



THE NUANCES AND DYNAMICS OF THE FILIPINO EXPRESSION *BAHALA NA* AS AN EXPERIENCE OF CULTURE AND FAITH

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ABSTRACT

In the face of challenging situations, Filipino Catholics manifest, through the expression of *bahala na*, certain cultural traits that portray Christian values, such as an attitude of undying faith in God. However, at some point, the same expression also reveals attitudes that are inconsistent with the Christian message and practices. Through the review and analysis of different literatures that have studied *bahala na*, the paper articulates the contrasting nuances that give the expression ambivalent dynamics while, at the same time, presenting its significant influence on the faith of Filipino Catholics. So, in terms of the expression's negative cultural nuances, the paper examines some distortions that could perpetuate Filipino Catholics' interpretation of the Gospel message, particularly on their understanding of Divine will, Divine providence, and Christian discipleship, which, consequently, affects how some of them treat their personal freedom and responsibilities as somewhat insignificant in alleviating themselves from suffering, and in attaining salvation.

KEYWORDS: culture, experience, suffering, *bahala na*, Filipino

Bahala na, an experience of culture and faith

Culture can be described in various ways. According to Donal Dorr (2013), based on his reading of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (20), culture is described as the people's shared understanding and attitudes which are observable through their ways of life and traditions. For some sociologists, it is described as 'the systematic sets of code, narratives, discourses, and practices which structure the interpretation of social life and social action' (Back et al, 2012, p. xiv). While for other sociologists, 'culture comes to be seen not primarily as a distinct or overarching system of belief, but as something more pervasive and integral to everyday life – indeed, as the very medium of lived experience' (Jacobs & Hanrahan, 2005, p. 1). There might be disparities between these descriptions, but the common thing that can be said about them is the way culture is experienced and accordingly, experience is a process of 'learning through 'direct' contact with people and things' (Schillebeeckx, 1980, p. 31). To put it differently, culture as shared understanding and attitudes are learned through social contact which allows the interpretation and communication of codes and practices making it part of everyday experiences. In Christian countries, like the Philippines, culture can therefore be said to be a medium of the experience of faith as the latter also permeates people's everyday experiences (Cruz, 1999). As noted

by José de Mesa (1979) based on his reading of *Gaudium et Spes* (53), it is also a feature of culture that throughout the course of time, people express and manifest in their lives these experiences of faith. With that, such experience of culture and faith is also translated into different expressions. In the Philippine context, the common expression that could translate these lived experiences is the phrase *bahala na* (Mijares, 1977). According to the study conducted by Alfredo Lagmay (1993, p. 34):

The culture bearer, as the locus of convergent forces in personal history, the habit system of society and the environment, is possessed of a rich mosaic of experiential processes which can be triggered by word and situation into a patterned response. *Bahala na* is one such trigger for an experience very much shared by other members of the culture.

Therefore, studying *bahala na* as an expression that is deeply connected with experience offers another way of looking into the culture of Filipinos and its connection with faith, specifically, the Catholic faith.

Looking at *bahala na* as an expression of experience, one can see that it is usually evoked in moments of uncertainty, struggles, or suffering (Lagmay, 1993). It can be loosely translated in English



as 'come/happen what may' pointing to a determined attitude, although in some cases, it could point to an attitude of indifference to what the future may hold. Another English translation is 'let it be', which could either have a defeatist tendency or, in some cases, could be more of an attitude of trust in someone or something (Gripaldo, 2005). So, most of the time, the expression is viewed ambivalently for it reveals traits and attitudes among Filipinos that could either be a positive or a negative response to suffering.

Another example of the various traits it manifests is resiliency or *katatagang-loob*. Filipinos are known to endure almost every form of challenges. Some suggest that this trait is a product of historical conditioning which formed a consciousness habituated in suffering due to the Filipinos' desire to outlive the colonial oppression (Tiangco, 2005). Filipino resiliency might have been beneficial in freeing the nation from foreign bondage, but today, the same trait is challenged by some for it has seemed to become an excuse for mediocrity (Arellano, 2018).¹ From economic and environmental to socio-cultural and political spheres, most Filipinos have been given less of what they deserve, yet they endure the experience of deprivation and suffering. Even if working abroad presents a challenging situation for families, some Filipino parents would still leave their children behind due to economic considerations. Even if public service has been exploited by people with the same brand of service, some Filipinos would still entrust their future to the same people in exchange for a short-term benefit. Even if the environmental threat is first-hand experienced, some Filipinos would still act passively. Even if some Filipinos are living lives that are devoid of their rights as human, they would still celebrate each moment of life. Yes, Filipinos are resilient, but the reality is they are still suffering. In the end, one would just say, "*bahala na!*" Thus, the expression could either be a sigh of relief or disappointment, either an expression of hope or despair, and either a sign of inner strength or submission.

To elaborate on these ambivalent responses which reveal Filipinos' positive and negative attitudes, below is the reexamination of some contrasting nuances of the expression.

Bahala na: the nuances and dynamics

As an expression deeply rooted in experience, *bahala na* can be understood through situational settings (Gripaldo, 2005). Thus, its meaning can be derivatives from different situations. In the interviews conducted by Lagmay (1993), whenever the expression is evoked, what can be observed from the situations of the respondents are the presence of adversaries and difficulties. These situations all point to particular deficiencies that if met would give them security, but if remaining unresolved, would keep them preoccupied with uncertainties (Lagmay, 1993). In other words, within the Filipino culture, *bahala na* is a response

to the experience of suffering (Casiño, 2015) 'arising from a perceived sense of personal incapacity for the moment, or deficiency in knowledge, information, or material means for determining the outcome of a situation or course of action' (Lagmay, 1993, 33).

Furthermore, it can be observed that *bahala na*, as a response to the experience of suffering, can be used responsibly or irresponsibly (Gripaldo, 2005). As a result, this opens up a variety of meanings causing ambivalence to the way it is understood as a cultural value affecting one's attitude in the face of suffering. In his article, Gripaldo (2005, p. 208) emphasizes the importance of categorizing this different understanding. He states:

'*Bahala na*' is a characteristic trait of the Filipino culture. The Filipino child is exposed to this culture and s/he unquestioningly imbibes this trait, thereby forming a predisposition towards it and eventually shaping an attitude about it. The attitude is reinforced in his/her daily contact with others in society where '*Bahala na*' is openly manifested. S/He too manifests it and finds no objections from others. In time, s/he cannot distinguish its negative applications from the positive ones. S/He simply lumps them all into one piece.

To articulate these positive and negative traits, the author presents the contrasting nuances and dynamics of the expression below.

(1) *Bahala na* as attitudes of courage and fatalism
According to De Mesa (1979), when it comes to the meaning associated with *bahala na*, it is the fatalistic resignation of the Filipinos that is commonly used to characterize the expression. This points to a tendency of withdrawing from crisis or avoiding personal responsibility. As Eugene Mijares writes (1977, p. 113), it is 'an attitude of total abandonment, an acceptance that nothing can be done anymore by an individual faced with a situation.' Moreover, De Mesa (1979, p. 85) states that this attitude can be traced to a belief that 'one's destiny is something that is already fixed. In other words, resignation or mere acceptance of a deplorable situation may find a fertile breeding ground in this belief.' According to Tereso Casiño (2015), this Filipino worldview is phrased as *Gulong ng Palad* (Wheel of Fortune) which rules out any concept of purpose and meaning as every situation depends on fate. 'Anything, then, that happens to a Filipino (whether good or bad) is attributed to a cause . . . known as *suwerte* (luck), *tsamba* (chance), or *kapalaran* (destiny)' (Casiño, 2015, p. 86). In effect, this gives the expression a negative implication leading to a defeatist attitude toward suffering (De Mesa, 1979). One therefore, tries to take the present in stride and awaits the future with very little hope that he can change it' (De Mesa, 1979, 85).

Nevertheless, in his book *Elements of Filipino Theology*, Leonardo Mercado (1974) points out that *bahala na* can also be perceived as hope which involves risk-taking projecting the virtue



of courage. In contrast to fatalism, this attitude has a positive implication as it allows one to face the difficult situation. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2023), courage is a 'mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.' Hence, *bahala na* shows that 'there is trust in (one's) capacity to meet any contingency, a fleetingly emboldened self-confidence in the face of uncertainty' (Lagmay, 1993, p. 33). As De Mesa (1979, p. 121) puts it, 'the positive *bahala na* attitude is a hopeful risk-taking motivated by hope which goes together with the required human effort. It is an active kind of hope, a responsive and responsible hope.'

(2) Bahala na as attitudes of trust and overdependence

With courage as a value found in the expression, it consequently projects a positive attitude of trust. Whenever *bahala na* is evoked as courage, it could inspire trust in something to overcome the situation however difficult it is and uncertain the future might hold (De Mesa, 1979). Furthermore, trust as a value can be understood in two ways, trust in oneself to resolve the situation or trust in the other when such a situation is overwhelming to be resolved on his/her own. The latter most of the time refers to a transcendental reality. Filipinos might be commonly using *bahala na* in a fatalistic sense, but in this situation the intent of the expression is providential, i.e., it carries the wish or hope that providence will personally take care of one's future, hence, trust in someone who could be in control of or has the power over fate (Gripaldo, 2005). However, one has to be mindful of this value because one might confuse trust with overdependence (Matienzo, 2015). With fatalism as its common value, the expression has the tendency to lead one to leave everything to higher powers while he/she becomes oblivious of his/her own capacities and obligations (De Mesa, 1979). In this manner, *bahala na* as an attitude of over-dependence subtly inspires passive resignation (Matienzo, 2015). Contrary to overdependence and passive resignation, trust as inspired by courage points to a better future which also depends on personal effort (Mercado, 1974).

(3) Bahala na as attitudes of commitment and indifference

With the contrasting nuances mentioned above, *bahala na* could also be evoked either as an attitude of being committed or indifferent. On one hand, *bahala na* as a commitment stems from the values of courage and trust. According to Rowen Rebusillo (1997), in taking the risk of confronting the circumstance, one acts with confidence in the providence of the higher powers while still being mindful of his/her responsibilities and own capacities. Hence, the evocation of *bahala na* in this situation does not indicate the avoidance of the problem, but a commitment to overcoming it (Lagmay, 1993). Furthermore, Casiño (2015) adds that this attitude of commitment also inspires stewardship, i.e., being responsible for other people which is usually expressed in the phrase '*ako na bahala sa 'yo*' (I will take care of you). So, 'when invoked, *bahala na* becomes a binding covenant through

which people commit themselves to help or take care for other people' (Casiño, 2015, p. 84). De Mesa (1979) emphasizes this through the value of *malasakit* (compassion), a Filipino attitude that captures one's commitment by making sacrifices, i.e., enduring pain suffering for the sake of the good of the other.

On the other hand, *bahala na* as indifference stems from resigned and overdependent attitudes. One leaves a difficult situation all to fate or chance that he/she becomes forgetful of his/her obligations (Gripaldo, 2005). The expression then projects an escapist attitude where one becomes unmindful of his/her decisions and their consequences (De Mesa, 1979). With this, the evocation of *bahala na* is used as an excuse for one to do whatever he/she wants while being indifferent to the harm or danger that the situation might bring (Gripaldo, 2005). As stated by Casiño (2015, p. 84):

Bahala na may also encourage Filipinos to embrace an unproductive perspective about life. Resigning totally to the work of *kapalaran* or *suwerte*, the Filipino may appear indifferent in the face of graft and corruption as well as welcome personal misfortunes impassively.

Hence, *bahala na* inspires an 'I-don't-care' attitude pulling Filipinos away from actively participating in the events of life which, in effect, becomes harmful to individual and social progress (Casiño, 2015). Based on the writings of De Mesa (1979), this is *bahala na* that is devoid of *malasakit*.

(4) Bahala na as attitudes of determination and mediocrity

Other contrasting attitudes that can be observed and derived from the discussions above are determination and mediocrity. By definition determination means a 'firm and fixed intention to achieve a desired end' (Merriam-Webster, 2023). Based on the results of the interviews conducted by Lagmay (1993), *bahala na* as a commitment permits one to improvise on difficult situations as they come along the way in order for him/her to achieve the desired result which, in this case, is toward resolving the difficulties. It follows that *bahala na* expressed as a commitment reveals an attitude of one's determination to get through suffering. This hypothesized that 'Filipino culture has indeed a built-in mechanism of flexibility and resiliency in *bahala na* for dealing with the pervasively uncertain contingencies of daily living' (Lagmay, 1993, 34).

Nevertheless, based on the results of the same study, Lagmay (1993) finds that this mechanism of flexibility and resiliency could also lead one to live his/her life without any definite plans for 'one follows the lead of the moment and action shapes itself into the molds of the changing situation' (Lagmay, 1993, p. 34). Such life depends on impulse and chance which makes one's present and future both ambiguous (Lagmay, 1993). As Casiño (2015, p. 85) puts it, 'Filipinos who put their trust in *kapalaran* (fortune) tend to be complacent about their work or future.'



Hence, this evocation of *bahala na* might appear positive for it seems to project the value of courage in facing uncertainties. However, on a deeper level, according to Berniemaack Arellano (2018), it could develop an attitude of mediocrity in addressing the difficult situation, i.e., instead of solving the problem by making plans, one would just rely on one's capacity to adapt even if it means embracing a situation which is caused by injustices. In this case, one evokes the expression irresponsibly as he/she acts passively in the face of suffering with the belief: '*Talagang ganyan ang kapalaran*' (There is nothing we can do about our fate) (Andres, 1981). As a result, 'it harnesses one's behavior to a submissiveness that eats up one's sense of responsibility and personal independence. It provides one with fall sense of self-confidence to proceed with an unsound action in the belief that somehow one will manage to get by' (Andres, 1981, p. 132).

So, with the dynamics of these responses, it can be observed that *bahala na* is surrounded by concepts that are closely related to Christian spirituality. This association can be attributed to the historical conditions that made the interaction between culture and faith possible. This is elaborated below.

Bahala Na's influence on the experience of Filipino Catholics

The interaction between Filipino culture and the Christian faith develops a tradition that forms Filipinos' understanding of *bahala na*. Consequently, this results in a split-level spirituality, i.e., 'the co-existence within the same person of two (or more) thought and behavior systems which are not only inconsistent with one another but are also in the state of non-communication with each other' (De Mesa, 1979, p. 10).

To explore this influence, the paper has looked into some details of Philippine history to present how the interaction between faith and culture has developed a tradition that gives *bahala na* its nuances and dynamics.

Bahala Na and the Filipino Spirituality

In his study, Casiño (2015) presents that *bahala na* is initially influenced by Ancient Filipinos' animistic spirituality, i.e., a belief in the spirits residing within nature, and these spirits are somewhat influencing fate causing fortunes and misfortunes in one's life (De Mesa, 1979). This belief, with its fatalistic nuance, survives the test of time and is considered the bedrock of the Philippine religious experience (Casiño, 2015). 'As the Spanish brand spread across the archipelago, it affected little the traditional fatalistic Filipino concept of *bahala na*. Over the centuries, Filipino Catholics, and later, many Protestants, embraced the concept without critical objection' (Casiño, 2015, p. 84). Its influence continues to manifest even in the present-day Catholicism (Casiño, 2015).

(1) *Bahala na* as Divine Will

First, this can be observed in the way *bahala na* has influenced Filipino Catholics' understanding of the *Divine Will*. According to De Mesa (1979) Some believe that the misfortunes happening in their lives, such as sickness and calamities, are all part of His will. With the belief that God's will is at work within nature, there is the tendency for believers to embrace and just accept every situation, even those that are ill-fated because, in the end, God's providence will always be there to save the day. Arguably, De Mesa (1979) has pointed out that there is even a linguistic misconception about the very phrase *bahala na*. Some presuppose that the expression has its origin in the term *Bathala*—ancient Filipino's highest ranking and powerful deity—which suggests that Filipinos have nothing to worry about adversities because *Bathala* will provide, thus, '*Bathala na!*' (Gripaldo, 2005). Aside from this term, some also suggest that the Filipino expression *bahala na* may have been derived from the Sanskrit word, *bhara*, which literally translated as 'load' which could mean 'responsibility'. The shift from 'r' to 'l', and in this case, from *bhara* to *bhala*, was a common linguistic phenomenon in the early times (Casiño, 2015). However, it may be unclear whether it is or is not the origin of the expression, but in terms of its usage, it can be observed that *bahala na* suggests that Filipino Catholics have this disposition to trust in the providential will of God even to point of leaving their own responsibilities to Him (Gripaldo, 2005). So, with this understanding, it leads to the second point.

(2) *Bahala na* as Divine Providence

According to Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos (2016, p. 340), '*bahala na* reveals a capacity to trust in the providence of God when confronted by life challenges.' Such trust has developed certain views of how Filipinos understand *Divine Providence* which implies passive resignation and overdependence (Catechism for Filipino Catholics, 2005, no. 1158) i.e., their tendency to leave everything to God while becoming forgetful of their own capabilities and responsibilities (De Mesa, 1979). Some claim that these originate from the lack of ambitions among Filipinos or simply from their indolence—a derogatory term used by Spaniards to speak of Filipinos' mediocrity. However, Punsalan (2016) emphasizes that this is not an inherent attitude among Filipinos, but a consequence of colonization, an effect of their daily suffering at the hands of their colonizers. As Punsalan (2016, p. 342) has cited:

Rizal acknowledged that indolence—the infamous Spanish malediction of the Filipinos—was a problem in his time. But he did not propose a "moral recovery program," as the Manila orthodoxy did nearly a century later... as a cure to the country's ills... Instead, he proposed cultivating a historical awareness... so that "instead of regarding [indolence] as the cause of the backwardness and disorder, we should regard it as the effect of disorder and backwardness." He traced the so called Filipino



inferiority to the “daily and constant plucking of the soul so that it [will] not fly to the religion of light, [which] drains the energies [and] paralyzes all tendency towards advancement,... [so that] at the least strife a man gives up without fighting (Rizal, 1972, p. 256, quoted in Rimonte 1997, p. 58).

Punsalan (2016, p. 343) then writes, ‘a constant experience of disempowerment and inefficacy of one’s actions and initiatives creates a sense of resignation. Such a response can be read as a kind of realism in the face of social and cultural violence of colonialism’. In other words, *bahala na* has become the expression of Filipinos’ desperate call for God’s providential and saving acts in the face of century-long suffering and oppression (Punsalan, 2016).

(3) *Bahala na* as Christian Discipleship

Third observation, citing another context that forms the meaning of *bahala na*, Punsalan (2016) points out the vulnerability of the Philippines to the forces of nature. As this always puts Filipinos in situations beyond their control, it appears that this does not only influence their understanding of Divine Providence, but also of *Christian Discipleship* (Casiño, 2015). This shows in the fascination of Filipinos with Jesus’ suffering and death. According to the study conducted by Peter Bräunlein (2009, p. 892) ‘the fascination with the suffering, battered and dead Christ can be regarded as a characteristic feature of Philippine lowland society.’ Thus, they tend to believe that self-inflicted suffering is a way for them to follow him (Bräunlein, 2009),—a literal interpretation of the biblical text where Jesus says, ‘Whoever wishes to follow me, take up his cross, and follow me’ (Mk. 8.34). This is demonstrated through their superstitious practices that adhere to traditional animistic beliefs wherein they have to do acts that serve as a way to please God for which they would be spared from harm and suffering (Casiño, 2015). Such practices have been commonly observed among Filipinos living in rural areas. For them, the physical and spiritual realities are intertwined that the misfortunes and catastrophes they are experiencing are punishments for certain actions that they have done (De Mesa, 1979). Hence, to make amends they would do acts of sacrifice or rituals. In some parts of the countries, during Holy Week, some Catholics will perform rituals of crucifixion, self-flagellations, and other forms of self-mortifications. Asking why they do such practices, the usual answer is, that they are for repentance in order for them to be spared from the threat of foreboding calamities (Bräunlein, 2009).

Furthermore, aside from its influences on Filipino Catholics’ practices of repentance and worship, this understanding of discipleship also has an influence on their understanding of salvation. It has the tendency to reduce the salvific act into two extremes, either for purely material improvement or purely spiritual gains (Bräunlein, 2009). As a consequence, this

dichotomy significantly affects the way Filipino Catholics live their lives and the way they perceive their individual commitments, as well as their responsibilities, both to the church and the society (Casiño, 2015). This develops negative attitudes and some of them are mediocrity and indifference which are inconsistent with authentic Christian discipleship as it distorts the notion of the loving concern of the Divine Will (De Mesa, 1979). De Mesa (1979, p. 133) argues:

This, if left unchallenged, would make the image of God one of unconcern for the welfare of man; it would also characterize Him as a God who makes sure that the duties He has imposed on His creatures are followed, otherwise punishment shall be meted out. Another reason for the importance of elucidating this matter is the fact God’s will is salvific. It is not against man, it is for man . . . It is a will that wants to bring out the best of someone who wants to be a better person . . . It is a will that ready to allow someone to make his own mistakes, and to forgive and to welcome him anew upon realizing his mistakes.

Moreover, these discussions on the background of *bahala na* and its influence on Filipino Catholics show how the expression can be understood and develop into a kind of folk spirituality. By definition, folk spirituality is an unofficial form of worship by virtue of its being instituted by the people through their traditional and cultural practices. It is unofficial because it is outside of what is officially prescribed by the Catholic Church that entails universality (Matienzo, 2015). This is further discussed below.

Bahala Na as Folk Spirituality

As noted by Rhochie Matienzo (2015), in the Philippines, an important folk spirituality is found in the expression *bahala na*; and according to Casiño (2015), this folk spirituality has greatly influenced Filipino Catholics both positively and negatively. In connection to the discussions above, the negative traits of the expression ‘arise from the idea that individual freedom is minutely insignificant before a pantheistic reality of ‘Providence’ (Matienzo, 2015, p. 90). With this, it ‘depicts a Filipino as a mere automaton whose existence is at the disposal of impersonal forces’ (Casiño, 2015, p. 86). Matienzo (2015) observed this through the Filipino’s devotion to the Black Nazarene where some devotees expose themselves to danger in their exercise of worship during *Traslación*²—a procession commemorating the transfer of the image to Quiapo basilica—with the common belief that their fate, including both material providence and salvation, is in the hands of the mute image of Christ who personifies the omnipotence of God. So, one would exclaim, ‘*Bahala na ang Maykapal*’ (God shall take care of things) (Matienzo, 2015) or ‘*Ipasadiyos mo na lang*’ (leave it up to God) (Punsalan, 2016).



Furthermore, in terms of material providence, Matienzo (2015, p. 91) points out that ‘it may bring false hopes and at the same time degrades the perfection and supremacy of God in a level of commerce, as if faith is a matter of depositing prayers and withdrawing granted wishes.’ In terms of salvation, he notes that there is a tendency to misunderstand the Church’s teaching since *bahala na* folk spirituality can be abused, e.g., some devotees who lead questionable moral lives believe in their hearts that faith alone could save them (Matienzo, 2015); and also ‘the obliterations in lives and properties have become necessary repercussions of the fatalistic worldview of *bahala na* folk spirituality’ (Matienzo, 2015, p. 93).

With these observations—wherein joining the lethal procession seems to be enough even if it does not bring change to one’s life because, in the end, ‘*Bahala na ang Maykapal*’ (Matienzo, 2015)—*bahala na* folk spirituality has become a convenient theodicy for Filipinos that through which it seems to lessen the suffering caused by an adverse circumstance and justifies it however unjust it might be (Casiño, 2015).

In *Gaudium et Spes* (43), the Church is reminded that she should not be blind to the discrepancy between the message being proclaimed and the human weakness of those to whom the Gospel has been entrusted. They cannot ignore these shortcomings and must combat them earnestly, lest they hinder the spread of the Gospel. As observed by De Mesa (1979, p. 9) ‘what seems to exist in place of genuine and mature Christianity is ‘an adaptation of Christian practices to the pre-Christian pattern of beliefs rather than a raising of genuine values of the pre-Christian past to the level of Christianity.’’ Therefore, despite the interconnectedness of culture and faith, one must still be vigilant against cultural influences that distort the content of the Catholic faith and disconnect it from daily life experiences.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- (1) *Bahala na* as a cultural expression is evoked during the experiences of suffering. It is conditioned historically by how Filipinos respond to such experiences. So, with the dynamics of these responses, they create the expression’s nuances revealing Filipinos’ positive and negative attitudes which, at the same time, find their place in Filipino spirituality.
- (2) While the Philippines is a Christian country and the Christian faith is essentially cultural, the influence between *bahala na* and the Catholic faith goes both ways. However, the negative nuances of the expression lead to a split-level spirituality that significantly affects Filipino Catholics’ understanding of suffering and salvation. With *bahala na*’s fatalistic nuance, Filipinos subject themselves to meaningless suffering leading to mediocre and indifferent attitudes because they tend to believe that salvation is Divinely willed and has nothing to do with human responsibility.
- (3) Taking notice of the negative cultural traits that *bahala na* projects could help significantly in discovering how the promise of salvation can be revealed in the experience of Filipino Catholics. With such awareness, the expression can be filtered from distortions. This gives way to the realization of the promise through the expression’s positive nuances that project positive hope which then motivates Christian praxis, i.e., Filipino Catholics’ commitment and determination to alleviate themselves from suffering. Hence, *bahala na*, more than just an expression, becomes a salvific experience that is instrumental in revealing the emancipative message of the Gospel.
- (4) In the advancement of understanding the Christian faith through Filipino culture, the Catholic notion of *bahala na* can be explored more especially in the field of Christian education. The relevance and popularity of the expression can become instrumental in delivering theological concepts for the consumption of learners. A study on integrating such cultural expression in teaching Christian Living is highly recommended.
- (5) A new way of looking at *bahala na*—a phrase that expresses Filipino emancipative traits—can offer a perspective in doing a further study of the concept of Filipino resiliency. Through this, it can help in reconfiguring its meaning positively and therefore can offer a better understanding of Filipino culture.
- (6) With the number of Christian concepts discovered in *bahala na*, they are recommended as subjects for independent research. A further study of each concept founded in Filipino culture can offer additional insights into the inculturation of the Christian faith.
 1. In his article, Arellano (2018) points to the mediocre response of Filipinos and the government in handling disaster. Accordingly, such response is most of the time being justified by resiliency, meaning, whatever the situation is, Filipinos can deal with it anyway. ‘One can certainly praise resilience while also raising awareness for the victims’ sufferings and trauma, in this context, glorification and romanticization add nothing to the discourse on how to alleviate the harsh realities that victims face. It is ironic that while narratives of Filipino resilience earn them admiration and attention from the public, it does not offer anything tangible that they deserve given the urgency of their situation’ (Tanggol, 2020, para. 8).
 2. The feast of the Black Nazarene is popular with the practice of *Traslación*—a procession commemorating the transfer of the image to Quiapo basilica. Although the procession is about the dramatic performance of struggle



of Filipinos alongside Jesus' suffering, it is, however, infamously known for the dangerous rush of a great number of devotees that unfortunately leads to some injuries, and sometimes death (Matienzo, 90). Nevertheless, the 2024 *Traslación* had been more organized and less dangerous as it was better coordinated according to the National Capital Region Police Office (Santos, 2024).

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