Journal of Language and Literature
Vol. 25 No. 2, October 2025, pp. 638 – 651
DOI: 10.24071/joll.v25i2.13416
Available at https://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/JOLL/index

Indigenous Holophrasis as Ecological Poetics and Praxis in Contemporary Australian-Aboriginal and Southeast Asian Poems

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Abstract

Indigenous poetry correlates with oral form. It signifies shamanic mantra but embodies ecological wisdom since it mostly depicts human's relationship with nature. This paper deals with contemporary English poems especially those of Australian-Aboriginal and Southeast Asian poems which make use of indigenous aspects in the form and content. The purpose of this research is to identify how the use of holophrasis is beneficial in highlighting the indigenous aspects in the poems. Among these poems include Evelyn Araluen and Lionel Fogarty, two contemporary Aboriginal poets who adopt Aboriginal phrases in their poems; Quintin Jose V. Pastrana, a young Philippine poet who was inspired by the Ambahan or the indigenous poetic form of the Hanunuo Mangyan people's in Oriental Mindoro, the Philippines; and Mario F. Lawi, a young Indonesian poet from East Nusa Tenggara who illustrates the initiation rite of Nappu Pudi tribe in that island. This research used qualitative method by referring to holophrasis as the method and praxis in reading the native poems. By means of the holophrastic reading, I found that the use of indigenous elements in their poems serves as methods to aestheticize and indigenize the poems in order to assert native identity in the hegemony of English as the colonial language.

Article information

Received: May 9, 2025

Revised: October 9, 2025

Accepted: October 26, 2025

***Keywords**: indigenous poetics; holophrasis; Aboriginal poetics; Ambahan*

Introduction

Any literary text was generally derived from oral tradition. Each indigenous tribe throughout the world has its own oral literature. The most relevant genre is poetry in every native tribe and language. It emerged "not as a luxury but as a true necessity" and was equal to the world itself (Rothenberg 1985, xvii). The idea of native poetry then reverted back to "the early and late shamans" from the different tribes in the world as the "model for the shaping of meaning & intensities through language"

Journal of Language and Literature
ISSN: 1410-5691 (print); 2580-5878 (online)

(ibid., 1985, xviii) that suggests "a high degree of contextualization and immediacy between storyteller/author and listener/reader" (Neuhaus, 2015, p. 14). The major landmark of oral poetry found in various tribes throughout the world is epic (narrative poem). The works originally relied on human voice as "an archetypal form in the human unconscious" as well as "a primordial and creative image" that "predetermine, activate, and structure" human's experiences, feelings and thoughts (Zumthor, 1990, p. 5). Oral poetry then is not far from human's daily lives, but has always existed from time to time since the "pre-classical Greek in the first millenium b.c." (Finnegan, 1977, p. 3) to this present digital technology era in its evolving form and content (Basinski, 2017). Native American poetry for instance reached its prominence comparable to those epics of the Greeks at the Homeric era. Most of these native poems made use of songs that the native people believed to have 'magic power'. They created words, melody and dance by imitating the sound of "the water of a river with its own ripples and flowing" (Austin in Cronyn 2006, 6). In a like manner, Australian Aboriginal Literature also originated from oral traditions and indigenous rituals (Wheeler, 2013, p. 2). Many of the indigenous texts take what the scholar, Michael R. Griffiths called "aboriginal life writing". This indigenous writing is a syncretic one, which resonates "a postcolonial structure of mourning and trauma" while at the same time, it holds onto "tradition and its restoration" (ibid, 2013, p. 16). This aboriginal writing does not aim "to reproduce a narrative of a static cultural form" but "to form a part of a complex regenerative process" (ibid., 2013, p. 17). Stuart Cooke identified the relationship between contemporary Aboriginal poetry and traditional forms of song poetry. The former might have evolved from the latter throughout the long years. He identified movement and direction as the crucial aspects of songpoetry. The songpoem does not portray irrelevant aspects that make it meaningless, but it "flows in a particular direction" by always evolving gradually according to particular conditions (Wheeler, 2013, p. 91).

Oral poetry can be both traditional and modern that not only refer to epic, but also include ballads and folksongs (Finnegan, 1977, p. 4). Oral poetry circulates through "word of mouth and not through reliance on the written word" and has three features, namely its composition, its mode of transmission, and its performance (ibid., 1977, p. 17). Several features that make them called poetry include the use of particular rhythm and metre, stylistic and formal attributes (the musical form or accompaniment, structural repetitiveness); context and setting of the performance, the mode of delivery, the musical attributes; and local classification (ibid., 1977, p. 25-26). In Southeast Asian region especially in the Philippines, the major and minor ethnic communities also know oral poetry that deals with various aspects in life including childhood, home, food and work, hospitality and friendship, and others. Among the indigenous communities that I discuss in this paper is the Hanunuo Mangyans, a small ethnic group in Southern Mindoro, the Philippines. They wrote seven-syllables poems they call *Ambahan*. They have the tradition of scratching the poems into the surface of a piece of bamboo, with a sharp pointed, home-made knife. The native people wrote their poems in the syllabic writing of old-indian origin. But they transcribe the writing in the literal Mangyan letters so that they are more easily read (Postma, 2005, p. 7-14). Simply said, it is evident that poetry throughout the ages still relies on orality as the major medium to convey messages in a sense of immediacy and urgency. Scholarly articles that deal with holophrasis and indigenous poetics are relatively rare. One essay that discusses holophrasis in poetry is entitled "Hope Mirrlees, the Holophrase, and Colonial Linguistic" by a professor and researcher at Leeds Trinity University, London named Juliette Taylor-Batty (2025). In her research, Taylor-Batty discusses holophrasis by referring to the term used by Jane Harrison in her work *Themis* and also to an 1837 essay of Francis Lieber. While in my research, I use the term by referring to Neuhaus' theory which is more contemporary. Although in general Taylor-Batty discusses holophrasis functions to reveal complex ideas of indigenous cultures and their languages (4-

6), she does not particularize on examining how the holophrasis used in contemporary poetry serves as a medium for raising individual's biosocial praxis as I argue in my research. Another similar writing is "Indigenous Poetics and Transcultural Ecologies" by Stuart Cooke (2025). In a like manner, although this writing addresses ecopoetics as the aspect of indigenous poetry, it does not particularize on biosocial impacts of reading the indigenous poetry. Instead of using the term 'holophrasis' to discuss indigenous language in poetry, Cooke uses the phrase 'trans-species pidgin' by referring to Eduardo Kohn's term (5). The third article dealing with language of poetry is "The Language of Poetry and Its Psycho-social Effects: A Case Study of Kofi Anyidoho's Selected Collected Poems" by Dr. Sontcha Jean-Luc Toure (2024). This article by Toure discusses the psycho-social effect rather than biosocial effect of poetry.

Indigenous oral poetry is composed of ancestral languages. The native language often consists of one-word sentence or clause that can mean a whole sentence in a different language. This kind of syntactic pattern is called holophrase or "a single word that stands for a whole sentence" (Neuhaus, 2015, p. 11). For instance, a holophrase in North American Indigenous language of the Plains Cree *kinohtehâcimostâtinâwâw* that means "I want to tell you folks a story" includes polysynthesis or "the process of joining both lexical and grammatical morpheme into one word to form what in Indo-European languages corresponds to a complete sentence" (ibid., 2015, p. 81). Australian indigenous languages themselves have more or less 250 kinds that are divided into around 26 different family-like groups. One example of this family language is the Pama-Nyungan family used in the region of Cape York and the southwest of Western Australia. Some examples of languages belonging to this family are *Murrinh-Patha* and *Gooniyandi* (Tardif et al., 2005). Another Australian indigenous language is *Bundjalung* that was spoken in "the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales and the Gold Coast and its hinterland. For instance, this language has one holophrase *dagay* that means "ghost of dead Aboriginal man", *dawargan* or "ghost of dead Aboriginal woman". Other words consist of one or more words that also mean one or more word in another language. For example: *bulahwar* means 'flour'; *burehn* or 'bread'; *jindi* or 'tea'; *guluy* or 'beer' (Tardif et al., 2005). Meanwhile, in Mangyan poems, the indigenous people use seven syllables in their lines and the English translation does the same. For instance in the line "*Kanta daga sa kaybi*" is translated into "The land we possess of old" that both have seven syllables (Postma, 2005, p. 87). Mario F. Lawi, a young contemporary Indonesian poet does the same in his poem "*Bui Ihi*: The Cooling of the Harvest" (Lawi, 2019, p. 3).

This article discusses several contemporary poems influenced by indigenous poetry. The two Australian poets, Evelyn Araluen and Lionel Fogarty are indeed of the aboriginal descents. Similarly, Mario F. Lawi is the Indonesian poet of the indigenous tribe in East Nusa Tenggara. Meanwhile, Quintin Jose V. Pastrana is a genuinely Philippine city dweller who has a great interest in the indigenous tribes in the Philippines and his poems in *Ambahan* with 7 syllabaries in each line. The two questions include: first, what indigenous aspects the contemporary English poems employ as ecological poetics; second, how holophrastic reading highlights the indigenousness in the poems as biosocial praxis.

Methodology

In doing this research, I did not particularly refer to any literary theory or criticism since the book on Australian Aboriginal Literature for instance does not particularly theorize indigenous poetics. Many literary especially western scholars do not really consider indigenous literatures as the parts of world literary scholarship (Araluen in Whittaker, 2023). This form of denial certainly was derived from the history of colonialism where western colonizers aimed to oppress indigenous people and their local cultures including oral tradition for the sake of their hegemony over the colonized regions (Griffiths in Wheeler, 2013, p. 17). Furthermore, Griffiths argued that Australian Aboriginal life writing aims to raise readers's awareness of the need for restoring and

rearticulating the aboriginal kinship out of the "ongoing dispossession and colonization" (ibid., 2013, p. 17). He then suggested that in reading the aboriginal writing, readers need "to think beyond the bounds of the text-beyond the conditions of writing as a form of intellectual production separate from lived experience" (ibid., 2013, p. 17). Meanwhile, the Western literary tradition tends to dichotomize things, such as literary canon and traditional or indigenous writing, and even between poēsis and praxis, the act of making art and ways of acting in the world. In this case, he added that Aboriginal life writers are not the individuals who are only concerned with writing literary works but also those who are "active agents of community building, kinship restoration, the (re) construction of knowledge about region and community, and the critique of colonialism" (ibid., 2013, p. 17-18). In accordance with this, this research referred to holophrastic reading as a kind of method in reading indigenousness in contemporary poems. The word holophrase and holophrasis was derived from the Greek word holos for "whole" and the Late Latin word phrasis that means "to declare, to tell." The term then means "the process of expressing in a single word a whole phrase or complex idea." A single word that depicts "a whole phrase or a complex idea" also serves as a holophrase (Neuhaus, 2015, p. 30). For instance, toddlers use one-word utterance such as banana for "I want a banana" (ibid., 2015, p. 30). This one-word utterance also represents holophrase, which further refers to "a specific morphological phenomenon that has long been identified as a dominant feature of many indigenous languages in North America" (ibid., 2015, p. 32). Holophrasis is one major feature "that distinguishes indigenous languages from English and other Indo-European languages, including English, German and Polish." A complex word can be a holophrase when it has "its basis in a verb and to express its subject and object(s) in the form of morphemes that are incorporated into this verb" (ibid., 2015, p. 34). The example of holophrastic verb is taken from Algonquian language of the Native American tribe, Plains Cree in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Montana. This holophrastic verb is mīyweyimew that means "S/he likes him/her/them" (ibid., 2015, p. 35). Holophrases have a strong relation with indigenous languages in their "tendency towards evidentiality, the process of identifying or qualifying one's (source of) knowledge; towards the use of figurative languages; towards the use of series of words and the ability to tell a story using a minimalism of text" (ibid., 2015, p. 37).

There are two types of holophrastic methods in English-language discourse, namely formal and functional. The formal one or called holophrastic traces are "elements that resemble holophrases formally either in their structure (direct holophrastic traces) or are invited by holophrasis (indirect holophrastic traces). The functional one or called relational word bundles are "structures that perform similar discourse functions in English as actual holophrases did in ancestral-language discourse" (ibid., 2015, p. 50-51). The direct holophrastic traces are "grammatical structures that are more or less suggestive of the morphological structure of the holophrase." The indirect holophrastic traces "echo discourse features associated with (original italics) the particular structure of verbs in indigenous languages, the complexity of indigenous words in general" (ibid., 2015, p. 56). In comparison, indigenous poetic tradition of the Hanunuo Mangyan in Oriental Mindoro, the Philippines preserves their poetry collection in their particular type of poetry called Ambahan. This indigenous term is also a kind of holophrase that means "the traditional poetry of the Hanunuo Mangyan of Mindoro" that also function as songpoems as the people can recite and chant them (Postma, 2005, p. 9). This ambahan has more or less eight features, namely: (1) a set of poetic expressions; (2) with a measured rhyme of seven-syllables lines; (3) having rhyming end-syllables; (4) vocalized as a chant without a determined melody or too much melodic variation; (5) without the accompaniment of musical instruments; (6) recited for the purpose of verbalizing in a metaphorical way certain human situations or characteristics; (7) with the possible challenge of a matching answer in dialogue-fashion (and); (8) in the presence of an interested audience of various size (Postma, 2005, p. 8). These eight features clearly show how ambahan or Mangyan indigenous poems

tend to have regular pattern compared with Australian Aboriginal and Native American poems. Nevertheless, the ambahan still retains orality since it emphasizes on human's voice to recite them and on spontaneous expression rather than determined melody. In discussing the questions, I referred to several books on indigenous poetics, oral poetry, Australian Aboriginal Poetry, Ambahan, Mangyan indigenous poems, and contemporary Indonesian poems from East Nusa Tenggara (Neuhaus, 2015; Finnegan, 1977; Zumthor, 1990; Wheeler, 2013; Pastrana, 2021; Postma, 2005; Lawi, 2019).

Results and Discussion

In her essay entitled "Too Little, Too Much," the Australian Aboriginal poet, Evelyn Araluen argued that aboriginal poetics are always present through what she named a kind of spirit called *yaburuhma* or "the kind of eternal that spirals out a constant across time and space; forever, the kind of promise we make to spread between every time" (Whittaker, 2023, p. 39). She further said that aboriginal poetics are often viewed of as being too little and too much. In fact, aboriginal poetry though it does not "respond to the colonial canon", it suggests "the concentration of power and perception that the Aboriginal voices reveal to the institutions and textures of Australian's literary canon (ibid., 2023, p. 41). In writing the aboriginal poetry in English, the Australian Aboriginal poets always "write around the implied subalternity". These poems have fun in "satirizing the transplanted cadence of Anglo-Saxon verse through fragmentation and irony, straining and interrogating the positionality of settler-colonial poeticism." These poems never leave English and its structures but aim to "juxtapose every afterlife of Eurowestern verse" with their new forms that feature "post-canonical, land-centric, kinship-connective, everyday-assertive" (ibid., 2023, p. 44).

1. Indigenousness as Ecological Poetics

In her poem entitled "Learning Bundjalung on Tharawal," Araluen uses indigenous terms *Bundjalung* and *Tharawal* as the title. The word *Bundjalung* refers to the aboriginal language spoken by the indigenous community in the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales and in the Gold Coast and its hinterland. This language is the first language of the people and one or two of the dozen or more dialects of the language (Sharpe in Tardif et al., 2005, p. 21). The poem has an asymmetrical typography that suggests orality. Each discrete part of the poem can serve as stanzas. In the first stanza, the poet says:

> *I know this room through tessellation of leaf and branch,*
> *wurahŋ-bil and jaran-gir,*
> *in the shade of a kulsetsi--*
> *(Cherokee) 'honey locust' [a flowering tree]*
> (Araluen, 2021, p. 8)

The word "tesselation" means "the process of fitting shapes together in a pattern with no spaces in between" (https://dictionary.cambridge.org) as one activity of the aboriginal people. The aboriginal terms *wurahŋ-bil* and *jaran-gir* mean a kind of expressions. *Jaran* itself came from Hebrew that means "cry of rejoicing" (https://mylofamily.com). The word *kulsetsi* is an aboriginal word for 'honey locust', a kind of plant. This portrayal of the parts of plant and the particular plant itself interwoven with the aboriginal terms exemplifies an ecological interconnectedness between the indigenous people and the natural environment. In the second stanza, the poet further describes her sense of place as an Australian aboriginal resident in the indented form:

> *I am relearning these hills and saltwaters*
> *and all the places wrapped around this room*
> *we both have dagahral here,*
> *lovers/fathers/friends/conquerors/ghost*
> *(Araluen, 2021, p. 8)*

In the first line above, the poet depicts the ways how she as an Australian Aboriginal descent aims to restore her kinship with the

"hills" and "saltwaters" as the natural sites. The next image "all the places" similarly suggests other natural sites that she aims to incorporate spiritually within her re-connection with the natural environment. The word *dagahral* might derive from the *Bundjalung* word *dagay* or "ghost of dead Aboriginal man" and *dawargan* or "ghost of dead Aboriginal woman" (Sharpe in Tardif et al., 2005, p. 28). In the next third and fourth stanzas, the poet uses several aboriginal terms for kinds of birds that similarly unveils her interconnection with the natural environment:

But here, in this new and ancient place,
I ask him to name the song that swoops through this mosaic:
sometimes it is wattlebird sometimes it is currawong--
when we drive, he tells me king parrot,
fairy wren, black cockatoo
(Araluen, 2021, p. 8)

In the lines above and the next ones for instance, the poet mentions several names of birds in aboriginal language such as *currawong* (loud-voiced fruit-eating Australian birds-https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/currawong#), *jalwahŋ* (tullawong), *bilin bilin* (parrot), ngarehr (black cockatoo-https://bundjalung.dalang.com.au/language/view_word/1272), and *nunganybil* (bird of any sort-https://bundjalung.dalang.com.au/language/view_word/4373). The description in the aboriginal words shows how these aboriginal images proves another form of human's interconnection with the birds as the living organisms in the natural environment. In the sixth stanza, the poet inserts one line in aboriginal language "*Bundjalung jagum ngai*, *nganduwal nyuyaya*" which approximately means "the land is the god of *Bundjalung* people," which similarly shows the people's ecological interconnectedness with the land as their ancestor. Their observation of a particular tree, ribbon gum that becomes the shelter and nest for the various birds, typically exemplifies aboriginal poems that percipiently observe any natural phenomena as emerging and occurring within sight. For instance, one line in an oral poem "The Daybreak"-"Day breaks: the first rays of the rising Sun, stretching her arms. Daylight breaking, as the Sun rises to her feet" and that of "The First Truck at Tambrey" by an aboriginal poet, Toby Wiliguru Pambardu describes the poet's observation of the truck coming to his neighborhood, in which he compares the sound of the truck's engine with crickets and the reeking petrol in the repetitive lines--"Chirping "njeen njeen" in the front like crickets-the starter" and "Smell the petrol going through by the big end!-up and down" (Rothenberg, 1985, p. 391, 404).

In the 9th or the last stanza, the poet uses several aboriginal words such as *wayan* or "road" and "root", *bilin* or "river" and "milky way", *baray-gir* or "the youngest child" and gahr or "black cockatoo". In the first line, the poet evidently depicts her effort to reconnect with her land through poetry, which means to use the aboriginal words for the trees and birds in her neighborhood. This holophrasis is aimed to assert her ethnic identity as both an Australian citizen and an Australian Aboriginal descent who lives in the western land as well as in her ancestral and indigenous land. In his poem "Jukambe Spirit--For the Lost", the Australian Aboriginal poet, Lionel Fogarty uses aboriginal word *Jukambe* that refers to "the Aboriginal Australian people of South East Queensland and the Northern Rivers of New South Wales". This indigenous community is also called *yugambeh, minyangbal, nganduwal* who have occupied the area for tens of thousands of years, expressed in 37 lines:

Jukambe
Don't we all have your spirit
Bleed sores between teeth
Feeding lighting rocks
My Jukambe will devote, come giant shelter.
My distant Jukambe host a tribe
I'm with your journey standing tall striped away
felt intervals for coastal Murris
are relation to Yoogum Yoogum.
(Kinsella 2001, 129-130)

This songpoem relatively uses literal language though it has several aboriginal words such as *Jukambe*, *Yoogum,* and *bunya*,

which give a sense of indigenousness. Yet, the use of literal rather figurative language similarly enables the songpoem to convey the message more clearly and straightforwardly to the aboriginal people. The spirit of aboriginality in the poem is aimed to raise the spirit of nationalism in the Jukambe people to love their tribe and the land where they are living. From the lines above, the poet like what Australian Aboriginal poets do in their songpoems tends to what Stuart Cooke argued, reduce "the parts of speech to mainly verbal or substantial elements" and mostly use nouns and verbs. The absence of adjectives in the songpoems shows what Cooke quoted from Rosenfeld's the deprivation of the poems' denotative power so that readers can feel their evocative power through rhythmic and sound patterns (Cooke in Wheeler, 2013, p. 91). The content of the lines above with its aboriginal spirit reveals an ecological interconnection between the people and the natural environment. He mentions several natural images such as lighting rocks, coastal Murris, mountains, fruit, bunya nut, territories, and seed, which all reveal the indigenous people's close relationship with their natural habitat and its living organisms. Lines 21-22 "initiation coming over elaborated wide territories now massed by houses and sales" disclose the poet's concern about the loss of aboriginal land because of housing and commercial projects. Lines 23-24 "my people nutritious a seed and brings boils over their bodies" serve as metaphors to compare the aboriginal people with nutritious *seed*, which suggest the originators of human tribe (seeds as the originators of any vegetation-my emphasis) and the life nourishment. Then, the phrase "brings boils over their bodies" suggests a blazing spirit in the aboriginal people's bodies.

In Southeast Asian poetry in comparison, Quintin Jose V. Pastrana, a young contemporary Philippine poet uses indigenous form of *Ambahan* or the traditional poetry of the Hanunuo Mangyan people in Oriental Mindoro, the Philippines. In a poem entitled "Condensation" for instance, he compares the wonder of natural scenes with the gems of poetry, its opulent world in words:

Water has no memory
it brings what it can flow with
then settles its dregs beneath,
ocean floor to coral reef,
to face ferment, until it
joins the sky and feeds the sea
That, my friends is poetry--

serrating, parting me from
the world like a fool and his
stash of high street merchandise,
beginning a sentence long
enough to carve grit into
my DNA, until I
rise and become no one else
(Pastrana 2021, 14)

The poem with the two stanzas above does not use any indigenous words in Tagalog or in Mangyan language. But all the lines in the two stanzas consist of seven syllables that emulate the seven-syllable poems of the indigenous Mangyan people. But the interesting part of his anthology is that all the poems he wrote were translated into Tagalong and Mangyan syllabic letters. For instance, the first stanza was translated into Tagalog by Danton Remoto into "Kondensasyon":

Walana alaala ang
tubig dinadala nito ang
kanyang kayang tangayin
at matapos ay iniiwan
ang mga sedimento
pababa sa sahig ng
dagat hanggang bahura
ng koral, para harapin
ang pagbuburo, hanggang
sumanib ito sa langit
at ang dagat ay busugin
lyan, mga kaibigan,
ang panulaan-
(Pastrana 2021, 15)

The English poem and the Tagalog translation both use lower case letters for each line that suggests orality and immediacy. The natural images in the poem reveal ecological aspects since it shows the poet the human's interconnectedness with the natural things in the micro and macro cosmos. The first line "Water has no memory it brings what it can flow with" describes the natural

quality of water as one of the four basic elements in the biosphere. This natural element serves as a metaphor for human's thought that flows and finally leaves ideas in one's mind (then settles the dregs beneath). In the second stanza, the poet gives an account of the ways the moving water has inspired him to write his poems that he compared with the 'condensed water'. The process of writing poems itself resembles the flowing water but that his poems later do not show any personal identity of his. The contemporary indigenous poem like the one above tends to juxtapose the natural objects with human's agency in his search of aesthetic trajectory in writing poetry like the moving water that leaves dregs on the bedrock of consciousness. The title condensation then suggests the poet's poetic works as the condensed feelings and thoughts that he expresses in words. In another poem entitled "Afterglow" or "*Matapos ang Pagbabaga*" in Tagalog, the poet expresses his feeling and thought only in seven brief lines. Each line still consists of seven syllables, the typical Ambahan of Mangyan people:

In love with the painted sky
fleeting, filtered--fog and time,
their sunset is our moonrise
The light streaks stain the linens
like fingernails traced on flesh
For once, this world is unmoored
from the burden of waking
(Pastrana 2021, 1)

The poem above uses cosmic images such as painted sky, time, sunset, and moonrise that all suggest a kind of human's consciousness since these cosmic things such as sky and time physically and non-physically embody very big and spacious entities. Meanwhile, sunset and moonrise though they likewise represent gigantic and magnificent cosmic objects, their cosmic cycles in setting and rising often connote transcience and volatileness. The use of metaphors in comparing "the sunset" with "moonrise" produces musical effects especially in the voiceless sibilants 's'. The images "streaks stain" in the next line similarly contains alliteration as well as another voiceless sibilant s and thus produces musical effect. What the poet depicts in the last line "For once, this world is unmoored from the burden of waking" implies the interdependent relation between "the world" and "the burden of waking". Yet, by referring to the title, this line suggests the freedom of the world to wake up from humdrum and desolation. This lyric likewise emulates the spontaneity and straightforwardness of Ambahan by the Mangyan people when describing any object in their surroundings. They do that immediately without any artificiality or ostentation. The Mangyan people in fact did not particularly write their poems about nature including plants and animals just as the Australian Aboriginal poets do. Yet, though they grouped their poems into various topics except into nature or environment, each poem evidently includes plants and animals as the subjects. For instance, in the following poem under Courtship category, the Mangyan poet wrote:

1. Kawayan sa marigit
2. Kang kabag o hinmapit
3. Hurok di way dariit
4. Inmuman ak hinmapit
5. Ararang ga sinigpit
6. Bulul-an yi patipit
(Postma, 2005, p. 40)

Each line consists of seven syllables, which shows the consistence of Ambahan despite its genre as songpoems. The numbering for each line reveals the sequential order of the lines that forms a story. The English translation of the poem above is:

Bamboo there at Marigit,
when I passed by long ago,
sprouts were just appearing then.
Passing by the other day,
with thorns thickly overgrown,
ready for a house to build!
(Postma, 2005, p. 40)

What interesting about Ambahan is that the Mangyan people in the past used "to scratch their poems into the surface of a piece of bamboo, with a sharp pointed, home-made knife" (Postma, 2005, p. 7). On May 11, 2024, I had a chance to visit and meet some Mangyan people at Banti Village, Oriental Mindoro. One of the Mangyan adult men whom I met was named Mr. Roomy Day. He was gladly and

proudly chanting a poem and showing his skillfulness in scratching a poem into the bamboo surface.

The wonderful thing about the form of the poem is that it consistently uses 7 syllables in each line. The word *banban* exemplifies an indigenous term the people keep original both in the original poem and its translation in English. Their reliance on the natural materials for their daily living indicates their ecological interconnectedness with the natural environment. The similar scene occurs in the Indonesian poem Bui Ihi: 'The Cooling of the Harvest' by a young contemporary Indonesian poet, Mario F. Lawi. This poem is in prose form consisting of two stanzas. The poem in general tells about the indigenous people's rite of *bui ihi* or the cooling of their harvest (Lawi, 2019, p. 3). The rite was also called *Banga Liwu*, in which the term was derived from the mythic name of the God of fertility. This rite was meant to cool down the harvest including humans and animals that are considered hot in the previous months, one month after *Daba* month (ibid., 2019, p. 51). One of the ritual activities for instance is by "moving from field to field as long as the lontar palms are slippery and the climbing stones have yet to be cleaned of moss" (ibid., 2019, p. 3). The poet uses indigenous terms such as lontar (a kind of ancient plant that resembles papyrus in which people could inscribe writing on its palm surface), *ha'ba* basket, which show the native people's interconnection with the natural life. In lines 24-25, the poet uses the indigenous expression in Hawu language as the indigenouos language"*Ana appu ya de tape wede pa loko pa da'I ta mahhe ri mone b'aga*", a kind of prayer in Daba or the initiation rite of Jingitiu people of Nappu Pudi tribe in Pedarro Village, Hawu-Mehara District, Sabu-Raijua Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. Its translation in English is more or less "I pray that the grandchild of yours, who has been raised in love and harmony, will find for herself a man who is rich in fields and rice barns" (ibid, 2019, p. 4, 51).

2. Holophrastic Reading of Indigenous Poetics as Biosocial Praxis

Holophrastic reading as a method in reading indigenous aspects in the contemporary poems tends to be heuristic that means to discover or learn something about the the indigenous culture (Neuhaus, 2015, p. 49). Neuhaus defines 'holophrase' as "a dominant structure in many indigenous languages that clearly distinguishes these languages from Indo-European tongues" (ibid., 2015, 49). It also means "a language structure with significant discourse effects that have resemblance to certain features found in contemporary Indigenous writing in English" (ibid., 2015, p. 49). Holophrastic reading then has the goal "to practice an Indigenous poetics by thinking outside the English language while simultaneously using that language" (ibid., 2015, 49). The main assumptions of holophrastic reading consist of two: (a) that the holophrase as a dominant Indigenous language structure may be translated into English language discourse and (b) that the results of this translation constitute a reading method for Indigenous literatures that is derived from Indigenous linguistic and discursive traditions (ibid., 2015, p. 49). There are two types of holophrastic manifestations in English-language discourse, namely one formal and the other functional: (1) formal equivalents of the holophrase, called holophrastic traces, are elements that resemble holophrases formally, either in their structure (direct holophrastic traces) or because they evoke discourse features that are invited by holophrasis (indirect holophrastic traces); (2) Functional equivalents of the holophrase, so-called relational word bundles, are structures that serve similar discourse functions in English as they do in ancestral-language discourse (ibid., p. 50-51). The direct holophrastic traces in general highlight words, compound words, or phrases that reveal the structure of the indigenous writing as the holophrase. These include quotation compounds; idiom-like lexical phrases; synthetic compounds; compound nouns with verbal modifier; deverbal noun-noun compounds (ibid., 2015, p. 52). Furthermore, the indirect holophrastic traces deal with discourse features that reveal holophrasis in some or another part of the literary work. These include evidentials; echoes of Indigenous verb complexity; textual silences; highly descriptive or figurative

language (ibid., 2015, p. 52). In Araluen's poem, the title "Learning *Bundjalung* on *Tharawal*" exemplifies idiom-like lexical phrase. Other examples are found in the prepositional phrases such as "through tessellation of leaf and branch", "in the shade of a *kulsetsi*", "all the places wrapped around this room", "in this new and ancient place" (Araluen, 2021, p. 8). Then, the indigenous words of the kinds of birds including *wurahŋ-bil, jaran-gir, bilin-bilin*; the land as the god for the people in *bundjalung jagum ngai*, *nganduwal nyuyaya*, in some ways represent these idiom-like lexical phrases. In Fogarty's poem, the indigenous word such as *Yoogum Yoogum*; the phrases influenced by indigenous traces such as ""*Yukambe* fruit a result", "my people nutritious a seed", "dialect young and old, not sold" (line 31), "the stories, bodies and mind, exact" (line 34), "In your spirit, *Jukambe*" (line 37, the last line) exemplify these idiom-like lexical phrases. In Pastrana's poem, "Condensation", the phrase "ocean floor to coral reef", the phrase with simile "the world like a fool" (Pastrana, 2021, p. 14) represent these idiom-like lexical phrases. In Lawi's poem, the similar prepositional phrases such as "in your *ha'ba* basket", "a parade of flowers and leaves", "the gleam in your grandfather's eyes", "the time of your initiation rite", "in the mouths of *monė ama*" (line 50) exemplify these idiom-like lexical phrases. Then the line in italics "*Ana appu ya de tape wede loko pa da'i ta mahhe ri mone b'aga"* (lines 24-25) exemplifies quotation compound. The phrases "ocean floor" and "coral reef" in Pastrana's "Condensation" also represent synthetic compound. Furthermore, a lot of phrases in the poems exemplify deverbal noun-noun compound, such as "the climbing stones", "cooking pot" in Lawi's poem; "lighting rocks", "loving brainy social wantness" in Fogarty's "Jukambe Spirit--For the Lost" represent these deverbal noun-noun compounds.

Furthermore, the indirect holophrastic traces are found in several patterns in the poems. One type of these, evidentials mean "discourse markers that identify or qualify a speaker's (source of) knowledge" by use of the expressions such as "I think", "she suppose", etc. (Neuhaus, 2015, p. 57) In Araluen's poem, the poet uses a lot of evidentials in all stanzas, for instance "I wish I knew the names of all the birds" (prolog), "I know this room" (stanza 1), "I am relearning" (stanza 2), "I watch the bark twist" (stanza 7). Fogarty has one evidential in line 28 "I don't see at grassland or hill creek track" (Kinsella, 2001, p. 130). Another omnipresent type of holophrastic traces is echoes of Indigenous verb complexity that refers to "remnants of the complex structure of verbs in Indigenous languages," which are reflected in English language discourse by pronoun copying and subject dropping (Neuhaus, 2015, p. 57). In Araluen's poem, this is identified in the first stanza, "I know this room through tessellation of leaf and branch, *wurahŋ-bil* and *jaran-gir*, where the latter indigenous terms seem to copy the pronouns the 'leaf' and 'branch'. Then in the second stanza, the poet echoes indigenous term *dagahral* for several human figures "we both have *dagahral* here, lovers/fathers/friends/conquerors/ghosts" (Araluen, 2021, p. 8) that suggests ghost or living spirit. In the fourth stanza, the poet uses the image "bird" to copy the similar object in Aboriginal language, *nunganybil* "but the rest are just *nunganybil*, the rest are just: 'bird' (ibid., 2021, p. 8). In the sixth line, the poet repeats the pronoun, Aboriginal people with aboriginal words "to use old words from old country I am so far from: *bundjalung jagum ngai, nganduwal nyuyaya*" (ibid., 2021, p. 9). In the 9th or last stanza, the poet repeats the pronoun in aboriginal word *baray-gir* with 'the youngest child' (ibid., 2021, p. 9). Furthermore, Fogarty and Lawi tend to drop subjects in their poems. For example, from lines 16 to 22, Fogarty only uses subject "my tribe" once and the next lines do not have any subject but might still be connected with the first subject:

> *My tribe were among white mans ownership*
> *grouped they claimed on Jukambe tear*
> *and distant areas*
> *Roasted raw the bunya nut*
> *unriped ceremonies*
> *initiation coming over elaborated wide territories*
> *now massed by houses and sales*
> (Kinsella, 2001, p. 130)

In Lawi's poem, the poet tends to use imperative that means to drop the subjects, such as in the third to eight lines:

> *Pray that the fretful harvest time will expiate all sins and prejudice. Release then in the arena seven pairs of fighting cocks. The ones whose souls are freed need no longer concern themselves with our future joy or sadness. Be told, their blood will serve to dissipate anxiety in times when the God of Fertility is unable* to conceal his anger (Lawi, 2019, p. 3).

Neuhaus argued that subject dropping is "the mirror image of pronoun copying". Pronoun copying uses repetition "for the sake of emphasis or flow of language, while subject dropping, aims to avoid the use of a grammatical subject. In this case, the grammatical subject of the sentence can be identified from the context" (Neuhaus, 2015, p. 61). These two methods evidently suggest the "Indigenous verb complexity and serve as indirect holophrastic traces" (ibid., 2015, p. 61). The next type of indirect holophrastic traces is the use of figurative/descriptive language in the poems. For instance, Araluen uses the aboriginal terms "*Bundjalung*" and "*Tharawal*" that refer to the aboriginal languages spoken by people in New South Wales. But the two words can also stand for other aspects of the people including the poet's effort to preserve the aboriginal language and its very diverse vocabularies for any topic in daily life including the name of birds. The use of indigenous words subtantiates the restoration and rearticulation of aboriginal kinship out of the colonialism legacy the people inscribe themselves in English (Griffiths in Wheeler, 2013, p. 28). In the last stanza, the poet also says that the aboriginal people learn their land through poetry and mentions the word *wayan* that means "road" and "root". This means that both "poetry" and "*wayan*" are synecdoches to stand for something else besides the songpoem and the road and root. In a like manner, Fogarty uses the word *jukambe* that refers to the aboriginal people but also the living spirit that the people always have to ignite in their own soul "*Jukambe*, don't we all have your spirit", "My *Jukambe* will devote, come giant shelter", "My distant *Jukambe* host a tribe". This word then tends to have multi meanings so that it likewise represents synecdoche, which means one term to refer to other bigger things. In Pastrana's "Afterglow", the poet uses the synecdoche when what he means by that is not limited to the diurnal phenomenon but suggests more on any psychological condition when humans have left bleak moments of life distress and entered the moment of enlightenment and freedom as he said in the last line "For once, this world is unmoored from the burden of waking" (Pastrana, 2021, p. 1). In a like manner, Lawi's use of indigenous term *Bui Ihi,* the term does not only mean the cooling of harvest but it also suggests the cooling of humans and animals from their "hot" bodily and spiritual condition so that they will decently welcome the harvest given by the God of Fertility (Lawi, 1999, p. 4-5).

Reading indigenousness in the contemporary poems by means of holophrastic reading methods not only gives knowledge about the indigenous aspects in the poems. But it can also evoke one's biosocial praxis. What I mean by biosocial is derived from the two words biology and social, which means individual's social awareness of the intrinsic values of any biological phenomenon in the natural environment. This biosocial theory also means "the configurations within which human and non-human agents interact, constitute themselves, establish mutual relations" (Fowler, 9). The Australian Aboriginal people are living closely with the natural environment and so do the Southeast Asian indigenous people such as the Hanunuo Mangyans in Oriental Mindoro and the Jingitiu community of Nappu Pudi tribe in East Nusa Tenggara. The indigenous people's use of natural resources such as the land, plants, and animals serve as the means to sustain their socio-economic life. Yet, at the same time, the people have a shrewd ecological awareness not to overuse the resources or destroy any life form, which means that they have ingenious knowledge of biological life of any living organism. I also refer to Aldo Leopold's writing "A Biotic View of Land" that discusses the importance for human individuals to have knowledge about ecology and biology of any

biota in the biotic life. He also introduces the biotic pyramid to give knowledge about the facts of biotic life and raise one's awareness of the interconnectedness of any life form. He argued that land "is not merely soil, but a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals" (Meine, 2013, p. 440). He further said that any human's activity toward the natural environment comes from "a different order than evolutionary changes", which further have more significant effects on any life form than what humans think or foresee (ibid., 2013, p. 442). In the last stanza of Araluen's "Learning *Bundjalung* on *Tharawal*", the poet depicts the aboriginal people's awareness to re-learn their land and any life form in their surroundings, which indicates their ecological discernment of the biotic life. This further leads to biosocial praxis when they will protect and preserve their land and the living organisms despite their need for them to sustain their social life:

> *We are relearning this place through poetry:*
> *I open my book and say, wayan,*
> *here is a word which means road, but also root*
> *and in it I am rooted, earthed,*
> *singing between two lands*
> *I learn that balun is both river and milky way,*
> *and that he is baray-gir, the youngest child*
> *and the top of the tree,*
> *where the gahr will come to rest—*
> *to call its own name*
> *across the canopy,*
> *long after his word for it*
> *is gone.*
> (Araluen, 2021, p. 9)

Like what the poet says in line 1, poetry then becomes the ecological agent to raise one's biosocial awareness of the land and how the indigenous people have to preserve it despite their use of the land and of the vegetative organisms and animals. The line "I am rooted, earthed, singing between two lands" celebrates the poet's exuberance in their aboriginal kinship despite their inhabitation of the land colonized by the white Australian people (Griffiths in Wheeler, 2013, p. 18-19). In Fogarty's "*Jukambe* Spirit--For the Lost," the poet expresses this biosocial spirit in the last six lines, from lines 32 to 37. With the biosocial praxis, I argue that the poet's use of land and particular trees represents his biological and social awareness. Then, the notion social refers to the *Jukambe* people and the spirit he has enlivened through the poem to ignite the indigenous people to love his land and his indigenous kinship:

> *Jukambe is my people, cause white mans name taken place*
> *Relived, I am. In your spirit, Jukambe.*
> (Kinsella, 2001, p. 130)

"*Bunya* pines" and other related images such as "*bunya* nut" and "seed" in the previous lines exemplify the use of biological images that suggest kernel or the origin of living organism (Hanson, 2015, p. 6-7). In Lawi's poem, the cooling of the harvest rite of the indigenous people in East Nusa Tenggara also embodies biological and social aspects. The people's reliance on the crop harvest as their sustenance, their use of betel leaves and areca nuts in the cooling rite illustrate the people's knowledge of the biological properties and social functions of the plants:

> After the tiresome census, the telling of people and assets, make haste to gather in a circle around sliced betel leaves and areca nuts. Pray that the fretful harvest time will expiate all sins and prejudice. (Lawi, 1999, p. 3)

The people's reliance on the vegetation as the life-giving sustenance is another biosocial aspect:

> *Make haste to finish the work in this field so that by the time evening's shadows lengthen, you may exchange the palm juice in your ha'ba basket--*
> (Lawi, 1999, p. 3)

In Pastrana's "Afterglow" and "Condensation", the poet tends to depict "the painted sky" and "water" as the cosmic and biotic objects that he analogized with some human states of mind and stream of consciousness. First, the poet analogized the painted sky and afterglow with the state of

enlightenment and liberation that human individuals can experience from any burden in life. Second, he analogized water with the flowing energy of human's feeling and thought including his activity in doing artistic works such as writing poetry. This likewise suggests a biosocial praxis since holophrastic reading of the images will bring readers to the Ambahan of the Mangyan people, in which the indigenous people have also been intimate with any biological, natural, and ecological lives in their surroundings, from their use of water, plant, and their observation of any living creatures.

Conclusion

Indigenous poetry will always become the gems of life since they teach biological, ecological, and social values to live the life in proper ways. Their influences on contemporary indigenous poetry such as those of Evelyn Araluen, Lionel Fogarty, Quintin Jose V. Pastrana, and Mario F. Lawi constitute holophrasis that unveils the aesthetics of combining indigenousness and modernity. Holophrasis is not a literary theory, but a way of reading indigenousness in indigenous as well as indigenous contemporary poetry. In view of holophrastic reading, the indigenousness in their poems serves as ecological poetics and biosocial praxis, which mean that readers should reflect on the values of indigenousness in their poems and implement them in their daily life. Neuhaus argued that holophrastic reading facilitates interpretation and is not interpretation itself. It then helps readers to understand the synergy between indigenous language and English or other languages. The juxtaposition between indigenous elements and Anglo-Saxon languages itself represent ecological aspect as the indigenous and the biosocial praxis of the indigenous terms in their daily life. The holophrastic reading dealing with the indigenousness through terms related to natural organisms then reveals biosocial networks of the indigenous Aboriginal, Mangyan, and Jingitiu people and their relationships with diverse biotic and biotic organisms on earth.

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