

# Selling Banaue: Material Culture in the Marketing of a Tourist Destination\*

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Promotion of an expected image is a main concern of many place-based cultural and natural attractions. Iconic representations of what a destination should be are exposed to consumers through a variety of media, the process of which allows actors and messages to become intensely involve in interpretation. A scholarship in the social sciences has thus discovered this inquiry on tourism as fertile ground in which a praxis of studying the tourist encounter can be developed. Reading the space and artifact of the tourist encounter as text would be one avenue where a destination image is reproduced. In this paper, I use an eclectic mix of two methods that will help me narrate the re-creation of a destination image of Banaue, a mountain town on the interior of Luzon Island, the Philippines and a major tourist destination in the country.

Examining destination image has been an established thread in the marketing literature of tourism. A fashionable way of treatment is to see destination image as composed of factors that could be handled through econometrics. For instance, Li and Vogelsong (2002) have proposed a model for image promotion derived from how a destination image is understood, and how the model's constituent parts become integrated into an algorithm. The authors operationalize these parts to study the image of the Chinese city of Nanjing, showing

in quantified terms the representative objects, frequent descriptors, and information channels that were at work in producing particular images of the city. In another study, Romania's images as holiday destination were shown as products of Likert scales (Vaughan 2007). Although helpful in devising management strategies for tourism products, works such as these fall short of telling how image is being created through the relationship of people and place.

Critical approaches are more substantive by investigating social frames accountable in reproducing place image as they set the issue in a discursive perspective. A prevalent example, especially for tropical beach destinations, is what Costa (1998) suggests as a "paradisical discourse." After reviewing the paradise concept in the Western and Judeo-Christian imaginations, Costa proceeds to examine the Western tendencies of othering in portrayals of the Hawai'ian Islands where tropes such as that of the exotic, isolated, ancient, and abundant paint the islands as "warm, bountiful and promised a life free from anxiety and need, and full of leisure and sexuality." Looking into the subtle details of a tourist's relationship with a place entails a narrative that may be formed from a special mix of tropes, such as those from the natural and cultural realms. In his focus on the Louisianian bayou, Wiley (2002) proposes that visitors are not attracted by "swamps-as-swamps but by 'Cajun swamps'," wherein tourists can experience a wilderness adventure embedded in the romance of its folk culture. This is moreover realized by their Cajun guides who perform spectacular antics on dangerous alligators.

The subject of this paper, the town of Banaue, is a municipality in Ifugao province of northern Luzon Island. Located on the southeastern parts of the Gran Cordillera Central, the great mountain range running from the Babuyan Channel in the north to the island's Central Plains in the south, Banaue has a subtropical to temperate climate owing to its 1200 meter high altitude. The municipality and the province to which it belongs are inhabited predominantly by the ethnic population known as the Ifugaos. Scholars and administrators since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century have maintained an interest on the

Ifugao's relatively intact "traditional" culture, characterized by wet rice cultivation in terraces; cottage industries; particular songs, dances, and rituals; and previously, the practice of headhunting. These and other components of Banaue that eventually constitute its touristic image have been summarized by Bulilan (2007) into Smith's "Four H's" (habitat, heritage, history, handicrafts) of tourism geography. Banaue's rice terraces in particular seem to be the brand tourists are seeking. They had immediately caught the attention of intrepid foreigners, scholars and travelers alike, who visited the area in the past. They had enthralled anthropologists like Barton (1919:9) who called them "the most extensive and the most admirable terraces for rice culture to be found anywhere in the world." They were already "world famous" and "much visited" by the middle of the 20th century (Wilson 1953:29-30).

In order to privilege material culture as text, I turn to two of the methods often used by post-positivist investigators. The first is visual research methods that employ illustrative representations, such as postcards, brochures, and maps, and these have been the semiotician's favorite method especially in the deconstruction of advertisements. It carries the Barthian idea that the elements of a pictorial text interact with the cultural world of the audience to produce meanings (Stokes 2013:124). The postcard is an example but a special case in point, since it is an advertisement but at the same time a souvenir. Brown and Turley (1997:6) mentions the postcard as "a 'wandering exile' whose platitudinous message is casually inscribed, open for all to peruse and, paradoxically, makes proper sense only to the ultimate addressee." The second method is phenomenology, a relational approach to the artifact or landscape using Merleau-Ponty's concept of "embodiment." The phenomenological approach specializes in a meeting of the visitor and the visited, in ways only each one can validate, because the particular phenomena that constitute a place could only be found through an experience from within (Thomas 2006:50). I did the methods by being a participant observer in Banaue during two visits, the first of which was in July 2007 and the second one in January 2008.

## ENCOUNTERING THE DIFFERENT

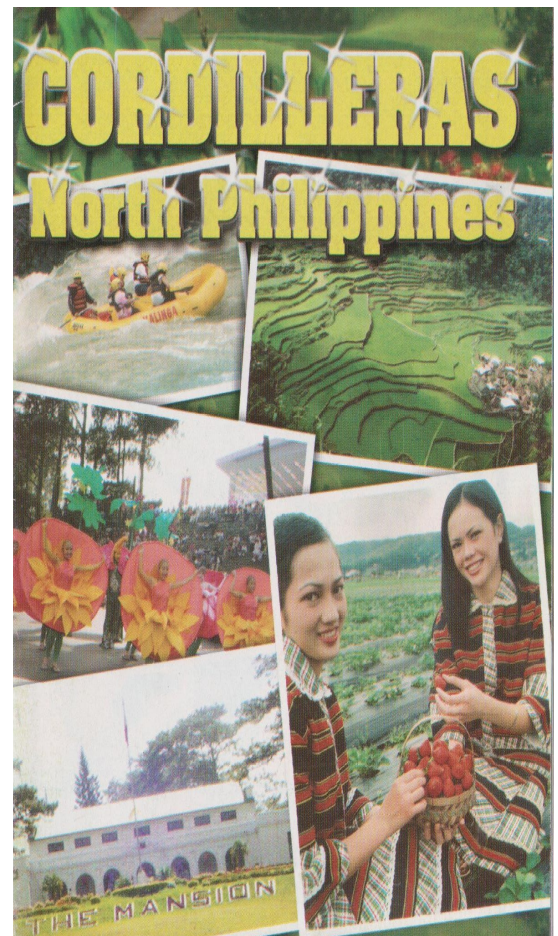
Scholars of tourism studies have been trying to explain the nature and reasons of a tour. The more popular suggestions have ascribed an important role to the medium that introduces the actual tourism product. Referring to his earlier book *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, first published in 1976, MacCannell (2001:31) has reiterated that the “marker” (which he calls medium) is in a relationship with the tourist attraction it introduces, and the tourist. According to him, as the attraction is a thing already made up for show, the tourist would tend to focus instead on the marker if he wants to search for the authentic. MacCannell believes that through the marker, the tourist would be allowed to gain access into the “backstage” and the hiddenfrom- view to satisfy his desire for the authentic, which is why he does a tour.

The idea of a “tourist gaze” as developed by Urry (1990) also ascribes a role to the introducing medium. The tourist gaze is the tourist’s view of the toured, and it portrays a powerstructured relationship of the two as it was derived from Foucauldian conceptualizations of power. Expressions of power as elaborated by Foucault would be present when agents construct and impose knowledge, delineate the normal from the abnormal, and perform surveillance (Cheong and Miller 2000:376- 377). “Classic” examples in which these expressions of power occur would be relationships of patients and physicians, students and teachers, employees and employers, and also prisoners and law agents. Where the subordinated is situated is important, as this would facilitate inspection and maintenance of the status quo, hence the concept of the gaze. There is for instance a “clinical or medical gaze” of a psychiatrist towards a mental patient, a “parental gaze” of a parent towards his/her children, and other gazes to discipline students, supervise workers, or reform criminals. This is extended to the relationship of a tourist and tourist attraction, the second of which is positioned to warrant a gaze from the first who is considered the agent by Urry (Cheong and Miller 2000:382).



The tourist gaze, as explained by Urry (1990:2-4), firstly assumes that a boundary exists between that of organized work characterized by the routine, everyday, and the normal, and that of leisure activity which is a break from the monotony. An individual would become a tourist and create his or her gaze when the introducing medium supplies him or her with information about the attraction. This medium could be posters, brochures, magazine articles, advertisements, websites, stories, and film that help build and reinforce the fantasy centered on a tourist attraction because it contrast the everyday experience. The tourist sets off in a journey, expecting to encounter these pre-viewed or pre-known situations that would deliver him or her pleasurable experiences. These take place through the employment of signs, and what is actually transacted between medium, tourist, and attraction are signs. For instance, the signs of the Cordillera Region as shown in a Department of Tourism brochure featuring accredited tourism establishments as of May 2007 include beautiful women dressed in Igorot-inspired blouse and *tapis*, holding a basket of strawberries, and seated against a view of a La Trinidad farm; the rice terraces of Banaue; and costumed dancers of the Panagbenga Festival (Fig.1). The tourist then would want to see these signs in the real places to experience the Cordillera and be satisfied. MacCannell (2000:28-31) thinks that there is more to the nature of a tour than putting the toured at the mercy of the tourist gaze, and seeing the tourist as a blind follower of the medium. He considers the tourist gaze an inadequate framework to understand motivations of a tour because of this unidirectionality and ego-centered perspective. He therefore proposed a “second gaze,” which is a continuous reconstruction of the tourist’s experience, such that,

*The second gaze turns back onto the gazing subject an ethical responsibility for the construction of its own existence. It refuses to leave this construction to the corporation, the*



*Fig. 1: A brochure of the Department of Tourism of the Philippines, 2007.*

*state, and the apparatus of touristic representation... The second gaze may be more interested in the ways attractions are presented than in the attractions themselves. It looks for openings and gaps in the cultural unconscious. It looks for the unexpected, not the extraordinary, objects and events that may open a window in structure, a chance to glimpse the real (MacCannell 2000:36).*

Encountering the different relates to the idea of constructing the inverse image of the “normal,” that which is called in postmodern parlance constructing the “Other” (Preucel and Hodder 1996:601). Complementary to this is the concept of the “Oriental” that was suggested by Said (2003), referring to representations by Europeans of peoples and cultures to their east that are non-European. Because travel narratives of the European have largely been the fuel of this discourse on the Other, it was easy to accommodate the concept of the Other into tourism to deepen our understanding of tour motivations. One example is an analysis by Oaks (2005) of P. Bowles’ novel, *The Sheltering Sky*, and of a reading by MacCannell of D. O’Rourke’s documentary film, *Cannibal Tours*. In this essay, Oakes emphasizes the tourist experience as a place-based encounter with the Other, with a tendency of the tourist to become eventually part of the other.

Theorists of social tourism have also taken Van Gennep’s and Turner’s framework of liminality to consider the tourist as going through a boundary, where it is possible to experience something new as he or she crosses into the other realm. Belk (1997:26-27) has added that this new experience is usually accompanied by learning that is triggered by curiosity, especially learning about himself or herself, essentially a “‘voyage’ of self ‘discovery’” happening through playful quality. In one of his articles on the American gaming capital of Las Vegas (Belk 2000), he suggested that the city’s establishments create a theatrical farce where the adult situates himself or herself in liminality. This becomes conducive for the “infantalization” of the adult that in turn makes him or her a

better gamer. Corollary to boundary is Holbrook's (1997) emphasis on the "edge" as an intersection of experiences and a generator of creativity and insights. He has attempted to demonstrate the significance of the edge by including a series of postcards in his article that playfully engage the reader's eyes.

## MATERIAL CULTURE IN REVIEW

The term "material culture" is used by several disciplines, and it appears that each has its own treatment of the concept. It seems that the term falls short of a solidified definition as it is a latecomer in the jargon of the disciplines that appropriate it, used especially when convenient or for lack of a better term, and not wholly claimed by one area of study. To scholars of humanities and arts studies, it could be the "artifactual representations of the beliefs, knowledge, traditions, and values shared by a distinct ethnolinguistic group" (Tolentino 2002:1). From the perspective of archaeology, it means the physical remains of past cultures. Archaeologists recognize categories of physical remains coming from a past and surviving into a relatively later time like the present. These are the *artifact*, which is a material that was modified and/or used by human beings; the *feature*, which is a non-portable artifact; and the *ecofact*, defined as "non-artifactual organic and environmental remains" (Renfrew and Bahn 1996:45-46).

Some scholars have recognized the area of "material culture studies" to give justice to the significance of an academic consideration of material culture *per se*. The clamor for a recognition of the term and its area of study is presented in a paper by Miller (1998:484), in which he called for an area of study concerned with "general theories of the nature of the artifactual world and specific studies of the social life of objects, whether memorials or landscapes." This is not entirely neutral, and looking at how Marxist thought have deeply penetrated and maintained itself in social theories through the advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the evolving area of material culture studies is oftentimes critical as it shows the relationship

between things and people as dialectical and recursive (Tilley et al. 2006:4). The investigation levels by which a study of material culture is pursued range from artifactual, such as appraising commodified objects and bodies (Paterson 2006); spatial, in which emerges a landscapes discourse (Bender 2006); to temporal, where an archaeology of memory could be problematized (Dyke and Alcock 2003:3-6).

The issue of consumption occupies a sanctified place in material culture studies, having been developed as a reaction to capitalist metanarratives but by now is also seeing itself more integrated in the theoretical backbone of marketing scholarship (Miller 2006). Mullin's treatment of the consumption concept offers a beneficial perspective from which to consider the material culture of tourism. He includes in its definition that of "how people socialize material goods," does of which could be thought of as an agency using artifacts that "assume meaning in a tension between structural and localized processes that cannot be described as being either wholly deterministic or disconnected from consumer symbolism" (Mullin 2011:134-135). It is in the context of consumption that I am examining the material culture of Banaue.

### **MADE BY THE LANDSCAPES**

A visitor from Manila like me tends to be subjugated by the towering mountains of the Cordillera in Ifugao as my bus negotiates the steadily climbing road at Hingyon amidst fog covered hillsides and deep, yawning valleys. Past the cloud line, I am welcomed by early morning sunshine, and allowed a panoramic view of hilltops jutting from the fog carpet that has concealed places where I was several minutes ago. With small towns and the rest of the landscape transformed into fields or left as forest, Ifugao is rural. To the Manileño, the "authentic" countryside is one element that stands in contrast to his everyday environment. We could also have the countryside in Metro Manila, but this has been created indeliberately by leaving vacant lots in subdivisions to let *cogon* grass or banana plants grow, or deliberately by planting gardens and parks. The

“authentic” countryside could be a place where fields and large plantations are found, and the people are living in hamlets instead of city blocks or subdivisions.

What separates the Cordillera from most countrysides are its mountains. This is a world apart from the realm of the Filipino lowlander. The Manileño’s relationship with highlands are structured by both space and time. His habitat is the sweltering tropical plains, with the mountains usually serving only as backdrops on the horizon. His (“normal”) everyday life is spent in his home or workplace, the buildings of which are usually situated on the lowland. Minus his air-conditioned house, car, office, and nearby mall, the normal is the tropical warm temperature. During weekends, holidays, or even after office hours, he reconnects with the highlands. Tagaytay City, a hill town perched on a high edge of the Taal Caldera sixty kilometers south of Manila, is his weekend or holiday space when he leaves the city to “unwind.” He immerses in the cool atmosphere and may feel delighted at being on top of almost everything. The Manileño, together with his family, could take a picnic while commanding a full view of Taal Lake and Volcano, go to a zoo, or enjoy horseback riding; dine with his or her lover in one of the classy restaurants at the edge of the ridge; while away time with his *barkada* on a night out; or go on solemn retreat with fellow Catholics for a few days.

Before the emergence of the modern Alabang commercial district and the Bonifacio Global City at the southeastern sections of the metropolis, Antipolo had been a favorite hangout of yuppies and college students in the early 1990s. Even with the waning of Antipolo as a “cool” or “hip” place, the hill town still retains its pull as a pilgrimage center and conference venue. Other major lowland cities in the country have appropriated their adjacent high places in this way. Cagayan de Oro has the Bukidnon Plateau, and smaller versions come in the form of Cebu City’s Tops and Legaspi City’s Lignon Hill. The urban Filipino has thus created a taxonomy of space and time as he shuttles between work and leisure, a taxonomy consisting of the “lowland-everyday” and the “highland-holiday.”

But there is more to Banaue. Aside from rusticity and altitude, the sculpted landscape has made itself the prime focus of attraction. The Banaue section in *Lonely Planet Philippines* opens with the following paragraph after stating the telephone area code, population, and altitude of the town:

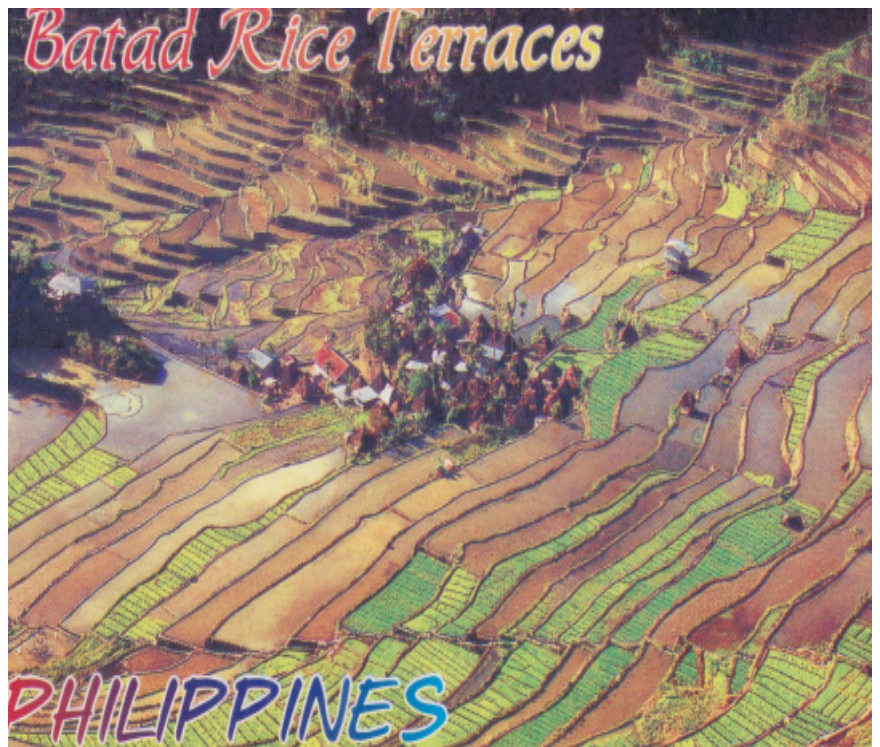
*If you say ‘rice terraces’ to a Filipino, they’re likely going to think of Banaue. Lipped in on all sides by fuzzy green steps, Banaue is directly accessible from Manila, and as such it is no idyllic getaway like Sagada. But don’t give Banaue grief. The local mud-walled rice terraces have a pleasing, organic quality that differentiates them from the stone-walled terraces in most of the Cordillera. World Heritage listed, they are impressive not only for their chiseled beauty but because they were created around 2000 years ago (Bloom et al. 2012:138).*

Following the framework of Urry (1990), it could be said that the rice terraces may be regarded as the most important sign in Banaue, a focus of the tourist gaze. When I entered the Banaue Museum from its upper floor, one of the first exhibits I came across had the heading “What To See.” The written text below it told me what I could expect to be shown by the rice terraces, like “water-filled terraces that reflect light at dawn; bright green rice stalks that dress the hills in March and the golden fields of ripe grain that sway to the gentle breeze in July.” Hotels, inns, restaurants, and the Tourist Information Center do not miss placing pictures or posters of the rice terraces in their premises.

Almost all postcards of Banaue feature the rice terraces, most especially the celebrated ones at Batad. The view in one postcard is from a perspective at a high point looking down at the fields below (fig. 2), showing them in the planting season when the paddies exude a multiplicity of colors: there are green paddies with newly planted rice crops, also brown areas with only muddied water, and the others are orange, slightly crimson, or bluish, depending on how their water reflects light. At the



center of the frame are the clustered houses of Batad with their clumps of trees that include several betel trees. The whole landscape of rice fields, shaped as a gigantic amphitheater, encloses this tiny enclave of residential structures. On another postcard is a shot of what a visitor could see from the perspective of Viewpoint looking towards the *poblacion*, or town center (fig.3). Although placed almost at the center of the frame, the *poblacion* is more of a background than the main subject. The rice terraces are the ones in the foreground and at the left and right sides of the photograph.



**Fig. 2: A postcard showing the Batad Rice Terraces.**

Postcards reinforce the dominant position of Banaue's terraced landscapes, showing it as "dwarfing" the town. They are one good medium in which to build and perpetuate Urry's tourist gaze in the visual dimension. The terraces are blown even larger than their large image in life, multiplied, and interpreted in a postcard.. Aside from the seen, a constellation of other sensed elements could comprise a Banaue in which the tourist could indulge himself or herself: the continuous sound of rushing water from a stream or rice field



**Fig. 3: A postcard showing rice terraces around Viewpoint.**

waterfall; the sound of *patpong*, or gongs being hit to produce music for a dance; the smell of betel quid and burning hay; or the nip of mountain breeze. These comprise what Urry (2001:3) calls the *sensecapes*, in which bodies derive pleasurable sensations “in performances especially to fold notions of movement, nature, taste, and desire, into and through the body.” This idea appears helpful in considering the landscape a multisensory unit to which receptors significant to tourism could connect.



**Fig. 4: A map of the Banaue Tourism Council.**

Banaue’s landscapes are also domesticated for the visitor through tourist maps. A map by the Banaue Tourism Council shows the major attractions of the municipality (fig. 4). In this medium, the whole place is portrayed as a wonderland in which the tourist could find spots that could satisfy him or her. There is strong support from visual aides, like the superimposition of pictures of tourist attractions, or drawings of them. The map drawing shows roads as thick light-brown lines, with foot trails as thin red lines branching off the thick lines, and the Banaue river as a discontinuous blue line. Locations of attractions are represented by small, red stars with eight rays, and ovoid-shaped pictures of the attractions are placed beside their corresponding stars. Lodges, inns, and restaurants are represented by smaller yellow stars, and the names of important buildings of the town are written at their locations on the map. The map from People’s Lodge and Restaurant similarly shows the roads, foot trails, and river, with an eight-ray star as location



of an attraction, and with a drawing of the attraction next to its star. At the roads' ends (near the map's edges) are place names with particular relevance to tourist concerns where the road could lead, with arrows for direction and the distance to these places. The place names indicated here are Manila (origin to, and destination from, Banaue), Baguio (another tourist city), and Mayoyao (another town where there are rice terraces to see). Hapao (where rice terraces are also present) instead of Hungduan (a neighboring municipality of which Hapao is part of) is written in a font smaller than those of the first three, as it seems that Hapao is considered integral to the Banaue tourism landscapes.

These tourist maps help enforce *interspatialities*, which “refer to mapped paths of consumers through the site” (Peñaloza 1998:341). The points and lines on the maps have been especially prepared for the tourist, designed to gather the most signs that one could expect of Banaue in the most efficient way. Visitors would just have to follow the routes. The maps were made distorted to suit the tourist: all attractions of the municipality have to be accommodated into the map, so that distances are not to scale; and Hapao has been drawn disproportionately closer to Banaue.

In the actual touring space, markers have also been positioned interspatially. Most of Ifugao and other towns along the way from Manila to Banaue contribute to the promotion of Banaue's attractions. Arches on the road at Lamut and at the Hingyon-Banaue border have signs welcoming the visitor. In Banaue poblacion, the T-shaped road intersection and its vicinity at the center of the built-up area have signs and symbols that highlight tourism-significant structures and spaces. At one side of this intersection is the Tourist Information Center, fronted by canteens and shops at the opposite sides of two connecting roads. A road segment from this intersection takes you along the public market and to a series of souvenir shops and restaurants, finally terminating in a dead end at the municipal hall. Another road segment from the intersection is lined by small hotels, inns, and restaurants for several meters up to the elementary school, past which there are no more



**Fig. 5: The sign showing the entrance to Banaue Hotel and Youth Hostel.**

sizeable establishments that offer something to tourists. The third road segment branching from the intersection is the major road to Banaue poblacion, which connects to the national highway. This is the one taken by visitors from Manila or from the Mountain Province going to or leaving Banaue, and is also lined with some lodges, inns, small shops, and canteens. The access to the Banaue Hotel and Youth Hostel is through this road (fig. 5). Along the mentioned stretches of the three road segments, names and nature of business establishments catering to tourism are signified on wooden or metal boards.

### **NOW SHOWING: THE TRADITIONAL LIFE**

One day after lunch, I took time out to visit the Banaue Museum situated above the town and national highway. Also called the “Beyer Museum,” this building contains his family’s collection of all things Ifugao and Cordillera, a condensation of Ifugaolandia. The different parts of Ifugaoness in space and time were brought into this building. There is a seemingly endless array of old Ifugao artifacts: from the kitchen objects like *dinalulu* (food bowl of the Ifugao), *liga-u* (winnowing tray), *inattagang* (spoons), to toys like *bawwot* (top), to things with social and ritual functions like *gangha* (gongs), *punamhan* (ritual boxes), *ungngiyung* (mouth flute), and many other objects, together with a model of a cooking hearth. There are Banaue memorabilia from the early to the later decades of the 20th century, like the letters of General Yamashita of the Japanese Imperial Army, and old photographs of the town by the American anthropologist Harold Conklin.

Nostalgia and academia are enhanced by *intertextualities*, “the principles by which displays of... memorabilia, images and products were arranged... to

encourage some meanings and preclude others” (Peñaloza 1998:341). A tour of the traditional in the museum is contextualized within a recognition of the scholarly efforts of key personalities in the Cordillera anthropological discourse: one of Conklin’s (1980) major publications, *Ethnographic Atlas of Ifugao*, is placed after visitors have read something about the rice terraces and before proceeding to view the artifacts of the traditional Ifugao household; in the display cabinet downstairs is the University of the Philippines diploma of Henry Otley Beyer accompanied by pictures of his son and small ceramic vessels from an archaeological site; and in another display case downstairs are stone adzes and other stoneware vessels collected by H.O. Beyer from other places in the country. A sentinel from the glorious days of American exploration, the Banaue Museum retains traditional, yet authoritative, interpretations about the Ifugao that do not heed the postmodern call for multiple narratives (Kohlstedt 2005). As such, it continues to be another mechanism that potentially others the people in its locality.

However it is not only in the museum where traditional Ifugao life is displayed. It is also consumed as a reality show that is set in the village. The way to Poitan takes me and my companions through rice fields and shaded areas of deciduous growth and pine trees. Poitan is one of several *barangays*, or villages, of Banaue. The *abong*, or traditional wooden house on stilts of the Ifugao, can still be seen in Poitan. Almost all these remaining houses have a series of carabao skulls adorning their sides. Only a few of these houses actually remain, but they number more than those that can be found in the tourist-neglected Ifugao towns like Lamut and Lagawe, which are more like clones of the typical lowland town. The stone structures expected of an Ifugao village are still here, like stone slabs as the flooring of the settlement area, a stone post that is said to have ritual functions, and a series of stones arranged in a circular manner—the meeting place of the elders. I have also noticed that under the floors of the *abongs* are textiles wrapping the skeletal remains of deceased village folks. When I came to Poitan, I was part of a team that conducted archaeological fieldwork in the *barangay*. In the few days that we excavated,

the everyday life of the place gradually introduced itself to me: children laughing and throwing stones into the pond, playing their *bawwot* (homemade wooden top), an old woman sitting on a log and chewing betel quid, ducks moving in flocks, farmers walking on the field dikes, and young men doing some woodcarving under a house.

Poitan is included as one of the attractions of Banaue, where Ifugao craftsmen such as weavers, carvers, and bronze smiths can be seen doing their work. It is presented by the Banaue Tourism Council map as a living heritage museum with “magnificently lined Ifugao huts on mountain slopes surrounded with stone walls to protect the villagers from invading tribes during tribal wars long time ago,” and is imbued with a strong sense of the past, as “much of the path [to Poitan] follows a century-old irrigation canal” (Rawthorn et al. 2003:186). Banaue (and the Cordillera too) is obliged to remain what it was, where the people are always headhunters who “have never experienced material affluence... “ and have “a fierce sense of honor and personal integrity [which] are universally-held traits of these people,” as some posters in a restaurant read. It is also a place that should be idyllic, a subject of awe, and pleasing to the senses, where “even the basic means of sustenance have been elevated to a high art... foremost [of which is] the rice terraces,”; “the emotional and physical joys of this primitive world are like a dream state,” but it is where “the tribespeople have little awareness or appreciation of the aesthetic value of these structures”—so go the posters.

Tourism has to increase the traditional in Banaue and make it available whenever possible to whoever wants it. It does this by creating the traditional. If a tourist would like to experience living the life of an Ifugao, he doesn’t have to go to a village in order to sleep in a real *abong*, or to wait for a rare occasion to witness and participate in a traditional dance among village folk. He may choose instead to go to resorts where he could experience all of these. Resorts in Banaue, like the Banaue Ethnic Village and Pine Forest Resort had been built to mimic traditional landscapes and architecture. *Abongs* have been built around ponds just like the real thing. There he

may sleep overnight in an *abong* and still feel the rudimentary provisions expected of a traditional house, warm himself near an open fire, watch an Ifugao dance or some ritual being performed, plus go boating and fishing, and marvel at the scenery. These things then become signs of what the tourist imagines as constituents of traditional Ifugao life but actually are staged structures and events, an example of MacCannell's idea of "staged authenticity" (Urry 2001:5).

## OF MENUS AND SOUVENIRS

I am afforded a selection of breakfast in the People's Lodge and Restaurant: in the menu are the Continental breakfast, American breakfast, and the Filipino breakfast, made up of garlic fried rice, egg, and a choice between Filipino sausage, hotdog, ham, or *bangus* (milkfish, *Chanos chanos*). I could have coffee, tea, or hot chocolate. This breakfast, I chose the Filipino breakfast with *longganisa* (Filipino sausage), and coffee. At lunchtime, I went to the Las Vegas Restaurant to see its menu. The main courses were all Filipino dishes, just like the menu of the People's Lodge and Restaurant. The Las Vegas Restaurant has a similar selection of breakfasts and accompanying beverages. This time, I ordered the specialty dish, the upgraded version of the meat-vegetable egg-rice dish popular in the old-style and much-frequented *panciterias* (noodle restaurants) of downtown Baguio. I went back to the People's Lodge and Restaurant at dinner, and this time I sampled their chicken *tinola*, a hot soupy dish that goes with rice.

The liminal space of Banaue is an arena where tensions of highland/lowland, local/alien, safe/dangerous, familiar/strange occur. Negotiations of these in tourist destinations are seen in the culinary landscape, governed by squeamishness on one side and adventure on another. Mealtime in Banaue's touristy restaurants still assures the visitor that his food is edible and safe—much like German tourists sampling the nightclubs of Bangkok in a paper by Del Casino and Hanna (2000:34), in which entertainment icons on a tourist map "call upon the east/west dualism directly to assure tourists that they can enjoy

western safety and comfort in the midst of eastern exoticism.” He may be served a *longsilog* Filipino breakfast or an American breakfast of bacon, egg, pancakes, and loaves of bread, or the typical lowland Filipino dishes such as *pinakbet*, *adobo*, *apritada*, *chopsuey*, *sarciado*, and *pancitan*. There is no restaurant overtly serving (much less as a regular offering) Ifugao everyday fare or even feasting fare, like boiled beans and rice for breakfast, *pinikpikan* (a dish of chicken slaughtered by beating), *itag* (dried meat), freshwater clams and whelks, or *jojo* fish from the rice fields.

Banaue sensecapes could only engage the tourist’s taste buds with free (or “properly acquired/given by an Ifugao in an ‘authentic’ setting”) *tappey* (rice wine) on special occasions, and only when the tourist has been invited into a “true” celebration happening in the tourism “backstage.” Even the commodified *tappey*, which could be available on an ordinary day, should be bought in non-tourist enterprises like the *bigasan* or rice dealer shops. The wines sold in tourist shops are made from the endemic *bignay* fruit, guava, strawberry, and *kamote* (sweet potato). Hence the *tappey* is still considered an element of the Other’s sphere, possibly rare, and hidden from view. Containers of the ones sold in a *bigasan* are *cuatro cantos* bottles once containing Ginebra San Miguel gin, starkly modest in contrast to a fancy bottle of *bignay* wine that sports a wicker handle.

Other items displayed in the tourist shop follow the adorned wine bottles. Ceramic souvenir mugs have also been embellished with a flare of the othered ethnic by wicker straps. What is funny, but not surprising, about the mug is that when you turn it bottom-side up, you will see “Made in China” printed on its underside. The staging of the “ethnic authentic” is facilitated by outsourcing of the artifact, which is quite common in tourist destinations where cultural tourism of the other is the showcase, like parts of China’s Yunnan province (Notar 2006:78). Several novelty items in the Banaue shops actually come from different sources: the strawberry wine, *lengua de gato* cookies, and chocoflakes are products of Baguio, many of the woodcarved souvenirs are made in Hapao, and bottles of



preserved *bignay* fruit are from Santa Fe in Nueva Vizcaya province.

Wood is the predominant material used in making souvenirs. Gazed icons of Ifugaolandia, usually made of wood themselves in their authentic form, are the subjects of woodcarving like the *bulul* (rice god effigy), *abong*, and wooden spoon and fork with anthropomorphic figures. In many cases, these icons have been transformed by the woodcarving industry to suit the needs of the visitors, such that aside from being gift items, a miniature version of an *abong* could become a scratch paper or memo holder, the *bulul* used as bookends, and other zoomorphic wooden figures could be fashioned with a depression and become an ashtray. Textiles were not left out in this metamorphosis of function. The *tapis* that usually serves as a skirt to the Ifugao woman would be reborn and turned by the weaving industry into table runners and bags, retaining the same designs and raw materials, but now assuming a different form as artifacts of the cosmopolitan. A lot of non-local subjects have also been drawn into representing Ifugaoness through woodcarving, such as a smiling sun, dragon face mask, man with big penis covered by barrel, Mickey Mouse, Laughing Buddhas, or a fertility doll from the Asante tribe of Ghana (Tolentino 2002).

### CONCLUSION: ON THE ROAD DOWNHILL TO SOLANO

My travel is a liminality that I have to pass from the Banaue wonderland in order to return to Manila. There are personal rituals here to be experienced. One is the shift from a chilling temperature to a hot one as the Solano-bound jeep made a stop at the town of Bagabag. The second is at Solano where I went to Chowking for breakfast, ceremonially reintroducing myself to the fastfood culture of the metropolis. The experience of travel has been likened to a boundary crossing with all its rituals, in the form of movements in space and the reconstitution of meanings in material culture that traverse different realms. The souvenir, for instance, is seen as “an attempt to transport some of the sacred quality of the journey

across boundaries and back to the home of traveler [sic]” (Belk 1997:30-32). As the road descended to the valleys of Nueva Vizcaya, I was reconnected to what, for me, is familiar and everyday.

Despite a theoretical potpourri in narrating Banaue, the binding element in this paper would still be the enormous potential of material culture to recreate a destination image. What have we seen so far? We discover that several tropes at play constitute Banaue as *the* destination of tourists, among them the imaginings of the primitive, the highland-thus-temperate climate, sweeping terraces, and adventure on the Cordillera. This is put into place by the artifacts and landscapes of the locality, where a conscious attempt is being done to heighten tourist experience amidst issues of authenticity. Banaue may then become a hyperreal world, a realm that would eventually parallel things which, in the words of Eco (1986, 1967:46), are found to be make-believe but are preferred over their real counterparts because they look more real.

The relationship between material culture and people takes advantage of time and space morphing, most especially in the postmodern era when new technologies and practices are legitimized. In the tourist encounter, meanings in part are borne out by intimate associations of the embodied senses with the artifactual text: street signs, souvenir shops, menus, and treacherous dikes of the terraces are sampled by the embodied traveller with all possible senses. Meanwhile, the fragmentation in time and space make configurations of material culture also take on their potency: brochures and websites sensitize him before the trip, while postcards, digital photographs, and souvenirs make the feelings linger on. The consumption of Banaue is thus facilitated as long as frames and networks such as these are being maintained.



## NOTE

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