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: Space, Home, Poetry

Introduction

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.

Puruyanan: The Waray Concept of Home

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.

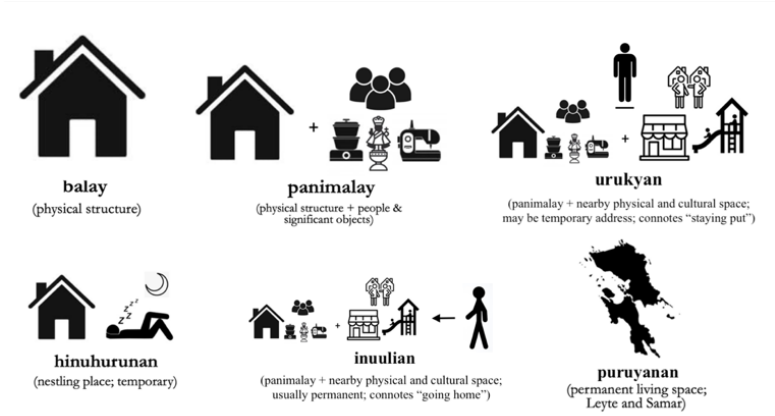

Figure 1: Waray concept of home (scope, time, movement, temporariness, permanence)

Puruyanan is the Waray concept of home integral to the reading of the poems examined in this study. *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. These 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*.

Kalikasan*: Natural Qualities of *Puruyanan

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. Frequent visits to Hindang, a rural area, allow Sugbo 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 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). 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 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.

The Cultural Realm: Forging Relationships

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. 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.

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.

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—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. Not only will Sugbo and his nephew need to figure out where to go. They 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 phenomenon. They are ephemeral but are forever in memory. To treasure them is to treasure the people with whom the experiences have been shared.

One may read the poem as an epistolary, 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. When the adolescents enter a serious romantic relationship, the parents or the parental figures usually give their advice, warnings, and reminders. *Sinasagdunan*. 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.

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

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.

In "Engkantada" (2008), Sugbo writes of a *diwata*, a common term used to refer to supernatural beings in Flilipino folklore, 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, maaram an kabablayan ha mga bakilid kun nalugsong ka kay nanduduroy lugod panmukad an kitikot, an surangga, pati sampaga nanrarangrang an tiyotes ngan burak, nagpaparumba pagkahinog an aslum, mga saging upod an rimas. asya liwat an panngakak han kaugangan panhuni hinin gangis, gitgit ngan kusi.	long ago, my ancestors used to say, those, living on the slopes, knew when you had arrived for things flowed in excess: the flowering of the kitikot, the surangga and sampaga the swelling of the tiyotes and burak the extravagant fruiting of the pomelos, bananas and rimas, the loud cackling of the hens, the clear chirping of cicadas, the gitgit and kusi.
yana bis lumatod di na ha imo nakilala. mga lagas waray na iniindigan mga susumaton pinanwakay na say mababatian initon-iton hinin kabablayan.	Now even the children don't know you the old don't join gatherings any longer they've lost the tales to time 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.

Conclusion

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.

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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