



# BANGA CROSSING MASSACRE AND THE SAGUIBIN FESTIVAL: THE PARADIGMATIC PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCE OF LEVINAS' ETHICO-POLITICAL MILIEU TO WOMEN LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS

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## ABSTRACT

### KEYWORDS:

*banganhons, saguibin, bayanihan, massacre, crossing*

*The great calamity took place on October 21, 1942 to the people of the Municipality of Banga, a town next to Kalibo, Aklan. This event is known as the Banga Crossing Massacre. Banganhons were invited by the local town officials through the order of Lorenzo Songcuya Duran, the town Mayor, to welcome the arrival of the Japanese forces at the junction of Rizal and Mabini Street known today as Banga crossing in the Poblacion. Male crowds were told to bring long benches from the church in the nearby vicinity where they could sit. Banganhons described the occasion as a very happy event. Flaglets were waved as the Japanese forces arrived. As a return gesture and without any provocation, the Banganhons were fired upon from the machine guns, while others had their hands tied together with abaca ropes and held captives. The Banganhon's were subjected to many physical torture and indignities. While they were bound helplessly together, as prisoners were dozing off nursing their bruised and broken bodies, as they leaned against each other in painful position, muzzles of Mausers rifles were furtively struck through the wall from the outside and a valley of shots rent the silent air, waking them from their troubled sleep into instant death. And to immortality. Many atrocities and rampaged occurred in nearby places and several towns and hundreds and thousands of people died in this siege.*

*Today, influenced by the philosophical viewpoint of Levinasian face as trace of God and human's relationship with the other, the women local governance of Banga headed by its Mayor opted to value the "Aeaw-aeaw" or welcome Event or the Banga Crossing Massacre and as a solution to the tragedy imprinted on the minds of Banganhons celebrates the Saguibin Festival meaning "to help one another".*

*Every year, the above mentioned event is being reenacted and the town celebrates Saguibin. This is the equivalent of the word Bayanihan. Banganhons has a long standing tradition of its unique way of surviving and accepting the challenges that beset the municipality known for its rich customs and traditions. It is within this context of reviving the true spirit of cooperation and understanding among Banganhons in order to move forward without losing its identity as a people along with the idea of launching a festival that will add color and dramatic spectacle, this event is geared to promote the tourism potential of Banga and consequentially, sustaining environment concerns and economic gains in the future. This festival envisions integrating its rich cultural heritage and its present statue as center for educational excellence, trade, commerce, and industry.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Banga Crossing Massacre and the Saguibin Festival:  
The Paradigmatic Philosophical Influence of Levinas'  
Ethico-Political Milieu to Women Local Governance and  
Political Affairs

Death comes in many forms but to die for one's country is a gift of life to those who are living today. A life shared transcends time and space.



A peaceful place, a very hospitable and so generous/charitable environment, jolly, kind, and very convivial people with bright and smiling faces encounter anyone coming to this town. Faces that Levinas would agree to value. No one ever suspected that a tragedy would occur in the town of Banga, Aklan, a tragedy that ended hundreds of lives, and later thousands of lives; a tragedy that would have never been known if not for Edgar Orola, the lone survivor. He is now 82 years old while narrating.

A week before October 21, 1942, the town Mayor, Lorenzo Duran Sr. and Atty. Jose Orquiola called for a meeting. It was disclosed that on the following day, the Japanese Imperial Army would arrive and male people had to gather around to lovingly offer hospitality to the arriving forces or foreign visitors at the junction of Rizal and Mabini Street (known today as (Banga Crossing) in the Poblacion. The male crowds were told to bring benches from the church in the nearby vicinity where they could sit. Orola tugged along with his father. The crossing was the venue because it was customary for Bangahons to meet and talked with friends at crossing every afternoon. In small stores there, some Bangahons would drink 'tuba' coconut palm wine and talked to their friends. As Bangahon, who was then perched atop a coconut tree, described the occasion as a very happy event. Exciting welcome preparations were done. Flaglets were waved as the Japanese forces arrived. As a return gesture and without any provocation, the Bangahons were fired upon from the machine guns, while others had their hands tied together with abaca and held captives.

What happened? The day, the Japanese forces arrived by 7 a.m., over three hundred people coming from diverging barrios met at the 'crossing' where the welcoming would be held. One of them was the eight year old Edgar, together with his father 'Perfecto', half brother Diogenes 'Genes' Rigodon and cousins Federico and Rodolfo Rigodon. To their surprise, their beloved Mayor and his right hand, Atty. Orquiola where nowhere to be found. Because of this, Edgar's half-brother, Diogenes "Gene" Retino decided to lead the group.

Because of the unexpected number of people, Genes requested for the benches in the church so that everyone could be accommodated. then they arranged the benches facing 'comba' community of Banga [going to Libas].

At around 7:30 in the morning, Luis Macahilig and Gene Retino, Federico Rigodon, Jr. and Luciano Trompeta proceeded to Libas for an advance exciting party. While the second group stayed and was led by Mancho Trompeta, Perfecto Orola, and Rodolfo Rigodon.

After around thirty minutes, 8 a.m., the first group left going to the 5<sup>th</sup> Capiz Cadre ('now Philippine army camp) based at Libas, Banga as an advance party to welcome the Japanese soldiers. together with over 100 people who were singing, playing guitar and drinking tuba while the second group stayed and continued their own merry making too. Some were drinking 'tuba' with chicken in small stores there, others were telling stories and some were singing and playing guitars.

After an hour and a half, 9:30 a.m., Before the Japanese soldiers arrive at the Banga crossing, Romulo 'Molong' Nacino, Edgar's friend, came rushing and gasping to tell the waiting crowd of what had happened at Libas. However, this news fell on deaf ears. He was shouting: 'those who were at the meeting point were all slaughtered.' But to his dismay, nobody listened. He decided to run away saying, '*kong indi kamo magpati, bahala kamo.*' [If you don't want to believe, then don't].

When the Japanese arrived, everybody started shouting "Banzai Banzai" [Long live! Long Live!]. there were only eight of them. Flaglets were waved as the Japanese forces arrived. The Captain and his interpreter stepped on the rotunda while the others laid down and fixed their arms. The interpreter requested the people to form the benches into a circle and demanded people to squat before them. He asked the people that if they had a gun at home, they would raise their hands. He further said: 'do not be afraid because we will not do anything to you.'

Mancho Trompeta raised his hand. He was called and tied up with abaca rope. His son, Sianing, shouted 'Tatay ako pa!' [Me too Father!]. He was also called and tied up. Up to this point, the innocent trusting people still hadn't felt that the Japanese had other intentions other than just being friends. They just watched the scene without reading/reflecting.

Probably, Gene Robi felt something evil was going to occur. He stood up immediately, jumped from the bench, ran, and was shot by the Japanese. The interpreter asked again, 'who have guns at home?' No one answered. The interpreter told the Captain in Japanese that no one else had guns.

There was a woman running and shouting '*Hueata ako! Hueata ako!*' [Wait for me! Wait for me!]. Perhaps she came from Santa Cruz. They waited for the woman and she was ordered to squat also. She's the only woman in this massacre.

Then, the interpreter asked if there would be no one else to raise his hand. He told the Captain of the Japanese Army that there was nobody who owned a gun other than the two who were tied up. The Captain ordered 'Ready Fire' in Japanese and removed a red cloth from his pocket and waved it up high. All of a sudden, as a return gesture and without any provocation, the guns started to fire at the unsuspecting and trusting Banganhons in the assembly. To save little Edgar from machine guns his father Perfecto embraced him covering little Edgar from a valley of shots. The machine guns lasted for 30 minutes. It was the threshold of the excruciating sufferings of the people who came to welcome them officially.

Little Edgar could hear the bullets of 2 machine guns and 6 rifles whizzing past/ grazing by his ears and the dreadful sound they made when they hit the benches. Hundreds of people lay lifeless at the crossing rotunda. The blood of the eager jovial welcomer covered the municipality's landmark. Edgar had one eye open and saw everything. The lifeless bodies around the Rotunda, the helpless people, blood in every corner, the hideous event was forever imprinted on his mind.

After the gunfire, the Japanese soldiers roamed around to check the bodies. Those who weren't dead yet were brutally kicked on the ground and stabbed to death with bayonets. A soldier approached Edgar and stabbed him with bayonets many times immediately. Little Edgar screamed in pain and stabbing him with bayonets was reiterated a number of times. After screaming once, he controlled himself not to scream anymore despite the excruciating pain. He was also kicked like the others but unlike them he was still alive. He acted as though he was dead despite the tormenting pain. He also saw how the Japanese officer stabbed Gobito 'Tay Vito's' Abitang buttocks. Being near him, a few drops of blood that spurted from 'Tay Vito' hit his head.

When the Japanese believed that everybody was dead, they left. After a couple of meters away, they did a single file and lay flat on the ground, more or less 10 seconds, to see if anybody would stand up. Yet, no one did. It was repeated twice. When they finally left for Bacan, Edgar made sure that they weren't on sight anymore. As the soldiers approached the Bacan bridge, he slowly stood up. A man who was still alive, crawling, told him to run. But Edgar could not run because of his injuries. He walked away staggering. Despite the severity of his wounds, he was able to cross Mantac Road miraculously and climb Manduyog Hill where he saw their helper 'Oyo' with his rooster.

Edgar saw Oyo, who at first did not believe his narrative, but after seeing his injuries, was convinced. Oyo immediately put down his rooster, lifted him and rushed Edgar home. When he got home, Edgar told his mother about the death of his father, who was sitting beside him during the massacre. They were all grieving that they forgot Edgar needs help. Without a doctor and medicinal supplies to treat him, Edgar's half sister, Floserfida Retino, used medicinal herbs to heal his wounds. The therapy worked and Edgar survived. He thank God for surviving his near death experience.

Meanwhile, his brother Genes narrated to him what happened to them at Libas (first group). They reached Libas at 8:30 a.m. At 9:30 a.m., the first group welcomed the soldiers, just like the crossing group did, with 'Banzai Banzai'. The soldiers instructed them to do a single file with 20 group members, including Edgar's brother to fall in line. Genes was at the head of the line.

With their arms tied with abaca ropes behind their backs, they were made to stand helplessly at the sidelines. The other welcomers were killed the same way as those at the crossing. While they were bound helplessly together, as prisoners, they were dozing off nursing their bruised and broken bodies, as they leaned against each other in painful position, muzzles of Mausers rifles were furtively struck through the wall from the outside and a valley of shots rent the silent air, waking them from their troubled sleep into instant death. And to immortality. Two soldiers were left to guard the surviving prisoners as the rest proceeded to the crossing.

The Japanese returned to Libas around 4 p.m. and brought their helpless captives to the municipality of Balete. Some of the prisoners fainted from hunger as they walked the long way to Balete. Instead of helping them, the soldiers kicked them and forced them to stand up.

Reaching Balete at 1 p.m., the prisoners were brought to a hut beside the bridge. The hut was untidy and will almost collapse, so rain poured in there. It was cold. By then, Genes realized his hands were loosely tied and he could escape, but Luis uttered, 'Do not escape for we will be released tomorrow.' The next day at about 6 a.m. they were again told to fall in line. Genes was at the end of the line 'number 20'. Luis Macahilig was ordered to put his head on a railing. His head were cut off. Genes saw his body reacted as if experiencing extremely shaky convulsion. When he was beheaded, he heard him in a petrifying scream. His head fell into the water. The 2 Japanese throw his extremely shaky convulsing body to the water. Ten people were killed tormentedly that day. The remaining ones were returned to the hut. Genes prayed fervently to San Rafael, the Patron Saint of Balete whose feast day was to be celebrated every October 23. Around midnight, Genes felt his arms come untied. He untied the two people nearest to him but was unable to help his cousin Federico. He shed tears. Genes and his companions planned their escape. He told them the guard would light a cigarette at around 4 a.m. and they would tuck him and run.

At 4 a.m., they did as they had planned. There was some sort of a force that pushed Genes to the door to escape. It can't be the prisoners for sure. His fellow captives cannot do that because they were tied and could hardly move. At the door, the guard tried to hold him by his shoulder, he was able to escape. He was followed by 'Kapo' but he was stabbed with bayonet. The other one, Shaning Gubatina escape through a broken floor and jumped into the water and let the current of the water helped him escape the Japanese in that place.

Genes walked and run through the mountains of Balete, reaching the crossing at 6 a.m. and tried to check if Edgar was still there. He saw the corpse of the people being eaten by cats and dogs and the entire crossing was bathed with blood. Many atrocities and rampaged occurred in the same town and nearby places and hundreds and thousands of people died in this siege. Today, curiously, a lot of birds loved to line up in all the electric wires in this place from dusk to dawn.

Many believed that Edgar was given a second chance in life so that he could retell the story. Although he was not a war veteran, he contributed to the rich history of the province of Aklan. A commemoration of the said event is popularly known as the Banga Crossing Massacre. It is celebrated every October 21. It is called "*Pagaawacaw Festival*" which means 'Welcome Festival' to remember the lives of the ones who were killed in the massacre. Today, they were given a place at Venturanza Park in this town. Orola lamented the laxity of Bangahons and the trusting manner with which they treated their enemies. The massacre could have been evaded had they realized that the welcoming party failed to return along with the Japanese soldiers and if only they had listened to the boy who earlier relayed the news of the massacre at Libas. Likewise, the thought never entered their heads that with their number, they could overpower eight Japanese soldiers.

As of the time, Mr. Edgar Orola is living peacefully with his wife and his three daughters. Two of them decided to live abroad and the other one graduated also in college. Being a jolly man, no one would ever suspected that he has a traumatic past. His story enlightened the minds of the Aklanons about one of the most petrifying tales that happened in the past. The story of the Banga crossing Massacre would have not been told if not for him, the only survivor: the one and only Edgar Rigodon Orola.

Every year, the above mentioned event is being reenacted and the town celebrates *Saguibin*, meaning to help one another. This is the equivalent of the word *Bayanihan*. Bangahons has a long standing tradition of its unique way of surviving and accepting the challenges that beset the municipality known for its rich customs and traditions. It is within this context of reviving the true spirit of cooperation and understanding among Bangahons in order to move forward without losing its identity as a people along with the idea of launching a festival that will add color and dramatic spectacle, this event is geared to promote the tourism potential of Banga and consequentially, sustaining environment concerns and economic gains in the future. This festival envisions integrating its rich cultural heritage and its present statue as center for educational excellence, trade, commerce, and industry.

Truth is not psychological but epistemological. Attestation is the projecting forward of the self toward its own most possibilities is inextricably linked to testimony or witness. **Testimony** alludes to "words, works, actions, and to the lives which attest to an intention, an inspiration, an idea of the heart of experience and history which nonetheless transcend experience and history," that is, to an "original affirmation of the absolute." Attestation anchors the witness and the conviction. It is the self-directing authoritatively and defied to be the bearer of a promise or a hope.

Testimony is required in contested areas where evidence of eyewitnesses or experts are needed to settle a probable state of affairs. At an epistemological level testimony operates at the level of belief or attestation. Testimony emerges as an issue in our time is deduced from philosophies of

consciousness. Husserl points out a vertical dimension of the self. Ricoeur uses Levinas' word 'Height'. And when he refers to the infinite.

Unconsciously, Bangahons' viewpoints and actions are influenced by Levinas. It is evident in their daily lives. For Ricoeur, only Levinas was able to depict height and exteriority together in a philosophy of testimony. It is an epistemological attempt to anchor infinity and the other in the configuration of the human self. The other who makes me responsibility, whose face is the injunction, "Thou shall not kill."

Doing something for the other and giving my responsibility is the identification mark of my humanity and spirituality. I am indeed totally subjected to it. It goes actually as far as being responsible for the life of the other before one's own life.

The absolute uniqueness of each face makes the testimony to be concrete and singular. It is this face, this event, which confronts me, questions me and opens possibilities for me. There is a danger, however, for false testimony that is a false "height" to lay its claim. Hence the need for a criteriology of the Divine (Nabert). The indispensable role of testimony manifests itself particularly in the radical negation of the face of the other in our time. We have examined this negation through the reflections on the holocaust and the question it raises for the human as image of God. The holocaust is a novum in history through its creation of Musselmann (and in this study, the Banga Crossing Massacre). The image of God is not an essential, substantive feature of the human self. It can be lost. This forces us to reexamine the human as image of God and refuse it as an ontological trait and accept it only as an ethical mandate: we must act to restore the divine image to the limits of our power in every situation where it is threatened. Testimony in our time must pass through the testimonies of radical negation. Hence testimony involves the personal truthfulness of God.

## THE FACE AS TRACE OF GOD

For Levinas, the human face reveals the encounter God, particularly the eyes. It is a profound encounter with another person reveals a trace of God. When you encounter the other in this way, you cannot escape his or her uniqueness. The face has an authority because it is a trace of the divinity.

### The Face as Ethical

In Levinas' argumentation, the face suggests that there is another order of existence...the order of an incredible good calling us to be responsible for the other. Here the self-centred self is called into question. Here the other rules. The face makes us responsible. The Search for the Good leads to our neighbor. God touches us through the face of the Other. It is a relational: relationship driven. The central question in philosophy is: where is the Good? Each thing or person is a unique expression of the Good. In other people we see traces of God. The face of another (the Other) calls me to respond. Goodness translates into responsibility for the Other. The encountered other is the stranger whom the scriptures tell us to love. When I encounter suffering in the face of the other I am bound to act. That face arouses the goodness within.

According to Levinas, 'the Other' exists independently of me. 'The Other' cannot be an interpretation or a working of my own mind. One cannot reduce 'the Other' to his/her

discrete set of ideas. This cuts off contact with 'the other.'

In order to achieve the good, Levinas argues that we must orient ourselves toward 'the Other.' For Levinas, the optimal face to face encounter requires a specific orientation. When 'the Other' enters our self-focussed world, 'the Other' places him/herself above us. Not in a superior or dominating sense, but in a way that you lose the power of your own proud subjectivity and become instead the one who is called to respond. You are now placed in the role of servant rather than master. You are placed in a receptive and responsive position which demands your action. 'The Other' that imposes itself does not limit but promotes my freedom, by arousing my goodness. 'The Other' impacts you unlike any worldly object or force.

Think of a time you had an absolute experience of another: a face to face experience that touched you deeply. In the eyes of the other you meet a stranger, one whom you cannot reduce to being you. And in this person's look, 'the Other' calls you not to reduce his/her face to being the same as any other face. This person's face is a "no": a refusal to let you reduce the face or to deny the face its uniqueness. When one realizes that 'the Other's' face escapes objectification, this is when Levinas says that we experience an epiphany. This epiphany reveals our responsibility for 'the Other.' We are, as Levinas states, "hostage" to the other through our responsibility. Our responsibility for the other is nonreciprocal – we expect nothing in return. We always, as Levinas insists, have a responsibility to attend to as we are subject to the face and call of 'the Other.'

Here the search for the good ends. Levinas's ethics does not bend us in God's direction, but it twists us in the direction of our neighbour. God's infinite goodness touches us without our knowledge. God's touch will always be indirect. God touches us through the face of 'the Other' who begs spare change from us. God refuses to appear, leaving only a trace in the face of 'the Other,' retreating to make room for 'the Other.'

#### Levinas' Main Ideas

Levinas main ideas are as follows: first, the central question in philosophy is: where is the Good? Second, each thing or person is a unique expression of the Good; third, the face of another calls me to respond. How? First, goodness translates into responsibility for the Other (turn away from own desires and interests); second, the infinite Good (God) is at the heart of ethics; third, the good comes as a vocation (not from myself)

For Emmanuel Levinas, ethics unfolds in our relationship to the other. One of the major philosophical claims is that our potential to open ourselves toward the Other, without setting any demand nor condition, in that which commands not only our possibility to grow an ethical relationship but even our mere being human beings. Being ethical – or being human – is being open for, prepared to and impassioned with the radical difference of the other, i.e., that which we do not know already about ourselves or about the other. As human beings, we have a responsibility to be ethical and this means to reach beyond the being of the other and delve without compromising into the unknown, and to a huge extent unknowable, that is the Other's infinite otherness.

Concerning Banganhons, barbarism, cruelty, injustice, to mention a few are actually worse than war. Banganhons believed that aggressors could be resisted. This is synonymous to Augustinian defensive just war. In the case of Banga

Crossing Massacre, the of this study contended that in overcoming aggression as Banganhons learned to rise, their ancestors learned to rise, not only are the victims aided, but the aggressor himself is benefited. For the Banganhons from whom is taken away the freedom which the Japanese abused in doing wrong is vanquished with benefit to themselves, since nothing is more truly a misfortune than that good fortune of offenders...is revitalized. When the aggressors and their next generations learned that their evil conduct were not rewarded, a chastised aggressors were hopefully diverted to more virtuous pursuits to the great benefit of themselves and their neighbors.

Concerning the local government here in Banga, the profound influence of Levinas is evident to the women community of Banga. its Lady Mayor and Banganhons uphold the *Saguibin* and Mayflower Festival as a solution to the massacre impinged on the consciousness of Banganhons. The *Saguibin* denotes camaraderie among the people in the community and connotes to be united on the task helping one another in time of need. Levinas philosophy is evident in this town. It is "any action by a group of people in which each person subordinates his individual interest and opinions to the unity and efficiency of the group." It is a strong sense of warm family *togetherness and pakikisama* (going beyond the material considerations) – pervades. Mutual understanding and mutual respect. They have to be worked at with patience, and have to be constantly protected. It encourages the attitude and helping and caring, and promotes non-confrontation and peaceful instructions among people. It is committed to people/service showcasing a true pagkakaisang lakas (oneness in spirit). Progress of the family and that of the individual members is inextricably linked. For the ordinary women farm workers only with real mission of a sense of purpose that comes out of intuitive or spiritual dimensions will capture people's habits – required to realize a vision. *Saguibin* exemplifies oneness in spirit, action and thought. This tradition is the legacy of the ordinary women farm workers to the community. It bridges to the future sharing not just their very selves but also with a larger segment of society to continue to seek peace, harmony, reconciliation and growth. Thus, continuously promoting and sustaining development and progress and pursuing its responsibility to the community that will ensure success. It successfully builds up a productivity oriented organization. It corroborates and evolve on appropriate culture to contribute towards the difficult task of rebuilding an democratic institutions. Another scenario for *saguibin* paradigm is that whenever any job was too big for one person or one family to do, as in moving a house, the neighbors come around to help. The word used for cooperative neighbor was *bayani*, which also means hero. Thus, several neighbors working together to achieve a common good can be alluded to as heroes. This tradition is indispensable for the nation to recover from serious difficulties. It is a paradigm of teamwork and solidarity.

For the Banganhons, man is capable of the virtue of justice that makes democracy possible; but the fact that he can be unjust makes democracy necessary. In the Philippines, democracy is indeed possible because numerous Filipinos are capable of respecting the rights of others. Contrary to the common observation that the Filipino is extremely individualistic and selfish, the truth is: "The Filipinos are a cooperative people. They value the virtue of helping each other and other people. They cherish their ancestral trait of

upholding *saguibin*, which means cooperation. The Filipino has a built in spirit of solidarity in his culture. The ordinary women farm workers believed in communitarian interpersonalism utilizing *saguibin* spirit and pakikisama. The *saguibin* spirit, whether at the corporate or the national level, will not automatically lead to productive work or effective organizational performance unless it is purposely and decisively harnessed by a true leader. A corporate culture or at the national level cannot be a product of spontaneous “people power.” People power in itself cannot be a foundation of participative management or democratic practices. One man – a leader – has to elicit the spirit of cooperation from his followers such as the EDSA revolution. What is a true leader? Leaders are people who are able to express themselves fully. They know what they are, what their strengths and weaknesses are, and, how to fully deploy their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses. They also know what they want, why they want it and how to communicate what they want to others, in order to gain their cooperation and support. Finally, they know how to achieve their goals. The key to full expression is understanding one’s self and the world and the key to understand is learning from one’s own life and experience. Authentic leaders are not deterred by the weaknesses they saw in their culture. They built on their cultural traits by converting weaknesses into strengths. They used the very hierarchical nature of their society to great effect by imposing authoritarian rule. They realized that they could get away with some curtailment of political freedom as long as they were improving the standards of living of their citizens. Most Filipinos as a whole are characterized by predominantly Malay traits, with both strong and weak points. Filipino culture is allegedly flawed by the following weaknesses: extreme personalism, extreme family centredness, lack of discipline, passivity and lack of culture, a colonial mentality, lack of self-analysis and self-reflection, and lack of the cooperative spirit. The strengths are supposed to be sensitivity to people’s feelings: family orientation, joy and humor, flexibility, adaptability, and creativity; hard work and industry; faith and religiosity; and lastly, an ability to survive.

So, Banganons catered to the high value assigned to treat other beings with love and tender care and by fostering a climate of peace and cooperation rather than confrontation. The key is the *tagalog* concept “malasakit.” It means empathy. Unless we share the same concern (*malasakit*) and are committed to a common dream, we can achieve nothing. It is teamwork (*sama-sama, tulong-tulong*) that gives us strength and lightens our heavy loads especially in times of crisis and adversity. The value of blending of all individual minds and hearts are very important.

#### Conclusion

My humanity is grounded in my subjectivity and this one is in turn grounded in my face-to-face with the other. The conditions of this face-to-face are also the conditions of my humanity. As a human being, the face that is in front of me summons me, asks for me and begs me. The face is talking to me and ‘thou shall not kill’ are not only its first words, they are also in first order. We must make these words ours, there goes our moral responsibility.

The Ethics of Emmanuel Levinas is an ethic of responsibility. Being ethical is being responsible for the other. This responsibility for the other is immediate and not only a matter of perception. As soon as someone looks at me, I am

responsible for her. I do not need to take any responsibilities toward her. This responsibility is mine and I can neither ignore nor refuse it.

Meeting the face is not of the order of pure and simple perception, of the intentionality which goes toward adequation. Positively, we will say that since the Other looks at me, I am responsible for him, without even having taken on responsibilities on this regard.; his responsibility is incumbent on me. I am responsible for his very responsibility. My responsibility is thus both without start and endless. It is also non-reciprocal. I neither calculate nor expect reciprocity. I carry my responsibility and reciprocity belongs to the other’s responsibility.

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7. *Vespertina Rigodon Orillos*
8. *Dolores Mabasa Tirona (note: now bedridden and speechless – old age)*
9. *Municipality of Banga, Aklan as every year Banga Crossing Massacre is reenacted entitled "Pagaeaw-aeaw" meaning welcome at Banga Crossing Rotonda.*
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*The fact that some of those who were massacred were the relatives of my great grandmother. You can also interview the next generations of Lorenzo Duran, who lives in Poblacion, Banga, Aklan.*



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