field of production, I fancied the complexities could be symbolically comparable with the ‘spaces of low-intensity conflict.’ This field of cultural production with its spaces and stakes controlled by gigantic industries and corporations would have replaced the spaces of insecurity when it comes to marketing this CD. In my encounter with Mangyan Internal refugees in Kanlungan, however, I was introduced to a new possibility for finding alternative marketing channels for this CD production, so that it directly benefits a large sector of the people from where this music came without the complexities described to me by Feld and Hayward.

Contents of the *Nostalgia* CD were taken from almost thirty hours of field recordings I made in Mindoro from 1982 to 1987, mostly from among the Iraya-Mangyan of Caagutayan. These recordings made on rather low-end cassette tapes were carefully ‘refurbished’ using digital technology in 2001. The CD liner notes were designed to appear like a journal, the notes printed in a font type that resembles an old typewriter, and with a number of pictures making

the notes appear like field notes. The whole production, with the liner notes having the semblance of ‘temporariness,’ with tape hisses deliberately made to be heard on some of the CD tracks, and with cranks of a 78-rpm record player heard on other tracks, are critiques of the process of reification of music in a CD production. The project was sponsored by the Tunugan Foundation, and was partly funded from the Philippine National Commission for Culture and Arts.

In April 2003, I donated a box of about 300 copies of the *Nostalgia* CD to the Mangyan internal refugees. The idea to donate, or more properly to return the CDs to their rightful owners, came as I observed that the items being sold at the small makeshift gift shop were ‘native looking’ handicrafts like wallets, bracelets, bead necklaces, or cellular phone holders. “People like to buy things with native designs” said one Alangan-Mangyan. The CD, I thought, would be especially marketable in this context because it had music ‘native’ to one of the groups of internal refugees and it would generate a lot of interest from advocates who visited the refugee centre and attended public forums.

The handing over of this box of CDs was a quasi-ceremonial event that happened after a whole day’s forum on land rights. It was there that we all spent the rest of the late afternoon listening to some tracks on the CD. The impact of their first hearing of a *marayaw* by Mamay Anghel or an *igway* of Ana Banaag is incomparable. “Mamay (Anghel) is alive again!” said Unduy immediately marveling at his picture at the CD cover. The pictures and the music drew out a lot of stories, especially from the older people, too numerous to be captured in writing, in the same way as my friend Sergio’s portfolio of pictures brought about a lot of stories from the Dumagat (Baes, 2005). An old Alangan-Mangyan came to me and said that the grayish color of the CD reminded him a lot about the ashes of his *kaingin*. Listening to one *igway*, an Alangan and a Batangan found it similar to the Banggi and the Ambahan from their respective areas. “You have returned the music to us, thank you for taking care of the *igway*”, an emotionally struck Alangan Mangyan said to me openly as I was leaving the next day.

I entrusted my friend from one of the NGOs to help out in the sale of the CD, making sure that 100 percent of the sales would go directly to the funds that were used for medical and other expenses of the Kanlungan community. I have kept 600 more copies of the CD at home, waiting for requests for more copies. NGO organisers, cultural workers, and students were the immediate clientele of this CD. It was sold at a relatively lower price than a mainstream commercial CD, and mainly at public forums on the internal refugees and the war in the countryside.

It was rather disappointing that what we have started would very suddenly be disrupted in the months that followed. After an NGO-organised fact-finding mission in Mindoro left two of the organisers dead, both of them very close to the Mangyans, the Mangyan internal refugees left Kanlungan abruptly, very early one morning. It is said they left word declaring that they “no longer wished for the lives of any of their friends to be in danger on their account.” They were followed and re-settled in an undisclosed place. Mindoro Island would still be very dangerous for many of them. Just as I received the news, my anxiety grew over the future of those people.

Nostalgia in a Denuded Rainforest must have been very timely for a people already tired of adversities that had occurred to them. While the CD is of value in the sense that it contains songs no longer in use, what seems to be even more important, as Christy Anne Castro stated in her review (2003), is that in it lies the history of recording among the Iraya-Mangyan, with examples of 78-rpm recordings made by Christian missionaries of cassette recordings I made in the field, now digitised in the format of a CD. In the sense, the CD in the eyes of the Mangyan internal refugees must have appeared like themselves, but ‘packaged.’

The CD is, as I implied right after its production, itself a political statement (Baes and Klein, 2002).

At the same time, another 'war of displacement' occurs with the CD being sold in the cybermarket, and questions as to how proceeds of the sale would be given directly to the Mangyan. I learned with disgust and much concern that the CD is being sold at the regular CD price of US\$19.90 at a cyber store of Filipino music called 'Kabayan Central'. Where these people got copies of the CDs, no one had told me. How the sale of the CD would directly benefit those like the Mangyan internal refugees, I have yet to find out. I contest that the CD belongs to the Mangyan internal refugees, more than it belongs to anyone else because of the need that arises from their situation. This claim to ownership is comparable to their claim to the ownership of their ancestral domain, to invoke Steven Feld's statement that recordings are 'memory gifts' and that, like land, should be returned to their rightful owners. Reclaiming this ownership is perhaps the next step in the political life of this CD. To add to this, cyber stores selling 'ethnic music' (or 'world music,' or whatever handle you would like to use) appear to be 'lie museums' in locating 'indigenous' peoples within time-space maps that exoticise them. Arguably, the CDs would appear of a different nature to a consuming public were they to be sold by internal refugees. The CD may well appear to be an exotic object but it makes a great difference if indigenous peoples themselves, the 'rightful owners' of the CDs, are those who exoticise themselves rather than external powers who exoticise those people for their primitive imaginaries.

I see the *Nostalgia* CD as the extension of those Mangyan internal refugees, now displaced in the cyber market. And like the spaces of low intensity conflict where the real locus of power remains unseen, the sale of the CD is controlled by invisible but very powerful agencies that hold the stakes in the culture industry. In conclusion, therefore, I am left with the question of how far this article could ever go? I guess I have to leave this hanging. I am implying here that the real conclusions to this article lie in the courses of action that the Mangyan internal refugees and those who advocate for their cause would be taking. And with this are my hopes that the indigenous internal refugees once housed in Kanlungan find strength in continuing the fight and the struggle for self-determination.

Endnotes:

1 To you, Mamay Anghel, and to those who follow in the defence of your ancestral domain...

2 This work is a sequel to my forthcoming article 'When there was no more music: Dumagat internal refugees from Philippines and issues of "cultural objecthood,"' which originated from a paper initially read at the 'Trajectories II' colloquium, 'Island Cultures in Transition in the Asia-Pacific Region' held at the University of Hong Kong from November 29 to December 3 2006. This version is written in memory of my brother, geochemist, activist, and environmental advocate Dr Aloysius Baes, who passed away just three weeks after the 'Trajectories II' reading. It was his work on the oil spills of multinational companies in Rapu-Rapu and Guimaras Islands in the Philippines that inspired the initial paper and this article. I would also like to acknowledge the helpful comments of two anonymous referees, and my good friend Veronika Avila, whose suggestions helped refine this article into its final form.

3 "*Pagsamburanay* beads that I hold, shield me, protect our *banwa* [community] from the other beings who destroy us."

4 Marayaw is a genre of Iraya-Mangyan songs used to communicate with spirits in rituals for healing the sick or protecting the community. The medium, or *ambuy* is a commander who engages enemy spirits with his army of spirits dwelling in ghostly warships (*pagaliliyon sakyan*) during nightlong rituals and through long incantations. Anghel Anias (*Mamay Anghel*) was a powerful *ambuy* before American missionaries of the Overseas Mission Fellowship converted him to Christianity sometime in the late 1950s. (See further, Baes, 1988.)

5 The assassination of Kalingga tribal leader Macli-ing Dulag in 1978 perhaps best signifies the kind of military oppression made by the Marcos regime. Macli-ing Dulag was gunned down in his home by military assailants for protesting against the building of a dam that would have largely encroached on

their ancestral domain, with utter disrespect for the burial places of their ancestors. The oppression in Mindanao and Cordillera happened not only during the length of the Marcos regime, but was carried over into the Aquino regime, and in many ways in to the present.

6 A number of articles from major dailies like *Ang Pahayagang Malaya*, and *The Philippine Daily Inquirer* or from alternative online media like *Cyberdyaryo*, *Ibon Facts and Figures*, or *The Southern Tagalog Exposure* have disclosed the deteriorating conditions in Mindoro Island following the declaration that the Communist NPA is a terrorist group. See, for instance, Camba (2001); Malanes (2002) etc.

7 The anonymous reader/s who suggested that my description of the employment of LIC to advance the agenda of tourism and mining is in conflict with my earlier description that LIC is a product of 'superpower' interests should see that mining and tourism have proven to serve the interests of first world nations to the neglect of the interests of the Philippine nation. The Mining Act of 1995, for instance, is a government policy that on the whole serves the interests of multi-national corporations. What I allude to in the quotation cited is that the Mangyan internal refugees see beyond militarisation. Their experiences tell them that trans-national tourism and mining industries are or appear to be the underlying agendas of military operations. Therefore, this statement indeed supports that LIC advances 'super-power' or 'first-world' interests.

8 Names of all individuals in this article are withheld and altered for security reasons.

9 Workshops conducted by NGOs like the 'Concerned Artists of the Philippines,' and 'The Southern Tagalog Cultural Collective' include painting and drawing and theatre production workshops that are mainly therapeutic in nature. These and other NGOs run a small daytime school where children learn the basics of reading and writing.

10 One example of action-oriented anthropology would be the organisation of public forums in academic institutions where indigenous peoples would speak about their land disputes with transnational companies and the state, would protest against mining and logging concessions, and/or government policies like the Mining Act of 1995. Moreover, Aloysius Baes' geochemistry evolved out of the concern to utilise science to serve those victimised by transnational/multinational industries, as exemplified in his work on Rapu-Rapu and Guimaras Islands in Central Philippines, and his work in general with the NGOs Center for Environmental Concerns (CEC) and Agham (Science for Society), both of which he helped found.

11 A colloquium on Asia Pacific music held in the Department of Contemporary Music Studies at Macquarie University, Sydney, at which I was keynote speaker, and which included contributions from indigenous musicians such as Tony Subam (Papua New Guinea) and Herb Patten (Australia) alongside papers from researchers such as Steven Feld (USA) and Shuhei Hosokawa (Japan).

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