Understanding *Apos* as an Emotional Language among Young People in a Commercial Farming Landscape

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ABSTRACT

Apos (sulking) in Kankanaey, or *tampo* in Filipino, is a powerful tool in understanding emotion discourse in a cash crop farming landscape specifically in its transformed character. Symbolic of a deep-seated emotional state, this indigenous manifestation of sulking is seen as a form of everyday sensing. I attempt to examine how this relational idiom becomes a defining element in everyday interactions, and to explore its implication on the character of youth subculture in the northern Philippine Cordillera. The culturally encouraged response to apos is *ayak* (to assuage); in Filipino, *lambing* (assuaging), a more expressive equivalent. In certain cases, the *ayak*, actuations to repair broken ties, may no longer be effective when conditions contribute to their trivialization. This may lead to a string of events ending with the sulking person reaching the last straw. In a non-confrontational culture, the deployment of apos has become symbolic of young people's emotional current, which can be pivotal in understanding emerging human conditions.

Keywords: apos (sulking), Mountain Trail, Sikolohiyang Pinoy, youth study, *barkada* (peer)

Introduction

In the process of exploring everyday lives in a cash crop farming community along the Mountain Trail (also called Halsema Highway) that traverses the province of Benguet, I was particularly struck by different communicative events among young people: *inom* (drinking) sessions with the *barkada* or peer group, shared laughter, and exchange of biting humor. Initially, these may be seen as typical youth subculture in a harsh, cold farming community. But I also realize that these communicative acts could take on a different trajectory that

may lead to self-inflicted violence. There is a compelling emotionally charged scenario where certain individuals are "silenced," or they decide just to keep silent, perhaps because it is a "cultural" tendency to do so, or because feelings of pain and hurt are unspoken. Such an emotional state is called *apos*, or in Filipino, *tampo*. Against the backdrop of vegetable production for cash exchange and the attendant issue of pesticide ingestion, apos as a cultural way of venting emotion is enduring. I take apos as a central element in myriads of interactions. I then endeavor to present apos as an emotional current/state that speaks of relational uncertainties which may bring about complex interactions ranging from harmonious to disruptive.

In determining the specific conditions and interactions that usher in the state of apos and its implication on the everyday lives of the community, I listened to the narratives of young people. At many points during fieldwork I talked to mothers who are more discerning of this emotional construct. Their accounts filled in much of the needed data. I departed from the anthropological lens and observed and took note of what was being taken for granted or things not being said. These made me conscious of metaphors, idioms, and everyday expressions. The ethnographic fieldwork allowed me to do participant observation during specific phases of community life. Fieldwork in the study site commenced in June 2009 until September 2010, first as part of an action research, followed by an ethnographic study between 2012 and 2013, with visits ranging from overnight to a week to two months.

Although much later, I led another extension project in 2019 to 2020 where I benefitted from listening to more stories. Once again, I got caught by the word apos being mentioned in several conversations. Since apos is a running theme in everyday conversations, I intentionally or unintentionally noted the state of apos in my workplace, among workmates, or even among relatives. In certain situations, the emotional state becomes distinct. For instance, whenever one is absent during meetings or gatherings, the absence is often explained away by phrases like *nagtatampo kasi* or *inmapos gamin*, translated as "because the person is sulking." Because the statement is said either in a serious tone or in jest, it allowed me to somehow reflect on the significance of apos as a strong emotional current that is necessarily relational.

The sulking or apos state must be read in the context of time-poor commercial farming communities where people find themselves in a scenario of farm work competing with time for household care work. This becomes striking among households with young adults as the older members' inattention to the relational-emotional state of teens may drive them to look for alternative sources of identity construction and sense of belonging.

While my findings are tentative and true only in my study site, there are themes and conditions that suggest a need for further study

which can contribute to theorizing in youth studies. As Lanuza (2004) claims, the effects of numerous social forces shaping the Filipino youth will, in turn, impact the wider social system. As a driving force, apos may push young people to mimic oppositional culture as the alternative expression of identity outside the home. This study could contribute insights toward the understanding of the heterogeneity of youth culture and the implications of inattentiveness to, or the lack of mindfulness over this seemingly taken-for-granted emotional state.

Framing the Study

Several theoretical perspectives in the anthropology of emotions inform this paper and helpful in framing the topic at hand. The Sikolohiyang Pilipino (SP) framework is useful specifically when apos is viewed as expressing the *loob*, literally translated as the inside or inner core of a person and cited as one of the pillars of virtue ethics. Sikolohiyang Pilipino eloquently explains the complexity of interpersonal relations which I find helpful, specifically the concepts *kalooban* (emotions) and *pakiramdam*, "shared inner perceptions."

Sikolohiyang Pilipino problematizes *kalooban* as emotion that is different from experienced knowledge or *kamalayan* which locates identity and the self in a web of social relations. In a seminal work of Enriquez, he highlighted *kapwa* and *pakiramdam* as pivotal in the interpersonal values among Filipinos. *Pakikipagkapwa* is the value that guides Filipino social interaction and is said to be intimately bound with *loob*. *Loob* has been described as constituting the holistic and relational self (Reyes 2015). To understand other people's *loob*, interaction with them must come with *pakiramdam*, translated as "heightened awareness, feeling for the other," which is a crucial mediating mode of apperception. Without *pakiramdam*, SP claims, one cannot understand an ambiguous situation, such as when another person is in a state of apos. It is only through *pakiramdam* that an appropriate response may be acted out.

When does apos or tampo happen? This is a key question explored in the study. Generally, apos is a delicate feeling or behavior that results from being offended, or hurt, and not getting what one wants from a significant person. As a symbolic gesture, apos happens in the domain of relationship. In SP framing, tampo happens in a situation that involves *hindi ibang tao*, or in a one-of-us-category level of interaction.

Pakiramdam has important cultural and social functions. In Filipino social interaction, the concern for feelings and preference for indirect expression of one's own emotional state make *pakikiramdam* the alternative mode of relating with others. It is also said that *pakiramdam* is more than empathy, as it has a more active and dynamic function

(Mataragnon 1978, 474). It is at once gauging and doing something to assuage the feeling (tampo, for instance) of the other to maintain social harmony—operating within what is acceptable.

In the work of Kleinman, it is pointed out that the moral behavior during situations of trauma and social suffering should be to give premium to social order over self-expression. Such kind of morality involves subordinating the self to "the social relational context of experience," in the form of interpersonal idioms such as "guilt," "shame," and even "face" (Fei 1992 in Kleinman 1995, 45–46), similar to the familiar Filipino *hiya* or shame, or even *nawalan ng mukha*, "loss of face" (Lapuz 1973; Enriquez 1977 in Pe-Pua 2000), signifying a strongly relational context.

The concept of pakikipagkapwa, from the word kapwa or "shared self/identity," is seen as a set of behavior that facilitates reciprocity, like *pagmamalasakit* (concern for others), pakikiisa (unity, solidarity), and *pag-aaruga* (caring), providing a fresh take on the issue of self and others. Kleinman's concept of intersubjectivity, which holds the view that life is a "social and intersubjective experience lived with others" (Kleinman 2000, 4), carries a similar perspective. Kleinman also forwards the idea that an act has multiple and powerful meanings when done in the context of layered conflicts, illustrative of the shaping character of an intersubjective experience. But while actions are done within the bounds of what is acceptable, the concept of "appropriation" has also been emphasized: that social and individual agency are involved in the discourse of morality, that the interacting self is implicated in the social (Kleinman 1995,185).

The enduring relevance of Kleinman's assertion lies in the context of structural violence that is shaped by political economy (Kleinman and Smith 2006; Kleinman 1995). Kleinman speaks of social violence and social trauma associated with work and the brutalizing compression of space and time under the regime of disordering capitalism resulting in what he termed the "delegitimation of the moral order." Such delegitimation includes alienation at the interpersonal and subjective levels, which ultimately challenges morality or what is at stake to people. From the social constructionist perspective, reality is largely shaped by the subjective meaning that we give to an experience, which influences "what we see and how to respond to situations" (Berger and Luckmann 1967). Put in another way, "to talk about feelings" in a certain way and in a certain context is reflective of how emotions are conceptually experienced and socially articulated (White 2000; Lutz and White 1986). This condition parallels what is found in the study site, a farming community that is strongly tied to market economics which has a disordering effect on the social-cultural lives of its settlers, partially manifested in emotional language.

I take the view that emotions do not precede or stand outside of a culture; they are part of culture and of strategic importance to our understanding of the ways in which people shape and are shaped by their worlds. Emotions are not reified things in themselves subject to an internal hydraulic mechanism regulating their build up, control and release, as some Western literature would argue. Lutz (1988) and Abu-Lughod (1986) understand emotion as "historical inventions" and as "rhetorical strategies" used by individuals to express themselves, to make claim on others, and to promote or elicit certain kinds of behavior. In other words, emotions are discourses; they are constructed and produced in verbal and nonverbal language and in human interaction. They cannot be understood outside of the culture that produces them.

I view the conception of *pakiramdam* and tampo or apos, and the corresponding response of lambing or assuaging, to mean the construction of "shared meanings" within a relational world. These shared meanings can be gleaned partly from the range of emotions conveyed within a culture. An understanding of the meanings conveyed in the way a culture communicates will require looking into the idioms of emotion which can perhaps clarify why suicide or pesticide ingestion happens in a community that holds life-giving as a strong value.

A Note on the Study Site

The study site is a commercial farming community, very much like its neighboring communities that are very highly integrated into the capitalist market. It is accessible through a concrete national highway that winds up mountain tops where commercial farms are maintained. With almost a century of producing crops for the market, the community is described as "a barangay made out of cash crops" (Malanes 2010).

In the area, farm and labor relations are defined in terms of access and control of resources (land, labor, capital, social network). At the community level, the pa-suplay system, an informal credit and production arrangement, figures as the enduring practice that becomes the source of labor and where circulation of resources are facilitated. Labor shortage is a real challenge in farming communities and this was observed in the study site. Castillo (1994, 37) finds this paradoxical considering the high population growth rate in the country. It is also within this scenario that pesticides become very handy as a quick-fix solution among farming households.

The intensity of vegetable farming is very evident in the study site. Green houses and big concrete homes abound and wide front yards serve as garage for six-wheeler trucks and jeepneys. The large volume of produce in a monocropping landscape demands big transport vehicles considering the distance of the site to the nearest trading post. The ruggedness of the road necessitates bigger trucks to somehow limit postharvest and marketing losses.

The community stands out in terms of cash circulation due to its heavy cash crops production. The same vegetable industry would, however, bring about a phenomenon that is hard to grasp: pesticide ingestion by young farmers. This has to be read as the end product of a long process of chemical-intensive farming, and the varied interactions to catch up with market moodiness and pesticide dependency on the one hand, and time for family or household care on the other. Generally, the latter is being sacrificed, which shapes how younger household members navigate untended emotions.

Kankanaey Emotion and Vocabulary of Emotion

In this section, I present the concept of apos as an emotion word and as emotion expressed through withdrawal. Apos or *inmapos* in Kankanaey, *sama ng loob* or tampo in Filipino, is a state of ill-feeling, an emotional state of being deeply offended. I found the ethnographic approach most effective in capturing what is not usually said while allowing me to take note of everyday interactions. I participated in official and unofficial community activities, including pesticide company-sponsored ones. Attending funeral wakes and festivities also formed part of my ethnographic fieldwork. Certainly, words and idioms are uttered within particular contexts that shape the construction of their meanings. The diverse social events provided much of the materials that I needed in making sense of why and how things are happening.

In casual conversations or even in light teasing games, *itatalna da* or *igiginek da* (they just remain quiet or they stay silent) is the predominant description of persons in the apos emotional state. One gets the impression that the Kankanaey, like other Filipinos, are not verbally expressive of their emotions, especially if expression entails offending others. Mataragnon (1989, 471) explains that this covert expression spawned the phenomenon of *pakiramdam* or "shared inner perception" which entails sensitivity to the feelings of others. Indeed there are emotion words, statements, and actions which may clarify conditions of "non-confrontation" in a Kankanaey community. These expressed emotions are presented in Table 1.

Data were drawn mainly from the accounts of women. These women eloquently recited apos as a vocabulary of emotion, and the means by which they discern apos. While it is acceptable that apos may be exhibited by both men and women, women specifically carry a compelling stance on recovering the shared meanings of apos. They

recognize the desire to "live it" as a form of communication that is highly relational. They also see apos as a source of unhappiness because of the community's current inability to pay attention to it, compared to a previous period when the phenomenon was dealt with using indigenous knowledge. And this, of course, is not without reason. If we take women having a "double vision" of sensing and not sensing belongingness (Nescott 1990 in Canilao 2002), the tension arising from the non-observance of traditional values attached to apos can indeed constitute the many factors that may explain why suicide happens in a community that gives so much importance to life.

Table 1: Accounting for Emotions

Gender and age	Local notions of emotions
22, female	*Apos wenu inmapos ket medyo kasapulan ay seryosoen tan wa'y ibagbaga na, ta mabalin ay isu din maysa ay gapun di kaskaso ay na-…* Apos today is something that has to be taken seriously because it is loaded with messages and before you know it, it is one reason behind these cases…
32, female	*Nu kanan gait mo, "palalo ka ay," masapul nga ma-ay-ayak ay dagus tan medyo wa'y ibagbagana tan pannaki-gait ngarud…* If they say, "you are too much," that immediately calls for a corresponding response, because this involves deeper relational matters…
29, female	*Din apos gamin ay ugali mangrugi pay lang sin kaung-unga…umapos din abiik kanan da met, isunga kasapulan ay ipawarwar din napasaktan…* Traditionally, apos starts early in childhood; they say the soul of the child gets offended by anything, and so there is a need to untangle the offended relationship between the living and the soul…
	…In my case, when I am in a state of apos, I keep silent and let it pass, but when the source of my pain comes again, I think I need to express this to some close friends who can understand…I never talked about these states of melancholia with my family though… *Nu para ken sak-en, ulay igiginek ko. Ngem nu mamingsan ta kasinak umapos, mamingsan ket ite-text ko met ketdi sin gagait ay maka-awat…* For this particular case, when probed, my collaborator said, "It is because it is expected that the other should have the sense to take the first move to assuage…"
45, female	In the past, even a child's soul can also be in a state of apos. *…kaman met lang manpapansin…ngem adi bale tan mabalin met ay maay-ayak…* It is like the soul also needs attention... but it can be assuaged…

In Kankanaey, *inmapusak gamin* (I have been sulking; in Filipino, *Nagtatampo kasi ako*) implies that because of apos, one has withdrawn from specific social interactions. In Filipino culture, tampo is considered as an acceptable expression of hurt feelings (Lapuz 1973). Tampo is also presented as an "affective disappointment" (Enriquez 1994, 168). Often described as a mild form of anger, apos demands assuaging or soothing by somebody close to the angry person. In Kankanaey, to assuage is to *ay-ayak*. Because pakiramdam is an emotional a priori (San Juan 2006; Enriquez 1977), the state of apos then is a message about a person's feelings, and such person strongly expects another to respond appropriately.

I am aware of the methodological limitations of studying the self as feelings and experiences that can never be apprehended directly without paying attention to their diverse, mediating modes of expression (Rosaldo 1986; Marcus & Fischer 1997). For this discussion, I am guided by the question, how is the state of apos communicated and to whom is it directed?

[1] The first time that one is *inmapos* or *nagtatampo*, one gets melancholic and pakipot, "never making the first move." It can also take the form of playing "hard-to-get," directed at the specific person

who is the source of the state of apos. In this state of melancholia, one gets sentimental and keeps to one's self. The usual expression is to keep silent and to consciously keep distance. Interaction can still happen, usually a calculated one. This calculated action comes with the expectation that the other is sensitive enough, *may pakiramdam*, and be the one to soothe the hurt feelings of the person.

A case in point is a mother who normally scolds her son because of his constant gin drinking. She also deploys apos by not talking, a sort of silent treatment to declare that she is angry at the drinking. *Tan ipariknak adi nga lawa met di am-amagenna* (I have to show him that what he is doing is not good), the mother would reason. There is the mother's assumption that the son is sensitive enough to get the message. The sensitivity, *nu makarikna*, similar to *pakiramdam*, is found to be effective as the son's response. In the words of this mother, "at least for some time my son avoided drinking heavily," which wooed her back.

[2] *Inamag na kasin* (The person did it again). Repetition of undesirable behavior despite efforts to reach out on the part of the offended can cause deeper anger and serious ill feelings. Usually, this sentiment is expressed in public where the *umap-apos* or *nagtatampo* talks about the source of apos with another individual or kin who can bring the message to the offender, in case there is lack of sensitivity, or *pakiramdam*, on the part of the offending party. The public declaration comes with idioms such as, *Wen baw maawatan ngem dey inamag na kasin* (Yes, it is understandable but, you see, he did it again). This is already a show of exasperation. For the offended, the repetition of an undesirable act can mean prolonged withdrawal from, and cutting close ties with the offender, or it can be worse as it can lead to self-inflicted injuries on the part of the aggrieved. When an act and source of apos is repeatedly done, it is considered acceptable in the community that the expression of hurt feelings or apos may go on for months. To say that *Wada kadi gamin gapu na*, There must be a reason, is an acknowledgment and recognition that the *inmapos* or *nagtatampo* has all the reasons to sulk and withdraw. This can be taken as an extreme expression of *sakit di nemnem* or in Tagalog, *sama ng loob*. This is illustrated in the ensuing discussions.

[3] *Mansemsemsem* may be translated as "piled-up emotional state" that results from repeated action, as in item 2 above, and is usually considered as the highest degree of apos. This nature of apos comes with anger and self-pity expressed in various idioms. *Kaseseg-angak iman*, I am pitiful; *Watak gamin kaman nina*, I am just like this; or *Masmasadutak*, I no longer have the desire to move on, are expressions of apos that are usually made public. But these may also be directed to the self. Drawing from the Freudian hydraulic theory of frustration-anger-self-directed action (Freud 1939; also in Panoff 1977; Lee 2009), this pent-up emotion can escalate to pesticide ingestion, with ambivalence becoming the seat of any sudden action.

In describing the states or range of apos above, I have endeavored to present the intensity of emotions but I do not intend to create the impression of a linear progression. There could be different trajectories that this emotional state can take depending on how it is subjectively mediated. From the data, a gendered perception is evident, with women having a heightened awareness of this emotional state, which may not necessarily be true for men. I say this because I do not remember any conversation about apos among men, except perhaps during teasing games when younger men would throw jokes about it just because the word was mentioned in passing. This gendered perspective resonates throughout the paper.

Apos in Kankanaey Tradition

The deep-seated relational origins of apos start early in the life cycle of a Kankanaey, as shown in the following idioms surrounding it. In child-rearing, the *kadkadwa*, companion/guardian, also referred to as *ab-abiik*, the soul of a child, can be in a state of apos. Sacla (1987) says that among the Benguet Kankanaey, a person has a physical mortal body and a soul that is immortal. If a person dies, the *kadkadwa* goes to the sky world. The *kadkadwa*, however, can be tricked, or is vulnerable to wrongdoings, hence a ritual called *paypay* is performed to win it back. According to my elder collaborators, if apos happens in childhood, it is not by the children themselves but their *ab-abiik* or *kadkadwa* who, because of being young, are vulnerable to apos. Probing showed that it is not the baby that experiences the apos but the *kadkadwa* or soul, or the "guardian angel." Such state of apos manifests through illness or non-stop crying. This signals a distortion of the relationship between the children's bodies and their *ab-abiik*.

Commentaries like *umapos san ab-abiik*, the soul is in a sulking state, which also means that the soul is said to be seeking "attention," requires a ritual called *ay-ayaken*, wooing back. The women informants related that this results from what is referred to as *naamisan san kadkadwa*, meaning that a child's soul has been offended. When this happens, the soul can fight back which might result in sickness or even death. Usually, this state of naamisan stems from "words uttered by adults," or from their inappropriate behavior, because *kumagat ti sao wennu aramid isunga nan-adawag* (words or actions can bite, and thus result in a backlash). The family performs a ritual with the aim of untangling what has been distorted, or *ta ipadas nga ipawarwar*. *Ipawarwar* or untangling the body's distorted relationship with the soul requires a more participative ritual.

For practical reasons, rituals to appease the *kadkadwa* are seldomly done today, as these compete with time and work in the farm. Some older women say that only when there is prolonged disturbance in a child will rituals be pursued. A retired midwife, now a member of the Lupon, pointed out that nowadays, *Mabaybay-an din aanak, baka ammu da met ay man-ap-apos kaman nide, ngem baka iman mas importante din garden* (Children are left on their own, perhaps farming activities are more important because even if parents know there is someone in the household undergoing emotional turbulence, it seems there is nothing they can do). During a break after a focus group discussion with junior high school students, I heard a rather disturbing remark: *…Wen baw, maawatan mi met nu apay nga masapul ay man-ubla-ubla da ina ya ama, apay kaman ni di laeng aya di biag?* (…Of course, we understand why our mothers and fathers have to keep on working, but don't you think there is more to life than work?).

Teenagers Appropriating Apos

Young people usually take on "symbolic" stances that can be seen not just as a passing phase but as real expressions of symbolic resistance to dominant values and symbols that may signal real social problems. For this section, I will sketch the norms of my young informants focusing on how apos becomes the start of "silent rebellion" and a prelude to a string of events, forming part of youth subculture. I am also guided by what anthropologists prescribe in the study of emotions: these must be seen in the context of how people talk of emotions in terms of social relationships and situation (Rosaldo, 1980). In this case, I will endeavor to look at apos as a means to describe aspects of the world in certain ways (Parker, 1997).

In the wake of a youth who died of pesticide ingestion, I was listening intently to a discussion among adult women when I heard the familiar line, *tan wada kadi gapuna say inmaposan na* (there was a reason why he was sulking). This seemed to clarify things, as I had been hearing the line, *tan wada kadi gapuna*, even among adolescents. Often, the statement was not elaborated upon. I would interpret this "reason behind" as rooted in apos and the strong message it is conveying. *Adik met layden na nu bilang* (I do not actually intend to do this) was what my mother collaborators recounted their children who died of pesticide ingestion as saying. These familiar "last words, last lines" from dying adolescents is striking: *Adik met layden na nu bilang, adik ingagara* (I do not actually want this…and I did not intend to do this), *Di ko sinasadya* in Tagalog. This recalls to mind what SP says about the loob, that because of the complex processes happening inside a person, constructions can be independent of volition (Enriquez 1977). Yet this is also a shared sentiment among teenagers. Not getting the attention they deserve is enough reason for rebelliousness. With the socialization that they have (drinking, *toknang* or biting humor), the pain or the anger is directed against the self.

Female teens agreed that teenagers at times feel it is important that someone should be listening. A shared sentiment is seen in the following excerpts from an informal talk during a snack period with female adolescents:

> *Puro sa met iman ubla-ubla…nga maawatan baw tan mababannog da iman. Isunga imbes ay man-estorya ka kuma, mayamyaman ka ketdin [laughter]. Tan iman damagen da met nu kumusta ed eskwelaan, nu kumusta din grades ket adika pay lang naibagbaga yan kayamyam da et kan sik-a…isunga itatalna et adi…*
>
> (It is all work, work…which we understand and we also see that because of work, they are always tired. They [parents] do ask how we are faring in school or about our grades, but the thing is, you have not yet started telling your story, they start getting mad at you, pointing out all your faults …and so we learn it is better not to talk…)

They concluded by saying in jest, *Pipiya pay iman di barkadam tan mankikinnaawatan tan parehas met gayam di kasasaad…maga pay di mataktak…* (It is better to talk to our peers, we find company…you do not even have to disturb anyone…) [cheering of agreement from the group]. The phrase *maga pay iman di mataktak*, or no one gets robbed of his/her time, is actually parodying a commonly heard response they get from their parents, *tumaktak lang dayta ti oras* (eating much of my time uselessly), which has to be taken in the context of time compression.

On the other hand, perhaps a youth reaction to "overdoing the act" of apos (in this case, self-inflicted injuries) can be gleaned from the following statement that can be taken as a commentary: *Pipiya din sana ay gagait tan adi da nalaka ay umapos* (At least there are those of us who do not easily get peeved). This is a recognition of how differently individuals construe their moral world: there are those who go into apos/tampo state yet do not necessarily end up dying. Generally, women say that to distance oneself from others as a way of venting strong feelings and even shame is alright, but to take one's own life is condemned. On the other hand, what is disturbing to them is the failure to respond appropriately to this emotional state. These women do not exempt themselves from the non-observance of the obligation to assuage the *inmapos* or the *nagtatampo*, describing themselves also "guilty" of failing to properly respond despite the fact that they can sense, through pakiramdam or makirikna, these offended emotions.

It was clear to these mothers that these children "were seeking out" or were trying to call attention to their predicament, but because of their fear of constantly being rejected, withdrawal becomes the remedy. Rejection and the dread of outright rejection by loved ones, according to Lapuz (1973), can be the reason behind the erosion of self-esteem among adolescents. In many ways then, apos becomes a way to explain sulking behavior. If this is handled well, it can start a restoration process, yet it can also be a pathway to a situation of risk.

The failure to attend to apos and to communicate appropriately with children equally invites criticisms from the elders who glower at parents who do not know how to *ayak* or tend to the young. This is on account of the elders' recognition of the adolescents being young and "who cannot yet discern what is good," *tan adi da pay lang ammuy am-amagen da*. I heard this from a retired teacher who is fondly called "the original madam" as she was the first and lone teacher in the 1950s when the first elementary school opened in the place. I heard the statement again in a women's assembly where the giving of advice, *bagbaga*, was highlighted. I agree with these observations but one also has to understand the predicament mothers are faced with—as farmers and/or farm managers who are bound into a "supplier-supply" relationship on top of housekeeping and caregiving roles and yet are also expected to provide this extra caring work of assuaging. Oftentimes during fieldwork, I listened to women narratives filled with guilt and regret about not having the time to perform the *ayak* or assuaging and to process such complex emotions with their children. Mothers who intimate their stories find themselves trapped into what their teens would say of them, that in their effort to talk to or assuage their children, they end up with *yamyam* or scolding, even quarreling with their kids. These accounts validate what their children expressed. Reflecting on my own mothering experience, I can greatly relate with these mothers. Indeed there were times when I could not help but point out the faults of my adolescent daughter, and not a few times did these end up in a truce or so. But maybe what makes us different is that my daughter was born and raised in an urbanizing area and that we are both used to communicating in a "straightforward" manner, so that any apos will not last even a day. This relates to what was said earlier, how teens can construe their local worlds differently, depending on the situation they are in. Perhaps what the SP would say of *pakiramdam*, as the first step towards bridging strained relationships, does not necessarily progress to the assuaging phase because of certain conditions households confront. Time poverty as one condition besetting commercial farming households and how it can shape the nature of social interaction are pursued below.

Time-poor Households

Strained emotional states are not oblivious to mothers I talked to. In fact what can be drawn from their accounts is they try to exert effort to "catch up" and take time to attend to the apos emotional state, yet they find themselves failing every time. The reason, they say, is their time poverty: the competition between tending their gardens and the need to pay attention to their teenage children while at the same time feeling anxious about the "moodiness of the market." Time poverty is indeed an enduring phenomenon in farming households in the Mt. Trail areas. In a time use study, a mother's day starts at five in the morning with household chores, often simultaneous with care work and sometimes farm preparations such as readying chemicals and fertilizers before her husband brings them to the farm. If a mother has a pre-school child with no helper around, she prepares the child to be brought to the garden rather than "to be left alone in the house." At around eight in the morning, the big day starts in the farms with the mother working while at the same time looking out for the child who is left to play in a cleared and shaded area. During weekends, school children are expected to help in the farm and so they are taught the "gardening trade" at an early age.

I would like to note that women are constantly negotiating time compression in between the performance of multiple roles and the anxiety attached to farming—from catching up with time for continuous production with the hope of chancing upon good market price, to transporting products to the nearest trading post in the shortest possible time considering market moodiness (Sidchogan-Batani 2012). Apparently, households are overwhelmed by their engagement with farming for the market. The consequence is costly, both socially and emotionally, with mothers failing to provide the corresponding response to apos. For me, reading from the many talks I had with these women, the failure to attend to deep-seated apos is the source of their greatest regret. In the context of apos as a relational-emotional issue, *pakiramdam* is a living experience. Women informants outlined their own usual response: *igiginek*, to keep silent, and *man-nemnemnem*, to calm anger and pain. Among the other members of the household, they also observe the same attributions and various deployment: silence from their children, sudden submissiveness, certain actions and inactions—all forms of expressing apos. *Pakiramdam* or sensitivity to these non-verbal expression is strongly felt, yet they cannot seem to have the "time out" to solve broken ties. Again, mothers find themselves trapped into what has become a farmers' idiom, *tan samsambuten di presyo* (it is because we need to catch up with the price and time is of the essence), so that any issue that needs time to attend to is considered

as *tumaktak* (gets in the way). What Keith Hart's annotations of money in market economics as constituting the structures that allow people to lose control of the management of their own life with increasing powerlessness (Hart 2005) seem to hold true. For these mothers, their sensitivity or *pakiramdam* never fails, and they are constantly feeling, constructing and interpreting the core messages of apos, yet as in the past, they find themselves unable to take time to perform the *ayak*, or their assuaging role.

Apos and Social Change

Things have changed. This has been clear to the locals I talked to who claim that in the past, everyone gave attention to this apos as a form of everyday sensing or mindfulness. Today, it is being trivialized, only mentioned casually and only during community gatherings. The nurturing element attendant to apos is no longer happening, and the kind of interaction or ritual expected is no longer performed until it calls for a serious consideration. In societies where emotions are culturally restrained, the expression of inner desires in a situation of change tends to take on a different configuration. It has become clearer to me that among the community members, with the changing sense of time that is shaping the way they carry their everyday lives—*paspas di biag* (very fast pace of life)—older household members can no longer fulfill the role of wooing back and soothing the hurt feelings of younger members. Emotional states and interpersonal relationships have been devalued, and in a situation of liminality, with the young navigating their place in this world, the *barkada* or peer becomes attractive. Teenagers turn to their barkada to find comfort and a ready outlet. Almost always, the barkada in the study site is associated with drinking, teasing and masculine humor.

Perhaps what is so uncomfortable with social change, as Lee (2009) notes, are the new needs and new moral standards that it brings, which have been observed in the study site. Young teens and mothers are not oblivious to the importance of apos as a cultural expression of hurt feelings. For their part, parents, or in this case mothers, have always been actively negotiating and navigating this realm, wanting to recover apos that carries a shared meaning of emotional care and affection. However, women find themselves not exempted from trivializing apos vis-à-vis the increasing demands of the market. In the meantime, adolescents who find company in their peers would, together, actively shape the reconfiguration of their local worlds. Amid the routine of this commercial farming community life and the rhythm of their youthful social lives, their barkada further animates their complex social world.

Turning to the Barkada: Tales of Social Harmony and Self-expressiveness

Teenagers, who are unable to process the experience of apos and to find endearment in their own homes, turn to and seek comfort in their *barkada*. Yet barkada evokes both positive and negative perceptions. Among teenage girls, this is a vehicle for group work, for sharing apos or sulking emotions and where adventures and experience happen. Peer pressure is an enduring element. For one not to be "OP" (out-of-place), a term used by teens, one then turns to the barkada for belonging and for adventure, no matter what it is—drinking, gallivanting, skipping school, to name a few. This is what Dumont says in his Visayan barkada study (1993): the barkada reinforces homogeneity among its members. The male teenage barkada, however, is the source of a mother's headaches. The fear of one act leading to another as the expressed source of anxiety is real: drinking can lead to dropping out of school; or if no longer attending school, a withdrawing child can be led to join a barkada where masculine showing-offs happen. These include alcoholism, bullying, sulking, and when things are subjectively felt to be hopeless, ending one's life.

Apos becomes problematic not only when deployed as a form of resistance or of punishing the object of emotional baggage but it also tends to widen the gap between parents and children. As shown, when one is in a state of apos, one refuses to talk and the silent treatment can last for days or even weeks. For teenagers, apos is also used as reason to stay longer with the barkada.

I was able to discern this scenario when I was talking to high school students about a topic on communicating their feelings. They said that communication is more open in the barkada. They underline the contrast with their parents who, they claim, fail to understand them. It is also in the barkada where they can share intimate secrets, similar wishes, desires and even experiences. The group also serves as a mechanism to learn "how to handle parents." The deployment of silent treatment, *wat igignek mo angguy tapnu met lang adi umattiddog di estorya* (just keep quiet so as to cut the story short), has admittedly been learned from the barkada. Teen informants also admit that there are times that they cannot avoid barking back at their parents only to feel guilty afterwards. But guilt seems to be temporary and normal as the same stories are heard from their barkada. They also learn "how not to talk" to their parents and find more comfort talking to their peers. In their words,… *owen pay adi, mas mayat maki-estorya ti barkada tan ma-realize mo met lang parehas kayo met gayam ti rikna ken estorya…mas open kami ti barkada mi….* This may be translated as, "yes, it is better to talk to my peers, we are all open and you realize that what you have been experiencing is the same with them…." Rebelliousness seems to

be the theme in the conversation. Again, barkada paints tales of social harmony and smoothness within (Dumont 1983, 432; cf. Fabinyi 2007) and among teens of Mt. Trail, the barkada provides the needed respite from an otherwise monotonous landscape.

Limitations of self-expression in the household somehow drive young people to look outside the home. Self-making among youngsters make them agents of their future. However, in trying to navigate their location in this world by working against the local world or the community ideology, they are unable to parallel their parents' perseverance or even imitate the *biag di galdenelo* (life of a farmer) that is persevering and, in many ways, fulfilling. This brings in the concept of "positioned subjects."

For Rosaldo (1989, 19), one notion of position "refers to how life experiences both enable and inhibit particular kinds of insights." My research participants, who are young farmers as positioned subjects at the tail-end of market economics, have a distinct "mix of insights and blindness." They are located in a particular context with particular experiences shared with others, which becomes what Kleinman refers to as the "framework of engagements." In short, experience sets the boundaries of what is acceptable and which, therefore, can be limiting or facilitating. Young farmers are considered as "lacking of sound decision making," *ta kurang panunot da* (they lack discernment), *adi da pay lang nanakman* (they are not yet mature).

In my ethnographic data, self-making that ushers in the "relational" is an important operative concept. A calculated challenge to the moral standards of the community is seen when a teenager who had just attended a drinking buddy's burial said, *Nu makdeng abe na, wada kasin sumaruno*... (If this ritual is finished [referring to the burial of the dead], someone else will follow...). Seemingly, this tone has become the socially available language of young people experiencing turbulence. This can be subjected to multiple readings: in the language of psychology, this is taken as a sign of suicidal thought, or it is also an expression of grief and bereavement that has not yet been fully processed, a friend having just died. From the community's meaning-making context, this can also be interpreted as a script communicating what the locals would term *manpappapansin* or calling attention (as a present-tense action word) which is an inflection of the Tagalog phrase *kulang sa pansin*, someone lacking attention. It can also be taken as a reflection of a particular type of subjectiveness, which is an enactment and embodiment of "conflicting social injunctions coming from competing social institutions and processes," to borrow Marcus and Fisher's terms (Marcus and Fischer 1997, 170). This can refer to apos or resentment towards parents, the self, or barkada, or to a subjectively perceived hopelessness after a series of bad things all happening to make someone very upset of the situation. This "call-for-attention" can be the last straw.

Let me deal more with the idiom *manpappapansin* or to call for or attract attention, as this was how my informant read her nephew's statement. Note that the phrase was articulated in a particular mood—just when everyone was focused on the burial of a young kin, this teenager publicly said this. Luckily, this was heard by the aunt who probably was the intended receiver, who in turn prompted another kin who conveyed that perhaps this young man was *aglamlampay*, somebody needing *lambing* or assuaging. Regrettably the kin failed to provide the corresponding assuaging, but not without reason. Initially, the phrase was taken lightly for the boy who said this was slightly intoxicated. In the culture, it is an accepted reality that teenagers are used to saying things that are "beyond the normal," such as this phrase, especially when under the influence of alcohol. At another level, this socially available language of the young, which should not be ignored, as realized later, can also be a signal of turbulence being felt at the subjective level. This can actually be a loaded statement which, as said earlier, can mean different things directed not just to anyone but to people with whom a teenager has closest ties. In the context where the self is exposed to the vagaries of farming for the market, where pesticide is valorized for its power to create wealth via farming and yet also blamed (at least by some sectors) for the death of a peer or a kin—all of these packaged into one—speak of emerging human conditions and experiences. As shown, this breeds different subjectivities and somehow shapes the expression of grief, emotion or even turbulence within the self. For teenagers, to enact the trivialized *manpappapansin* is an affect that constitutes the emergent subjectivities of the young in this part of Mt. Trail.

Within the culture of rebelliousness of the young and the harshness of the market as backdrop, being part of the vegetable industry demands a certain degree of toughness and strength. Yet young people are still vulnerable to relational issues within the confines of the home or the kinship, which they try to navigate and negotiate through the barkada or through their "emotion scripts." Perhaps the expression *kulang sa pansin* reflects their deeply felt relational concerns or even their practical view of what would happen to them and that they need others to be concerned about them. This is a communicative act, a calculated act, and a "provocative risk taking," as Robinson observed among Tiwi society, that signifies the call for collective response. This "calling for attention" can be taken as an outright mimicry of the life tied to the market as "a game of chance" or as a learned option, as in Macdonald's Kulbi (2003, 2006, 2007) which he termed "culturalization" of suicide. Similarly, being attentive to the culture that puts value on apos and the differentiated language of the young, can form part of the "process of culturalization" (Lee 2009; Dentan 2001). Yet, when all of these articulations fall on deaf ears,

when drinking continues to be the primary means of socialization, there is always the available pesticide, which makes the body the ultimate test of its power. Again, this can be taken as constructing the self through violence, or what Goldstein (2003) calls the role of violence in "producing an image of the self."

These suggest that the barkada can be a breeding ground and a prelude to another form of relational struggle. While teenagers find camaraderie in the barkada, it does not always mean they are already spared from emotional baggage. As said earlier, in a farming community where "catching up with time and the moodiness of the market" is a major preoccupation, one has to be tough and stoic enough to meet the strong and masculine posturing of the barkada. An interesting communicative event within the barkada where drinking gin is part of the game is the so-called *toknang* or exchange of biting humor. *Toknang* play, which is a masculine discourse, starts with humor exchange and most often escalates into biting humor. As *toknang* happens in a drinking session, it can generate a vocabulary of emotions where one gets exposed to taunting and bullying and, in this case, the transported apos, instead of being expressed, can be intensified further. This happens when in a toknang performance, the "it" or the one being talked about ends up being bullied and gagged because he cannot make a rebuttal to the one who started the teasing. This is amidst cheering and jeering of the rest of the barkada. In a community where displays of masculinity are given premium, the *natoknang* or bullied ends up losing face. Again, the cycle of withdrawal begins, which can be a predisposing condition to self-harm. This character of apos resulting from drinking and *toknang* forms part of the "string of events" that is rooted in the initially untended apos. Lapuz (1973), who studied young patients back in the 1970s in urban Manila, noted that protective behavior, such as ingratiation, evoking pity and, if I may add, drinking and laughter, thinly disguises the erosion of self-esteem.

Final Thoughts

The study of apos has been undertaken in the context of an alarming phenomenon which is pesticide ingestion, but not alarming enough to deserve attention from sectors that are supposed to be mobilized by a public health issue such as this. I have argued elsewhere that the reason behind the seemingly unperturbed public is that this is not visible. In other words, the issue of pesticide ingestion has been "silenced" or unspoken on different levels. In this ethnography, what I have are conditions and contexts for non-communication being reproduced silently. As it is an evaluative response to situations and processes that cause pain and hurt feelings of a significant other

(usually parents), apos has become the unspoken and "silenced," seemingly vague yet having clear meaning constructions associated to it. I take this as yet another "silencing" construct. Still, this cultural idiom has been constantly negotiated by young people and their mothers, as the significant other. I navigated through the complex and layered meanings attached to apos and it has become clearer to me that youth social life is truly fragmented (Lanuza 2004; Cornelio 2020) against the backdrop of a harsh, often toxic, cash crop farming landscape. Informed of the meanings of these emotion word, one can also glean the "subliminal meanings attached to these expressed or silenced words acquired through time" (Scheper-Hughes 1992, 434). This unspoken pain runs deep in a seemingly non-confrontational Kankanaey setting. While apos alone will not cause one to do the act (in this case, pesticide ingestion), it has become apparent to me that issues of loss in terms of parental care, time and attention matter significantly to these young adults.

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Notes

1. This paper is drawn from one of the themes in my thesis for the PhD in Anthropology at UP Diliman. The research was guided by Ethical guidelines and clearance endorsed by the Cordillera Regional Health Research and Development (CRHRDC-DOST) issued in 2012.

2. Incidentally, such talks of a culture being expressive or not is usually discussed in relation to other ethnolinguistic groups in the region such as the Bontoks who are said to be expressive and confrontational.

3. *Lupon* or *Lupong Pambarangay* is a local body where council of elders sit as per PD 1508 or *Katarungang Pambarangay Law* for amicable settlement of cases. Lupon members are considered as

"persons in authority." This is enshrined in RA 71601 or the Local Government Code of 1991.

4. Is generally defined as a group's meaning systems and mode of expression, commonly understood as "oppositional" to the dominant culture (Lanuza, 2000).

5. I find the post interview sessions more productive as words come out spontaneously, which started with the boy/girl-next-door conversation; these idioms were blurted out during lighter conversations.

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