‘Figuring’ Catholicism: The Santo Niño and Religious Discourse in Cebu

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Epilogue

"Lugar Lang"
Saying Who Christ Is

During the sixteenth anniversary of the first people power revolution in 2002, the Archdiocese of Manila announced that any protests of a political nature would be “banned from the premises of the EDSA shrine” (Cf. Nocum 2002). Cardinal Sin himself had given the order that the grounds were to be used solely for liturgical purposes in order to “maintain the sacredness of the shrine”. The rector of the shrine, Bishop Socrates Villegas, admitted that the edict was put in place with specific reference to the events of “EDSA Tres”. Extrinsic the shrine from the volatile realm of ‘politics’ was the only effective way the Archdiocese could see of avoiding a repeat of its ‘desecration’ at the hands of EDSA Tres revolutionaries. In this context, the shrine needed ‘protection’ from the people whose sheer passion and fervour threatened the survival of the Lady of EDSA. One wonders whether they themselves perceive the irony in the fact that the shrine had been founded upon a very political act – a revolution in which the Church itself played the most significant part in bringing about.

This edict was tempered, however, by a corresponding act of ‘inclusion’. The Archdiocese announced it would also be hosting an inter-faith prayer service during people power commemorations. “Pagkakaisa para sa kapayapaan” (“Unity for Peace”) was the theme under which Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and other Christian denominations were each allocated a ‘prayer room’ within the shrine. In its sixteen-year history, this was the first time in which the shrine had officially hosted other religious
denominations within its walls. Each group would be set a certain amount of time to pray “according to their own religious tradition”, before finally congregating in a final invocation administered by Cardinal Sin.

In having other religious groups literally housed within their iconography, the Archdiocese was projecting an image of the Philippine Catholic Church as an institution tolerant of religious pluralism in the country. What was being achieved by the joint prayer was not the effacement of doctrinal differences, but the suggestion that these views can co-exist and unite for the sake of peace and good governance. In the physical partitioning of the various groups was a reiteration of the Catholic Church’s capacity to administer doctrinal demarcations, so that through “Pagkakaisa para sa kapayapaan” the Church was able to project itself as the conciliator of those divergent creeds. The eventual congregation of all groups under one ‘final prayer’ consummated this symbolic message: that the power to ‘tolerate’ and administer rested solely upon the Catholic Church who, under the confines of their iconography, exerted that power by literally and symbolically ‘accommodating’ divergent worldviews.

Though the icons are different, the discursive dynamic that operates upon them is the same. Like the EDSA Shrine, the Santo Niño has long been enshrined in glass in order to ‘protect’ it from the “gesticulating mass of humanity”, whose sheer devotion became a threat to the icon’s very survival. The Santo Niño’s recent ‘demotion’ from Patron Sainthood, likewise, exerted the Cebu Archdiocese’s power to regulate and guide the ‘unauthorised’ and ‘illogical’ crafting of its meanings. In the most popular Christian icons in the Philippines can be observed the pervasive irony: that the Santo Niño needed to be ‘protected’ from the very ‘souls’ who are constantly petitioning its grace and

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intercession. In this sense, the Church’s authoritative jurisdiction over Christian icons extends beyond the physical, such that those in power are not merely custodians who ensure the Santo Niño’s safekeeping, but are expected to wield the authoritative capacity to say “who Christ is”.

To say that this study has been concerned exclusively with the Santo Niño, or that its analytical breadth is restricted to the island of Cebu alone, turns out to be an understatement of its subject. In the development of this study, the point has been to examine the ways in which the Santo Niño is representative of a people’s interaction with discursive powers of regulation and remembrance in the Philippines. Its objective has been to depict the experience of religiosity in the country as mediated by acts of appropriation, contestation, co-option and the efforts to find a ‘meaningful story’ out of a highly complex range of scenarios. In this way, and in others yet discussed, religiosity is characterised by Filipino attempts at ‘figuring’ Catholicism (in both its mundane and tumultuous manifestations) amidst a constantly challenging and changing world.

IT SEEMS FITTING to mark the end of this study’s journey by invoking the metaphor of a jeepney. For one thing, riding a jeepney has the capacity to encapsulate critical aspects of Philippine life, including the religiosity that has been the subject of this study. In the physical structure of a jeepney, in the vibrant colours and iconography of its construction, there is a form of devotion in which Catholicism can be seen as uniquely and indelibly the Filipino’s own (Figure 7.1).
In the habitus of riding and driving is inscribed the belief that beyond hard work and survival, divine forces are constantly at work to determine the course of one’s life from this journey to the next. As Dequiro (2002c) rightly observes, “You can’t get a better sense of the history and culture of this country than by riding a jeepney.”

Crying out “Lugar lang!” (loosely translated, “…this is the place”) is the Cebuano way of halting a jeepney when a passenger wishes to disembark. There are no designated stops on any given route. A passenger simply shouts out the words and the driver does his best to comply. Usually, that compliance means swerving across traffic or simply stopping in the middle of the road whereupon one is expected to make a swift (if dangerous) exit. Yet while there is always something inherently precarious about aborting one’s journey (physical or scholarly) in such an abrupt way, the image of a jeepney reminds us that a ‘conclusion’ or a ‘final chapter’ does not have to mean that one has exhausted a subject’s interpretive and analytical possibilities. For like any scholarly work, a jeepney ride is almost always transitory. Winding its way around the city’s main thoroughfares, prescribed routes do not usually venture into the small back alleys or deep into the villages and towns where people’s houses are. Rather, the end of a jeepney ride
is most likely the beginning of another journey – one that takes you in more direct proximity to your destination.

This study, like a jeepney ride aborted, is not an end but a commencement. Its objectives will have been reached if I have been successful in showing that the Santo Niño -- an object no more than a few centimetres in height -- encapsulates broader themes about Cebuano and Filipino religiosity that must now be evaluated according to the minute and specific contours of Filipino life. In this sense, the “figuring” of Catholicism that has been both the subject and rationale of this study, is a much more demanding endeavour than one might expect – a project that extends far beyond the intellectual parameters of a thesis, and says more about Philippine religion than the icon’s physical diminutiveness might initially suggest.
Appendix One – Myths and Legends of the Santo Niño

1.1: “Sakat, The Nephew of King Humabon” (Delacalzada 1965, 9-11)

Sakat was the son of King Humabon’s brother. He was a young man of strong build, nimble of limbs and agile in his movements. He was so quick in climbing up coconut trees that he was named Sakat. He was *kusog mokatkat* meaning (sic) very fast in climbing up.

At the time that Magellan landed in Banawa, Sakat was bedridden. To be specific, he contracted t.b., a dreaded disease. His t.b. grew worse as the days passed by. His parents gave him herbs and roots of trees as medicine. But to no avail. Sakat himself thought that his end was near. He grew very thin, his eyes sunken and he could no longer walk unless he was assisted.

On the day that King Humabon and 800 of his men were baptized, a mass was held before an ‘improvised alter’. On this altar was placed the Image of the Holy Child. The people gathered around and gazed fascinatingly at the Holy Child. The Image was very different from their bakhoy (idols). Their idols were ugly to look and were mishappened (sic).

That morning only the men were baptized, for the women including Queen Juana were baptized in the afternoon by Father Pedro Valderrama. King Humabon wanted that his nephew Sakat should also be baptized. But Sakat could not walk. So two men were sent to the house of Sakat’s parents where he was confined. Sakat did not want to be baptized. But when he was told that it was his uncle, King Humabon, who commanded the men to fetch him, Sakat could not refuse. He was helped to walk – no he was carried by two men and brought before the altar where Father Valderrama was waiting for him.

The moment Sakat was placed before the altar, he opened his sunken eyes slowly and languidly. As he raised his eyes to the altar, his eyes were attracted by the image of the Holy Child. How beautiful was the Image! He could not take his wyes away from it. At this time Father Valderrama said “in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, I baptize thee Felipe.”

To the surprise of all the people present, after the baptism, Sakat or Felipi, his wyes still focused to the Image of Señor Santo Niño Jesus, slowly rose from the bamboo stretcher – all by himself. Then he stood up and walked around. “I am well!” he shouted with joy “I am well!” He turned around and faced the altar. He knelt down and gazed at the Holy Child “Thank you. Thank you very much for making me well again”

The effect of this was that the people was electric, more so to the queen. She was already fascinated by the Image earlier but with the ‘miracle’ she just saw, she wished very much to own the image. Her wish was granted and so the Image of the Holy Child was given to her as a gift.”
1.2: “The Origin of the Sinulog”

The Sinulog is a dance performed by a man but usually by a woman before the Image of the Holy Child. It is a dance to ask favor from Niño Jesús or to fulfill a promise previously made after the favor was received. For instance, a man, a woman or a child got sick. The person while suffering the ailment, implores the Holy Child to relive him of the suffering, promising that after he got well, he would dance the Sinulog during *Fiesta Señor*, that is during the celebration of the feast of the Image of the Holy Child. In case he could not attend the feast for one reason or another or in case of a child someone is delegated to dance the Sinulog for him or for the child.

The world “Sinulog” comes from the Visayan word “sulog” meaning current. Literally, “Sinulog” means like the current, flowing like the current. The dance, therefore, is performed like the flow of the current, accompanied by the beating of a drum or drums. The man or woman dancing has a piece of an unlighted candle in her hand. She first genuflects before the Image of the Holy Child, raises her arms upward, then begins to move her feet. As she does this, her hands with the unlighted candle in one, start to gesticulate and wave over her head. As she dances, she shouts “*Pit Señor!*” Or “This is for Sotero! Pit Señor!” She names the person who dedicates the dance being performed.

How did this Sinulog originate? Let us turn to the story of the court jester of King Humabon.

King Humabon had a court jester who was called Baladhay. He was already in his prime when he was baptized and his Christian name was Santiago. Every time King Humabon wished to be entertained, Tiago (his nickname) was always called. One day, however, when King Humabon wished to be entertained Tiago was not in the court. The king at once commanded a servant to fetch Tiago. The servant could not find Tiago in the palace. When he reported the matter to the king, the king told the servant to go to the house of the jester. The jester was there but he was sick.

In fact he was sick for sometime already, but he hid the matter from the king. he did not wish to trouble the king unduly. His ailment, he told himself, was not serious. But as the days passed, his sickness grew worse, until finally, that day, he could no longer get up.

King Humabon had Baladhay treated by his best *manamambal*. Herbs and roots of trees were applied to Baladhay but to no avail. In fact, his sickness grew worst. [sic] there were already cobwebs on his eyes, eyes which were sunken. He grew thin, his hair, his beard grew long, very long. He had the appearance of a dead man.

When Queen Juana learned of the miserable condition of the court jester, she advised her husband to have Baladhay brought to the palace. Baladhay was fetched from his home and was brought to the palace on a bamboo stretcher. The sick man was really very miserable to look at. When Queen Juana saw the pitiful condition of the court jester, she commanded that he be brought right at once to her room. There before the Image of the Holy Child, Baladhay was made to lie down on a *lantay* (bamboo bed) where several sick children before were cured of their ailments.

Despite his serious condition, Baladhay, true to his calling as a jester, as he was made to lie down on the bamboo bed, said “*Ako higda lantay, patay.*” Freely translated, he said, “On this be I lie, I die.”

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But he did not die. As he lay on his bed, his sulken eyes slowly closed and before long he fell into sound sleep. Simultaneously, hot tears rolled won from his eyes. When Queen Juana saw this, she told everyone to leave the room. She closed the door herself.

Two hours later, King Humabon, Queen Juana and court officials heard a commotion in the room where Baladhay was left alone. They hurried to the room to find out. When the room was opened, they saw Baladhay standing and holding a bolo in his hand, and staring belligerently at the Image of the Holy Child, “Come on!” they heard Baladhay spoke, “Why do you stop?”

They were surprised to see Baladhay thus. He was no longer sickly. He was nimble and active. His face was flushed with much exertion as evidenced by perspiration which bated his body. The king who still was feeling his amazement asked, “What do you think you are doing, Santiago?”

“That Child up there is naughty!” answered Baladhay pointing to the Image of the Holy Child on the altar.

“How?” asked the king.

“Do? He played jokes on me. He teased me incessantly that I became angry with him.”

“How did he tease you?”

“While I lay on that bed over there soundly sleeping,” the court jester narrated, “I felt an insect, a fly – yes just like a fly – was crawling over my face. With my eyes still closed I swapped [sic.] it with my hand. I did this several times but the crawling sensation did not stop. I was forced to pen my eyes only to see that naughty child holding a coconut midrib which He used to tickle my face. In my anger for disturbing my sound sleep, I stood up at once and grabbed this bolo which hung on the walls. As I faced Him, He danced and danced as He took hold of the mid-rib as if to fence with me. I held the bolo tight in my hand and followed Him dancing. I could not help but danced [sic.] with Here and there and hither yon.”

“Then?”

“Then, when you entered the room, quick as a flash that naughty child vanished before my eyes. But there He is now standing immobile and dignified on the altar as if nothing happened.”

That is how, according to the old folks, the Sinulog originated.
Appendix Two – Excerpts from Aginid: Bayok sa Atong Tawarik (Abellana 1999)

2.1: The Santo Niño Upon Spanish Arrival (pp. 41-47)

41 Tawarik, aginid kay bayuk man sa atong tawarik, Higayon na nga kining mga ugis nga Kastila.

42 Kinahanglan na nga sa ilang pag lawig dinhi sa atong dagat kinahanglan ang pag buhis nga maoy hanabang sa atong kaugalingong pamomuan Aron molungtad ang kagamhanan inabagang sa harta wan [wealthy] nga kahimtang ug maka ligan sa tinuod nga katakus.

It is time for the white Spaniards…

43 Hoyuhoy aginid, ang pag agboy sa atong tawarik, kinahanglan na ang atong katakus, sa kahusay, kaligdong apan may kaisug nga iparang sa malupigon. Ang pag buhis sa mga langyaw nga mo sulod dinhi, kay sila wala may labut sa atong kalungtaran, kinahanglan gayud nga mag buhis kay anggongan [responsibility] sa mga lawig nga mga dumodu-ong ang buhis kinahanglan.

It is important that upon crossing our oceans, they must be taxed as aid/help to our government. In order to strengthen the power (of the government) the financially rich must help for true strong unity.

44 Aginid, ayaw gayud pag undag sa tanos nga aginid, ang sampa [realm] ning mga ugis ug balangasan [bearded] nag dili nga sila pabuhison, hinun kita mag buhis aron ika dugang sa ilang gahum kay giisip na man nga kita nahimong ulipon busa kita mag buhis kanila.

We must be strong, wise, calm but fearful enough to match the invader/bully. To tax the foreigners who enter here because they have nothing to do with our resistance, tax is necessary for the locals.

44 Hoyuhuy, kay may kabingkilan, padayon ang aginid, ang mga tawong balangasan, dili gayod mo buhis aron sa pag kabig kanato nga dili sila pabuhison, may usa ka matahum kaayong dakung

Do not stop to progress in objecting for the realm of the whites and bearded not to be taxed, yet we are taxed so we can contribute to strengthen their power because they have intended to make us their slaves, therefore we must tax them.

44 bitang. [chair] Ilang gihatag ngadto

There is a conflict, continue the journey, the bearded men will never pay tax and continue to persuade us not to tax them, and there is one beautiful and huge chair that they have given to King
Humabon They trusted Humabon to be the head and not one single person will go against him as he was entrusted with full authority. Humabon no longer insisted the blondes to pay taxes, instead he complied to pay taxes because of his intentions regarding Lapulapu who already forewarned not to help the blondes so they will leave and return home.

(I believe Humabon did this to spite Lapulapu who disliked the Spaniards) There was a neighbouring barrio/barangay that showed disapproval and therefore destroyed and burnt the houses and leveled everything to the ground. Because Rajah Humabon, true to his name, and that Lapulapu was his enemy, he took this opportunity for Lapulapu and the Spaniards to fight to lessen/reduce their individual greedy power.

It was a fight between two powers. What aggravated their anger and strengthen their bravery was that the whites were cheaters/thieves. They stole gold, money and figurines including the beautiful gold depiction of Sheba and so with the depiction of Ganesha. These images were stolen by the aggressors so we will forget earthly treasures that were unchristian.

In the past, before Christianity was absorbed into the minds of our people,
most of our predecessors adored depictions/replicas/representations of different objects. In the beginning they were animist as no one have ever introduced and convinced them to know the truth like the Bible. Even the graves of dead people were excavated to remove precious belongings and they were taken away. These acts according to our elders were acts of desecration against the dead. In addition to these evil deeds, women were raped by strong and powerful aggressors. The meaning of this in English is culture while wealth is the evil spirit. Sheba was the golden replica of those from Arabia who was most revered because she was useful. Just like Ganesha who was possessed by a tribe from India. The wrath for those who raped the women added fire to all their grudges.

Glide on, Aginid, continue and continue, this is good for our tribe, let us idolize Laon, Lumawig, Gunong, Bukakaw, Sidapa, Sisiburanin up to Migbibaya for none of us was defeated against the offensive blonde and bearded people.

Aginid, Aginid, kick the gongs, shake the drums, accompany with noise our joy and glory as we now possess victory, Aginid, glide one, Aginid.
Not long after they removed the holy cross from where it belongs, awake in the night, Juana the wife of King Humabon, was always awaken in her sleep by a small child begging to return the holy cross to where it used to be. Juana was shocked as when she opened the wooden chest, where she stored the image of the child, the gift she received on her baptism together with more than 800 men headed by her husband Humabon. Upon seeing the image, she was surprised to realize that it resembled the child who wakes her up in the night begging to return the holy cross. She told the story to her husband Humabon who agreed to install the holy cross back to its place. He was obliged to instruct his men to put back the holy cross which was comparable to a huge axe that they all fear. After the holy cross was reinstalled, Juana in her deep sleep sees the child very happy and always was thankful to her.
Appendix Three – Case of a Quezon City Poltergeist (Bulatao 1965, 147-153)

The house where these events occurred is a two-story house with a basement in the rear at a slightly lower level than the rest of the first floor. The back door opens from the basement to a yard the edge of which drops abruptly to a large creek. The creek at this point flows rather swiftly and its bed composed of pebbles, rocks, and scoured adobe stone. On the other side of the creek are shanties occupied by squatters. All day and night there is the sound of falling water.

The occupants of the house were a normal, well-educated family, the master being an accountant by training, he wife, a school teacher. The oldest daughter had married and left. Two sons remained, one studying in high school and the other in grade school. All the members of the family had received high honors in school and were clearly in the top range of intelligence.

The main human characters of this account were the maids. The youngest was Virginia, a pretty girl of fifteen. Ailing was her aunt, a widow of thirty-five. A third maid, Ester, about twenty, did not enter much into the story except later as an eyewitness.

The following narration is the composite account of eighteen eyewitnesses, in substantial agreement on the main events. No one fact has been knowingly added to their explicit testimony.

The First Day

The main “happening” began about noon, Tuesday, 29 March. The two maids, Ailing and Virginia, with a third maid, Ester, were alone in the house when Ester heard footsteps upstairs as of someone angrily stomping around the room and hitting the floor with a cane. Seeing no one, they proceeded to serve lunch to the son of the house who had returned from school, and to take lunch themselves. After lunch Ailing went to the basement to do her ironing when she felt sand thrown at her apparently through a window. She was certain there was no wind at the time and thought some children were playing pranks on her. Then small stones began to fall all over the basement and hit her without causing pain. As she ran into her room, a round stone about eight inches in diameter crashed down with great force beside her feet.

Everyone ran outside. Anyone coming inside the house was met by a rain of stones. When the son of the house came back from his afternoon classes he saw people gathered behind the house. He went in together with them and saw pieces of wood, the kalso for wedging the window, being thrown at the maids. One of the neighbors then telephoned the police. The son, accompanied by a certain carpenter, went upstairs. The carpenter climbed to the roof of the house but saw nothing. Two policemen came in a police car and went through the house looking for the stone thrower, but likewise saw nothing.

Meanwhile the master of the house had been summoned from his office by a neighbor who told him about the mysterious stoning. Over the phone he asked if it was by hoodlums, juvenile delinquents from across the creek, the squatter area, but he was told that it was more mysterious than that and that the stoning was coming from inside the house. When he arrived home he found the police car parked in front of the gate, the
front of the house all closed, and a crowd gathered behind. He entered the house through
the basement door and noticed the basement strewn with seven big stones and many
broken pieces of adobe-like stones such as those found in the creek bed behind the house.
The scene was as if a truck had unloaded a truckload of gravel, and children had then
played on it. Some of the stones were still covered with lumot (moss), such as those
found in the river bank.

The policemen, unable to find the stone throwers, left. The master then asked
someone to go to the church nearby to call a priest and sent the son to call the mother,
who was teaching at school. While he was interviewing the maids on the steps leading to
the basement, machine bolts started flying, one of these swishing by Aling’s skirt and
falling at her feet. “Nandiyan na manan sila!” [Here they are again!] they shouted. As
Aling entered her room to take something from the medicine cabinet, the master who was
at the doorway saw a plastic basin fly at her, as if thrown, and striker her at the back.
Virginia also shouted, “Ay!” and then saw her own shoulder dripping wet where a cup of
water had been poured on her.

The master told Virginia to change into dry clothes. Afraid to go into her room
alone, she asked two of the boys to go into the room alone ahead of her. But as the two
boys entered the room they were hit with two coat hangers. They ran right out again.

The mistress of the house arrived, shortly followed by a priest from the
neighbouring church, a Belgian. He started the blessing, prayed before the Sacred Heart,
blessed the house with holy water room by room. He left at about 7:00 p.m.

The maids were preparing supper when a glass fell and broke at Aling’s feet.
Virginia and Ester set the coffee table to boil, but the coffee pot overturned, without
falling off the stove. Virginia jumped off the path of hot water. Then a cup unhooked
itself from the dishrack and fell. Unable to prepare supper, the family telephoned the
mother-in-law who arrived at about 10:30 p.m. bringing cooked food.

About midnight another policeman came while there were still many people
around. Aling had to go to the bathroom but was still so scared that she brought Ester
and Virginia to the bathroom with her and left the door ajar. Once more the tabo partly
filled with water and standing on top of a waterdrum (it was the time of the water
shortage) was thrown out through the bathroom door. Shrieks arose again. The
policeman left in a hurry saying, “Baka mapahamak rin ako.” [I might be implicated in
all this]

The mother-in-law also took her departure, leaving behind two young men to help
guard the house. The family then went upstairs (where things remained completely
undisturbed) and spent a peaceful night. The two young men prepared to sleep in the
parlor while the maids retired to their room. As they spread their sleeping mats, the
sungkaan (a solid piece of wood with two rows of cup-like hollows for playing sungka)
which had been lying on a cabinet near the wall flew off its stand, sailed over Virginia’s
head, and dumped its sigay (seashells) on the sleeping mat. The maids ran out of their
room to the parlor where the young men were lying on tables. The maids tried to sleep
on the sofa, but were kept awake all night by the loud tappings and by the sofa’s being
violently shaken. Aling felt her ankle being pulled and saw chairs moving.
The Second Day

Around 6:15 the next morning the master of the house woke up and went out the kitchen door to the mailbox. Aling was in the kitchen and Virginia in the bathroom fixing herself. As the master came in, he saw a stone strike the kitchen door with such force that the neighbours heard it and said to him “Mayroon na naman ba?” [Is it happening again?] He picked up the stone and recognized it as the panghiloån stone from the bathroom. He then observed that the source of the thrown object seemed to be where Virginia was. But it was clearly not Virginia who was doing the throwing.

It was then decided to separate the two maids. At about ten o’clock Aling took Virginia to her cousin’s house and left here there while she went on to market. On her return she dropped in again and saw Virginia busy at some embroidery. While facing her she saw a beer bottle come at her from Virginia’s shoulder while Virginia herself never moved. The beer bottle was flowed by a flower vase likewise thrown at her from Virginia’s direction. When she tried to light the kerosene stove to heat herself some water, the flame suddenly jumped up and burned the tablecloth. Scared, they returned to the original house.

The married daughter of the house came for lunch at two o’clock. As it started to rain and the maids had finished washing the dishes and had gone to the basement, several bottle caps were thrown from the kitchen to the dinner room corner. The daughter picked up the bottle caps and threw them in the garbage saying, “You would be more useful if you threw money instead.” About ten minutes later the telephone rang, and expecting it, to be her husband, she went up to the landing to answer it. Barely had she said “hello” when she felt something brush her shoulder from above, hit the balustrade, and land on the second step of the basement stair. She saw it was a fifty-centavo piece. Saying, “Hindi naman kayo mabiro,” [You can’t take a joke] she ran out into the rain with the maids.

Finding the rain very strong, they went around to the kitchen side of the house, and as they peeped in, they aw the curtains on the other side of the room being lifted up, bunched together in the middle, and raised. The rain nevertheless drove them to reenter the house and take refuge in the kitchen, from which place they heard footsteps descending the staircase and a low voice making a grumbling sound. They telephoned the master of the house at his office to tell him that there were voices inside the house.

The mistress of the house came back from school and was met at the gate by the daughter and the maids. She walked toward the house making a large sign of the cross and saying, “Please don’t do us any harm. After all this is my house too.” On going up the stairs she saw the fifty-centavo piece but did not touch it. They said the rosary together aloud and at its end the mistress said, “With your permission I will give the fifty centavos to the Virgin of the Rosary.” But when they went downstairs to pick up the fifty-centavo piece, it was gone. Aling later said that she was missing fifty centavos from her purse.

That evening the master of the house brought home an officemate. While they were in the dining room and eating gulaman and taking over the events of the last two days, a stone struck the table with great force and bounced against the wall. The stone was smooth and wet, apparently having come from the creek behind the house. There
was no agreement about the precise direction from which it came. The officemate, without touching the stone, wrapped it up in a handkerchief and brought it the next day to the National Bureau of Investigation for possible fingerprints. The NBI said that the texture of the stone as well as its original wetness precluded the possibility of fingerprints and they made him the butt of jokes.

From this point on, the eruption subsided. Virginia went to live at the cousin’s place and it was only when Virginia came to visit Aling that minor manifestations occurred. I myself witnessed a couple of such minor events. Once when Virginia was preparing to say goodbye for the evening, I saw a glass fall by itself on its side and also saw a table knife after it had jumped up from its rack by the sink and fallen into the floor. On another occasion I saw barbecue sticks being thrown out of a cabinet as though by mice, even though there were no mice there.

Frightened and discouraged, Virginia decided to go home to Antique. She could not be dissuaded, not even by the mistress of the house who had grown very fond of her. One evening, after one of her visits to the house, as she was saying goodbye, all the lights of the house went on by themselves. It was goodbye.
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