



Observing the Transcendent Other

Early Modern Christian Interpretations of a Philippine Religion

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ABSTRACT Transcendence and its interrelation with immanence play an important role in all religions. For a believer, the transcendent reveals itself through religious practices and can be communicated to others via various means. But when a religion is extinct, the only way of learning about its transcendence is via remaining sources, which often reveal only a biased image. This article deals with the analysis of the transcendent of an ancient Philippine religion and its distinction to the immanent. It discusses ways of approaching the transcendent with the help of three examples dealing with the consequences of divergent understandings of transcendence and immanence, with liminality, soul concepts, and death.

KEYWORDS transcendence/immanence, Philippines, indigenous religion, Christian mission, Spanish colonial empire, Early Modern period, witchcraft, soul concepts, religious ritual

Introduction

The interrelation and distinction between immanence and transcendence are of main concern in any religion. One way or another every religion deals with communication or contact with powers and a world that transcends earthly life. Similar to the concept of religion itself, the expressions and notions of transcendence and immanence are deeply rooted in an Occidental, Christian culture. However, non-Christian religions also contain phenomena that are comparable to this kind of transcendence. For describing and analyzing them, it is necessary to determine emic understandings of transcendence and to keep in mind that these will differ from the Christian one. Fiona Bowie suggests that with the methodology of cognitive, empathetic engagement the observer recognizes his or her own dialogical position in the process of acquiring knowledge and strengthens the awareness “of the possible multiplicity of identities of both self and other” (Bowie 2013, 703, 722). But how shall we proceed with religions that are extinct and do not offer emic perspectives to researchers?

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This article discusses how the transcendence/immanence distinction (TID)¹ can direct the focus of research to take different understandings of the transcendent into consideration. TID is understood in this article as a concept for research as well as a lived differentiation made by believers. This will be exemplified with the help of an ancient Philippine religion² that ceased to exist as a comprehensive system of beliefs due to Christian mission since the late sixteenth century. The different beliefs and practices related to this religion were indeed not extinguished at once by missionaries, for religious belief comprises various areas of the worldview, practices and customs that can continue to exist even after a conversion to another religion. But this ancient Philippine religion as a reference system that can provide us with a broader interpretation of, for example, mythological beings ceased to exist. However, mythological beings, beliefs and concepts related to the understanding of the body and soul survived up to today. Some of them, though, appear in fundamentally different forms. This is a phenomenon that can be observed in every culture, just like, for example, practices related to Christmas in many European societies. The main sources providing some details about this religion today are writings produced by Catholic missionaries and church authorities during the Spanish colonial period.³ These texts are marked by the interests of their writers, who were part of the colonial enterprise, seeking to gain power over the population of the Philippines and convert them to Christianity. They are, thus, generally far from being sources that describe the observed religion objectively, but highly biased and fundamentally ethnocentric.

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Even though this article focuses on an ancient Philippine religion, it deals with a situation of religious contact and transfer due to the circumstances under which knowledge about this religion was produced. The Spanish sea expedition under the command of Miguel López de Legazpi, which initiated the colonization of the Philippine islands in 1565, was accompanied by Augustine missionaries. In the subsequent years, friars from other religious orders and Roman Catholic ecclesiastics followed (Bourne 1962; Phelan 1959, 31–32). The missionaries established close contact to the indigenous population, observed their customs and beliefs, recorded them for their brethren and by doing so preserved their observations for posterity. These writers provide us with their own interpretation of ancient Philippine religions⁴ shaped by their own Early Modern Christian worldview. Their writings dominate historiography on

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1 The article draws on the concept of transcendence/immanence distinction developed by the Käte Hamburger Kolleg “Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe” at Ruhr-Universität Bochum (see Stünkel 2017). The abbreviation TID is used in the text.

2 The population of the Philippines consists of a multitude of communities that can be differentiated on the basis of ethno-linguistic criteria. This article concentrates on ancient beliefs and practices of the Tagalog-speaking people, initially living in central Luzon around the current capital Manila and the island of Mindoro. The examples presented here to discuss the TID are taken from a broader study analyzing the ancient Tagalog religion as a whole by critically discussing the sources that form the basis of the historiography of this specific religion. This study was led by a prototypical approach to religion developed by the ethnologist Roland Mischung, who suggested concentrating on phenomena that are particularly typical instead of using a strict definition of religion. The approach comprises cosmology, mythology, religious rites, magic and divination (Mischung 2006, 198–99).

3 The study drew on descriptions of the (ancient) Tagalog religion from thirteen sources (among them chronicles from religious orders and letters) written between the late sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries (Rath 2017, 69–90). The early descriptions are regarded as primary sources, while the later ones mark the beginning of the historiography of religion by drawing on primary observations made by earlier writers and reinterpreting them from a Spanish Catholic perspective. The main concern of the study was to call for a critical revision of the historiography on the ancient Tagalog religion, which uses the mentioned sources as the main and almost only reference, adopting details without critical reflection, mixing them up with information on beliefs from other areas in the Philippines and thus constructing something that is presented as the ‘ancient religion’ of the Philippines.

4 It is a matter of perspective whether the ancient Philippine belief systems are regarded as one Philippine religion with regional particularities or as different religions. As this study concentrates on the Tagalog-

Philippine religions, for historians and scholars of Religious Studies claim to be confronted with a lack or scarcity of alternative sources.⁵ This limited corpus on which the majority of depictions of the Philippine religions are based facilitates an approach from the perspective of history of knowledge, for many statements on the so-called pre-Hispanic religions can be traced back to a few or even one single source. On the other hand, the restricted source material provides us with a rather superficial idea of the religions based on unrelated details in many fields. This especially affects the field of the transcendent, as it will be discussed in this article by means of three examples.

These examples are selected in order to show how the use of the concept of the TID can direct the researcher to critically reflect on two kinds of influences on his or her results in the analysis of an indigenous religion having to do with a two-leveled process of observation: The researcher observes the observation made by others who are likewise not devotees of the observed religion.⁶ The first case will thus sensitize for the influence of an often not reflected projection of the own specification of the TID on the object of research. The second case shows the potential of the concept of TID in directing the research focus to the moments or time spans making the differentiation, the distinction between transcendence and immanence, visible. The third example is a case study on soul concepts showing how the focus on the TID can unveil fundamental differences in perception on part of the observed agents, the first-order observer and the researcher, leading to new interpretations.

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Some Key Elements of the Ancient Tagalog Religion

Among the rather unrelated details researchers can gain from textual and a few archaeological sources about the ancient Tagalog religion are some phenomena that shall be explained here in short for a better understanding of this article. I refrain from presenting an overview on the ancient Tagalog religion in general, for it would be but a mere construct with speculative relations between different details that is opposed to my concern of reviewing the historiography on the ancient Tagalog religion. The spelling of Tagalog names and terms varies in the sources. In the following, I will use a standardized spelling even when I refer to primary sources.⁷

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Most sources present Bathala as the main god or head of the ancient Tagalog pantheon; he was regarded as an indigenous equivalent to the Christian god by many missionaries. The name resembles a Hindu deity, so it is likely that he was renamed or even newly included in the pantheon as a consequence of religious contacts with Hinduism that took place in Southeast Asia around the thirteenth century. Other frequently mentioned beings are *anitos*,⁸

[6]

speaking areas and on the ancient Tagalog religion, it claims the existence of various belief systems or religions, at least for the purpose of this study, without denying many similarities and parallels.

5 The preference for textual sources in historical research as well as restricted language skills of researchers, especially with regard to Chinese writings such as reports from travelers and merchants, limit the available sources. Furthermore, the passage of time, wars, iconoclasm, disadvantageous weather conditions and continuous calamities occurring all over the Philippines reduced alternative sources for the study of religions, such as religious images and places of worship.

6 Even the single process of observing is complex, comprising three aspects: The identity of the knower; the object, event or process that is observed; and the “narrative or interpretative stance by which the object of knowledge becomes known in a particular manner to the knower” (Bowie 2013, 703).

7 The following elements of the ancient Tagalog religion are taken from my dissertation (for further details, see Rath 2017, 91–97, 110–30, 139–45, 142–75).

8 The pluralization of this and other Tagalog terms by using ‘-s’ just serves for a better understanding. In Tagalog, pluralization is actually made by using a plural article, in this case *ang manga anito*.

which can be regarded as godly but with a closer relationship to humans than Bathala, for they are said to be addressed by the Tagalog people and asked for support in certain concerns.⁹ In some sources they are compared or equated with Catholic saints, for they were related to the deceased ancestors. They were represented by figures made of different materials, but *anitos* themselves do not appear in a material or physical form. Another, less frequently mentioned form of ancestors was called *nono*. Unlike the *anitos*, who are associated with positive issues, the *nonos* were rather feared.

Other mythological beings are presented as witches and/or sorcerers in the sources and it seems that at least the Tagalog people, and partially the Spaniards, regarded them as appearing in physical, sometimes human bodies, so I would not interpret them as being part of the pantheon but rather another intermediate sphere. Those which are discussed in this paper are the following: [7]

- the *mangagavay* heals or causes diseases [8]
- the *manyisalat* is consulted for love issues, especially to destroy relationships
- the *mangagayoma* can initiate or support (romantic) relationships
- the *hocloban* can kill or destroy houses just by lifting the hand¹⁰
- the *mancocolam* breathes fire that is very hard to extinguish
- the *magtatangal* is a shapeshifter who can separate its head and entrails from the body at night¹¹
- the *aswang* is actually a being from the Visayan mythology, but today *aswangs* get attention from all over the Philippines and they are regarded as a universal Philippine phenomenon. Here the current perception seems to be much different from the ancient (Tagalog) one, for they can be regarded as a living myth (without judging on their existence or non-existence). In the Early Modern sources they are sometimes equalized with the Tagalog *patianac* who, in contrast to the popular *aswang*, has no meaning for current Philippine mythology, but many characteristics and the behavior of the *patianac* are an integral part of the perception of the *aswang* today. The *patianac*, as the name suggests (*pati* -> *patay* = dead, *anak* = child), is said to cause misfortune in childbirth.

Finally, the *catalonan* are frequently described as priests, so they can be regarded as the human intermediaries between the transcendent and the ordinary people. [9]

There is no or just speculative information on the relationship between all these beings. Likewise, the relation between them and phenomena that were interpreted as the indigenous idea of (the) soul, which will be discussed at the end of this article, is not clear. [10]

The Transcendence/Immanence Distinction (TID)

Transcendence, derived from the Latin word *transcendere* ‘going beyond’, is related to immanence (Christophersen 2014). It is ‘the other’ of a material, visible, tangible world. The two concepts should not be analyzed separately, and to get access to a specific idea of transcendence it is recommendable to relate it to its particular immanence. [11]

The transcendent can refer to different dimensions, from a profane to the most meaning- [12]

9 *Anitos* are discussed in detail in case study 2 in this article.

10 This being is actually ascribed to the Bicol instead of the Tagalog areas, but it can be found in ancient Tagalog dictionaries.

11 *Magtatangals* were ascribed to the Bicol area as well, but they are likewise mentioned in an Early Modern Tagalog dictionary as well as in a Tagalog catechism.

ful religious understanding. In his book *Michelangelo's Finger*, Raymond Tallis introduces his interpretation of transcendence as an everyday experience, but he regards the transcendent as the ultimate end in religion as the same phenomenon. Tallis explains how the simple act of pointing a finger both presupposes and develops transcendence by creating space between the person pointing and an object that might be visible to the addressee or not.¹² Pointing opens a realm of possibilities and facilitates the sharing of a world while it can also show things beyond this shared world. Perception goes beyond the visible and sensible; it is based on our previous experience and forms a kind of transcendence (Tallis 2010, xxii, 122, 124, 127–33, 140).

Immanence can be equalized with materiality, while, as its counter-concept, transcendence would then be immateriality. But this simplifies the main idea, since transcendence seems to be only that part of immateriality that is suffused with meaning. Hence, the main field in which transcendence is studied is the religious one, for here the meaning of transcendence exceeds the one of immanence by far. [13]

The transcendent is an integral part of every religion; it is the feature that goes beyond finitude. Religious transcendence can become very powerful, for it is furnished with an important meaning by believers. Situations of cultural change, which can be a result of religious contact, leave imprints on understandings of the transcendent (Danz et al. 2011) and may urge self-reflection. In this regard, power relations play an important role, because a feeling of superiority works against a holistic critical rethinking of one's own worldview. Therefore, it is unlikely that colonial contact led to remarkable changes in Early Modern Catholic thoughts on the concept of transcendence in Spain. But it did cause modifications in the attitude towards the indigenous population of other parts of the world, as, for example, the criticism of colonialism by the first bishop of Chiapas, Bartolomé de Las Casas, shows. Effects of this change of attitude are visible in missionary writings describing the Philippine cultures and religions, for at least some of them show efforts to present certain indigenous elements as cultural achievements. Regarding local religions, it can be observed that some missionaries interpret certain elements in them as Pre-Christian features and take them to be comparable to the predecessors of Christianity. Such compatible factors were approached as preliminary stages towards Christianization instead of being branded completely as barbaric superstition.¹³ [14]

For the devotees of a religion that does not allow ambiguous worldviews, only one way of understanding the transcendent exists; all other ways are deemed wrong. Transcendence can be experienced by the devotee of the respective religion, but for outsiders it can only be captured via description by the devotee or by material representation. If we want to understand the concept of transcendence in a religion, we need strong dedication to get involved into a religious system (just as in the methodology of cognitive, empathetic engagement) that may conflict with our own worldview, and even if it does not, it is not an easy task. This is a restriction which must be thoroughly considered in the analysis of a religion on the basis of missionary writings as source material. The Christian understanding in the writings should be identified and alternative views discussed, for example, by comparison with similar concepts in cultures and religions that are related to the observed one. [15]

To place the TID at the center of analysis instead of looking exclusively at the transcendent urges a self-reflection emphasizing the interrelatedness of the two elements (transcendence [16]

12 The object might not be visible to the addressee because he or she cannot see it from his or her position; it may not be there anymore or not yet there, or it might not even exist.

13 The Jesuits Pedro Chirino and Francisco Colín, for example, present the preparation of dead bodies for the funeral as comparable to old Hebrew practices (Chirino 1604, 76–77; Colín 1663, 67).

and immanence) as well as the differences in transcendence/immanence understandings between one's own cultural background, the background of the initial observers and the observed religion. Further, the concept of TID emphasizes the liminal point where the immanent ends and the transcendent begins, where a transgression of borders takes place and where it points at the decisive focus for the research.

Case 1: Divergent TIDs and Their Consequences for Observation

The dimension of transcendence in extinct religions is prone to change through the categorization used in their descriptions, for they have no living speakers who can inform others about them and correct misconceptions. Especially in the case of the ancient Tagalog religion, where the depiction made by Spanish missionaries can hardly be contrasted with any native source, the categorization applied has left a strong influence on what is perceived and described as the transcendent in the ancient Tagalog religion. This can be demonstrated through the example of figures and beings that are introduced as 'priests of the devil' (*Ministros del demonio*) by two Franciscan authors (Plasencia 1962; San Antonio 1738, 156–57).¹⁴ By calling them such, the missionaries place them within a framework of interpretation drawing on an Early Modern Catholic demonology that formed the basis of judgments made by the Spanish Inquisition. Although indigenous people from the American viceroyalties and the Philippines were excluded from inquisitorial practice (González Molina 2013, 68), the judgment as 'priests of the devil' by the authors of the sources implicitly equipped the described beings with characteristics typical of the Early Modern Catholic idea of witches. The punishable act for which witches were condemned by the inquisition was the mortal sin of heresy. Fiona Bowie emphasizes that witchcraft universally deals with the idea of a life force, essence, or energy within humans that can be captured or harmed by people who are evil and equipped with extraordinary powers. When protection measures against these attacks fail, specialists are usually called to cure or retrieve this life force (Bowie 2008, 200). In Christian thought this life force would be equated with the soul that was believed to be harmed by witchcraft. Hans G. Kippenberg and Kocku von Stuckrad show how accusations of magic, which is always related to witchcraft, have been used since Antiquity to collectively exclude individuals from the society (Kippenberg and Stuckrad 2003, 155–64). Witch persecution in Europe in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period worked with the same mechanism, and it can even be observed in phenomena related to witchcraft in non-European cultures. Recent research on magic emphasizes that it is, on the one hand, often a "projection of deeply entrenched modern Western 'modes of thought' and colonialist fantasies" and, on the other hand, a polemical weapon to devalue the (theological) opponent (Otto and Stausberg 2013, 6–7). The determination as 'priest of the devil' can be interpreted as both a projection of one's own interpretation of the world by the missionaries (especially in the sixteenth-century source) as well as a devaluation of the ancient Tagalog practices (by the eighteenth-century Spanish Catholic authors).

In terms of the TID, witches are humans endowed with supernatural, hence transcending, powers through a pact with the devil. This idea was either relativized or emphasized by the description of each 'priest of the devil' in the sources.

In the descriptions, two Spanish terms—*hechicero* or, in its female form, *hechicera* and *brujo*

14 I will concentrate here on the creatures included in this list that are ascribed to the Tagalog provinces or that appear in Tagalog areas as well as in others.

or *bruja*—are used. In English they could be translated as ‘witch’ and ‘sorcerer,’¹⁵ but their differentiation is less clear than these suggest, for both work with supernatural techniques and can fall back on *hechizos* (spells or charms) to achieve their evil aims. According to Óscar Javier González Molina, the main difference between them was that *brujos* or *brujas* were judged by the inquisition as opponents of Christianity, for they would intentionally harm the Catholic faith by making a pact with the devil. *Hechiceros* or *hechiceras*, on the other hand, deviate from but do not harm Christian doctrine due to ignorance and not intentionally oppositional. Another characteristic of *brujos* or *brujas* was that they lived and operated in remote, small communities, while *hechiceros* or *hechiceras* acted alone. Like *brujos* and *brujas*, they were not accepted by their respective society (González Molina 2013, 69–70).¹⁶ In his reference book initially published in 1611, Sebastián de Covarrubias Horozco refers to meetings of *brujas* in which the devil appeared in different forms. Often, he just caused a deep sleep and made them believe that they were traveling to different places or doing certain things. Their evil deeds were comparable to the ones described in the *Malleus Maleficarum*,¹⁷ and some even sucked the blood from children until they died. Additionally, Covarrubias Horozco defines the verb *hechizar* as casting a special type of charm after having made an explicit or tacit pact with the devil (Covarrubias Horozco 2006, 358–59, 1032).

The classification of the ‘priests of the devil’ as *brujo* or *bruja* and *hechicero* or *hechicera* by the missionaries seems to be guided by criteria related to the respective category. Not all beings are classified as either one or the other. The means by which these beings carry out their special crafts seem to matter for the missionaries, because they are frequently mentioned,¹⁸ but they do not determine the categorization. In the English translation of the description written by Juan de Plasencia, only the *aswang* is introduced as a sorcerer, three others (*mangagavay*, *hocloban* and *mangagayoma*) are said to be witches and three others again (*catalonan*, *manyisalat* and *mancocolam*) are just called priests.¹⁹ Juan Francisco de San Antonio, whose description shows considerable similarities to but also differences from Plasencia’s text,²⁰ is not sure if the *mancocolam* was a *brujo* or an *hechicero*. He categorizes the *mangagavay*, the *manyisalat*, the *hocloban*, and the *mangagayoma* as *hechiceros*, and the *catalonan* as priests.

Beside this explicit categorization, the association with cannibalism suggests the classification as witches since witches were deemed to commit cannibalistic acts. As in the case of magic, cannibalism was used as a polemical weapon to devalue the religious Other or as a discourse of alterity, especially in the context of the Spanish mission in the ‘New World’, but also in eighteenth-century observations on African traditions and religions (see, for example,

15 One of the two sources was only available to me in an English translation of the Spanish original of 1589. This complicates the evaluation of the distinction between the two terms, but due to the reception of this early source I am convinced that the translators used ‘witch’ for *hechicero* or *hechicera* and ‘sorcerer’ for *brujo* or *bruja*.

16 The feature of operating secretly supports belief in witchcraft all around the world when the fear of potentially being haunted by something invisible is created.

17 The *Malleus Maleficarum* or *Hammer of Witches* written by Heinrich Kramer, first published in 1487 is an important treatise on witchcraft.

18 The authors talk about the use of remedies and medicine or emphasize that the *hocloban* is more powerful than the others because it does not use any instrument for its craft (Plasencia 1962, 193; San Antonio 1738, 156).

19 By equating the *manyisalat* with the *mangagavay*, it is implicitly called a witch and the determination as priest can either refer to indigenous priests (in the case of the *catalonan*) or be interpreted as a short form of ‘priests of the devil.’

20 In the introduction of his chronicle, San Antonio mentions Plasencia, and the similarity of the descriptions of the ‘priests of the devil’ make it likely that he used Plasencia’s writings as a source, which he partially interpreted in a different way.

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Kern 2009, 181; or Gareis 2011, cols. 322–23). The consumption of human flesh is attributed to the *aswang*, whereas the *silagan* is said to have eaten human liver (Plasencia 1962, 193; San Antonio 1738, 156–57).²¹

Further, the relation with the devil may suggest this classification as well, like in the case of the *mangagayoma*, who is said to use natural means for his craft but is also empowered through a pact with the devil (Plasencia 1962, 194; San Antonio 1738, 157).²² Plasencia further refers to cooperation with the devil²³ and describes how the indigenous people were deceived by him: [22]

The seventh was called *magtatangal*, and his purpose was to show himself at night to many persons without his head or entrails. In such wise the devil walked about and carried, or pretended to carry, his head to different places; and, in the morning, returned it to his body—remaining, as before, alive. This seems to me to be a fable, although the natives affirm that they have seen it, because the devil probably caused them so to believe. (Plasencia 1962, 193) [23]

This statement indicates that Plasencia applies a different specification of the TID than the Tagalog people. He does not explicitly categorize the *magtatangal*, but integrates it in his list of ‘priests of the devil’ and thereby classifies it as human, because priests are human.²⁴ But he feels that even with the intervention of the devil a human would not be able to separate his head and entrails from the body to roam about. In opposition to the Tagalog perception, which might have regarded the *magtatangal* as a shapeshifter, in Plasencia’s worldview, only an illusion caused by the devil would make this possible. The Jesuit Juan José Delgado, who describes the abovementioned being as well, defines the *magtatangal* as a unification of an *hechicero* and a *brujo* (Delgado 1892, 367).²⁵ In his daytime human appearance, Delgado interpreted the *magtatangal* in his eighteenth-century description as an *hechicero* while the rather superhuman abilities of shapeshifting at night reminded him of those of a *brujo*. [24]

In Malay mythology, various beings with similar abilities and names to the *magtatangal* are known²⁶ who are rather perceived as ghosts or shapeshifters and not as ordinary humans having a human body. In this way, they are regarded as transcending beings, as beings who can turn into a transcendent shape, or as beings who are transcendent in nature but who can temporally take over human bodies. Hence, through the comparison with other mythological creatures, the specification of the transcending abilities of the *magtatangal*, who is known as *manananggal* today, can be discussed without relying exclusively on the Spanish sources, in which it is essentially classified as human and thus immanent. [25]

The crafts that are related to the beings categorized as *hechiceros* and *hechiceras* (or witches) are healing or causing diseases and assisting in love matters.²⁷ These crafts could have been [26]

21 The *silagan* was said to belong to the Bicol area.

22 In this regard, it is apparent that at least for San Antonio the pact with the devil is not the decisive feature for categorizing a being as *brujo* or *bruja*, because he calls the *mangagayoma* an *hechicero*.

23 According to him, the *mangagavay* was able to prolong life by binding a serpent around the waist “which was believed to be the devil” (Plasencia 1962, 192).

24 As does Plasencia in his description, San Antonio also does not categorize the *magtatangal* as *hechichero* or *brujo*.

25 His *Historia* was printed for the first time in 1751.

26 They are listed, for example, in Ferdinand Blumentritt’s dictionary on the mythology of the Philippines (Blumentritt 1896, 410).

27 The *manocolam* acts differently, for it is said to kindle an indelible fire in houses. Only San Antonio interprets it either as an *hechicero* or a *brujo*, while Plasencia just calls it a priest (of the devil) (Plasencia 1962, 192–93; San Antonio 1738, 156).

performed by humans with the help of medicine and other instruments. Beings classified as *brujos* and *brujas* (or sorcerers) instead implied carrying out acts that transcended the missionaries' understanding of human skills. This categorization may point at a different specification of the TID, in the sense that for the Tagalog people these beings were transcendent or at least acted as shifters between the immanent and the transcendent sphere, which was, in the Spanish-Catholic worldview, possible only in a very limited way.

The *aswang*, classified by Plasencia as sorcerer (i.e. *brujo*), is said to originate from the Visayan Islands and not from the Tagalog provinces (Delgado 1892, 367; Plasencia 1962, 194; San Antonio 1738, 157). Delgado introduces it as the real *brujo* and equates it with the Tagalog *patianac*. According to him, they were enemies of mankind, made an explicit pact with the devil and gathered in certain places, like treetops, where they adored him. The devil would appear to them in different animal shapes and they would eat dead bodies without salt or any spices (Delgado 1892, 367–68). Due to the striking similarities of this description with general imaginations about witches' covens²⁸ and the fact that no other authors besides Delgado described these gatherings, I interpret most elements that exceed the depiction of these beings by other authors as decorative features added by Delgado. The rejection of salt is also part of the narrative on witches' covens that was interpreted as a sign for the rejection of Christianity, because as an element of Christian ritual, it was inedible for the devil (Roper 2007, 162). Although these features are not openly contested in research literature, they have not been included in the historiography of the ancient Philippine religions. As a piece of eighteenth-century writing, in the research on ancient Philippine religion Delgado's *Historia* is usually not regarded as a primary source, for the major parts of the Philippines were deemed as Christianized by that time.²⁹ However, by equating the *aswang* with the *patianac*,³⁰ a new framework for the interpretation is opened, which also provides new details for the specific indigenous way of dealing with the TID. In the end of Plasencia's letter, he describes ghosts, and one of them, a woman who died in childbirth and returns at night, is called *patianac* (Plasencia 1962, 196). Like in the case of the *magtatangal*, the same figure exists in other Southeast Asian mythologies where it is interpreted as a ghost rather than a witch or sorcerer, thus transcendent without a (human) body.³¹

This suggests that the classification of beings as *brujo* or *bruja* by Spanish missionaries (like the *aswang*) can be taken as an indication for their transcending nature in the view of the Tagalog people. With these beings, the Spaniards felt that they had further supernatural abilities or powers that *hechiceros* and *hechiceras* did not have. *Hechiceros* and *hechiceras*, instead (like the *mangagavay* who healed or caused diseases or the *mangagayoma* who dealt with love issues), were supposedly humans for the Tagalog people as well as for the Spaniards, and as such immanent. Provided that there were no alternative means of interpretation as in these cases through interreligious comparison, ghosts would have been turned into humans, for the Spaniards interpreted all these beings as essentially human, which remained so in the cultural

28 The witches' covens included secret gatherings at night where the witches adored the devil, who might have possessed the body of an animal. Cannibalism is another frequent element of it (Roper 2007, 162; Brever 2008, 65–67; Schwerhoff 2011, 434; Krampfl 2011, 425).

29 By the eighteenth century, the majority of the Tagalog provinces was Christianized, so the descriptions in these sources are usually not based on primary observation.

30 The Augustinian Tomás Ortiz also relates the *patianac* to the *aswang* because both were responsible for the death of children (Ortiz 1962, 107–8).

31 Blumentritt calls the *patianak* a deity or demon that appears in almost every Malay culture. According to him, the Tagalog version was a transformation of an aborted fetus (Blumentritt 1896, 431). The Indonesian version of it, called *pontianak* (or, in Java, *kuntilanak*), is interpreted by Albertus Christiaan Kruijt as the soul of a deceased woman or by Walter Skeat as an undead child (Kruijt 1940, 240–41; Skeat 1902, 135n2).

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memory. The fact that a different understanding of the TID by the Tagalog people compared to that of Spanish missionaries, and the fact that the ancient Tagalog religion as a full system of beliefs and practices with believers who can speak for it—a system of reference for interpretation—no longer exists, can cause a transformation of some mythological creatures from transcendent to immanent. Even though there are alternative ways of interpreting them, the ascription as witch remains attached to the described beings up to today.³² Additionally, the fact that this list contains different classes of beings including indigenous priests, healers as well as ghosts with very different physical characteristics (some are immanent, some transcendent or shapeshifters) is not discussed in the research literature.

Case 2: The Liminality of the TID

The concept of the TID deals with transcendence as going beyond and may focus on the point or phase of transformation. This moment coincides with the phase of liminality in ritual theory.³³ Descriptions of rituals that include spiritual healing bear the potential to analyze these phases and the specific way of dealing with the TID of the observed religious tradition.³⁴ The concept of the TID can, on the one hand, define the analytical frame as being the liminal phase in these kinds of ritual descriptions. On the other hand, it leads the focus of the analysis to the process of transcending, when the immanent becomes transcendent. [29]

The analyzed sources on the ancient Tagalog religion contain descriptions of a ritual performed for sick people in mortal danger. The ritual was led by an indigenous priestess called *catalonan*³⁵ who performed sacrifices and carried out divinations for the sick person. While the description includes various moments that can be discussed in terms of the TID (like a trance, the apparition of the devil and the temporal creation of a sacred space for the performance of this ritual), I will focus on two elements that lie at the core of the ritual: imminent death and mythological beings called *anito(s)*. [30]

In the analyzed sources, *anitos* form an exceptional category in the way that only the authors of later writings found a relatively homogeneous interpretation of them, while earlier authors present a variety of interpretations. Initially they were often described as an indigenous category and not adjusted to a Christian concept. In early sources they are said to be gods or divine beings (Chirino 1604, 4, 50, 75; Ribadeneyra 1601, 36) and only occasionally saints.³⁶ They are deemed responsible for wealth and health, but also for misfortunes and [31]

32 *Aswangs* are, for example, famous elements of Philippine horror movies today. Besides features ascribed to them by another categorization, in some of these movies one can clearly observe that the idea of *aswangs* as witches is still present. They are connected with the full moon and black cats, and their shadow may even be depicted in the shape of a modern, Hollywood-influenced idea of a witch (humpbacked with a wart on the nose). (These observations are based on a case study that I carried out for a workshop on ghost movies in Southeast Asia in October 2012 at the University of Göttingen).

33 This phase of liminality goes back to the *rites de passage* described by Arnold van Gennep and their modification by Victor Turner (see, for example, Gennep 2001; Turner 1964).

34 Fiona Bowie explains possession, obsession and mediumship as a direct embodied relationship of humans with discarnate spirits (Bowie 2013, 701).

35 The abovementioned authors include the *catalonan* in their list of ‘priests of the devils.’ Other authors merely introduce them as indigenous priests who were mostly said to have been female.

36 Miguel de Loarca, who was not a member of a religious order but belonged to the first conquerors and settlers in the Philippines, calls them *ministros de Bathala*. This means ‘priests,’ ‘ministers’ or ‘agents of Bathala’; Bathala was interpreted as the main god of the Tagalog people. Within the description, Loarca explicitly equates them with (Catholic) saints (Loarca 1962, 170–73). The statement of the Franciscan missionary Marcelo de Ribadeneyra that the *anitos* support people before god can be regarded as an implicit equation with saints (Ribadeneyra 1601, 36).

diseases (Loarca 1962, 170–73; Quirino and Garcia 1958, 374–76; Ribadeneyra 1601, 36). An early source says that together with every child, one good and one bad *anito* are born. The bad *anitos* were the souls of slaves and poor people (Ribadeneyra 1601, 36–37). Wooden or stone images are called *anitos* as well (Colín 1663, 54; Ribadeneyra 1601, 36–37; San Antonio 1738, 150; Santa Inés 1676, 50). The authors of the mid-seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources emphasize that among the *anitos* were ancestors or the souls of ancestors (Colín 1663, 64; Delgado 1892, 363; San Antonio 1738, 150; Santa Inés 1676, 50).³⁷

The descriptions show that *anitos* act at the heart of the specific way the ancient Tagalog religion deals with the TID by having a relation to the transcendent world as well as to the immanent. They are regarded as members of the transcendent world, so they probably had no carnal bodies, but they were able to access the world of matter. Through the equation with saints, they are presented as intermediaries between Bathala, who was interpreted as the main god of the Tagalog people in the transcendent world, and humans in the immanent world. As ancestors or souls of ancestors, they represent a temporal link between these two worlds as former members of the immanent world who were transformed into beings of the transcendent world. As wooden or stone images, they can be regarded as material representations of transcendent beings. Here it is not clear how strong the connection of these representations to the actual *anito* was, for one should not uncritically equate them with a Catholic understanding of statues as representing, for example, saints. Another way of interpreting the relationship between *anitos* and the images could be that they might have taken the matter of these images as their bodies. But the sources at hand give no clue regarding this aspect. [32]

The description of the ritual addresses the moment of transformation. The indigenous priestess either predicted the imminent death of the sick person or that he or she would cheat death. When the priestess predicted life, those who were present would eat and drink, singing the stories of the forbearers of the sick person and of ‘the Anito’ for whom they made the sacrifice. When she predicted death, people would sing praises of the virtues and heroic deeds of the sick person and say that the *anitos* had elected him or her to become one of them. Relatives and friends would celebrate the sick person like an *anito* and entrust themselves to him or her so that he or she would remember them in the other life (Colín 1663, 66; Santa Inés 1676, 52). In a later source, the prophecy of death is interpreted slightly differently by stating that people would say that their gods elected the sick person as one of their *anitos* for his or her heroic deeds and merits (San Antonio 1738, 152). [33]

These descriptions match the general depictions of *anitos*. They appear as a group of (transcendent) divine beings who have an influence on living people; the dying person is believed to become an *anito* as well. However, unlike the Christian idea of the soul, it was not as if an *anito* was be part of a living human and proceeded to the realm of *anitos*. *Anitos* seem to represent humans exclusively post-mortem, which means that they are transcendent and not related to the human body of a living person in the way the Christian soul is regarded to be. Further, descriptions of the preparation of human bodies for the burial, including conservative measures (Chirino 1604, 76–77; Colín 1663, 67), suggest that the carnal body had a function in the afterlife as well. [34]

Ritual descriptions differ from the majority of descriptions depicting elements of the ancient [35]

37 These authors present *anitos* with their respective area of responsibility (as for example *anito* of the sea) and add then that some *anitos* are regarded as (souls of) ancestors. In the early seventeenth century, only Ribadeneyra stated that the *anitos* were the souls of ancestors (Ribadeneyra 1601, 36).

Tagalog religion in that they are less comparative in nature. They do not adjust the observed categories to Christian ones in the way the ordinary descriptions of elements of the religion do, for they rather describe an event instead of interpreting phenomena for other Christian readers. They can be regarded as the result of a kind of participant observation (without following current standards for gaining, as much as possible, objective results by reflecting on one's own role as observer). Therefore, these depictions bear the potential of providing valuable details on the indigenous specification of the TID. However, it seems as if only one or even none of the above authors personally observed the ritual, for the descriptions are too similar to reflect different rituals.³⁸ Additionally, the ritual descriptions at hand unfortunately do not elaborate on the process of dying. Therefore, the information given on the access of humans to the transcendent world is limited to the fact that a dying person is said to become an *anito*, and *anitos* are regarded as ancestors who liaise with living humans and thus are a central element that manifests the specific way of dealing with the TID in ancient Tagalog religion.

A late sixteenth-century manuscript refers to rituals for sick people, but it does not describe them the way other authors did. It is stated that indigenous rituals differ according to the societal status of the sick person. On the rituals for the leaders, it is written that one or more priests would invoke the *anitos* to tell them about the state of the sick person. If he or she died, the priests said that the *anitos* tried their best, but other *anitos*, who caused the disease, were more powerful. One of the causes of a life-threatening disease is that the soul leaves the body and the patient cannot be cured until it returns (Quirino and Garcia 1958, 375–76). Here, the intermediary role of the *anitos* is emphasized and it becomes apparent that *anito* and soul are two different things. The statement on the disease also indicates that the 'indigenous soul' concept considerably differs from the Christian one, for the described soul can leave the body while the person is still alive. Likewise, the ancient Tagalog idea of dying seems to be different from the Christian one because the patient does not die at the moment when the soul leaves the body, but only after it stayed away for a certain period of time. There must be a transcending link between the body and the soul that can be cut or dissolves automatically after a while. Finally, the idea of a stolen soul and powerful beings causing diseases is reminiscent of the statement by Fiona Bowie on the stolen life force, which she regards as a universal feature of witchcraft. Here the *anitos* do not take over the role of the stolen life force, which can be equated with the Christian idea of the soul, but rather the role of witches as well as specialists who take care of the sick person.

Focusing on the interpretation of these ritual descriptions on the TID reveals striking differences in the Tagalog and the Spanish Catholic understandings, respectively. While the descriptions focused on *anitos* and their role in the process of dying, the analysis showed that a category taken for granted by the Spaniards was probably understood differently in the ancient Tagalog worldview. In the Christian worldview, the soul is the phenomenon that links the transcendent with the immanent world. Therefore, the focus in case 3 will be on this concept and divergent interpretations of it.

38 The Jesuit Francisco Colín was the first who published the description in 1663. Francisco de Santa Inés states on the cover of his chronicle that he takes his information from Colín, and the ritual description reproduces the one made by Colín literally. The description by Juan Francisco de San Antonio, published in 1738, is also very similar, with the only exception that he deems the gods responsible for electing the dying person to become an *anito*.

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Case 3: The TID and the Concept of ‘Soul’

When transcendence is understood as ‘going beyond,’ death introduces the process of transcending because it is a step going beyond earthly life. Fiona Bowie describes the afterlife as a “discarnate existence based on the premise that consciousness exists in an immaterial form, and that some aspect of conscious personhood (soul, spirit, energy) continues after the death of the physical organism” (Bowie 2013, 701). In Christianity, the concept of the soul bridges the gap between the immanent and the transcendent world. It provides humans with the expectation that at least a part of them lives forever and represents the individual in its new, transcendent existence. The Christian concept of the soul has been developing over centuries and comprises influences from various traditions.³⁹ It is interwoven with almost all aspects of the religion and it has not always been imagined as transcendent in nature. For a Christian observer, it is difficult to free his or her thoughts from all implications of the concept of the soul in order to openly perceive divergent ideas of life after death and the force that gives life to humans in other religions. [38]

Apart from mentioning the soul in some contexts as presented, for example, in the preceding case, the analyzed sources on the depiction of the ancient Tagalog religion do not describe an indigenous soul in any detail. While this might suggest that the Tagalog people did not believe in something similar to the Christian soul, in missionary writings, which were intended to be used in their practical work, the Tagalog word *kaluluwa* is used as translation for ‘soul.’⁴⁰ In bilingual catechisms and manuals, *kaluluwa* covers the main functions of the Christian soul. As a matter of course, in these writings *kaluluwa* is presented in a Christian understanding, but especially for initial missionizing it would have caused difficulties if *kaluluwa* was used in a contradictive way to its original meaning. [39]

In Christian belief, the concept of the heart (in its metaphorical understanding) is closely related to that of the soul.⁴¹ In the bilingual catechisms and manuals, heart is translated with *loob*, which is also related to free will (as one of the abilities of the soul) and interior. In modern understanding, *loob* is regarded as ‘the inner self,’ which, in turn, shows similarities to the Christian understanding of the soul.⁴² The overlapping of *loob* with the Christian idea of the soul is visible in some examples in Early Modern missionary writings: Regarding the [40]

39 On the history of the soul in the Occident see, for example, Jüttemann, Sonntag, and Wulf (2005).

40 The second part of my analysis of the ancient Tagalog religion is based on another set of sources comprising nine writings intended for use in practical missionary work, such as catechisms and manuals used for confession (Rath 2017, 249–61). These writings usually present the Spanish together with the Tagalog texts on opposite pages or in successive chapters.

41 Arnold Angenendt draws attention to the relation between the Jewish idea of raising one’s heart towards God and the Neoplatonian raising of the soul. Jan Assmann shows similarities between the ancient Egyptian idea of weighing hearts before God with the Christian concept of the Last Judgement (Angenendt 2009, 249; Assmann 1993).

42 These similarities are usually not focused on in research on these concepts, for both have their specific sphere of responsibility. The concept of *loob* has been discussed in the context of a movement called *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* that intended to revisit the indigenous worldview (see, for example, Miranda 1989; Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino 2000; or Santa Maria and Madelene 1993). Likewise, *kaluluwa* was discussed in this context (see, for example, Salazar 1989, 1983; Mercado 1994; or Jocano 1971). Both were retrospectively interpreted in a specific Philippine way, but in some details the Christian influence on the reinterpretations by Christian Philippine authors is visible. Usually, researchers do not address the involvedness of *loob* in the ancient Tagalog religion and their close relationship with each other in pre-Christian perception. Zeus Salazar, one important researcher engaged in the *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, related Philippine soul concepts to another force (*ginhawa*) in a similar way I did with *kaluluwa* and *loob* (Salazar 1989). This shows that he also felt that there was something more than a soul that shaped the ancient Tagalog conceptions of life and death.

demand to raise the soul to god with prayer, the Augustinian Luis de Amesquita translates the Spanish expression for soul (*alma*) with *loob* (Amesquita 1747, 27).⁴³ Likewise, the Franciscan Sebastián de Totanés states that prayer is expressed by the whole soul. In Tagalog, it is uttered by *loob* (and not by *kaluluwa*). Further, Totanés demands that the believer always remember the debt towards Jesus for his deeds for mankind in the interior of his or her soul. In Tagalog, this debt has to be considered by *loob* (Totanés 1745, 48, 188–89).⁴⁴ For the confession, he recommends rethinking the state of the soul or (in Tagalog) *loob* in advance (Totanés 1745, 65, 189). In the Spanish version of his text, the Augustinian Gaspar de San Agustín relates the feeling of hatred caused by a wrong confession to the soul. In the Tagalog version, the feeling is concentrated in *loob* (San Agustín 1787, 30–31). I interpret these deviations of the two versions by translating *alma* (soul) with *loob* instead of *kaluluwa* as an intentional choice made by the authors caused by the fact that in these fields the concept of *kaluluwa* was not applicable.

The Christian concept of the soul comprises two main functions: it establishes communication with god and links the individual to the transcendent world when the person passes away. The presented examples suggest that the first function was a task of *loob* and not that of *kaluluwa*. Looking at the relation of these two functions, it is apparent that they do not necessarily have to be subsumed under one single concept; even in Christianity, they supposedly developed as a consequence of the merging of different traditions into one soul concept. In other religions, one of the two functions can be carried out by a life force and the other is reflected in the idea of deceased ancestors. [41]

A comprehensive study of the indigenous soul concepts in Oceania carried out by the ethnologist Hans Fischer shows that in almost the whole area covered by his analysis people believed in two kinds of souls. He calls these ‘spiritual double’ (*spirituelles Doppel*) and ‘dream ego’ (*Traumego*). The spiritual double survives after the person dies and becomes a ghost. The dream ego can temporarily leave the body of a living person, usually when the person dreams, but also when he or she is unconscious or insane. Since these states share a lack of consciousness and are not exclusively related to dreams, I prefer calling it ‘ego of consciousness’ (*Bewusstseins ego*). When this ego of consciousness leaves the body, the person will not die immediately, but only if it remains absent for a while. After death, the spiritual double and the ego of consciousness either become two separate ghosts or they unite to become one ghost (Fischer 1965, 244–47, 282–86). [42]

The Philippines fall within the area covered by Fischer’s research. Studies in cultural anthropology on soul concepts among different Philippine ethnic groups reveal that in many areas people believe in two souls, double souls or twin souls (Rath 2017, 342–56).⁴⁵ Further, an etymological analysis of the word *kaluluwa* suggests that its root is derived from the Austronesian *duva*, meaning ‘two’ (Salazar 1989, 85; Dempwolff 1938, 3:44). Based on these [43]

43 Within the analyzed writings, the catechism of Amesquita is an exception because he published his text exclusively in Tagalog, so he was rather free in the translation. A comparison revealed that it is a literal translation of a Spanish catechism published by Geronimo de Ripalda and the Tagalog text only deviates in a few examples from the original (Ripalda 1727, 43). I regard these few deviations as striking differences between the Spanish and the Tagalog concepts behind the chosen words.

44 He also insists to always have the sweet names of Jesus and Maria on the lips and (in Spanish) in the interior of the soul or (in Tagalog) in the depth of *loob*. See Totanés (1745, 50). Today the concept of debts to *loob* (*utang na loob*) is regarded as a specific expression of Philippine culture. It may have been functionalized for evangelization.

45 The details for these various soul concepts are presented in the writings of Zeus Salazar and Leonardo N. Mercado, who majorly draw on ethnographic research carried out by John M. Garvan and Landa L. Jocano (Salazar 1989, and 1983; Mercado 1994, 1975; Garvan 1964; Jocano 1971).

considerations, I suggest interpreting the ancient concepts of *kaluluwa*, *loob*, and *anito* (which is also closely related to the relation of humans with the transcendent world) with regard to Fischer's framework. As an inner self, *loob* would be the ego of consciousness, because its functions are similar and the concepts of ego and self are almost the same.⁴⁶ The spiritual double might be conceived as a non-solid or immaterial duplication of the body and not necessarily something inner. This leaves the role of the spiritual double to *kaluluwa*, which also corresponds with the function of the soul as the continuation of the individual in the other-world, which was covered by *kaluluwa* in its pre-Christian meaning. Additionally, the root of 'two' in the term *kaluluwa* might qualify it as a double.⁴⁷ As presented in case 2 above, *sanita* was interpreted as a post-mortem phenomenon, corresponding with the ghost in Fischer's framework, to which either one or both pre-mortal phenomena are transformed after death.

Studies in cultural anthropology on ancestor worship show that one's own ancestors are usually venerated, expected to bring fortunes to a specific group and cause misfortune when the conventions of veneration are not followed carefully. Another cluster of the deceased, not one's own ancestors, are believed to majorly cause misfortune (Hill and Hageman 2016, 6–8, 22). The information derived from the descriptions of the ancient Tagalog religion suggests that *anitos* can be interpreted as belonging to the category of individual ancestors. Other beings, called *nono*, are described in the sources as ancestors who are generally feared to bring damage to people (Chirino 1604, 53; Bobadilla 1962, 284; Colín 1663, 63; Santa Inés 1676, 49; San Antonio 1738, 150). These might represent the second type of ghosts, in case the spiritual double and the ego of consciousness do not unite after death. The differentiation of the two groups of ancestors may be reflected in the idea presented in the late sixteenth-century manuscript where one group of *anitos* tried to help a sick person and another caused the disease. But in this case, the term *anito* was used for both.

In terms of the specification of the TID, a ghost can be interpreted as a transcendent (immaterial) being that is distinct from the ordinary physical existence of humans by having no solid body. This could also be claimed for soul concepts. But in both cases, it is questionable if this assumption can universally be applied to every religion. Regarding the soul, especially in early Christianity the material or immaterial nature was exhaustively discussed.⁴⁸ Likewise, the exclusive immateriality of ghosts is questionable, for example, when they live around humans causing physical harm or in case of the return of an individual from the world of the deceased to the world of the living. In these cases, it is not clear if they are really regarded as fully transcendent without a body. Further, the expression 'reincarnation' suggests that something presumably spiritual becomes carnal, thus immanent, or takes over a body and can be seen as united with something immanent. But whether it remains a spiritual substance that is

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46 In this regard, one can see also similarities to Fiona Bowie's thoughts on consciousness, who emphasizes that some aspects of the personality, like agency and memory are separable from the body and that "consciousness has an existence beyond the realm of matter." These abilities are reminiscent of the faculties of *loob* described in the catechism and manuals. Further, Bowie talks about near-death experiences and lucid dreaming where conscious awareness shifts from the embodied to the disembodied self (Bowie 2013, 704). Here, this conscious awareness is equated with self and we can go back to the current understanding of *loob* as the inner self. Indeed, researchers who engage with the concept of *loob* in a deeper understanding often call it differently, for example like Miranda, the Filipino within (Miranda 1989). But this may be caused by a fundamental different attitude towards self, which Bowie differentiates in the Western self that is rather bounded and individual and the Non-Western as social and 'dividual' or multiple (Bowie 2013, 705).

47 The two soul concepts should not be regarded as life principles in the way breath or the heartbeat can be understood, because they do not have an immediate influence on the living of a human being (for a further discussion on this subject see Rath 2017, 356–61).

48 As similarly contested phenomenon in Christianity is the understanding of the Eucharistic bread and wine which, for some believers, really are body and blood of Christ.

contained in a new human body or whether it unites with this body until it becomes immanent must be studied individually in each case. Regarding ghosts, it is also possible that there are semi-transcendent beings or shapeshifters who can transform themselves into immanent existences when they direct themselves towards the living.

The habit to interpret soul concepts necessarily as solely transcendent can cause additional confusion. In the case of a stolen life force (which is sometimes equated with the idea of the soul), it is possible that this might be understood by devotees of non-Christian religions as material in nature. Further, even within one cultural background the perception of concepts may change over time so that, for example, something originally physical or material might turn into a metaphorical concept. Metaphorical expressions could no less be understood as a hint towards an originally material understanding. As mentioned earlier, the concept of the heart was translated with *loob* in some Tagalog catechisms and manuals, but that is not the expression used for the heart as a physical organ in Tagalog. The organ, *puso*, is mentioned in the analyzed missionary writings only on a few occasions in which the position of the heart inside of the body played a role.⁴⁹ This might indicate that *loob* was not located in the chest like the heart. In various cultural contexts, as for example in Indonesia, the center of emotions, which is the heart in Christianity, is the liver. Likewise, *loob* may have been located in the liver, rendering sensible the intention of the abovementioned *silagan*, who was hunting for human livers, or related to or even equated with other inner organs which were the object of the desire of other mythological beings. But this equation is rather speculative and merely points at another differentiation between the understand of the transcendent and the immanent in different societies or cultures. [46]

Along the concept of the soul, this case study showed how elements of an ancient (extinct) religion that are not part of explicit description of that religion can be discussed on the basis of another set of sources and anthropological research on similar phenomena. The leading category TID guided the discussion to reaffirm that the question whether the observed item is immanent or transcendent in nature must be asked. Related to this, images of dying and the transition to the otherworld was addressed. In this short form, this endeavor appears more experimental than it was in my main analysis of the ancient Tagalog religion. In this article, I intended to show how the questioning of every assumption on the nature of phenomena on different levels of observation can open the mind for alternative interpretation. Starting from the (Christian) idea of soul, it becomes clear that even its own transcendent nature has not been undisputed. The fundamental conviction of the universal truth of their own worldview made the Spanish Catholic missionaries believe that the Tagalog people must have a soul like them, but the misconception about this must be corrected. The use of the word *kaluluwa* in the language of evangelization (reflected in the catechism and manuals) demonstrates that they met a concept which they regarded as similar enough to the Christian one to integrate it in their work and ‘convert’ it together with the people. And they succeeded, for when Philippine Christians think about *kaluluwa* today, they have the same Christian soul in mind; and even researchers may have difficulties to free themselves from their pre-assumptions on that concept (especially with regard to the TID) and to come to a new interpretation of it. In this article and in my more extensive study, I related the concept of *kaluluwa* to other key elements of the individual (especially with *loob*, the inner self) that existed in the pre- [47]

49 San Agustín, for example, emphasizes that the intention not to sin should be expressed with a prayer that must be uttered on the lips as well as in the heart (in Spanish *corazón*, in Tagalog *puso*) (San Agustín 1787, 88–89). The Augustinian Tomás Ortiz uses the term *puso* in the explanation of the third sign of the cross that must be carried in front of the chest (Ortiz 1740, 35).

Christian worldview and, with anthropological research conducted about other cultures and religions that share common beliefs with the ancient Tagalog religion, opens the discussion for a reinterpretation of the relation of the ancient Tagalog people with life, death and the transcendent world.

Conclusion

The three examples outlined above point at the specific way in which the TID in an extinct religion can be analyzed by critically reviewing one's own and the first-degree observer's perception of transcendence and immanence, which may be strikingly different from the observed one. The first case showed how the projection of the Spanish missionary's interpretation of ancient Tagalog mythological beings had the potential to partially change their characteristics with regard to the TID for future perceptions. The analyzed sources alone do not bear the potential to shed light on the indigenous specification of the TID, since they were not meant to question the Spanish Catholic way in which the missionary authors presented the ancient Tagalog TID. Differing from mere descriptions of religious phenomena which are full of interpretation, the observation of rituals has the potential of presenting relatively descriptive information on specific moments where transitions between the transcendent and the immanent in the observed religions can take place. In the presented second case, the descriptions were unfortunately too short to fully grasp the ancient Tagalog TID with regard to the process of dying and afterlife. However, it opened a way to direct attention to presumably different concepts of life forces and souls that were selected as the focus of the case study in the third example. The focus on these concepts, the use of a second corpus of sources and the comparison of the concepts to later anthropological research on similar phenomena in nearby areas opened the view to new (re-)interpretations of the elements of the ancient Tagalog religion described in the primary sources. Analogous to this comparison, a comprehensive depiction of different forms of dealing with the TID in various other cultural settings might serve for a further discussion. It could also be helpful to develop a set of sub-categories describing the abovementioned intermediate categories that are partially or temporally transcendent, taking over (human) bodies in a specific way, or even to discover new forms of bridging between the transcendent world as one pole and the immanent world as another.

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The diverse range of understandings of immanence can cause problems because immanence might be equated with material and tangible objects, hence real things, by observers. From a strictly constructivist perspective, everything that is imagined as material and tangible in one culture has to be interpreted as material and tangible (for that culture), no matter if an observer believes in its real existence and materiality or not.⁵⁰ With respect to the majority of worldly objects, the ideas of immanence may be similar in different cultures, but especially in the field of mythological creatures we should take different perceptions into consideration. In this connection, the differentiation between religious and non-religious areas of an observed culture may cause problems as well. The more mythological creatures are regarded and described as immanent, the less observers will interpret them as part of religious beliefs. The cores of many religions deal with transcendence, sometimes represented in immanent objects and practices. A substantial share of sensory perceptions (seeing—at least with one's own eyes—and touching) is deemed to indicate immanence; others (hearing and smelling)

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50 Consequently, Nils Bubandt, who carried out field research on spirit possession in North Maluku, Indonesia, even regarded the spirits as informants, in addition to the person they used as medium (Bowie 2013, 704).

point out transcendence. The act of feeling can be regarded as intermediary because it can refer to touching, indicating tangible things, but it also emphasizes an emotional involvedness (which is an important part of religiosity) that facilitates the sensory perception of transcendence. Therefore, emotion can be understood as a field that deals with the liminal range of the TID. This could constitute a completely new analysis that needs a new set of sources and theoretical as well as methodological approaches.

The TID concept proved helpful for focusing on certain aspects within the analysis. These aspects were discussed in my initial study as well, but by using the concept of TID, the focus could have been placed on these areas much more quickly, for it helped continuously question the divergent perceptions of transcendent and immanent (by the Tagalog people, the missionaries, current historians and myself). Further, it could have led the focus of research to the field of emotion and feeling, which was now only slightly touched by questioning the heart as the seat of emotions.

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