

***Koroza Ireidi, Korsang Irei: A Decolonial Creole-Indigenous Kristang Framework for
Psychoemotional Wellbeing and Relational Ethics***

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Abstract

This paper explores and formally defines the unique ontological Creole-Indigenous emotional constructs of *ireidi*, or numinous and psychoemotionally healthy self-regard, and *irei*, or psychoemotionally healthy unconditional love, as they are described, manifested and embodied in the ongoing long-term Kristang revitalisation effort led by the author, one of the last native speakers of the critically endangered Creole-Indigenous Kristang language (iso 639-3:mcm), the primary scholarly authority on Kristang language, culture and identity worldwide, an internationally recognised Creole-Indigenous speculative fiction writer and literary figure, and the 13th and current *Kabesa*, Cowboy of Heaven or Indigenous Chief of the Kristang Creole-Indigenous Nation worldwide since 2015. Drawing on their consistent but unnamed presence in Kristang history alongside an autoethnographic analysis of (1) the author's own lived experience of consolidating *ireidi* within himself, especially as the first openly gay, non-binary, polyamorous, atheist and neurodivergent *Kabesa* of the primarily Roman Catholic Kristang community, (2) his subsequent ability to both recognise his

receiving and calibrate his provision of *irei* to others based on his *koroza ireidi* or psychoemotional core of *ireidi*, and (3) his ability to consistently do this within the technocratic, conservative and affect-flattening society of Singapore, the paper argues that a relational framework centered around *irei* and *ireidi* invites an authentic, real and psychologically liberating and emancipatory approach toward well-being that simultaneously supports both grounded and agentic human individuation, and larger scale collective and societal renewal, rejuvenation and evolution toward a more sustainable means of living amidst renewed forms of polycrisis, uncertainty and long-term societal collapse.

Keywords: well-being, mental health, Creole, Indigenous, autoethnography

Introduction

Across the first three decades of the twenty-first century, individual psychological well-being and mental health have become global concerns of increasingly urgent importance in the face of recurrent, unignorable and reality-destabilising polycrisis, volatility, uncertainty and global collapse (Lawrence et al.). The need for new and functional mechanisms that support continued individual resilience, agency and antifragility in manners that are expressly decolonial and/or context-appropriate and dignity-restoring are paramount, especially for younger generations of humanity growing up in an environment that simply by its very nature can invite tremendous psychological stress and sometimes even collapse (Kałwak et al.; Izydorczyk et al.). However, extant concretised therapeutic and well-being models tend to be overreliant on Western paradigms and concepts of well-being (e.g. Wheaton et al.) that, while well-intentioned, do not often accurately reflect the lived reality and experience of people in other parts of the world, again especially in contexts that can be far removed from Eurocentric approaches to well-being such that these models of well-being are perceived as

fake, disingenuous or inauthentic, or worse still perpetuating existing structural inequalities and hierarchies that already are a part of the polycrisis; most notable among these are emergent findings that Western approaches to well-being may inadvertently promote unhealthy outcomes related to individualism (Humphrey and Bliuc).

As a direct antidote to this, some Western scholars have proposed wellbeing models that are founded on relational paradigms that are premised on non-Western, minority and Indigenous ways of approaching what in the West is called mental health (e.g. White), and are sometimes also referred to as developing forms of cultural resilience (Schabowska). As Schabowska powerfully argues,

The pathway out of the polycrisis, or the means to alleviate its adverse impacts, particularly concerning mental health, lies within culture. Culture serves as a reservoir of moral knowledge, comprising value judgements and facilitating their transmission across generations ... [and] as a means of appraising reality, accessible to all. ... Possessing such a frame of reference is crucial for evaluating reality—our attitudes towards it and the appropriateness of our expectations (Schabowska 174).

Indigenous and non-Western well-being models grounded in cultural resilience also support greater ecosystemic connection and adherence to necessary principles related to long-term sustainability (Sangha et al.) and the preservation of universal human rights across cultures (Tsuji et al. 6681). At the same time, scholars have also noted the marginalisation, occlusion or exclusion of these paradigms from greater public awareness and usage as a result of the legacy of European colonisation (Axelsson et al. 10–12), to the degree that the literature related to models of Indigenous well-being is still somewhat emergent. This paper thus aims to add to the available literature on useful models of Indigenous well-being that can be adopted by the wider general public for large-scale collective benefit, while simultaneously

also documenting, consolidating and concretising behaviours and mechanisms that have historically unconsciously characterised secular or non-religious Creole-Indigenous life from the Kristang, Serani or Portuguese-Eurasian lived reality, point of view and/or worldview – itself historically diminutised and marginalised for decades and centuries to the point of occlusion or even distortion, often at the hands of larger institutional or organisational actors (Wong, “Linggu Skundidu: On the Elision of the Kristang Language, Culture and Identity from Mainstream Public View and Academic Scholarship in Independent Singapore (1965-2023)”); Wong, “Terror, Trauma and the Transhuman: Exploring Possible Representations of Kristang / Portuguese-Eurasian Identity Erasure in Wong’s Altered Straits and Stuart Danker’s Tinhead City, KL”).

Research Questions

The paper seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How do the Kristang concepts of *ireidi* (psychoemotionally healthy self-regard) and *irei* (psychoemotionally healthy unconditional love) function as psychoemotional and ethical principles within Kristang lived experience and community revitalisation?
2. How might these relational frameworks add to or challenge dominant Eurocentric models of wellbeing, identity, and interpersonal ethics in contemporary scholarship?

Because creole languages and cultures have long been, and continue to be, mischaracterised, dehumanised, stereotyped, and stigmatised as lacking complexity, analytical value, rigour, or scholarly relevance, a short section on language, affect, and ontology in Kristang has also been included. This paper is also intentionally structured in this way: scholarship has historically failed—and often still fails—to recognise the legitimacy of Creole-Indigenous frameworks without reproducing colonial assumptions about what counts as research, knowledge, system, structure, or valid modes of interpretation. While the section headers

below may approximate Western expectations regarding academic organisation, this text also seeks to exemplify a decolonial and creolised praxis of inquiry at the same time, demonstrating that non-Western and Creole-Indigenous approaches are not only methodologically and structurally appropriate, but necessary for theorising *irei* and *ireidi* and other Creole-Indigenous concepts on their own epistemic terms.

Language, Affect and Ontology in Kristang

Kristang refers to both a critically endangered Creole-Indigenous language (iso 639:3: mcm) and the attendant Creole-Indigenous ethnic community who speaks it, also known as the Orang Serani or Portuguese-Eurasians, and based today in four main *sidadi koroza* or core cities of Melaka (Malaysia) or *Bara Sejarang*, Singapore or *Pedra Draku*, Perth (Australia), *Praya Bela*, *Borloo* or *Borlu*, and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) or *Via Argila*, together with a worldwide diaspora altogether estimated at some 37,000 individuals alongside somewhere around 2,000 mainly elderly speakers of the Kristang language. Almost moribund by 2015 (Baxter) and listed as critically endangered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger since 2010 (Pillai et al.), the language, culture and community have all undergone large-scale sustained, dramatic and public-facing revitalisation since 2016 under the leadership of the author, who is simultaneously a major literary figure and philosopher and published novelist, poet, playwright, short story writer and body performance artist in Singapore (Wong, "Book A Writer / Our Writers: Wong"; Fischer 212–42), a linguist and the primary scholar-practitioner and academic authority on Kristang (Wong, "Department of English, Linguistics & Theatre Studies: Wong"), and the 13th and current *Kabesa*, Cowboy of Heaven or Indigenous Chief of the entire community worldwide, and the first to be publicly recognised as such by multiple public and academic institutions nationally and internationally since 2025 (*Say It In Kristang*). Initially focused on language reinvigoration centered around free non-profit

Kristang language classes offered to Singaporeans (Wong, “Kodrah Kristang: The Initiative to Revitalize the Kristang Language in Singapore”), this grassroots non-profit initiative led by the author, known as Kodrah Kristang (‘Awaken, Kristang’), has expanded substantially to also include the decolonisation, reclamation, rejuvenation and restoration of the culture, identity and community as a whole since 2022 (Wong, “Moving from Language to Literature, Culture and Identity: Kristang Revitalisation in Singapore after COVID-19”), and the consolidation of Kristang values, literary themes, ontology, epistemology and emic research paradigms as a means of stabilising the community’s real-world presence and ability to reflexively understand itself after years of being spoken about and dissected by outsiders instead (Wong, “Kultura Krismatra: Excavating the Progenitor Kristang Creole/Indigenous Way of Being in Singapore”; Wong, “Toward a Kristang / Portuguese-Eurasian Literature: Contestations, Challenges and Characteristics”; Rocha and Yeoh), and to ensure the community can engage with its own needs and interests metacognitively and critically (Gone 358–59).

After ten years of revitalization, therefore, a unique Kristang cultural matrix and epistemological framework supporting psychoemotional human individuation as the ultimate goal and focus of well-being has been concretely constellated and can be clearly understood as running in parallel to many other Indigenous cultures and ways of being worldwide, in terms of its emphasis on the holistic appreciation and analysis of knowledge and data from a positionality of wholeness that incorporates relationality and felt knowledge (Gupta; Million 30–31). In Kristang, this positionality is known as the Quaternity of Personhood, inviting a four-way examination of information that is collected or experienced through one’s *korpu* / body, *mulera* / mind, *korsang* / heart and *alma* / soul (Wong, “Kultura Krismatra: Excavating the Progenitor Kristang Creole/Indigenous Way of Being in Singapore” 121–22), and having these different datastreams interact with and inform one another, instead of simply privileging

one (especially the *mulera* / mind) over the other three to the point that they are ignored or even stigmatised, shamed or loathed for what they offer the whole individual. An understanding and embodying of well-being therefore proceeds from the same reference point, and necessarily involves working with and incorporating all four perspectives, as well as always seeking the same quaternary approach to ontological wholeness and componentiality elsewhere in one's own lived experience and reality, including in one's relationships with others, *Gaia* or the living Earth and *Otiosos* or the living universe – this itself forming another quaternity of *onsong* (self), *otru* (other), *Gaia* (Gaia or the living Earth) and *Semesta* (*Otiosos* or the living universe).

Through an autoethnography of my own lived experience as a Kristang person and one of the most visible, respected and esteemed examples of individuated Kristang personhood, this paper thus seeks to concretise additional elements of this existing framework that have been represented and embodied in Kristang culture for quite some time and manifested by myself as *Kabesa*, but which have not been translated into formal academic work up till now. If earlier work has focused on explicating the quaternities that the individual person and/or their reality can be organised or distinguished into, this paper now seeks to explore the 'glue' or connections that hold these parts together within a psychoemotionally healthy or individuated human being, and in doing so provide a more mechanistic and segmentable process by which others can approach their own pursuit of individuation, and thus of their own overall well-being, in a society generally premised on the opposite. This 'glue' consists of two distinct and complementary forms of affect held in balance and tension and paradoxically informing, giving rise to and complementing each other known as *ireidi*, or numinous psychoemotionally healthy self-regard (Wong, "Tigrisoneru: On Self-Respect" 1480–84), and *irei*, or psychoemotionally healthy unconditional love (Wong, "Irei: On Unconditional Love in Kristang").

Methodology

I use a qualitative, interpretive methodology grounded in a Kristang Creole-Indigenous epistemic approach to autoethnography, Indigenous epistemology, and critical discourse analysis below to expand on *irei* and *ireidi*. As a Kristang speaker, community member and researcher, I draw on my own lived experience, community interactions, revitalisation pedagogies, and linguistic documentation produced through the Kodrah Kristang initiative to analyse how *koroza ireidi* and *korsang irei* emerge, circulate, and acquire meaning. Kristang Creole-Indigenous autoethnography is appropriate here because the concepts under study are relational, embodied, and historically undocumented, and therefore accessible primarily through emic knowledge, memory, affect and practice; I also use my own voice and perspective as a Kristang researcher to frame this discussion because as mentioned, a large number of scholars continue to dismiss creole languages and cultures as having nothing critical to study whatsoever, and as containing no critical perspectives or information to study whatsoever. The approach follows established work in decolonial and Indigenous research methodologies, which recognise relational or felt approaches to knowledge, personal intuition community expertise, language reclamation, and culturally specific ontologies as valid forms of evidence. Textual examples, community narratives and linguistic forms are therefore treated not as isolated data points, but as socially situated expressions of Kristang wellbeing, identity and ethics. The goal is not generalisation, but first preliminary conceptual clarification and theoretical refinement grounded in lived Indigenous experience, and in writing that aligns with that Indigenous experience and autoethnographic research paradigm. The following sections thus analyse *ireidi* and *irei* as they manifest within Kristang epistemology and lived practice.

Discussion of *Ireidi*: Numinous Psychoemotionally Healthy Self-Regard

Ireidi can be defined as psychoemotionally healthy self-regard that charges or informs the person possessing it with what has often been informally and subjectively described as an aura or glow of radiance, health or rejuvenating energy, and which is usually glossed in the literature as numinosity (Corbett 143–46): an experience that leaves the observer with a sense of wonder, awe, sacredness or being imbued with a positive life force or energy that is difficult to describe in material terms, but is nonetheless a lived and experienced phenomenon. My own unusual positionality and public visibility in spite of it mean that I necessarily unconsciously manifest and maintain a significant amount of *ireidi* in order to be able to exert functional unconscious influence over the community as *Kabesa* without that role actually being premised on any institution appointing me or recognising me in that role, and it instead being premised on relational means grounded in the amount of *ireidi* I generate:

- I am openly gay, non-binary, actively polyamorous, neurodivergent (autism, ADHD, High Sensitivity, Stacked-Sequence Synesthesia and Time-Space Synesthesia) and atheist as a public figure, and have successfully independently maintained this level of openness within paternalistic, conservative and heavily state-managed Singapore since 2021;
- I was the first publicly gay and non-binary serving civil servant, government school teacher, government / civil service scholar and Ministry of Education Teaching Scholar in the Singapore government from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022 (when I resigned from the service);
- I maintain full congruence between my private and public selves and do not distinguish the two, meaning that I am uncommonly (and neurodivergently) frank, candid, authentic and overt about my history of sexual trauma and abuse, my sexual desires and interests (and the people I am reciprocally attracted to) as a gay, non-binary and actively polyamorous man, and am extremely comfortable with body

positivity and my own near-nudity or nudity as part of my art and processing of my own experiences as a victim of severe sexual, psychoemotional and institutional abuse that targeted me for being gay;

- I maintain full independence from the Singapore state and all other institutions in Singapore while also maintaining this level of visibility, and consciously withdrawing from any project, endeavour or initiative that asks me to unjustifiably occlude any part of who I am, on the grounds that declaring that I am gay, non-binary and so on is somehow universally not appropriate, and that bare mentions of basic fact and property cannot be distinguished by members of the public from covert attempts at exerting an agenda, at ‘influencing other people to become gay’, and so on.
- I have maintained my public leadership of the Kristang community as *Kabesa* for ten years with near unanimous overt and covert support, even though most of the community is Roman Catholic, and a sizeable amount of the community lives in contexts where openly supporting or acknowledging a gay leader can result in severe social, economic and legal repercussions and/or even threats to one’s life or basic livelihood

My ability to maintain all of these parts of my experience as *Kabesa*, to do so without struggling under intense shame, to do so without subjecting the community to additional shame or disrepute, and to manage and handle the accompanying levels of psychoemotional transference, projection, mistreatment and abuse that one might imagine necessarily emerge from my doing this are thus postulated to stem from my very high personal levels of *ireidi*. *Ireidi* is necessarily psychoemotionally healthy by definition (i.e. if a form of self-regard is psychoemotionally unhealthy or narcissistic, it by definition simply just will not be called *ireidi*, since something that is *ireidi* must be psychoemotionally healthy), and is not the same as mere grounded confidence (*konfiansa*), endurance (*aguenta*) or resilience (*perzefra*); as

glossed in the Kristang research repository that I maintain, the *Libru Laranja* or Orange Book, *ireidi* is more

us accepting and therefore admiring in a balanced and objective fashion our own strength, beauty, attractiveness and sensuality, and appreciating and taking pride in what others see in us in a balanced and objective fashion ... many of us fear that if we admire or respect ourselves in any way, we will magically turn into narcissists, a fear encouraged by the global elite and unhealthy members of the Western psychology community who project themselves onto others. If we live in Singapore, we have the added fear of being shameful or selfish or a disappointment to our image-conservative family, a fear sometimes encouraged by unhealthy elements of the state. (Wong, “Tigrisoneru: On Self-Respect” 1481–83).

Ireidi and narcissism, even the concept and phrase of healthy narcissism, are thus not synonymous in any way, because as I will show below, *ireidi* relies on a foundation of pride and self-regard that is built autopoietically, on one’s own internal truths, actions, achievements and beliefs as a human being, rather than relying on any form of external validation for those truths, actions, achievements and beliefs. I am proud of who I am, and find regard for who I am, because I have operationalised myself and transformed myself based on my own terms and my own appreciation of what each of my actions and achievements mean in themselves to me, rather than on what anyone else might tell me they mean; at the same time, I paradoxically am only able to arrive at such stable self-concepts precisely because my psyche is constantly questioning and refining what these self-concepts mean by comparing them against what others say they mean, what my own society says they mean, what other societies say they mean, and so on. *Ireidi* thus stands apart as a separate psychoemotional construct that is operationalised differently in Kristang praxis and self-concept, likely due to the additional Kristang recognition of reality being fundamentally

Uncertain, or always mutable and shifting: one has a healthy and balanced respect for oneself, and admires oneself for what one is and what one has objectively achieved, and at the same time also recognises that this respect and assessment of oneself may not be shared by everyone else, and that that is okay – multiple conflicting or paradoxical assessments of who one is (or multiple truths, if certainty is taken as the epistemological axis or value judgement upon which one is evaluating reality) – can all be true at the same time (Wong, “Kultura Krismatra: Excavating the Progenitor Kristang Creole/Indigenous Way of Being in Singapore” 118–21).

This operationalisation of the concept of *ireidi* hence can clearly be seen to rely on the same notion of radical acceptance that informs many Western well-being frameworks, and even the same deeper understanding that the self or individual is premised as the main and focal point of all of one’s own lived experience and assessing of external (and internal) judgements and evaluations of one’s own functionality, worth, value, utility and so on. However, at the same time, where *ireidi* is different, and where it incorporates a uniquely Kristang or Indigenous approach to well-being, is in recognising the importance of acknowledging others’ interpretations of the self as also possibly, paradoxically and conflictingly valid, and therefore of placing the self in a healthy state of ongoing tension animating or inviting healthy growth: the self is valued and appreciated by the self for what it has concretely and unquestionably achieved from the self’s perspective, but also accepts and recognises that there may be truth, legitimacy, usefulness or value from all other perspectives too – or there may not, and regardless, it is the self’s own lived agency that will determine how much more the self wishes to grow or evolve from integrating (or ignoring) these other perspectives.

For myself, therefore, before I came out as gay, I spent many years trying to understand and grapple with *why* I was gay, and why I felt or believed being gay might be okay or might not be okay as a means of integrating the perspectives that exist today about homosexuality,

queerness and queer expressions of desire. I never diminished my own felt experience of being gay or being attracted to other people born biologically male, or tried to ignore it – to do so would take away agency from my own self and my positioning and honouring of myself as the main axis on which my own lived experience must be processed – and at the same time also sought out information about what this actually meant. Could this actually mean I had a disorder or was psychologically disordered, as earlier academic and now very-discredited work on homosexuality had sought to argue? Could this mean that just by existing or being myself I was being fundamentally inappropriate or threatening to the rest of society, as a number of other people in Singapore and elsewhere often like to argue? In concretising and building a stable psychological core or *koroza* that repeatedly sought to approximate more and more fine-grained alignment what I felt and experienced with how I thought and meta-thought about what I was feeling and experiencing, I therefore accidentally built a *koroza ireidi*: a nexus of stable self-regard that, in being able to justify and understand itself across all four dimensions of my own personhood, also self-perpetuates or becomes *autopoietic* in its paradoxical generation of positive and stable pride, consistency of affect and thereafter ability to withstand the pressure of letting itself be seen and understood in public as an endlessly exponentiating positive feedback loop – the goal of individuation as realised from a Kristang point of view and way of initiating and maintaining it. Rather than being overwhelmed by uncertainty, my psyche and *koroza* have learned to make use of it to further refine their own understanding of themselves, and in ways that recursively prove that the initial impetus to do so made logical sense and aligned with my own felt knowledge of what it meant to be Kevin, human and Kristang (Collier).

Discussion of *Irei*: Psychoemotionally Healthy Unconditional Love

Ireidi is one half of the duality that allows for sustained and functional well-being in the Kristang paradigm: it both informs and is given rise to by the other half of this duality, which

is called *irei*. *Irei* (both a noun and a verb in the Kristang language, with its categorisation as the latter being glossed in English as ‘to unconditionally love’) can be defined as a noun as psychoemotionally healthy unconditional love, exactly as the semantics of the phrase itself might lead a non-Kristang observer to anticipate: the ability to care about and show deep and unabiding love for any other human being or sentient creature across the entirety of one’s natural lifespan, such that that love is never withdrawn under any circumstances.

Whether unconditional love can even exist as a legitimate or functional concept has already been debated elsewhere in the literature from both philosophical (e.g. Cordner) and neurological perspectives (e.g. Beauregard et al.), with both finding some basis for its existence; my own lived experience, as unavoidably subjective and microscopically unreflective of all humanity as it is, also has provided this general understanding to me as a person who, prior to becoming *Kabesa* (and even still as *Kabesa*), generally remains autistically hyperfixated on coherence, logic and empirical measurement as standards by which I hold my own beliefs to. *Irei* is a phenomenon I have experienced from others and which I have noticed myself generate, and in psychologically very distinctively separate ways from *amor* or ‘normal’, non-unconditional love in Kristang. With my Time-Sequence Synesthesia (TMSPS) altering how I unconsciously and subconsciously perceive time, I often unconsciously perceive *irei* as a ‘rushing continuity of fire or energy’ that feels timeless and non-temporally bound, and a certainty that I can return to both in the present moment and in the future that does not change – no matter how hard I try to run away or escape from it. This phenomenon has been additionally confirmed as people who I experienced it from passed away across the course of my lifetime, differentiated from people who I did not experience it from also passing away without a similar feeling being engendered: key among these are my great-grandmother, Mabel Martens (1905-1999), who was the 10th *Kabesa* of the Kristang people from 1969 to 1989 and the person who taught me Kristang as a baby, my grandfather

and her son, Peter Rowsing Martens (1935-2021), and my Kristang teacher and mentor, Bernard Stephen Mesenas (1938-2021), who was not biologically related to me. Their love for me was *irei* rather than *amor* – a certainty that was pure, psychoemotionally unhealthy and consistent, and which was always going to be present no matter what I did as a person (and which, out of *irei* for them myself, I was never ever going to exploit or harness) till the end of their lifespans. I currently experience the same unconscious psychoemotional experience with my parents, my husband, two of my other current romantic partners, and one of my previous partners who I am no longer in contact with, the last being one of the key pieces of data that helped me to understand the concept of *irei* in the first place, as the bond with him has persisted despite us not being in contact since 2021.

Like *ireidi*, *irei* by definition must be psychoemotionally healthy, meaning that any form of co-dependency or ego-distortion is simply not *irei* by definition, as these constitute unhealthy or self-effacing forms of unconditional love. As also distinguished in the Orange Book, the key means of distinguishing *irei* from all other forms of unconditional love is that *irei* is

To love any living thing unconditionally and unquenchably, including if the living thing hurts one deeply or leave's one's life entirely, as if one is loving oneself (i.e. without becoming co-dependent) (Wong, "Irei: On Unconditional Love in Kristang" 4104).

Uniquely in Kristang epistemology, there is no *irei* for others without *ireidi* for the self (since one cannot truly unconditionally love others without doing the same for oneself), and there is no *ireidi* for the self without *irei* for others (since one relies on and needs others to provide perspectives on and refine what true self-regard means for oneself without any form of external validation). Both rely on paradox and Uncertainty Thinking to exist, and both are augmented and enhanced by paradox into becoming autopoietic or self-perpetuating. If I

never give up on myself and on wanting to become a better and happier person through developing my *ireidi*, then the same can be said for how I relate to and work with others through *irei*; likewise, all of the fruits and labour that I reap from my relationships with others through *irei* inform my own inner fire of self-regard that forms my *koroza ireidi*. A *korsang irei* or a heart of *irei* is therefore one that does not rely on a scarcity mindset when it comes to the amount of love one can have for the world, and is filled with as much *ireidi* for the self as one also has for others: “the rule of thumb...is the subject must still have the same level of self-regard for themselves as for the other” (Wong, “Irei: On Unconditional Love in Kristang” 4108).

Because *irei* is informed by *ireidi*, therefore, it also incorporates individuation as a necessary component of how healthy unconditional love and regard for another person manifests, as well as, paradoxically, the formation of a healthy and sustained interest in the other (*otru*), in the wider synchronic community (*Gaia*) and the wider diachronic community (*Semesta*), to the healthiest possible degree. As glossed in Kristang:

Yo amor kung bos ati kereh fikah mbes sorti di pesua yo podih fikah.

I love you so much that I will individuate for you / transfigure myself for you / be fully myself for you / become a better person for you [if that is what is needed for things to be better for you – because when things are better for you, they become better for me too]. (Wong, “Irei: On Unconditional Love in Kristang” 4111)

It is the same love that undergirds my own ability to leave someone’s life (as I have done many times in the past) as a result of being aware that, to the most objective degree that I can tell, and even and in spite of me wanting desperately to stay and/or to act on my own feelings and impulses and desires, that what is best for the other person (and therefore for myself) is for me to step back, so that the other person can individuate, no longer unconsciously rely on

me as a crutch or as an idealized mentor-figure, or no longer accidentally use me as a proxy for real *ireidi*. It is also the same love that allows me to forgive and reaccept people who have sexually abused, violated or raped me, and/or people who once wanted (or still want) me dead through the Kristang process of *Novokoroza* or Reconciliation, because *if I were ever in that position, I would need to do the impossible and herculean task of being able to forgive myself if I ever wanted to move forward* – and my own level of *ireidi* would motivate me to find a way to do so and make recompense for my errors. Even from a purely subjective or ego-oriented point of view, this also helps me, because what I experience is the world and universe that I live in filled with other people, and I want my experience of reality to be better and to be filled with much less harm, hate, loathing, fear and Death: everything that helps that manifest helps me and my own level of well-being too.

Conclusion: *Irei* and *Ireidi* as an Emancipatory Approach Toward Individual and Collective Well-Being

I have succeeded as *Kabesa* for the last ten years, and built up an organic, ground-up and wholly independent *koroza ireidi* and *korsang irei* that has allowed me to claim, name and expand my own existential and purely relational agency, leadership and mission to revive Kristang, not by force, power or might, by telling people what to do or coercing people into corners, or even by secretly narcissistically passively-aggressively expecting or suggesting that everyone idealise me as a superior or perfect human being. I have succeeded because I am profoundly and imperfectly human and absolutely unafraid of showing myself to be, and believe that *irei* and *ireidi*, however superhuman and impossible they may appear to seem, are actually grounded in the most mundane and ordinary lived experiences that can – and should – frame our communities and societies. Many Indigenous scholars and leaders will say the same.

What holds us back is the sheer weight and scale of the personal, collective and intergenerational trauma that still preoccupies almost all of us on every conceivable level, and which has only been increasing as society nears collapse. But it does not take a super-individuated person, or even an individuated person, to see how much better our planet could be if we finally acknowledged that we all have the power to see ourselves in others in fair, grounded and nuanced ways, and let them see us in the same. That, paradoxically, the miracle that might help us all feel better and once more dare to reach for a better world might be the one that lives and thrives inside of us, each time we realise that it was right there all along, waiting to be seen, appreciated, cherished and loved inside and out, *pra korpu, mulera, korsang kung alma* – in body, mind, heart and soul.

One of the other conditions that at first appears to be required in order to make *irei* and *ireidi* possible is learning how to not desire revenge or vindication. And yet, I believe this is not so very difficult either: it is simply believing and accepting that the best revenge or vindication, in a time of unparalleled crisis, stress, uncertainty and loss, is to be absolutely free from revenge and vindication themselves, by showing that a life well lived and loved is indeed the best and most paradoxically autopoietically unnecessary revenge and vindication of all.

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