

Voices from the Other Side: Impressions from Some Igorot Participants in U.S. Cultural Exhibitions in the Early 1900s

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I. Introduction: The St. Louis Fair of 1904

In the 1900s Igorots from some parts of the Cordillera, such as Bontoc, Suyoc, and Abra, were recruited to join other Filipinos for the purpose of exhibiting their respective ethnic cultures at the 1904 International Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri (see Afable 1997, 2000; *Igorot Village* 1904; *Philippine Exposition* 1904). A grand celebration to mark the centennial of the United States' acquisition of the Louisiana Territory from France, this fair became an occasion for the young imperialist nation to show off its new colonial acquisition – the Philippine Islands.

The purpose of the first exhibit of Filipino ethnic groups at the Saint Louis Fair was expressed by Albert Jenks (quoted in Jenks 1950, 203-204) in 1904:

The purpose of the ethnologic exhibit at the Exposition in the States is twofold: **first**, the American visitor may have an opportunity to understand the different tribes of people in these Islands. There will be representatives from all the various stages of culture, from the least-civilized..., the semi-civilized..., to the civilized and cultured....¹ They will also be represented as naturally as possible so the Americans at home can get as good an idea of the Philippine people as possible without actually visiting the Islands. The **second** reason for sending them is so that the Filipinos may have a much better idea of what America really is and what her people are with the result, it is hoped, that seed sown in the Islands by the visitors to America, when they return to their homes in the Philippines, will result in the fruits of peace, industry, and progress along the lines of American ideals for the Islands.

Over the past decades there has been considerable interest among Filipino and foreign scholars, writers, and some of the descendants of the Igorots who participated in the 1904 Fair, about the ways in which Filipinos, particularly the “Igorotes,” were represented in the writings and photographs of the early 1900s. Among the Philippine ethnic groups that participated in the Fair, the Igorots were the most popular. They drew the largest crowds and garnered the widest international

media coverage. The Igorot Village is said to have been the biggest money earner in terms of entrance receipts (Afable 2000). Newspapers sensationalized the Igorot exhibition by calling attention to the “Igorot dog feast,” the “headhunting wild people,” and a curious invention, the “chieftains of the tribes.” Although this was viewed by the Igorots as ridiculous, they nevertheless humored their hosts. This resulted in the creation of Igorot stereotypes which have persisted to the present. The myth of the ‘dog-eating’ Igorot can be largely traced to the media hype during the St. Louis Fair. There was also much controversy over the scanty clothing of the Igorots and Negrito men, considered immodest if not immoral among many Westerners at that time. At some point, American officials felt compelled to explain the practices observed at the highly popular Igorot Village, publicizing the fact that “wild tribes” composed only a small portion of the Philippine population, and that the butchering of dogs was mainly for ritual purposes (Louisiana Purchase Exposition 1904, 169).

When the St. Louis Fair ended, some Igorots stayed and traveled to many U.S. towns, while the others regrouped with new arrivals from the Bontoc region and traveled to Canada and several European cities to take part in various cultural exhibitions. These overseas travels from 1904 to 1914 were the result of private arrangements between the American entrepreneurs and the Bontoc people. Archival records show that over 300 Bontocs traveled abroad between 1904 and 1911. By 1910, Bontoc probably had more well-traveled people than any other rural area in the Philippines. Through these travel experiences, as Afable (2000, 20) says, many of the Bontoc participants became familiar with many aspects of the wider world, including entertainment contracts, receipts, and correspondence, and some even made court appearances at trials involving them and their managers.

II. Voices from the Other Side

The stories of three Bontok women, one from Bontoc Central and two from Tucucan, illustrate how the Igorots who participated in the overseas cultural exhibitions viewed their participation and experiences. These interpretations, impressions, images, and assessments of their American sojourn, *nikimalika*², draw on recollections of their teenage years during the first decade of the 20th century.

Most of the participants were from Bontok villages such as Alab, Tucucan, and Samoki. A smaller number came from other villages of Mountain Province. A sizable representation in the Saint Louis Fair also came from the Kankana-ey of Suyok, and Tinguians of Abra. These Cordillerans, particularly the Bontoks, traveled not only to different cities in the United States, but many proceeded to Canada, France,

Belgium, the Netherlands and London to join other exhibitions (Afable 1997, 2000). These trips covered the years from 1904 to 1914.

In scholarly discussions of the exhibition of "Igorotes" in the United States, the participants appear as passive, silent actors who, it is suggested, were forcibly recruited and subjected to a life of degradation through their exhibition as "wild," "headhunting savages." Most of the accounts on the Igorots who participated in the different expositions viewed their exhibition negatively. It can be said, however, that in reading what transpired in the 1900s according to how they viewed these past events from the perspective of the present, several writers may have misinterpreted the events that happened almost a hundred years ago.

In "Rediscovering the 1904 World's Fair: Human Bites Human," Galloway (2001) reports on a gathering of some of the descendants of those who participated in the 1904 St. Louis Fair. The gathering took place in January 2000 at the Wydown Middle School in Missouri, where the 1904 Igorot Village stood at the Fair. The Igorot descendants who visited the setting of the Igorot Village had varying views on what they perceived as the experiences of their ancestors. Some of them believed in the rather popular interpretations that there was coercion or manipulation, brain theft, eugenic experimentation, and forced feeding of dog meat.³ Where did these interpretations come from? A number of these were based on 'rumors' that developed into myths. Over time, these were passed off as 'fact' (Galloway 2001).

Yet there is a critically important question that has not been adequately explored: How did the Igorots see themselves? And how does this self-perception contrast with how others represented them, or interpreted these representations? In various articles the Igorots were described as people who were "herded into ships of no return," "forcibly recruited and exhibited like animals," "inhumanly treated," "exploited," or "lured by recruitment agents," and their conditions were described as "dehumanizing" and "demoralizing to the tribe" (see Demetillo 1996, *Zig-zag Weekly* 2004). Such descriptions clearly have a judgmental or political tone. In fact, however, evidence from the Cordillera suggests that some of the participants were teenagers who were goaded by their own curiosity and thirst to seek adventure outside their village (*ili*). Earning cash (*lagfu*) was another strong incentive that attracted these Igorots, young and old alike.

Most of the writings to date have focused largely on the exploitation of the Igorots, and on the way they were viewed as culturally representing all Filipinos. Elite Filipinos here and abroad denounced this exhibition of Igorots, claiming that the exhibit had caused them great humiliation and embarrassment. Furthermore, there was fear that based on the exhibition of Igorots who performed at the St. Louis Fair the U.S. public would judge the Filipinos as "backward/

primitive" in their ways and therefore not ready for independence or incapable of running their own government.

Afable (2000, 20) has commented that viewed from a contemporary perspective, "there is no doubt that today, the exhibition of people in all these Fairs is overwhelmingly considered demeaning, exploitative, and based on racist assumptions." Yet one hundred years ago, were these views representative of the Igorots' own perception of their involvement in these exhibitions? Were they really forced to participate in the 1904 and subsequent exhibitions? Were they passive in their responses to events that affected them during their trips abroad?

A century after the fact, there would seem to be little chance of discovering the participants' actual view of this period, little prospect for asking any of the Igorots who took this voyage how they represented themselves as the actors/subjects of this historic event. Fortunately, some Igorots have recorded what they heard from their elder kinsmen, who were themselves descendants of those who participated at the Fairs. Foremost among them is Antonio Buangan, who conducted extensive research and was able to interview his kinsmen who heard stories handed down to them by some of the participants from Suyoc.

While doing field research in Bontoc and Tucucan from the late 1960s to the 1980s I was also lucky to have directly interviewed Tagkhay Antero and two of the three surviving Tucucan women (Kinarang, Mangameng, and Luyawan)⁴ who had gone to the States. I took down notes of their interesting stories but did not realize the importance of their *nikimalika* accounts until more recent years when I read about the largely negative interpretations of several writers who had published papers on the subject. It is interesting to note the different perceptions, interpretations, and observations of the participants themselves about their experiences during those exhibitions, particularly the manner of their recruitment and their having been active participants. My interviews with Tagkhay [also known as Isding] Antero in the late 1960s focused largely on her impressions of Bontoc during the early American period. The two women from Tucucan whom I was able to interview in the early 1970s were Kinarang and Mangameng; I was unable to interview Luyawan whose health was failing at that time. Marilou Demetillo, a newspaper contributor for the Women's Feature Service of *Today* (1996), also had a short interview with Kinarang in 1996. Unfortunately, at the time of my interviews with Kinarang and Mangameng, the Tucucan men who went to the U.S. had already passed away.⁵

When my interest in the subject was rekindled by the extensive archival research carried out by Patricia Afable, I began digging up my old field notes pertaining to my informants' travels abroad. Most of my informants' experiences in their overseas travels⁶ have been confirmed by documentation in Afable's papers (1997, 2000). As I read through

the historical accounts in Afable's work, I reviewed my old field notes, and tried to determine how much of the informants' experiences were reflected in the documentation. Specifically, I thought of these questions:

- What was their story regarding their experiences abroad?
- How were they recruited and by whom?
- What were the activities that they carried out in the recreated Bontok village?
- How did they see themselves in the context of their role in the exposition?
- How were the Igorots treated by their managers during their travels, and by the people who came to watch them during their exhibition?
- Did they experience any harassment or abuse from the people who recruited them? How did they respond to their exploitation?
- What were their impressions about the Americans who paid to watch them?
- What were their impressions of America and its people?

Although my interview notes reveal that the original questions I posed were not primarily focused on the St. Louis Fair, my informants talked at length about unmarried women's freedom in making their own decisions on matters pertaining to their personal affairs. This topic brought them to give themselves as examples — where sometime during the first decade of the 20th century, against their parents' and elders' advice, they escaped at early dawn and hiked for two days to



Figure 1. Young Kinarang, second from left; and Mangameng, third from right. (Photo from the personal collection of Elisa Amok)

meet the group in Cervantes and Candon. Together, they were to join the other groups leaving for Manila where they would board the boat that would take them to *Malika* (America). These participants have offered us another view of these past events.

Kinarang's Story



Figure 2. Kinarang, c1970. (Photo taken by the author in Tucucan, Bontoc)

Kinarang was in her late teens or early twenties when she and two other peers ran away from home to join a group at Candon, bound for America (see Fig. 1, photo of young Kinarang and Mangameng). She claimed to have been baptized at the Anglican Church of All Saints Mission (after she arrived from America) in 1916.⁷ I first met her in the early 1970s (see Fig. 2) when I resided in Tucucan while doing field research. Based on my estimate, she must have been in her late 70s then (she, however, claimed to have been in her middle eighties).⁸ She walked straight and carried herself elegantly, even while coming home in the evening from the fields with a load of *camote* leaves for her pig, or some bundled twigs for fuel. My field house was along the path going to the fields across the river, and sometimes I would ask her to drop in for a cup of coffee. As one of my key informants in the village, she shared information on social stratification, kinship, and women's activities and worldviews. I remember her giving examples by narrating her experience in her travels to far-off places, especially to *Malika*. It was clear from her accounts that she had a great sense of adventure

and wanted to see what it was like outside the *ili*. Thus she joined the Bontok group despite her parents' protests and their fear about travel to unknown places. This fear was based on the belief that the spirit of a person who dies while away from the home village, especially in a foreign land, will be lost and unable to come home to rest. Furthermore, they were told that should their parents get sick or die, they would not be around to perform the death rituals. Kinarang and two other young ladies – Mangameng (in her early 80s in 1970; see Fig. 3) and Luyawan, who were her Tucucan friends – escaped from their homes and joined their other companions in Candon, Ilocos Sur, where they met other persons from other villages who were also adventurous like them. From there they boarded a boat that took them to Manila. Mangameng and Kinarang said they were asked to cover their bosoms and wear



Figure 3. Mangameng, c1970. (Photo taken by the author in Tucucan, Bontoc)

dressess and shoes to avoid attracting attention, especially when they boarded the ship from Manila, and while they were traveling abroad. They were not accustomed to walking with shoes and tried to remove them whenever they could.

The Trans-Pacific trip

The women found the long trip by boat exciting. Seeing the big ocean for the first time, they were fascinated by the vastness of the sea. However, they both described the one-month travel by sea as an ordeal. They were

seasick most of the time; the ship's movements over the rough waters made them throw up. Many of their companions stayed in the lower deck, especially when the sea was rough, for fear of falling overboard.

When they finally landed in Tacoma, Washington, they were met by their *ap-apo* manager (Kinarang was not sure of the name although it sounded like a Mr. Sant [Hunt?]), who took them to the train station. According to her, this person was known to have been in Bontoc as a soldier.⁹ Kinarang recalled that the train that they boarded was more luxurious and larger than the one they saw in Manila. They also felt sick on the train and were made to wear thick clothes due to the cold weather. She heard that some of the people with them, whom she did not know, got sick and died.¹⁰ Another complaint was that they were fed with American food and not rice, except on special occasions. Some could never fully adjust to the bread diet, but many eventually got used to it.

Kinarang boasted: "We were very popular and many Americans came to visit us and watch our performances. Those who were rich gave us gifts of money. Some wanted to know more about our customs (*nan os-os-kilaan tsa*), many took pictures of our dancing, singing, weaving, and of the men forging iron and building stonewalls (*nan en tup-tupeng*). We made bracelets, rings, earrings and other things out of woven strips of *owey* rattan. The men crafted spears, wove basket hats and other ornaments for men. The people who came to watch us bought these as *Ikorrote* souvenirs. We kept the money that they paid us (*Kwa me pay nan sipeng ay enigwar tsa*)."

In her narration Kinarang described *Malika* as: "... a big place, but not all people there were wealthy. There were also many who were poor (*Ansan pay nan lawa eschi*). We also saw some poor people who did not dress as well. When we stopped in some places not many came to watch us, because I understand that these were the poor towns (*lawa nan ente-te-er es nan na chay ili; mo pay umey kami es nan ili nan kakachangyan, ya ansan nan umali ay men fuya kan tsakami*). When we arrived in the richer towns many people came to watch us. The women wore long heavy dresses and hats, some rode in *kalesas* pulled by horses. They had many machines like what they used in farming, but these were not practical in our mountains." Kinarang recalled that there was an American who was attracted to Mangameng and wanted to marry her, but the latter did not like to stay in America. She said she wanted to come home to her *ili*. Kinarang, however, did not want to elaborate on this neither did Mangameng.

Tagkhay Antero's experience in Malika

Tagkhay was in her teens when she was recruited and asked to join the group of Antero (very likely after Antero came back from the St.

Louis Exposition). Her father was from Samoki while her mother was from Gonogon. She said she was an orphan, like Antero who was to become her husband. She was living with her relatives in Bontoc town when she was recruited by Antero. She estimated her age then to be around fourteen or fifteen.

She narrated that a certain Likardo Senai-de (Richard Schneidewind), who was in Bontoc earlier as a soldier,¹¹ came to recruit Antero, who had returned from his first trip to America, after staying for one year at the St. Louis Exposition. According to Tagkhay, Antero¹² was attending school when Schneidewind arrived from America and called for him, to instruct him to recruit other Igorots “to exhibit our cultural practices (*enpafuyas nan ukhali tako*).” Antero was asked to recruit a group composed of 10 old women (*inan-a*), 10 old men (*amam-a*), 4 married women (*finaryan*), 4 young men (*fafallo*), 4 married men, 4 young women (*mamagkit*), and 4 children (*ongong-a*). Antero recruited people from Bontoc, Alab, Samoki, Tucucan and a few from other villages. Some were married couples and others were either related or from the same village. It is interesting to note that at that time some of the participants were recruited from villages which were at war with each other.¹³ However, no conflict was experienced throughout their travels, according to Tagkhay, and no inter-group conflict cases seem to have been reported in the documents. Those who went were people who were excited to experience adventure and earn money.

As recalled by Tagkhay, the group started from Bontoc town and passed through Sagada to Bangnen, down to Cervantes and Candon. After hiking for two days they boarded a boat that took them to Manila, after which they boarded a bigger boat to America. The trip across the Pacific Ocean took one whole month. She and most of the group got seasick and stayed below deck, sleeping most of the time, while Antero and some others who had already experienced several trips across the Pacific were roaming around the deck and taking care of them. Tagkhay mentioned that they stopped in Japan where some passengers got off and new passengers boarded the boat. They arrived in Tacoma, Washington, where someone came to take them to the train bound for Chicago. The group was split into two 20 persons went to one place while the rest went to another. She remembered their travel to Canada, Detroit, and many towns in America such as Savannah (Georgia), *Salvania* (Pennsylvania), *Dallas* (Dallas, Texas), and *Wasington* (Washington), and other places that she could no longer recall. They stayed in each place for only 2-3 days. They did not go to New York because, according to her, the people who lived there were wealthy (*kakadangyan*). Most of their travel to different places involved riding trains, which she described as better than riding the boat.

Life at the Fair



Figure 4. The Igorot Village, St. Louis Fair.

"Our managers (*ap-apo*) built structures [see for example the Igorot houses at the St. Louis Fair, Fig. 4] that were exactly like those found in the Bontoc *Ili*, such as the *afung* (dwelling house), *ato/ator* (ceremonial men's house), and *khongo* (pig pit). They also set up the paraphernalia for weaving (*abel/afer*) and blacksmithing (*enfesar*). We showed our *ugkhali* (customs), what we normally did in the *ili* how we worked (weaving, blacksmithing, basket-making), our dances, songs, how we ate, what we ate, how we slept, how traditional decision-making was done, our tattoos, and other skills which were demonstrated to the people who came to watch us."

The wedding of Tagkhay and Antero was an important event that received some publicity. "Our marriage ceremony was performed in public, for the audience to see our custom, and it drew a large crowd. All the ritual procedures were followed since it was a real wedding and not staged. Another important occasion at the Fair was when I delivered Sebya [Sylvia], our first-born child my not delivering in a hospital was one of the highlights of the show. They called attention to 'the Igorot woman who gave birth without going to the hospital'. When they first saw my baby they said, "the baby has no nose! (*kanan cha ma-id eleng na*).'" This was because, according to Antero's interpretation of their

comment, the newborn baby's nose was 'flat.' Many people were curious and asked a lot of questions, which Antero could understand since he was good in English and the best *en-taropeter* (interpreter) who could answer the visitors' queries. He learned to write and speak in English and Spanish from Mr. Cabrera (a Spanish mestizo), his godfather, who sent him to school in Bontoc, and had him baptized and named Antero Cabrera. He was also tutored by an American *sengyora* in Bontoc who taught him English,¹⁴ and he learned very quickly because he was very bright. They called him Antero since he went to America."¹⁸

The Death of Ula

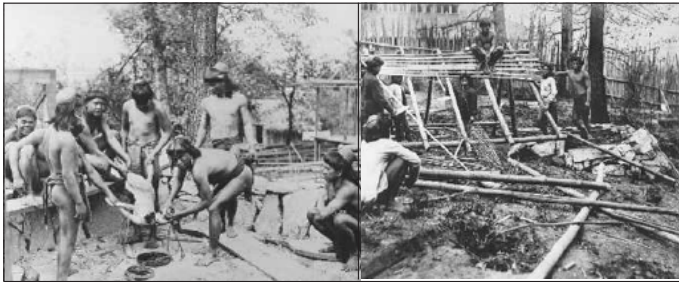


Figure 5. Scenes from the Igorot Village, St. Louis Fair.

Tagkhay recalled the death in Detroit of an old man, whom she referred to as Ula (the record mentions a man named Matyu who died in Detroit in 1908 [Afable 2000, 10]; however, his *ili* name could have been Ula). According to Tagkhay's narration, Ula got very sick and they tried to cure him but he died before they could take him to a hospital. He was buried in America (she could not remember where) since they could not ship his body home because of the expense involved. They were allowed by the American authorities to perform the death dirges and other rituals,¹⁶ but not the propping-up of the corpse on the 'death chair'. Instead, they performed a ritual that included the collection of soil from the burial site, which they brought with them when they returned to Bontoc a symbolic substitute for the corpse that could not be physically transported back to the home village. This procedure was carried out in the belief that his spirit would follow the collected soil, as if it were his body, back to the *ili*. "Our death practices and rituals were not exhibited at the Fairs, because our elders said it was taboo (*lawwa/inayan*), since it is as if one is wishing that somebody among us should die."

Seeking Justice

After their performance in one place they were transported to another town. Kinarang and Mangameng mentioned that they went to numerous places in the U.S. My 1969 field notes describe an occasion narrated by Kinarang when some of their companions wrote to the President of the United States.¹⁷ Moreover, when the Bontoks believed that they were being shortchanged or cheated, they resorted to seeking redress through the American legal system.

Afable (2000, 26) mentions cases filed by two Bontoc men, Ellis Tongain and James Amok, who wrote President Woodrow Wilson about some problems, including not being paid and not being allowed to go home. Apparently, the U.S. President responded to their complaint. An investigation was carried out which resulted in their being sent home in December 1913. There is also documentation of an earlier complaint filed by Igorots against Truman Hunt in Chicago, Memphis, and New Orleans, in 1906. Hunt was accused of defrauding them and not paying them over long periods. In the Chicago case, Julio Balinag, Katonen, Dalasan, Pomecda, Fomeloey and Dengalen accused Mr. Hunt of robbing them. The Cook County Court returned some money to the complainants. Hunt was convicted in two separate trials and sentenced to 11 months and 20 days in the first case and 6 months in the workhouse in the second. Afable (2000, 26) points out that the juries at these trials, which in 1907 would certainly have been composed entirely of white people, interestingly ruled in favor of the "Igorrotes."

Igorot visit to other places in America

Tagkhay also narrated that "Our managers gave us a sightseeing tour to show us how Americans live. They told us: 'Now that we Americans have seen your customs and way of living, it is our turn to show you how American life is'. We were shown how they built houses, what they did for their entertainment, how they farmed with the use of machines, how they raised their pigs and chickens for the primary purpose of selling and not for rituals. We were also taken to a factory where we saw that Americans did not use their hands to work like us, but they let machines do the work. There was an accident involving a worker whose arm was severed by the machine. It was explained to us that the government would be responsible for taking care of the injured man, and would shoulder the hospital bills and compensate him for his disability." Tagkhay commented, "This is a good practice. When we Igorots get injured in an accident, no one will do our task, so the family members will have to suffer. But I am not in favor of machines that can harm the people using them."

Tagkhay said they met briefly with the other Bontoc groups and would sometimes compare experiences. Then they would separate again to perform in different towns or cities. She mentioned that when they arrived in the rich towns they made more money because there were more people who came to watch the show. They said they did not get to meet the other Filipino ethnic groups who were also participating in the exposition in fact most of them were not aware of the other ethnic groups except for the other Igorot groups. She did not recognize any lowlander Filipinos among those who came to visit the Igorot Village.

As recalled by Tagkhay, their managers (*ap-apo*) imported rice from the Philippines to feed the group. "We were fed rice especially at lunchtime, and this attracted people who came to watch what we ate and who were amused with the way we ate rice with our hands and not on a table." However, some of them complained when they were given bread for breakfast and dinner.¹⁸ Each person was given one whole loaf of bread during each meal. Some of the participants who did not like to eat bread threw it in the garbage can. When the managers discovered this they were scolded for wasting food. To teach them a lesson, the managers withheld their supply for two days, so they were forced to buy their own food. Antero and Tagkhay also scolded them for throwing away food.

Incidents of harassment, insults, or annoyance

Tagkhay narrated: "We once experienced an occasion where a man who might have been drunk tried to annoy us but was quickly scolded by the manager. Sometimes there were people in the audience who would say 'Ha ha ha! Igorrotes!' — while pointing to our tattoos. Sometimes there were curious people who asked if they could touch and examine the tattoos. Of course we understood their curiosity, because they saw that our customs were very different from theirs — they do not tattoo themselves, nor do they eat dogs — the same way that we found their ways to be so strange and different from ours."

"Another occasion happened in a restaurant, when a white man tried to give us some left-over food, but another white man who was observing talked to him and told him, 'They are not dogs that will accept your left-over food. Their manager takes care of feeding them. They have their own food supply.' But aside from these two incidents, they [Americans] were good, they treated us well (*gawis da met, gawis nan enkak an da ken dakami*)."

It appears that the group of Tagkhay did not have any bad experience with their managers. However, Kinarang had a different story. According to her, their manager did not pay some of their companions their salary (*lagfu*). She mentioned that some of their

companions wrote to the American president, who told the *okom* (court/government authorities) to pay them. This statement is confirmed in Afable's work (2000, 28) which reports on the cases, cited earlier, filed by Ellis Ton-gain and James Amok. There was an investigation and the Bontoc people who were touring in France at that time, were taken to Marseilles, where they boarded a ship in 1913, despite the wish of half of the group to stay with the Schneidewind group.¹⁹ This case however is not the same case of 1916 involving Kinarang's group.

Sojourners' assessment of their trip to America

Tagkhay said that their *nikimalika* was a good experience, "because we saw many places, we earned some money, Antero and I got married and we had our first child that was *minal-lika* ('made in America'). We were proud to show our customs, which was the reason why we were invited to go there. People had to pay to listen to our songs, watch our dances and rituals. Many bought the things that we made as souvenirs; some gave us gifts." The same comments were made by Kinarang and Mangameng.

Did anyone get rich from the money they earned?

Tagkhay, Kinarang, and Mangameng could not think of anyone who came home rich. As Tagkhay narrated: "We came home with souvenirs such as clothes, beads, coins, and other things that each fancied which we stored in a trunk and carried back with us. We changed the dollars that we earned when we reached Manila. Many rich Americans who came to watch us also gave gifts that we took home. Antero brought home his *melikana* (suit/coat) that was given to him by a big *Malekano*, because he was a good *entaropeter*. Antero was also invited to the house of the president [the White House].²⁰ Some of the things that we brought home were taken by relatives who went through the things in our trunk and took what they fancied. We wore the other clothes until they got worn out. We were, however, rich with stories of *Malika*."

Would they have wanted to live in America?

Tagkhay had this to say: "When I hear these young people talking about America, they seem to think it is so easy to go and live there. I always tell them, it is not that easy to live in America. People there work very hard, harder than here. If you don't have a job you can starve in America. So you young people should stop saying 'America, America,

it is good in America! ‘(*Malika, Malika khawis id Malika*)’ America is not what they imagine it to be. Many among us longed for home, and we were happy to be home where things are familiar to us. Furthermore, even if you don’t work very hard here you will not starve.” Kinarang and Mangameng had no romantic ideas about America either. But their stories tell us that while they were traveling to foreign lands they always longed for home and commented about the people as “*sab-safali nan ukhali tsa*” (their customs and practices are so different from ours).²¹

One important value internalized by Tagkhay and Antero was the high premium placed on education.²² Antero sent all his children to school and they were proud to have children and descendants who turned out to be professionals. Some have migrated abroad. The Tucucan overseas travelers were very popular in the community with stories of their adventures: Kinarang and Mangameng married distinguished men of the community, and were quite popular in the village as women who had traveled to far-off places and had many adventure stories to tell over the years. Aniwasal entered politics and became Deputy Governor of Bontoc in the 1930s. With their earnings abroad they were able to purchase valuable items that normally they would have been unable to afford, such as Chinese porcelain jars, ceremonial iron vats, precious trade beads and other valued goods that are usually acquired as heirloom among the upper class of Bontok society.

III. Conclusion

In 1914 the U.S. colonial government in the Philippines passed legislation, to put a stop to the exhibition of Filipinos:

Anyone who exploited or exhibited tribal people would be fined
Five Thousand pesos or be imprisoned for more than five years.
(Forbes 1928, Worcester 1930)

In examining some of the narratives of those who directly participated in the controversial exhibition of Igorots abroad from 1904 to 1916, new perspectives emerge that shed a different light on how future scholars may think about this undertaking. Contrary to the claims of some writers and analysts, the stories of the Bontoc and Suyoc informants show that their so-called “forced recruitment” for exhibition was in fact voluntary participation. Antonio Buangan, who did extensive in-depth interviews among the descendants of the Suyoc Igorots who participated at the 1904 St. Louis International Exposition, has this to say:

There is no indication that they were forced to go. In fact, the selection and composition of the group suggest a carefully thought-out representation of generations and family units. The Suyoc Igorots were not an isolated 'primitive' group. At the beginning of the American occupation in the early 1900's many had contact with many Americans who had come to the mountains of Suyoc to prospect and lay their claims for gold. Many married Suyoc women, have settled and died in Suyoc or the region. (Buangan 2004).

It is also clear from the stories of the Bontok that they, too, were not forced, but rather they desired to go abroad, and some even boldly escaped, against their parents' and village elders' wishes, to join the groups who went to America. The main group recruited by Antero, for example, all clearly volunteered. These included well-selected persons of different ages, including husbands and wives, relatives and friends from the same village. They not only participated in the 1904 St. Louis Fair, but made direct contracts with American managers in subsequent trips to North America and Europe. If anything, young women like Tagkhay were lured by their own curiosity and thirst for adventure outside their *ili*. Earning cash (*lagfu*) was also another strong incentive that attracted these participants, young and old alike.

Accounts of Igorot experiences in the U.S. indicate that far from being passive and exploited exhibits, they were capable of shaping their destiny, as when they felt cheated and they reacted by using the English language to **engage the White man's law and structures of political power**. This has been well documented in the cases described by Afable (2000) where the Bontoks who felt that they were being exploited wrote to the American President who responded to their letter and did something to ensure that justice prevailed. Another documented case shows the Igorots taking their manager to court. Here they applied the legal principle of due process, and the American justice system ruled in their favor. This event is of particular interest, since it happened in a foreign country at a time when the people bringing the lawsuit were considered "uncivilized" or "wild." Bringing a white American to a trial that was most likely heard by an all-white jury and compelling the American court to rule in their favor was no mean feat for the Igorots who were allegedly "forcibly recruited and exhibited like animals" in *Malika*.

An earlier version of this paper, entitled "Voices from the Other Side: Impressions from Some Igorots Who Participated in the 1904 International Fair at Saint Louis, Missouri and Subsequent Travels," was presented at the 4th National Philippine Studies Conference, September 17-18, 2004, Baguio City, Philippines.

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NOTES

1. This view strongly follows the theoretical paradigm of unilinear evolutionary theory, popular from the latter part of the 19th century to the early decades of the 20th century, that guided the "scientific" explanation of the development of cultures.

2. *Nikimalika/nakimelika* roughly means "a taste of America" or "to experience America."

3. Galloway examined the newspaper reports during the 1904 St. Louis Fair to check out the facts from fiction. See also Clevenger (2004).

4. A correction of the date of travel of the three Tucucan women (in an earlier version of this paper) is based on a document (dated 1916) about an investigation involving three girls from Bontoc who were reported to have been kidnapped by a Mr. Anfenger who was the manager of the exhibition. The charges were eventually dropped after the investigation, due to lack of evidence.

5. Among these Tucucan men who travelled in the first decade of the 20th century were Aniwasal, who was quite popular, and his nephew Felingao. I was able to interview some of Aniwasal's cousins and descendants, including village elders who gave us information about his activities during his post-overseas travels when he returned to Tucucan.

6. Most probably the exhibition of the Philippine ethnic groups during the 1904 St. Louis Fair and the subsequent European tours were the first organized Filipino overseas cultural performances (i.e., cultural exhibitions). However, the subsequent trips of the Bontok participants were contracts that had nothing to do with government arrangements, but were contracts entered into by the Igorot (largely Bontok) participants and their American private managers.

7. She also narrated the same story to Marilou Demetillo in her 1996 interview. Demetillo was of the impression that Kinarang participated in the 1904 Saint Louis Fair. I had the same mistaken impression when I interviewed her in the 1970s. However, this has been corrected. It can be established that the three women left Bontoc in 1914, through documents collected by Afable who so kindly furnished copies of communication papers and documents from the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (personal communication, May 2005). The names of the three women were included with eight others in a 1916 contract agreement, signed on February 28, 1916, acknowledging receipt of fifty-one dollars as bonus, plus seven dollars per month with food and lodging.

8. Demetillo estimates her age to be over a hundred years in 1996. However it is most likely that she exaggerated her age when she said she was in her

late twenties in 1916. Most likely she was in her early twenties or younger at that time.

9. This manager could have been Mr. Anfenger who was a soldier until he resigned to engage in managing his own fair.

10. This rumor appears to have no basis in fact, as shown by the 1904 newspaper reports on the train incident, as stated in the archival research carried out by Galloway (2001).

11. She may have confused Richard Schneidewind for Truman Hunt. It is the latter who was known to have first visited Bontoc as a soldier before he assumed the position of Lieutenant-Governor of Lepanto-Bontoc.

12. Antero was one of the boys employed by Albert and Maude Jenks. Jenks was the first American anthropologist to reside in Bontoc where he stayed for 5 months. He did research in central Bontoc in 1902 (see Jenks 1905).

13. See Prill-Brett (1975, 1987), on armed conflict and diplomacy among the warring villages during the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

14. He was one of the boys in the Jenks' household that included Falikao and Tommie who were also at the St. Louis Fair. Sitlanin and Bugti were also recruited during the subsequent trips abroad. These young boys, said to be conversant in English, are mentioned in the records as indispensable interpreters.

15. Balonglong was Antero's Bontoc name. Henceforth, the name Antero became his official surname and it was used by his children. See Jenks (1950) and Jenks (1905) for photographs of these boys.

16. Antonio Buangan (2004) quotes from a news report (*Louis Globe Democrat*, April 23, 1904) that refers to the Suyoc (Kankanaey) group who wanted to perform the full funeral rites over the body of the dead Maura, which the authorities allowed except for the smoking of the body over a slow fire.

17. However, archival documents show that it was not a letter to the U.S. President but rather a series of communications authored by a Filipino law student Vicente Salumbides who wrote to Col. Jones, Chief of the Insular Bureau, in behalf of the 11 Igorots, through Francisco Mangayo, under contract with Foley Burke and H.L. Anfenger. The complaints were about their not being treated well, and not being given money for their transportation back to the Philippines as promised when they were recruited. After an investigation Col. McIntyre wrote to Representative M. L. Quezon on March 24, 1916, informing him that the Igorots were under contract, and that sufficient money to cover the cost of their transportation to the Philippines was deposited with the steamship company; further, that the Igorots were well cared for and seemed happy. The Bureau wrote to President Moore of the Panama-Pacific Exposition, and through him prevented the exhibition of these Igorots on the exposition ground (Letter to Hon. Manuel L. Quezon, from Frank McIntyre, Chief of Bureau, dated March 24, 1916).

18. This was also the complaint of the group of Kinarang and Mangameng.

19. This case does not seem to be the same case involving the group of Kinarang (see preceeding note).

20. Antero and Antonio were quite popular and received much publicity. In 1904 they visited the White House and had a few minutes with President Theodore Roosevelt (Afable 2000, 23).

21. It is quite interesting that their non-romanticized view of America and American life did not deter their own descendants and many other Igorots

from migrating to the United States. Today, many Igorots (from the different Cordillera provinces) are found around the world, especially in the United States and Canada, as immigrants or overseas workers. They belong to an international network of overseas Cordillerans known as the Igorot Global Organization (IGO).

22. Looking back at the Cordillerans over the span of roughly a hundred years and the impact of American administration in the Cordillera, it is probably safe to say that the introduction of education and the English language has been a significant American legacy. It has been an option, a choice open to the mountain people. Like the Anteros, many Cordillera parents saw the benefits of education which allowed their children to adapt to and interact with the outside world. Some of the elders who did not take advantage of this opportunity had stories of regret as they lamented their 'poor' condition in life as compared to their village mates who had been schooled and have successful descendants. Furthermore, educated Igorots could compete with their lowland countrymen and excel in their respective fields.

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