

Presented at the 10th DLSU Arts Congress  
De La Salle University  
Manila, Philippines February 16, 2017



## Transpersonal Ecology, Empathy Gap, and the Case of the Lumad in Mindanao

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**Abstract:** Apathy towards the environment does not only affect the environment itself, but it also affects its inhabitants – especially those whose lives are interconnected with nature. Transpersonalecology is the psychologically-based idea of transcendental self-expansion to accommodate the ecosphere. Unfortunately, there is a neurological process called the empathygap which hinders people from going out of their way to act on issues they do not feel personally. The Lumad tribes consist of different indigenous tribes who adopted the term “Lumad” back in 1986 to separate themselves from the Muslim and Christian groups in Mindanao. Transpersonal ecology may seem like an off – and even outdated – concept, but the culture and practices of the different Lumad tribes here in the Philippines have been showing its applicability and importance. This research paper consists of the discussion regarding transpersonal ecology and the empathy gap, and the case of a selection of Lumad tribes in Mindanao. It does not cover the technical and legal aspects of environmental conservation and heritage preservation, and it assumes the applicability of empathy gap to non-relational beings such as the environment. Therefore, the following discussions will take place: 1) transpersonal ecology and the empathy gap, 2) culture and practices of the Lumad tribes, 3) viability of transpersonal ecology based on Lumad culture, and 4) how the empathy gap affects both. The goal of this paper is to show the viability of transpersonal ecology by using the Lumad way of life as an example, and to raise awareness – and subsequently, demand action – regarding the empathy gap.