# Thru the Lens of Latin America:

# A Wide-Angle View of the Philippine Colonial Experience

by Elizabeth Medina

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*To my fellow Filipinos -- wherever they are,*
*whatever they believe -- who love our Motherland*
*and think of what it means to be Filipino,*
*I dedicate this book.*

*Man is a historical being.*

Mario Rodriguez C.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks to historian Rosa Soto for her encouragement and fascinating description of her research into the fate of the black women slaves of Chile. To philologist Mirtha Alarcón for clarifying historical and literary terms and the main currents of Chilean historiography. To my history teacher Marco Saavedra, whose classes introduced me to Chilean history. To Angel García for thoughtfully reading and re-reading the drafts of each chapter and suggesting additional sources for the chapters on Latin America and Chile. Thank you also to Carmen Oria and Melvin Goldman, good friends who supported this project by providing valuable books and materials, and many others like bank executive Camilo Quintana, who shared their love and enthusiasm for Chilean history and provided pieces of knowledge from their deeply assimilated awareness of the past that I would have been hard put to discover on my own.

Finally I thank my teacher, Mario Rodríguez Cobos – Silo – who developed the system of knowledge and practices that enabled me, through long years of struggle and meditation, to understand the process of my life and to see it as a microcosm of my people's story.

# INTRODUCTION

This book is the third in a trilogy which was born from one book originally entitled "The Lost Centuries: Reflections on the Hidden Meanings in the Philippines' Colonial Past." Since "The Lost Centuries" was over six hundred pages long and combined material for ordinary readers with other topics of more interest to those with a specific interest in history, I decided to divide it into three volumes:[1] the selective translation of W.E. Retana's biography of Dr. José Rizal, the autobiographical account of my discovery of identity in Chile and the oral history of my grandfather's death, and this third book -- a vision of our colonial history framed within that of Latin America.

This work presents excerpts from the works of important Latin American writers and historians to Filipino readers unfamiliar with Latin American history, as well as my proposal for a different way of teaching our history that would aid in helping our youth in the process of identity formation, by widening their historical horizons and deepening their understanding of our complex and multi-layered cultural legacy.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I is about the theoretical foundations of my thinking and my ideas on how we can modify the way history is traditionally studied and taught, in order to put it at the service of the formation of a positive cultural identity. The first chapter develops the proposal of including the body and the emotions and applying global and process vision in historical research and teaching. The main objective of this complex-sounding approach is to see history as a living and dynamic phenomenon whose development becomes comprehensible when an understanding is achieved of the intentions that move the actors of history. These actors can be individuals as well as societies and nations, all of them following their dreams and projects or reacting to the dreams and projects of others.

To look behind the dates and the events and understand the whys and wherefores that fuel the strongly-felt actions of history's protagonists is to imbue history with life and to establish a living connection with it. We ourselves live our lives impelled by hidden, strongly felt motivations which in their essence are not so different from those of our forebears.

---

[1] The first two books are entitled "Rizal According to Retana: Portrait of a Hero and a Revolution" and “Sampaguitas in the Andes.”

However, the subjective motivations of historical protagonists are just one part of the hidden scaffolding of history. There is another aspect: the major context, the larger process. The stories and actions of historical protagonists are also part of broader, sweeping movements and developments in the world at large, and the other half of the equation for a new way of studying and teaching history is to discern the outlines of the "big picture" -- the macro historical processes of civilizations and major world developments that condition the microprocesses of countries and societies.

This change of focus is demanded by our new globalized world and the fact that all races and cultures have now overflowed over the old frontiers, whether in physical or psychological terms, as a consequence of the Age of Technology and Information. The world was always interconnected, but its interconnectedness was never so perceptible as it is today.

The Revolution of the United States was a struggle in which American colonials, the British, the French and South American creoles fought, as allies and antagonists. The Philippines, though in Asia, since 1521 has been a part of Western history, and its past as a former Spanish colony reveals upon closer study many interesting parallels and contrasts with that of Latin America. If Filipinos have had identity conflicts which arose during our colonization by the United States, the Latin American countries today are facing a serious issue of cultural invasion, as a result of the explosive expansion of U.S. business interests in the Southern Hemisphere.

The immense majority of postmodern Filipinos may think they have nothing to do with Latin America; however, I have discovered from experience that we have everything to do with that marvelous continent. As indigenous tribes whose culture was eradicated by the conquistadors, we shared not only the fate of the Indians of Latin America, but their provenance as well, for the first settlers of the American continent were part of the large migration that crossed the Bering Strait 40,000 years ago -- the same race which populated Asia. Included in this book are excerpts from important works -- the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano's landmark *The Open Veins of Latin America*, and Argentine journalist Ricardo Herren's *The Erotic Conquest of the Indies*. They will give Filipino readers a compelling glimpse at the tragedy that the Spanish conquest signified for the Indians of the Aztec and Inca empires, and enable them to weigh the invisible implications of the Conquest for the native psyche and for the future of the colonial societies -- and the 'modern' republics

that succeeded them -- which were founded over the ruins of the Indian world. It is my hope that they will not only inspire Filipinos to find out more about the past of their Spanish-speaking family in the Third World, but that they will also powerfully communicate the fact that the human dimensions of our own history are much richer than we have imagined them to be, and that they are not irrelevant to our present lives. It is not a matter of letting bygones be bygones and leaving the dead to lie in peace -- the dead must not be forgotten because they are the guardians of our soul; they can give us strength to repair our ancient wounds and rebuild our nation's spirit, by anchoring us in certain knowledge of who we are and what our past has really meant.

Part II is entitled “An Alternative Look at Philippine Colonial History” and suggests a new way of looking at our Spanish colonial period by framing it within the wider context of Latin America's Spanish colonization and emancipation, and in parallel to the specific process of Chilean history. It is followed by an "alternative reading" of the descriptions of the revolutionary period and its protagonists given by Teodoro Agoncillo in his excellent *A Short Story of the Philippines*, in which I offer clues as to how we might configure a more culturally meaningful vision of that time, by considering the Hispanic-Filipino cultural landscape as we read about our revolutionary history -- a cultural landscape which was quite different from the new mentality that arose during the subsequent years under U.S. rule.

In Part III, I reflect on our colonial experience under the U.S. and present a hypothesis of how and why we developed feelings of ambivalence toward the United States. We have been left today with the image of the Spanish as bad colonizers and of the Americans as good ones, and in the course of our intricate history I believe we internalized distorted and limited concepts of racial, linguistic and cultural superiority and inferiority. The result of this has been that our social behavior and interactions are pervaded by guardedness and defensiveness, ambiguity and the avoidance of self-definition. The "critique" which I develop of the essential intentions of the United States tries to balance the scale between the Spanish and the U.S. colonial experiences by pointing out the negative and positive aspects of both eras. I believe this analysis is important to free us of the ambivalence and denial we have felt toward our memories or perceptions of both periods, by making us aware of the fact that both have brought us to our situation today of willingness to grow in the direction of political maturity and social responsibility.

The book's penultimate chapters link our past of serial colonization to our unresolved issues of identity and proposes a concept of identity that is grounded in the body and the emotions and not on intellectual theory -- an identity rooted in an acceptance and celebration of our collective past. I base this hypothesis on a deep intuition that the Filipinos' past remains unintegrated and holds many unresolved conflicts and unmourned losses, whose consequence could be no other than a damaged and fragmented identity. I present the ideas of the highly respected and deeply loved Venezuelan writer Arturo Uslar-Pietri, and of the late African-American poet Marlon Riggs, both of them visionaries whose thoughts can help clarify our own path towards building a positive Filipino identity. The formation of a positive identity will be the contribution of each nation to the construction of a new planetary civilization, peopled by creative and loving human beings. It is my belief that, as an essentially creative and compassionate people, Filipinos are especially called to this task.

Elizabeth Medina
Santiago de Chile
May 1999

# PART I

# CHANGING THE TELLING

## Chapter 1

## Intention and Theoretical Basis

Though this book has an academic-sounding title and topic, it was never my intention to write for an academic readership, but for ordinary people like myself who are interested in our history and enjoy thinking about its importance for our day-to-day lives. The original book this volume came from and that I started to write in 1991 began with the account of my personal experience as a young girl of disconcertment in front of the way I was taught about Philippine history, and alienation from my own culture. That sense of alienation impelled me out on a long voyage in search of something to identify with, which came full circle when I moved to Chile and, there, miraculously encountered my Filipino self.

The journey that began with my flight from the Philippines ended with the deep desire to return and share my experience with other Filipinos, of discovering the outlines of our country's story imbedded in Latin America's colonial history. However, given the realities of book publishing, I was advised to focus my book more precisely on the kind of readership who, in the eyes of publishers, would be most likely to be interested in a book on history -- academics. And so, these essays and excerpts from the works of Filipino, Latin American and North American writers and historians are presented in a volume for readers who are "academically oriented." It is important to me to emphasize, though, that my intention is to open a dialogue and share a point of view that may be useful and interesting for other ordinary, thinking persons like myself, especially my fellow Filipinos.

My main hypothesis is that history is to a nation what biography is to a person, except that the subjects of historical study are of a larger scale and the space-time categories much expanded in comparison to those that apply to a single human life. I haven't developed this concept beyond the level of hypothesis and don't consider myself capable of doing so alone, but I believe it is interesting enough to merit writing about it, because of the positive changes that thinking in these terms have brought about in my own life and attitudes, in

terms of helping me to resolve and constructively channel my life-long struggle with identity.

This hypothesis suggests a change in how history is taught, especially in our high schools and universities, to non-specialized youth. Instead of teaching and studying history in intellectual and external terms, *to find the way to help our young people feel vitally linked* to it, just as a person in the ideal case feels deeply connected to his or her past. This is a challenge to the traditional separation between intellect, emotions and physicality in the field of knowledge. It is a proposal that is based on a vision of man and the world as forming a unity, as being one, and not separated or alienated from each other. The world exists for us because we can perceive it and are dynamically related to it. We perceive the world through our bodies, our minds and our feelings. If we are isolated from the world (which is practically impossible in real terms but can be experienced as a background, psychic reality) we die, and in fact people who are put in solitary confinement suffer serious psychological alterations. We need the world, and it is not just a problem of survival. The external world is our challenge to grow and the point of application for our creative energies. Our fellow human beings are also "the world" -- not simply nature. We need the human world in order to fulfill our individual human potential, which in essence is a lifelong process of learning to love. We are thus a part of the world, extensions of the world, and the world is in turn the extension of ourselves.

Man and world form a connected, dynamic and evolving structure with multiple connections and feedback circuits. In this structure, the human consciousness is the great perceiver and processor of information, the point of contact, as it were, which makes it possible for human beings to communicate with each other, undertake joint enterprises in the struggle to survive and progress -- all of this, in connectedness with the world as a living part of themselves.

When I propose to link history to the body and to the feelings, I am essentially suggesting that we add the dimensions of body and emotion to the one that is traditionally explicitly exercised in historiography: the intellect. In reality, the emotions and the body are always implicitly included in everything we do, but when there is a bias against them, as has indeed been the case, not only in the study of history, but in all of Western culture since the end of the Middle Ages and the emergence of the Age of Rationalism -- there are problems. We already tend to approach our history as just facts or dates and as being removed from the histories of the Western nations; sometimes as quite interest-

ing and motivating, but mostly (especially for students) as a chore to be gotten through with a passing grade. Certainly, its deeper relevance for who we are today and how we became what and who we are has been left unexamined. The result of this is that we do not become grounded in our history except for the rare exceptions among us who, in spite of the dry treatment that most teachers give the subject, connect deeply with it and are inspired to learn more on their own. For most of us, this means that in matters of our history and our collective personality as Filipinos, we are a bit like a person who has suffered amnesia as a result of past traumas who must reinvent himself at every moment and whose life unfolds with a background feeling of being adrift on an unknown sea, moving in an unknown direction. Though a few individual Filipinos who have reflected deeply on this may feel they have it clear for themselves, and others may have strong convictions and opinions on the subject, as a whole, as a nation, I question whether we feel sufficiently grounded in our past, and understand and treasure it.

Our particular history of serial colonization tells me that we are already a special case. Nevertheless, according to the historian Morris Berman, this problem of dissociation of individuals from their national history is a well-nigh universal condition in the West. It is my conviction, based on personal experience, that to link the past to the present is to cease to drift, it is to have an inner map and compass. Any nation deeply connected to its past has a metaphorical rudder, a psychic cohesiveness that empowers it to forge a destiny.

It is as a consequence of this line of thinking that I link the study of history with the formation of a positive cultural identity.

Because this proposal for a modified approach to history is in effect oriented toward an unorthodox fusion between psychology and history, I am carefully informing my readers as to where the concept comes from. It comes from my consciousness, of course -- from my personal history as a Filipino -- and from my studies from 1973 to the present of a current of thought, a school called Siloism, or New Humanism.

All mental constructions come from somewhere, usually from a human source and not directly from the Holy Spirit. This is not to say that I am disparaging belief in God as a source of illumination -- but this is the ground of personal faith. I am not questioning anyone's possible belief in divine inspiration. I mean that a theoretical system, as opposed to a simple intellectual intuition, is generally the product of a school that has been developed by one or a line of

pioneering teachers. My school is not yet found in any established institution or university, though it is beginning to figure in bibliographies related to transpersonal psychology and political and sociological theory. Since I use a special vocabulary that will probably be new for most of my readers, I have included a small glossary at the end of this book to define terms such as "consciousness" and "intentionality," and to clarify how I use other, more familiar terms such as "culture." It would be disruptive to footnote each mention I make of the ideas developed by the founder of Siloism, thus I will state at this point that all of the concepts applied and developed in this book, unless otherwise indicated, come from and can be further studied in the works of Silo listed in the Bibliography.

Siloism, or New Humanism, is a system of theory and practices for simultaneous personal and social change which began its public life when the Argentine thinker Mario Rodrguez Cobos gave an open-air talk at the foot of Mt. Aconcagua in 1969 on "The Healing of Suffering." Mario Rodríguez lives in Mendoza, Argentina, and has written a considerable number of books under his pen name "Silo," which have been translated into 25 languages in 100 countries. On October 6, 1993, Silo became an honorary member of the Russian Academy of Science. His ideas have been studied and written about by some of Russia's foremost scientists and philosophers, including Mikhail Gorbachov. I began to study Siloism in 1974 in Berkeley, California, though I first made contact with it in Manila in 1973, just before my family emigrated to the United States. From 1974 until 1986 I studied Siloism and its Psychology of the Consciousness. Together with other Siloists I taught free courses in stress reduction techniques at the University of San Francisco, to teachers from the Concord Unified School District, and at the San Francisco YMCA, as a community service. I led self-knowledge groups and workshops in San Francisco, Washington, D.C., Berlin (West Germany), and in Santiago, Chile. Intellectual teamwork, community organizing, autobiographical study, training the attention and developing the mind's capacity to think in a structural way and with process vision, were important skills which I began to acquire in those years. My later high school and university studies in Santiago provided me with the material on Latin American and Chilean history that I present in this book, a task which I could not have achieved, even at this modest level, without the help of many friends and mentors. The information and experience I have acquired throughout my life have come into play in my writing, but the intellectual scaffolding, or the major framework that allows me to establish relationships and identify new connections between data

within a coherent context, is the legacy of my studies and practical application of Siloist doctrine.

## Theoretical Clarifications

It is very important for me to clarify to my readers the theoretical bases of this work, the concepts that form the foundations for its development.

The first is: *Man is a historical being.* Human beings, to an extent unknown in the other animals, are defined and marked by their past. Man is born into human society already inheriting a long accumulation of social experience, which includes the memory of family, nation, and, -- in its maximum extension -- that of the entire human race. Animals, unlike us, are born into a purely natural world, certainly one having its own complexity and social structures, even language, but without the accumulated memory that human beings have of the ways their forebears have modified the natural environment in order to create a peculiarly human mode of existence.

This leads to the second concept, which is that *Man exists in relationship to an environment, a relationship that is structural and dynamic*. Structural, in other words, means multi-leveled and multi-relational. In a word: complex. We relate to our environment at the most basic levels of seeking food and shelter, and as the most basic needs are met higher needs arise: sexuality, affiliation (belongingness), individuation, spirituality. We relate to the world of natural phenomena, of animals and plants, as well as to the world of other humans, whether like us or different from us. We are also aware of our mortality, we remain linked to those who have died who were important to our lives, and we project our drive for survival, even our desire for immortality, through our wishes for those who will live on after we die, and these psychic contents give rise to the dynamic between generations, between tribes and clans in the eternal struggle for predominance and survival. This, very briefly, is what is meant by the structural and dynamic relationship between human beings and their environment.

The basic idea is that you cannot separate the human being from its environment, and therefore this apparent duality is really a unity. Just as without an environment the human being cannot live, without the human being the environment does not exist -- at least, we are not there to perceive it (I speak from the point of view of my human existence, I cannot speak from another; this

entire work is enunciated from this position, from the position of human existence, and not from any other).

But what happens with this structure of human being - environment? Is it static? No, it is dynamic, in process and constantly changing. Yes, nature has her own rhythms and cycles, she is in her own way alive. But humans, both individually and as communities, also undergo their own rhythms and cycles in accordance with the demands of life and survival. And as human life has evolved, it has always grown more complex. Evolution, in fact, as the expression of the intentionality of life, is recognizeable in the movement from simpler to more complex forms of life, from simpler to more complex human responses. These responses become codified into customs, rituals, cultures, technology, science.

In the dynamic structure of man - nature, it is human consciousness that begins to act over nature to change it, to modify it, in order to make the environment a space that is more welcoming to human life. Thus small transformations began to occur, whose accumulation over the millenia led to the emergence and development of parallel and successive human civilizations. The development of human civilization has been the externalization of the development of the human consciousness, as the human mentality has undergone transformations through the ages.

In other words, as we have acted over nature and created a more human world, we ourselves have changed. It is not a difficult idea to grasp, though I do not have sufficient knowledge to develop it more elegantly past this point.

Human beings, therefore, through their human consciousness (which is *active* and *not*, as has long been believed, passive, and works in permanent engagement and dialogue with the external world), are characterized by their unique capacity to transform their world, and, in that process, to transform their own mentality as they continually create and recreate their cultures -- which in essence, are the expressions of their evolving, innermost being.

For human beings to become aware that such an active, transformative consciousness exists, is the great leap that has already been produced in our time. The study of the nature and functions of this consciousness and the application of the new knowledge that is born from it have already revolutionized our planetary civilization.

## Man is Not Merely a Natural Being

The realization that the consciousness is the element that drives human life and transforms the natural environment -- and man himself, given that, in a structural relationship, if one element changes, then the other must necessarily change as well -- has important implications. One of them is that man is not his body alone. It means that human beings are only partially defined and determined by their racial makeup and geographical location. Even more important than race and geographical origin are our respective histories and how our cultures have evolved throughout the approximately 1.7 million years that we have lived on Earth. In other words, more than natural beings, we humans are psycho-biological beings who have been shaped -- more than just by race and geography -- by the particular processes that collective consciousnesses have undergone in the different human civilizations that have thus far developed on this planet.

## The Consciousness as Interpreter of the World

The consciousness structures and interprets the data it receives on the world into a particular view of reality, but it is not able to structure reality *as it is* -- it structures a *human reality* that is a reflection of the way that a particular consciousness structures. Therefore, at the most we can hope to share an interpretation or reach consensus. We cannot claim to see reality *as it is* and impose that vision on others. Thus, *what is presented here is one interpretation of reality and not the absolute truth* .

And yet, even as my personal consciousness cannot claim to possess the Final Truth, it can claim to possess its particular truth, forged from the experience and knowledge gained in the course of one experienced life. And since my consciousness is not floating in the void, but is part of the greater consciousness of humanity, as well as in dynamic engagement with the world (for my experiences were gained thanks to engagement with that world), then it can perfectly well be that the interpretation or vision of my consciousness may be shared by many, many more.

Human society -- from the family, to the clan, to the nation and to the race -- is anchored in a shared consciousness of itself and of greater life. And the truths that arose in certain eras which were then embraced without argument or conflict by the ones that followed them, were accepted because they coin-

cided with the registers, the intimate experiences, intuitions and comprehensions of large human collectivities.

Thus, even while I state that the vision developed in these writings is subjective, is just one description, one interpretation of the world and not Reality Itself, in the same breath I declare that I do not accept that anyone else owns the absolute truth and has the right to impose it, or that anybody else's interpretation automatically invalidates my own, since my interpretation is based on life experience and not on invented or borrowed theories without grounding in experience. What is more, another factor which, in our globalized era, gives added credibility to my "subjective" vision is the fact that the experiences and knowledge I present in this work have not arisen from my unique sensitivity, but from that of a collectivity that is multi-racial and multi-cultural -- the New Humanist Movement -- that has been developing its activities in fifty-five countries on all the continents since 1969. Thus I trust that mine is a shared vision with value for our times.

**History, Memory and Identity**

Within the context of the preceding ideas and in logical consequence, the orthodox or conventional approach to history is therefore also an interpretation, and I posit that it is an inoperative one for the formation of identity. Of course, it was never intended to serve such a function. In my belief, history as it is still being taught has had the main objective of creating and maintaining a memory of the past which purports to be objective, based on the extensive gathering of data from certain sources considered to be the most impartial, complete and reliable. It has been a history that emerged from the Age of Rationalism, an era which our more complex age has surpassed. Thus there have been filters acting in the process of creating that memory in accordance with the overvaluation of what was "objective," untainted by personal interpretations, emotions, by the vision of the unenlightened and the unimportant. A selectivity was thus exercised that left out certain viewpoints and materials. For example, oral history, oral traditions, the viewpoints of women, of minority ethnic groups, of powerless and therefore voiceless (and pen-less) majorities. The most internal aspect of history -- the invisible dimension of the evolving corporal, emotional and mental life of large human groups -- has been largely excluded, again, because Rationalism placed undue importance on individuals, on brilliant men from the dominant races and cultures of the West.

It couldn't be any other way, since the World *was* the West. The West was the center of the universe. Western, rationalist, positivist academe knew little about the mind and was unwilling to seriously investigate the power of the hidden and invisible dimensions over the so-called conscious and higher faculties. Only matter counted -- the West's vision of matter. As we all know now, even Positivism knew too little about the invisible, incredibly complex interrelationships inherent to Nature and Life, and that ignorance, once believed to be the height of human knowledge and sophistication, has led us to a worldwide environmental and spiritual emergency...and opened the door to the expansion of our species' consciousness.

One signal of this expanding awareness is the questioning of the old paradigms of authority. Does academe own our history? Do the historians own it? I believe not. They were never meant to be owners, but guardians. They were meant to teach and guide, not to frighten away, intimidate or exclude. To serve and not to rule, nor to serve only the children of those who rule.

There is no one authority or final arbiter over our nation's memory, except ourselves. The memory is plastic and changeable, not just from the point of view of its contents, but from the point of view of which areas receive more importance than others at different moments. When one is a child one remembers different things and in a different way than when one is sixty years old. In different historical moments there are different needs and thus history will be studied differently according to the conditions created by those varying needs. The one requirement that cannot change is the care exercised with respect to the gathering of information, the rigorousness of the research that is carried out, the use of reliable sources and the commitment to preserve and respect them. The rest is a work of interpretation, which must combine erudition and human sensitivity to such issues as ethics and serving the welfare of the social whole. Erudition and human sensitivity that are attuned to *this* epoch, without false loyalties or obligations to previous constructs that have lost validity, because they are proper to earlier stages of cultural evolution, earlier moments of process.

In any case, you who read this will be the final judges of whether this particular interpretation serves your needs at this particular moment in time. No doubt this work will receive its due share of criticism; however my main concern is not to avoid criticism but to reach the widest possible audience, so that our people will *start talking about our history and become newly aware of our selves* -- because awareness is the beginning of growth. And my hope is that I

might succeed in explaining my thoughts in a language that will be clear and understandable, not just for cultured adults, but also for young people in high school and college.

To summarize, I develop a proposal in this book for making our history more relevant to our present lives by seeing historical events as human happenings that involved large groups of people, whether in our land or in lands far from us, whose lives are somehow still connected to our own, and whose past actions continue to influence us today. I also propose that we can and must expand our vision of our past by relating it to the stories of other lands and nations who in fact shared our history but who are currently excluded from our history books. The purpose for doing this is to put the study of history at the service of forming a positive Filipino identity, an image of ourselves that will be based on a vital connection with the past, on an acceptance and honoring of the good things, and comprehension of the bad things stored in our collective memory, because these will bring acceptance, honoring and comprehension of ourselves.

The basic ideas that underlie this work are: 1) the human being is a historical being that is both shaped and conditioned by the accumulation of social and historical experience, more than by mere natural factors such as race and geographic origin; 2) the human being exists in a structural relationship with the environment, in oneness with a world that is only apparently separate from it; 3) the human consciousness is the powerful, invisible connective between the human being and the world. It is *active* and through it we are able to configure a meaningful image of ourselves in relation to the environment. That image orients our behavior toward forging a dynamic relationship with the world that assures not just our survival as individuals, groups or nations, but our development as a species toward more complex stages and levels of culture.

Finally, the vision put forward in this work is an interpretation of reality that makes no claim to being the absolute truth. However, it is a grain of truth that may give voice to the truth of many millions of other Filipinos -- since my consciousness is part of the greater, collective consciousness of my countrymen and women. They will be the ones to confirm whether or not this particular vision is useful or applicable. But be that as it may, I claim equal merit for this vision to receive serious consideration -- along with proposals from other sources -- as a responsibly-offered contribution to the search for alternatives to

the traditional approaches to studying, teaching and reflecting about history in general, and Filipino history in particular.

## Chapter 2

## A Proposal for a Somatic and Structural History

I have studied literature and literary research methods but never formally studied history, nor did I ever feel especially attracted to it. However, after I met a Chilean historian named Rosa Soto, I became so excited about the idea of doing historical research that I set myself the goal of one day carrying it out in the Philippines.

Rosa is the foremost expert in Chile in an area that she is the first to have studied in depth: the fate of the black slaves brought to Chile from the 16th to the 18th centuries. There are no black people today in her country, but Rosa asked herself one day: Once there were black slaves here -- what happened to them? Where have they gone? As a feminist, she was especially interested in learning what had happened to the female slaves. She set to work getting permissions from churches to study their old documents, and from the government to obtain access to financial records dating back to the colonial era. From these she pieced together a fascinating story and published a book that established her as the authority on the topic in academic circles. As she told me, "I rescued my poor black women from their anonymity, and they rescued me from mine."

She was especially aided by the sale documents she found in church archives. Not only did Rosa learn how the slave trade worked in Chile and how the slaves lived, she also learned certain things about the process of Chile's liberation from Spain under the leadership of Bernardo O'Higgins. O'Higgins was the illegitimate son of the Scottish-born Viceroy of Peru, Ambrosio O'Higgins. His mother was Isabel Riquelme, a Chilean woman of aristocratic Spanish lineage from the southern city of Chillán. During the early 1800s, the Chilean patriot army was formed by landed creoles who obliged their peons to join up. The tenant farmers and laborers had no idea what they were fighting for and many among them were former slaves. In fact, the five thousand-man Liberation Army led by Argentine General José de San Martín, which crossed the Andes mountains into Chile together with O'Higgins, included a large number of freed slaves.

Rosa informed me that, contrary to popular belief, the women of Chile's colonial society were not all retiring, well-coiffed, powdered ladies who spent all

day fanning themselves inside the large hacienda houses or in dusty Santiago. Their husbands sometimes had to leave their farms or businesses on trips that could last months, and their wives often took over the running of their absent men's business affairs. Many women carried out business activities in Santiago, such as curing and selling beef, running kitchens that served meals to laborers and selling grain. As for the slaves, the only ones who could afford them were the large landowning families, besides, of course, those who bought and sold them, and so it was in these families where miscegenation took place between slave women and their masters. Slavery began to disappear when a law was passed in Chile that declared the children born to slave women free. Their illegitimate children were usually taken in by the families who owned them and given the family's surname. Thus, even today the "genotype" or black racial features sometimes surface atavistically in the offspring of the most aristocratic Chilean families. This is also why, when Rosa is commissioned to trace a family's genealogy, she makes clients pledge not to cancel the contract if she discovers that black blood runs in their family.

In the end, Rosa realized, the slaves were freed (slavery was abolished in Chile 42 years before it ended in the United States) and mixed with the general mestizo population. However, one can still find traces of the genotype; all one has to do is take a walk in the streets of Santiago and one will find a few Chileans with kinky hair, broad noses, a certain set of the head, a certain physiognomy. The few Africans who once were brought to Chile to do the hard physical labor in the plantations (which the Indians did not have the stamina to do) have in effect been absorbed and melded with the mixture of Spanish and Indian and European that are today's Chileans. I have been told by philologist Mirtha Alarcón that music experts have discovered that the cadence of the "cueca" -- the Chileans' national dance and music -- is of African origin.

When I explained my idea of writing this book to her, Rosa Soto enthusiastically explained to me the changes that had taken place in historiography since the 1960s, synthesized in the idea that there are in fact many histories, not one. There is a history of ideas, a history of culture, a history of women -- to name just three -- depending on the interest of the researcher and the point of view from which they wish to approach history. Historiography today studies the stories of common people, because it has been proven that their protagonism in the historical process -- until now invisible because it was left out -- has had no less weight than the deeds of their famous leaders. The search for knowledge has likewise acquired a new orientation. Whereas in the past, data gath-

ering was an end in itself and valued in much the same way as money (i.e., the more mountains of it were accumulated, the better) today data is the means to gain access to multiple meaningful visions of the past. Data obtained through rigorous research is important, but above all it is quality, not quantity that counts, and the researcher's capacity to skillfully work with information.

In the not-so-distant past, history had been, as Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano described it, "dead letters which in our times gather together the dead letters of past times." The body and emotions were excluded, despite the fact that history has always been made by passionately felt, momentous human acts. Morris Berman, a mathematician and historian of science from Seattle, Washington, was the second important influence in my process of reflecting on how history can be made relevant to the present. He developed the idea of including the "somatic" dimension in the book, *Coming to Our Senses*. I immediately resonated with his engaging description of his first encounter with external history in high school:

> I was born and raised in upstate New York. During my high school years, we were required, as part of the history sequence of our education, to spend time learning about local and regional history. Our textbook had a chapter about the Colonial period, another about the defeat of the Iroquois, still another about the building of the Erie Canal, as well as ones on the rise of the steel and textile industries. For all I remember, there may even have been chapters on working-class movements, strikes, the formation of labor unions, possibly something on the life of Emma Goldman[2] (though I doubt it).
>
> That I *don't* remember is largely the point here. It was all crushingly boring; it seemed to have little relevance to anything that really mattered, to me or any of the other students forced to study this material. Yet it never occurred to me that there was anything wrong with this, because all of high school -- or, I should say, the part devoted to formal education -- was boring. Chemistry and Latin were no different from history, even though history was supposedly about "real life." Yet none of us were deceived about what actually constituted real life. Real life was your awkwardness in front of the opposite sex, your relations with your peers, your struggle to cope with what went on in your family. And for many of us, fear played a large part

[2] Russian-born labor agitator in the U.S. and lifelong exemplary activist (1869-1940).

> in all of these dramas. Yet none of this was in the history books; why (white) people bothered killing Indians or building canals remained a total mystery, and not a very interesting one at that. History, no less than chemistry or Latin, was a set of abstractions, a bunch of formulas to be learned and later repeated. Which is what we did.
>
> It will of course be argued that all of high school is a disaster, generally for everyone, and that my use of textbooks written for teenagers is an unfair example. But is it really? Pick up almost any history monograph today, including ones written by sophisticated or "sympathetic" historians, and you will generally confront the problem of reading about things that somehow fail to resonate with what is most familiar to you. And what is that? In a word, your emotions, or more broadly, your "spiritual" and psychic life. These things are what your real life is about; they reflect the things that matter the most to you, for they are experienced in the body. The human drama is first and foremost a somatic one. How is it, then, that things such as emotions, or more generally the life of the body, gets left out of academic history? How is it that historians remain oblivious to the anemia of their enterprise in its present form? How is it that that which is most important in human life gets omitted from virtually all accounts of the past?

Berman continues:

> Regardless of what a person visibly presents to the world, they have a secret life, one that is grounded in their emotions, their bodily relationship to the world and to themselves. History has failed to tell us about these things because as a discipline it moves along the lines of external description. The academic study of human life...proceeds on the assumption that only the visible is real.... Academic discourses generally lack the power to shock, to move the reader; which is to say, they lack the power to teach. They fail to address the felt, visceral level of our being, and so possess an air of unreality.

He suggests that if history were written with the body holding the pen, instead of just the mind, it would read like a good novel but it wouldn't be invented.

Of course, I am sure this will conjure up for some people the disturbing prospect of ending up on the other extreme, and distorting history with an emotionalized look. Many of us are still constrained by the taboo against getting emotional about any subject of analysis, because "[I]f you do experience identification or resonance, you disqualify yourself as a professional observer or analyst."

In his book, Berman points out that the bias against emotion has its origins in Western positivism:

> 'Emotional' in the modern period has the same force as 'unreliable'; it means you are biased, that your judgment cannot be counted on. I suspect most of us would agree with this; I am only trying to suggest that our agreement is part of a culturally conditioned process. Prior to 1600, *lack* of identification was regarded as strange. Perception and cognition emerged primarily from the body, which is why, to borrow a term from the anthropologists, everything possessed *manna*, was alive.

He continues:

> The heavy professionalization of history began in the 19th century. Leopold von Ranke, the noted German historian, set the tone for historical research by asserting that the job of the historian was nothing more or less than to give a straight account of the facts; to report "what actually occurred".... The triumph of the Scientific Revolution in the realm of historical understanding meant that things must never be examined except from the outside. And this...is where we still are today. The body and its feelings have no apparent relationship to the historical process; the 'inside' simply doesn't count. History is, quite literally, a superficial discipline.

Thus Berman understood why high school was so boring -- because historical objectivity is not just boring, "[I]t is also, quite simply, wrong, and on some level the body knows this. This is why we found it difficult even to sit still in school. That restlessness is the body's way of flashing us an essential message: 'This is bullshit,' the body is saying; 'don't listen to this.'" He concludes brilliantly: "History is made somatically; to be accurate, then, it should be written somatically." Berman does not present a set formula of how this is to be done because he does not believe it can be carried out in a formulaic way,

but he is convinced that a truly "objective" historical construction must include the somatic experience.

Another way of restating this idea of incorporating somatic experience into historical research might be that, instead of looking at history simply from the outside and intellectually analyzing it on the basis of information about events as if one were going to write a news article, one could try to understand what was going on underneath the surface and access the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the times. People and societies see themselves in different ways in different historical moments. One cannot study history without studying the evolution of culture, otherwise the manna is left out.

We are essentially talking here about how human beings create their world from the internal image of it that they form in their minds. Thus, to understand history, we cannot simply base ourselves on the external phenomena of human actions -- we have to go back to what is in the collective mind, to try to trace and understand the beliefs, the meanings -- in the last analysis, the *images* -- that are the motor of human actions. And these belief systems, structures of meaning and collective intentions are expressed in *cultural configurations*: behavior codes, inner landscapes, ways of seeing, interpreting and being in the world.

There must be ways that an operative methodology can be developed in this direction, because history is a human construct, history is ours to reshape to make it useful for our evolution. The reason that Berman's proposal made such an impact on me was because it triggered an intuitive realization that the Philippines is a textbook case of the alienation he describes, with its bizarre history of serial colonization and abrupt and reiterated superimpositions of cultures and world visions that were diametrically opposed to each other. First we were indigenous tribal groups practicing animism, then the Spanish arrived to impose Judaeo-Christian monotheism, destroy our cultural artifacts and ban our ancestral religions. Later the Americans erased our Hispanic-Filipino memory and superimposed on top of our religious, pre-industrial mentality, their secularized, industrialized, consumerist culture and the dream of a new life in America. It is no wonder then that Philippine history is taught in such a dissociated, alienating way. There can be no doubt that such a state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue unaddressed.

However, I don't think the idea of a somatic history would be to give ourselves permission to pass judgments of historical innocence and guilt (this is

probably the main concern of those who instinctively object to including the emotions in the writing of history). It would certainly be just as damaging for us to set to getting our history Right, to expose all crimes and fairly distribute blame. Then the bad people would finally be unveiled as such and punished with our collective repudiation, and the good people venerated and duly consecrated. This would be futile and meaningless because there are as many documents and testimonies as there are arguments and justifications; but, even worse, it would reinforce the eternal problem of the divisions and resentments that inevitably lead to backlash.

No, this isn't the idea at all.

More important than achieving any kind of correct photograph of the past is for us to learn to observe ourselves as we have moved and changed throughout the different stages of our history, as we have evolved into a people. I believe a somatic perspective is a requirement for learning to see this process. Our past was constructed by the felt actions of our forebears as they gave responses to the emergencies of their times. If we are able to recover from the mists of time the deepest intentions that motivated our grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on, to act as they did, we will become psychically grounded in the past, it will come alive for us, and our forebears will return to accompany and give us counsel as we face our emergencies today.

Anyone who reads about ancient Filipino tribal cultures will immediately grasp that ancestor worship was the center of our archaic community and religious life. However, we often see this through the emotionally-disconnected filter of museum anthropology, and fail to *feel* what it means when one's beloved and honored dead are a living presence. And yet, we are nothing if not a deeply spiritual people; we cannot help but feel naturally connected to nature, to our superstitions and legends. This aspect of our psychology, I believe, must be valued and incorporated into the activities of researching, writing and transmitting our history. In other words, connecting with our "myth" and true personality as a people is another means to incorporate the somatic element into our historiography.

This, as far as achieving a somatic history.

To include the body and the psyche, or to gain insight into how the underground currents of human subjectivity contribute to the genesis of historical events, would be a good start to imbue history with new life and meaning. We

could call this the micro level of history. There is, however, another level of understanding to be considered, which could be called the macro level. I would define it as the level that would allow us to attain a vision of the overall historical dynamic, and "frame" historical events within a major context, a larger process. What does this mean?

To develop the second idea that I propose to apply to the study of history, called structural or global thinking, I have applied two of the four universal laws enunciated by Siloism.[3] The first is the Law of Structure: "Nothing exists in isolation, but in dynamic relationship with other beings within conditioning environments." The second is the Law of Cycle, which states: "Everything in the universe is in evolution and goes from the simplest to the most complex and highly organized, in accordance with cyclical rhythms and periods."

The first law is fairly straightforward and speaks of the interconnectedness between all beings and phenomena, within environments -- which can also be understood at a more abstract level as "framework, field, or context" -- which exercise influence over them and condition their development. The second law I interpret to mean that everything in the universe unfolds in processes of growing complexity which are, however, ruled by cycles, and which in turn are felt or registered as periodic intervals or rhythms, as in the phases of human life, the changing seasons of the earth, or the millenary stages of the evolving human consciousness.

In proposing that structural vision be applied to historical study, I really mean that the idea of interconnectedness of historical phenomena within a major, conditioning process be used as a framework to get the Big Picture of history.

The final and greatest actor of history is the human whole -- but a human whole that is made up of a constellation of sub-protagonists, right down to the individuals. Great men and women do not make history by themselves, but represent, interpret, and make visible the unexpressed collective wishes of the larger human groups to which they belong. Neither do societies and nations float around in the stratosphere; they exist within the context of great civilizations, which in turn continuously undergo dynamic processes of birth, development and decline.

---

[3] Mario Rodriguez Cobos, or Silo. Siloism. Berkeley: Aconcagua Press, 1973. The other two laws are the Law of Concomitance, and the Law of the New Surpassing the Old.

These elements taken all together make up the major structure or scaffolding that constitutes the ultimate historical subject and its context, which is humanity, in a planetary process of evolution. The interactions at more complex levels within that structure (at the level of nations, regions and civilizations) give rise to the larger processes of human history. It is a dynamic, expansive phenomenon in which each element in the system exists in interrelationship with all the rest, and all of them exercise influence over each other.

Contrast this with the linear, static and isolationist vision of history proper to the Newtonian world view, which has been surpassed by new physics and by telecommunications and transport technology -- in two words: world culture. We know today that countries and peoples do not develop in isolation -- a concept that might have been arguable in archaic times, but which began to lose validity when the world started shrinking one thousand years ago. The astronauts who landed on the moon in 1969 looked across space at our planet and realized that political borders did not exist, that Earth was a unity.

Thus, the second part of my proposal is that the most intelligent approach for us today is to think of the historical process of any given country in relationship to the processes of the other countries to which its destiny is linked -- the other nations whose intentions made an impact on its history, or, conversely, whose historical processes received the impact of its intentions.

This is structural, global vision. It isn't empty jargon -- it is how we are learning to see our new reality. The "global village" of the third millennium is a world in which planetary consciousness has been born, thanks to technological, scientific and cultural evolution. As we widen our sight and establish more and more new connections, perceive new interrelations between actors, actions, consequences...all in simultaneous and dynamic unfolding, a psychic revolution is taking place in our mentality: the expansion of our awareness. Such a very simple thing indeed, and yet it is making it possible to allow the narrow system of beliefs, the isolationist thinking proper to the old world, to effortlessly fall away from our minds. Like a dragon shedding its old skin.

Since we did not have structural vision before, we could not correctly situate ourselves in front of our past. A history taught from this deficiency necessarily had to be an obstacle to forging an identity that would open up the future instead of barring it; that would free instead of imprisoning us. The image of a world historical process could not arise before, because our vision was fragmented and there were unnamed oceans in our knowledge.

Working to achieve structural vision thus means that Filipino history must be situated within world history and understood from the perspective of the forces of human intentionality that led to the creation of mentalities that are still with us today, but that no longer have meaning and therefore are devoid of usefulness.

As I have mentioned previously, the Spanish Empire arose in the gap between the end of the Medieval Age and the birth of the Renaissance. However, Spain was not of the Renaissance, she was fully medieval, and even as she discovered a New World she implanted a vision whose intention was to keep the machinery of medieval conquest moving full speed ahead, with the new fuel of the pristine resources she found and unhesitatingly plundered. Therefore, to the Spaniards we were not human beings like them -- we were raw material in human form to serve their worldly and spiritual imperial ends. The consequences of this, as we can now understand, were tremendous. Entire civilizations were destroyed, the foundations of a future world order of economic and cultural subjugation were laid...and a new race was born. Though the first two effects of the New World's discovery left a legacy of multiple forms of violence and a long chain of suffering, that new race (which we belong to, psychically if not by blood) today is beginning to define and create a new identity that can empower it to change the future, by freeing itself from enchainment to the violent past, which is manifest in the old attitudes and psychological conditionings that pose very real obstacles to the transformation of the former Spanish colonies into truly developing countries.

As for the danger of falling into false interpretations, we will simply have to assume the risk of making mistakes and trust in our capacity for self-criticism and rapidly getting back on track. We must let our intuition and inner, somatic registers guide us. The sensation of presence or absence of meaning, of identity, is an unquestionable, visceral register and is quite easy to detect. We know when things make sense and when they are incomplete and flawed. We know when we don't know who and what we are, where we came from, where we're headed. We know this in our bodies and, though we may not even talk about it, it is there and we know it's there. Our great opportunity is to explore this new ground today and attain a more complete, more profound knowledge of ourselves than we've ever had before.

My interest, in the realm of history as well as in every other aspect of life, is to open up new possibilities for learning and understanding for myself and for

others. I am not a historian and my intention should not be interpreted as a wish to compete from a position of ignorance. I have been taught that it is not enough to merely formulate criticisms of what exists -- one must also propose new directions. The new paradigm of our world is, I believe, *the expanding consciousness*, and it has brought about the deeply positive crisis of all rigid approaches, not just to thought and study, but above all to living. If we don't loosen up and put ourselves in a fresh mental disposition to change our old ways of being and seeing, we risk our own disappearance even as a species. I don't believe this will happen because life always finds the way toward growth and I believe in the power of life.

In the specific field of knowledge, it is my belief that evolution will triumph, and synergy between the "insiders" and "outsiders" of every discipline will open up the new paths to knowledge that can only be discerned by our collective intelligence.

## Chapter 3

## Excerpt from *The Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent* by Eduardo Galeano[4]

This landmark work, by one of the most highly-respected writers of Latin America, was first published in 1971 and has been reprinted over 60 times. It is a historical description of how the developed countries established their economic hegemony over Latin America over the last five hundred years and presents a pitiless analysis of that hegemony´s disastrous human consequences. The following paragraphs are an excerpt from the referenced chapter, which is a moving denouncement of the cultural and human tragedy that was the destruction of the Aztec and Inca Empires. In the context of this unparalleled combination of pillaging and genocide (both intentional and accidental), that was the Spanish conquest of Latin America, the Philippines' own experience can be viewed with greater clarity and perspective.

Galeano's thesis is that the wealth of the New World Indians was their curse, and in this sense, the Philippines' relative poverty in precious metals was a blessing. I offer these few pages from Galeano's book to Filipinos who are unaware of the outstanding works of Latin American writers and as an introduction to an historical drama of which we cannot remain any longer in ignorance: the fate of the Indians of those other lands, who are part of our story because, like them, we also were Indians and the spoils of the Spanish Crown.

### The Fate of the Indians of America

*A Flood of Tears and Blood: And Yet the Pope Said that the Indians Had Souls*

In 1581, Philip II had declared before the Audiencia of Guadalajara,[5] that a third of the Indians of America had already been annihilated and that those

---

[4] Tr. Cedric Belfrage. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973. Reprinted by Permission.

[5] Galeano defines the *audiencia* as "a judicial district as well as a judicial, administrative and advisory body. In Mexico, it was the supreme court of administration and judgment." This was because Mexico was a Viceroyship. The Audiencia in all other points had to forward its cases to Mexico, Peru or Spain for final ruling; likewise the Holy Inquisition.

who were still alive were obliged to pay tribute for the dead. The monarch said, additionally, that the Indians were being bought and sold. That they slept in the open air. That mothers killed their children to save them from the torment of the mines. But the Crown's hypocrisy had narrower limits than the Empire: the Crown received a fifth of the value of the metal that its subjects extracted throughout the Hispanic New World, besides other taxes, and the same happened in the 18th century with the Portuguese Crown in Brazilian territory. America's silver and gold penetrated like corrosive acid, as Engels said, into all the pores of Europe's moribund feudal society, and, at the service of nascent capitalist mercantilism, mining businessmen converted Indians and black slaves into an extremely numerous "external proletariat" of the European economy. Greco-Roman slavery was in fact resurrecting, in a different world: to the misfortune of the Indians of the annihilated empires of Hispanic America, we must add the terrible destiny of the blacks wrenched away from the villages of Africa to work in Brazil and the Antilles. *The Latin American colonial economy had at its disposal the largest concentration of labor force ever known until then, to make possible the largest concentration of wealth ever placed at the disposal of any civilization, in the entire history of the world.*

That violent tide of greed, horror and bravery did not swoop down on these lands except at the price of native genocide: more solidly-founded recent research attributes to pre-Columbian Mexico a population between 25 and 30 million, and it is thought that there was a similar number of Indians in the Andean region; Central America and the Antilles had between 10 and 13 million inhabitants. *The Indians of the Americas added up to no less than 60 million, perhaps more, when the foreign conquistadors appeared on the horizon. One and a half centuries later they had been reduced, in total, to just three and a half million.* According to the Marquis of Barinas, between Lima and Paita, where more than two million Indians had lived, no more than four Indian families were left by 1685. The Archbishop Liñán y Cisneros denied the annihilation of the Indians: "The thing is, they hid themselves," he said, "to avoid paying tribute, abusing the freedom that they enjoyed and that they didn't have under the reign of the Incas."

Metal flowed unceasingly from the American veins, and from the Spanish Court there arrived, also unceasingly, decrees that granted paper protection and ink dignity to the Indians, whose extenuating work sustained the kingdom. A fictitious legality sheltered the Indians; exploitation in reality bled them to death. From slavery to the service encomienda, and from this to the tribute

encomienda and the regime of salaries, the variants in the legal status of Indian labor did not alter their true situation beyond a superficial degree. The Crown considered the inhumane exploitation of aboriginal labor so necessary, that in 1601 Philip III issued rules prohibiting forced labor in the mines and, simultaneously, sent other secret instructions to continue it, "in case that measure causes production to slow down." Likewise, between 1616 and 1619, the Royal Inspector[6] and Governor Juan de Solórzano carried out an investigation on the working conditions in the mercury mines of Huancavélica: "...the poison penetrated to the very bone marrow, debilitating the limbs and provoking constant chills, and the workers died, in most cases after four years," he reported to the Council of the Indies and to the king. But in 1631, Philip IV ordered that the same system be continued, and his successor, Charles II, reissued the decree some time later. These mercury mines were directly exploited by the Crown, unlike the silver mines, which were in the hands of private businessmen.

In three centuries, the rich river of Potosí[7] burned, according to Josiah Conder, eight million lives. The Indians were torn away from their agricultural communities and herded, together with their women and children, to the mountain. Of every ten who marched toward the high frozen wastelands, seven never returned. Luis Capoche, owner of mines and mills, wrote that "the roads were crowded, as though the entire kingdom were moving." In the communities, the Indians had seen "many women return, afflicted, without their husbands, and many children orphaned of their parents" and they knew that in the mine awaited "a thousand deaths and disasters." The Spaniards covered hundred of miles of the surrounding areas in search of labor. Many of the Indians died on the road before reaching Potosí. But it was the terrible conditions of work in the mine that killed the most people. The Dominican Fray Domingo de Santo Tomás denounced to the Council of Indies, in 1550, soon after the mine opened, that Potosí was "hell's mouth" that annually swallowed Indians by the thousands and thousands, and that the rapacious miners treated the natives "like animals with no owners." And Fray Rodrigo de Loaysa would later say, "These poor Indians are like sardines in the sea. Just as the other fish pursue the sardines to capture and devour them, so all in these lands pursue the miserable Indians...." The chiefs of the communities had the obligation to replace the *mitayos*[8] who died, with new men from 18 to 50 years of age. The distri-

---

6 "Visitador" in the original.

7 Fabled Bolivian mountain, practically solid silver.

8 From "mita", system of forced labor enforced by the Incas to provide manpower for their public works projects and their mines. In order to maintain these projects, the Spaniards continued the *mita*, forcing Indian

bution corral, where the Indians were assigned to the mine and mill owners, a gigantic field with stone walls, is now used for the workers to play football; the prison of the *mitayos*, a shapeless mountain of ruins, can still be seen from the entrance to Potosí.

In the Compilation of Laws of the Indies (Recopilación de Leyes de las Indias) there is no lack of decrees from that time establishing the equality of rights of Indians and Spaniards to exploit the mines, and expressly prohibiting that the natives' rights be harmed. Formal history -- dead letters which in our times gather together the dead letters of past times -- would have nothing to complain about, but while legislation over Indian labor was debated in endless files and the talents of Spanish jurists exploded in ink, in America the law was "observed but not fulfilled." In the facts, "the poor Indian is a coin," -- as Luis Capoche says -- "with which everything needed is found, as with gold and silver, and much, much better." Numerous individuals presented proof of their status as mestizos before the courts so that they would not be sent to the tunnels, or sold and resold in the markets.

Towards the end of the 18th century, Concolorcorvo, in whose veins Indian blood flowed, disowned his kin in this way: "We do not deny that the mines consume a considerable number of Indians, but this does not proceed from the work they do in the silver and mercury mines, but from the libertine ways in which they live." The testimony of Capoche, who had many Indians under his employ, is illustrative in this sense. The glacial temperatures of the outdoors alternated with the infernal heat of the mountain's depths. The Indians entered into these depths, "and in most cases they were taken out dead, and others with heads and legs broken, and in the milling machines they are injured everyday." The *mitayos* made the metal fly into shattered fragments with blows from their pickaxes. Later they carried it on their backs, up ladders, by candlelight. Outside the tunnel, they moved the long wooden axles of the milling machines or melted the silver in fire, after grinding and washing it.

The 'mita' was a machine for grinding Indians. The use of mercury for the extraction of silver through amalgamation poisoned as much or more than the toxic fumes released by the earth's bowels. It made the hair and the teeth fall out and provoked shivering that could not be stopped. Men poisoned by mercury would drag themselves through the streets begging for alms. Six thou-

---

communities to provide a certain number of workers for specified periods of time, usually a year or more. In Peru, the *mita* survived throughout the colonial period and was not abolished until 1821 (*Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Empire, 1402-1975*).

sand five hundred bonfires burned at night on the rich mountain's slopes, and in these fires the silver was worked, using the winds sent by "glorious St. Augustine" from heaven. Because of the smoke from the ovens there was no grass or planting within a radius of six leagues[9] around Potosí, and the emanations were no less implacable with the bodies of the men.

There was no lack of ideological explanations. The bloodletting of the New World was converted into an act of charity or a reason for faith. Together with guilt there arose an entire system of alibis to soothe the guilty consciences. The Indians were converted into beasts of burden because they could carry a greater weight than the weak backs of llamas, and along the way it was proven that, in fact, the Indians were beasts of burden. A viceroy of Mexico considered there was no better remedy than work in the mines to cure the "natural wickedness" of the Indians. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, the Humanist [sic], sustained that the Indians got the treatment they received because their sins and idolatries constituted an offense against God. The Count of Buffon declared that no trace could be observed in Indians -- cold, weak animals -- of "any activity of the soul." The Abbott De Paw invented an America where depraved Indians mixed with dogs who could not bark, cows whose meat was not edible, and impotent camels. The America of Voltaire, inhabited by lazy and stupid Indians, had pigs whose navels were on their backs and bald, cowardly lions. Bacon, De Maistre, Montesquieu, Hume and Bodin refused to recognize as their fellowmen the "degraded men" of the New World. Hegel spoke of the physical and spiritual impotence of America and said that the Indians had perished after a single puff from Europe.

In the 17th century, Fr. Gregorio García sustained that the Indians were of Jewish ancestry, because, like the Jews, "they are lazy, they don't believe in the miracles of Jesus Christ and they are not grateful to the Spaniards for all the good they have done them." At least, this priest did not deny that the Indians descended from Adam and Eve. Many were the theologians and thinkers unconvinced by the papal bull of Paul III, issued in 1537, which declared the Indians "authentic men." Fr. Bartolomé de las Casas agitated at the Spanish Court with his denouncements against the cruelty of the conquistadors of America. In 1557, a member of the royal council answered that the Indians stood on too low a step on the ladder of humanity to be capable of receiving the faith. Las Casas dedicated his passionate life to defending the Indians

[9] The equivalent measure of a league in kilometers varies according to different writers I have read, but this would be between 24 and 30 kms.

from the miners' and encomenderos' excesses. He said that the Indians preferred to go to hell to avoid meeting Christians.

Indians were "commended" to the conquistadors and colonizers for them to catechize. But since the Indians owed the "encomendero" personal services and economic tribute, there wasn't much time left over to lead them along the Christian path to salvation. In recompense for his services, Hernán Cortés had received 23,000 vassals; Indians were distributed at the same time as lands were awarded through royal grants, or they were obtained through direct plundering. From 1536 on, the Indians were granted under encomiendas, together with their descendants, for a period of two lifetimes: that of the encomendero and of his immediate heir. From 1629 on, the regime began to spread in practice. Lands were sold with the Indians in them included. In the 18th century, the Indians, the survivors, assured a comfortable life for many generations to come. Since the conquered gods persisted in their memory, there was no lack of saintly alibis for the usufruct of their labor by the victors: the Indians were heathen; they did not deserve another kind of life. Past times? Four hundred twenty years after the Bull of Pope Paul III, in September 1957, Paraguay's Supreme Court issued a circular apprising all the judges of the country that "the Indians are as much human beings as the other inhabitants of the republic...." And the Center of Anthropological Studies of the Catholic University of Asunción subsequently carried out a revealing survey in the capital and in the interior: out of every ten Paraguayans, eight believed that "the Indians are like animals." In Caaguazú, in Alto Paraná and the Chaco, Indians are hunted like animals, sold at low prices and exploited under a regime of virtual slavery. Nevertheless, almost all Paraguayans have Indian blood and Paraguay never tires of composing songs, poems and speeches in homage to the "Guaraní soul."

## The Combative Nostalgia of Túpac Amaru

When the Spanish erupted into America, the theocratic empire of the Incas was at its zenith, its power extending from what today we call Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, including parts of Colombia and Chile, and reaching the north of Argentina and the Brazilian jungle. The Aztec confederation had attained a high degree of efficacy in the valley of Mexico; and in the Yucatan and Central America, the splendid Mayan civilization persisted among its nation-heirs, organized for work and war.

These societies have left behind numerous testimonies of their greatness, in spite of the long time of devastation: religious monuments erected with more wisdom than the Egyptian pyramids; efficient technical creations for the struggle with nature; art objects that reveal unsurpassed talent. In the museum of Lima, hundreds of craniums can be seen on which trepanning was performed and cures using gold and silver plates, by Inca surgeons. The Mayans had been great astronomers, they had measured time and space with astonishing precision, and had discovered the zero value before any other people in history. The irrigation ditches and artificial lakes created by the Aztecs amazed Hernán Cortés, even though they weren't made of gold.

The conquest broke the foundations of these civilizations. The implanting of a mining economy had worse consequences than the blood and fire of the war. The mines demanded great population displacements and broke up the communitarian agricultural units. They didn't just extinguish numerous lives through forced labor, but, besides this, indirectly they destroyed the collective system of planting. The Indians were led to the tunnels, subjected to the service of the encomenderos, and obliged to give up in exchange for nothing the lands that they were forced to abandon or leave untended. On the Pacific coast, the Spaniards destroyed or allowed to die off enormous plantations of corn, yucca, black beans, Lima beans, peanuts, sweet potato. The desert rapidly devoured large extensions of land that had received life from the Inca irrigation system. Four and a half centuries after the conquest, only rocks and brush remain where most of the roads that connected the empire used to be. Although the gigantic public works of the Incas were in their majority erased by time or by the hand of the usurpers, there still remain, in the Andes mountains, the interminable terraces that made possible and still permit the cultivation of the mountainsides. A North American agronomist estimated in 1936 that, had they had been built that year with modern methods, those terraces would have cost some US$30,000 per acre. The terraces and aqueducts for irrigation were made possible, in that empire which did not know of the wheel, the horse or iron, thanks to the prodigious organization and technical perfection achieved through wise division of labor, but also thanks to the religious force that reigned over the relationship of man to the earth, which was sacred and, therefore, always alive.

The Aztec responses to the challenge of nature had also been amazing. In our day, tourists know as 'floating gardens' the few surviving islands in the dried-up lake where today the capital of Mexico rises above the indigenous ruins. These islands had been created by the Aztecs to solve the problem of lack of

water in lands selected for the creation of Tenochtitlán. The Indians had moved large masses of mud from the shores and had secured the new islands of mud between thin walls of cane, until the roots of the trees bound them firmly together. Between the new spaces of earth, water channels flowed. Above these unusually fertile islands grew the powerful capital of the Aztecs, with its wide avenues, palaces of austere beauty, and staggered pyramids. Magically blooming from the lagoon, they were condemned to disappear before the assaults of the foreign conquest. It would take Mexico four hundred years to reach a population as numerous as the one that had existed in those times.

The Indians were, as Darcy Ribeiro says, 'The fuel of the colonial production system.' "It is almost certain," Sergio Bagú writes, "that hundreds of Indians who were sculptors, architects, engineers and astronomers were thrown into the mines, lost in the crowds of slaves, to carry out the crude and exhausting work of extraction. For the colonial economy, the technical abilities of these individuals were of no interest. They only had value as unskilled laborers." But not all the splinters of these broken cultures were lost. The hope for rebirth of their lost dignity would give rise to numerous indigenous uprisings. In 1781, Túpac Amaru laid siege to Cuzco.

This mestizo chief, a direct descendant of the Inca emperors, was the leader of a messianic and revolutionary movement that was the most far-reaching of all. The great rebellion broke out in the province of Tinta. Mounted on his white horse, Túpac Amaru entered the plaza of Tungasuca to the sound of drums and pututus, and announced that he had condemned the royal chief magistrate Antonio Juan de Arriaga to be hanged, and ordered the prohibition of the mita of Potosí. The province of Tinta was becoming emptied of its population because of the forced service in the tunnels of the rich silver mountain. A few days later, Túpac Amaru issued a new decree freeing the slaves. He abolished all taxes and the "distribution" of Indian labor in any form. The Indians joined the forces of the "father of all the poor and all the miserable and helpless" by the thousands. At the head of his fighters, the caudillo attacked Cuzco. He harangued his men as they marched: all those who died under his command in this war would resurrect to enjoy the happiness and wealth they had been stripped of by the invaders. Victories and defeats followed. In the end, betrayed and captured by one of his chiefs, Túpac Amaru was delivered, weighed down by chains, to the royalists. The royal inspector Areche visited his dungeon to demand from him, in exchange for promises, the names of the accomplices of the uprising. Túpac Amaru answered disdainfully, "Here the

only accomplices are you and I: you as oppressor and I as liberator -- both deserving of death."

Túpac was subjected to torture together with his wife and children and principal followers, in the square of Wacaypata, Cuzco. They cut out his tongue. They tied his arms and legs to four horses to dismember him, but the body did not separate. They beheaded him at the foot of the gallows. They sent the head to Tinta. One of his arms went to Tungasuca and the other to Carabaya. They sent a leg to Santa Rosa and the other to Livitaca. His torso was burned and the ashes thrown into the Watanay River. It was recommended that all his descendants be exterminated, to the fourth degree.

In 1802, another chieftain descended from the Incas, Astorpilco, received the visit of Humboldt. It was in Cajamarca, in the exact spot where his forebear Atahualpa had first seen the conquistador Pizarro. The son of the chieftain accompanied the German scholar to walk through the ruins of the town and the rubble of the ancient Inca palace, and as they walked told him about the fabulous treasure hidden beneath the dust and ashes. "Don't you sometimes feel a desire to dig in search of the treasure, to satisfy your needs?" Humboldt asked him. The young man answered, "Such a desire does not come to us. My father said it would be sinful. If we had the golden branches with all their fruit of gold, the white neighbors would hate us and do us harm." The chieftain cultivated wheat in a small field. But it was not enough to save them from others' greed. The usurpers, greedy for gold and silver and also for slaves' arms to work the mines, did not take long to pounce on the land when they offered tempting profits. The plundering continued through time and, in 1969, when the agrarian reform was announced in Peru, the newspapers still frequently reported how, from time to time, Indians from the broken communities of the sierra invaded the lands stolen from them or from their ancestors, unfurling their banners, and how they were repelled by army gunfire. It was necessary to wait almost two centuries after Túpac Amaru, until the nationalist general Juan Velasco Alvarado adopted the chieftain's phrase with immortal resonance: "Peasant! The landowners will no longer eat from your poverty!"

Other heroes that time took care of rescuing from defeat were the Mexicans Hidalgo and Morelos. Hidalgo, a peaceful rural priest until the age of 50, one fine day rang the bells of Dolores Church, calling the Indians to fight for their liberation: "Do you want to make the effort to recover from the hated Spanish, the lands stolen from your ancestors 300 years ago?" He raised the standard of the Indian Virgin of Guadalupe, and before six weeks had passed,

80,000 men followed him, armed with machetes, picks, slings, bows and arrows. The revolutionary priest put an end to the tribute and distributed the lands of Guadalajara. He decreed freedom for the slaves and sent his forces against Mexico. But he was finally executed, at the end of a military defeat, and it is said he left, at his death, testimony of passionate repentance. The revolution did not take long to find a new leader, the priest José María Morelos: "Take as your enemies all the rich, the nobles and employees of the first order...." His movement of indigenous insurgency and social revolution came to rule a large extension of Mexican territory, until Morelos was also defeated and shot. The independence of Mexico, six years later, "turned out to be a perfectly Hispanic business deal between Europeans and people born in America...a political struggle within the same ruling class." The encomienda serf was converted into the peon, and the encomendero into the landowner.

## Chapter 4

**Excerpt from *The Erotic Conquest of the Indies,*[10] "The Friars Run Around like Maddened Stallions"**
by Ricardo Herren Crosio

Ricardo Herren is an Argentine journalist who made a study of chronicles from the 16th to the mid-17th centuries that tell of the miscegenation that took place on an epic scale during the Spanish conquest between the conquistadors and the Indian women, giving birth to a new race that populates three continents today, from Mexico down to Tierra del Fuego, Chile: the Hispanic Americans.

This chapter which I have translated from Herren's book clarifies why, on one hand, the loose morals of many Spanish friars in the Philippines went uncorrected, and, on the other, how the violent superpositioning of Spanish dominion over the Indian world (which also was violent in our case, even if there was less bloodshed, because it was equally coercive), established a colonial culture over foundations of social alteration and moral chaos, allowing the taking root in the Spanish colonies of corruption, moral laxity and the equation of power with violence.

In order for us to make the conscious and profound decision to change the ways we live and act as individuals, as a society and as a nation, we cannot avoid the previous step of comprehending the psychological reality of our past and its very real consequences for our collective mentality and behavior today. For the little-understood cultural legacy of our colonial history, far beyond the simpler questions of language or economic dependency, has to do with the undermining of our deepest ancestral values and their subsequent distortion into such social ills as apathy, hypocrisy, egoism, exploitation, authoritarianism, the mafia ethic and political corruption. These ills are not part of our nature; they were originated by the violent transculturation imposed on the indigenous inhabitants of America and the Philippines by Spanish colonization. Our ancestors were the powerless objects of conquest who somehow had to survive the destruction of their world at the hands of conquerors who, though purporting to save their souls, demanded the sacrifice of their indigenous Self as the prerequisite of redemption. But once this had been accom-

[10] *La Conquista Erótica de las Indias.* Chapter entitled "Los frailes andan como potros desatados." Free translation by E. Medina.

plished, the Indians became outcasts in what had been their Eden, and the progeny born of the union between indigenous women and the new masters learned to survive in a new reality which, in the eyes of their elders, had to be a deviate or monstrous thing: an alien social construct built over foundations of cultural destruction and dislocation, racism and venality, in the place of millenial traditions, religious order, honor, and unquestioned identity.

## "The Friars Run Around Like Maddened Stallions"

The fall of the Inca ruling class provoked an enormous social and psychological catastrophe in the [Inca empire's] rigidly structured society.[11] The situation was made worse, years later, by the anarchy that resulted when the partisans of Diego de Almagro and Francisco Pizarro[12] began a savage civil war, which, with brief intervals in the fighting, lasted over a decade.

The Spaniards appear from the beginning in Peru as a corrupting element of the strict Indian customs under the Incas' rule of indissoluble monogamy and an austere ethic of hard work and honesty. Many chroniclers are soon scandalized at the direction that events begin to take.

Pedro Cieza de León wrote, "Let no one lay blame for the things that are happening in Peru on the arrival of the Viceroy, but on the great sins that were being committed by the people who were there. I met some men who had had more than fifteen children with their concubines. And many leave their wives in Spain for fifteen or twenty years, taking an Indian mistress in place of their natural wife. And in accordance with the many sins committed by the Christians and the Indians, so punishment and disgrace were widespread."

In general the aboriginal females reciprocate the voracious appetites of the Spanish in matters of lust. Beyond their sexual appetites, the Indian women in Peru -- who were also always pragmatic -- discover that in the new order that was imposed it was better to have mestizo rather than Indian children, not just because by becoming the concubines of Spanish men they gained entry into the colonial world, but also because their mestizo children would have a privileged status that was denied to Indian children. Mestizos did not pay tribute and had access to many of the positions reserved for Spaniards.[13] In this way, the reigning legislation favored carnal union between Spaniards and Indians,

---

[11] Herren footnotes that polygamy was the privilege of high officials and incest was only allowed to the imperial family (as in the case of the Egyptian pharoahs).

[12] Francisco Pizarro associated with Diego de Almagro to undertake the conquest of Peru with the support of Carlos I of Spain in 1529. Pizarro captured and killed the Inca emperor Atahualpa, entered Cuzco in 1533 and founded the city of Lima. Almagro contested Pizarro's claim to wealthy Cuzco to no avail, and set off to claim Chile in 1536, which was his prize but turned out to be poor in mineral wealth and bristling with hostile Indians. Almagro returned from his disastrous expedition and finally fought Pizarro, but was defeated and killed by him.

[13] This was not the case in Chile, where according to the historian Luis Galdames the mestizos made up the colonial labor pool that did the hard physical labor in the cities and in the countryside and whose lives were marked by poverty, ignorance, superstition and violence. Galdames may refer to a consolidated stage of colonization, besides which no doubt there were differences between the Peruvian and Chilean processes.

though it did so inadvertently. Also, as happens with the females of any species of mammal, the Indian women surrendered pleasurably to the triumphant males.

Less than a decade after the capture of Atahualpa, in the midst of civil war between the Spaniards, the dark-skinned women show signs of terror that their white men might die in battle. During the battle of Chupas between Almagro's mestizo son and the new governor Vaca de Castro (1541-1542), there were in the camp many ladies from the native Cuzco nobility, the *pallas*, "by the Spanish much beloved, and the women feeling for them the same love," related Cieza de León. The Indian women were pleased "to be in the service of such strong men and to be the substitutes of the legitimate wives they had in Spain," he adds. When they see that the end of the war approaches, "foreseeing the death that had to come for the men, they shrieked and moaned and, according to the custom in their country, pulled their hair from one side of their heads to the other."

What is certain is that the Spaniards win the favor of the women of Peru and, when they do not, they take them by force. No one is satisfied with little when there is so much to be had. The chronicler describes this plainly: "There had been women given to the harems of the Incas as well as for vestals in the temples of the Sun. But there were many more given to the Christians or that they took for themselves. The unmarried men take them as concubines and, if they are married, as the servants of their women and sometimes to be concubines for themselves and for others. The black men, the mestizos and the Anacona Indians are all the same as the Incas as far as taking women, except that the Inca took women to keep them inside the house, honest and well occupied and supported, whereas these others do so for all the dissolute things that can be imagined, in all manner of vices. Furthermore, besides those who act in this way -- and there are a thousand of them for every Inca -- there were also some *encomenderos* who had, and others who have them even today, houses to keep women in like those of the Incas, with the greatest vigilance and care, in order to satisfy their sensuality, which is being done by many, and the custom of having the *encomenderos* get married[14] is disappearing..." the scholar Fernando de Santillán wrote, twenty years after the Conquest.

[14] According to philologist Mirtha Alarcón, the encomenderos, Spaniards who were awarded large land grants by the Spanish monarch, were required by law to marry, under pain of being stripped of their encomienda.

As in other places, it was the Indian men who were most hurt. "Many Indian women leave their husbands or abhor or abandon the children they bear with them, seeing them as subject to tribute and personal service, and they desire, love and cosset more the children they have outside marriage with Spaniards and even with black men, because they seem to them as being absolutely free and exempt, which clearly should not be allowed in any well-governed republic," wrote Solórzano Pereira.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, Huamán Poma de Ayala observes that the Indian women dress like Spanish women: "They wear underskirts, sleeves, boots and blouses" and that "they no longer wish to marry their Indian equals.... The principal chief is marrying his daughters and sisters to mestizos and mulattos. Since they see their chief and the other women happy to bear mestizo children, they no longer want to marry Indians and the kingdom is being lost."

Concubinage loosens family relations, invents a new chaos in lineage and imposes disorder on society, alarming bishops and viceroys. Their concern is futile. The attraction wielded by freer sex in soft colonial society is too powerful, to such a point that it will last until our days.[15] In the 16th century, the measures taken have no real effect. The viceroy Francisco de Toledo points out that licentiousness was so common that concubinage almost was not considered illegal.

Very soon, mestizos and mestizas join in these unsanctified practices in a social climate of permissiveness and tolerance. The president of the Audiencia of Lima and pacifier of Peru, Pedro de La Gasca, when he decides to send two mestiza daughters of Juan and Gonzalo Pizarro to the king in 1549, explains his reasons to the monarch for doing so. Mestizas, he says, "often have the temperament of Spanish women that they inherit from their fathers, of getting whatever they want, and the little concern for their honor that they learn from their mothers." A dangerous mixture for the moral health that the authorities wanted to impose in vain on Peruvian society.

Neither do clerics and nuns escape from the widespread licentiousness. Towards the end of 1592, the choirmaster of the Cathedral of La Plata, which is today the city of Sucre in Bolivia, sent a report to the Spanish king, which the

[15] Footnote by Herren: "A few years ago, the Peruvian government found itself obliged to launch a publicity campaign in favor of 'responsible parenthood' before the scandalous increase of children with unknown fathers."

latter had requested, on the situation of the clergy in his jurisdiction. Doctor Felipe Molina enumerates a long list of irregularities committed by the religious of the Peruvian high country, but when he comes to "the monastery of the nuns of this city of La Plata," he describes a life behind the convent walls that is truly libertine. The nuns steal from each other and take valuable objects from the sacristy. This seems to scandalize the choirmaster more than the fact that "the prioress... was pregnant" and that "in the process of this investigation and before its conclusion, she aborted deliberately." "Another two nuns... had given birth a few days ago, their many attempts to abort having failed." On the day of "the baptism of one [of the nuns' children], there was rejoicing behind the communion gate[16] with an afternoon tea, which the father of the baptized child attended."

The abbess, denounced choirmaster Molina, "was very ugly," and so, in order to entice her lovers and "give gifts to those she loved," she basely exploited the work of the other nuns, such that "they should sew and wash the linen of the men she had dealings with," and she even stole their food.

The situation wasn't much more edifying among the Spanish friars of the different orders, entrusted with catechizing the Indians. The cohabitation of the religious with their catechumens is extremely frequent. Molina says that there are priests "who are publicly raising [their children]..." The friars acted at whim, thanks to the passiveness with which the Indians bore the priests' misbehavior. "These vices that they live in within their orders," says the choirmaster, "go unpunished and, moreover, are permitted, because the Indians never dare to complain."

Such sexual activity was not, however, gratuitous for the priests. The friars are "full of tumors and get them treated outside their convents, in this city, in public view, where I have seen them. And some who are lame, others without noses, come to this city to attend to their business affairs... and they go about the city, the squares and shops alone, doing business, buying things and sometimes wearing their habits very indecently, dismounting in the squares and uncovering wide breeches[17] made out of colored fabric and beribboned with laces, in sight of everyone...." In other words, not only are they libertines, they are dandies as well.

---

16 M. Alarcón explained that behind the altar there was a gate that separated the church from the convent, at which the nuns would receive communion from the priest during mass.

17 According to Herren, these were wide pantaloons fashionable as underwear in the 16th century.

Not satisfied with Indian women, the friars go "where only civilians ought to," also to "the houses of women of dubious reputation, given over to vice. And, finally, they run around like maddened stallions who've been turned loose. And many of them, [who before were] good religious, become very bad catechists and priests, and no trace is left in them of religion or even of Christianity, apart from their priestly habits." A poor example for the Indians, whom they had to "indoctrinate and civilize."

Such widespread abuse against the women of the land contributed, yet again, to the decadence and prostration of the masculine Indian world. The aboriginal men not only find themselves divested of females with whom to have children and form families. This same fact was also unmistakable evidence of their impotence and their incapacity to protect their women, to attract them and succeed in keeping them at their side in order to project their future continuity through new generations.

This was going on half a century after the arrival of the Spaniards in the Inca Empire. One hundred and fifty years later, the Spanish travelers Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa discover that, not only had the situation stayed the same, it had gotten considerably worse.

"Among the vices that reign in Peru," they point out, "concubinage must be considered the most important as the most scandalous and widespread. Everyone practices it: Europeans, creoles, bachelors, married men, secular and regular ecclesiastics."

The situation that was denounced a century and a half before by Viceroy Toledo had remained unchanged, or had worsened. "It is so common for people to live in continuous concubinage, that in the small villages it even becomes a source of pride. And so, when a newcomer arrives and takes up residence for some time and does not practice the country's custom, it is noticed and their abstinence is attributed, not to virtue, but to stinginess and the desire to save, it being believed that they do so to avoid spending money." They said this from their own experience. In Quito, they were asked by the neighbors about their concubines, and when they answered that they lived without women, the residents of the place were stupefied.

The Spanish sailors are scandalized by the conditions in which the religious live. Their descriptions are much more amazing than those of the choirmaster of the cathedral of La Plata. "The convents," they write, "are never closed and

thus the religious live in them with their concubines inside their cells, like the [secular priests] who keep mistresses in their private residences, in exact imitation of married men.

"These people take so few precautions, or none at all, to cover up their conduct, that one is left with the impression that they themselves take a certain degree of pride in publicizing their unchastity. And this is what they transmit whenever they travel, since they take with them their concubine, children and servants, and thus make known the disorder of their lives."

Things do not stop there. The bastards of the religious socially inherit their fathers' honorary titles without shame. Thanks to this, in Quito one finds "innumerable 'provincials', 'guardians', and 'instructors'[18] from all the religious orders," because "the children always keep as an honorary title that of their father's station, and in public they are almost known [only by that title]." As for the concubines, they are conferred the social prestige and authority of their men of the cloth, and treat the townspeople "like underlings and treat them with contempt, or reduce them to a role of servitude as though they were their own servants." De Ulloa and Juan exclude only the Jesuits from this generalization. Of the others, "hardly a one escapes from these excesses."

They tell that on one occasion they went "to one of those convents" to say goodbye to some priests they had met. When they reached the cell of the first priest, they found "three young and attractive women, a religious, and another -- the one we had gone to visit -- who had had an accident and lay unconscious on the bed. The women were burning herbs to cure him and doing some other things to bring him back to consciousness." They found out from one of the friars that one of the three young women was the injured priest's mistress. They had had a marital argument the day before, and the priest's concubine, to irritate him, had gone to stand in front of the church where the religious was preaching. The friar lost his temper and, in the middle of a fit of rage, fell from the pulpit and lost consciousness. The other two females, a third religious explained, were the woman of the head of the congregation, and his own.

[18] Titles of ecclesiastical functions: Provincials were in charge of a province of the Church; Guardians were the gatekeepers of the convents, and Instructors were the readers of edifying texts at mealtimes in the convent refectory (Qtd. M. Alarcón).

"What is even more striking," they write, "is that the convents are reduced to being public bordellos, as happens in the smaller settlements, and in the larger ones they become theaters of unheard-of abominations and execrable vices."

The parish priests did not behave more chastely. The authors of "Secret News from America"[19] relate that the parish priest of a town in the province of Quito led such a scandalous life that complaints reached the bishop. When he was summoned for a fraternal rebuke, the priest told his provincial superior "that if he had any need of the parish, it was just to keep his mistresses and to make women fall in love with him, because as far as his personal needs went, all he needed to live on was a sack and a refectory ration; and so, if [the provincial] tried to forbid him his amusements, then they could keep the parish, which he had absolutely no need of." The result, add the chroniclers, was that the religious returned to the town "and continued with his perverted life as before." Surely, the one who had rebuked him was not living much more chastely than the parish priest himself.

Another priest whom the travelers met, a man "already past the age of eighty," nonetheless lived as man and wife with a young and attractive concubine -- so young and attractive that she was taken for one of the daughters that the religious had had with other women, because she was his fourth or fifth stable partner. And since he had fathered children with almost all of them, there was a veritable swarm of children there, some of them small and others grown." A situation which did not totally lack advantages, since the priest had among his children many altar boys to help him celebrate mass.

The parishes were, above all, an excellent business from the economic point of view, as De Ulloa and Juan pointed out, because of the implacable exploitation of the parishioners with masses, papal bulls and other paid ceremonies, and as a means to obtain an abundance of young girls for bed and domestic service.

In the jurisdiction of Cuenca (today Ecuador), a priest became enamoured of the chief's daughter, who was unusually beautiful. He had sought her out many times before, but the adolescent had always rejected him. He therefore

---

[19] Herren footnotes that this report, its original Spanish title *Noticias secretas de América*, was prepared by Spaniards Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, ship lieutenants who participated in a mid-18th century French expedition led by Charles La Condamine, whose objective was to make precise measurements of the earth. They spent 11 years in South America and, aside from their scientific research, wrote this confidential report at the behest of the Marquis of Ensenada on the situation in the colonies they visited and lived in.

asked her father for her hand in marriage, assuring him that he was going to request special dispensation from his bishop in order to marry.

The artful priest sent a messenger on some insignificant pretext to carry papers to the bishop and, meanwhile, he concocted "a fake license through which the prelate allegedly granted him permission to marry. As soon as the messenger returned, [the priest] showed the chief the alleged authorization. That same night, the false marriage took place and the deacon played the role of priest without the attendance of any other witnesses, or other circumstance, since malice gave it to understand that for such cases these were unnecessary, and from then on they lived together" (the priest and the chief's daughter).

After many years, and when the priest had already had several children with his false wife, the deception was discovered and the superiors of the religious punished him by removing him to another jurisdiction. "The unfortunate Indian woman was left saddled with children, and the chief, full of grief from the mockery committed against him, died shortly afterward, and the greatest part of the punishment fell on those who had been guilty of nothing more than believing in the words of a priest."

The celebration of orgiastic festivities was a common practice among the priests. Nothing seemed more repugnant than this to Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, so much so that they imagine that such things were "inventions of the Devil himself." But no -- they are the inventions of the ministers of the Lord.

The priests finance, organize and participate in the carousing. "And, gathering together their concubines, they hold the celebration in one of their own houses. After the dancing begins, so do the goings-on with drinks of local brandy and fruit, and, as the excitement mounts, the entertainment moves on to lewdness and acts of such immodesty and bawdiness that it would be foolhardy to refer to them, or lacking in prudence to stain this narrative with such obscenities. And so, leaving them hidden in the regions of silence, we shall limit ourselves to saying that all the malice that one might wish to express with regard to this issue, however great, could never plumb the depths that those perverted souls are mired in, nor would it be enough to understand it -- such is the degree of excess that debauchery and loose behavior have reached there."

Civil society follows similar models of libertine behavior, to the point that, as the sailors discover to their surprise, there are no prostitutes in the viceroyship of Peru. Such is the ease with which women will go to bed with anyone who pleases them, that prostitutes would starve to death. Much to the embarrassment of the Spanish chroniclers, the virtue of Peruvian women consists, simply, of not going to bed with whomever crosses their path and importunes them to do so, but with those whom they choose -- something which is too dissolute for the puritan morals of the age.

# PART II

## An Alternative Look at Philippine Colonial History

The following four chapters were first inspired by my readings of the 1975 edition of Teodoro Agoncillo's *A Short History of the Philippines* and by my introduction to Chilean history when I was required to revalidate high school in Santiago, before being allowed to apply for admission to the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile.

I feel tremendous respect for our historians. It was thanks to their work that I first acquired a dim awareness in my youth of the dramatically truncated nature of Philippine history -- in this sense I consider that they faithfully carried out the essence of their task. In writing these chapters, however, I conducted an experiment -- I read Agoncillo without limiting myself to passively taking in the words printed on the page, but, more than that, trying to feel out the multiple dimensions that influence how history books are written and that constitute a subtle filter between us and the meanings of historical events.

My intention was to be aware of some of these filters as I read, in order to penetrate them and connect with the narrative at a deeper, "less official" level. These dimensions which I am able to identify are: the cultural and generational formation of the writer-historian; the translation and interpretation that such formation imposes when the historian consults sources and re-elaborates the information obtained; and the changes of vision that occur at several points of the process of transferring knowledge: during the time that intervenes between the genesis of a historical event and the moment when the historian actually writes about it; after their writings have reached their students; and as new historians arise from the ranks of these to carry out, in turn, their own research, adding a new link to the transmission chain that will include their generational vision.

In the case of Philippine history, within the past one hundred years the Filipino people experienced a dramatic passage from one cultural mentality and way of life to another, and our historians have had to study and write about these two quite different cultural landscapes -- that of Hispanic Philippines (a little over three and a half centuries) and that of Americanized Philippines (almost half a century) -- of necessity without experiencing the first, and, due

to their academic training in the North American canon, without a strong background in Spanish or Latin American culture and history.

The task of writing about a historical process without a deep grasp of its cultural landscape -- one significantly different from the historian's own -- had to result in a historical image with shallows and shadowy areas of cultural sensitivity, which naturally influenced how that image was passed on. Especially since history has until quite recently been conceived as a monolithic, "objective" presentation of facts and events, in which the application of a psychological perspective was considered irrelevant or detrimental for a rigorous approach. However, it seems to me that including a psychological and cultural perspective in *histories of colonization* is vital for formerly-colonized peoples to understand their past, by illuminating the shifts in mentality and changes in cultural meanings that come about when some nations are colonized by others. Otherwise, as in our case, the straightforward, cut-and-dried narrative of the "here-today-gone-tomorrow" procession of our colonizers or the "free-one-minute-annexed-the-next" story of our passage from Spanish to North American colonization *has* to produce alienation and bewilderment in Filipino history students. This was my experience.

Perhaps thirty years ago there was not as much of a need for this culturally-sensitive focus in a world with fewer cultural connections between countries and clearly-drawn borders. Today, however, the frontiers between cultures have been erased by modern transport, television and telecommunications; institutions, religions, political and social systems everywhere are in crisis; and the problems that could be swept under the rug fifty years ago can no longer be ignored, above all world poverty and the destruction of the environment. A global approach to our history is today the most useful one for Filipinos, who, though scattered in all the countries, are still closely concerned by and connected to the problems faced by the Philippines. And for the Filipinos in our country, a new awareness of the stories of other peoples, far distant from our shores but related to us by destiny, and the initiation of dialog with them can perhaps suggest new answers and attitudes to old obstacles and dilemmas.

The approach I take is not the conventional one of a writer-historian (and this is why I don't invade the field of historiographers per se, but rather complement it) of emphasis on pure research and erudition. The information presented here is readily accessible; I have not discovered new data. I don't have the formation of an academic and to compensate for this lack I have referred

to the works of historians of established repute. What these writings offer is a different approach to the information their works have provided, one which I believe is not readily available and which consists of reflecting on history from a literary sensitivity and applying ideas from the field of transpersonal psychology in order to humanize history, taking it from the sphere of pure knowledge to that of human wisdom.

I believe this approach is useful, given our history's uniqueness, as that of a people formed out of two successive experiences of abrupt, traumatic superimposition of radically-different worldviews and cultures over our original indigenous one. Our second major transculturation happened just one hundred years ago, which in terms of historical time is like saying that it happened yesterday. This necessitates a cultural translation in order to help along our people's psychic process of integrating (understanding) the past. The process of integration has indeed been taking place outside of our rational awareness, but it is quite complex and to leave it to chance is to impoverish ourselves. For the Filipinos, integrating our past is an educational and cultural enterprise of considerable importance. The legacy of cultural alienation and disorientation is today the burden of many millions and our collective consciousness suffers a tremendous dispersion of energy and loss of vital vision because of it.

Perhaps the labor of integrating the past is not the primary function of our historians, but of our artists. At some point, however, I believe it must be explicitly addressed by Filipino historiographers and writers, it must be studied, written about and verbalized, even if only because it is a fascinating theme. In Latin America, the clash of cultures and mentalities took place 500 years ago and is relegated to the distant memory, though its effects still strongly influence their societies in ways that Latin American writers, artists, philosophers and social scientists unceasingly strive to elucidate and understand. In our case, it is close enough in time for us to address it, directly wrestle with its unresolved issues, and in the process clarify many struggles in all the fields of endeavor that currently challenge us. In any case, harm it cannot do.

This reflection on history carried out from a literary and psychological perspective is not value free -- no human statement ever is. Any claim to value-free exposition is still a proposal in favor of the absence of values as the basis for thought. I believe that the absence of values is inoperative for any human activity worthy of the adjective "human." This work affirms the essential

Filipino values of compassion, peaceful coexistence and the upholding of personal and collective dignity. As our history has been sadly plagued with crimes against these values -- perpetrated as much by our conquerors as by those of us who replicated the conquerors' example against their own kind -- any serious work of reflection on Filipino history cannot evade the issue of what Dr. José Rizal so often referred to as the 'moral redemption' of the Philippines.

**Methodology and Objective**

I once worked as an interpreter at a seminar given to deans of Chilean universities by the mathematician and philosopher Dr. Thomas Saaty, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh. During his talks, he touched on some of his ideas about group processes and the resolution of group conflicts and spoke at length on how so-called objectivity was really "consensual subjectivity." In other words, a group of scientists and academics (probably in Europe) had decided some time back that the way they thought, wrote and spoke was "objective," and that other people who thought, wrote and spoke differently were "unobjective." He also expressed his disagreement with the negative bias attached to the emotions and the belief that if someone felt strongly about something, it meant they had lost their objectivity and therefore were incapable of logical thinking.

I agree with Dr. Saaty that the human rational faculties are not expressed in pure acts and that thinking is not divorced from feeling. Thinking is propelled by the liking for ideas and by curiosity, which is a kind of emotion that makes one feel attracted to discovery and new learning. Intuition is a non-rational way of knowing which relies on global emotional perception, which, however, can later be confirmed by empirical observation and deduction or inference -- through the gathering of confirmatory evidence. Einstein allowed himself to be guided by intuition to the knowledge that was useful to him in formulating his relativity theory. He did not feel the need to first of all master all the theories of mathematics and physics, and did not do so. Research is a process of searching for external referents that confirm and substantiate an intuitive, embryonic, idea-image in the researcher's mind. If the West's concepts of "objectivity" and scientific thinking became the paradigm for intellectual and scientific work between the 17th and 20th centuries, surely this meant they constituted a real breakthrough in the intellectual sphere of human activity. But its past success and universal acceptance don't necessarily mean it is the only way that correct thinking can be achieved forever, and that we must not

stray from the dictates of European and North American academe at the risk of committing intellectual suicide. On the contrary, today the vanguard thinkers and scientists of the West believe that the human species' approach to knowledge is in the midst of a revolutionary change, precisely because the rationalist, positivist paradigm has reached its limits. For quite some time, they have been moving toward the fusion of Eastern and Western thought and a new unification of science, philosophy and religion.

New physics has confirmed that pure objectivity is impossible for us humans because we capture the information from our environment in a selective way and screen out other information that our senses and consciousness are unable to detect and structure into processable bits of information.

Therefore, if we are hard-wired to work with filters and there is nothing to be done about it, the most "objective" way to proceed is to detect and define the nature of our filters, in order to reduce their interference to the minimum.

Also, since our perception is conditioned by our structural limitations as a species on one hand and by our subjective filters on the other, teamwork is a superior level of intellectual work, multiplying as it does our capacity for critical observation and evaluation. "Superior," if carried out by individuals who have developed the skills for working cooperatively and thinking collectively. One head is good, but more heads working in convergence is better. The critical faculties of the individuals are expanded, and it is because of this that a parallel capacity for convergent thinking must be present, if the increased capability for critical thought is to result in greater effectiveness rather than in the Babel Tower effect. Asians may have a cultural advantage in this sense, because we are not as strongly conditioned to be intellectually divergent and individualistic as Westerners are.

According to the Siloist method of intellectual work, before undertaking any attempt at description or interpretation of a phenomenon, one must define the interest and point of view. This is necessary in order to create a frame for the intellectual work and to set down favorable conditions for coherent future dialog, since the terms of reference will be clearly defined. Following the definition of one's interest and mode of approach, one then observes the object of study on three levels: first by itself (differentiation stage), second in relationship to similar objects within a larger framework or context (complemen-

tation stage), and finally, in process (synthesis): where it is coming from, where it is right now, and where it is going.[20]

My interest is to throw light on dimensions of Hispanic-Filipino colonial history that have not been easily accessible before, by approaching it from the wider perspective of Latin American history and culture. Philippine history is already studied on the individual plane. What I attempt to do in this chapter is to observe the relations between her history and that of other peoples who shared the experience of Spanish colonization with the Philippines -- the Latin American countries in general, and Chile in particular -- in order to access a broader vision of the Philippines' colonial process.

I can say many things about what constitute my personal filters, but probably the most relevant ones are that I belong to the postwar generation of Filipinos and have experienced transculturation twice: first in the United States, and later in Chile, which affirmed my Filipino identity instead of disarticulating it. I have a definite pro-Filipino cultural bias and the purpose of my writing is to focus on my people and my country in the most positive way that I can, because there is much that is praiseworthy and exemplar in ourselves and in our history that has been taken for granted, and even more -- I believe -- that we are unaware of, and which deserve to be made visible and extolled. I am in no way affirming that Filipinos are a race of angels and would not hesitate to say that we certainly have our share of malevolent qualities, which have been quite active and received more press than our constructive ones; nevertheless, the enormity of the challenges we must face if we are to build a country for us all is matched by the greatness of our yet-untapped potential as a nation -- a potential which the moment has come to seriously tap without delay.

Thus, the purpose of this work is not the pursuit of an objective vision of Filipino history, but quite the contrary. It is to express a very subjective vision that offers the benefit of showing our past within a broader framework, that can enable us to see ourselves as not being an isolated process, but part of a larger one which birthed new peoples and nations out of a titanic clash of worlds -- between Europe and Indigenous America and Oceania. The usefulness of attaining to this new vision would not be the gaining of academic knowledge, but rather achieving a deeper identification with our past, upon better understanding where we come from. It would make us surer of our "origins," more tolerant and compassionate toward our present situation,

[20] This is a summary of the steps of what in Siloist theory is called The Method.

prouder of ourselves, and readier to change in order to grow stronger as a nation, among other nations who, like us, are in a process of understanding their own histories and striving to grow, redefine themselves and create new myths to replace the old. I refer to the family of countries who, like us, experienced colonization, grouped together up until now under the labels of "Third" and "Fourth Worlds," and who, it is my belief, are the future of our planet and of our species.

## A Comparison of Two History Texts

In the interest of offering an overall temporal view of our object of study -- Hispanic Philippine colonial history -- I share with you a table that I made up to compare the treatment given by two Filipino historians to the four main eras of Filipino history: the pre-Magellanic, Spanish colonial, American colonial and post-colonial periods.

The table that follows compares two history texts, one by Teodoro Agoncillo and the other by the Jesuit priest José S. Arcilla, from the point of view of how much material each book devotes to each era.

| **Era**[1] | **Time Span** | **Agoncillo** | **Arcilla** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | A Short History of the Philippines (300 pages of text) | Introduction to Philippine History (138 pages of text) |
| **Pre-Colonial/ Pre-Hispanic Islands** | 1300 BC – 1521 (ca. 2,821 years) | | |
| No. of Chapters | | 1 | 1 |
| No. of Pages | | 26 (9%) | 5 (4%) |
| **Spanish Colonial/ Spaniards** | 1521[21] - 1898 (377 years) | | |
| No. of Chapters | | 7 | 14 |
| No. of Pages | | 127 (42%) | 103 (75%) |
| **American Colonial/ American System** | 1898-1946 (48 years) | | |
| No. of Chapters | | 6 | 2 |
| No. of Pages | | 108 (36%) | 16 (12%) |
| **Post-Colonial/ The Republic** | 1946-1974 (27 years) | | |
| No. of Chapters | | 3 | 1 |
| No. of Pages | | 41 (14%) | 7 (5%) |

Both works stop in the early 1970s. Agoncillo's book is written for adult readers, while Fr. Arcilla's work is for high school students.

It isn't surprising to see how little of our pre-colonial history is developed in our history books. In the Latin American countries where “mestizaje” or racial mixing took place and a new mestizo race was born (by this I refer to those societies like Chile's, whose socioeconomic life has been shaped by the predominant influence of Spanish or European cultural groups), the history of their tribal societies is a separate branch of study which only those with a specific interest in it seek out. What children are exposed to in school is much

[1] The names given to the eras correspond first to that used by Agoncillo, and after the slash, that used by Arcilla.

[2] Though the Philippines was not occupied by the Spanish until 1565, or 44 years after discovery, I use 1521 from the point of view of Spain's concept of establishing sovereignty over the archipelago, and thus our entry into Western history and the era of colonization.

the same fare that ours receive: cursory external descriptions of social customs, religious practices and economic life. There is, of course, much to be understood from this era, though I believe it could be better approached not from an external anthropological perspective, but with the interest of understanding the religious world of our ancestors and trying to see how that religious matrix is still present in the mentality and social behavior of modern Filipinos.

Both books offer the greatest amount of material on the Spanish period, but Agoncillo dedicates almost the same number of pages to the American period -- perhaps because, from the point of view of participation, native Filipinos never had the visible and active role in the Spanish colonial government that middle-class Filipinos did under the Americans, and thus we actually "did" more things during the American period in almost a tenth of the historical time.

What strikes one though, upon reading Spanish colonial historical accounts and comparing them to the American period, is that, in spite of the common people's notable absence as protagonists in the former, they are nonetheless a definite popular presence -- in the descriptions of city and town life, local government, customs and religious practices. During the American period, however, the protagonists are the politicians and their supporting cast. It is almost as if no new cultural activities developed, nor cultural and social trends. The focus is exclusively trained on economics and politics. Was there no substantial difference then, in the way people lived between the Spanish period and the years we were a colony of the United States? Was the North Americanization of the Filipino people mostly a transition to a new socioeconomic model and political system and the acquiring of a new language, but underneath the furious political activity and the dramatic material transformation of our country, the Filipino-Hispanic soul did not change, or simply accepted the superpositioning of a new cultural layer? I believe so. Nevertheless, surely there were cultural and societal developments that took place (ours is a huge country after all), which our social scientists, writers and folklorists can further investigate and make known.

So much for the broad picture. I will now give a summary of the Spanish colonization and independence of Chile for the benefit of Filipino readers, who will immediately recognize in it facets of our own story.

## Chapter 5

## A Relevant History of Chile

Latin American history is on the whole extremely well documented from the time of the Conquest and Emancipation until the present. The Latin Americans have been studying themselves and writing about their past almost uninterruptedly, picking up where the friars left off and never ceasing to record and analyze their histories from multiple angles. In the specific case of Chile, I received the distinct impression when I first began to study its history that Chileans loved their past and were fascinated by it. There is a solid tradition of historical investigation and writing in Chile that I believe is comparable to that of the European countries, because the foundations of Chilean intellectual culture were laid by scholars formed in the major currents of Western European thought, most notably France and England.[22]

### Discovery

We have something in common with Chile. In 1520, before Ferdinand Magellan[23] landed on the shores of Homonhon, he sailed along Chile's southern coast and is thus credited with its discovery from the south. According to a lecture on Magellan's voyage given in 1991 by Chilean historian Virginia García Lyon, Magellan named the land "Tierra del Fuego" (Land of Fire) because of the numerous fires he and his men espied one night from their ships, though they saw "not one mortal man." Magellan had crossed the Atlantic, sailed along South America's eastern coast, and around what today is called Cape Horn. The expedition made its way with great trepidation through a torturous watery maze of small islands until reaching the strait later named after its discoverer. Magellan at first thought it was the mouth of a great river, and though it is a relatively short corridor it took the expedition 38 days to clear it because of the violent weather it has since become famous for. After Magellan finally succeeded in negotiating the strait, he realized what it was and named it Todos los Santos, after the date of the crossing. He then found

[22] In the case of Chile, after independence from Spain its governing class made the decision to move away from the Spanish model of government and education. The government invited Andrés Bello, a Venezuelan of tremendous culture, to set down the bases of Chile's educational system. He drafted the Civil Code in 1848, patterning it almost exactly after that of France.

[23] The English version of the Portuguese captain's name, in Spanish Fernando de Magallanes, and in Portuguese "Fernão de Magalhaes."

himself before a great ocean that he named the 'Pacific,' because of the striking contrast between its becalmed waters and the stormy passage they had left behind.

The Archipelago of St. Lazarus (according to Agoncillo, rechristened Felipinas after Felipe II by Ruy López de Villalobos in 1542) was to be the next important land sighting for the ultimately successful, though arduous and tragic expedition. As we know, Magellan did not see its end, dying in Mactan at the age of 41, and only 17 half-starved men completed the voyage around the globe, out of the original crew of 250.

It was Diego de Almagro, Francisco Pizarro's partner in the conquest of Peru's Inca empire, who discovered Chile from the north in 1536, sixteen years after Magellan's sighting of Tierra del Fuego. Almagro's reconnaissance of the lands that had been awarded him was fraught with suffering, heavy financial losses and disappointment, for in Chile he found neither a great center of civilization equal to Cuzco[24] nor rich gold mines -- only intense heat, cold and altitude sickness when his numerous army crossed the Andes before reaching level country; indomitable Indians; and once again the pounding sun and freezing nights when he chose the alternative route of crossing the Atacama Desert to return to Peru.

**The Conquistadors**

Eduardo Galeano wrote:

> Fourteen ninety-two was not just the year of the discovery of America, the new world born from that mistake of grandiose consequences. It was also the year of the recovery of Granada. Fernando of Aragon and Isabel of Castile, who with their marriage had overcome the disintegration of their dominions, defeated the last bastion of the Moslem faith on Spanish soil in early 1492. It had taken almost eight centuries to recover what had been lost in seven years, and the war of reconquest had depleted the royal treasury. But it was a holy war, the Christian war against Islam, and it is not accidental, besides, that in that same year 1492, 150,000 declared Jews were expelled from the country. Spain would acquire reality as a nation raising swords with cross-shaped hilts. Queen Isabel became

[24] The center of the Inca Empire.

> the godmother of the Holy Inquisition. The feat of the discovery of America would be unexplainable without the warring military tradition of the Crusades which reigned in medieval Castile, and the Church did not have to be begged to convey a sacred character to the conquest of the unknown lands on the other side of the ocean. Pope Alexander VI, who was a Valencian, converted Queen Isabel into the owner and mistress of the New World. The expansion of the kingdom of Castile would enlarge God's reign over the earth.[25]

## The Spanish Conquest: A Capitalist Enterprise

The great motor behind the discovery of the New World was economics:

> Pepper, ginger, cloves, nutmeg and cinnamon were as sought after as salt to preserve meat in winter without rotting or losing its flavor. The Catholic Kings of Spain decided to finance the adventure of direct access to the sources, to free themselves of the expensive chain of intermediaries and resellers who monopolized the business of spices and tropical plants, muslins and knives which came from the mysterious regions of the Orient. The desire for precious metals -- the means of payment for the commercial traffic -- also motivated the crossing of the devilish seas. All Europe needed silver: the silver mines of Bohemia, Saxony and the Tyrol were already almost exhausted.[26]

## The Motivations of the Conquistadors

The Conquest was a capitalist enterprise which was replicated with military precision in all the lands claimed as Spanish possessions, and was the direct consequence of Castile's thirst for new conquests after the expulsion of the

---

[25] *The Open Veins of Latin America* (16-17). The Holy Inquisition, born from the union between the Spanish monarchs and the Pope, was created to unify the kingdom under one faith by persecuting and driving out all Spanish Moslems and Jews. Since the Moslems -- who ruled Spain from 711 C.E. until 1492 and were the guardians of Greco-Roman knowledge throughout the European Middle Ages -- were scientists, artists and skilled artisans, and the Jews, besides having their own great culture (which flourished alongside Christian culture under the tolerant Moors) were also bankers and businessmen, the expulsion of these two groups from Spain dramatically set back her cultural and economic development. Countries such as England, France and Holland profited by accepting the expelled Jews.

[26] Ibid.

Moors. This is the historical framework within which it is studied in Chile, which makes it comprehensible for modern students. In the Philippines, however, its presentation is absolutely disjointed, with so little context as to practically have none. One day, we are simply told, because of developments in Europe which spurred the search for spices, silks and gems in the Indies, the Spanish Pope divided the world between Portugal and Spain, and the Spanish conquistadors and friars appeared on our horizon to claim us for the Catholic Kings and the Pope. However, as the reading of just two paragraphs of Galeano's great work drives home, the story is much more interesting when one first learns a little about the internal process of Spain's formation as a nation and a world power, and the conquistadors' identities and motivations.

During the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, those who did not belong to the nobility in Spain were called "plebeyos" or plebes, and "villanos" -- inhabitants of a *villa*, a small population center, not so large as a city, but larger than a village. The former were the urban elements who exercised all manner of crafts, and the latter were the inhabitants of the towns, connected to farm work. As for the noble class, it was made up of "titled nobles" (dukes, counts and marquises), knights (caballero*s* -- who had the wherewithal to own a horse and arms), and gentlemen (hidalgos). The outstanding characteristic of the nobility was the cult to honor, which was hereditary and which they had to maintain and enhance. Because wealth enhanced personal honor, losing his wealth was reason for a nobleman to be stripped of his title, and thus many nobles undertook enterprises of conquest to preserve their privileges.

Chilean historian Luis Galdames explains that the Spanish nation developed within a context of continual warring, from the days when the Goths and Visigoths populated the peninsula and were conquered by the Romans. They developed a character that was accustomed to hardship and open to adventure. The frequent episodes of pillaging suffered during the Moorish invasions and a mode of life that often revolved around shepherding and moving from place to place to find better pasture and escape from persecution and hunger, especially in Castile where the soil was poor and the climate tending to extremes of heat and cold, gave the Spanish a similarly extreme temperament and a hardy constitution that prepared them for the future challenges of discovery and conquest of the New World.

The Spanish also developed an extreme religiousness, probably because survival was so difficult and because religious faith was what sustained their fight to drive out the Moors and was naturally strengthened by victory.

The first to go to America were not the nobles; they only arrived later as governors. A few impoverished *hidalgos* were the first to try their luck in the new lands, a new space where they had wide opportunities for finding wealth (gold and silver) and raising their social status. These motivations were shared by the plebes and villanos who joined the expeditions of discovery and conquest and who made up the majority of the ranks of 'conquistadors.' Most of them were uneducated, because education was at that time the privilege of the nobility and clergy in Spain and in all of Europe. Hernán Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico, was an exceptional case of literacy and culture, having studied law in Spain before becoming a soldier of fortune. Francisco Pizarro, the bastard son of a poor *hidalgo* who had worked for his father as a swineherd, and Diego de Almagro, the son of peasants, were both illiterate. However, as a result of the historical and social conditions that had molded the Spanish national character, they were tough, astute and courageous. Galdames explains that “they came from regions where the conditions were not favorable for agriculture, such as Extremadura and Castilla; others came from Andalucía, taking advantage of the nearness of the ports.”

## Types of Spanish Enterprises in the New World

In 1495, once the Catholic Kings had taken away the privileges conceded to Columbus,[27] the Indies were opened up to all those who wished to "recover in them and search for gold, other metals, other merchandise."

Different types of enterprises were created for the conquistadors to carry out in the Indies.

The enterprise of recovery was undertaken by a group of individuals with the aim of "recovery," or the exchange of merchandise for the natives' gold or precious objects.[28] The head of the expedition was obliged to give the Crown

[27] Before Columbus left on his first voyage, Fernando and Isabella had made him Governor of all the lands he would discover.

[28] The octogenarian Chilean historian, Virginia García Lyon, said in a Santiago lecture in 1992 that "Magellan brought with him perhaps millions of communion hosts for the conversions to Catholicism, 900 small mirrors and 10 large ones, and bells, which greatly attracted the Indians."

20% of the total value of what was recovered (called the quinto real or 'royal fifth'), after deducting operational costs.

The enterprise of Indians, or cabalgada de indios, had the objective of capturing Indians to sell into slavery, which was justified either by the Indians' armed resistance or their refusal to convert to Christianity.

The enterprise of conquest was aimed at establishing a permanent settlement within a territory, using Indian labor. The leaders of these were often soldiers with experience from previous enterprises who, once they had obtained some wealth, decided to organize and lead new expeditions to spread their fame.

**Financing and Other Mechanisms**

The leadership of an enterprise was authorized by the king and queen under a *capitulación* or agreement. The capitulación invested the captain of conquest with sovereign powers and governmental functions such as Governor, Judge or Chief Constable (Alguacil Mayor). The subsequent refusal by the men recruited for an enterprise to recognize the captain's leadership was tantamount to an act of rebellion.

Generally, most of the financing of an enterprise to the Indies was the leader's responsibility and in many cases commercial firms participated by lending the captain of conquest money under certain terms of repayment. In other words, the enterprises of conquest were privately financed.

Once the head conquistador had obtained the document authorizing the enterprise, he began recruitment. The system of operations was frankly medieval, since national armies had not yet come into existence. The hired army also included surgeons, sailors, chaplains and a veedor or inspector (literally "seer"), who was in charge of setting aside the *quinto real* (the royal fifth) for the King, out of the booty obtained.

The captain of conquest could not act according to personal initiative in the operations of conquest -- at least, not legally. Aside from the stipulations of the *capitulación*, the conquistador received instructions, which he had to follow. These covered the issues of navigation, methods for making war, prohibition against concubinage (universally transgressed), blasphemy and gambling, and the obligation to evangelize and take judicial possession of the conquered territory.

Along with the small army of Spaniards there usually marched hundreds of Indian allies. They not only participated as tongues, or interpreters, but also as warriors, fighting with the Spaniards against other Indians.[29] Rivalries between tribes and the prospect of taking part in pillaging and sharing in the booty were among the motivations which led different tribes to ally themselves with the Spaniards.

This was certainly the case in the Philippines during the Spanish conquest and period of colonization. In Luzon the Spaniards relied on native fighters rallied by their datos or chiefs, from Pampanga, Pangasinan and Ilocos to resist the 1762 British invasion, and the British in turn were supported by natives under anti-Spànish leaders such as Diego Silang. After each battle the winning side gave permission for its troops to loot and pillage for a few hours, and it was customary for non-combatants such as Chinese or the impoverished to take advantage of the general situation of anarchy. In this way the regional (i.e., tribal) divisions took root among the native Filipinos, rooted in the war violence perpetrated amongst themselves that surely became branded in popular memory as generations-old grievances and blood feuds. The same happened between the Christianized natives who fought the moros in the south in the services of their Spanish rulers.

## The City and the Rewards of the Conquistador

The captain awarded prizes to his men according to the merits they earned. He decided where a settlement would be founded and a map of the future city was then traced. The solar or lot was the urban prize, equivalent to a quarter of a block, set aside to construct a house for the beneficiary. The owners of *solares* became the city's principal neighbors or vecinos. Another prize was a farm (chacra), a piece of rural property for the production of food, located just beyond the city's perimeter.

Another prize was the distribution of rural land to each conquistador to be converted into a large farm or hacienda. Other highly valued prizes were the

[29] Herren points out a detail left out of the history books: large numbers of Indian women were camp followers of the Indian armies. They cooked, washed and mended clothing and served as concubines, often giving birth along the way. The conquistadors recruited men from different countries. According to Virginia García Lyon, nine nations were represented in Magellan's crew, including 27 Italians, 38 Portuguese, German technicians, an Englishman, some Africans and Arabs.

concession of gold and silver mines or placers, where gold was obtained by washing.

The first settlements were established because of the conquistadors' need to assure their own protection and survival and their success, in effect, in claiming the new lands for the Spanish crown and implanting the new culture and religion. They built first of all strongholds, fortresses, and the priests were indispensable for the enterprise, both as fighters (the Augustinians and Jesuits – religious orders founded in the tradition of medieval knights defending the Christian faith in heathen lands, unlike the Dominicans and Franciscans, who originally had mystical orientations) were particularly renowned for their courage and for being war strategists and experts in the use and fabrication of armaments and gunpowder), and for converting and domesticating the fractious native population.

**The Encomienda System: Disguised Slavery**

The need for manual labor to carry out the multiple tasks demanded by the founding of a city and maintaining the needs of the community, as well as to exploit the mines, explains the importance of another of the prizes: the encomienda of Indians (from *encomendar,* to commend or entrust). The encomienda was generally conceded for two lifetimes -- the encomendero's lifetime and that of his son -- after which the encomienda reverted to the Crown, which could then reassign it to someone else. It was actually a disguised slavery which was to contribute to the decimation of the Indians. In exchange for the encomienda of Indians, the *encomendero* had the duty of giving them protection and Christian indoctrination. But the dynamics of the conquest -- individualism, the desire for quick and easy wealth without concern for the means employed to achieve it, and the Indians' belligerent resistance against the new order to which the Spaniards wanted them to submit and which they fiercely rejected, meant that any intention of "civilizing" the Indians that may have been contained in the letter of the law was never materialized. Instead, the encomienda system became the precursor of the importation of black slaves, which began when it became clear that the Indians could not endure the back-breaking work of the mines and the fields, and they began dying off by the thousands.

**The First Colonial Settlement is Established in Chile**

In 1540, after Diego de Almagro's death in Peru, during the war that he waged against Pizarro and lost, Pedro de Valdivia, Pizarro's right hand and already a famous and wealthy conquistador, requested permission to conquer Chile. He left Cuzco with 150 soldiers, 3,000 Indians, tools, domestic animals and European seeds, since his intention was to initiate Chile's colonization. With his expedition went three priests and the first European woman to arrive in the country, Valdivia's mistress, Inés de Suárez.[30]

On February 12, 1541, Valdivia founded a settlement in the central Aconcagua Valley on a hill named Huelén (which meant "suffering" in the Mapuche language, rechristened by him Santa Lucía) and a small island formed by the bifurcation of the Mapocho River. He named the new city Santiago de la Nueva Extremadura in honor of St. James, the patron saint of Spain, and after his birthplace, the region of Extremadura. Valdivia founded other important cities and quelled uprisings by the Indians as well as among his own men, when some tried to abandon Santiago and return to Peru because of poverty and hardship. Towards the end of 1553, the Indians under the leadership of Lautaro, a 20-year-old Mapuche chief who until months before had served as a groom in Valdivia's stables, attacked and destroyed a fort in Tucapel in the south. Valdivia went to the fort's aid with just forty horsemen and a group of Picunche Indians. They were attacked by successive waves of Lautaro's warriors. Valdivia, already admired by the Indians for his bravery, died in battle. Legend tells that his heart was ritually devoured by the triumphant chiefs to take unto themselves the conquistador's courage.

The Disaster of Curalaba in 1598[31] which signalled a generalized Mapuche uprising and was followed by the destruction of seven cities south of Concepción finally established the southernmost limit of Chilean colonization where that city stands today. Thereafter the Spaniards renounced all further attempts to subjugate the Mapuches, who did not tolerate even the presence of missionaries within their territory. The cities, haciendas and the agriculture and mining activity north of that frontier configured the construct of colonial eco-

---

[30] Inés de Suárez is described in the historical accounts as a woman of unusual courage and compassion, fighting the Indians alongside the men and keeping their morale high in the first and very dangerous years of the settlement. Valdivia was later obliged to send her away and bring his legal wife to Santiago.

[31] A small force of around 380 soldiers led by Martín García Óñez de Loyola, governor of Chile, undertook a campaign of pacification and was massacred in Curalaba by the Mapuches under Pelantaru. The Spanish were demoralized and admitted that they did not have the military strength to defeat the Indians in the South because of the difficult terrain, the inclement weather and the superior numbers and fighting ability of the Mapuches. Besides their non-dependence on agriculture for subsistence, they had an extremely efficient system of leadership rotation in which any warrior chieftain killed in battle was quickly replaced.

nomic and social life. A creole society developed, with intermarriage between Spaniards and pacified Indians creating an ever-growing mestizo group.

Galeano makes reference to Earl J. Hamilton, a North American historical researcher who quantified the wealth that flowed from the American colonies to Spain, concluding that the combined wealth from the thousands of kilos of gold and silver funneled to Spain from Hispanic America, as well as the revenue from the spices and agricultural products brought from the Philippines, ended up in England and France, from whom Spain bought manufactured goods and armaments, thus fueling the Industrial Revolution.

> [T]he flow of silver reached gigantic proportions. The plentiful clandestine exportation of American silver, which was siphoned off as contraband to the Philippines, to China and to Spain itself, does not appear in the calculations of Earl J. Hamilton, who at any rate offers astonishing figures in his well-known work based on information obtained in the Casa de Contratación.[32] Between 1503 and 1660, 185,000 kilos of gold and 16 million kilos of silver arrived in Seville. The silver transported to Spain in little more than a century and a half exceeded by three times the total of the European reserves. And these figures...do not include the contraband.[33]

Thus, the motivations of the Conquest were material more than spiritual, and even in the spiritual realm, they were imperial -- to spread the Empire of Christianity. The Conquest was not an altruistic enterprise. It made Spain and Portugal very rich and powerful indeed, and either decimated, enslaved or pauperized their new subjects.

## Destruction of a New World to Implant the Old

The social attitudes and motivations which were the foundations of the colonial settlements were, unfortunately, largely reprehensible and ignoble. The conquistadors as a group were mainly comprised of ignorant, penniless adventurers seeking wealth, fame and an entry into the nobility, or noblemen who sought more of what they already had. Mostly they came to plunder, and

---

[32] Described by Herring as a "Board of Trade," organized in 1503 and in charge of overseeing the trade between Spain and her colonies. I would call it the "Royal Expeditionary Office," since it was the body that gave the king's official approval to the enterprises of conquest and kept track of their operations for the king's benefit.

[33] *The Open Veins of Latin America.*

when they stayed they did so as the new ruling nobility, with the Indians as their vassals, concubines and servants. Thus they recreated all the faults of the world they had only physically left behind, and gave their Old World mentality five hundred years' worth of extended life by transplanting it in the New World's pristine soil. The conquistadors did not want a New World, only a replica of the Old one, thus they never hesitated to destroy what they found, because to almost all of them it was an invalid construct.

The Indians inhabited a world totally different from that of the Spanish. North American historians caution against taking the Indians for noble savages, pointing out that their civilizations had the same problems of inequities and violence. These statements surely hold truth, and the intention of this writing is not to uphold the Indian civilizations as the most compassionate ones ever produced by humanity. However, that the Aztecs and Incas were decadent civilizations doesn't justify the Spaniards' brute destructiveness. The Conquest from the perspective of the Indians was a human and cultural tragedy and cannot be minimized or brushed aside. To this very day, in Latin America there is widespread feeling that the anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America is a day of sadness and not of celebration.

The Indians, in contrast to the Europeans, still lived in a religious era, in symbiosis with nature -- a stage that Western civilization had already left behind. Gold to the Incas was the symbol of the Sun god and served a primarily ritualistic function. The Caribbean Indians were sexually free; according to Herren, the chiefs gave their daughters and sisters -- even their wives -- to the conquistadors to establish kinship ties with them. When they offered gifts to the Spanish it was not as a gesture of vassalage but the ritual initiation of a relationship of respect and reciprocity. The Spaniards' acceptance of their gifts meant to the Indians that they agreed to forge an alliance with them. However, the Spanish interpreted these gestures as submission and self-abasement. They took the Indian women as the spoils of conquest and as the opportunity to give free rein to the hedonism that was firmly held in check in Spain by rigid moral constraints and social rules. In the New World there were no longer any taboos or controls over their appetites, especially since they hardly saw the Indians as humans with souls like themselves.

Thus, unlike the pilgrims from England who arrived with their families on the North American continent to establish a freer and more egalitarian society for themselves (and initially in peaceful coexistence with the Indians), the Spanish adventurers arrived in the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South

America first to plunder, and then to install themselves as masters. Never again to toil by the sweat of their brow, but to oblige others to toil for them. Herren writes:

> As Theophile Gautier would say centuries later, observing the men of the Peninsula, 'in general, work seems to the Spaniards a humiliating thing and unworthy of a free man.' Throughout the process of the Reconquest [of Spain from the Moors], city-dwelling Spaniards suffered the contagion of the knightly ideal of noble life. The proverbial 'arrogance' and 'pride' of the Hispanics, even when it obviously contrasted with their scarcity of means or their plebeian condition, had its origin in this diffusion of the chivalric ideology toward all layers of society, predominant in the Middle Ages among the European upper classes.... The same is true for their fondness for idle living and the possession of infinite servants.
>
> [T]he Spaniards, as soon as they had settled in Hispaniola [today Haiti and the Dominican Republic], considered themselves gentlemen and refused to practice their trades. Their main concern was to get rich in order to achieve their ideal of the aristocratic life, through equally chivalric means: force of arms and military conquest, courage combined with disdain for safety, in order to win fame and honor as well. In this way, and not by working or speculating as a bourgeois would have done; by getting gold and, if there was no gold, then pearls; and if there were no pearls, slaves to traffic and for themselves; and land to establish mayorazgos [the system of inheritance by the firstborn son]. 'The thirst for gold, no less than that for land, is what moves our people to face so much work and danger,' Pedro Mártir de Anghiera correctly observed, in the men who came from a country where large portions of the soil had been appropriated once and for all, and there was no longer any hope for the dispossessed to convert themselves into landowners.

In the Philippines, as Agoncillo points out, "The Spaniards...were indolent, which the natives imitated...." The Spaniards would later convince the native Filipinos that it was the latter who were the lazy party. The Americans, on the other hand, impressed us because they did not shy away from doing work, even such humble tasks as washing their own cars on Sunday mornings. Today it isn't clear if the formerly-colonized tropical peoples are "lazy" because

of the climate, human nature or the habits formed by Spanish colonization. Surely a little of all three, and other reasons besides.

With time, after the initial orgy of depredation and unbridled licentiousness had evolved into less visible practices, social order and regulation were duly established as the Spanish Crown installed governors, administrators and priests in each place. The centers of colonial life settled into the inertia of the sociopolitical and economic model imposed by the Mother Country.

Nevertheless, the apparent new order and symmetry were established over foundations which have conditioned these societies' future development. Today, unethical opportunism, the avidity for wealth obtained with the least effort, the attitude toward work as debasing and thus of those who need to work for a living as being the social inferiors of those who do not, the view of women as either sacred, asexual Virgin Marys or the rightful booty of powerful males and, most lamentable of all, that the powerful are beyond the law, constitute the heavy legacy of medieval Spain to her former colonies, notwithstanding the admonitions of the Catholic Church and the pious rhetoric of politicians, businessmen and social scientists.

Past the initial stages of the colonization process, the Spanish colonial settlements in America developed into towns and cities and a new wave of emigrants from the Spanish Peninsula began to arrive, to make a new home in the colonies. Many were the so-called "segundones," or second sons. The first-born sons of the nobility, thanks to the system of *mayorazgo*, inherited their fathers' titles and properties, and the second-born usually joined the priesthood as the best alternative for a socially-prominent profession. After the priesthood, there was the military, or seeking a fortune in the colonies. The children of the segundones became the creoles of America. Their fathers were proud, self-made men who passed on to their children a certain contempt for the Spanish nobility and the peninsulars, as men who had attained position and wealth without having earned it.[34] The creoles all spoke *castellano,* whereas the Spanish who came to America to administer it were from different regions and did not all speak Castilian. There were cases in which the governors were Catalans or Basques and spoke Castilian badly, but did not care to make an effort to communicate well in that language because they had their own strong regional identity and linguistic preference. The creoles were thus unified by

[34] Although there were many Creoles whose maximum aspiration, once they had become *hacenderos*, to enter into the nobility. They bought titles from Spain, which converted them into marquises and dukes, and this was also the case of rich *insulares* in the Philippines.

their common language. Finally, they identified with the land and began to view the self-important Spanish bureaucrats with growing antagonism. The creoles were barred from occupying important positions in the governments of their own land because of their birth certificates. Thus, although they were loyal to the Crown, they became deeply dissatisfied with Spanish rule.

## Chapter 6

## The Emancipation Process of Chile and Latin America

The independence struggles of Chile and the other Latin American countries were a long process that began when Napoleon invaded Spain in 1808, imprisoned Ferdinand VII and put his brother Jean[35] on the Spanish throne. The American colonies, with the creoles as their spokesmen, declared themselves loyal subjects of Ferdinand VII and refused to bow to Napoleon. However, the king's imprisonment gave them the chance to claim their right to govern themselves, at least until such time as the king had recovered his throne.

### The Regency Council and the Council of the Indies[36]

Upon the king's imprisonment, the different regions on the Spanish Peninsula formed government juntas made up of prominent citizens, charged with governing for the duration of the war against the French. The juntas were brought together under a Regency Council in Cádiz to unify action and avoid dispersing energies. By this time the Liberal movement[37] had taken hold in government circles, giving rise to important reforms. The Regency Council convoked an assembly of national representatives which it designated the Courts of Cádiz (Cortes de Cádiz), and sent proclamations to America for each region to appoint and send a deputy. An official proclamation circulated in the colonies which expressed the liberals' reformist intention:

> From this moment on, American Spaniards, you are elevated to the dignity of free men. You are no longer the same men as before, bent under a yoke that grew more rigid the farther you were from the seat

---

[35] Jean Bonaparte's propensity for drinking made the Spanish people nickname him "Pepe Botella."

[36] The following material is from a standard high school history textbook, *Historia y Geografía de Chile, 3er Año de Educación Media*, and Hubert Herring's *A History of Latin America From the Beginnings to the Present.* The term "American" hereinafter refers to the creoles and mestizos of Spanish America (Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America). The Philippines was evidently untouched by the processes detonated by Napoleon's occupation of Spain -- the Liberalization of Spanish government and the emancipation of the Hispanic Americans.

[37] Refers to the doctrine and party of the Liberals, "those in favor of liberty." Liberals believed in progress through freedom and opposed the monarchy's absolute authority and that of the Church. In economic policy, they believed that economic balance was the result of interplay between natural laws (for example, that the price mechanism was regulated by adjustments between production and consumption). The Liberal movement's origins are traceable to the Encyclopedists D'Alembert and Diderot, whose monumental work prepared the way for the French Revolution and shaped 18th century philosophy (Larousse Universal Ilustrado).

> of power, looked upon with indifference, harassed by greed and destroyed by ignorance....

The reformist spirit of the Spanish liberals and the acknowledgment of the old abuses committed in the colonies gave the Americans growing confidence that they should assert their rights.

The liberals' greatest aspiration was to promulgate a constitution that would limit the king's power, create a congress and guarantee the rights of individuals. The Courts of Cádiz materialized these ideals in the Constitution of 1812, whose provisions Ferdinand VII would have to honor when he returned to the throne. It was thus that Spain passed from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy.

When news of the events in Spain reached the colonies, two factions formed which proposed two different solutions. The Spanish wanted to maintain the setup of viceroys and governors and to recognize the Regency Council as the supreme authority. This faction was made up of government officials, most of the clergy and businessmen, and a few Americans. The creole group, on the other hand, refused to recognize the Regency Council's authority, which they said only represented the Spanish people, and considered that the viceroys and governors ought to cease their functions. The government of each region, according to this group, should be exercised by a *junta de gobierno*, or government council.

The creoles based their position on the following grounds:

First, the American colonies were the possession of the Spanish king and not of the Spanish people, and therefore were not bound to obey the Regency Council.

Second, upon the king's imprisonment, his power had reverted back to the people and the people could now form a provisional government according to its wishes, until the king's return.

And third, the old Spanish laws indicated the procedure for the formation of government entities in the king's absence, and the Spanish provinces had themselves set an example upon establishing regional juntas.

The creoles' purpose in proposing the establishment of government councils was twofold: to defend the rights of the legitimate Spanish king while he was imprisoned, and to carry out reforms that would end the abuses and problems that the colonies had suffered from since the time of the Conquest. Very few creoles were already thinking of independence and those who were, did not dare to openly express their ideas.

The creoles of Quito (Ecuador) and La Paz (in the region then known as Upper Peru, today Bolivia) were the first to form government councils in 1809. These were, however, short-lived because troops dispatched by the viceroys of New Granada[38] and Peru quickly dismantled them by force. The councils formed in 1810 in Caracas (Venezuela), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Bogota (Colombia) and Santiago (Chile) fared better. In other places such as Mexico, Peru and Uruguay, the creoles were either unsuccessful or did not make great efforts to depose the Spanish authorities.

The councils were established in the name of Ferdinand VII and carried out similar reforms, among them the suppression of unpopular taxes, the creation of new armies, abolition of slavery, elimination of the Inquisition, construction of public libraries and new schools. In almost all the colonies, it was agreed to initiate commercial exchange with all nations.

The measures adopted by the juntas were heavily influenced by the ideas of the 18th-century French philosophers and the revolution that gave birth to the United States. The formation of congresses and the drafting of constitutions expressed the political aspirations of the colonies to attain representative government through the expression of popular sovereignty ("popular", meaning that of the creoles, with the common people under their tutelage).

---

[38] New Granada was the viceroyalty established by the Bourbons, which had jurisdiction over modern Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela. The viceroy was the "vice king," the king's representative, whose powers were tempered by the Royal Audiencia and the royal visitadores, who could carry out at any time a "residencia," or public review of the viceroy's conduct of government. There were four viceroyalties: New Spain (Mexico -- the Philippines was under this viceregal authority), Peru, New Granada and La Plata (today Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay). In the regions distant from the viceroyship, the king's representatives were the audiencias and the adelantados (captains of conquest, later captains general and governors). Under Charles III (1759-1788), America was divided into 'intendencias' under officers known as 'intendentes,' who absorbed the duties of the governors, corregidores and alcaldes mayores (municipal officials). The reform was resented by the viceroys as a threat to their power and by the audiencias as a usurpation of some of their functions. However, the king soon died and was succeeded by his son Charles IV, a weak ruler who abdicated in favor of his son Ferdinand VII upon the Napoleonic invasion. Shortly after, America left the Empire.

The council established in La Paz in 1809 made no secret of its true aim: independence. The first congress which met in Venezuela proclaimed its independence in 1811. However, the majority of the creoles remained faithful to the king and rifts soon arose among them because of varying intentions and loyalties. The royalist reaction later made itself felt in repression and the creole cause, led by Francisco de Miranda[39] and Simón Bolívar, collapsed in 1814. Between 1816 and 1819, with the help of President Pétion of Haiti, adventurers from England, Ireland, Scotland and Germany, and an alliance with José Antonio Pez, the leader of the plains horsemen or llaneros of Venezuela, Bolívar organized a new revolutionary army and won New Granada's (today Colombia) independence in 1819, Venezuela's in 1821 and Ecuador's in 1822.

Mexico's process developed in isolation from the rest of the continent. Instead of a creole rebellion, in 1810 there was an uprising of markedly popular character, carried out mostly by Indians under the leadership of the parish priest of the town of Dolores, Miguel Hidalgo. Hidalgo gathered forces and initiated a campaign under the protection of the Virgin of Guadalupe and to the cry of "Long Live Ferdinand VII and Death to Bad Government." The rebel forces, which reached the considerable number of 80,000 men, won victories everywhere; but, curiously, Hidalgo did not attempt to take the capital, was later defeated by the Spanish under Calleja and executed in 1811. A new junta was formed under the leadership of another priest, José María Morelos,[40] who convoked the Congress of Chilpangingo in 1813, which declared Mexican independence. The Spanish surprised the sessioning members of the Congress and captured and shot Morelos. Agustín de Iturbide, a former royalist officer who fancied himself a Mexican Napoleon, then drafted the Plan of Iguala in 1821, which recognized the "three fundamental guarantees of the Mexicans" -- Catholicism, brotherhood between the Spanish and the Mexicans, and political independence. Iturbide made a triumphant entry into Mexico City on September 27, 1821, and was welcomed by the populace as the head of the newly-independent nation. In 1822, a popular movement elevated Iturbide to the rank of emperor. He was crowned Agustín I but soon deposed by a military uprising led by General Antonio López de Santa Anna, who would dominate the country until 1855. Under the Constitution of 1824, the country became a Federal Republic under its first president, Guadalupe Victoria. Iturbide had

---

[39] Venezuelan general and ideologue of the independence movement; he had fought with the North Americans in their war of independence and later with Bolívar at the start of his campaign to liberate Venezuela.

[40] In Mexico the secularization of the parishes was implemented and radicalized the clergy, making them adopt and defend the cause of the oppressed.

escaped to Italy in 1822 and returned to Mexico in 1824 to attempt a takeover of the government, but was captured and shot. The independence of Mexico did not signify much change, other than the replacement of the Spanish by the creole aristocracy, and the country's history would continue as a struggle for power between creoles and mestizos, through successive government coups carried out by caudillos[41] with the support of generals, up until the 1920s.

## Chile: The "Old Country"[42]

The process of Chile's emancipation is divided into three stages: the Old Country, or *Patria Vieja*; the Reconquest; and the New Country, or *Patria Nueva*. The first stage covers the years from 1810, from the establishment of the first *cabildo*, to the Disaster of Rancagua in October, 1814, when Bernardo O'Higgins was defeated by the Spanish under Mariano Osorio and forced to escape to Mendoza, Argentina. The Reconquest by Spain, from October 1814 to February 1817, was marked by Spanish reprisals. The third stage, *Patria Nueva*, begins with the Liberation Army's crossing of the Andes and its triumph in the Battle of Chacabuco on February 12, 1817, followed by the declaration of independence after the Battle of Maipú (or the battle of the Maipo River Plain) on April 5, 1818.

Chile's independence process was primarily a struggle between the Spanish, who wanted to keep the colony intact for the king and preserve their own position of supremacy, and the creoles, who wanted self-rule. However, among the creoles there were at least three factions with different leaders. The first were the royalists, men of great moral rectitude who loved their country but were immovable in their belief in the divine right of kings and the unseverable bond between Chile and the Spanish monarch. The second were the malcontents with Spanish rule who were vehement and idealistic in their desire for self-government; included in it were a numerous group of influential creoles -- which became known as "the 800" -- and Bernardo O'Higgins, who was already a declared proponent of independence. Finally, there was the third and most numerous group, made up of creoles who wanted to replace the Spanish in government, but without conflict or revolutionary political experiments.

---

[41] Caudillo means 'commander' and comes from the old Spanish term "cabdillo," meaning 'head.'

[42] Other sources for the history of Chile were the two-volume *Resumen de la Historia de Chile* edited by Leopoldo Castedo, based on the six-volume opus of Francisco A. Encina; the *Larousse Universal Ilustrado*, 1958 edition, the *Pequeño Larousse ilustrado*, 1987 edition, Galdames's *Historia de Chile* and the Maltés/Concha Cruz text of the same title. In Chile there are historians who are "O'Higginianos" (those who admire O'Higgins) or "Carrerinos." (those who idolize Carrera). Encina belongs to the first category; I don't know about the others.

This third group would at times support the first group, and at other times the second. The common people were largely indifferent to the issue of self-rule, siding with their employers, the military or the clergy, and often willingly joining the Spanish army after capture. The Mapuches in the south allied themselves with the Spanish. The years between 1810 and 1822 were thus marked by continuous armed conflicts which took on the characteristics of civil war. The warring bankrupted the country, and the costly final campaign to liberate Peru, though successful, turned the tide of public opinion against the period's two greatest figures -- the Argentine General José de San Martín and Bernardo O'Higgins.

**Santiago's First Open Cabildo**

As already mentioned, a basic condition of the colonial process past the initial stages of conquest was the development of a strong mutual dislike and temperamental incompatibility between the creoles and the Spanish, and deep creole resentment at being barred from high posts in the colonial government and with the abuses in the colonial system's economic practices. Besides this, in Chile, as in Argentina, the creoles were numerically superior to the Spanish and owned most of the productive land.

In 1808 and upon the death of its president, Muñoz de Guzmán, the Royal Audiencia of Santiago named a new governor, Brigadier Antonio García Carrasco, who traveled to Santiago from Concepción together with his secretary, Argentine-born lawyer Juan Martínez de Rozas, to assume his post. From the beginning of his mandate, García Carrasco aroused the dislike of the creole aristocracy (made up of a few very wealthy Castilian and Basque families) because of his “unrefined manners...”. Shortly after, Spain was invaded by the French and in a solemn ceremony on September 25, 1808, “President García Carrasco, the members of the Real Audiencia and of the Santiago cabildo swore loyalty to the person of Fernando VII, as their legitimate sovereign.”[43]

Six months later, García Carrasco and his right arm in government, Martínez de Rozas, were implicated in a crime which became a public scandal. An English frigate, the Scorpion, was illegally commandeered near Valparaiso, the captain and eight crew members murdered and its cargo seized. García

[43] For this portion of the historical narrative I make use of the history text written by J. Maltés and A. Concha Cruz, *Historia de Chile*, Bibliográfica Internacional S.A., 1992, and Luis Galdames’s *Historia de Chile*, 15th ed., Editorial Universitaria, 1995.

Carrasco did not inform the customs officials of the frigate's presence and sent dragoons to assist the men who carried out the misdeeds, evidently in exchange for a share of the contraband for himself and his advisor. The creoles openly criticized and rejected the governor and his secretary's conduct (it was believed that Martínez de Rozas was the criminal plan's author). Despite the secretary's resignation and reclusion in his hacienda in Concepción, the incident divested the Spanish government of credibility in the creoles' eyes and strengthened the latter's will to form a cabildo, neutralize the powers of the Audiencia and the governor, and govern themselves.

When the notification arrived in Chile from the Cádiz Parliament that deputies had to be designated in representation of Chile, García Carrasco impeded the election because he feared that members of the cabildo – his enemies – would be elected. A special commission was then formed in Spain to choose two delegates for Chile. Joaquín Fernández de Leiva and Miguel Riesco y Puente were elected as deputies and signed what became a famous eleven-point document which presented the creoles' aspirations to the Cortes. The most important of them were:

1. Equal representation with the Spanish provinces before the Cortes
2. Abolition of the tobacco monopoly
3. That half of the colonial posts be occupied by creoles
4. Absolutely free (unrestricted) trade
5. The reinstatement of the Jesuits.[44]

As the news from Spain grew worse, the most radical in Chile celebrated the French victories. There was a generally accepted stance that Chile belonged

[44] The role of the Jesuits in the germination of Latin American independence, though indirect, was by no means unessential. The recently published translation by Francisco Borghesi of a book written by the Italian historian Antonio Muratori (1672-1750) and published in Venice in 1749 on the Jesuit missions of Paraguay (*El Cristianismo Feliz en las Misiones de los Padres de la Cía. De Jesus en Paraguay*) sheds light on the significance of their educational and cultural labor. Asked by an interviewer on whether his translation provided clues to the Jesuits' influence over the development of the Latin American mentality and capacity for independence, Borghesi replied that, although the Jesuits were expelled almost 50 years before the independence movements and their schools were not seedbeds for the ideas of the intellectual vanguard, nonetheless they did contribute in a certain sense to them. "To run settlements composed of six to seven thousand persons which were headed by two missionaries, the Jesuits needed collaborators of all kinds. Given a total of 30 settlements of converted Indians, this signified the formation of a human mass that little by little assimilated the secrets of social and economic organization, creating a civic mentality that, upon the arrival on the morrow of the ideas of independence, would have meant that a body of men had already been formed who knew how to organize themselves." According to the article published in the cultural section of the Chilean newspaper El Mercurio (November 21, 1999, E12), Muratori based his book on testimonies covering the first half of the 18th century, when the Jesuit missions numbered 30 and were spread out over a total area of 300,000 $m^2$ – equivalent to the total surface area of Italy – and populated by 140,000 Indians.

to the Crown because it was conquered with the Crown's money and people; but if France or England were to make Spain their colony, then it was fair that Chile should separate from Spain rather than accept another country's rule. A pro-independence document written in Argentina and entitled "Political-Christian Cathechism for the Instruction of the Free Peoples of South America" had begun circulating in secret, signed with the pseudonym 'José Amor de la Patria'. According to the historians Maltés and Concha Cruz, the document established the sovereign right of peoples to create the government that best served them; it presented the advantages of a republic over a monarchy; it recalled the crimes committed by Spain in America; called for the establishment of a government junta; advised the people to receive Elio, the future new Spanish governor, with the points of their bayonets; and it ended with these words:

> Neither invader kings, neither French, English, nor Carlota,[45] nor Portuguese, nor any other foreign domination. We shall all die first -- *Americans!* -– before suffering or bearing the foreign yoke."

Since there was as yet no printing press in Argentina or Chile (unlike the Philippines, where the first printing press was built in the 17th century and operated by native printers, the first of whom was Tomás Pinpín), the document only had limited and secret circulation.

By this time García Carrasco had already forbidden all public discussion of the developments in Spain and imagined revolutionary plots were being hatched around every corner by the creoles. Informed by the Buenos Aires Audiencia of the rumors of conspiracy in Santiago, the governor decided to make an example of two creoles who were highly respected and recognized patriots, José Antonio Rojas and Juan Antonio Ovalle, and a young Argentine lawyer, Bernardo Vera y Pintado. Rojas and Ovalle managed to send messengers to Santiago denouncing García Carrasco's secret orders for their arrest and exile to Lima. The decision to arrest the three – two of them old men and the third one ill – and secretly send them to Peru was a new affront to the Chileans and intensified the revolutionary climate in Santiago beyond the bounds of official control.

[45] Princess Carlota, the sister of Fernando VII, had offered to be the Regent for Chile until her brother's reinstatement on the throne, but all the creole groups refused.

A huge crowd gathered to protest in the city's main square, Plaza de Armas. The gathering turned into an open town meeting whose declared aim was to obtain the exile order's immediate revocation. The Governor was forced to sign an order to bring back the prisoners to Santiago, the Spanish military commander refusing to act against the citizens. The following night, July 13, 1810, some 1,000 men gathered once again in Plaza de Armas and agreed to take over the reins of government on the 17th. The Cabildo would assume power and the townspeople would decide on a provisional form of government until elections could be held.

The Audiencia, to derail the coup, gave its support to the moderate creoles and offered the radicals the removal of García Carrasco to placate them. An assembly took place on July 16 and accepted the Governor's resignation, with the majority voting for Conde de la Conquista don Mateo de Toro Zambrano as his successor. However, Toro Zambrano, a very popular and wealthy man, was already in his eighties, described as approaching senility, and clearly unfit to rule.

The Cabildo of Santiago then began to take indirect steps toward the formation of a government junta: 1) it requested an increase in its membership; 2) it later refused to swear loyalty to the Regency Council, though recognizing its authority over the Peninsula; and 3) the revolutionaries succeeded in getting authorization from the president of the Audiencia to formally hold an Open Cabildo.

On September 18, 1810[46] a "cabildo abierto" or open town meeting took place, in which 400 principal residents of Santiago gathered in the great salon of the Consulado[47] in Plaza de Armas. Almost all of them were creoles, joined by an absolute minority of Spaniards (only those who occupied the highest public offices attended). Luis Galdames describes the historic meeting in this way:

> The Salon of the Consulate was full. In it there were about 350 persons wearing powdered wigs and ceremonially attired in frockcoats, tricorned hats, knee breeches, silk stockings, shoes with silver or gold buckles, and wearing short swords in scabbards. Around a hundred guests still had to arrive, almost all of them from the Spanish faction and including the Re-

[46] Chileans celebrate September 18 and 19 as their independence days -- "Fiestas Patrias."

[47] The Consulado was the body in charge of regulating and administering commerce and trade in every Spanish colony, including the Philippines. It also had authority to resolve legal issues.

> gent of the Tribunal of the Royal Audiencia, which had refused to be represented at the meeting.
>
> A few moments later, the Count of Conquest entered accompanied by Secretary Argomedo and the Advisor Marín. The three took their seats in armchairs placed on a dais or platform; the other attendees were seated on rows of wooden benches placed in the salon for the purpose. The aged president soon ended the atmosphere of expectation reigning over the gathering. He stood up and, showing the insignia of power, said: "Here is the cane – dispose of it and of the power to govern." Later, addressing the Secretary, he said, "Advise the people of what I have already informed you," and once more took his seat. Argomedo then rose and in a firm voice pronounced a brief speech which ratified the Count's resignation and asked the Cabildo to propose " the best means so that we may remain the assured, impregnable and eternally faithful vassals of our most adored King Ferdinand."

Thus the creoles professed loyalty to their "adored king," but upon beginning to exercise self-government and initiating relations with the Buenos Aires Cabildo, they immediately aroused the ire of the Viceroy of Peru.

One of the first measures taken by the new government was to open up trade with all nations, breaking their dependence on Buenos Aires and opposing the will of the Spanish businessmen who wanted to keep the supplies of products limited and prices high. The measure was in fact urgently needed to generate income from exports and import tariffs for the purpose of financing the new government. However, books, maps, armaments, printing presses, textile machinery and tools were exempted from import duties "with obvious intentions."

A congress was convoked, since the cabildo or government council was only a provisional governing body until a congress could meet that would be truly representative of the popular will. The junta therefore dispatched orders to the town councils of all cities to call all male residents, older than 25 years and respected by their fellow townspeople, to elect deputies to the congress.

In Santiago, the election had to be postponed for a day because of an uprising led on April 1, 1811, by the Spanish Lieutenant Colonel Tomás de Figueroa, which was quickly put down and its leader executed the next day. The incident marked the end of the Spanish faction's influence. The junta dissolved

the Royal Audiencia, whose complicity in the rebellion had been discovered, and placed the ecclesiastical authorities under its control. On June 13, 1811, a court of appeals was formed to replace the dissolved Audiencia, and four sections to facilitate the conduct of government: departments of state, finance, war and police.

On July 4, 1811 the First National Congress was held. Although there were some patriots among the deputies, notably Bernardo O'Higgins,[48] most of

[48] Bernardo O'Higgins (1783-1842), the Father of Chile's independence, illegitimate son of Isabel Riquelme and Ambrosio O'Higgins, Scottish-born governor of Chile from 1788 to 1796 and later Viceroy of Perú, was born in Talca on January 20, 1783. His mother came from an old aristocratic family of Chillán. As a child Bernardo lived with the family of Juan Albano Pereira in Talca. At age 10 he was sent to a Franciscan school for the sons of Spanish nobles. His mother had married Félix Rodríguez, who agreed to have the boy live with them. He became very close to his half-sister, Rosa Rodríguez.

At his father's behest he was sent to Lima to study at age 12, attending the Colegio de San Carlos. According to Chilean historians, Peru was dominated by wealthy families of creoles and peninsulares whose loyalty was secured by the privileges granted them by the Crown, it was where Spain had most effectively transferred her rigid class system and as a result had fewer men of independent mind than Argentina and Chile. From there Bernardo was sent to Richmond, England, because his father wanted him to receive an English education. The allowance his father gave him was misused by his guardian.

His English education would be decisive for his future direction as a patriot and statesman. In Richmond, Francisco Miranda, the ideologue of Latin American independence who had fought with the North Americans against Britain and later collaborated with Simón Bolívar, became Bernardo's tutor and inspired him to work for the cause of independence.

Spanish spies had reported on his links with Miranda and as a result his father was removed from the Viceroyship of Peru. His guardian informed him in 1801 of his father's instructions to turn his son out of his home. Shortly after, Ambrosio O'Higgins died and in 1802 Bernardo returned to Chile. His father's prestige allowed him to establish very good connections, but his innate modesty, his character which did not lend itself to flattery and praise, and his ideas which were much more advanced than those of the men of his country, confined his influence to a limited circle.

He had inherited a small fortune from his father and knew that by embracing the cause of independence he stood to gain nothing and lose everything, but committed himself to it. Though by nature peaceful and modest (he believed he was by vocation a farmer), O'Higgins was a brave and inspiring military leader and became commander-in-chief of the patriot army after the Chilean Junta removed Carrera from the post. After O'Higgins' defeat in Rancagua (1814) he retreated to Mendoza, Argentina, where he joined José de San Martín in organizing the Liberation Army. He was elected Supreme Director after the Battle of Chacabuco (governing from 1817-1823), proclaiming the independence of Chile after the victory of Maipú.

O'Higgins was a man of high moral character who comported himself always with dignity and nobility of purpose. When in 1834 a prominent citizen of Lima called attention in the press to his illegitimacy, he calmly replied that since he had first acquired the capacity to reason, he had adopted a higher philosophy which made him think of his birth, not as something that defined what he personally was, but as something that belonged to his Creator, to the universal human family, and to his homeland Chile and its freedom.

He wanted a Chile patterned after England but without an aristocracy. He promoted public works and education and promulgated the Constitution of 1822, but his authoritarian government, which imposed measures incompatible with the nation's cultural reality, became unpopular (he abolished cockfights, public celebrations, the sale of wine and titles of nobility). He was asked to resign by his creole compatriots (the history

them were lukewarm reformists who wanted to see the old order continue with as few changes as possible. By no means would they consider breaking away from the monarchy.

The Carrera brothers[49] then carried out their first coup, which modified the composition of the Congress and induced greater openness to reforms. The Congress created a Supreme Justice Tribunal which obviated all necessity of processing judicial cases through Spain. The tobacco monopoly was also abolished and the payment of fees to parish priests for baptisms, marriages and burials. The payments to the Lima Inquisition, long a cause of creole resentment, were ended. However, the project to create public cemeteries was not materialized. The elimination of parochial privileges turned the priests into

---

books refer to them as "the people" but term really meant the socioeconomic group who now led the country's affairs) and agreed to do so, winning their admiration. He then exiled himself to Perú, where he died.

[49] Reference to José Miguel, Luis and Juan José Carrera. José Miguel Carrera is the archetype of the Latin American caudillo and demagogue, skilled instigator of barracks uprisings. Born in Santiago on October 16, 1785 to the creole aristocracy, by age 20 his wild behavior had already gotten him in trouble with the law, though his powerful family saved him from exile and prison. Charismatic, astute, emotionally volatile, his sensual proclivities led him to a lifestyle of dissipation; however, his energy was prodigious and his leadership ability phenomenal. His family sent him to Spain, where he enlisted in the army and became a cavalry officer. Army life gave him direction and focused his energies, and his reckless courage and mental agility won him universal admiration. Wounded in battle and hearing of his father Ignacio's membership in the Santiago junta, he obtained permission from the Regency Council to return to Chile. Upon his arrival he immediately engineered the first coup of the revolutionary period with his brothers on September 4, 1811. Never truly interested in politics or statemanship, once in power, even power ceased to interest him. He was a master of intrigue and enjoyed the excitement of staging military coups. Though he was a major figure in Chile's history for 10 years, only two were spent governing and the rest plotting the overthrow of his rivals.

Carrera was loyal only to his family, above all to his older sister Javiera who was beautiful, iron-willed, ambitious and convinced that her brothers were destined for greatness. She counseled them in their strategies to gain power and tried to save them when the tide turned against them, without success.

Carrera had no qualms about forming and dissolving alliances with the conservatives, the revolutionaries and the Spanish to gain his ends. He was a true demagogue, skilled at inciting people's emotions with grandiloquent appeals. In particular, his disdainful mockery of his own class, the traditionalist aristocracy, won him the support of military officers and the youth, and the unconditional loyalty of his friends.

Although Carrera during his rule defeated the Spanish forces and their royalist supporters in the south (Concepción and Talcahuano), the violence of his troops against their own people, which Carrera tolerated to keep the army loyal to him, alienated the people from the revolutionary cause. Even Carrera's reputation as an effective military leader vanished after the siege of Chillán in June, 1813, after which the city was sacked by the patriot army.

The aristocracy (specifically, the powerful group within it which was the Lautaro Lodge) finally decided that Carrera had to be eliminated. Though O'Higgins was blamed for the executions of Luis and Juan José Carrera in Mendoza on April 8, 1818, they were the result of the Chilean junta's belief that they were demanded by the public good. José Miguel was also executed in Mendoza four years later, after the discovery of his plot to assassinate San Martín and O'Higgins.

opponents of the creole government and supporters of the royalists, and they brought to bear their enormous influence over the provinces to do the same.

Another important reform carried out by the Congress was the partial abolition of slavery, with the declaration that from that time on, every child born in the country would be free and no new slaves could be brought in. A law was passed which became known as that of "freedom of wombs," though according to Encina-Castedo, the abolition of slavery was a purely symbolic gesture, as there were not enough slaves in Chile for the measure to have any impact over the economy.

The Carrera brothers, not satisfied with the coup they had carried out to modify the composition of the Congress, decided to hold another with the help of several army officers and friends in order to gain more power in the government. Until then, Carrera had exercised power only indirectly through one of the members of the executive, Juan Larraín, an intimate friend of the Carreras and member of the 800, who rose to power after the September 4 coup.

Carrera's priority was to form a strong army and he was determined to raise funds through forced taxation, which immediately aroused popular resistance. Since the greatest resistance to his military plans came from the Congress, he decided to close it down. He surrounded the building with cannon while the deputies were in session, cordoned off the Plaza de Armas with three battalions and gave orders to let no one leave the building. The president and ten deputies signed a document closing the Congress and transferring their powers to the executive. The balance of power was now polarized between Concepción under Martínez de Rozas, together with the Larraíns, who led the 800 group, and Carrera. A new three-man junta was formed after Congress was closed, presided over by Carrera as representative of the central part of the country. Juan Martínez de Rozas was elected in absentia to represent the south (he was in Concepción, where he had his power base). Bernardo O'Higgins was elected to represent the north after the first choice, José Gaspar Marín, refused his election. O'Higgins accepted on condition that he would first travel for a consultation with the Concepción Junta.

When news reached Concepción of the dissolution of Congress, the Junta proposed to Martínez de Rozas that its army be deployed to Santiago to remove Carrera from the government and restore the Congressional powers. But Martínez de Rozas advised against it, believing he did not have a strong enough power base to take over the government. Carrera sent O'Higgins to the

south, thinking the latter could convince Martínez de Rozas to support him. As soon as O'Higgins left, Carrera tried to win the backing of the 800 group by forming a new junta with one of their members, José Nicolás de la Cerda, and a moderate royalist, Manuel Manso, who was later replaced by José Santiago Portales, the father of the future statesman Diego Portales. The new junta then set to work to form an army, but the coercive and chaotic manner in which recruitment and the requisitioning of arms and provisions was carried out caused soldiers to disobey their officers and the rural people to flee to the mountains with their livestock. The forced measures that Carrera resorted to in order to raise money for his army were the beginning of the country's downslide into financial ruin. His later unconditional backing of the army and tolerance of their abuses against the populace also eventually turned the common people against the revolutionary cause.

Meanwhile, in the south, O'Higgins and Martínez de Rozas agreed that Carrera had to be removed from the government. They accepted the closing down of Congress and concentration of power in a triumvirate, but the idea arose between them of forming a six-member Senate, composed of two senators from each province (north-center-south), without whose approval no decisions of import could be made. Their intention was to prevent the concentration of power in Carrera's hands. O'Higgins organized a meeting between Carrera and Martínez de Rozas, which took place; but though they agreed to avoid an armed conflict, they were unable to reconcile their differences.

Then, in July 1812, a military coup staged by Juan Manuel Benavente with the support of royalists deposed the Concepción junta. Carrera gave Benavente his support and named him governor-intendant of the province. He then banished Martínez de Rozas to his birthplace, Mendoza, where the politician died the following year. Carrera's power was now absolute. He was 27 years old.

The constitutional projects begun in the Congress of 1811 were not brought to completion because of the subsequent coups. A preliminary draft was published in 1813, which later became the basis for the Constitution of 1823. It was patterned after the Spanish Constitution of 1812 and included guarantees of individual freedoms, such as prohibition of arrest and imprisonment without clear evidence and filing of charges, prohibition of trial and sentencing unless legal procedure was applied, and limited freedom of the press.

However, throughout Carrera's government, the aristocracy grew more and more disaffected and alarmed at what they perceived as the power passing into the hands of a dangerously unscrupulous radical.

Carrera's rule was a paradoxical mix of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary tendencies. In many ways he was the worst and the best leader of those times. During his mandate, the country's first printing press opened and began to publish the first newspaper, the weekly Aurora de Chile, under the direction of Fr. Camilo Henríquez. The printing press had been brought to Chile from the United States by Matthew Arnold Hoevel and three typesetter assistants. The event produced great excitement in the country because up until then the only newspapers that reached Chile were stale issues of newspapers from Spain, Buenos Aires and Lima. Henríquez used the *Aurora* to diffuse ideas of independence and civil rights, publishing Rousseau's *The Social Contract*, the Venezuela Junta's declaration of independence, and the writings of American critics of the Spanish monarchy and proponents of independence for Chile. The *Aurora de Chile* became a powerful instrument for sowing the idea of independence in the people's minds.

**The Empire Strikes Back**

In 1813, the new Chilean government was militarily weak because of internal struggles for power and Carrera's political machinations. An example of this last was Carrera's move to weaken Martínez de Rozas' supporters in the south by sending royalist captain Pablo Asenjo to Valdivia, with orders to use his influence and connections to depose the patriot junta and appoint Colonel Ventura Carvallo as governor, "in the name of Ferdinand VII and José Miguel Carrera."

However, after the money that Carrera sent to the royalist authors of the uprising for the purpose of gaining their sympathies had been received, a war council formed in Valdivia declared its separation from Santiago and loyalty to Abascal, the Viceroy of Peru. Feeling more secure now that he could count on an army of 1,500 men, Abascal began his offensive against the creole government, placing his forces under the command of Admiral Antonio Pareja. More soldiers were recruited in Chiloé and the royalist army was joined by volunteers all along its northward advance, so that, by the time it had captured Concepción and was approaching Linares, it had swelled to over five thousand.

After Pareja captured Concepción, Carrera left Santiago for Talca to organize its defense. The junta's composition was accordingly modified and it set to convoking militias and getting more funds for the army.

Bernardo O'Higgins began to distinguish himself as a military leader. The ensuing military engagements between the Spanish and the patriots led to two defining events: the savage sacking by Carrera's army of the southern royalist port city of Talcahuano, followed by that of Chillán farther to the north, after laying it siege and dislodging Pareja's forces. Thus began a pattern of mutual reprisals that turned the struggle for independence into a civil war. The burning of farms and fields by both sides reduced the rich and productive countryside to a wasteland and the peasantry to a miserable, hungry rabble. The siege of Chillán had meant considerable losses and desertions for Carrera's army, as well as shortages of food and munitions. Sectors of the populace that until then had been neutral now became hostile to the patriot cause. Even the junta (Eyzaguirre-Infante-Pérez) turned against Carrera, who then began to think of ways to rid himself of them.

The fighting continued. Pareja became seriously ill and handed over the command to an officer named Sánchez, who organized a highly effective guerrilla war against Carrera's forces in Chillán province. The support of the Mapuches soon gave the Spanish absolute control over the territory south of the Bío-Bío River, known as Arauco.

Carrera's army was five times more expensive than the royalist army and its upkeep cost three times the country's annual budget in peacetime. New forced loans were needed to finance it, but there was nowhere to get more funds from, within Chile. The junta decided to move its headquarters from Santiago to Talca and offered to negotiate a peace treaty with the Spanish, based on an agreement it had drafted with the Senate. But the Spanish, now under Sánchez, refused. Carrera knew that behind the junta's move to Talca lay the intention to get rid of him, and he responded with arrogance and threats. The junta then asked for Carrera's resignation as commander-in-chief of the army, and, when Carrera did not answer, replaced him with O'Higgins. O'Higgins, aware that the army supported Carrera overwhelmingly, tried to convince the junta to revoke its decree, even conferring amicably with Carrera. If the junta stood firm, he told Carrera, he would have to accept his designation. Carrera promised in that event to keep order and discipline among the ranks and support O'Higgins in the military operations as his second in command.

In Talca, the junta told O'Higgins that the failure of Carrera's military campaign and the hatred that his dictatorship had inspired gave them no alternative but to remove him. O'Higgins was the man to head the army, because of his courage, merits and patriotism; besides, he was the man Carrera would object to the least. Twelve days later, a letter arrived from Carrera praising the decision. It was late 1813. There was widespread feeling that the revolution was headed for defeat, and fear of Spanish reprisal once they took over the government began to spread among the patriots.

Viceroy Abascal decided to send a new force which, after taking Chile, would proceed to Buenos Aires. He sent Brigadier Gabino Gaínza with a small force from the royal port of Callao to Chile. By then, Sánchez's army had reached the limits of misery. With Gaínza's supplies and a small force, the Spanish put together a 3,000-man army, always with the Mapuches in the south guarding their backs and on the ready to help if necessary.

The junta offered Carrera an important post in Buenos Aires, believing his continued presence in Chile would become an obstacle to smooth government and military operations. On his way to Santiago, Carrera and his brother Luis were captured by royalist guerrillas and brought before Gaínza. Carrera tried to convince Gaínza to take Santiago with his help and set up joint rule, since clearly, he said, the Chilean army couldn't win on its own, and, even after the Spanish had won, the civil war would probably continue. Gaínza asked him to write down his proposal,[50] but after Carrera did so the Spaniard refused, saying that the leaflets circulating in Santiago were full of evidence that the generalized animosity against Carrera would make his partnership in government totally useless to the Spanish.

The royalists had just taken Talca and were sure they could win the war easily. The junta returned to Santiago and, after a new open town meeting during which it was decided to form an emergency government for the defense against the Spanish onslaught, named the governor of Valparaiso, Colonel Francisco de la Lastra, supreme director. A new constitution was drafted to give legal character to the change. Antonio José de Irrisarri took on the function of governor-intendant of Santiago and proceeded to assemble a new and amazingly well-equipped army. However, it was put under the command of an inexperienced 24-year-old naval officer, Blanco Encalada. The army began to march south and suffered an embarrassing defeat in Cancha Rayada, in

[50] Carrera kept a diary, and in the entry describing this meeting he wrote, '...the scoundrel asked me to put my proposal in writing' (Encina-Castedo).

which 450 royalist guerrillas dispersed Blanco Encalada's 1,400-man army, divesting it of the arms and supplies that had been gathered with so much effort. Santiago lost its morale completely.

Meanwhile, the patriot army's ablest generals, O'Higgins and Juan Mackenna, whose communications with Santiago had been cut off and with difficulty reestablished communications with each other, began to retreat toward Santiago, successfully engaging the Spanish in battles in El Quilo and El Membrillar. They stopped the advance on Santiago of Gaínza's army, obliging him to set up winter camp in Talca.

The patriots were now weary of war and desirous of calling a truce with the Spanish. An English commodore named Hillyar was then sailing down the Pacific coast in pursuit of the North American frigate, the Essex, which had been harassing British trading vessels. Hillyar was asked by the Viceroy of Peru to carry a peace proposal to Lastra. However, the terms were practically to restore the old regime unchanged, and the struggles that the creoles had already fought made it impossible for them to accept such an arrangement. Irisarri got Hillyar and the Senate to draft a modified treaty, which was then submitted to Gaínza. It recognized the sovereignty of Ferdinand VII, and Chile as part of the monarchy; Chile would send deputies to Spain to carry out negotiations in order to reconcile differences, and in the meantime the current government would continue to exercise the powers it had been invested with.

According to Encina-Castedo, the document showed the patriots' ingenuous good faith upon imagining that there was any chance at all that Gaínza might accept such a treaty and Abascal ratify it. But Gaínza, who secretly supported the cause of American independence,[51] besides admiring O'Higgins and wanting to meet him, believed he could impose certain demands and achieve a compromise between the modified agreement and Abascal's rigid requirements.

On May 1, 1814, negotiations began along the banks of the Lircay River between Gaínza and his expert negotiator Rodríguez Aldea, and O'Higgins, Mackenna and Jaime Zudáñez, a man from Upper Peru who proved to be an even more astute advisor than Aldea. A treaty was signed three days later that greatly favored the patriot side, practically creating a free state within the

[51] According to Encina-Castedo, seven years later Gaínza would lead an independence movement in Guatemala.

monarchy. Gaínza had no sooner signed it than he wished to retract, and told Abascal he would await the Viceroy's orders in Chillán and resume governance over the province of Concepción as if the treaty did not exist. In the meantime, he tried to distract O'Higgins and the Santiago government, to gain time while he reorganized and re-equipped his army.

Among the Chileans, the treaty was opposed by the royalists and by Carrera's supporters, the latter not because they objected to its content, but to stir up political controversy and destabilize the government.

O'Higgins did not trust Gaínza and, intuiting that the Spaniard was being duplicitous, urged Lastra to make a formal declaration of war. At that point, fanatical royalists released José Miguel and Luis Carrera from prison so that they might overthrow the patriot government and break the treaty. Another coup was carried out on July 23 and a new Junta formed, headed by Carrera, a priest, Julián Uribe, and Manuel Muñoz Urzua. Javiera Carrera became José Miguel's advisor, and the first thing they did was take revenge against their enemies. Lastra, Mackenna and some 30 members of the 800 group were imprisoned. Carrera tried to win over O'Higgins, who was in Talca with his army, but the Talca War Council pronounced itself against the new government and determined to overthrow it by force of arms.

Luis Carrera then engaged and defeated O'Higgins in a battle near the Maipo River. The aristocracy,[52] now opposed to Carrera, decided to do nothing against the advancing Spanish forces, whose rule they preferred to Carrera's. Viceroy Abascal rejected the Lircay Treaty and decided to send a new force under Colonel Mariano de Osorio to end the war once and for all. Abascal's instructions were, in case of a patriot surrender, to wipe the slate clean, treat the populace with consideration and respect property. If the government refused to surrender, there were to be no sackings and the inhabitants were to be treated with commiseration.

Osorio's first move after taking command of the city of Chillán was to send representatives to Santiago to invite the Junta to dialog, but Carrera and Uribe imprisoned them under the pretext that they carried no identification. Since the Junta's army consisted of no more than 800 men, Carrera asked O'Higgins to join forces with him, after warning O'Higgins that he would brook no de-

[52] As mentioned before, this refers to the Lautaro Lodge, which finally ordered the execution of the Carreras as well as the mysterious shooting of Manuel Rodríguez, a brilliant guerrilla leader who was a Carrera supporter.

mands or conditions from the latter. Realizing that the alternative was certain disaster, O'Higgins acceded. Osorio began his march on Santiago with a force of 5,000 men, and on September 29, from his position just south of Rancagua by the Cachapoal River, he sent an ultimatum to the Junta: they had four days to surrender.

The outcome of the battle that followed, known as the Disaster of Rancagua, has been the subject of much historical debate. According to Encina-Castedo, O'Higgins' orders from Carrera were to hold Osorio back for one month at Cachapoal, together with his brother's divisions. But Juan José Carrera panicked when he saw the Spanish break through, and retreated to Chillán. On the morning of October 1st, O'Higgins found himself alone on the river, defending one sector while the majority of the Spanish forces had begun to advance on Rancagua. He was therefore forced to retreat and hurriedly improvise a barricade around the city's main plaza, without enough supplies or munitions to withstand a siege, and soon realized he was outnumbered by the Spanish four to one.

Juan José Carrera was already in Rancagua with his two divisions, only to hand the command over his men to O'Higgins, then take refuge in the parish house for the two days that the battle would last. Inexplicably, José Miguel Carrera stayed away -- a bizarre decision, given that the practice of generals remaining behind the lines was still several decades away from becoming axiomatic in military science. His absence was disconcerting to O'Higgins and his men (and historians) later speculated that Carrera stayed away in hopes of ridding himself of his strongest rival.

After the first day of intense fighting, a man who had been a patriot leader in Chillán province cut off the defenders' water supply. O'Higgins, realizing that his men could not resist more than another day, sent an urgent message to Carrera to send reinforcements. Carrera's cryptic reply was interpreted to mean that help would come. The next day a division of militiamen did arrive, but when the enemy cavalry charged them, they ran away. The Spanish set fire to all the houses surrounding the plaza; sparks fell on a munitions pile and set off an explosion. Lack of water, intense heat, heavy casualties and exhaustion doomed the patriot army's fierce resistance to defeat. After the battle, Osorio and his officers were unable to restrain their men from killing the wounded and prisoners, pillaging and raping. It was October 2, 1814.

When it was clear that the battle was lost, O'Higgins retreated, arriving in Santiago with 200 survivors. There he spoke for the last time with Carrera, who proposed moving the government to Coquimbo province and continuing the resistance in the north (Carrera later left with his supporters for La Serena). O'Higgins thought the plan insane and set out for Mendoza with his men and patriot residents of Santiago who feared Spanish reprisal against them and their families. O'Higgins' mother and sister went with him. The crossing was disastrous, for the refugees brought no food, not even warm clothing or the right shoes. General José de San Martín,[53] then governor of Cuyo Province and already preparing an army to liberate Chile, correctly anticipated that refugees from Santiago would head for Mendoza and sent troops and a thousand mules with supplies to meet them, saving them from starvation and overexposure.

Thus ended the stage of Chilean emancipation known *as Patria Vieja*.

## Ferdinand VII Recovers His Throne

The intervention of the English forced the French to leave the Spanish Peninsula. Napoleon's disastrous Russian campaign and the counterattack of his European enemies brought total defeat. Ferdinand VII immediately recovered his throne upon Spain's liberation and reestablished the old regime in 1814. He

---

[53] José de San Martín (1778-1850) was born in Yapeyú, a Jesuit village on the northern frontier of Argentina. At the age of eight he moved to Spain with his parents, studied at the Seminary of Nobles of Madrid, joined the Regiment of Murcia as a cadet (1789) and fought in the war against Napoleon. From Cádiz he went on to London, and from there, in 1812, to Buenos Aires, where together with Alvear he founded the Lautaro Lodge (patterned after the Masonic lodges but not of the Masons) and organized the Granaderos Cavalry Regiment, with which he won his first victory in San Lorenzo (1813). He was designated chief of Argentina's Northern Army, and in 1814 went to Mendoza, where he conceived his vast plan for the independence of Chile and Peru. There he formed the famed 5,000-man Andean Army, which crossed the cordillera in 1817 through the passes of Los Patos and Uspallata. The Army of Liberation defeated the Spanish in Chacabuco and entered Santiago in triumph. The city's inhabitants offered the government to the army leader, but San Martín declined the honor. After losing at Cancha Rayada, the Liberator won a decisive victory at Maipú (1818), sealing Chile's independence. Later, with the support of O'Higgins he organized the expedition to Peru, and on the August 20, 1820, Lord Cochrane's squadron left the port of Valparaiso with the liberation army on board, which debarked in Pisco. On July 9th of the following year, the Argentine leader entered Lima and on the 28th proclaimed Peru's independence, taking power under the title of Protector. His administration lasted a year and was beneficial for the country. Meanwhile, Bolívar was carrying out a victorious campaign from Venezuela toward the south and had sent Sucre to Ecuador, where the royalists had a stronghold. Convinced of the need to unite forces with those of the Venezuelan leader, the Protector of Peru sent reinforcements to Sucre, thanks to which the allied army won in Pichincha (1822). On July 25th of that year, San Martín went to Guayaquil and celebrated a historic meeting with Bolívar, in whose hands he left the leadership of the army. As a result of this meeting, San Martín resigned from his office of Protector, left for Chile and later for England. In 1829 he returned to Buenos Aires, but upon being informed of the chaos ruling in his country and the animosity of the powerful toward him, refused to debark and sailed back to Europe. He lived in Brussels for a time and later in France, dying in Boulogne-sur-Mer on August 17, 1850.

did not accept the liberal reforms, derogated the Cádiz Constitution and persecuted the liberals, forcing many of them to exile. He then began the struggle against the Hispanic-American creoles.

The military governors and officials in several of the American colonies had looked on with suspicion as the first government councils were formed. Believing that what the creoles really sought was independence, they decided to suppress the new governments by force of arms. The differences among the creoles, lack of resources and trained troops led to the failure of the American movement for autonomy over almost the entire continent, and the reestablishment of Spanish rule during the period known as the Reconquest.

In Ecuador and Upper Peru, the royalists triumphed easily, thanks to the troops dispatched by the Viceroy of Peru. In Mexico, the fight continued for five years until Morelos' final defeat. In Venezuela, though then-Colonel Simón Bolívar won initial battles, the patriots' resistance was quelled after a few years.

O'Higgins' defeat in Rancagua allowed the Spanish under Mariano Osorio to take Santiago and reestablish the old regime. The creole reforms were abolished and the Real Audiencia reinstated. Though Osorio was inclined to benevolence, fanatical royalists carried out an agenda of revenge that included mass jailings and a massacre of prisoners. Abascal ordered the exile of all who had served in the patriot juntas, and though relatives and friends succeeded in saving many from exile, 42 men were sent to Juan Fernández Island,[54] including eminent members of the 800 group and Matthew Arnold Hoevel, the North American operator of Chile's first printing press. Osorio, whose rule the Chileans accepted because of his magnanimous and amicable character, inevitably entered into conflict with the high-handed Abascal, who decreed Osorio's replacement by the Catalan Casimiro Marcó del Pont.[55] Marcó del Pont was an inept military man who had risen to field marshal thanks to family connections and the decadence of Spanish politics. He implemented a repressive policy marked by harsh taxation, abusive treatment of the populace by the military, and the reestablishment of the old practice of public executions in the Plaza de Armas, as punishment for opposing the re-

[54] Where the original Robinson Crusoe was marooned after surviving a shipwreck. For some time, distinguished gentlemen dressed in European clothing were forced to make homes out of dank caves and forage for food in the forests, just as Alexander Selkirk had done a hundred years before.

[55] Marcó del Pont spoke Castilian badly and preferred to speak Catalan, which added to his unpopularity among the Chileans.

gime. Instead of returning the Chileans to fear and submission, the revolutionary spirit was reborn.

The abuses and violence of the Spanish when they reestablished their rule throughout the continent ended by imbuing the Americans with the desire for total independence from Spain.

**The "New Country"**

The period of the final struggle for Chilean independence is called "Patria Nueva" or New Country.

In Mendoza, O'Higgins and his men joined San Martín's army. The presence of Carrera and his supporters soon became a factor of dissension, but a military confrontation was prevented when Carrera decided to leave for the United States to buy arms and organize an army of his own.

General José de San Martín's liberation army was now made up of some 5,000 men. Before embarking on the crossing of the Andes, San Martín requested complete instructions on policy from Buenos Aires, including the setting up of a new provisional government in Santiago and the designation of O'Higgins as provisional president or director, once the enemy had been removed from the city.

A priest who had arrived in Mendoza with O'Higgins' army, Luis Beltrán, showed remarkable genius in the improvised production of arms and munitions. He designed special narrow, low-slung gun carriages for transporting cannon over the mountain passes, pulled by mules or oxen (the cannon were wrapped in cloth and hides for protection and were at times transported through the air with pulleys and ropes). Cattle and fodder were sent ahead to strategic valleys to supply the army with fresh meat. The men carried provisions of the Mendocinos' staple food, a thick mixture of ground meat and maize which when combined with hot water became a tasty and nourishing meal. They had been carefully trained and had extremely high morale. An engineer drew up an exact topographic map of the routes to be followed. Between the 18th and the 24th of January, 1817, three divisions began the crossing, one through Los Patos and two through Uspallata. The ascent was carried out without difficulty, except for a few black soldiers who suffered from the

cold and had to be revived with "aguardiente"[56] and onions. San Martín had planned everything, even a retreat route back across the Andes in case of defeat. Not one cannon or load of munitions was lost, in an army crossing of the second highest mountain chain in the world, along trails that were only used by expert herdsmen. It is one of the most extraordinary feats ever achieved in military history.

A general named Miller described the soldiers of the Liberation Army as disciplined and excellent fighters, despite their tattered uniforms, buttonless jackets and shabby ponchos. European officers were initially shocked by the casualness of the soldiers' attire, but were impressed by the quality of their weapons and their enthusiasm.

**The Battle of Chacabuco**

The patriot victory in Chacabuco Valley on February 12 was due to a combination of two factors. The Spanish governor Marcó del Pont committed a strategic error and rushed his army north of Santiago to Chacabuco instead of massing his forces and engaging the patriots in the south. The patriots' victory was decided by the courage and decisiveness of O'Higgins and Cramer, an ex-officer of Napoleon's who urged O'Higgins to order a new advance instead of retreating when his column found itself under bombardment from the Spanish artillery.

Marcó del Pont hurriedly abandoned Santiago for the port of San Antonio, from whence the panicked Spanish commandeered ships to take them to Callao, Peru. The Liberation Army entered Santiago in triumph and the people clamored for San Martín to accept the governorship of Chile, but San Martín declined. The cabildo then asked O'Higgins to take over the country's leadership as Supreme Director, and he accepted.

Concepción was liberated by the Argentine general Las Heras and the far south by the Chilean captain Freire. O'Higgins undertook the capture of Talcahuano, the port where a new Spanish force sent from Peru, once again under Osorio, was to disembark. At the same time he did this, O'Higgins organized a plebiscite in Santiago on whether the country's independence should be declared. The people voted overwhelmingly in favor and the independence of Chile was declared on November 12, 1818.

---

[56] Literally means "firewater" -- an alcoholic drink obtained, in this case, by distilling wine. In Brazil it is derived from sugarcane.

O'Higgins failed to take Talcahuano and Osorio's forces landed and defeated the patriots in Cancha Rayada in March, 1818. San Martín reorganized the army and engaged Osorio's forces on April 5, 1818 on the Maipo River plain, winning after six hours of battle. Chile's freedom was now a *fait accompli*.

José Miguel Carrera had arrived in Buenos Aires from the U.S. on February 9 with a small force, mainly French and North American volunteers, but soon got into trouble with the government and had to escape to Montevideo (Uruguay). He began planning a new coup against Chile from Buenos Aires, but it was discovered. His brothers were executed in Mendoza on April 8, 1818 by order of the provincial governor of Cuyo and upon the request of the Santiago Junta. Carrera vowed revenge against O'Higgins and San Martín (both men were in the battlefield when the Carreras were shot and had no knowledge of the executions, but later assumed responsibility for them) and plotted their assassination. His plans were discovered and he was executed, also in Mendoza, on September 4, 1821.

After a year of preparation, the Liberation Army went on to Peru, which, San Martín was convinced, had to be liberated to safeguard the new republics from royalist reaction. A navy of 4,000 men was organized with great sacrifice, with monies gathered from public donations and from Buenos Aires to buy nine warships from the U.S. and Britain. Lord Cochrane, a flamboyant, controversial (he was dismissed from the British navy) and recklessly courageous naval leader, hired his services out to the Chilean government. He kept the Pacific coast clear of Spanish ships and prevented the Spanish squadron from leaving the royal port of Callao, thus enabling the Chilean fleet to transport the Liberation Army to Pisco, Peru.

San Martín decided to pursue a strategy of negotiations with the viceroy and avoid armed conflict. Chilean historian Francisco Encina considered this a serious error on San Martín's part, because he considered -- writing, of course, with historical hindsight -- that the Viceroy's forces were in such a state of demoralization that a military victory would have been assured. Instead, the protracted siege of Lima resulted in the demoralization of the Chilean army from prolonged inaction, hunger and disease. Malaria broke out in Lima and the surrounding mountains, where the Viceroy's forces were deployed, and there were no hospitals in the city, no provisions for public hygiene and no food supplies. San Martin's army also suffered from malaria, fatigue, hunger and lack of discipline during the long months of inaction. According to En-

cina-Castedo, towards the end of the siege twenty men were dying daily and the rest slowly starving to death.

San Martín entered Lima and proclaimed the independence of Peru on July 28, 1821. However, there was still a numerous royalist force in the region called the Sierra and in Upper Peru. San Martín met with Simón Bolívar in Guayaquil, Ecuador, proposing that they join their armies to expel the Viceroy's remaining forces. He was disappointed when Bolívar refused, even after San Martín manifested his readiness to subordinate himself to the other man. San Martín, already suffering for many years from ill health and dependency on morphine to alleviate chronic pain, then resigned from his office of Protector of Peru, renounced the leadership of the Chilean army, and returned alone to Chile on October 12, 1822.

Bolívar, after many months in Guayaquil waiting for authorization from the Bogotá Congress, began his offensive against the Sierra region in 1824 and defeated the royalist forces in Upper Peru.

San Martín's Peruvian campaign lasted 2 years, 1 month and 12 days, of which half was spent laying siege to Lima and half ruling it. He lost favor in the Chileans' eyes because of his strategy of negotiation and non-confrontation. Back in Chile, San Martín fell ill from typhoid fever. Cochrane and the Carrera faction wanted him court-martialed but O'Higgins and other members of the government protected him. San Martín returned to Mendoza, where he learned of his wife's death in Buenos Aires. He decided to leave for England with his small daughter. His friendship with O'Higgins remained firm until the latter's death.

## The End of O'Higgins's Government

Bernardo O'Higgins believed that if a Republican government were immediately established, it would bring back the divisions that had caused the downfall of the governments during the period of the Old Country. He therefore established a dictatorship with the support of the Lautaro Lodge. O'Higgins designated a constitutional commission which gave legal status to the dictatorship on October 23, 1818, through a Constitution which was approved by a plebiscite. O'Higgins continued to govern for four more years, during which recognition of Chilean independence was obtained from all the countries of America, British loans were obtained to start up the mining industry and agriculture, and free trade was established, as well as a system of public educa-

tion, the National Library and an institute of higher studies. However, a great factor that worked against him was the country's economic collapse after almost 12 years of civil war, and the people's refusal to make the further sacrifices that O'Higgins felt were necessary to build a modern economy and a new political structure. O'Higgins also introduced many reforms which were too advanced for the mentality of the country and thus were not welcomed. The provinces of Concepción in the south and Coquimbo in the north rose up against him and on January 28, 1823, after a tumultuous open town meeting, O'Higgins resigned and turned over the government to a five-man junta. He then retired to Peru, but was always considered a national hero, even by the democrats who criticized the severity and puritanism of his dictatorship.

**Aftermath of the Emancipation Struggle**

The creole government established in Argentina in 1810 was not reconquered by the Spaniards. Thus Chile achieved independence with the help of Argentina, and Peru with the help of Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina and Chile.

After independence, besides the heavy casualties among the creoles (especially in Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela), who were those with enough education and culture to lead their respective countries, the new republics had to deal with the problems of organizing a state without having had the least preparation for the task, since Spain had never allowed the inhabitants of its 'Indian Kingdoms' to exercise any governmental, legislative or judicial functions. Everything had been structured in such a way that the designation of authorities, the promulgation of laws and decrees, etc., were carried out exclusively on the Spanish Peninsula.

This deficiency led to the emergence of caudillos in most of the countries, who were either military leaders of armed groups or urban leaders of public opinion. Many were demagogues who wielded enormous influence over sectors of the population. They did not stop at anything to impose their will and subjected the new Hispanic-American republics to reiterated government coups, revolutions and depredations.

Chile had to deal with the same problems as the rest, but she solved them within an astonishingly brief lapse of time. By 1830, she was already on her way to becoming a fully organized State, controlled by an oligarchy whose economic power was primarily based on agricultural land holdings, shortly to

be expanded into mining and shipping, in close partnership with British and North American capitalists.

# Chapter 7

## The Colonization and Emancipation of Hispanic Philippines

The preceding description of the motivations and organization of the Conquest, and the colonization and emancipation process of Chile within the context of that of the American continent, has probably broadened the reader's vision considerably and provided new points of reference for analyzing the Philippine experience.

## A Note on the Evolution of Implanted Colonizer Cultures

There are two important points to communicate at this point, regarding the mentality of *in illo tempore* [57] -- our Hispanic-Filipino era, and the cultural dynamics of colonization. The reason I include them here will become clear in the latter part of this chapter. Both ideas are a contribution from a French Canadian friend, André Moreau, who derived them from his comparative studies of the culture which developed in Louisiana under the French creoles and that of French Canada.

First, and I quote André: "With regard to Spanish America's past, it has been argued that the modern ideal of progress was unknown. This is not to say that the society lacked a unifying ideal. Rather, just as eternity is characterized by the absence of change, a society striving to imitate perfection would aspire to be unchanging and immutable. Of course, this concept is hard to grasp in modern Western society, imbued with the ideal of relentless change."

The second concept that André pointed out was that the development of the transplanted culture in the colonies followed a different process than within the colonizer country. A time lag was produced, with the colonizer culture sustaining the momentum of its development in the mother country at a rapid pace, while the transplanted -- and now dominant -- culture in the colonized country remained fixed in the initial moment of its introduction.

On a visit to Louisiana in 1975, André interviewed an old woman who reminisced about her childhood years, around 1925. "When describing the period, she said, '*Et quand les Américains sont venus*..." ('And when the Americans arrived....'). In other words, Americans were viewed as outsiders in Louisiana.

---

57 Latin, "in those times" -- a literary topic that refers to the mythical past.

And this, within living memory! In sum, French Louisiana resembles, in some respects, the French Canada of a couple of generations ago. It illustrates the tendency of outlying, isolated settlements to remain static as the metropolis evolves, giving rise to a rift. One way of describing this is to say that the past and the present coexist, separated only by distance."

The linguistic manifestation of this phenomenon is clearly observable in the Spanish spoken in Latin America today, which uses many anachronistic words and forms that were common usage in 16th-century Spain, and which have already disappeared in modern Spain through the process of linguistic evolution. In Latin America, Spanish is still called "castellano" or Castilian, the name of the language spoken at the court of Castile. At the time of the Conquest, there was no official language known as "español" in the Spanish Peninsula because modern Spain did not yet exist. Political unity among its kingdoms had only recently been achieved, upon the marriage of Fernando of Aragon and Isabel of Castile.

Related to the phenomenon of "mother-child cultural rift" is another, which André's example also illustrates -- the Law of Inertia, applied here to processes of mentality shift. Once implanted, a first colonizer culture, already fused or syncretized with the original local one, will resist the advent of a subsequent colonizer culture. However, with the passage of time, the new generations -- who did not experience the moment of cultural transition and its accompanying resistance to a new transculturation (in other words, the people's resistance to adopting a new transplanted dominant culture, due to the inertia of the preceding cultural process) -- will have no awareness that such a phenomenon ever occurred. They'll simply assume that what is now there has *always* been there, and has always been universally embraced. The younger generations will accept the culture they were born into, notwithstanding their parents' or grandparents' having once perceived it as invasive and alien, and perhaps even having sworn to resist assimilating it at all costs.

**Differences between the Philippine Colonization and Independence Process and that of Hispanic America**

The factors that differentiated Hispanic Philippines' colonization and emancipation process from that of Latin America can be summarized in the basic conditions of *geographic isolation* and the *non-formation of an authentic creole group and a numerically significant Hispanic mestizo population*. These two basic conditions became a cultural barrier to education and the dissemina-

tion of ideas of independence. The formation of a national identity was delayed because of the racial and cultural division between the Spanish and the Filipinos which a mestizo race, had one been formed, would have bridged.

*Geographic isolation* effectively marginalized the Philippines from the American process because she was in the Far East. Even the influence of progressive, liberal governments in Spain had little chance of reaching the Islands and establishing reforms, because by the time reforms began to be felt, a change of government took place and things went back to business as usual.

From the very beginning, all power in the Spanish Empire was concentrated in the monarch's hands. The colonial administrative structure was set up in such as way as to prevent interference with the monarch's will and the usurpation of his/her power by keeping the viceroys, audiencias, captain generals and governors neutralized by the constant competition among themselves for the exercise of their respective crumbs of authority. After Spain's transition into a constitutional monarchy, the musical chairs in Madrid between liberal and conservative governments translated into a similar succession of liberal and conservative governor generals in the Islands that made it natural for the religious orders to be a parallel government, since they were the only ones with any stability and consistency in their policies to offer. Since they were always there, they built up a solid power base and became the colony's *de facto* rulers. Given that the Spanish colonial mentality naturally fused the interests of Church and State, the Spanish government's representatives in the Philippines did not really feel uncomfortable with this situation. Despite their conflicts with the religious orders, they did in fact believe at a non-rational, somatic level -- as the Orders did at the "rational" one -- that the latter's presence in the Philippines was the guarantee of continued Spanish rule.

Geographic separation was a conditioning factor *within the country* as well, since the islands posed natural barriers to linguistic unification and reinforced regional differentiations. The friars, who were the only Spaniards with the freedom to establish their presence throughout the country (civilians were limited by law to residing in the urban centers), also reinforced linguistic differentiation by catechizing in the dialects.

The second important conditioning factor was that *neither an authentic creole class nor a mestizo race was formed***.** There were several reasons for this that are not difficult to surmise. The indigenous inhabitants were mainly peaceful and did not offer sustained violent resistance to the conquistadors, and more

friars than soldiers arrived in the Philippines. Besides, the Philippines was farther away than the Caribbean and the South American continent, and the displacement of soldier explorers and governors took place first in La Hispaniola, Mexico and the lands farther south. In Latin America, the marathonical miscegenation between a few thousand Spanish soldiers and friars and hundreds of thousands of Indian women was what produced the mestizo race. There was not the same wealth of gold and silver in the Philippines that they found on the American continent, where the highly-developed Aztec and Inca civilizations had already made finely-worked gold accoutrements an essential part of their ceremonial and social practices. Thus again, the adventurers went to America first to find an easy fortune. Finally, after the initial fever of the Conquest had subsided, Spain imposed limits on the exodus of able-bodied men to the new colonies since her economy began to register the effects of a growing scarcity of labor. Thus, not enough Spanish males reached the Philippines to engender a statistically significant Hispanic-Indian mestizo race with the native women, as happened in the Americas.

Few Spanish women came to live in the Philippines, which meant that a proper colonial creole society could not be formed -- only a reduced 'aristocracy' with racial and cultural characteristics that radically differentiated it from the numerically superior Malay and Chinese groups.

According to W.E. Retana,[58] the climate in the Philippines was another factor. Europeans did not tolerate it well and Spanish men were more vulnerable to sickness, they did not live long and were notably less virile than the Chinese, who easily surpassed them in their enthusiasm for and success at engendering offspring with native women. I would add my own speculations. Aside from the always reduced number of white men who arrived in the islands, and in spite of the fact that Spanish men had the Mediterranean temperament and were as a rule ready to miscegenate and cohabit with indigenous females, once a colonial social structure had been established there arose social barriers that made intermarriage between whites and natives dependent on other interests. In order to be required for marriage by Spanish males, native women had to offer economic and social position. Spanish men preferred white-skinned women, unlike the Portuguese in Brazil who found their black slaves much more attractive than their own wives. Since many of the wealthy natives were of Chinese-Malay blood, marriage with a Spaniard was desirable because of the added social cachet that it brought. Thus the intermarriage between Span-

[58] In two articles written in 1921 for the magazine "La Raza Española. Revista de España y América," entitled "Spanish Descendancy in the Philippines: Why Having Been So Numerous, So Little Remains."

iards and native women was necessarily confined to the social situations and circumstances that made such unions possible. In this sense, the Spanish friars who had children with their native concubines, the majority of whom naturally came from the underclass, in a sense were the best contributors to the "improvement of the race," along with the common soldiers, sailors, prisoners and other assorted adventurers and riffraff – whether from Spain, Mexico, Peru or Europe. In any case, not enough to truly alter the gene pool and produce a new racial type.

*Religious obscurantism and a form of theocracy* became entrenched in the country. Because of the colony's geographic isolation, non-formation of an authentic creole class, and the resulting lag time before an educated middle class (made up of both mestizos and non-mestizos) could arise that was capable of spearheading a movement for political autonomy and later independence, the religious orders were able to put down deep obscurantist roots in the country. The expulsion of the Jesuit Order[59] surely contributed to this process. It would be interesting to find out how many among the revolutionary generation of 1896 were, like Rizal, the products of a Jesuit education.

After initially protecting the natives from the abuses of the *encomenderos*, the religious orders became much more occupied with consolidating their power through their vast landholdings and the tremendous influence they had gained over the native mind. According to Agoncillo, "Royal decrees forbade colonists from residing outside Manila and urban centers....The vacuum left by the civil officials was filled by the friar who was generally the only Spaniard in any town and who acted as the buffer between the government and the people.... There was then, as one friar truthfully confessed, 'nothing of moment done in the towns' without the guidance and interference of the friar." By the 18th century they were the tacit -- if not manifest -- center of power on the Islands, and the colonial administrators were fully aware of it.[60]

---

[59] According to H. Herring, Charles III expelled the Jesuits in 1767 from all the colonies, which had disastrous results, because they were the most important factor of economic development, education and moral order in the realm. Their downfall was the result of the resentment of the other religious orders and their own consciousness of their power. They had become very prosperous, establishing many of the new industries in America and applying efficient agricultural practices. The *encomenderos* hated the Jesuits because they protected the Indians inside their missions. The Jesuits questioned absolutism, appealing to the Pope when they did not agree with the King's or the Viceroys' decisions. After their expulsion their works rapidly deteriorated and so did the colonial economies. They began returning to America in the early 1800s.

[60] In the 1670s, the Augustinian friar José Paternina, Commissar of the Holy Inquisition, condemned Captain General Diego de Salcedo to prison in Manila based on false charges. After languishing for years in jail, Salcedo died of illness (J.T. Medina). In 1719, Governor General Fernando de Bustamante was murdered by friars in his own palace when he initiated radical fiscal and administrative reforms (Agoncillo).

Thus, in the Philippines, because of

- Geographic isolation from Spain and the American continent as well as the existence of internal geographic barriers (island configuration),

- The non-formation of a true creole group and a Spanish mestizo race, and

- The clerics' successful efforts to block the diffusion of Spanish language and education, inducing a kind of freezing of historical time which insulated the Philippines from the ideas of Liberalism and representative democracy, not only did we gain independence 88 years later than the American colonies, but *the medieval mentality implanted by the friars and conquistadors in the 16th century*[61] *was preserved intact in the native Filipino mind for 354 years.* When the Americans arrived and imposed their rule, not only did a phenomenon of cultural sleight-of-hand occur, but in terms of temporal emplacement, we can say that our people also experienced a kind of time travel, as they were catapulted within a few years from one mental time -- the Medieval Age -- to another -- the Industrial Age. From an old mindset that valued no-change and was anchored in theocentricity, we switched to the modern one, which was its exact opposite -- the new empire of science, technology and secularization. How many other nations in the world might there be who have traveled through time as we have?

**The Arising of National Consciousness as the Motor of the American Independence Movements**

The Latin American creole class, thanks to its racial and cultural characteristics, though held in abeyance by the Spanish, acquired consciousness of themselves as the legitimate heirs to the land. Though it took some time for the image of independence to arise in their minds, once there it was a pretty straightforward struggle with a virtually foreordained outcome. A united land mass and cultural and racial brotherhood made it possible to act concertedly. Napoleon's interruption of the rule of the Spanish monarch was the historical accident that did the Americans a huge favor.

Spain as a colonizing power, thanks to her sons´ iron will to power and tremendous vigor and willingness to endure hardship in pursuit of their dreams,

61 The influence of the Italian Renaissance, which began in the 15th century, only reached Spain in the 17th century.

won supremacy over Portugal and the rest of the world during the 15th and 16th centuries. But once her colonized peoples had attained a consciousness of themselves as *the Spaniards' racial and cultural equals, but with a broader identity* -- one that was expanded to include the awareness of the liberation struggles of other peoples and countries (the U.S. and France) -- a power shift began to germinate within the Spanish Empire that she was unable to stop with even the most implacable repression. The lesson here is that once a new consciousness has been attained and the decision made to move forward until the ultimate consequences, all resistance must inevitably crumble.

This happened in Northern Europe with Martin Luther's Reformation movement (which started as the rebellion against Rome's collection of the money paid for indulgences), in India, with Gandhi's non-violent independence movement, and in Martin Luther King's civil rights movement. Even in the context of the Socialist and Anarchist-inspired labor movement in the U.S., no change would have happened if the European-born activists and workers hadn't organized and showed the government that killing them would be a worse strategy than introducing reforms in the labor laws. It was thus that the working class and labor unions were transformed into what they are today -- the U.S. government's staunchest and most conservative supporters.

**The Obstacles of Race and Cultural Margination in the Process of Formation of a Hispanic-Filipino National Consciousness**

In the Philippines, the formation of an important creole group with national consciousness did not take place. The Hispanic-Filipino creoles *as a class* did not identify their destinies and aspirations with those of the mestizos and the natives. Many of them, as insulars, were probably even more conservative and close-minded than the already mostly mediocre-thinking peninsulars, and given such a tiny group, these internal differences in attitude were much more significant in diluting the capacity of the entire class to influence -- much less channel -- a historical process of change. For their part, the mestizos and natives had to wait several generations before enough of them gained access to education and formed a nucleus of national consciousness. In other words, the *mestizaje* that was formed in the Philippines, unlike in Latin America, more than a mixture of blood was a fusion between the native and Spanish mentalities. It was a *psychic, cultural miscegenation*. In other words, though our bodies largely stayed separate, our minds and cultures mixed through the proximity of at least seventeen generations throughout almost four centuries. Modern Filipinos today who have been bombarded with North American cul-

tural influences have forgotten that they have a somatic-emotional layer of Hispanic culture. When they go to Latin America they become aware of feelings of empathy toward and an instinctive affinity with Latin Americans. For their part, when Hispanic Americans travel to the Philippines, they feel very much at home, except for that one small detail -- everyone around them speaks English, and Filipinos have instinctive, class-and-race-rooted reservations against the Spanish language.

It is difficult then not to conclude that race and the withholding of education were the two most important delaying factors of our emancipation process, following geographic isolation. In other words -- racism and the cultural marginalization of the colonized by the colonizers.

The Spaniards never saw their reflected image in us, despite centuries of consorting with our people, whereas the creole aristocracy saw themselves as the Spaniards' alter ego (or 'other self'), ruling *ad aeternam* over the natives. It is important to point out, nevertheless, that although the Spaniards who came to the Philippines were principally of an undistinguished calibre -- traditionalist bureaucrats and religious -– the Filipinos were lucky because they mainly arrived to administer and exploit, unlike in Latin America, where today people still make the generalization that, by far, the Spanish who arrived there were ex-convicts, the dregs of their own society who only came to destroy, steal and despoil. Since it was so difficult to engage in commercial activity in the Philippines and the cultural and social atmosphere was so stagnant, intellectuals and entrepreneurial Spaniards stayed in Spain and stirred things up over there. It was logical for progressive cultural activity to be practically nonexistent in the Philippines -- any significant development of authentic cultural activity requires the basic conditions of prosperity and freedom of expression. The lid on both was securely screwed over the psychic pressure cooker that was Hispanic Philippines.

According to Agoncillo, with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the shortening of the distance that separated Spain from the Philippines, liberal Spaniards started arriving and new ideas and books from Europe. Despite the spectacularly successful efforts of the friars and their supporters to hold back the clock, it was just a matter of time before the backlash had to take place.

Thus it was that in the 1890s, after a period of economic prosperity that gave rise to a middle class, the Filipinos finally gained consciousness of themselves as a people, of their will to freedom, and of the absolute validity of that will.

The Propaganda or Reform movement[62] and José Rizal's personal example and writings did the work of projecting an image, an identity, that the people recognized as accurately representing their somatic register of themselves –- of the mestizos as well as the non-mestizos, and even of the creoles with genuine identification with their land -- as an oppressed nation that was ready for freedom.

Revolutions are extremely dynamic events that cannot be controlled and that rush, flood-like, toward an outcome that seems to be totally random, not controlled by reason, but which when analyzed reveal their inherent logic. When we are able to understand the process of a revolution, identifying its stages and how its dynamic leads from one spiral to the next, we can even say that an impression is created in us of awesome symmetry -- even beauty. A revolution, to me, is the Tao in action, the celestial dragon imposing new order over the chaos that unconscious men create in the world.

The actual events that were generated by the clash of intentions between the Spanish colonial authorities and friars, and the Filipino upper, middle and lower classes led to many strange and bizarre developments, which even those who detonated the phenomena were unable to understand, much less control.[63] Rizal was helpless to bring even his tremendous moral authority to bear on his people to stop the armed rebellion. Bonifacio was unable to maintain his leadership, because of the gaps of class and race mentality that made him an appropriate leader for the urban working class and poor of Manila, but not for the middle class caviteños. Unity within the revolutionary government and within the army was thus early on eroded by regionalism and class differences. Aguinaldo put his trust above all on his fellow caviteños; the Spanish high-handedness of General Antonio Luna, who in every other sense a true Hispanic-Filipino patriot, alienated the soldiery until he was finally assassinated by members of Aguinaldo's select guard.[64] Native Filipinos opposed the

---

[62] Refers to the 'reformists' or 'propagandists' -- Hispanic-Filipino writers, artists and intellectuals who exiled themselves in Spain, where they agitated for political reforms through their writings in the press and by lobbying deputies of the Spanish parliament.

[63] Because of limited knowledge and space constraints, the account I have presented of the Chilean revolutionary and emancipation process is quite straightforward and may create a flattened, cause-effect impression, but I must assure my readers that the works consulted (especially Encina-Castedo) convey the very same qualities of barely-controlled chaos and dramatically unpredictable clashes of intentions as our own.

[64] It is also possible that Aguinaldo considered Luna a threat to his own position as the sole leader of the revolutionary army. Agoncillo wrote: "With the liquidation of General Luna, demoralization in the Filipino ranks set in and the reprisals against those intimately connected with [Luna] led to a cold indifference among his sympathizers to the Filipino cause. Not long after the bloody incident [Luna was hacked to death by Aguinaldo's guards], many army officers surrendered to the Americans and thus made it impossible for Aguinaldo to maintain his army intact with a high morale."

revolution because of regional loyalties (as in the case of the pro-North America Macabebes and other -- pro-Spanish -- groups), cultural deformation (upper-class creoles and Hispanic Filipinos who considered themselves a cut above the common people and preferred American rule to a Filipino government that would almost certainly strip them of socioeconomic privileges), and because (as in the Chilean case) there were also those who were indifferent to the issue of independence and betrayed the revolution because it meant nothing to them (perhaps included in this group were those who led the Americans to the otherwise impregnable Tirad Pass[65] and to Aguinaldo's final stronghold in Palanan, Isabela).

The *coup de grâce* was delivered by U.S. imperialism. Our revolutionary process birthed our first Republic, but the Americans had already laid diplomatic and military siege to it even as it was being born. Their advantage was that, unlike the Spaniards, they were not immediately perceivable as a clear image of "threat" or "enemy" to our leadership. Only after the Americans began displacing the Filipino troops that surrounded Manila, in preparation for their staged battle with the Spanish to take the city[66] did Aguinaldo finally see what was up. Time was lost, serious mistakes were committed and the North Americans were already an entrenched military presence before we realized that a new invader was in our midst.

Historical processes depend much more on energetic accumulations, rhythms, and on windows of opportunity that open briefly, then close hermetically shut again until the next confluence of favorable conditions.

We had the energy to fight a decrepit Spain, but not enough to resist a vigorous new world power from without, and enmities among the alienated siblings from within.

The American annexation in 1898 was a tragedy for the new Filipinos. They dared, fought and sacrificed but there was no happy ending for them. Sev-

---

[65] I do not know how old the name of Tirad Pass (Pasong Tirád) is, and speculate on whether it acquired this name after the fateful skirmish in which Gregorio del Pilar died, and was so named because while it was defended by Filipino sharpshooters during the sacrificial battle with the North Americans the order "Tirad!" (Fire!) was heard so many times that afterwards the people gave the place that name. "Tirad (vosotros)" is the second-person plural conjugation in the imperative mood of the Spanish verb *tirar*, to shoot.

[66] According to Agoncillo, first Gen. Francis Green talked Gen. Mariano Noriel into moving his troops to allow American troops to occupy his sector by promising him good pieces of artillery, and later Gen. Anderson warned Aguinaldo not to allow any Filipino troops to enter the city, because they would be under American fire from one side of the Pasig river.

enty-five years after the Chileans had won their freedom, we won ours too, only to lose it once more.

**Were The Filipinos Ready for Independence?**

Whether or not the Filipinos were indeed ready for independence in 1898 has been a subject of debate, and some argue that we really didn't have the least idea of how to build and run a country, and so U.S. annexation was actually a blessing, since the U.S. was a better colonial ruler than the Spanish. Definitely, if there is such a thing as readiness for freedom, if a people are supposed to graduate to independence the way a student graduates from college, after passing exams and being certified by authorized examiners as qualified to exercise the profession they have studied for -- if life is this kind of a school, then the Filipinos were not ready for independence and it was correct for the Americans to take us in hand and prepare us.

It really isn't my intention to argue this point, though, because it seems to me that the question is incorrectly formulated. We might better ask: would it have been better for the Philippines to be invaded in 1898 by the U.S., Germany, Holland, France or England? Because Philippine independence in the dawn of U.S. Imperialism and in the mature stages of European colonialism never had a chance.

We don't know what would have happened if the world had been an ideal place in 1898 for the new Philippine Republic to be born in. I am sure the Filipinos couldn't have created an ideal country in the same sense that the founding fathers of the United States and the first French and Latin American republics did. How could they have done so? They had no national or cultural homogeneity, they were little more than a collection of regional identities (read: tribes) with a small minority of leaders who themselves did not have a consistent unifying identity, who significantly differed from each other in their economic, cultural and racial characteristics and aspirations.

The process they had begun would have had a very difficult course to hack through: jungles of disunity, inexperience and hidden agendas. Probably the continuation of our revolutionary history would have been similar to Mexico's -- *caudillismo* and the simple replacement of the Spanish by the creole oligarchy or by a series of strongman military governments.

From this perspective, U.S. annexation was perhaps the most anodyne we could have gotten, especially since the U.S. brought with it a democratic discourse, translated into a chance for native Filipinos to become, at least ostensibly, full political and economic protagonists in their country -- a chance I doubt they would have gotten under Spain, even had Rizal's vision of a Philippines with parliamentary representation become a reality. If the Philippines had remained Spanish, the creoles would probably have made sure that the native Filipinos remained an underclass, just as they have done with their indigenous *and* mestizo populations in Latin America.

It must be said though, that one path merely proved to be more circuitous and deceptive than the other. In hindsight, the Filipinos truly fell from the frying pan into the fire.

Would the world powers have recognized Filipino sovereignty? In the ideal world, yes, but not in that real one, when the third phase of the Age of Colonization was just beginning.[67] The first phase had belonged to Spain and Portugal. The second saw England, France, Belgium and the Netherlands' forays into Africa, India and Asia, and the third was the establishment of the United States' hegemony over Hispanic America and Oceania.

The fact is, there wasn't a remote possibility that we might have kept our freedom, given the historical moment.

But for the sake of argument -- if a person wants to be free, does anyone have the right to refuse him or her their freedom? I don't think so. The power, certainly, but the right -- never.

Freedom is a desire that arises from a need so basic and inherent to humans that it cannot be denied. When it is denied, human beings are degraded as such and a basic contradiction is founded, the flow of life's energy is blocked, and sooner or later it must be unblocked and flow out again. Human beings always find new channels to exercise their freedom and their human intentionality, just as life always finds the way toward growth and new stages of complexity.

---

[67] As all my readers surely know, Rizal's -- and that of the intelligentsia's -- conviction that the Philippines should remain a Spanish colony was also founded on his correct premonition that the U.S. would be a threat if the Philippines became independent. In his essay written in 1889, "The Philippines in 100 Years," he predicted: "Perhaps the great American Republic, whose interests lie in the Pacific and who hasn't shared in the spoils of Africa, may one day think of acquiring offshore possessions" (Retana).

It's really a non-issue whether or not we were ready for independence, and the obvious negative answer to this question (we were not ready, just as the American creoles were not ready, but they went ahead anyway and learned to govern themselves) cannot reasonably be used to justify our annexation by the U.S., even citing the apparent material advantages it later brought.

On the philosophical, ethical and psychological planes of reflection, when one human intentionality is blocked violently by another, an important problem is created. However, when the hindering intentionality is negative -- as in the case of the genocide against the Jews and the Gypsies that the Nazis perpetrated during World War II and their military offensive against Europe -- then the violent reaction to quell that negative intention is morally justifiable and acceptable.

In the Filipinos' case, the military action of the U.S. which thwarted their intention to be free was morally unjustifiable. The Filipinos had the right to be a sovereign nation on their own territory, if that was their wish and aspiration. But intentionally-impelled processes -- not rights in and of themselves, no matter how noble or how much somatic mass consensus they may rest upon -- are what determine historical outcomes. There may be consensus; but if no one makes a move, the social whole is dead in the water. It takes the unbeatable combination of consciousness of inalienable rights, knowledge of how processes are launched and sustained, and a collective will as flexible and indivisible as tempered steel to pursue the goal with one-pointed devotion until the final consequences, for any human collectivity to successfully imprint a humanizing direction on the unfolding of history.

After Aguinaldo was captured, though he swore allegiance to the United States, he wore a black bowtie for the rest of his life as a symbol of mourning for his country. A dramatic posture from a man who, today, cuts a pathetic and shameful figure. Aguinaldo is our hero with feet of clay, a man whose historical role I consider has been insufficiently analyzed, perhaps because of political reasons. Bonifacio has been subjected to more scrutiny, and the North American historian Glenn May hypothesized that he was a mythical hero (like Ferdinand Marcos). Aguinaldo, though, is a sorry figure who does not even reach up to Bonifacio’s ankles. Bonifacio was, it can be claimed, an inept military leader. But he never betrayed his cause and died with his honor intact. Aguinaldo was led astray by his personal ambition to be the sole leader of the Filipino revolutionary war, by his ineptness in dealing with the Hispanic Fili-

pino mestizos' political intrigues during the organization of the First Republic, and by his indecisiveness in front of the Americans' duplicity, allowing them to keep Filipino soldiers out of Intramuros during the mock battle with the Spanish forces and the Spanish capitulation to the Americans.

Aguinaldo was not the only one who was fooled – the Americans succeeded in doing the same thing to the Cuban revolutionary army. But the Americans had fought the Spanish in Cuba, while in the Philippines the Filipinos defeated the Spanish, then were forced to deliver their country on a silver platter to Admiral Dewey and General Green.

## Chapter 8

## The Class Structure of Hispanic-Filipino Society

This chapter offers clarifications of cultural concepts which have fallen into gray areas and gaps as a result of the fact that Filipino historians have written about the Hispanic-Filipino period without translating the shift in cultural paradigms (in other words, mentality) that occurred between our experiences of Spanish and North American colonization. Without these clarifications, the way certain aspects of our historical accounts are presented create a subtle confusion in students and readers. Up to now, the aspect of mentality shift that marks Philippine history (I cannot make a categorical statement, since I have not carried out a study of the existing literature on this area of study, and I am proceeding on the basis of a hunch that this is the case) has been paid scant attention, and I shall present some ideas that may be useful as well as stimulating.

The areas I will address have to do mainly with the class structure of Hispanic-Filipino society, which was based on the many differences among the various groups of Hispanic Filipinos, including the language gap. These differences were, within society as a whole, those between the upper classes and the plebeians; and within the intelligentsia, the differences between the reformists and the revolutionists -- the classes that Bonifacio and Rizal have come to represent in our minds but which also included the Pedro Paternos, Felipe Buencaminos and Trinidad Pardo de Taveras. It is important for us to try to get a better idea of what these different identities meant *within the cultural context of those times*, because I believe we have been looking at the Hispanic part of our past through the filter of our post-Spanish cultural landscape, which has resulted in a subtly flattened and skewed vision of our pre-U.S. period. By juxtaposing Latin American and Philippine history and culture, it becomes possible to access dimensions of our story that are otherwise invisible for us, because of the psychological pressure that North Americanization tends to exercise over our image of self, of country and of the greater world.

To go back for a moment to Chilean history, the main characteristic of Chile's revolutionary period was that there arose two main creole groups who were divided into royalists on one hand and proponents of self rule on the other.

However, within this clear-cut scenario there were many nuances, many different positions, and the two basic factions experienced an evolution between 1810 and 1816, until they converged into a united pro-independence front after the Reconquest. The aristocrats were initially divided between these two groups. José Miguel Carrera, an aristocrat by birth and social standing but the most radical of the independence advocates, both advanced and harmed the patriot cause during the years of his political and military protagonism. There was a significant sector of aristocrats who were pro-independence but who became anti-Carrera, as well as aristocrats who were royalists but were favorably disposed toward Carrera. Many of the Spanish in Chile were also pro-independence and fought with the creoles as able generals or soldiers. Then there were royalists who remained neutral and others who were fanatically pro-Spain.

Our own revolutionary history barely had two years to develop its post-insurrectional process in. But notwithstanding this, we can also make out different factions: Spaniards who joined the revolutionary cause; Hispanic-Filipino creoles who were either neutral or pro-Spain; and, of course, among the mestizos and native population there was surely no lack of those who were pro-Spain (or pro-friar), pro-independence, and neutral.

Despite its particular complexities, however, the Chilean revolutionary cultural landscape *did not have* the two crucial elements that were present in our own: the race and language gaps. This is why our revolutionary history -- and all of our history after 1521, in point of fact -- is psychologically so complex. It is obvious that race is a crucial factor of identification and cohesion, and racial differences, when the power structure favors some over others, become incredibly divisive. Language is another vital factor of union and division, because sharing language implies sharing the same worldview. For language not to be a factor of division in a society, there must be a solid cultural and social basis of tolerance, and strong parallel, peacefully coexisting identities. This was never the case in our country (except, perhaps, at the intra-regional level, as within Luzon, within Visayas and within Mindanao), because the greater world was not that way either. The world beyond was still dealing in simple coin, as in the Chilean case, where both creoles and Spanish were European gentlemen fighting a gentleman's war, with the Indians conveniently relegated to a position of dignified and valuable but ancillary military support. The Indians in fact had won a kind of sovereignty which they had imposed on the Spanish in 1598, after the Disaster of Curalaba, when the colonizers finally left them alone south of Concepción. The Mapuches then exercised a *de*

*facto* sovereignty over the Arauco Region for over two hundred years before the northern independence movement began. So it was that, in Chile, there wasn't the idea of the Indians as a despised group, as happened in the Philippines; the creoles at one point even adopted the Mapuche emblems to symbolize their new government's Chilean identity and its otherness from Spain's.

Ours was a totally different case. It was the original scenario of Hispaniola in the Caribbean, except that on Hispaniola, the Indians finally died out from disease and war and were replaced by their mestizo children. In our case, the Indians never died out, but multiplied. The Spanish, creoles and mestizos were surrounded by a sea of native Filipinos whom they basically used as their servant classes. But modernity caught up with the medieval Spanish mentality anyway, and I can imagine why the Katipunan's declaration of revolution produced a state of panic among the Spanish -- they were literally helpless and in the classic course of events should have been massacred en masse. But they were not, and this to me, in and of itself, is a manifestation of one of our most important traits as a people: our essentially peaceable and humane character.

The Philippines was one of the first postmodern countries, being a mixture of worlds, of languages, and of times within one geographical space. From this point of view, I feel that our history is more accessible to us today than at any other time in our past, because today the conditions exist that facilitate the adoption of a global perspective that values multi-ethnicity and affirms the full range of identities, from the local to the planetary, from the individual to the global.

**The Development of the Reform Movement**

The seeds of the Reform Movement were planted upon the entry of groups of native Filipino youth, beginning in the mid-19th century, to educational establishments and the Pontifical University of Santo Tomás. This was followed by the development of the movement for the secularization of the parishes. I will give a brief explanation by Fr. Cayetano Sánchez of the Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental, a scholar of our history, of how the Philippine parishes came into being and what the differences were between regular and secular priests.

When the conquistadors arrived in the Islands, they brought with them friars, religious who belonged to defined orders: Recollects, Dominicans, Francis-

cans, etc. They were men who had taken vows to dedicate their lives to the Church. In Spain they lived in communities, were subject to the authority of a superior called the Provincial, and governed by "La Regla" -- The Rule, the body of regulations prescribed by the founder of each religious order for observance by its members. The members of the Orders were the "regular clergy."

The basic social unit in pre-Hispanic Philippines was the *barangay*. However, wherever they arrived, the conquistadors founded their own settlements, tracing the plans for the future city that each settlement should grow into. First, a main plaza or square was established, and then a church and an *ayuntamiento*, or city council house, was built around it. These settlements evolved into the parishes.

With the passing of time, the Orders trained and ordained native priests, but these did not enter the Orders and become members of the "regular clergy." The native priests lived in their own houses and were subject to the authority of the bishop. They observed a general norm instead of the "Rule," and they were called the "secular clergy."

The proponents of secularization proposed that the regular clergy cease to be parish priests and transfer that function to the secular priests. This process happened in Mexico but in the Philippines it did not take place, because of the opposition of the friars.

Secularization finally turned into a political issue. The friars, casting about for justifications not to relinquish their power, claimed -- not without reason -- that the native priests were not sufficiently trained to take over the parishes. It was probably true that the majority of the secular clergy were not as highly educated as Fr. José Burgos, who studied at the Universidad de Santo Tomás. There were also cases in which the secular clergy were not examples of high moral and ethical formation (understandable, in view of the prevailing situation). However, the will to start a process of relinquishment of power was the real issue at stake. The friars resorted to their already habitual tactic of casting racial and cultural aspersions on their subordinates, and to the more dangerous one of imputing subversive intentions to them. The ultimate result of this last was, as they say in Spanish, *Les salió el tiro por la culata* -- their strategy backfired, and the radicalization process began.

Agoncillo tells that when the Cavite Mutiny broke out, the friars embarked on a campaign to convince the government that underlying the secularization movement was the intention of working for independence. The secular priests Mariano Gómez, José Burgos and Jacinto Zamora were implicated as authors of the Cavite Mutiny and executed, and many prominent natives were accused of sedition and exiled or sentenced to prison.

The secularization movement died and the underground currents of popular rebellion were set in motion. GomBurZa became martyrs in the people's eyes and symbols of their cause. Fourteen years later, it was discovered that *katipuneros* who rushed out to the fields in revolt wore pieces of the priests' habits as *anting-anting*, or amulets.

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, psychological harassment by the friars of the native intelligentsia continued. But apart from this, taxation was onerous -- according to Agoncillo, the Philippines not only financed the extravagances of her domestic governors and the generous salaries and pensions of Spanish civil and military employees, but diplomatic missions in other points of Asia as well. The army and the navy absorbed much of the budget and social needs were grossly underprioritized. These conditions gave the nationalist intelligentsia more than enough motivation to initiate a serious campaign for reforms.

Agoncillo writes that Graciano López-Jaena[68] was the first to exile himself to Spain after drawing down upon himself the friars' wrath with a story he wrote about a licentious priest, "Fray Botod." On February 15, 1889, he founded the fortnightly newspaper *La Solidaridad*, together with fellow expatriates in Madrid. The aims of the *Sol* included the removal of the friars from the Philippines and the secularization of the parishes, but more importantly, the winning for Filipinos of basic political and social rights.

In the following text, Agoncillo summarizes the process of the reform movement, giving a description of its social context (italics in all quotes of Agoncillo are mine):

> The reform movement, though unsuccessful in securing the needed reforms in the Philippines, nevertheless started a wave of nationalistic feeling in the

[68] Editor of *La Solidaridad* and brilliant ideologue of the Propaganda Movement. López-Jaena died in Barcelona in 1896 at the age of 40.

> colony. While the expatriates were endeavoring to focus Spain's attention on Philippine conditions in order to win the sympathy of the liberal Spaniards, *the native middle class at home, composed of the well-to-do and the small educated segment,* organized themselves into societies for the purpose of sending financial aid to the reformists in Spain who were living in penury.

In the end, however, Agoncillo tells us that because of differences of opinion among the expatriates in Spain, lack of financial resources, lack of feedback from the Spanish government and the death of the most important reformist leaders -- Graciano López-Jaena and Marcelo H. del Pilar -- the reform movement died and the historical protagonism passed on to the native insurrectionists.

> The expatriates in Spain were discouraged by the negative results of their sacrifices and by their thinning ranks: Rizal was in Dapitan as an exile; López Jaena was dead; so was Del Pilar. Perhaps their influence was more felt in the colony than in Spain, for the Spanish politicians had no time to waste on a colony too far away to affect peninsular politics. In a final effort to meet the challenge of the impossible situation, the remaining Filipinos in Madrid decided to hold a general assembly in Hong Kong in 1896 to prepare a radical solution to the Philippine problem. But Marcelo H. del Pilar, who should have led the meeting and, ultimately, the revolution, died before the expatriates could leave Spain. *The effect in Maynilà was that the aggressive and fiercely nationalistic elements of the native population, realizing the futility of continuing with the peaceful approach to the Philippine problem, decided to proceed with their revolutionary plan without the counsel of the intelligentsia*.

Agoncillo then describes the founding of the Katipunan and states that the KKK succeeded where the middle class and the reformists failed.

> *The well-to-do and the intelligentsia, it must be noted, were not truly radicals but conservatives,* for they insisted, even in the face of Spanish obstinacy, on winning freedom through reforms and on making the Philippines a province of Spain. The reforms they demanded were from the very beginning impossible of realization, for the enemies of native aspirations for a better life, the friars, were as securely entrenched in Spain as they were in the colony. *There was something naive in the reformist group which made them fail to see the restiveness of the masses, for they were at heart too*

> *conservative to recognize the ability of the masses to respond to adequate appeals. Since the reformists wrote in the language, not of the masses but of their masters, they failed to establish any rapport with the masses without whom no movement for freedom could succeed. It is to the credit of* Bonifacio *that, though almost illiterate, he was able to penetrate the minds and hearts of the masses and so made them feel the need for unity and action. As one who had but a dubious knowledge of Spanish but with a competence in his own language, Bonifacio employed the medium of expression that he correctly thought would establish an intimate dialogue with the masses.* He and the masses, then, understood each other on two levels: on the level of language used (Tagalog) and on the level of ideas, which were as simple as they were fiery: Spanish brutality, greed, and injustice, on one hand, and the need to remove the Spaniards through force, on the other. *These were simple ideas that even the simple-minded clearly understood, unlike those of Rizal and his colleagues in the reform movement who expressed their ideas in a sophisticated manner in a language the masses did not understand.*

Agoncillo describes the Katipunan and Bonifacio in these terms:

> It must be noted that unlike the previous native societies founded in Maynilà, *the Katipunan was supremely plebeian, for none of its founding members belonged to the wealthy or to the intelligentsia. At best, two or three of them were small merchants and clerks who had nothing in common with the middle class.* Andres Bonifacio was born in Tondo...on November 30, 1863, the son of very poor parents...lost his parents at an early age and so he had to be both father and mother to his younger brothers and sisters. *He reached the equivalent of the present primary grades.... Naturally intelligent, he read books at night and qualified as a clerk-messenger in the commercial firm of* Fleming and Co..... *His knowledge of Spanish was far from satisfactory but he could read Spanish books and understand them. It was thus that he read...the Bible, "Les Misérables," the penal and civil codes, international law, the French Revolution, and the lives of the presidents of the United States.*

In these paragraphs we find several points that in my opinion merit closer examination and clarification. These points are: the use of the terms "middle class" and "plebeian"; the comparison made between the aims of the propaganda movement and the KKK, and the assessment that the former's aims were naive and their message linguistically ill-presented; the social composi-

tion of the KKK; the social characterization of Bonifacio; and the presentation of Spanish as the language of the masters and Tagalog as the language of the masses.

**The Middle Class and the Plebeians**

I think it would not be inaccurate to say that Filipino colonial society in the 1890s had just begun to evolve into a modern one to which the terms upper, middle and lower class could be neatly applied. For these terms to be used and to mean something that would correctly represent for us the social reality of those times, we need to have a clearer picture of what Hispanic-Filipino society was like, in contrast to our own. Filipino society changed radically under the Americans, and what for us today is "middle class" does not have an identical counterpart in 1890 Hispanic Philippines.

The linguistic factor must be taken into account as well, because we have believed that it was enough to translate the Hispanic-Filipino cultural concepts into English to grasp what they meant. Thus, we have been using words such as "plebeian" since the advent of the Filipino-American colonial period, and in the intervening years we have become more and more Americanized and the term has evolved into what I believe is a very fuzzy one that really tells us very little. Today we associate "plebeian" -- and correct me if I am wrong -- to two different meanings. One of them is "of the common people" and the other is "a member of a democratic society wherein all are equal, without class distinctions." These meanings are accurate, but at two different levels: the *informal, gut level*, and the formal, purely semantic one.

Where is the problem then? The problem is that the two meanings are quite different in terms of emotional association. The first means "nothing special" and the second means "what is proper, what is fair and desirable." There is a communicational short circuit between these two meanings; they don't speak to each other, and as a result they create in our minds a very subtle gap -- in terms of valuation and understanding. In other words, in terms of cultural meaning.

Allow me then to attempt a clarification of this two-faced concept. The first level of meaning refers to the linguistic reflection of social prejudice; the second level of meaning is empty of social categorization -- it is merely descriptive, formal, strictly semantic. If we use "plebeian" to describe a historical figure such as Bonifacio, we therefore have to make a clear distinction be-

tween the informal gut level (which was quite specific and weighty in the Hispanic-Filipino sociocultural context) and the semantic level (which would lead us to the formal, more neutral Americanized meaning which we actually assign today to this word). Obviously, it was to the *Spanish* that Bonifacio was "vulgar" and "common." To us -- and no doubt to the men and women he led and inspired -- he is a cultural icon, a *maharlika*. And yet he was indeed plebeian in the truest sense -- we just have to clarify in which one, because in our educated post Filipino-American culture, this word has very little meaning as a sociological term, and yet it's all over the place in our historical literature.

What does "plebeian" mean, exactly? Its formal etymological meaning is "of the Roman plebs (an ordinary Roman citizen who did not belong to the patrician families), one of the common people." In other words, all of us. So big deal, right? Why call Bonifacio The Great Plebeian? The Great Ordinary Person, The Great Common Man. The ordinary man who was extraordinary. Well, but so was Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

In our past historical and cultural landscape, however, the adjective "plebeian" had a great deal of social significance. It was an old Spanish concept that defined a person on the basis of what he/she *was not*. The old Spanish mindset had so many social prejudices built into its perceptions of self and other, as well as into the interactions between the different social/religious/racial groups, that social relations were permeated by nuance and unspoken codes. For an Americanized Filipino mindset that hasn't studied and -- more importantly -- *experienced* Hispanic culture, many of these subtleties easily go unperceived and are thus meaningless.

To perceive these subtleties, one would have to be aware, for example, of the differences between the mother culture in Spain and the hybrid colonial cultures that developed in her colonies. Spanish words acquired nuances in the Philippines that they did not have in Spain. 'Don' and 'doña' became associated with social superiority because of the cultural differentiation between the wealthy and cultured Spanish and creoles from the poor, non-Spanish speaking, pureblooded natives -- a nuance which did not carry the same alienating connotations on the Peninsula, where race differences and foreign domination did not constitute the framework for social relations and interaction. "Don" and "doña" had been forms of address applied by the *villanos*, town dwellers, to the *hidalgos*, gentryfolk without titles of nobility but who belonged to the social class that was a buffer between the top of the social hierarchy and the bottom. The appellatives were used to promote differences of social rank,

which were inevitably tied to race and color distinctions in the colonies. In Chile, only the Spanish and the creoles could be addressed as ‘don’ and ‘doña’, not the mestizos and certainly not the fourth class, who were the descendants of the black slaves who intermarried with mestizos and Indians. Social climbing Hispanic Filipinos reinforced the nuance to the point that "don" and "doña" acquired the meaning of "oppressor" for those who rejected an unjust society and coercive economic construct that stripped them of everything including their dignity. Thus it happened that an important 18th-century revolt in the Ilocos region began with the cry of "Death to the *dons* and *doñas*!" In Latin America, as in Spain, ‘don’ and ‘doña’ are part of normal address today, a matter-of-fact social convention. In the Philippines they continue to be imbued with ambivalent connotations, inspiring wary curiosity in some and uneasy nostalgia in others.

Agoncillo's definition of a "native middle class...composed of the well-to-do and the small educated elite" is insufficient to give a clear idea of what "native middle class," "well-to-do" and "elite" meant, in the context of that society's cultural and economic reality. You couldn't really establish social divisions in the Philippines at that time on the basis of income or occupation alone, because there were so many cultural differences among the different groups of Filipinos, even within the same income groups. For example, Mabini was a lawyer, but he was dirt poor. Rizal was a Renaissance man and world traveler, but his family, though undeniably prosperous and tending to emulate European ways, were tenant farmers. I believe they *did not* belong to either the economic or the "true-blue" upper class. Rather, they were solidly upper middle-class. López-Jaena and Marcelo H. del Pilar, professionals and brilliant men, were probably of more modest means than Rizal, exiling themselves to avoid political persecution in the Philippines and surviving in Europe thanks to the modest economic support of Filipinos at home who believed in their political mission. Included in the ranks of the KKK were highly-educated Filipinos. The best known of them is Emilio Jacinto, "The Brains of the Katipunan," who had an undergraduate degree from Colegio de San Juan de Letrán and a law degree from the Universidad de Santo Tomás.

There were probably three tiers in the upper class of Hispanic Philippines: the premier class was made up of the Spanish, the second group of creoles (the, so to speak, "true blues"), followed by a native upper class, some of whom may have had less or more culture than the creoles, but who had access to the highest levels because of their wealth, and who eventually could marry up into true-blue families. Also there surely were Spaniards and creoles who were not

culturally refined, but because of racial and family provenance, and/or money, automatically got entry into the aristocracy. The titled Spaniards were the ones looked upon as the ultimate blue bloods, and perhaps the only ones who felt themselves to be their equals were the friars who held high positions in the Church hierarchy.

The 'middle class' could have been defined less on the basis of income and more on a combination of upward mobility because of professional status, or the ability to acquire skills (the intelligent and self-taught) thanks to personal initiative and a high degree of self-motivation –- but especially because it was made up of *urban residents*, whether mestizos or natives.

The 'lower class' was probably made up of the urban and rural underclass. In the cities and towns they would have been the servants, street vendors, transport workers, unskilled laborers, and the visible ethnic groups who occupied the lowest rungs in the racial ladder, such as Chinese laborers and indentured servants and Filipino ethnic minorities. Definitely included here were the uneducated, those unable to read or write. The rural population who sustained a subsistence living standard was also a member of this 'lower class' -- the large mass of rural inhabitants, whether farm workers who rented small parcels of land from a large landowner or hired out their work seasonally, or those who were the unskilled labor force that the government turned to for manpower for its public works, and so on. The lower classes were the invisible native Filipinos. Hispanic Philippines had certain similarities to South Africa in the days of apartheid, or to India under the British, in the pre-Gandhi era when the caste system was deeply entrenched.

Who were the 'intelligentsia'? I believe the intelligentsia was actually a cross-sectional group of Filipinos who had a higher-than-ordinary cultural level (perhaps better said, who *had* one, period), and they came from any of the subgroups located between the upper class and the lower middle class. They were the *cultural* elite, whether or not they had money, and irregardless of their racial characteristics. They tended to be liberals and freethinkers, though there was no lack of reactionary conservatives and anti-native Filipinos among them.

We come to the word 'plebeian.' What exactly did it mean in those times?

First of all, the word was employed because of the Spaniards' archaic nobility and class-obsessed mentality (these descriptions of Spanish mentality should

not be misunderstood as referring to modern Spain, which underwent vertiginous sociopolitical changes beginning in the early-19th century and I believe has left its former colonies far behind in terms of social evolution). Strictly speaking, 'plebeian' meant not belonging to the nobility. In Spanish Philippines, it probably had more of a nuance of 'common' or 'vulgar,' this last being a very important word in those days. Spanish is a highly-nuanced language and much more ambiguous than English, and one must understand its implicit cultural codes in order to know what is really being said. Today, plebeian simply means 'commoner,' since the covers of the glossy magazines sold in Hispanic America are still heavily populated by the marriages of members of the old European nobility to wealthy commoners. In those days, however, 'plebeian' in the Philippines probably had a negative connotation of social inferiority, from the perspective, of course, of the Spanish and the creoles, and of the social-climbing and wealthy natives.

Thus, we must qualify the term 'plebeian' for postmodern Filipinos to be able to understand it. More than a precise adjective of a person's actual social and economic status in those days, it was a term that denoted the degree of class discrimination that all native Filipinos were subjected to -- especially the poor and little educated. There was so much class prejudice in the Philippines at that time, that even 'mestizo' -- already associated with inferior quality throughout the Spanish Empire,[69] since the reigning paradigm of that era was white racial purity -- was further nuanced in the Philippines to include the category of 'mesticillo chino,' the term often applied to Rizal by the friars, who called him a "vulgar Chinese half-breed" (*un vulgar mesticillo chino*). At first I was misled and thought this was the crudest expression of racial contempt devised by the friars. I thought initially, “It was bad enough to be nothing but a Spanish mestizo -- imagine being a *Chinese* mestizo!” However, when I obtained the parts of the Retana biography that I had not accessed when I first translated and published it in English, I discovered that in Hispanic-Filipino society, the natives who showed outstanding talent and intelligence were automatically believed to have Chinese blood! It is enough to give one pause, because even Rizal, who did not even (according to Retana) have slanted eyes and only had 1/32$^{nd}$ of a degree of Chinese ascendancy –- not enough to qual-

[69] In my book, *Sampaguitas in the Andes*, please refer to Angel García's description of the identity of the Filipino mestizo class in the 1930s, specifically his comment that in 17th-century Mexico there were 16 different categories of *mestizaje*. A clear distinction was made between mestizos (who were those who had as little as a drop of Spanish blood) and those who were "cuarterones" or almost full-blooded Spaniards, born to a Spanish mother/father and a mestizo(a).

ify for the adjective “Chinese mestizo” – because he was so outstandingly intelligent, was believed by the friars to be more than a mere native.

Our eminent historian Teodoro Agoncillo applies the term 'plebeian' in his descriptions of Bonifacio, using “plebeian” interchangeably with “proletarian” and sometimes stating that Bonifacio was a member of the urban proletariat. However, it must be realized that “proletarian” is a semantic term and concept that has been freely applied to 19th-century Philippines but which only came into existence in the cultural landscape of a generation of *20th-century* Filipinos whose generational mentality was deeply impressed by the Marxist-Leninists´ revolutionary transformation of tsarist Russia. This is a superposition of one cultural and epochal reality over a preceding one, which, without proper explanation and justification, is an unacceptable lack of rigorousness in the use of language and the treatment of history.

Agoncillo also disconcertingly describes Bonifacio as an illiterate laborer. No doubt he faithfully quotes primary sources, as Retana himself has said as much about Bonifacio. I don't base my objection on any implication that Agoncillo distorted the literature or took any liberties -- not at all. I am sure his source documents did state that Bonifacio was "plebeian" and "an illiterate laborer." It was after all an interesting image. But here again I believe that a subtle distortion of a cultural-semantic nature takes place that makes it difficult to understand what is really being said. The problem, once more, is the need for cultural translation between the Spanish and English mentalities.

"Laborer" in English refers to persons who perform unskilled physical work. Perhaps the Spanish 'obrero' was translated as 'laborer,' when 'obrero' is also synonymous to 'trabajador' in Spanish -- meaning "employee, worker," and can be applied in a broad sense to all members of the working class. W.E. Retana refers to Bonifacio as a warehouseman, while according to Agoncillo he was an agent for a British firm, and Ross Marlay states: "His class background is a matter of dispute."[70] Whatever, it seems safe to surmise that Bonifacio did not do unskilled manual labor *per se* (in Spanish, 'obrero no califi-

[70] Agoncillo writes: "[Bonifacio] read books at night and qualified as a clerk-messenger in the commercial firm of Fleming and Company. Not satisfied with his salary, he transferred to Fressell and Company where he was employed as an agent." Bonifacio was therefore not illiterate. Marlay writes: "[H]is mother was a Spanish mestiza and his father was the *teniente mayor* of Tondo." If his father was a town official of Tondo, a very important suburb of Manila, then Bonifacio’s family had a certain degree of social rank among the natives. However, Bonifacio was orphaned and this meant he fell into economic precariousness, which he dealt with from a very young age.

cado' or 'obrero de la construcción'). He was an employee rather than a laborer in the sense of being part of a road construction gang.

Neither was Bonifacio illiterate. He could read and write; Agoncillo writes that he attended primary school. He might have filled out forms as part of his work. Could this have been the translation of 'iletrado' -- unlettered? This would mean 'not highly educated, lacking in culture;' however, with the customary ambiguity of Spanish synonyms, it can also be used to mean 'analfabeto,' or illiterate.

Here we find ourselves back in the cultural landscape of Spanish Philippines, richly shaded and full of subjective, unspoken mutual assessments in social interaction. Everybody sizing up each other, *all the time*. Unfortunately, those who write are the ones who leave a record of their perceptions (for example, Rizal), but we can only guess at the thoughts of those who left few written documents behind (Bonifacio). According to Agoncillo, Dr. Pío Valenzuela said of Bonifacio when they met that he was "astute and intelligent and spoke Tagalog fluently and those who did not know him would not suspect that he was a mere laborer." Valenzuela, in modern language, was probably saying, "Bonifacio was so articulate and confident in his manner that you would have thought he was, say, a community leader or a small business owner, instead of a mere clerk or employee."

In post-dictatorship Chile, an employee is not supposed to have any initiative. Any difficulty with a client should be referred to a higher authority, hopefully the shop owner. An employee who has opinions and personality usually moves on to the next job pretty quickly, because it is an employee's place to obey orders and do what they are told. Only the shop owner has permission to have any initiative or brain activity -- that's why he got into business for himself in the first place, because he was too much on the up-and-up to limit himself to being seen and to serve, but not to be heard. A secretary in Santiago has two main functions: to answer a ringing phone so that the executive doesn´t have to speak to anyone unimportant, and to dial phone numbers for her boss, who is, once again, too important to make their own phone calls or to pick up a ringing phone. She (secretaries are 'shes') does *not* take messages.[71] A secretary who takes down and delivers messages is a rare phenomenon, because her role is to be a barrier between the world and her employer. Therefore the fewer messages she gives him, the better a secretary she is!

[71] I must however add the caveat that this is changing and there is growing awareness of the importance of communication with and concern for external and internal clients.

With this cultural idiosyncrasy in mind, proper to a Hispanic country's concept of 'employee' on the eve of the 21st century, we can imagine, going back a hundred years, that urban employees may have been expected to behave in the same way in Hispanic Philippines. Bonifacio was full of initiative, he was articulate and well read -- he was an anomaly, he broke the mold, he rocked the boat. He worked for a British, not a Spanish firm. This, I believe, is the more accurate reading we can give to the historical script.

My observation of Latin American culture also leads me to suggest the following idea. It has to do with a difference in attitude between the Hispanics and the Anglo-Saxons toward information.

A hundred years ago, Hispanic Filipinos had a different relationship with information and the written word than we do today, a relationship that was based on the little importance that the pre-modern Spanish gave to education, both for themselves in Spain as well as for their colonial subjects, besides their unsophisticated attitude toward information in general, proper to a world which did not even dream of a future ruled by information technology. When the majority of the people are functional illiterates (probably the status of most native Filipinos in those days) or completely illiterate, considerable informational and communicational laxity pervades even the allegedly informed and educated layers of society.

Culturally speaking, Hispanic societies are much less obsessed with factual accuracy and completeness of data than Anglo-Saxon ones. This is quite evident in Chile in the level of ambiguity and generality of journalistic writing. In Santiago, it would seem that newspaper articles are written, not to *divulge* information but to hide it, just as the secretaries' function is to keep clients away from the boss. The city therefore still functions on the basis of the human grapevine and street rumors are often a more accurate source for gauging what people are really thinking and what important events are really developing -- not the newspapers. The tenor of conversation is usually, "This is what is *really* happening, not that nonsense in the press." Newspaper articles are wrapped in a film of diplomacy and courtly understatement. Why? Because the journalist will lose his job if he is too informative. He will offend the newspaper owners or their friends, who are members of the oligarchy, and soon find him/herself out of a job. The same happens with the television media.

Returning to Hispanic Philippines, I believe it is safe to speculate that there was in fact a high degree of imprecision in ordinary communication and in the printed media. When one reads Retana's biography of Rizal and studies the trial documents, it is clear that the Spanish authorities didn't take care to use Rizal's correct family names. Rizal's name is recorded as "Dr. José Rizal Mercado" -- using his father's two surnames. Rizal himself signed his correct name, using his mother's surname: José Rizal y Alonso.

According to Retana, when Rizal was read his sentence in Fort Santiago, he protested not only against the injustice of the death sentence, but also because he was referred to in the public writ as a Chinese mestizo, and he stated categorically that it was not correct -- he was a pure Malay.

Thus it seems to me that, social prejudice and communicational ambiguity aside, Bonifacio had indeed acquired a significant level of culture as an autodidact -- a self-taught man. He loved ideas and, socioeconomic problems having prevented him from acquiring a formal education, he educated himself. Because if Bonifacio did indeed read the titles that Agoncillo tells us he did, then it is certain that *he had a superior level of reading comprehension in Spanish*. Even if he spoke it haltingly, he surely had quite good hearing comprehension as well.

I can vouch for the fact that Bonifacio had advanced reading and comprehension skills in Spanish, because it is *not* easy to read Spanish literature -- it requires knowledge of "cultured Spanish," which demands the previous acquisition of a large vocabulary and above-average command of grammar and syntax. Unlike in the case of English, which is democratic and adopts spoken forms as the norm rather than the language of academe, it is not enough to know street and kitchen Spanish to be able to read Spanish literature -- the level of knowledge and proficiency required is dramatically greater. When I arrived in Chile I already read and spoke Spanish, but I was unable to read the literary section of *El Mercurio* -- I simply couldn't understand it. It was full of erudite references and complex syntactical constructions. Granted, bad writing in any language, no matter how many academic degrees a person may have, is always obscure and difficult to understand, and after the brief time I spent at university I recognize that much of the writing in Chile that passes for erudite is not what I consider good writing because it is ponderous, obscure and does not have anything new to say. Nevertheless, W.E. Retana, a dynamic and extremely articulate writer, in his biography of Rizal was often times a challenge for me to understand. I can therefore assure you that in

1890s Philippines, the level of Spanish of the books Bonifacio was reading on his own was at least on par in terms of complexity as the writing of Retana and the articles of *El Mercurio.*

Bonifacio was therefore educated and was not a member of the lower-class urban poor -- he was of the middle class, and culturally could be considered as part of the intelligentsia (seen from *our* perspective, of course) -- no matter if he was barely scratching ground level in both categories. *He was by no means illiterate, nor was he a simple laborer*. He was called a *plebeyo* because he had no social connections, no pedigree to speak of. What Dr. Valenzuela was saying, in effect, was "You would never have thought, listening to Bonifacio, that he was just an *indio* from a poor family, a social nobody without even a *bachillerato*.[72]

I would go even farther and suggest that perhaps many native Filipinos had a much better command of Spanish than they ever let on, precisely because it could get them into trouble, or at the very least leave them open to public ridicule. Even today, language is a thorn in Filipinos' sides and among us it is not very politically correct to speak impeccable English; one must mix it with Tagalog and not have an American accent, otherwise people might think one is showing off or feels superior, and be offended or negatively predisposed toward one as a result. Isn't it probable that this particular attitude took root among us during the Spanish era, and did not only arise upon the arrival of the Americans in our country?

In Spanish social interaction (or in British or any other class-based society), one thing you are never forgiven for is not knowing your place. Given this fact, probably many more native Filipinos than we believe today could in fact speak Spanish in those days, but they had to act according to script and conceal their ability.

In synthesis, I believe that Bonifacio was a member of a new, authentically modern middle class then just beginning to be formed in the Philippines, as a result of the new economic prosperity of the mid-19th century. There may have been unskilled laborers among the KKK members, especially in the later stages, but surely the KKK membership as a whole was an elite, as the group with awareness of the historical moment and with the capacity for responding to its challenges and assuming a protagonistic role. The original KKK mem-

[72] A *bachillerato* is the equivalent of high school and two additional years of study, roughly what today is called an 'associate's degree' in the United States.

bers in Manila were 'plebeians' and perhaps many of them were indeed poor urban workers (they were, after all, the majority in the cities), but if we contrasted them with the overwhelming majority in those times of rural and illiterate Filipinos, we could accurately assert that they belonged to a rising modern urban middle class. They were breaking away from the old paradigm of submission, race/cultural inferiority, and fear. They were a new kind of Filipino, with consciousness of a germinating new identity. They were more radical than the group that the ilustrados belonged to, but they were basically the other expression of one same vanguard that was moving toward independence: they were the first modern Filipinos.

## Rizal vs. Bonifacio as National Hero: A False Issue

Another curious development in the way our American-era historians have approached our revolutionary history is the rivalry that took root between pro-Rizal and pro-Bonifacio groups, and it would be interesting to carry out a bibliographic search to find out when and how this polemic started in the first place. I feel that there is a big jump between studying our history to understand it, and using it to buttress our personal preferences and desire for social rehabilitation or class vindication, and extreme care must be taken with this. The Bonifacio/Rizal controversy seems to be a clear example of how history can be distorted to suit the visions of people from another age, to justify interests that have nothing to do with historical study, the preservation of cultural memory and the construction of a positive national identity.

Black-and-white vision has been applied to these two men which has turned them into quite caricaturesque figures that somatically distance us from them. Rizal is portrayed as the elevated, upper-class intellectual, in opposition to Bonifacio as the impetuous, uneducated common man. This is I believe an oversimplification which does a disservice to both men, as it reduces them to unidimensional caricatures of their true human complexity. Bonifacio was also an intellectual, a lover of ideas, but his historical role was that of a natural leader, a man of action, a risk-taker. Rizal was an artist, a poet and a scientist, unstintingly devoted to his country, but you might say he would have preferred to live to the age of 90 in his beloved, colonized Philippines in his unwillingness to risk bloodshed -- the reason for which was that he could not convince himself that the Filipinos had the potential for becoming an effective, organized fighting force overnight, and that *simple, immediate separation from Spain was the answer*. Agoncillo writes:

> Rizal opposed an armed struggle without military preparation, for it would end tragically for the revolutionists.

Rizal, born into a comfortable social milieu and given a first-rate education, possessed the qualities of an enlightened humanitarian and was a prototype of the late 19th-century Hispanic-Filipino gentleman. Rizal came from an unknown, isolated, backward country but attended the best European universities, practiced several professions and cultivated a number of arts. If one thinks about it, Rizal was a mutant of his times. He came from a suffering, darkened world but was protected from its darkness and had access to another world in which the pursuit of freedom and knowledge -- rather than their sup-

pression -- were the highest values. It is only logical that he should have adopted as his mission the liberation of his homeland from bondage. He acted on his intention, but he did so in a civilized, honorable manner and according to gentlemen's rules.

Bonifacio, on the other hand, ran against the grain from the moment of his birth, defeating fate and ignorance. To summarize his life in symbolic language, he was born ordinary and became extraordinary. He was the personification of the common Filipinos' decision to, as Rizal wrote, risk everything for an uncertain outcome, since they had nothing to lose and became convinced they would never gain anything from quiet waiting. He gave expression to the Filipinos' somatic realization that times of emergency had arrived and the opportunity had to be seized to rebel against a so-called destiny that had condemned them for centuries to submit to negative psychological and social conditionings and every kind of violence in their own land.

Bonifacio's (and by saying 'Bonifacio' I really mean the entire group of those who detonated the armed insurrection of 1896) arrival at this conviction is even more marvelous an occurrence than the emergence of a great moralist and idealist like Rizal from a family with a tradition of cultural and spiritual refinement. It demonstrates yet again that innovation is never confined to privilege but often spontaneously arises among the dispossessed, both because of their numerical superiority and the demands on them to overcome great obstacles just to survive. The presence of these two men on the stage of 1896 should -- instead of giving an excuse to stir up false controversy -- make us pause and reflect, and lead us to conclude that without either of them, and those they represented, our finest hour would not have been possible.

Both men were phenomenal, heroic, and galvanized the nation into awareness and action.

We can be sure that there were hundreds, even thousands more Filipino men and women like them. They were only the initiators of a moment that had been waiting to happen for centuries.

Bonifacio did not "penetrate the minds and hearts of the masses and so made them feel the need for unity and action" through his use of Tagalog. These elements were already there. The Filipinos had already realized on a gut-level that Spanish rule could not continue because they had lost their fear of, and hence their submission, to it.

In *Noli Me Tangere*, the coldly calculating Dominican Fray Sibyla visits his seriously-ill superior, who has lost his health to "this terrible country," and who tells him:

> "Our power will last as long as they [the people] believe in it. When they attack us, the Government says: *The people attack* [the friars] *because they see them as an obstacle to their freedom, therefore let us keep them where they are*."
>
> "But what if the Government listens to the people?"
>
> "It won't."[73]

Rizal in effect spoke to the world on behalf of his countrymen, revealing and denouncing the injustice and moral degradation that they were subjected to and which had no possible justification. He put into words and images the shameful reality of the Philippines' oppressed and oppressors. What was lacking and what Bonifacio, Jacinto and many others supplied, was the logistics of rebellion. They didn't have to convince anybody; they created the organization, the method, a clear-cut "how," and the bursting flood found its channel. Bonifacio as the symbol of the new image of a free Filipino spoke and wrote in his native Tagalog, but his *spirit* spoke of the decision to be free, and the message spread as a mental missile -- not primarily as words on paper. It was a decision and a choice that went far beyond linguistic preference, but that spoke to a people who had one language they spoke to each other, and another language their masters spoke to them and which until then they were not allowed to address their masters in as their equals. Bonifacio was affirming selfhood and not merely affirming or denying a language. A Filipino living in dignity and creativity could speak any of the 65 languages of the Philippines, as well as Spanish, English or any other world language, as Rizal did, and their vibrations would be unmistakably Filipino, as Rizal's were. A Filipino could declare him or herself "Filipino" -- as Trinidad Pardo de Tavera did -- or speak all the dialects, ostentatiously refuse to speak English or Spanish, and give nationalistic speeches from dawn to dusk, and still be a stain on their country's name.

---

73 From *Noli Me Tangere*, facsimile of original manuscript. Manila: José Rizal National Centennial Commission, 1961. Free translation by E. Medina.

Rizal was very much the fruit of European -- not even of purely Spanish-- culture, by dint of his education, but he was essentially cut from the same bolt of cloth as Bonifacio. He himself tells us that long before he left the Philippines, before he ever learned a single foreign word, he had already gained a painful awareness of the trouble in his land. Violence, ignorance and irrationality ruled uncontested in the Philippines under the guise of racial superiority and Divine Will. You didn't have to be highly educated or be an artist to see that reality. But Rizal by temperament and by culture could not espouse the same violence as a weapon of change. He believed that if Spain could be made to see reason, then the Philippines could progress without breaking its bonds with the mother country.

Rizal was a peaceable and logical man: how could an unarmed, untrained, unfinanced revolution win? Gandhi would demonstrate the falsity of this premise, but fifty years still had to pass. The North American Revolution -- the most important defining event in the consciousness of the West for the 200 years that followed it -- was backed by the wealth of the colonial aristocracy, and the French Revolution by that of the bourgeoisie. Rizal did not want a blood bath, much less attach his name to it as its stamp of approval.

Bonifacio, on the other hand, was the intimation of a new world that Rizal could conceive of as being possible only after much time and very gradual preparation. But there was no time left to prepare for freedom. It had arrived. The image of a new Philippines erupted into the landscape to everyone's surprise. She was a renegade, a boldly free woman like the bare breasted image of France leading the revolutionists -- not the proper, convent-bred, *comme il faut* María Clara. Bonifacio may have consciously intuited this new image. At any rate, he birthed it, he was the precursor of the new-era Filipinos whose intelligence, initiative and energy outweighed their social disadvantages. It was the sons of principal families like Sergio Osmeña and ambitious middle-class Spanish mestizos like Quezon whom the North Americans would place in the initial positions of political visibility, while the new generation of Bonifacios (urban middle and working class youths) trained in “democracy” in U.S. universities or in the American regime’s University of the Philippines. But it was Hispanic Filipinos like Claro Mayo Recto who would practice true Filipino statesmanship, and who would refuse to renounce the Hispanic past because they considered it to be their personal and national cultural heritage.

Returning to the point of Bonifacio’s rupturist role in our history, we cannot underestimate what his determination to organize the revolution meant, for

that world in which the ideal was no-change, in which men were totally subordinated either to God or to Spanish civil authority. The insurrection that Bonifacio led induced a state of psychic alteration in all Spaniards in the Philippines. It was truly a shocking phenomenon.

Bonifacio, the man of action, the new Filipino, could not convince Rizal, the Hispanic Filipino, to share his vision. Bonifacio was present in the meeting where Rizal spoke in favor of peaceful political organizing under the Liga Filipina, but if they ever met Rizal later testified that he did not remember him (possibly to protect Bonifacio). Each belonged to a different stage of the Revolution: Rizal and the reform movement intellectuals belonged to the germination stage; Bonifacio and the Katipunan, to the insurrectional stage. Without either, the 1896 Revolution would not have taken place, anymore than without the abuses committed by the Spanish colonial government and the religious orders.

**Was the Reform Movement a Failure?**

The statement that "since the reformists wrote in the language of their masters, they failed to establish any rapport with the masses, without whom no movement for freedom could not succeed..." can, I believe, create the mistaken impression that the reformists were milquetoasts[74] and that, simultaneous to their demands for reforms, they accepted the unjust domination of Spain. It also seems to imply that they failed to achieve their objectives, and that, in other words, their efforts were futile.

The reformists were educated Filipinos who believed in vigorously agitating for a rational agenda of political reform, presented with almost preternatural stick-to-it-iveness to the Spanish people and government in Madrid. The unquestionable justice and ethical basis of their demands were their main arguments and the fuel for their efforts. I don't believe they considered Spanish, or the language question, to be the pivotal issue; rather, the injustice of denying the Filipino people education and political rights in the interest of preserving the rule of tyranny. They also published Filipino newspapers, but these were less effective because they did not reach larger numbers of people than the Spanish ones (La Solidaridad and their articles and letters published by other newspapers in Spain circulated freely throughout Europe, while newspapers were banned in the Philippines and could only be printed and circulated at

[74] 'Milquetoast' was a 1950s comic strip character invented by H.T. Webster. The word refers to a person who is timid, meek or unassertive -- in new slang, a wimp.

great risk). Also, they were agitating in Spain in an effort to win the support of the Spanish people, especially of opinion makers and politicians. They were working on the basis of the assumption of that rational age that one must impact on the spheres of influence and persuade the decision makers to yield to pressure from below, if one wants to obtain changes that will survive in the long term.

In this I am sure they did not totally fail, but Spain was already unraveling within as well as without; she had no capacity of response. One gets the impression of a situation in which the snowball of error and obstinacy was too huge and had accumulated too much momentum for reason to deviate its course. Though there did arise a climate of repudiation of the corrupt colonial governments in the final years of the Spanish empire, it seems the Spanish policy makers were incapable of opening their eyes -- intellectuals and artists probably saw what was happening, but were helpless to prevent the final disintegration of the old Spain that was about to disappear, of which nothing remained but its desiccated imperial husk.

The reformists were essentially lobbying in Madrid for support for colonial reforms. They were not primarily directing themselves to the Tagalog masses. They would have used other strategies -- these men were not stupid, even if it may seem to us in historical retrospect that they spent much time and energy barking up the wrong tree. They had to exile themselves to Madrid because in the Philippines they were asking to get shot.

Peaceful agitation for reform was a necessary stage. When one has a failing marriage, one tries reform first; one doesn't go straight to file for a divorce, especially if no legislation for divorce exists. One doesn´t immediately begin plotting a murder. We must realize that these Filipinos lived in a different world, and it was not at all clear or obvious that armed revolution had to happen, even for those who would later be its leaders, as Agoncillo points out:

> Apolinario Mabini, later to become General Aguinaldo's trusted adviser and factotum, admitted that, along with Rizal and del Pilar, he wanted the Philippines to be a province of Spain in order to prevent Filipinos from seeking separation through the 'organization of such a society as the *Katipunan* and an uprising like that in 1896.'

In the Philippines, as in Chile, the revolution was the culmination of a process of radicalization that began with the formation of educated cadres of young

Filipinos, the movement to secularize the parishes, the stage of the reformists, followed -- upon Rizal's exile -- by the founding of the Katipunan, the break-out of the insurrection four years later, and, finally, the declaration of the First Philippine Republic in 1898. It was a thirty-year process. The Filipinos did not attain to the vision of independence until after the reform stage was concluded, and even then there were sectors who were not in favor...perhaps there were even those who defined themselves only after the Philippine-American War had begun.

Graciano López-Jaena and Marcelo H. del Pilar assumed enormous personal risks and made great sacrifices, daring a rupture with the culture and society that they nevertheless *were* a part of. Like the Chilean creoles, the Filipino intelligentsia did not initially want separation from Spain, but autonomy.

The reformists assumed a courageous posture and we cannot disparage their methods or reduce them to the position of cynicism that we imply they took if we say that they worked for reforms "through the language of their masters." The reformists did not initially promote "a movement of freedom" to the masses, though del Pilar soon became radicalized and espoused it; and Spanish was their second mother tongue, just as today English is ours, *together with* Tagalog and our other languages.

**Cultural Division Undermines the Revolution**

The meteoric rise of Emilio Aguinaldo as the most effective military leader of the revolution led to the power struggle between him and Andrés Bonifacio. One of the two men had to relinquish his dominant position, and Bonifacio's star was on the wane. Agoncillo writes of the objection to Bonifacio's election as Secretary of the Interior during the Tejeros Convention, raised by a man named Daniel Tirona, who claimed that a certain Cavite lawyer -- a paisano of Aguinaldo's -- was the better man for the post, since it was fitting that such an "exalted" position should be occupied by a man with an attorney's diploma. The incident was the public manifestation of Bonifacio's definitive exit from the leadership of the revolution and his marginalization from the revolutionary government.

The incident strikes me as odd, especially since on the strength (or weakness) of *one* objection founded on a technicality -- the Secretary of the Interior of the Revolutionary Government, much more than having a mere diploma, had to be a man with a proven record of leadership ability, personal responsibility

and commitment to the cause, and could call on the counsel of as many attorneys as necessary without needing to be one himself -- Bonifacio renounced his election and walked out of the Convention.

It is a possibility that Bonifacio believed things would be defined on the battlefield and not in a conference room, fighting with weapons instead of verbal scrimmage, and he did not have much faith in the Tejeros Convention. He attempted a boycott not because it was a strategy but because he was upset. Bonifacio was a romantic idealist at bottom, aflame with religious zeal and believing that his charisma and faith could unite everyone to fight for the new country. He did not take into account the counter-revolutionary elements in the Aguinaldo camp, and he could not neutralize those who wanted, not to save the country, but simply to win and become top dogs.

Bonifacio was not educated or prepared by his life to deal with mestizo sophists with the ability to talk themselves into important positions. The environment of the Constitutional Convention threw him off, discomfited him. He was better at dealing with Filipinos ready to fight unitedly and looking for leadership. He wasn't ready for the role-playing and interminable discussions and speeches that took place between mestizo and native principales who were professionals, his social and economic superiors, who were loyal to their own class first before being loyal to the concept – still disturbingly, overwhelmingly new – of a country for all Filipinos. Beneath the organizational aspect, there was the class one.

There was also the fatal regional condition. Cavite was winning the military battle and the Caviteños were heady with confidence in their leader, Aguinaldo. Bonifacio had been losing and joined the Cavite revolutionaries. He did not expect that his military defeats would mean his personal removal from the leadership. It was probably unthinkable and only the intensity of the emergency and the difficulties of communication, and the lack of political awareness among the Magdiwang leaders, let pass the summary trial in Maragondon and the executions.

## Walking Out

Walking out to express disagreement is a common behavioral expression of strong disagreement in indigenous societies, which are consensus-based and in which all disagreements must be ironed out, since no important tribal decisions can be made unless there is unanimous agreement. But this is not the

paradigm of Western culture. In the West, if you aren't present in the decision-making, you simply don't count and are excluded from the process.

In 1995, I had the opportunity to listen to the writer Herb Cohen talk about the art of negotiating, in which he made an interesting distinction on the basis of differing communication strategies between what he called 'high-context' and 'low context' cultures. Culture, he said, is based on the history, geography, climate and the economic and political systems of a country, and it is expressed in how people communicate. In old cultures, such as Japan, Saudi Arabia and Russia, communication is 'high context'-- this means it is implicit in the physical environment or internalized in the people. High context communication is indirect and works on the basis of unspoken, invisible codes. Thus, the person who is *not* present in the meeting is more important than the ones who are. People *never* say no. The meanings are in the people and the cultural codes are homogeneous -- there is one dominant code.

Younger cultures such as those of the Western countries, on the other hand, are 'low context' cultures. In the U.S., Canada, Germany, Australia, England, one says "no" directly. Communication takes place in an explicit code and the meanings are in the *words* . The codes are heterogeneous; it is common for communication to take place in several cultural codes.

In the book *In the Absence of the Sacred*, deep ecology activist Jerry Mander writes about the democratic practices of the Iroquois Nation within the hypothesis that the founding fathers of the United States patterned their new government after the Iroquois' impeccable model of democracy, except for the participation of women in the highest circles of decision making. Mander describes the tribal meetings of the Iroquois and other North American tribes (their mechanism for reaching tribal consensus before making decisions that affected the lives of all), from a Westerner's normal experience of time, as "eternal." They mostly take place in silence, with the chiefs sitting motionlessly for hours, eyes half-closed. The tribe meets to decide on an important issue and no one leaves until consensus is reached and *everyone* agrees on the course of action to be taken. If a single member walks out, the tribe must meet again, because a walkout blocks the consensus process.

In the case we are examining, Bonifacio walks out of the constitutional convention but his action backfires because the Aguinaldo faction continues the assembly and Bonifacio is excluded from the new revolutionary organization.

Aguinaldo is later swayed to rescind his pardon and order that the brothers be executed.

I believe that class differences, side by side with regionalism, provoked Bonifacio's fall from the leadership of the revolutionary government. The idea doesn't seem far-fetched to me that he was out of his depth in that new arena, where he had to face cultural contenders who wielded the powerful weapon of conviction that they were superior to men such as he. It makes sense, if I place myself in the psychosocial landscape of our great-grandfathers. Bonifacio was an urban leader of middle and lower class native Filipinos; his power base was in Manila. Aguinaldo had numerical superiority, being the leader of perhaps the most important revolutionary provinces, besides being socially superior to Bonifacio. From our perspective today, Bonifacio was valuable *precisely* because of his condition of not belonging to a privileged class and truly representing the disenfranchised majority. But at that historical juncture, despite the fact that the country was in the midst of a violent upheaval, despite the destructuring of the decadent power structure and value system that had been in place for 350 years, those men in the position of creating a new society were proceeding to do so from the old mentality, still ruled by the values, visions and behaviors of their old world.

I go back to my own statement: "...despite the fact that the country was in the midst of a violent upheaval -- the destructuring of the decadent power structure and value system that had been in place for over 350 years...."

This is *my vision*, a hundred years after these events. If we place ourselves mentally in that historical moment, in dusty, backward, lethargic 19th-century Philippines, these big words were surely nowhere to be seen. Things probably *looked*, on the surface, exactly the same as they had always looked. Revolutions, according to the British historian Eric Hobsbawm, are "large-scale happenings." Very often they take shape with movements faster than the eye can detect. Things had changed, but above all in the common people's minds -- though not in many others', such as Daniel Tirona's.

The Katipunan shifted the historical protagonism to the native Filipinos, the uneducated and uncultured. The reform movement had only allowed the participation of a few. A change of paradigm had taken place in the Filipino mind, which had arrived at a bedrock questioning of the established values, the worldview in which the Spaniards and the religious were on top and the mass of natives at the bottom -- the medieval pyramid. Now the Filipino peo-

ple stumbled into the landscape of the modern era, the self-realization of peoples and government based on democratic principles. The pyramid was suddenly upside-down.

It was a largely invisible, psychic event. A new image had emerged in the collective imagination, packed with such force as to mobilize the entire population and frighten the Spaniards into retreat.

However, despite this eruption of the new, the old was still in place, *even in those who, like Bonifacio, chose the precarious path of armed resistance* for the recovery of self and homeland. At the moment of freedom, they found themselves face to face with their half-brothers, who imposed their own conditions and refused to renounce the old order. Who still believed in its validity and could not conceive of breaking with it.

Marilyn Ferguson explains in *The Aquarian Conspiracy:*

> As Kuhn shows, those who have worked successfully from the old vision are habituated and emotionally linked to it. Their unshakable faith generally accompanies them to the tomb. In fact, even when confronted by overwhelming evidence, they cling wildly to the wrong ideas, just because they are familiar. But the new paradigm gains in ascendance. The new generation recognizes its strength. When a critical number of thinkers comes to accept the new perspective, a collective change of paradigm takes place. When a large enough number of people has adopted the new perspective, or grows up within it, consensus arises.

The old paradigm was the inferiority of native Filipinos and their essential incapacity to do without their religious and racial superiors: the Spaniards. The mestizo class occupied a favored position in the old order because they were less inferior, a little more equal than the natives, "the others." However, the revolution was favorable to them as well -- if it succeeded they could be the most equal of the land. All they had to do was astutely gain ascendancy in its political leadership.

I therefore reflect from my perspective as a 21st-century Filipino that Bonifacio succumbed to insecurity or frustration -- and virtuous indignation -- when he should have stood firm and coldly pointed out that a pre-revolutionary law degree did not automatically qualify an individual to participate in the leadership of the new government (probably the opposite was

true: it disqualified them!). Secondly, that the incident was the harbinger of what would later happen to Mabini, removed from his position of influence by the machinations of anti-independence mestizos; and to the entire country when the Americans took over and wealthy, conservative Hispanic-Filipinos assumed a position of dominance once the military struggle had ended and the politicians' turn came to run the show. War's end meant the end of popular, native protagonism.

What finally happened in our revolutionary process from the point of view of the intentionalities of the key groups? The role played by the creole class in the Chilean process was played in that of Hispanic Philippines by the Filipino intelligentsia (nationalist middle class mestizos and natives, whether Spanish or Chinese-Filipino) in the reformist stage, by the lower middle class and the lower class native population in the insurrectional stage, and by the intelligentsia once again in the revolutionary government stage -- but this time with a mix of nationalists and opportunists. They did not, in other words, share a common vision, as did the creoles of Latin America. They did not even hold to the value of *striving* to find a common, unifying vision. And so on the basis of fragmented identities, in turn formed from different somatic identifications, it was inevitable that the new Republic would succumb to disunity and dismemberment.

A great difference between the Chilean process and ours was the fact that the Filipino *common people* acquired national consciousness and were the protagonists of the insurrection and the revolutionary war, unlike in the case of Chile and the rest of the Latin American countries, where the people were not much more than the vehicle for the creoles' aspirations for freedom. On the other hand, in the Philippines' case, the creoles, the moneyed classes and the pro-Spanish intelligentsia identified with the fortunes of Spain more than with the project of building the new Philippine Republic -- but since it was clear that Spanish rule was over, they decided to cast their lot in with the North Americans.

The revolutionaries could not pull off the building of a country alone -- they needed the consensus and backing of the nationalist intelligentsia. Trouble was, the members of this group (to which Rizal belonged) had either died, were in exile, or busy leading soldiers in the battlefield. This was how the counterrevolutionary intelligentsia wound up filling the vacuum of political protagonism. The armed revolutionary army was already woefully weakened and demoralized by the egregious errors of Aguinaldo, most importantly the

elimination of Bonifacio, Antonio Luna and the margination of Mabini. Thus the military effort was weakened both from within and without, because the Americans easily found those who were willing to betray or were alienated from the republican cause. The Americans' overwhelming superiority in arms (which the Spanish also had but which the high revolutionary morale and overwhelming sentiment of unity had overcome) was now brought to bear with ever more collapsing resistance. The revolutionary momentum was gone. The creole, mestizo and native elites would inevitably decide to become the vanguard of elegant cooperation with the U.S. after the revolution's military defeat.

The men and women of courageous action who gave the nation a brief moment of pride and freedom yielded center stage to the politicians, to the beginning of an era of political showmanship, rather than the serious-minded commitment and passionate sincerity of the Generation of 1896.

The creoles and other formerly pro-Spanish groups then adopted a pro-U.S. stance. But though the educated Hispanic Filipinos were active in the early political stages of U.S. rule, and despite the presence among them of authentic nationalists, a new generation began to be educated by North American teachers in the Philippines and in U.S. universities. The Americans preferred to shape a new pro-American Filipino, because a Hispanic Filipino, no matter how cooperative, could never be their man 100%. He would never see things as they did. He would consider himself as their cultural equal, if not their superior, and certainly never as their humble and malleable subordinate -- because he had a clear and strong identity.

Not so a native Filipino who, thanks to the Americans, for the first time had access to a good living standard, education, and could now participate in politics and business in his country, in preparation for final independence. The memory of the past, when none of this was allowed him, made him develop an innocent sense of trust and loyalty toward the conqueror-turned-mentor, who, though he belonged to the white race like his predecessor, did not call Filipinos "chongos" but "little brown brothers."

The forgetting of our Hispanic-Filipino self and the North Americanization of our society and identity thus became the next stage of our national karma.

# PART III

# IDENTITY

## Chapter 9

## The Myth of the Good American (and the Bad Spaniard)

Before beginning I will clarify the following: I am pro-American (in this chapter I will use the term in the sense we traditionally use it) in one sense and anti-American in another.[75]

This is truly a complex topic because it is entwined with so many emotionally-charged experiences for us. In the words of one Latin American writer, America is the land of paradox. It is where one finds it all: the best and the worst, the most progressive and the most reactionary. The United States was the last of the colonial powers, and after giving the Philippines her independence and making Hawaii a state, has limited herself to maintaining a few small protectorates. Nevertheless, she rules the world today through business, entertainment, foreign aid, politics and military alliances. The intention of her foreign policy, however, has never changed, and it is: to subordinate the interests of all other countries to her own. This fundamental orientation of "America first" was the bottom line of her colonial regime in the Philippines, though it was a pill that was heavily-sugared, not just with altruistic rhetoric but with visible material benefits, and the Filipinos were won over pretty quickly and deeply. To begin with, the Spanish had made themselves so thoroughly disliked by us that their dismal act was not at all hard to follow. However, with time our admiration and hero-worship for America turned into ambivalence and, still later, into disillusionment and antagonism. Today Filipinos on the street are no longer as automatically welcoming as in the past to the “Amerkanos.” And it took some doing, but we finally divested ourselves of America’s two final strangleholds on our will to self-determination: the Marcos dictatorship and the military bases.

Though I speak strongly in the paragraphs that follow, it is not from a desire to indulge in gratuitous dissing, to portray the United States as a bogeyman or make her a scapegoat. I do so from the intuition that we have to purge our-

---

[75] I am pro-American people but anti-American government. I do not perceive the two as being one and the same, but quite different entities with unlike intentions. The American government is the White House and Congress, the Pentagon, the State Department -- the political and military bodies that wield the power and might of the United States and bring it to bear in international life, for good or ill. They are allegedly voted for and represent the will of the American people, but only around 28% of the U.S. population votes, and thus that 28% is the one whose will is upheld by its political representatives, who -- whether Republican or Democrat -- basically are two sides of one same coin. We were annexed and colonized by the U.S. government and its armed forces and not by the American people.

selves of our resentment before we can completely heal and finally leave the past behind. For this to happen, first we must say everything that needs to be said; and second, we must realize that we are not the only ones to have had this experience -- it was part and parcel of a worldwide process that followed the Age of Discovery and which began when Columbus discovered the New World -- the Age of Colonization. Both eras lasted approximately five hundred years, and on the threshold of the third millennium it behooves us to reassess them in our minds.

———

The Americans began as our conquerors and later turned into our liberators. They were the enemy who became our friends. We gave them our loyalty, embraced their language and married their traditions to ours.

American rule not only sent the Spanish civil and religious autocrats packing -- it also brought the 19th *and* 20th centuries to the backward world of our grandparents[76] in one fell swoop. America brought modernity to the Filipinos: public education, systematic health care and public hygiene, radio, telephones, cars, massive construction of roads and highways, dams, port facilities and government buildings. They also freely gave us a language to open our minds to new horizons in which we were their linguistic equals.[77]

From this standpoint, they won our respect and admiration -- and our later devotion -- with good cause. American rule was a boon for the majority of Filipinos in a material sense, and initially in a cultural sense as well, allowing us a degree of freedom of expression we had never enjoyed under Spain. Agoncillo wrote:

---

[76] I refer to my generation's grandparents, born in the 1890s. "Backward" must be clarified – a better term would be "traditional". In point of fact, from the perspective of urban development, aesthetics, social customs and mores, the Philippines under Spain was a colonial jewel that had little to envy other European colonies. Under U.S. rule, in which an ultra technologically-oriented culture added many improvements to the infrastructure of the Spanish era, the Black Legend on the Spanish period arose, and one of the key words attached to it was "backward". The counterpart of the ideology that everything that preceded the Americans was inferior was of course the White Legend, that everything the U.S. brought to the Philippines was superior and progressive. Neither is completely true and we must configure a more accurate image of each era today.

[77] There is only a democratic "you" in English and no indirect third person, as in Spanish ('usted', from 'Vuesa Merced', 'your Mercy'), in which one addressed one's interlocutor indirectly as a gesture of respect. Tagalog replicates this Spanish characteristic of the use of the polite second person plural, as in "Pumasok po kayo."

> The fundamental freedoms, though limited by the Sedition Law and the Flag Law of 1907, which prohibited the display of banners, emblems, flags and other devices for the purpose of rekindling hostility toward the United States, were nevertheless real. The nationalistic newspapers could attack the Americans without their writers fearing that they would lose their lives. Too, the writers in Tagalog could write nationalistic plays advocating independence and present them to the public at the risk of being jailed, of course -- a thing unheard of or simply unthinkable during the Spanish colonial regime. It was this difference or contrast that made the majority of Filipinos feel obliged to support the new alien rule (158-159).

However, between the initial benefits of early U.S. rule and our 1990s reality, there are, of course, many more points to reconsider in evaluating the U.S. colonial experience.

Today, we feel a disturbing ambivalence towards America, in spite of the fact that we connect many things American to our most cherished childhood memories and experiences: birthdays, Christmas, nursery rhymes, Walt Disney, fairy tales. English, even if we mix it with our dialects or with Tagalog, is already a part of our expression and is further associated in our minds with culture, learning and success in economic and professional endeavor. The Church, for many Filipinos the focal point of their lives, speaks to them no longer in Latin, but in English. And who among us doesn't have relatives or friends who now live in the U.S., who are Americans?

The end of the Japanese Occupation marked the moment when, for the common people, the figure of the American G.I. acquired mythical proportions as our Liberator from evil and terror incarnate -- the Japanese. Innocent objects like bubble gum and Hershey bars became symbols of salvation from that violent time.

Our parents (children and adolescents during the times of inflation, poverty and uncertainty under the Japanese), as adults would compensate for their bitter experiences of impotence, humiliation and deprivation by embracing the American dream of material plenty and freedom.

Then why the ambivalence?

There was one thing that did not change significantly in our people from Spanish times to American rule: the Filipinos maintained an essentially pas-

sive and compliant role with respect to their own development, in spite of the impression created under the Americans of a people beginning to take their destiny into their own hands. We accepted the position of subordination to the Americans and peaceably adopted the molds they considered universally applicable and unquestionably valid, as the Spaniards had done before them.

Whereas under the Spaniards we were treated as rejected wards, useful but decidedly inferior and merely tolerated in social intercourse, with the Americans we were conferred a new status: that of apprentices in democratic government, trainees in self-rule, participants in co-government. We were apparently dignified under the new power, one this time uninterested in our eternal souls, but concerned with the welfare of our bodies and minds, which they meant to elevate by teaching us to live and think as they did. Dignified, because we were treated as valid interlocutors.

With our literacy rate of 5% at the time of the American invasion,[78] aside from high rates of infant mortality and morbility and a short life expectancy, how could we contest this posture and not accept the powerful but benevolent master-come-lately, seeing ourselves as we might have done at the time, as a people (despite the new feeling of pride after the ecstatic experience of throwing off an oppressor of almost four centuries) essentially at a loss as to how to build a country, organize and administer it? By the time the Americans had established their colonial government, our people had seen the handwriting on the wall.

We only knew we wanted freedom and a country of our own. But we had no historical choice – it was not to be.

Somewhere along the way, in spite of what must have been a profound rejection of the alien presence speaking a strange language, grief and confusion, and a silent determination never to accept it, most of us were to be won over to such an extent that it became almost the national aspiration to be as alike to and accepted by our American mentors as was possible. America was to be our model of government, progress and enlightenment for a brief, heady time.

---

[78] The population figures for the Philippines in the late 1800s are unclear, and we don't have figures on the casualties from 1896 to 1898. In 1907, nine years later, Agoncillo states that 44.2% of the population, according to him of 7,600,000 -- 3,359,200 persons -- was literate, but he does not specific in what language – in the native languages, in Spanish or in English. More precise data are needed.

But the new house was built on shifting sands. Our newfound well-being was built on an illusion of growing autonomy and self-rule, but in fact we were the *patients*, not the agents of the process of modernizing and democratizing the country. The Americans did it all for us. We had no hard experience to show for it after 1946, except for the feverish political activity our leaders engaged in, but which was not to prove to be enough to give a socially coherent direction to the country's development after Independence. We were already being taught in high school in the 1970s that the U.S. kept our economy agricultural and discouraged its industrialization. Like Spain, who did not allow her American colonies to industrialize, it was not in the U.S.'s interests for the Philippines to become a productive competitor. What was useful to the States was to have a huge, ready and growing market for its products, a cheap supplier of raw materials, and an immovable rook for its military strategy in the Pacific. The relations between the U.S. Congress, the Governor General and Philippine political leaders would be just as underlyingly conflictive, buffered and convoluted as the set-up between the Spanish Governor General, the Church and the King, even if the Filipino people did have channels of direct contact with the American high authorities, nonexistent under the Spaniards.

We did not in fact receive authentic democratic training under the Americans. It would have been counterproductive for their true aims. We were taught *cupolar* politics (from the cupola, or the top).[79] In other words, in which a handful of power brokers make the real decisions. The power rested squarely on the shoulders of the U.S. authority on the Islands and Congress in Washington, D.C. The Philippine National Assembly[80] counted among its members the best minds in the country and probably many authentic nationalists. But Quezon and Osmeña were the chosen ones with direct access to the governor general. Most political decisions were never made in the National Assembly but handed down to it, after maneuvering and negotiating behind the closed doors of the governor general's office. Time and again our polite requests for autonomy were put on the back burner. Time and again we lost face. Time and again we capitulated and applied our Oriental patience.

---

[79]Agoncillo relates that the Partido Demócrata Nacional was founded by revolutionary veteran Teodoro Sandiko in 1914 in an effort to break the Nacionalista's political monopoly and thus attenuate the Mazarin-like (Italian-born French prelate and astute political adviser to Louis XIII) character of their relations with Gov. Gen. Harrison, considered by the PDN to be Osmeña and Quezon's puppet. The PDN sought to introduce mechanisms of "...initiative, referendum and recall in order to make democracy really of the people...". But although the PDN joined forces with the Progresistas, "their combined strength... could not dislodge the Nacinalistas from their seat of power...."

[80] Or the Philippine Congress.

However, as Agoncillo points out, under America there were important gains in the creation of a new social consciousness (italics are mine):

> But if the American administrators failed to solve the agrarian problem and its attendant evils, they nevertheless brought to the Philippines a new conscience and the dissemination of a new attitude which dignified labor. Together with the dissemination of the basic individual freedoms, the new conscience and attitude led to a social consciousness among some groups of laborers whose location in the urban society made them less naive and a little more sophisticated.... The awakening of the working class may be attributed not only to the introduction of labor publications, which influenced the thinking of the poor but educated workers, but to the activities of labor leaders and, especially, to their writings which dealt with labor. *Many labor leaders were writers* , among them Lope K. Santos whose socialistic novel, *Banaag at Sikat* (Rays and Sunshine)...effectively brought to the attention of the general reading public in Tagalog and especially to the laboring class of Maynila and the suburbs the socialistic tenets of Europe.

Agoncillo explains quite rightly that the early labor organizers would not have found fertile ground to spread their ideas and convictions, had they not had the atmosphere of freedom of expression and a population that was increasingly better educated. The formation of a modern middle class and of an organized working class were direct consequences of public education, and thus the Americans' educational campaign must receive credit for making it possible for the children of poor farmers to get a college education and attain professional status within one generation.[81]

Today, although there is a serious problem in the Philippines of a gargantuan social debt rooted in its endemically unequal distribution of wealth and anachronistic agricultural fiefdoms, there is not the glaring, shocking social discrimination that I have observed in Chilean society and that plagues every former Spanish colony to a greater or lesser degree. Under the U.S., the Filipino middle class became the country's principal political and economic protagonist -- not the mestizo class. We cannot underestimate the positive consequences of this fact. The Americans did change the Spanish mentality of explicit racism based on color of skin, hair and eyes and -- most important --

[81]There was already a Hispanic Filipino middle class in the mid-nineteenth century. It was the socioeconomic layer from which the propagandists arose and, later, the leadership of the revolution.

family name.[82] However, though attenuated, class differentiation is still a problem in Philippine society because of the lack of socioeconomic development and its underlying, historical root cause of social injustice. There were outward changes, certainly, in the attitude toward work, especially. The old Spanish belief that to have to work for a living was demeaning persists in Latin America, though it has evolved in modern Spain and has fused with the generalized Mediterranean attitude toward work as secondary to the enjoyment of life. A new democracy of social class was perhaps the most genuinely democratic contribution that America made to our national life. However, given the deep structural inequities that were not challenged, merely coated with a veneer of greater prosperity and social mobility, the better-educated Filipinos eventually began to leave the Philippines for lack of attractive economic opportunities in the homeland.

The Americans relinquished the colony in 1946, when it was clear that we already were securely under their control and they could not hold us back any longer. Perhaps also, given the ruinous state of our economy after the war and the commitments assumed by the Americans to rebuild Europe and Japan, they realized that Philippine independence would reduce their obligation to rehabilitate her.

For a few years after independence, the Philippine government sustained the momentum of advances in quality of life gained under the U.S., but it steadily succumbed to politicians and bureaucrats who knew how to organize and run political campaigns and take office, but had no cultural or ethical agenda for the newly-independent country. Stanley Karnow's rather grandiloquently-titled book, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines*, testifies to the determining role played by U.S. intelligence in Filipino presidential politics throughout the forties, fifties and sixties, even asserting that it was the CIA's skillful image-building and marketing that made Ramon Magsaysay the most beloved president of our history.[83] The Philippines after its 1946 independence was little more than a formal, puppet democracy.

---

[82] There are recognizable and respected family names in the Philippines today in every region, but they are not confined to the super rich, European-descended, militantly Catholic aristocracy as in Chile, where these families control politics through a system of family succession, creating a kind of 'tacit marriage' between Church and State.

[83] This statement is absurd; Magsaysay was a middle-class Filipino with genuine feeling for his people, though he was a creature of his time and thus subservient to the Americans. It cannot be forgotten that he chose to be molded by them; they could never have achieved that level of successful image-building without the right person for it. Between claiming "We identified him correctly as the right person and created an image with his consent" and "We made him what he *was*" -- there lies an abyss.

This is perhaps why Philippine Independence was moved back to June 12, 1898 by Macapagal, in recognition of the people's authentic sentiment.

But I digress. To continue on the subject of our ambivalence: we knew all along that the Americans were leading us on and keeping us "in our place." This was probably the origin of our ambivalence -- it was our instinctive response to the underlying duplicity and coerciveness in the Americans' dealings with us.

In effect, even if, unlike the Spaniards, the Americans were not constantly reminding us of our racial and cultural "inferiority," they did oblige us to play second fiddle to them, to accept the role, if not of inferiority, of subordination -- an implicit inferiority. The dividing line between these categories, especially if subordination is prolonged, is a fine one indeed, because one side has unilateral power to dictate conditions to the other. It is analogous to an excessively prolonged authoritarian-dependent relationship between parents and children. When one is kept on too short a leash for too long, one cannot but feel diminished as a human being, or at the very least, given too little real consideration and respect. This was the truth of our relationship with the Americans. According to Recto, Quezon fumed that he preferred "a government run like hell by Filipinos to one run like heaven by Americans." Notwithstanding his flamboyantly nationalist rhetoric and theatrical declamations, however, Quezon was 100% the Americans' man. He would not have been where he was otherwise. Quezon at least had the astuteness and dramatic flair that were necessary to save the Filipinos´ face and maintain a semblance of honor. However, we were never in anything but a humiliating position. We could not even enjoy the luxury of running our own country like hell. Perhaps *that* was precisely the next stage of our national karma, which had to take place between 1946 and 1986, and we are now ready to begin a new one: running our country with honor.

The Americans employed an uplifting democratic discourse but their attitudes were in fact authoritarian and their actions arbitrary. Not, I repeat, in the same manner as the Spaniards, who were largely unsubtle despots, but in a manner no less diminishing of us, though our key leaders, carefully chosen on the basis of personal ambition or tractability, were in no position to acknowledge this situation and react effectively.

One must cultivate a critical look at the values inherent to different cultural views in order to discover one's own cultural virtues, and therefore it is important to study and reflect on the histories of other countries.

The intentions of the U.S. government, though it may sound laughably obvious to us today, were not to help us learn self-government, to pass on to the Filipinos their tradition of democracy. First of all, the Americans had precious few democratic traditions to speak of, much less pass on. The American Revolution, Howard Zinn explains in *A People's History of the United States*, was the successful result of the lettered and moneyed colonial aristocracy's efforts to convince the poor colonial population that England was impoverishing them with her demands for taxes. The colonial aristocracy then proceeded to carve a psychosocial chasm between the black slaves, the white servant class and poor farmers, and the Indians – the underprivileged and marginal groups who, before independence, were natural allies and viewed the moneyed class with hostility and mistrust. The division between the slaves and the poor whites became race -- the establishment of the color line through the prohibition of intermarriage and the legal relegation of black slaves to subhuman status. Between the poor whites and the Indians, land was the perfect dividing wedge. Open season was declared on the Indians and the landless tenant farmers and former indentured servants received carte blanche to move west and lay claim to the land under the "legal" protection of the army. The American Revolution worked because it *did* improve the economic lot of the poor white underclass, at the same time as it increased the power and wealth of the aristocracy. However, the genocide against the Indians and the institutionalization of slavery gave the lie to its statements regarding the equality of all men, not to mention the fact that women's rights were left out of the Constitution. In the 1880s the United States began its transformation into a modern police state when the U.S. government and business interests joined forces and resorted to police action to eradicate the Socialist and Anarchist-inspired labor movements on the East Coast. That was the beginning of the end of "democracy" in the U.S. This is the part of U.S. history that we were never taught, and that, in fact, most Americans remain unaware of, or studiedly indifferent to, because the penalties for those who have championed radical reform in the U.S. have historically been grievous, even for the sons of her powerful families.

Democracy is a higher paradigm of government that was born in the West. Each nation that espouses the democratic ideal develops an evolutionary path toward its attainment that responds to the demands of its particular reality.

Democracy is not and has never been the monopoly of any one country, rather, each country has achieved breakthroughs and there are interesting experiments underway, but the process of achieving world democracy is our common task, not a messianic mission awarded to the chosen. Nowhere can it be claimed that authentic democracy has been achieved, though some countries are farther ahead in its praxis than others. And just as no organized religion has a monopoly on humanity's spiritual evolution, neither does the U.S. government have or ever had a registered trademark on democracy -- past and present claims notwithstanding. Certainly, it never had a mandate to teach the entire world how to be democratic, nor to impose its official formula on the entire world.

What the Americans did have to teach us and display before our admiring eyes was their genius for organization, their overwhelming urge to dominate nature, and their avidity for material wealth. These are the patrimony they have passed on to the *entire* world, which has contributed to the impoverishment of great masses of people and the disequilibrium of the natural environment. In the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant world view, wealth is the sure sign of God's favor and poverty its opposite.[84] This is not the moment to digress into socio-religious analysis, but what I am trying to get at is the intrinsic gulf that separates us from the Americans -- an even wider chasm than that between us and the Spaniards.

The intention of the U.S. never had anything to do with humanitarian motives, but with their expansion in three spheres: geopolitics, strategic defense, and business. Big business.

The Spaniards were, with slight variations, the other side of an identical coin. We were a lucrative operation for them as well, though it is claimed in our history books that the Crown's most successful business in the Philippines was the gaining of souls for Catholicism, and we, compared to the gold-and-silver-rich colonies farther west, became much more important to Spain as a friar bastion than as an economic bonanza. Though the Spanish objective of spreading the Catholic faith can be seen as being somewhat more humanitarian, in its deepest intentions, than the Americans' calculating benevolence, at bottom both boiled down to the same thing: a more primitive stage of human development in which coercive domination and the co-optation of foreign

---

[84] The Neoliberal version of this belief is the revamping of Darwinian theory to say that the economically incompetent (read: those who cannot finance themselves, which means the poor, the old and the very young) do not deserve to survive in the market society.

territory constituted the reigning paradigm of power. The Spanish conquest was, after all, fueled by the search for a natural resource that had already been appropriated by the nobility and the rich in Spain: land. Their huge landholdings were, in effect, the definitive basis of most of the religious orders' wealth and power in Hispanic Philippines.[85]

The Spaniards were overtly racist, considering themselves infinitely superior to us "indios." The Americans were racist as well, but in a different way. According to Herren, unlike the Spaniards, who readily mixed with non-European women after fulfilling the formality of baptism, the Anglo-Saxon Protestants, from their arrival in New England till the great expansion westward in the mid-1800s, never mixed to any significant extent with the American Indians. The mere fact that they have a term and neat categories for "minorities" today points to their penchant for keeping count of whites and the different zoological species of non-whites. In Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico, Chile, Cuba, Spain, etc., you have peoples of all colors who coexist without bothering to keep track of such racial details. Particularly in Brazil, the mixture and peaceful coexistence between white and black Brazilians is notable. There do tend to be differences in terms of class, with more whites belonging to the upper classes and more blacks to the lower; but there are no race riots there; rather there are lootings carried out by the poor inhabitants of the hillside slums, the *favelas*. The black populations of Brazil, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Venezuela, Peru, etc., arrived in these countries at the same time as the African Americans, as slaves brought by Spanish, Dutch, British and French slave traders; but it is in the United States where African-Americans are still not plain and simple "Americans."

Living in a society that has never allowed them to forget the color of their skin and the crimes it committed against them (as if *they* were the guilty party!), African Americans were forced to go back to their African roots to build an identity, but, that not being enough, they also took on the task of unraveling the historical wrong with their own intentionality -- without referents, without approval or support from anywhere. All the contrary -- they received opprobrium, criticism, attacks, if not cold indifference. The result of this epic reinvention of collective selfhood is that African Americans, after finally overcoming their invisibility for white society, have achieved a formidable sense of self-worth and empowerment. They won their struggle for civil rights. Their achievements in music, dance, sports, literature, entertainment and fash-

[85] With the exception of the Jesuits, who lost their economic base upon their expulsion from the Spanish colonies in the 17th century, and returned to the Philippines to dedicate themselves to education.

ion are the most outstanding of the 20th century and have been adopted by cultures all over the world, who have transformed these contributions to enrich their own.[86]

The myth of the American melting pot consists of this: racial mixture has happened and happens, in spite of the official (white) culture's resistance to it.

The first Filipinos who emigrated to the United States in search of jobs in the farms and factories of Hawaii, California and Alaska experienced racism. Filipino writer Carlos Bulosan wrote about the ambivalence and pain produced by the desire to be incorporated into America and the visceral register of not being wanted. In the Philippines, though we were represented in politics, we were invisible socially for the Americans. One could take Douglas MacArthur's long affair with a Filipina actress as a metaphor of the covert consorting that took place between us and the Americans. Though we were their political interlocutors, there was even less social mixing with them than there had been with the Spanish. They preferred their own company and created small enclaves of American life in their social clubs: the Manila Polo Club, the Army Navy Club, Clark Field.

To the Spanish, we were definitely visible: they made no secret of their disdain. To the Americans, we were invisible. Paradoxically, when one is despised one can form an identity based on one's clear otherness. But when one is subjected to a double standard, honored in political dialogue but invisible in social interaction, one tends to have a harder time finding an identity (especially in our case, in which we wanted to forget everything that had happened to us before). The first thing one does then, is to try to become visible, to learn the codes to overcome invisibility, even to totally assimilate. We tried very hard to do this with the Americans but we always collided with the glass wall. We always will. Because I suspect that white American society is so inherently resistant to mixture, that in the end it will finally be absorbed by the racial dynamic that increasingly isolates it in the U.S. today. The "dynamic Others" will evolve a new identity of such force and attraction that they will become the new paradigm. The old model will simply lose all force of attraction. We will prefer to be new barbarians whose historical time has come, rather than flawed copies of the once-great, now decadent Romans.

---

[86] Nevertheless, young black men are still the group at highest risk in the U.S. of dying before the age of 25 from drug-related crime, gang and state violence.

The bottom line in the question of identity is to value what one is, to accept it as what one had to be, and as a positive foundation over which one can build without any need to deny or destroy anything that came before. This is why education is so crucial for the formation of a positive identity.

Today there are hundreds of thousands of professional Filipinos living with their transplanted families in the United States.[87] They live in the immaculate, deserted suburbs, where they no longer have to deal with the glaring social injustices of Philippine society. However, I cannot help disbelieving that their U.S. citizenship makes them feel any more a part of American society and any less Filipino in the deepest, most recondite core of their being. At the risk of offending, I surmise that they are very much on the fringes of that society, working for it and sustaining it, but without much perceived importance to it. They may never change anything there, beyond being passive beneficiaries of organized affluence. Are economic well-being and material comfort a fair exchange for the awareness that you are just another "minority" in a sea of uprooted, undefined and undetermining cultural subgroups? It can be, and we must respect this position if it has been freely adopted. However, for many Filipinos such as myself, there was no choice involved. Our parents made the choice for us. And in the case of other Filipinos, their economic margination and cultural deformation made the choice for them.

In the United States an immigrant, even if he or she has lived there for years and years, must pay taxes but may not vote. Chile is the first country in my life where I have voted. In this country anyone who has been a permanent resident for five years has the right of suffrage. This to me is democracy because it is non-discriminatory and participative.

Americans and Filipinos are as alike as oil and water. Americans live within a rigidly-structured super-society in which the human element is notable for its absence. The Philippines is more alike to India in the sense that simple human solidarity is often one's only resource for survival, but unlike the Indians we do not have as strong a sense of joy, dignity and security in who we are and what we are here to do. After almost ten years of living in the United States, I realized that people's sensitivity there is pulverized almost to extinction at a

[87] From 1982 to 1992, 200,000 Filipino professionals emigrated to the U.S., according to Chile's Channel 7 evening newscast of May 18, 1992.

very early age.[88] And today, after living for sixteen years in a Latin American country, I have begun to perceive that the social crisis in the U.S. lies in its underlying paradigm that prioritizes business over humanity; that rewards the warrior and punishes the weak and the vulnerable.

The majority of Americans -- especially those who have no knowledge of life outside the alleged First World -- have little sense of the rainbow of realities beyond their borders and are trained to relate with caution and mistrust: "What does this person want from me? They *must* want something, because I *have* everything." They view each other as competitors. They believe that people who are trusting and open, who reveal themselves or take an interest in others, are naive and therefore underdeveloped and inferior. Not so long ago in the daily language of Americans there were two ubiquitous phrases: “bleeding heart liberal” and “people with low expectations” -- to feel and to be content with little were, in other words, revealing indicators of one’s condition as a “loser.”

The concept of human relations as not primarily based on money but on mutual support, which the first American immigrants brought with them, has been lost, sacrificed to the myopic vision of the American Dream, in which money is supposed to free you of annoying dependence on others. In the end, however, this ethos is a trap of isolation because the other becomes seen ultimately as an obstacle to one’s well-being. How is this possible? How can a humane society be built on the basis of misanthropy? The fact is, a society based on the law of the jungle becomes the worst kind of jungle, because animals at least have limits of rapaciousness[89] -- violent human beings do not, because violence in humans turns into an uncontrollable social sickness. Thus, the average American city -- like the average European city, but even more so -- today faces a crossroads whose alternatives are human uninhabitability, or a profound change in its citizens’ behavioral orientation, towards the reincorporation of human values into social coexistence in the interest of society’s survival.

Our ambivalence finally flowered in the second half of the 20th century when it could no longer be denied that the U.S. government, through its many agen-

---

[88] I speak as an Asian who belongs to a nation marked by an exquisitely fine emotional sensibility. For a Westerner, this may be totally normal emotional development; for a Filipino and even for a Latin American it is not.

[89] This is why I consider the vainglorious election of the jaguar (the Chilean yuppie class calls their country "the jaguar of Latin America") is in fact allegorically correct, for they do prey like wild beasts on the weakest of their own economy.

cies, continued to maintain an iron grip on our political and economic life. This perception has been patent in Mexico since the 1840s, and in Central and Latin America since the fifties. The difference between our situation and theirs is that they have a strong Hispanic identity and the U.S. has had to penetrate their borders either through overt military action or multinational corporate activity. The U.S. has not spent one disinterested cent on improved public health and massive English education programs in these regions. Its intervention has been brutal in most cases and its attempts at cultural penetration continue to be met with quietly determined resistance, despite the enamourment with gentrification and cultural wannabe-ism of the moneyed classes.

In the nineties the Filipinos are, in my personal opinion, on the threshold of real democracy, having accumulated so much experience in what democracy *is not.* Real democracy is the existence of options, popular participation in government and respect for minorities. It is nonviolent and fair. For democracy to work there must be a responsible electorate with civic education and responsible elected officials with an intention to serve. We were never the vanguard of democracy in Asia -- at least, not after 1898 -- we were a political showcase for the United States, and the final proof of this was the Marcos dictatorship, which installed and kept itself viable thanks to the backing of the U.S.

The 1975 edition of Agoncillo's *Short History of the Philippines* ends with a thorough account of the political and social ebullience that marked the 1960s, and draws particular attention to the issue of the military agreements between the Philippines and the United States which established the military bases. Upon reading about the social unrest that arose over the legal impunity granted to U.S. military personnel who had committed criminal acts against Filipinos, it came to my mind quite spontaneously that perhaps the rising tide of anti-Americanism was a vital reason for the American support given to Marcos's "anti-Communist" declaration of martial law. Perhaps martial law enabled the silencing of opposition to the U.S. bases and set back the new wave of nationalism that threatened U.S. control over the Philippines, in the midst of an escalating Vietnam war.

Today it has become clear to us what the consequences for a country are when leaders without ethical formation and an ethos of service take over the reins of a country and put it, instead, at the service of their personal ends. Today too, we have no more colonial masters or saviors to keep us from responsibly assuming our own destiny. Even the most fervently religious must know that

God helps those who help themselves, and that now is the time to test our true mettle as Christians and prove ourselves capable of seeing our fellow countrymen and women as the extension of our families, to love in a less intimate way, but yes, to love -- when we begin to see their welfare and advancement as part of our own and not opposed to it.

I believe we are today in a position to free ourselves of our ambivalence towards the U.S., since it was rooted in our cultural disorientation, which a widening historical perspective has begun to help us correct. When one finally achieves a genuine feeling of autonomy and maturity, one can finally free oneself of one's parents. One is no longer their dependent or subordinate because one has separated and gained an identity. We can give ourselves permission to love the English language and literature because culture transcends politics: it belongs to the realm of universal human experience and is the patrimony of all human beings. We must give importance to rediscovering our Spanish roots, to recovering the Spanish language in order to be able to speak and listen to the Hispanic-Americans who have much to tell us about ourselves as well, in a reencounter between brothers and sisters long separated from each other upon the disintegration of a family.

Finally, our greatest and most dignifying task is to study and learn about ourselves: by patiently and systematically gathering knowledge about our multicultural heritage, our literature, our science, our art -- including our invaluable traditions of folklore, mythology and magic. The coming generations will then have a solid base over which to continue the construction.

## Chapter 10

## Defining Identity

Before we begin, it would be good to define this important word.

What is 'identity'?

I will hazard a definition based on what I have read, studied and lived. Identity, at the personal level, is the image that one forms of oneself through time, based on one's life experiences and the interactions that one has had and continues to develop within the different environments of daily life. This configuration is a process that unfolds gradually, having great stability but at the same time marked by dynamism, since it goes through different moments and stages of increasing complexity and richness. It would correspond to the "I," which is the psychological identity that allows one to be the same person even though one assumes different roles: daughter, mother, sister, friend, worker, lover, employer, wife, etc.

Personal identity is not static; it evolves, broadens and deepens with time. The incorporation of the images of family and race into one's self-concept are largely tacit and unremarked events in the self's evolution that occur through successive stages of socialization. There is a dynamic in human relationships that allows the transmission of this concept of self, family, and nation to and with others, whether in crisis, in creative growth or in celebration. Thus, my awareness of my identity continually expands throughout my life as I attain ever deeper and broader experiences of self, I share them with others, and discover the greater world beyond with growing depth and breadth of register.

When I speak of national identity, beyond the personal biography one has had, I refer to one's awareness of origins, of family history, how far back that awareness goes and how much substance, fullness and richness it acquires for oneself with the passing of time.

The process of acquiring identity is probably linked, first of all, to the *body*: to one's somatic registers, and to powerful emotions connected to the image of one's parents, grandparents; to the places that have been important in one's life; to the flavor of foods, to fragrances, to landscapes. To sounds: of nature,

music, animals, weather (rain, wind, thunder). To temperature: the heat of the tropical sun, the warmth of people's smiles, the lukewarm waters of the South China Sea in which one bathed each summer, the moist, fragrant earth of typhoon season. Identity would be a feeling-at-home in a world that is profoundly known, familiar, with which I feel fused at the deepest level of my being. This is why language is so important for identity, because language, after all, is the codification of our world, the outer world as well as the inner world of thoughts, emotions, bodily registers. What is outside of our language doesn't exist, and the more language we have, the more worlds we are engaged with, can gain access to and travel in; the more lives we can know and even live. [90]

I also relate the presence of identity to a sensation of structuredness, as if one were as many-faceted as a diamond but, nevertheless -- and also like a diamond -- maintained a structure of unity that had transparency, that was easy to grasp, to see through; that had mass, weight and gravitational pull, like a miniature sun.

Thus, to me, to possess an identity is felt from within as an inner unity and order in the self, and from without as a clarity and presence of being that others can perceive easily and fluidly engage with.

Lack of identity, or loss of identity would then be registered as a gap, an absence, or an interruption in that oneness, fusion and at-home-ness in oneself and one's outer world, in one's own body as well as in the world of things and other human beings. If one suffered amnesia, one would have an identity problem. If one's family had been uprooted or separated or disappeared, one would have an identity problem. If one's nation had been co-opted by another in any way at all, through war, enslavement or genocide, or any other form of effective invasion of any intimate sphere of collective life, such experiences would originate a problem of identity. I conceive of identity as a state of being that is profoundly rooted in ontological security. In other words, in a sensation of intimate safety in one's being, of belonging to oneself, of inner orientation, of certainty that one belongs somewhere, one is someone, and that one's world is a safe and friendly place.

---

[90] References to the "I" as the basis of psychological identity and its connection to bodily registers are developed by Silo in "The Book of School"; language as defining the limits of one´s world is based on Wittgenstein´s famous words. See also the Introduction to Gyorgy Kepes´ *El Lenguaje de la visión*.

Therefore it follows that when lack of identity exists, one feels that lack as a subtle state of intimate disorientation, an absence of inner security and anchoring, a feeling of being lost, of floating in the middle of nowhere, and -- naturally -- as a permanent background climate of anxiety. Passiveness or automatism in the present, and an absence of future with its resulting lack of capacity to dream, are behaviors that necessarily accompany an inner state of lack or loss of identity.

From the outside, said lack would be registered by others as a kind of invisibility of being, a non-definition, absence of weight, or a shifting quality in a person's presence, in their words, their actions -- creating an impression in others of not knowing who they were really dealing with, what their intentions really were, what it was they really wanted.

Reality seems to flag the presence of identity. What has identity is registered as real.

Since human groups and nations are in a sense a multiplication of the individual, I would suggest that if identity at the individual level is experienced as a feeling of wholeness, of cohesion of self, then identity at the national level would be felt as a belonging among one's people, as an empathy, a deep identification with the others' welfare or misfortune, and a willingness to work for the benefit of the whole. Identity would then be a variety of love -- love for oneself and love for one's human group, one's larger family.

A nation with identity would likewise have a sense of reality, of *being-there*, of being engaged and able to make their will felt. It wouldn't just be an awareness of having a history -- it would also have to do with an awareness of having *power*. Power not primarily in the sense of controlling things and events from the outside, of controlling external phenomena, but of being able to create, to irradiate power from within, the ability to direct the inner energies of the whole towards the attainment of collective goals.

In this sense, perhaps we human beings are on the threshold of a journey toward a new awareness of ourselves as individuals, as families and societies. It is, it seems to me, fitting that this should be so and at this precise moment in humanity's history. Things tend to happen all at once, after all, in synchronicity and not in linear fashion. And so it makes sense that, just when the entire planet is becoming aware of its global oneness, that individuals and nations

should also begin to have an awareness of the experience of identity -- which is none other than the awakening to Self, and self-consciousness.

**Identity Formation Through the Body and the Memory**

If we observe the process of identity formation, in the beginning it would seem one "borrows" an identity from one's parents, one's role models. One imitates them and the approval they give one reinforces the borrowing until finally, from repetition and accumulation of experience, one finally internalizes that external, orienting image as the basis over which one can continue building one's own identity.

Aside from this somatic, experiential and social aspect of identity, there is another aspect that has to do with language. I had mentioned previously that identity and language have to be intimately linked because language is how human experience is transmitted and how its most basic components are codified. Language is therefore as emotional as it is conceptual -- the infant first learns language from its mother, and the primeval bonding that occurs at that stage is absolutely linked to the acquisition of the "mother tongue" -- the dearest and most intimate idiom for any human.

Later language acquires a new dimension when the child begins to develop relationships, first within the immediate family, and gradually with the other members of her community. And aside from language as a form of emotional and intellectual bonding with the mother and, through the mother, with the world, language now becomes the vehicle of one's narrative, one's story. In this process, memory acquires an overwhelming importance. Not just to have a language and a story, but to remember it... and something more.

Neurologist Oliver Sacks wrote in *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* with wonderful discernment:

> We have, each of us, a life-story, an inner narrative -- whose continuity, whose sense, *is* our lives. It might be said that each of us constructs and lives, a 'narrative', and that this narrative *is* us, our identities.
>
> If we wish to know about a man, we ask 'what is his story -- his real, inmost story?' -- for each of us *is* a biography, a story. Each of us *is* a singular narrative, which is constructed, continually, unconsciously, by, through, and in us -- through our perceptions, our feelings, our thoughts, our ac-

> tions; and, not least, our discourse, our spoken narrations. Biologically, physiologically, we are not so different from each other; historically, as narratives -- we are each of us unique.

To possess an identity, it is not enough merely to have a story -- everyone has one, after all. However, not everyone feels rooted in it, nor do they feel a certainty of owning and belonging to themselves, of being the master of their destiny, of recognizing and feeling at ease with the folds and depths of who they are. To reach that grounding, certainty and self-recognition, besides having a story we must also have *awareness* of that story, of how it acts and gives full significance and meaning to the present and the future. In other words, one must *own* one's story. Sacks explains this idea in this way:

> To be ourselves, we must *have* ourselves -- possess, if need be re-possess, our life-stories. We must 'recollect' ourselves, recollect the inner drama, the narrative, of ourselves. A man *needs* such a narrative, a continuous inner narrative, to maintain his identity, his self.

## The Clash of East and West: the Birth of Mestizo Identity

A person with identity is more than just a person -- he or she is an *individual*, a person with self-awareness. This is, in ordinary life and ordinary society, quite a rare occurrence. It is in fact, from the philosophical and cultural point of view, a Western phenomenon, the Western contribution to the development of world culture[91] -- the concept of the individual with rights and duties, but above all as an autonomous being with the inalienable right to pursue self-formulated goals of happiness and freedom. However, this model of individuality, though commonly accepted as a concept, is in existential terms still a problematic image, for the image of the individual is both desired and evaded, charged as it is with attributes of solitude, alienation and isolation. Only in recent times has a new model begun to arise that is more interesting and believable –- the individual as fulfilled, autonomous and at the same time capable of initiating and sustaining close bonds, committed to society and able to engage with others in ways that are balanced and unsuperficial.

We are moving in that direction, though we still find ourselves faced by social patterns that are strongly polarized between the herd mentality and fear of

---

[91] Developed in Joseph Campbell's *Myths to Live By*.

criticism on one hand, with small variations according to the sociocultural context, and on the other, urban alienation in which the herd is transformed into the gang, political party, religious or professional association – that is to say, borrowed, utilitarian, pragmatic identities, based on the need to compensate an inner component of alienation from oneself and/or others, personal vulnerability, insecurity.

Thus it is that in the West, despite being the cradle of the concept of "individual", something is still lacking, some powerful event must still take place that will trigger the arisal of a mature image of individuality, in order to end the stage of borrowed and alienated identities and enable us to move toward the stage of a global identity, based on significantly renewed concepts of self and nation.

On the other hand, within the traditional Asian context, the concept of the individual is in an even earlier stage of development, given that from the Asian perspective, society is still more important than the individual, and traditionally the individual is expected to place his/her needs and goals in abeyance to those of the family, and be prepared to fulfill the ultimate duty of sacrificing these if one's elders require it. In this sense, we Filipinos have found and still find ourselves astride two cultures — the Hispanic/Anglo-Saxon and the Asian — and confronted by the double bind of being both Asian and Hispanic-North American, both Oriental and Occidental. We therefore occupy a cultural and social space that swirls with invisible currents of ambiguity and ambivalence; we are often vulnerable to situations of metaphorical checkmate.

And in spite of the fact that the Filipinos are not strictly speaking mestizos by blood, we are indeed mestizos by history because of our double colonization by Western powers between 1521 and 1946. A serial colonization in the course of which we assimilated our colonizers' cultures and fused them with our own.

## Western Conquerors, Eastern Vassals

We can extend the East-West dichotomy to the situation of the entire world at the time of the Conquest, and in a general way state that all the indigenous civilizations were proper to the East, and the conquering nations to the West.

Extrapolating what occurs in identity formation at the individual level to the scale of nations, upon the Spanish colonization of Latin America and the inevitable miscegenation between the Spanish males and American Indian females, a new process was initiated of identity formation at a colossal scale. The Spanish arrived and destroyed the indigenous identity as the noble and unquestioned paradigm that had ruled the Indian consciousness and imposed its sacred order for thousands of years, and in the ensuing five hundred years fathered a mestizo race that -- to this very day -- has not yet achieved a clear sense of self. Why? Because the role models did not mirror the child. The Spanish model looked down on her as a corrupted, flawed offspring, while the Indian model produced shame and rejection (the child inevitably adopting the dominant, alienated and alienating look of her Father/Great Master).

Thus, speaking in general terms, for five centuries the mestizos of Latin America have been debating their selfhood between their European father and their Indian mother. Those who identified positively with the Enlightenment ideals have striven to become the Europeans of Latin America, and those who negatively identified with the victims of the Conquest have responded with the cultural backlash of what Arturo Uslar-Pietri has called 'naive autocthonism.' The most self-questioning elements -- from the creoles of the early 1800s to the educated middle and upper classes of the 20th century — opted for a self-definition that straddled a rather fuzzy midpoint between the European intellect and the Indian body -- more wild and untrammeled than the former, but more light-skinned and visible for the greater world than the latter. Yet this option has always been an uncomfortable position, for although the European image has been co-opted by the upper classes, in the end they themselves assert (with inner contradiction, since neither do they want to be identified with the Other -- the non-Europeanized, less sophisticated majority) that they are *not* Europeans. And it *is* undeniable that Latin Americans can never be any more European than Filipinos can be white Anglo-Saxon Protestants.[92] It

[92] Even in cases of apparent white racial purity as in the Chilean upper class, underlying the Aryan appearances there is a lack of solidity, of grounding, that is manifested in a personality that is evasive, undefined or aggressively self-important (i.e., essentially insecure). It is as if the upper classes considered themselves a

is, moreover, an impossibility for Latin Americans (despite the idealistic efforts that have been made at different moments) to identify one hundred per cent with the indigenous model, which leaves non-Indians as eternal outsiders and is evolving slowly and painfully on its own toward insertion into the postmodernity that the mestizos are already fully integrated into -- though principally as objects rather than as subjects.

Of course, Latin American mestizos – unlike the Filipinos – assimilated Spanish as their own language and from the very beginning became an intermediate racial and cultural connective between the European and the Indian phenotypes. The Filipinos could neither claim the right to the first nor did we come to resemble the second in sufficient numbers, such that a world that based itself on externalities – ourselves included – erroneously assumed that in the Philippines the formation of a mestizaje never went beyond a superficial and ephemeral phenomenon that was virtually wiped out after the North American regime. And yet, in the Philippines a mestizaje did indeed become a material and cultural fact, though not to the same racially visible degree as the mestizaje of America. However, our having remained "indios" in appearance does not constitute grounds for denying the fact that we have a history of almost four centuries that inevitably distanced us from our pre-Hispanic self, changing the form of our consciousness through what I term a *psychic mestizaje*.

The Filipino ethnic groups who have preserved their pre-Hispanic way of life and who did not relinquish that cosmology in order to become integrated into the Christian Filipino-North American society have not experienced the same process of psychic mestizaje, and the situation between them and the so-called "Christianized lowland Filipinos" is marked by a significant cultural distance, though in terms of physiognomy the differences between them are so insignificant as to be practically non-existent. The same has happened among the Latin Americans, with the aggravating circumstance of strong racial differentiation. Despite the efforts of utopians at different moments and the genuine sentiments of solidarity and fraternity of certain segments, the indigenous of Latin America are in a different process of gradual and difficult insertion into postmodern society. The mestizos not only completed this stage long ago, they have in fact surpassed it and must now win positions of leadership in their society and direct it toward a path of equitable and sustainable development that will answer to the needs of the majority – a majority that today finds itself relegated to a position of growing abandonment.

---

group apart, superior to the rest, much in the same way their Spanish creole or other European forebears felt (i.e., differentiated and superior) vis à vis the pureblooded Indians and the commonfolk mestizos.

The Indians of Latin America have begun their struggle for political and cultural vindication, as did the African Americans after the abolition of slavery, and the Native Americans of the United States in the nineteen sixties. In the Philippines the Islamic Filipinos are in a good position to win the battle for effective autonomy, despite the fact that they have long faced a central government unwilling to deal with them on the basis of cultural and political equality. This discrimination is rooted in the historical inertia that has kept the old Spanish-era mentality of religious and cultural differentiation largely unchanged, a mentality that was implanted by colonization and its cultural consequences of fragmentation in general and over-identification by the Christianized Filipinos with each of the succeeding Great Masters in particular.

However, today both the Christianized and the Moslem Filipinos are threatened by the steady deterioration of their quality of life that has been taking place for five generations and which the government shows no sign of having any will to stop and reverse. In other words, speaking in general terms we can say that in the Philippines today we are all Indians and all marginalized by our own government, run by our fellow Indians. And this has to do with our essential problem of lack of authentic identity as a nation.

Because of the vacuum of a national identity, "micro-identities" become the only reference points in national social interaction. This is manifested in the Philippines in our famous "regionalism," and in Latin America in the existence of special interest groups of all kinds. Although in political and human terms there exist an instinctive identification and solidarity between the Indians on one hand and the mestizo women and youth on the other, in the sphere of cultural identity these groups coexist within a context of tacit pluralism –- together yet apart. The mestizo is not Indian; Indians and mestizos have different narratives, different registers of themselves, and authenticity demands that this fact be recognized and respected. The problem is that when the time comes to unite behind a common objective, the lack of a unifying mystique makes itself sorely felt.

In our case, and reiterating what has already been said, the Filipinos are in a less complex racial situation than the Latin Americans, although our struggles for independence and social vindication have been blocked by our geographical isolation (both between the country and other national territories and within the country, because of its island configuration), added to historical circumstances that interrupted the normal development of a process of na-

tional reflection, and, therefore, the evolution of an authentic historical consciousness. In Latin America, although this process has taken place with great variations among the nations and in an imperfect manner that has been subject to accidents, it has nevertheless taken place. Hispanic America has indeed been able to develop its own historical consciousness, capacity for self-reflection and an original cultural life.

Now then, for "one's own"(identity formation process) to advance toward new levels of complexity and development, the encounter with other, similar individuals is important for a new dynamic and movement to arise, dialectic and new synthesis. In this sense, the future encounter between the Philippines and Latin America promises much in relation to a possible new leap in the three spheres of the interiority of nations – for there to be a new depth and breadth in our historical consciousness, new instances of self-reflection (this time in complementation, no longer in differentiation), and new momentum toward cultural renewal. In this process, Spain's participation is of interest, as the great catalyst that she was of the clash and meeting between three continents and the arisal that followed of Hispanic-American-Asian mestizaje. Spain, the daughter in turn of Greco-Roman – Visigothic – Arab – African mixture. In other words, our nations -- the heirs of the actions of our forebears -- find themselves today in a position of initiating a collective reflection on our respective national biographies and the cultural identities that have arisen from them...and on how we can rethink the past in order to understand the present and channel the future, this time with the intention of vindicating our human brotherhood. It is a formidable but beautiful task that can only be undertaken on the basis of a conversion of our old look toward the past, toward ourselves and toward each other.

## Who and What Are The Mestizos Then?

The mestizos of Latin America are neither Europeans nor Indians -- they are something of both, just as the Filipinos are no longer the indigenous tribes of pre-Magellanic times, nor pure modern Asians like the Indonesians, Thais or Chinese. For their part, Filipinos have much in them of the courtly, medieval Spanish heart. In their minds run the ideas of democratic North America, whose language they made their own. But the soul that quickens our Hispanic heart and Anglo-American thinking continues to be pre-Hispanic and animist -- the same that has nested since time immemorial in our land and our bodies.

## False and Borrowed Identities

In the study of the identity formation processes of Latin Americans and of Filipinos, the leitmotifs of borrowed identity and self-imposed identity are like trace metals in the organic stream of our social interactions, political projects and cultural aspirations. One can also observe futile efforts to impose determinist molds on ourselves or to deny parts of ourselves that could not be made to fit within those various models, the selfsame final result: we have not felt authentic, rhetorical declamations notwithstanding.

What to do then? It is clear to me that if we cannot receive the explicit approval of either the one archetypal parent or the other (our progenitors having been irrevocably distanced from us by the mists of time), we must adopt a new look at ourselves that is neither the purist look of Western father nor Native mother. Simply train our own eyes upon ourselves and acknowledge that we are in the presence of an identity that is our reality, that we recognize as our own. *We* then constitute ourselves as the model -- *sui generis*, original, new and perfect. A newborn infant with an entire new life to grow into and shape, under the approving and protective shadow of the spirits of her forebears.

With this change of look toward self-reference, we can broaden the old, narrow categories, undo the knots in the straitjacket and let the messages from the past receive a full, unprejudiced hearing. And in that symbolic moment of recreation, we will touch the ground, look up to the expanse of our sky and say: "This is our reality...and it is good."

Nevertheless, before the moment of resolution can be reached, a previous step is necessary -- to comprehend our difficult past and how our psyches and bodies experienced and survived it by evolving an array of self-images which were externalized in different behavioral patterns. Only when we have understood why we act as we do today and what our present behavior has to do with conditions of origin as a people, can we fully validate what we are and wholeheartedly accept ourselves and each of our brothers and sisters in our larger family.

## Authentic Identity: Synthesis

My conception of authentic identity is that it is an inner image of self that rests over two components: the somatic (the body and emotions), and the mnemonic (language and memory).

With regard to the somatic element, identity is an emotion that accompanies the somatic register of being, an ontological certainty of self-recognition and belongingness to a human world. This emotion is positive, self-affirming and life-affirming. Like all positive emotions, it creates internal cohesion and external expansion, and it coheres the individual with the social body and vice versa (i.e., the social body sees itself reflected in each individual member). This emotion is not gratis nor is it even natural: it arises after a critical mass of social and historical experience is achieved and a human group becomes aware of a commonality of past, of present reality and of future aspiration. In other words, when a collectivity acquires consciousness of having been transformed into a spiritual entity that calls itself: Nation.

The second component of identity is language, insofar as it gives outer expression and form to the genesis and continual evolution of self-awareness/self-image, world awareness/world image. This naming and coming-into-ownership of self, of the other and of the world is the psychic process that is informed by and in turn informs external experience. Its scope is vast, flexible and in constant flux, containing at its center the individual (personal biography, subjective narrative) and expanding out in growing concentric circles to the family, the clan, the nation, and, finally, the species (collective biography, universal history).

## Globalization: The Formation of the Global Human Family

Until the voyage toward globalization began 500 years ago, identity formation was quite straightforward and comparatively uncomplicated, based as it was on the processes of scattered, isolated human groups that settled in unpopulated lands and for thousands of years developed separate cosmologies, cultures, and -- in a few cases -- full-blown civilizations. The civilizations which were founded and that propagated their practices, customs, languages, and imposed military and commercial dominion over enormous empires, developed within space-time conditions which were much more extended and much less accelerated than those of our era.

The Geographical Discoveries and the Conquest began a new age with the clash between the West and the East, between European and Indian civilization. It ushered in a process that, on one hand, was exhilarating, full of great strides forward in knowledge, and, on the other, caused a tragedy of unprecedented proportions for the Indigenous peoples of America and Oceania -- a process, however, that has culminated 500 years later in the birth of a truly global civilization, at whose threshold all of humanity now stands.

Thus the Conquest has signified for us, the children born of the contradictory union between the conquerors and the conquered, a conflictive origin and a painful, centuries-long progression toward the recognition and validation of our narrative. For the histories of the Conquest were written by the conquistadors and the friars, and also by the Indians, but for many centuries the only accounts given validation, studied and disseminated were those of the Spanish.[93]

Though Latin American historiographical development only dates from relatively recent times, in the 19th century, following independence, Latin American historians assimilated without difficulty the preceding Spanish chronicles as well as the important contributions of diverse European historiographers and scientists, from the pre- as well as the post-independent periods. The indigenous chronicles that survived have been incorporated into the Hispanic-American historical legacy, above all in countries such as Mexico, where the imprint left by the great past has been indestructible. In the Philippines' case, few testimonies survive from pre-Hispanic times. Filipino historiography only began to develop during the North American regime, always hampered in its capacity to incorporate into its documentary archives the materials produced by Spaniards, most of which are not found in the Philippines but are scattered in private collections throughout the world, aside from, of course, the bibliographic patrimony preserved in the Spanish archives.

[93] I don't refer to the Portuguese and their colonization of Brazil, as this development is carried out from the viewpoint of the Philippines' colonial history in the context of the Spanish Empire.

## The Difficult Birth of Filipino Identity

It is difficult to imagine more adverse conditions for a process of identity formation than those of the Filipino process. I will develop this point in greater detail further on; for now suffice it to say that I cannot think of any people who have been dealt such a bad hand as we, in terms of the complex, chaotic conditions we were given within which to develop a sense of identity and historical consciousness. From this point of view, our ahistoricity, our silence and -- when we have broken that silence -- our tendency to write about ourselves superficially,[94] seen within the context of our hundred-year long existential drift since we were annexed in 1898, declared independent in 1946 by the United States, and the 54 years that followed which have revealed the basic lack of solidity in our national process -- are rendered totally logical and comprehensible. In the Philippines, it was impossible for a double colonization followed by a third internal colonization to have produced a national leadership grounded in autonomy and a solid ethical base, simply because the United States formally declared her "independent".

The vicissitudes suffered by the Filipinos as a people who have been a geographic link between East and West, and who experienced a series of colonizations that is unique in the history of the world, followed by a diaspora whose reasons and evolution are paralleled, in a way, only by the Jewish Di-

---

[94] In his bestselling book, Dr. Oliver Sacks points out a quality that is invariably present in patients with frontal-lobe syndromes, in which there is a loss of memory and therefore loss of a sense of the self's reality, of identity. The condition becomes manifest especially when the patient is among people. They become 'excited' and 'rattled' and engage in "frenzied, social chatter, a veritable delirium of identity-making and -seeking..." , as if "some ultimate capacity for feeling...is gone, and this is the sense in which [they are] 'desouled'." Though many of those afflicted by what is called 'silly-happy' schizophrenia are often a source of amusement for the people around them because of their clowning around and joking, Sacks observes that "In all these states -- 'funny' and often ingenious as they appear -- the world is taken apart, undermined, reduced to anarchy and chaos. There ceases to be any 'centre' to the mind, though its formal intellectual powers may be perfectly preserved. The end point of such states is an unfathomable 'silliness,' an abyss of superficiality, in which all is ungrounded and afloat and comes apart. Luria once spoke of the mind as reduced, in such states, to 'mere Brownian movement'."

The tone of trivialization and silliness is the hallmark of much Filipino writing for the unspecialized reading public. Quite often the journalistic treatment of our history, national character, and current events stands out for its shallowness and cute self-deprecation, and the overall impression created, at least in my personal opinion, is that the writer is 'de-souled', unable to communicate at any significantly profound level of feeling and thought. Thus their writing is superficial because they can only write from a state of being that is shallow and weightless, that flits and drifts from one topic to the next without settling and plumbing the depths which they are unable to penetrate, for lack of anchoring that in the final analysis is not just psychological, but most important, spiritual. In our social interactions there is also much tendency to infantilism, joking, or a pained silence, as if we had to avoid at all costs showing what and who we really are, as though we had a panic fear of unveiling ourselves just as we are before the other's eyes, and encountering the other just as he or she is.

aspora (though without the Jewish nation's impregnable historical consciousness), make our history an extremely interesting case study of identity lost and yearning to be reencountered. We are also a great experiment whose laboratory is the entire world, and our only valid interlocutors our heretofore silent and silenced selves – and those other nations whose history is also ours, unbeknownst to them and to us.

## The Prerequisite for the Voyage to Self-Comprehension: Points of Reference

No object of study can be comprehensible unless it is first framed within a clear and meaningful context, and we cannot approach the complex subject of identity from a position of ignorance of the perspectives of other peoples who have wrestled with this critical issue even longer than ourselves -- the African Americans and the Latin Americans.

I present two visionaries' ideas, which have helped me better understand our dilemmas with respect to history and identity.

## On Identity: A Venezuelan and an African American's Thinking

Venezuelan writer Arturo Uslar-Pietri, in two essays entitled "Mestizaje Cultural" (Cultural Miscegenation, or crossing of cultures) and "Notas sobre el vasallaje" (Notes on Vasallage) tells us that the question of mestizo identity has been foremost in the minds of Hispanic-Americans since the 18th century. I paraphrase his words at times and at others I translate them into English in the paragraphs that follow. They are the lucid and poetic response of just one important Latin American thinker to the enigma of how to learn to see a self that is in a very real sense new, for which no previous molds exist. The first stage of the search for Latin American identity was the imitation of the European model, a process that was forced and, as such, condemned to failure:

> Successively and even simultaneously, many men who were representative of Spanish and Portuguese-speaking America naively believed — or tried to be — what they obviously were not and could not be. There was a time when they believed themselves Castilian gentlemen, as there would be another for imagining themselves as Europeans in exile engaged in unequal battle with native barbarism. There were those who tried with all their souls to seem French, English, German and North Americans. Later

> there were those who believed themselves Indians and set to vindicating the apex of an aboriginal civilization that was irrevocably interrupted by the Conquest. Neither was there a lack in certain regions of those who felt that they possessed a black soul and who tried to revive an African past.

Culturally they were not Europeans, nor were they Indians or Africans.

Throughout the history of Western civilizations from that of the Greeks, the evolution of the Jewish people, Rome, Great Britain, France, until the formation of modern Europe and the United States, the phenomenon of racial mixture has been the origin of cultural creation and revival. The mixture between cultures and races must be seen as a phenomenon that goes beyond a simple mixing of blood, as the miscegenation that in the eyes of another time was seen as giving fruit to racially inferior human beings because it corrupted the purity of the conquering white race. Uslar-Pietri refutes the false concept of the racial purity of the Spaniards who arrived in the New World, and the ideology of Anglo-Saxon superiority that would later be established when this racial group in turn undertook the conquest of the planet:

> Because of an absurd and anti-historical concept of purity, the Hispanic-Americans have tended to look upon their condition of having mixed blood as a mark of inferiority. They have even come to believe that there is no other kind of mestizaje apart from that of the blood, and they have largely inhibited themselves from looking at and comprehending what is most valuable and original in their own condition.
>
> Mestizaje was seen as an undesirable feature that denoted inferiority, [due to] the influence of the ideas of racial superiority which began to appear in Europe in the 18th century and were reinforced during the 19th century with Gobineau, which gave birth to all the banal literature on Anglo-Saxon supremacy and on the providential mission and historical burden of the white man, who was in charge of civilizing, directing and guiding his inferior colored brothers. A kind of inferiority complex and biological shame was created before the fact of blood mixture. We wanted to hide the traces of mixed blood or to make it be forgotten in front of the Europeans, forgetting that Europe was the fruit of the most incredible mixtures and that blood mestizaje could be an effect, but it was far from being the only cause nor the only form of cultural mestizaje. What was truly important and mean-

> ingful was the encounter between men of different cultures on the astonishing stage of America. This and no other was the defining fact of the New World.
>
> In the clash between the Spanish and the Indians, there were manifest objectives that were frustrated or adulterated by history. The Indians, particularly those with the highest degree of civilization, tried to preserve and defend their existence and their world. Their obvious objective was none other than to expel the invader and preserve unchanged their own social system and culture, and raise a high and insulating wall against European invasion.... For their part, the Spanish brought with them the decision to convert the Indian into a Christian of Castile, a laborer of the Old World, absorbed and incorporated totally to their language, beliefs, customs and mentality, in order to convert America into a huge New Spain. Neither did they succeed. The chronicle of the settlement [of America] records the frustrated efforts, the desperate failures of that impossible enterprise.

What happened in America was neither the continuity of the Indian world nor the extension of Europe, but something totally different, and this is why it was a New World from the very beginning. Uslar-Pietri paints a vivid picture of a scene he imagines in recently-conquered Cuzco, in the house of the soldier-poet Garcilaso de la Vega, whose son Inca Garcilaso would become the most famous mestizo poet of colonial Peru.

> In one wing of the building, the captain was in a huddle with his comrades, with his friars and their scribes, immersed in the old, cracked skin of the Hispanic world, and in the opposite wing was [his Indian consort] Ñusta [princess] Isabel, with her Inca relatives, reminiscing in Quechua about the lost splendors of the old times.[95] The boy who would be Inca Garcilaso ran back and forth between the two wings like a spool that was weaving the fabric of a new destiny.

What the Filipinos have called "colonial mentality" Uslar-Pietri terms "the subjugated consciousness." He asserts that original creation is possible from a situation of political or economic vassalage when there is rebellion and protest, whether tacit or explicit, instead of conformism, citing the example of Russia, in which the literature from the times of economic and cultural de-

[95] A poetic image, certainly, but Uslar-Pietri does not include the scene's possible somatic component: Ñusta Isabel and her relatives are also in mourning for their world destroyed, their fathers, sons, brothers, uncles disappeared, their gods banished by the new gods according to prophecy.

pendence under the czars is far superior to literature produced during the Soviet regime. However, he cautions that one must know how to recognize the subjugated consciousness, which can either take the form of "pleasurable and passive surrender to something that is not one's own, or remaining in a state of anguish and vigil, in the creative search and affirmation of what is one's own." He describes the fundamental role of the work of art before situations of vasallage:

> Under the most negative external conditions and even as a necessary response to the degrading limits that these can attempt to impose, the work of art arises as a testimony and an illumination.

The Venezuelan philosopher defines the subjugated mentality as tending to be imitative and sterile, based on acceptance and conformism and not on dissidence and protest:

> The attitude of a man who is completely integrated and incorporated into a situation that is totally accepted tends to divest him of all individuality and power to question. Anyone who has arrived at the conviction that all the answers are given in the Koran is not only capable, but even feels obliged to do it as a kind of public service, of burning the Library of Alexandria, or at the very least he will refuse to waste time by writing a single page that would, evidently, be merely repetitive or useless. No one wastes time lighting a candle in the blinding light of noon, and the world of artists and literary creators is that of the lighters of candles in the darkest corners of the soul or of society.

Uslar-Pietri warns us that a colonized mentality in literature takes the form of a sensationalistic appeal to old images and arguments that have lost all relevance for the present. I agree with the assertion, but it seems important to me to extend the example to other fields, specifically politics. In the Philippines we have been the stupefied witnesses of an enervating procession of demagogues who tirelessly offer arguments stolen from the past in order to rouse powerful emotions and gain popular support for aims which (they declaim) seek true answers to current problems. It is a tactic that has finally become as inefficient as it is hackneyed, a cheap trick, so to speak, for harnessing dormant social forces for the achievement of dubious personal ends, hidden behind a false nationalistic discourse.

Uslar-Pietri now describes the pseudo-artistic culture of the subjugated consciousness, which appropriates to itself the authentic responses of past generations and pastes them disingenuously over situations and responses in the present that are nothing more than a mechanical repetition, a static interpretation of the past:

> If it does not fall into sterility, the subjugated mentality satisfies itself with imitation, which is the false crisis, false conflict, false language, and the form that crisis and conflict had donned for other human beings in other latitudes. It is the kingdom of literary and artistic parasites who live from and batten on beings who are different from them, or of those who mechanically repeat, without content or substance, the gestures and postures that men of other times and worlds have adopted before the terrible demands of their reality.

However the author emphasizes that it is not a matter of limiting oneself to autocthonous literary and artistic forms and rejecting all others that are foreign, but of focusing on what is primary and essential, that is, the content that is one's own, and one's knowledge of and ability to work with universalist forms:

> This is not tantamount to condemning the Latin American artist and writer to autocthonism and – even worse – to *costumbrismo* [a literary genre based on the depiction of local customs and manners]. One must know how to utilize universal forms of language and art, but to the degree that they are required or justified as part of the effort to affirm oneself before, or against, one's own surrounding reality. Which is the fundamental problem of being or seeming to be; of being genuine or false; of discovering or repeating.

This is a generalization that will undoubtedly be hotly contested, but in my opinion Filipino writers have a propensity for facile superpositioning of contents from the past over the emergencies of the present. There is one outstanding example -- our modern writers have transposed with astonishing ease the figure of Rizal over that of Ninoy Aquino as if the circumstances of the two men were identical (i.e., a martyr's death leads to popular canonization) -- when each man acted within a different historical moment, in response to political, social and cultural issues that could not be more different. In the process, Rizal is further caricaturized and his humanity and historical power diminished upon being made the equivalent of a media hero, a politician who,

though brilliant, did not have a proposal of historical change for his country. Rather, Aquino dedicated his political career, first to combatting, then to bringing to an end the predominance of the man whose greatest political rival he was. Not only this. Aquino acted as the white king in a chess game played by the U.S. Marcos, financed in his political rise and presidential campaigns and maintained in power by the CIA, is the archenemy of Aquino, scion of a family that began to play a role in Filipino politics during the transition from Spanish to U.S. rule, and who married the daughter of sugar barons. Aquino received asylum in the U.S. after his long imprisonment during Marcos' martial law and occupied his exile teaching at Harvard. After his death and Marcos' fall, his wife is elected president by a people who later fell from euphoria into disappointment, as they saw how she was used to further the interests of the economic power bloc led by her family. Corazón Aquino had no political program of her own. As a bluestocking educated in an Ivy League university she was a tractable daughter of the U.S., and her moral agenda consisted of her devotion to the Catholic Church. Her presidency was celebrated by the U.S. Senate and then-President Reagan. This was the grand result of Ninoy Aquino's martyrdom, the man today considered as the second Rizal.

Aquino, upon being called the new Rizal, receives the great benefit – of questionable veracity, since his new, sanctified image was owed more to the media's powers of suggestion rather than to the rise of Aquino's image in the popular conscience as a moral reference – of being transformed from a professional politician into a social redeemer. Nevertheless, at the most he had played the role of the dictator's political nemesis, who acquired throughout his years of persecution by the same, a halo of superhuman devotion crowned by martyrdom. A devotion which was the logical consequence of a change which, undoubtedly, must have operated within Aquino during the years of imprisonment, during which a sense of moral mission was forged, as he saw that his was the only figure invested with the weight and credibility –- ideological as well as personal -- needed to displace the man who had gone mad with power. It was his sense of mission that gave Aquino the force to return to Manila from freedom and comfort in the U.S. and face the dictator for the last time (it seems that he had this presentiment) on the dictator's own ground. The chronically-ill Marcos was still in power but only nominally. Aquino knew it, and he frightened and enraged Marcos's watchdogs so much that they committed the stupendous idiocy of eliminating him in front of the entire nation.

And many will say to me: notwithstanding the clear distance between the two men in terms of their philosophical, cultural and human stature, was not Rizal the greatest enemy of the masters of the Philippines – the friars – and was it not Rizal who forced the hand of the colonial government (the friars' faithful servants and guardians) to commit the gross blunder of shooting him?

Agreed. It cannot be denied that from the mythico-historical perspective, there is a clear similarity between the two men.

I will however insist that such a simplistic and sensationalist analogy between Aquino and Rizal cannot but overlook another interpretation, less romantic and flattering, but absolutely supported by the country's real situation: as a saddening signal of the reigning cultural indigence and vacuum of moral references in the Philippines, because of the fact that since 1901, the only sphere of national life that has been given any importance is that of the politicians and of the foreign and local business and political interests that Filipino politicians have served.

I say this because the grandiose analogy leaves too many questions in the air. Can we not analyze past and present in other terms? What happened to the hard issues underlying the need to put an end to the Marcos dictatorship, which Ninoy's death achieved? Was the EDSA Revolution in fact the beginning of a new era for the Philippines? Could it not rather be seen as the babbling beginnings presaging the future arisal of a new and powerful phenomenon of national reunification?

Yes, EDSA was clearly the beginning of a new era: that of a Philippines without Marcos as president. But two presidents later, ruled by pro-Marcos Erap. Like the Philippines in 1898, that no sooner having freed herself of the burden of Spanish tyranny, found herself saddled anew, but with a worse burden -- the United States. In both cases, we continued to be not much more than a donkey that switched riders. In 1901 we exchanged the European of medium height and slender build for a blond, pink-complexioned giant, speaking loudly in an incomprehensible language and carrying a big stick.

If we want to resolutely break new ground to the future, we must return to Rizal and undertake the materialization of the great Rizalian dream of Filipino social redemption. As the artifice of the destruction of Marcos's overt power, Ninoy Aquino is certainly a postmodern hero – but only one among many, the

one who has won the greatest fame. There have been many more who have not gotten any press, who have even gotten a lot of bad press or simply been carefully blacked out from the news. And without any doubt, in terms of leaving a legacy for the future, Rizal continues unparalleled and his message still waiting to be finally understood, taken seriously and put into effect. In this sense, once all the comparisons between Aquino and Rizal are done, we find ourselves once more before the great Question: brilliant mythological-historical analogies aside, when will we do something about the tremendous mess under our noses that is going from bad to worse to catastrophic with each passing day?

For now we shall leave the question launched and suspended in the air, in order to finish listening to Don Arturo Uslar-Pietri.

He continues the thread of the description and analysis of original artistic creation, which must find its path without falling into either the trap of sterile imitation of foreign forms, the deceptive transposition over the present of past realities, or forced self-enclosement in autocthonous forms and content. He explains that it is not a matter of simply transplanting other realities, citing the example of how the communications media are superimposing Anglo-Saxon cultural contents over Latin American culture. On the other hand, he cautions that simple autocthonism is also a form of subjugated consciousness because it paralyzes the process of growth and seeks to perpetuate the past. What is the answer then? He responds succinctly and precisely: Creativity, and an attitude of openness to the world:

> The remedy cannot be isolation, nor a sanctimonious nationalistic complacency; even less, a systematic anachronism supplied on demand like a psychotropic drug. One must be out in the world, but as a participant in the world's real struggles. Aware at every moment of what one risks losing and what might be gained. Lucidly betting on contemporaneousness and universality, but without losing sight of the situation that the bettor is in.
>
> ...There is no doubt that one must know what is happening in the world in order to better know what is happening in our home. In any case, this is the fundamental duty of intellectuals, whether they believe themselves to be insurgents and turn out to be vassals, or whether they are vassals and believe they are insurgents.

> This is the drama, the issue and the fertile destiny of the intelligentsia of Latin America at this great hour of history. In the measure that men and women of thought, creators and artists understand this and seek to express it in their works and messages, they will travel the marvelous path of creating the New World. In the measure that they do not comprehend it, they will turn their backs on the New World and its promise of originality, even if individually they become the Kandinsky of Brazil, the Becket of Santo Domingo, or – why not? – the Victor Hugo of Panama.

**Marlon Riggs: Cultural Identity based on Union through the Affirmation of Diversity**

Marlon T. Riggs (1957-1994) was a writer, movie and video producer and director, a graduate with honors from Harvard in 1978 and professor of Documentary Filmmaking at the University of California in Berkeley. His films won awards in Europe and the United States, though always amid controversy in his home country because they focused on the black gay man's search for the vindication of his cultural identity.

I know a bit more now about Riggs thanks to the Internet, but I learned of his existence through serendipity during a visit to San Francisco, California in 1994. One night I switched on the TV and found myself watching an interview with Riggs filmed in 1993, the year before his death. Riggs was plain and soft spoken, warm, yet his ideas were complex and powerful. As I listened to him speak on camera about black identity I realized what a rare opportunity I had stumbled across, grabbed a notebook and began writing down his words.

Riggs spoke with astonishing profundity, although he used ordinary language, of the evolution and current status of African-Angloamerican identity. He posited the equal impossibility of returning to the mythical African past and of continuing to sustain black identity over the image of the white man and the dialectical coexistence of these identities within a society ruled by the values of the predominant racial group. In other words, Riggs explained, the African-American people of today can no longer base their self-concept on a mythical past in Africa or on the historical experience of slavery and the alienation that persists within American society between them and the Anglo-Saxon establishment. Today the image of the African past has been surpassed by an extremely complex and rich accumulation of social and historical experience. On the other hand, the image of the white Other negates the humanity of a people marked by degradation and the mutilation of its humanity dur-

ing the 250 years that the slave trade existed in the former English colony and after its independence. Therefore, black identity based on the negation of the humanity of the whites is useless for the construction of a new future, because to reject the Other still perpetrates an enchainment to that image, and therefore to the dehumanized image of the one who rejects. Both options therefore are in reality one and the same – a clinging to an old construct of identity that is inoperative for the present, resists change and that inevitably leads to what Riggs called "backlash" – violent reaction, the pendulum swing.

The thinking developed by Riggs captivates with its paradoxical mix of complex substance and simplicity of exposition and because he clearly saw the promise of this new era of unification around a renewed sense of community, within the broadest and most enriching diversity. Riggs was able to discover a thread that led him from his personal situation as an artist and black gay man who loved white gay men, and the real necessity and possibility that society today might overcome intolerance and racial and sexual violence through a cultural change of humanizing the image one has of the other, and the affirmation and validation by minorities of their cultural and human identity. He used video and poetry as the medium for revealing and expressing humanness, and precisely by discovering self-acceptance, self-affirmation and art in the very things that a discriminated group is made to feel ashamed of, but that constitute in fact its genuine modes of self-expression.

He belonged to a minority within a minority, because gay blacks reject their brothers who desire intimacy with whites, and he assumed the risk of exposing his personal situation as the example in his attempt to change the prejudices toward the minority he belonged to. Nevertheless, he had the intellectual and human largeness of self to transcend and move beyond the concerns of his group, including in his message and his art the affirmation of humanness in diversity and the right to the creation of one's own identity based on the acceptance and positivization of what one in effect is. Finally, he went one daring step further and linked the struggle for the vindication of black gay rights to the historical image of social struggle of figures who are paradigmatic for the African-American people, such as the abolitionists Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass, and the socio-religious leaders Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.

During the filmed interview, Riggs explained with simple eloquence:

> The old identities are falling apart all over the world. We live within a new multiculturalism and the challenge we face is assuming diversity, learning to embrace, respect and reaffirm our differences without privileging any one difference above any other.
>
> This attitude is what will allow us to appreciate what it means to be human.
>
> A new phoenix is arising from the ashes of this civilization.
>
> We are transforming ourselves into a global family whether we like it or not, and in a world where the imperative of forming a communitarian social identity is the only possible response to violence, we cannot advance a single step without the capacity of accepting ourselves, before anything else. Without this precondition, we cannot accept anybody else.
>
> We can forge a new individual identity that is not based on the Other, that can expand toward a group, national and global identity.
>
> The Other is no longer the fundamental premise of our individuality. We can't go back to the mythical past. We have to take our fragmented past and present, and achieve a redefinition of our identity.

Riggs concluded that his people needed to undertake the task of creating a mythology, "not a literal one, but a metaphoric mythology." This statement puzzled me at first, because I had no access to any of his writings, but with the passing of time and subsequent readings of other writers who have elucidated for me the importance of myth for the life of postindustrial man, I have reached the conclusion that what Riggs wanted to say was that a people who yearn to achieve a new, empowering identity must come into profound contact with their most intimate and powerful symbols and psychic images – those capable of moving them profoundly and therefore, of mobilizing them into constructive, creative action.

It is my conviction that in the case of the Filipinos, the psychic images that have the most profound hold on our consciousness and, therefore, have the power to mobilize us in a new direction toward reunification and the fulfillment of our destiny, are to be found in the events and heroes of our revolutionary history between 1870 and 1913, through our conceptual, emotional and visceral reconstruction of the true culture and history of Hispanic Philippines.

♥♥♥

I am no longer a 'little brown sister.' I am a Filipino who didn't even exist as such before Magellan arrived and named my archipelago. He came and separated me from my tribal identity, my tribal family. He imposed a new vision and I accepted it and took a subservient place within it. The Other was the Spaniard, the friar, and they said they loved me and came to save me, and I believed them. But after many generations I grew and realized that there were other motives and other interests that sacrificed my life and my children´s lives for alien benefit. I fought that world then. It was painful for me and I had to be prepared to give my life. I even had to kill a part of myself. I succeeded, but another conqueror came. Another Other who later made me forget many deaths and offenses and convinced me that his dominion meant my welfare.

The Spanish brought me Salvation and the Americans brought Democracy and Progress. And yet I found myself becoming more confused, and I believed my country was only the place where I was born and preferred to grow old and die in. I then became a wanderer, a displaced person in search of my family's welfare.

In the course of my search I lost my country; I lost my self.

Today I look at myself and see that I am quite something. I've lived through a lot and accomplished much. But I have no memory. I want to hear the stories of my past, I want to listen to the voices of my grandparents, great-grandparents, and my great-great-grandparents, who were silent. When I have learned the stories, I want to tell them to my children.

Because without the stories, how can we find our way in this world? Without stories we can believe in, I mean. Stories that ring in your bones and tell you -- yes, this is true, follow it, believe it and give thanks, for you have found your lost home.

# Chapter 11

## Writing on Identity

The few writers (including myself) I have come across who have dealt with this topic have done so in four ways. First there is the sociological approach most commonly taken by Filipino historians and writers, of describing the Filipino character through generalization and enumeration of the different regional personalities, the psychological markings and behaviors of *utang na loob*, *pakikisama*, *bahala na*, and so on.

There is a literary mode of writing about identity, in which writers describe not only individual traits, but, above all, they communicate profound human experiences within a specific social and cultural context (generally, of crisis), described with emotional and psychological depth and commitment, often because the authors write from living experience. This approach to writing on identity, being in a literary mode, sends its messages indirectly, thru allegory and metaphor, suggestion and atmosphere, rather than in explicit, analytical language. I consider Rizal's novels as being the prime examples of literature on Hispanic-Filipino identity, and Carlos Bulosan's *America is in the Heart*, as providing important clues to Filipino identity in crisis during the North American colonial period, in the raw and poignant recounting of Bulosan's struggle, as a member of the Manong generation, to fit into an America in which it was "a crime to be a Filipino."

There is a third mode which describes the psychology of a people on the basis of their collective historical and cultural experience. The writers I have read whom I identify as fitting into this category are Octavio Paz, in his landmark *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, which examines and interprets the Mexican soul in the context of Mexico's revolutionary and political history; Uslar-Pietri as an essayist, writing on the Latin American search for identity; Miguel de Unamuno as a critic of the Spanish personality in crisis during the transition between the end of Spain's empire and her birth into modern statehood; and Luigi Barzini's *The Italians*, which analyzes the Italian character and psyche by tracing the artists, religious and political leaders who have made the greatest impact on Italy's history. Barzini's work also presents an explanation and interpretation of the evolving Italian philosophy of pragmatic *dolce vita* in the context of her modern social reality.

I write about Filipino identity from a double perspective that is part technical and part personal. The technical aspect is the application of my studies of the Psychology of the Consciousness, the function of the image, and of the Siloist concepts of process and structural vision to history. The personal aspect derives from my self-knowledge work between the ages of 19 and 36, years in which I applied evolutionary psychology to my life, whose most precious and unexpected benefit has been the discovery of my Filipino identity, which I have subsequently communicated in my writing between ages 39 and 45, my age as I write this.

It is my conviction that the old formula of enumerating our national traits is no longer -- nor was it ever -- a satisfactory approach for defining our identity, because of its lack of depth and psychological naiveté. At this moment in time, we must deal with our identity organically and somatically: as being rooted in our history, in the collective biography of the Filipino people, in our past and present relationship with our homeland and with each other. This task can only be undertaken by applying self-observation to the way we perceive the world and ourselves in relation to it. Such self-observation is the activity par excellence of our human consciousness, and it is only thus -- by appealing to the new perspective of serious self-observation and reflection on our mentality and its evolution -- that we can recognize and describe the new, meaningful image of ourselves that is in fact already before us, if only we can see through our old sight.

From this perspective of linking the examination of identity to history and applying the self-critical y meditative faculties of the consciousness, what leaps to our awareness is the incontrovertible fact of our having been, for almost all of our written history, a colonized nation.

Colonization is therefore the historical framework, the major context, within which I choose to examine the development of Filipino identity.

It is in our history of successive colonizations and diasporas that our identity has been formed and expressed. Our consciousness as a nation has been powerfully and undeniably conditioned by a history of reiterated divestment of our right to self-determination and self-definition.

The consideration of our vital origins as a repeatedly colonized people can yield new depths of understanding regarding our self-perceptions and our actions, and on the basis of this comprehension we can configure an accurate

description and interpretation of our complex identity today -- and by 'accurate' I mean one that will be recognized by us as resonating with our intimate psychological registers of our reality.

The behaviors that our inner self images have given rise to throughout our history, those very conducts that up until now have merely been put together in a kind of grocery list or mechanical inventory of Filipino idiosyncracies, without any attempt to comprehend their reasons for being and the functions they fulfill in the economy of our collective psychic life, can then begin to acquire for us the meaningfulness and logic that they have always possessed. And the value of undertaking the voyage to self-comprehension is this: when the darkness of self-unawareness is broken by the light of comprehension and self-knowledge, our old mechanical behaviors will spontaneously and smoothly transmute into more conscious, more intelligent conducts.

Writing on identity therefore, is not just an exercise in intellectual speculation for me, but a serious effort aimed at creating mental conditions for the arising of new comprehension and self-knowledge, in the interest of empowering us all to recreate the past, the present and the future, to recreate ourselves, and in consequence, to recreate the entire world in our new image.

# Chapter 12

## Filipino Identity and Serial Colonization

In Chapter 10 I developed an approach to the issue of identity by first defining the term and developing a description of the registers that accompany the presence of identity, both at the personal and the collective level. I then proceeded to describe the process of identity formation as I conceive it: as the configuring of an image of self which is based on the body and the memory, and which is codified and transmitted through language in the form of a vitally grounding narrative.

I then stated that, at the level of the macro historical process, the first instance of the formation of a mestizo identity at a grand scale was that which resulted from the collision between the Indian and European civilizations during the Age of Discovery and Conquest, over the geographical space of the New World. The Philippines, though it did not become the setting for miscegenation at the same grand scale as in America, was nevertheless a part of that larger process, which went far beyond mere blood mixture, but was more than this an unprecedented overlapping of mentalities, languages, religions, in the course of which the indigenous cosmology was dismantled and the European medieval mind received 500 years' extension into the Age of Modernity, through the formation of a syncretic mestizo race and culture. The Conquest was, however, only the initial massive movement in what proved to be an inevitable progression toward global contact and fusion between all races and cultures. Identity has ever since become an increasingly more relevant concern, as traditional ways of life and of viewing the world have been challenged, undermined and inevitably transformed by planetary human synthesis.

I closed Chapter 10 by introducing the thinking of two cultural figures with respect to Latin American and African American identity in order to provide the reader with additional points of reference aside from my own, before moving on to an analysis of the formation of Filipino identity.

In Chapter 11 I briefly explained how I write about this issue, in comparison to other writers who have dealt with their own nations, and how I believe my approach differs from the traditional focus on identity of earlier Filipino writers.

The material in this chapter was originally presented as a paper at the First International Conference on Philippine Studies held in Reggio Calabria, Italy, in November 1998. It is my first, imperfect attempt at mapping the development of Filipino identity within the adverse framework of our serial colonization, and the language already previously introduced in the first part of this book will be used in a technical way without, it is hoped, posing too many difficulties of comprehension for the reader. In any case, Chapters 1 and 2 contain explanations of the Siloist method of analysis and the basic concepts applied in this discussion. The glossary of terms in Appendix A also provides additional clarifications.

* * *

## The Formerly Colonized on the Threshold of a New Identity

Although cultural identity is an issue for all nations today, its study at this historical moment especially answers to a vital existential need for collective self-knowledge among all the formerly colonized peoples of Asia, Africa, Oceania and America, and within the human groups who have been forcibly transplanted to foreign sociocultural milieux, because of the population displacements that have so characterized the 20th century.

These large movements of population, the product in prehistory of natural cataclysms, great changes in the Earth's configuration and climate, and incipient transport and navigational technology, in our era have been the consequence of world conflicts, invasions and colonizations, economic crises, transport and telecommunications technology, and the phenomenon of manifest globalization and human planetary synthesis which they have all brought about.

Transplanted migratory groups bring with them to their new land an awareness of their respective stories of origin, but their new experience can best be reflected on and written about by themselves. However, these groups, as dislocated humans forced to pull up roots and experience involuntary insertion into alien cultures, often do not have a culture of writing about such a dynamic and complex, present-intense and past-obliterating experience. They frequently come from the lower socioeconomic strata of their original societies and, in the struggle to simultaneously overcome the trauma of flight and adapt with alacrity to the barely comprehensible demands of a new world, opt to

forget or outright divest themselves of their emotional and psychic bonds to the country they have been forced to abandon.

The Filipinos are perhaps the prime example of this type of human group, having experienced a successive double -- and I affirm, really triple -- colonization between the 16th and 20th centuries, and the global diaspora that is our response to repeated, traumatic divestment of self and country.

This enunciation of ideas on identity formation and the impacts exercised on it by colonization in the specific case of the Filipinos aims to take the examination of identity to a theoretical and objective level of speculation and discussion, beyond the recountings of individual transculturation that currently proliferate in Filipino literature, in the interest of creating a conceptual frame or structure that may be useful for understanding an experience that most Filipinos, in one way or another, are consciously living through and need to integrate. Such a structure would help to derive observations and provisional conclusions that might add clarity to this process and enable us to understand our collective behavior, decide whether we want to change it, and in what ways.

## The Impact of Serial Colonization on the Levels of Formation and Codification of Filipino Identity

Applying the analytical tool developed by Siloism called the Method, I structure the study of identity formation and codification into three levels, or planes: the plane of the individual, of relations and of process.

## I THE INDIVIDUAL PLANE

As discussed in Chapter 10, on the individual plane identity is first formed through two components:

- *Somatic and emotional experiences* that produce a deep sense of ontological security, identification and fusion at the corporal, sensorial level (mother, home, family, land); and

- The codification of these sensorial, emotional registers in a *mother tongue*, which can also be several languages, but all serving as vehicles of the same sense of familiarity and at-home-ness; again, providing the individual with ontological security as s/he bonds with the mother, then is incorporated into a family, later a clan and finally, through that clan, to a nation. The function of language in identity formation is also as the vehicle of each individual's story, the narrative of his/her biography, which is what makes each person unique. That narrative is expanded and becomes part of the narrative of the family, tribe, and nation, and the individual must *possess* that narrative, feel vitally linked to it, in order to be grounded in a deep sense of the reality of their being.[96]

### Somatic-Emotional Identification

In the case of the Filipinos, the first component of identity formation is present -- there is a powerful identification with the land, or, in the case of trans-

[96] In this sense, the acquiring and development of a personal and a group identity is part and parcel of being solidly anchored in a cosmology, which is a collective narrative/image of the nature of the universe and, in the case of the pre-hispanic Filipinos, was one proper to religious, traditional man. Upon our entry into Western civilization, our native cosmology was dismantled and had to be reassembled to be as faithful a copy as possible of that of the Christian conquistadors. When our hispanic colonization ended, however, we underwent a second dismantling of what was in any case still a religious cosmology, into a profane and materialist one. These developments all impacted on the beleaguered Filipino consciousness, as it was forced to absorb a new coercive psychic construct, **after** it had projected outward a powerful intention and a very first project of cosmogony: the Revolution and the First Republic. [Please see Appendix C for an explanation of cosmology/cosmogony referred to religious, traditional man.]

planted Filipinos, with the parent or parents. However, for northern and central Filipinos, because of colonization, their psychic grounding stops at the level of clan -- there is no feeling of being part of a nation, except for the brief interval between 1872 and 1913, when the 1896 Revolutionary process developed and ended. The reasons for this are clear: during Spanish rule, neither the mestizos nor the native Filipinos possessed their country -- it was the property of the Other and they were natural beings without intentionality, possessed by the Other along with their land.

## Islamic Filipinos

The Islamic Filipinos were never completely pacified and integrated into the colonial society by the Spanish. They were not converted to Catholicism and maintained their Moslem religion, culture and monarchic government. Thus in this study of Filipino identity, the Moslem Filipinos form a second pole of tension (we may even posit that theirs is the authentic surviving native Filipino identity), in contraposition to the twice-colonized Christian Filipinos' syncretized, synthetic identity. In any case, the Islamic Filipinos, identifying with their separate and integral cosmology, have never identified culturally, religiously or historically with the Christian Filipinos, and, needless to say, maintained their cultural autonomy from the Hispanic-Filipino center in the past, and from North-Americanized Filipino society.[97]

## Language and Somatic-Emotional Identification

Language was a part of the somatic-emotional identification process also only up to the level of clan, because neither Tagalog nor Spanish became a vehicle of deep linguistic identification and effective unification. In contrast, in Latin America[98] Spanish did become the language of unification because of the formation of a mestizaje and a large creole group that identified somatically and emotionally with the land of their birth. Neither took place in the Philippines. The Spanish and creole minority identified with Spain and the mestizos

---

[97] In the case of the southern Islamic Filipinos, their island identity, cohered by Malayan Islamic culture and religion, defined Mindanao as a clearly differentiated region from Visayas and Luzon, and their sultanates coexisted in a permanent state of tension with the Spanish and North American colonial powers. The Mindanaoans did not identify with the Christianized Filipinos although they did join the revolutionary movement and the resistance against the U.S. After independence from the U.S. in 1946, they began to assert their wish for autonomy, and today Mindanao is officially designated as an Autonomous Region. In terms of trade, the Mindanaoans consider that they "export" their products to Manila. It was always this way, since the 16th century, and not only Mindanao, but also the Visayas considered Manila another country.

[98] 'Latin America' refers to all of Hispanic America, from Mexico down to the Southern Cone.

were few and even when they formed a Hispanic Filipino identity, they did not identify politically or culturally with the aspirations of the native non-mestizo population. The native nationalist middle class did, but they did not survive the revolutionary war intact. The non-nationalist creoles and mestizos insinuated themselves into the higher echelons of the culturally divided revolutionary government and advocated capitulation to the Americans, who could deliver what they wanted: political protagonism in a reformist -- not revolutionary -- society, one in which their differentiated identity and privileged position would be preserved.

In the Moslem south, Tagalog and Spanish were disseminated but never to the extent of becoming vehicles of deep culture for the people, rather as trading and administrative languages, useful for dealing with what was perceived as a foreign governmental presence and a minority Christianity-practicing native group with cultural and political commitments to the foreign administration.

Through Spanish, the creoles and educated mestizos and Filipinos identified with a rather conceptual Mother Country: Spain. The non-Spanish educated natives received the message that the native motherland and her native children were 'less than' the Mother Country and the Spanish-speaking children. Thus, language (Spanish) became associated with separation, differentiation, exclusion and denial of being, for the native Christian, disenfranchized Filipinos.

Spanish did not come to mean the same thing to the Islamic Filipinos because they did not accept Christianity and the colonial cosmology. The Spanish never succeeded in disarticulating their original psychic world.

**Divestment of Narrative: Predominance of a Foreign Voice and Look in Philippine History**

During the 377 years of Spanish colonial rule, the disseminated historical narratives on the Philippines were the works written by Spanish friars from a religious perspective, and these were used as the main sources of standard history texts. The first historiographic work on the Philippines, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, published in 1609 by Antonio de Morga, was unknown in the Philippines until Rizal discovered it in London and republished it. There were no Filipino historiographers during the Spanish period. After the North American colonial period began, as Renato Constantino states in *Identity and Consciousness*, "(t)he Spanish legacy of ignorance made it easier for the

Americans to carry out their own process of miseducation." The European education which formed the mentality of the Hispanic-Filipino middle class, with its emphasis on the humanities, was replaced by the materialist and positivist American canon. The Filipinos' cultural landscape was deconstructed and Spanish and the Hispanic past were set aside. The entire country was re-educated in English. But how profound could this educational process have become under a new colonial power whose interests were economic and military? What happened was a cultural lobotomy, a flattening-out of the Filipino memory and the acquisition of a new shallow borrowed culture -- one that could more correctly be called "borrowed" than the Hispanic-Filipino culture that preceded it, because it lasted such a short time, besides being imposed by decree. This meant that deep knowledge of Spanish language and culture was lost, and the *syncretic yet authentic construct* of Hispanic-Filipino social customs, traditions and values quickly metamorphosed into an American-Filipino pseudoculture and lifestyle. No culture of linguistic translation developed, since there was no interest either in translating Spanish literature into English, within a new educational system completely geared to the United States, nor in maintaining the Filipinos culturally abreast of developments in the Hispanic world (perceived by the U.S. as inferior because technologically backward). New generations of historians with only school Spanish began to cite Spanish texts out of context to support limited theories and visions, formed in a quite different temporal and cultural awareness. I say they did so "out of context," meaning without deep discernment of the past cultural world that such documents were produced in, which first of all enables the researcher to work from a basic attitude of respect and valuation that is unquantifiable, but nonetheless affects the quality of the final products of research and educational endeavor in the humanities. I also say their vision was "limited" because they implicitly circumscribed themselves to addressing a narrow world which consisted of Americans and Americanized Filipinos. The Hispanic world simply lost importance and vanished. The Spanish colonizers became the bogeymen. Everything was terrible in those days. The creoles and mestizos kept mum. It would have been impolitic for them in the American era to show vehement clinging to or nostalgia for Hispanic culture. Thus they kept the legacy for themselves, as a family affair, as the family jewels. This attitude also helped to erode the cultural memory and legacy.

Thus it was that during the North American era, American historians and writers and American-era trained Filipino scholars began to be the voices of authority on the Philippines (in that order). A generation of Filipino historians trained in the North American canon -- the first we had ever had, since under

Spain there were no native historians[99] -- published their work in English. They had not received a cultural formation under the nationalist Hispanic-Filipino paradigm. The generation of heroes and intellectuals of 1896 were in their majority exiled or killed, and the individuals who survived, though there were highly-cultured and respected nationalists among them, as isolated individuals could have nothing but scant influence over thought, public opinion and long-term educational policy under the Americans. The Filipinos were already hurtling toward postmodernity, eager to divest themselves of the annoying burdens of the past. History books on the Philippines, written based on the partial and elementary translations of Spanish chronicles, and increasingly documented with the writings of American historians, became culturally superficial narratives promoting a subtly pro-North American Filipino perspective. Cultural contact with Spain and the Latin American world ended. Spanish language, perceived as an anachronism and a reminder of the cultural inferiority that the indios suffered under the Spaniards, creoles and mestizos, was dropped as an official language in the 1950s and eliminated from the high school and university curricula in the 1970s. The United States became the overweening presence in the Filipino mental and psychic landscape. The conditions were set down for the second wave of the Diaspora: the Brain Drain.

The loss of memory also had a physical basis: loss of documentation. During the revolutionary war against Spain and the ensuing guerrilla war against the United States, large quantities of historical documents were confiscated from the revolutionary forces or removed to Madrid upon the Spaniards' withdrawal. Another significant amount was seized by the United States and shipped to Washington D.C. Several files disappeared from the American military command's headquarters in Manila after they had been indexed -- they apparently never arrived in Washington. I don't know if their fate was ever clarified or whether there was ever a formal request from the Philippine government for an accounting of the disappeared files from the U.S. government. It is not hard to imagine what they may have contained, and which made their disappearance an imperative.

The historical documents from the Spanish period and the U.S. Army's "Philippine Insurgent Records" which are in the Spanish language are largely unexamined. According to historian Bernardita Reyes Churchill, Filipino historians today are unable to work with Spanish documents. The microfilms are in

[99] Dr. Jose Rizal became the first Filipino historian, by publishing his annotated edition of Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*.

very poor condition and the images of the handwritten documents are almost illegible. Any meaningful amount of sifting through them, which would easily run into months because of their disorganized and repetitive condition (the American clerks who photographed the documents in Washington during the 1900s even photographed typed duplicates and blank pages!) would damage any researcher´s eyesight. The originals must be digitalized for the future, but if they are already "rotting away" in the vaults and there is no social consensus regarding the importance of preserving our bibliographic resources and modernizing the way they are managed, how can the government be pressured to allocate funding for the protection of these endangered remnants of our historical patrimony?

## A Deeper Vision: Ileto's "History from Below"

I consider Reynaldo Ileto's *Pasyon and Revolution* to be a breakthrough historical work of the post-U.S. era. It is an annotated translation into English of the Tagalog oral tradition called *pasyon awit*. Through literary analysis of this lyrical form, Ileto traces the evolution of an urban and rural native consciousness, externalized in the *pasyon* tradition from the 1840s on, developing into an underground movement of liberation of which the colonial government and the religious orders had only a dim awareness. Despite periodic violent repression, the tradition was repeatedly revived by prophets preaching an ideal of united brotherhood in holy struggle for the Motherland's redemption, which was also symbolic of the native self´s redemption from the degradation of colonial enslavement. In *Pasyon and Revolution* the principal protagonist of the revolutionary process is not the ilustrado class but a heretofore invisible brotherhood bearing what would be the key characteristics of the revolutionary society later called the Katipunan, and whose historical shadow has continued to hover over modern religiopolitical societies like Lapiang Malaya and Watawat ng Lahi. Ileto asserts convincingly that the KKK was not merely the secret society founded in Manila in 1894 by an Andrés Bonifacio inspired by the ideas of the ilustrados and by Rizal, but the logical consequence of an old and secret tradition that expressed the popular dream of emancipation and was sustained by a living line of rural Filipino messiahs and revolutionary leaders.

It can be affirmed that through works such as Ileto´s we are beginning to repossess our own narrative. But much remains to be done in terms of producing a new leap in our consciousness, and one of our tasks must be to erase the Language Line from the Filipino psyche.

## The Language Line, or the Polemics of Identity-As-Language

A "language line" arose during the Spanish period, in which, aside from the institutionalization of race difference, the dominant cultural minority bolstered the myth of its inherent superiority to the native majority by withholding its language and culture. This language line was maintained intact during the American period, when, notwithstanding the greater accessibility of English than that of Spanish under Spain, the creole and native aristocracy formed under Spanish rule retained its cachet of cultural superiority as Spanish-speaking Filipinos and did not pass on the Hispanic-Filipino cultural legacy they had received. The new ilustrado (or educated) class, this time was sent to study in U.S. universities and upon their return obtained high positions in government and developed successful careers in the private sector, perpetrating the social inequalities based on linguistic and educational achievement that had put down deep roots during the Hispanic-Filipino era. This ilustrado class was now predominantly native in its racial characteristics, but, together with the upper classes, began to institutionalize the new hybrid strain of colonization: internal colonization, or the rule of the powerful and super-rich minority over the majority poor and landless Filipinos.

To this day, Spanish is an elitist language in the Philippines (a cultural phenomenon that produces wonderment and incredulousness among Latin Americans, for whom Spanish is the language of their despised classes) and despite the North Americans' much vaunted claims to diffusing their language through universal public education, it is a fact that, like Spanish under Spain´s colonial rule, English under the U.S. was mainly disseminated in the urban areas, and cultured English is only spoken in the Philippines today in the universities and is solely employed by the communications media oriented to the well-educated minority. Tagalog is being taught and promoted with greater emphasis today in the universities, but the lingua franca is Taglish, a mixture of English and Tagalog.

Merely giving more importance to Tagalog in the education of the already-privileged minority is not enough. All efforts to promote linguistic development, if not accompanied by measures to close the social chasms that continue to be widened by the cultural abandonment of the majority and their resulting inability to rise above poverty and ignorance, miss the point once again. *Identity building is not merely an issue of linguistic correctness.*

In Filipino literature, only Rizal's novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* have clearly formulated the social and historical problems of the Philippines and their solution, which Rizal stated as education for the people and moral and civic uplifting -- the only possible foundations for true independence. Rizal is the prototype of the Hispanic Filipino with an authentic Filipino consciousness, and his image has never completely lost its paradigmatic power. However, certain aspects of his writings continue to be misinterpreted as expressions of his personal thinking, such as, for example, the diatribe of a character in *El Filibusterismo* against the natives' use of Spanish as self-demeaning, because Spanish is not their language and they should therefore use their own tongue, which is the only one that truly dignifies them.

Rizal has been portrayed as promoting a position of cultural purism that he did not espouse in life. As stated by W.E. Retana in his biography of our national hero, Rizal wanted Spanish to be the language of *all* Filipinos, their second mother tongue, and railed against the short-sighted meanspiritedness of those who denied Spanish education and culture to the Filipinos, whom he denounced as sowing hatred and alienation, prophesying that the inevitable fruit of such perversity would be "wolfsbane: the death of future generations."

The Language Line continues to this very day and caused the elimination of Spanish from the educational canon, leading to the extreme anomaly that a country that was a Spanish colony for 377 years, and whose documentary patrimony can be said to encompass not only the spectacular Spanish archives but those of Latin America as well, today does not have historians with a deep enough understanding of Hispanic Filipino culture to carry out research on the Spanish documentation in their very land, because they were conditioned for 45 years to study, think and communicate preferentially in English. This bizarre Language Line however also causes Filipinos in the Philippines to obviate speaking cultured English, because it may be interpreted as cultural snobbism and be punished by a varied repertoire of social sabotage.

Thus the Language Line has evolved as a kind of tyranny of cultural mediocrity in every direction -- hardly anyone can speak classical Tagalog, either. The argument I have encountered against promoting the study of classical Tagalog is that it would lead to a dangerous, new linguistic controversy: each Tagalog province would claim that its Tagalog was the purest one. One would simply be opening up a new can of worms. Is this a seriously taken point or a justification for not changing? Perhaps this is a counterpart of a response that used to be commonly given by Chileans in the eighties whenever one voiced a

complaint against mindless bureaucracy or the absurdity of certain ways of doing things: "What do you want? This is the Third World."

IN SYNTHESIS, the first level of identity formation in the Filipinos suffered the following negative effects of serial colonization:

- Though the Filipinos do have somatic-emotional identification with their land and language, it does not go beyond the level of family and clan. There *is* national somatic-emotional identification, but it is weak and undermined by class differences: the chasms between the very poor and the very rich, the well-educated and the under-educated, the cultured and the ignorant.

- Linguistic self-description and a deep sense of ownership of one's own narrative was harmed by serial colonization. First, under the Spanish the voice and look of the friar was privileged above that of the Spanish official, and the voice of native historians was non-existent. Ileto's work is important because it is the first major writing that presents rural Hispanic Filipino oral traditions, which allow the native voice to be heard as it describes the Filipino soul, its deepest symbols and powerful mobilizing images of liberation, and bonds these traditions to revolutionary history. He thus provides evidence that the 1896 Revolution was an authentic national struggle for liberation, the result of the arising of the first Filipino *national* identity.

The Language Line was born during the Spanish period and continued throughout the American era. Spanish as an elitist language was joined by English as a new elitist idiom, but as lip service to nationalistic equality, based on the impoverishment of culture and education, the preferential daily use of Taglish above correct, cultivated English or Tagalog has been promoted. Thus the deeper meanings of identity and nation building are deviated by the secondary issue of linguistic purism.

How can identity formation be strengthened at this level? How can we promote the recovery of our narrative and the elimination of our language line?

## II THE PLANE OF RELATIONS

This level of identity development has to do with geography, history, and inter-national relations. Identity is registered and configured in individuals and groups based on the experience of shared geography, awareness of a common history and the complementary relations developed with other individuals, groups and nations which deepen the register of a collective "I".

## Fragmented Vision of Geography and History

According to the chronicler Antonio Pigafetta, when Magellan's expedition landed in Luzon they found the *balangai* -- barangays, the city-states of the 'gentile' Malayan natives. After the expedition left Luzon and Zubu (today Cebu) and landed in Pulaoan (today Palawan) and Java, they encountered monarchies under Moslem rulers. The Spanish, as is universally known, gave the archipelago a name, and their administration imposed a formal Western order over that conglomeration of islands and multiplicity of realms and kingdoms -- a formal identity that had no existence outside of their minds. They did the exact same thing in Latin America (as they had done with Portugal and the Pope, when they summarily divided up the world into two large pieces of real estate). The indigenous inhabitants did not resist the Spanish mentality, but neither did they validate it and disarticulate their own vision (which was based on the indigenous somatic-emotional realities and narratives). No transcultured mestizaje took the place of those original native inhabitants, unlike in Latin America, where they were decimated and the few who survived did not live in the same spaces as the Spanish and the mestizos. It is therefore understandable that to this very day, in the native Filipino mind, we still see and feel the existence of an invisible line that is drawn between the formal and the real, and though we pay lip service to the formal, we live our lives according to what, at the level of inner reality, is "real."[100]

The Spanish mind worked in the same way, asserting its mindset and denying every other. Except for a minority among them, for example, the rare priest with genuine religious commitment and cultural and historical awareness such as Fray Bartolomé de las Casas and Fray Bernardino de Sahagún,[101] the Spanish were incapable of perceiving the objective validity of the indigenous civilizations, destroyed them unhesitatingly as works of the devil and replicated

---

[100] Please see Appendix C, on the concept of the archaic, religious cosmology that allows traditional man to live in close proximity to the sacred, which confers reality, being, and power.

[101] Fray Bartolomé de las Casas argued that the Indians had souls and denounced the abuses of the encomienda in the court of Isabel I. Fray Sahagún preserved Náhuatl (Aztec) accounts of the conquest of Mexico in the *Códice Florentino* (See Bibliography:*Visión de los Vencidos*).

the cosmology of Castile-Aragon throughout the entire New World. They named Mexico 'New Spain' and several thousand islands grouped close together as 'Felipinas,' after their king. "America" was the name later given to a continent whose inhabitants, even today, despite a common language and past, still feel strongly differentiated from each other. This is understandable if one reflects that not even the largest existing administrative order on the continent at the time of the Conquest, the Inca Empire, encompassed all the tribes spread out over that gigantic geography. Just the same, the Spanish went ahead and did what they did because it was their vital project to "discover a new world." They did discover a New World -- from their perspective – and, given the superiority of their war technology, subjugated the peoples they found and considered their lands and bodies as their new, rightful possessions. Such is the power of the intentionality to destroy and create worlds, and the power of the naive consciousness to co-opt the outer world as the unquestioned, logical extension of its inner reality.

However, our native psyche, intruded upon and forced to assimilate a vision come from without, resisted that change. The human consciousness is very much married to the body, and the body is one with its environment. The consciousness is also deeply determined by the past even as it is ineluctably oriented toward the future. The original separation of islands, of regions, of micro-identities, is therefore still very much alive and in force today, ruling side by side with our modern mentality and behavior and often overruling them. Colonization imposed a more complex step -- unification into administrative entities called nation-colonies -- but because it did so artificially, a backlash had to be produced at some point or at several ones (the periodic rebellions).

This process did not take place to the same extent in Mindanao as it did in the Visayas and Luzon. Today the Islamic Filipinos consider themselves a world apart from Christianized Filipinos, as they, in fact, are, in terms of cultural identity. They never accepted the sovereignty of the Spanish government over their own, but merely agreed to coexist with it. Neither did the mountain tribes of Luzon, grouped under the name “Igorots,” ever submit to the sovereignty of the Spaniards, though unlike the Mapuche of Chile, neither did they ever unite in sustained armed resistance. They never really assimilated into the lowland culture and today are on the brink of extinction from poverty and disease, the destruction of their lifeways and habitat.

After the arrival of the Spaniards, the native petty kings, chieftains and their subjects, gradually transformed into the Christianized, town dwelling principalia, though apparently putty in the Spanish hands and despite their adoption of the Spanish cosmology in the course of their long assimilation into Christian culture, only outwardly accepted the unitary image of being one people.[102] Internally, within the native psyche, the original world of clans, tribes and city-states was merely made over into clans, provinces and regions.

Things could not be any other way, since the human beings comprised within the new artificially-created administrative constructs could not develop autonomously, but had to passively submit to the designs, intentions and images of an alien super-"I". The process of identity formation remained crystallized at the infant stage, so to speak, of maternal mirroring -- rather of non-mirroring, because of its adoption by a usurper-mother. For she is a step-mother who transmits a cruelly ambivalent message: "You are now my child, but you are not like me and never will be, because our skin color is different. You must speak your own language, not mine, because I don't want you to deceive yourself that you are me, or could ever be my true child." Later, another one arrives who now says, "I want you to learn my language (I am humane, unlike that first step-mother of yours), and from now on you shall be the little brown brothers of my beautiful, powerful children, so that you too may one day be as beautiful and strong as they."

Under colonization, the development of a mature autocthonous identity was an impossibility past the level of clan and tribe (region), and certainly could not reach fruition at the level of nation. This is why Filipinos today are still intensely and primarily "regionalistic." A parallel may be seen between the colonial experience of the Filipinos and that of the Africans, today still divided into tribes that continue to war against each other, and within their societies are still ruled over by petty kings, oligarchs and military leaders.

**Mediated Relations with Other Nations**

Since the colonial power -- first Spain, then the United States -- is the arbiter of the colony's relations with other nations, allowing extraneous contact or

---

[102] Indeed, under the Spanish the natives were identified in polite speech by their ethnicity or provincial identities: Igorots, Moros, Tagalogs, Ilocanos etc. However, to the Spanish mind the natives were an inert human mass called the "indios". "Filipino" was a term applied in the late-19th century to the Philippine-born children of full-blooded Spanish parents, and to the ilustrados who asserted their cultural equality with the Spaniards.

disallowing it, and in the case of the former, acting always as an intermediating presence, then the colony can only relate on the basis of a pseudo-identity as the property of an alien nation.

It is interesting and not fortuitous that in the Philippines' case, our vertiginous internal development toward national consciousness began when Spain finally opened the Philippines to free trade in the mid-19th century, because of the new prosperity that permitted cultural development. However, from within and looking outwards, our most important export market in Asia was Singapore, or Great Britain, according to economic historian Yoshiko Nagano. We could not develop authentic nation-to-nation relations with other Asian states, and our relations with the Hispanic world were limited to economic and religious cultural commerce with Mexico and Peru. Under the U.S., our development of the false identity as the Little Brown Brother was secured through U.S. monopolization of our economic and cultural life, and the ceasing of all contact between us and the Hispanic world. Of course, neither were any significant cultural or economic bonds forged with Asia under the North Americans.

Without external points of reference, we literally became isolated, which fomented intense cultural myopia and a new obsession with a foreign image, this time of the U.S. The first serious questionings regarding identity in Filipino literature only arose after titular independence, during the 1950s.

**The Third Obstacle: Internal Colonization**[103]

In his analysis of *El Filibusterismo*, W.E. Retana asserted that the final message of Rizal's second novel was that revolutionary violence was not the answer to the Philippines' ills because it would merely replace the tyrants of the present with their ex-slaves, and these would only become worse tyrants than their former masters:

---

[103] Elizabeth Burgos-Debray wrote in her introduction to Rigoberta Menchú's book (See Sources): *We Latin Americans are only too ready to denounce the unequal relations that exist between ourselves and North America, but we tend to forget that we too are oppressors and that we too are involved in relations that can only be described as colonial . Without any fear of exaggeration, it could be said that, especially in countries with a large Indian population, there is an internal colonialism which works to the detriment of the indigenous population. The ease with which North America dominates so-called "Latin" America is to a large extent a result of the collusion afforded it by this internal colonialism.*

> Subversion is dealt a hammer blow with *El Filibusterismo*, whose synthesis is this: we do not deserve to win, nor should we, because if we won, we would be worse off -- today's slaves would be converted into tyrants. The country would be transformed into a witches' Sabbath worse than the most insignificant South American banana republic, where only confusion and vice prevail. Let us study, let us dignify ourselves, *let us become original, let's be a nation* , and then Providence herself will give us the rest.

During their rule, the North Americans did not dismantle the hold of the religious orders over the Philippines; they merely repatriated the Spanish friars and sold some of their land holdings. Neither did they touch the landed oligarchy; rather, yet another class of millionaires arose from the new business opportunities created under the United States. The peasantry's situation did not change -- it worsened, and the disaffected landless evolved from *tulisanes* (outlaws) to Huks (during and after the Japanese Occupation) to the Marxist and communist guerrillas of the present. After Independence in 1946, the United States continued to control Filipino economics and politics. She had not taught us anything about representative democracy; rather she trained a new set of favored partners in politics and business. The local government corruption that had already put down deep roots under the Spanish flourished during the American period. The false democracy that the Philippines inherited from the U.S. reached its apex under Ferdinand Marcos.

Identity is synonymous with empowerment and humanization, thus no country with an endemic and ever-worsening gap between rich and poor, with rising levels of poverty and illiteracy, a record of double colonization punctuated by traumatic wars, and followed by internal occupation (Marcos's Martial Law) and massive diaspora by its most dynamic citizens, can possibly be populated by a people with an authentic national identity. Authentic national identity is manifested in the clear behavior of serious and disinterested commitment to the development and progress of one's people and the unwillingness to separate oneself forever from one's homeland merely for economic reasons.[104] It can only be developed under conditions of social equity and prosperity, cultural development, and a collective memory of self-creation as a people. Examine any First World country and the presence of these conditions will be evident.

---

[104] It is true that the Chinese have done this for thousands of years, but they do not celebrate the fact as naively or as loudly, as so many expatriate Filipinos do. The Chinese lost their innocence long ago, but we still advertise ours.

An identity under normal historical conditions takes at least 100 years or five generations to develop, and countries usually must experience several revolutions before the different dynamic groups learn to coexist and forge a workable power structure based on some kind of consensus, even allowing for a certain degree of coercion and violent imposition of preeminence. Colonization does not allow such a process to take place.

Thus, today the Philippines is held hostage by internal colonization -- the colonization of the Filipinos by their fellow Filipinos, who have adopted the behavior of their past masters and become the exploiters and oppressors of their own kind. By no means is internal colonization a purely Filipino phenomenon. In Guatemala, as the 1992 Nobel prize winner Rigoberta Menchú has denounced, the rich mestizo landowners persecute and terrorize the Indians who try to defend their remaining lands from being legally stolen from them with the collusion of the government and the military. Internal colonization is present in all the former Spanish colonies, with the exception of a few outstanding cases such as Costa Rica, Uruguay and Argentina. Wherever a colonially-established theocracy, a colonially-created landed aristocracy, and a large unassimilated and land-divested Indian population have comprised the condition of a country's historical process, the abuse of power and social injustice are to be found, for all respects and purposes, as part and parcel of the country's very institutions. And you will find a people with no real sense of national identity -- rather, warring and alienated micro-identities within parasitical or coercive relationships.

Given the current reality of internal colonization, Filipino national identity is truly an impious fiction. There is no such thing, any more than real democracy existed under the U.S. or has existed after July 4, 1946. What exists in the Philippines today is a modernized feudalism with petty chiefs and monarchical rulers -- pretty much the same social organization that existed 500 years ago, except that, unlike the ancient indigenous cosmology, it offers neither psychic anchoring nor a peaceful, well-ordered social framework to the great mass of its disempowered and dehumanized subjects. This feudalism exists side by side with a formal democracy that does not challenge it because of the patron-client relationship that marries them –- and the same patron-client relations mark the political life of the other former Spanish colonies who today are ruled by formal democracies as well, under the patronage of the powerful economic groups whose members belong to the old aristocracy or have married into it. Yet another mark of our globalized times.

Therefore, at the second level of identity formation, serial colonization has harmed the development of Filipino identity in these ways:

- The formal administrative and national unity established by the Spanish was only superimposed over the somatic-emotional world image of the indigenous Filipinos, without altering its essence. Even after the incorporation of Catholicism into the native Filipino consciousness, before the impossibility of full identification with Mother Spain (made possible in Latin America thanks to the formation of a mestizo race), the micro-identities evolved only from the stage of clan, tribe and city-state to the provincial and regional stage, but became crystallized at that level. It was only when the Philippines was opened to world trade and the thirty-year revolutionary process began (1870-1900l) that an evolution took place toward the more complex stage of national consciousness. However, U.S. annexation and new colonial rule nipped that evolution in the bud, and prepared the ground for the next stage of internal colonization.

- Under colonial rule, the Philippines was unable to establish or develop relations with other nations, but was limited to passively accepting the trade relations imposed by her owners. First, by Spain, which, almost throughout her colonial government, closed the Philippines to foreign trade. Second, by the U.S., which monopolized Philippine trade, closed her off to the Hispanic world and did not allow her to establish self-determined relations with other Asian countries.

- Internal colonization was the successor of overt rule by the United States, constituting the transfer of political and economic power to the pupils of the North Americans' lessons in formal democracy, and who then administered the Philippines so that U.S. control could continue undisturbed over the country's post-1946 economic and political life. The diaspora of Filipinos to the United States, which began during the 1920s and continues into the nineties, the U.S.-supported Marcos dictatorship, and the acute exacerbation since then of the breach between the super-poor and the super-rich in the Philippines, attest to the harm that internal colonization has done to the Filipino nation, in the sense of preventing its progress toward national unity, social peace and a minimum floor of existential decency. Given these deficiencies, not only is Filipino identity checkmated, but the viabil-

ity of the Philippines as a competent member of the community of nations in the 21st century becomes open to serious doubt.

How can the Philippines initiate a new era of economic cooperation with and cultural openness to Asia, Latin America and Europe? How can the Filipinos make the Philippines a country for all Filipinos, just as the Netherlands is for all the Dutch, Indonesia is for all Indonesians, Canada for all Canadians?

## III THE PLANE OF PROCESS

The level of process, expressed simply, has to do with the dynamic of Filipino identity through time: where it comes from, where it is today, and where it is going. On this plane we can examine the concepts of Self, Other, Family and Nation, which are configured through time in a collective memory, and externalized in behaviors, in patterns of relationship and engagement with the world.

### The Effects of Serial Colonization on the Filipino Concept of Self, Other, Family and Nation, as Expressed in Filipino Behavior

We can observe the following:

- **Alienation and estrangement: Fragmented, False, and Fantasy Identities.**

There has been an internalization of a fantasy self based on the image of the Other -- first of the Spaniard, then of the North American. This fantasy self induces a rejection of the shadow image it seeks to obliterate, of the Native self, the *indio*, whose essence is reflected for the escaping self in the image of the racially pure, uneducated, disenfranchized Filipino. It also produces a blocking out of the Moslem Filipino, as though they had nothing to do with us, the Central and Northern Christian Filipinos.

Estrangement from each other and a degraded concept of our fellow Filipinos is a direct consequence of the internal divisiveness (clashing micro-identities) and self/other denigration that was the major educational achievement of Spanish rule, and, in a mitigated and disguised but equally pervasive way, of the North American era.

Both colonizations located, as the racial and cultural paradigm, an Other that was internalized as an ideal, fantasy self, displacing otherness to the estranged, native self. And so the Spaniard and the American successively became what Trinh Minh-ha calls the Great Master, whose image -- whether hated or adored, or both -- occupied the central position in our inner firmament. Our own image was relegated to its proximities, the more we mimetized with the GM image or reflected its characteristics through degree of mixed blood, ability to speak the Other's language, position in society thanks to wealth or the connections that gave access to that position. The image of the native, unmimetized self: brown, ignorant, provincial, ungroomed, poor -- the pure Filipino -- became phobic, the self that was denied, rejected, and -- ultimately -- feared. This shadow is reflected for us in other despised groups whom we also reject, such as Moslem Filipinos, Igorots, Jews, African Americans, Mexicans, fellow immigrants who are a threat to our own gains in the case of the U.S., including the Filipinos we come across all over the world in our tourist jaunts to rest from wageslaving, who serve in such quietly honorable capacities as waiters, maids and transient workers...annoying or saddening reminders of what we would prefer to forget.

The behavior of non-identification or rejection of the native image is more common among socially self-conscious or ambitious Filipinos, or Filipinos who identify with their new assimilated, transcultured selves to the exclusion of the past. In general, Filipinos over-identify with a specific group and develop "antibodies" against other groups. Thus the Pacific Northwest Filipinos, proud descendants of the activist Manong Generation, do not feel much affinity with the post-1965 immigrants to the U.S., who were mainly professionals and wanted to blend into mainstream white American society. The latter, on the other hand, aspire to be perceived as completely assimilated and successful, and see the children of the manongs as socially inferior and uncomfortably militant about their ethnic identity. In any case, many Filipinos transplanted in the States do not feel much identification with or commitment towards the Filipinos who remain in the Philippines, and often either feel deep ambivalence or evince psychic emotional numbness before the image of their people´s dilemmas in the homeland.

- **Autocthonism**

The other polarity of this inner estrangement is the deification of the native image and the denial of the non-native Other. In the case of Moslem Filipinos, it could be said that the wish to secede from the Philippines is largely rooted in the force of their autocthonous identity as opposed to that of the twice-colonized Christian Filipinos. Autocthonism among Northern Filipinos is manifested as the denial of colonialism as a historical reality that continues to exercise effects over national life, and as linguistic/cultural isolationism.

Autocthonism has led to the rigidly nationalist thinking that not only denies how colonialism has altered the development of the Filipino -- it has also promoted a historiography that is sectarian and therefore unobjective and prey to cultural distortion. Both the affirmation that pre-Hispanic Filipino identity seamlessly, undisturbedly continued into the present, and the insistence on portraying the Spanish period and the interrelationships between the colonizers and the colonized of that distant past as virtually devoid of cultural interest and inherent human value, create a forcing of the Filipino narrative and memory. On one hand, vindicating a pure cultural reality and image that is so far back in history that to believe we can recover it in its pristine state is highly suspect of unhealthy fanaticism; and on the other, converting the Spanish into historical scapegoats is indicative of intellectual dishonesty, or at the least, emotional immaturity and the bigotry that so often accompanies it. Furthermore, it creates an obstacle to constructive international relations of cultural and economic cooperation, which can only be successfully achieved if we are able to open ourselves without fear or reservations to accepting other cultures and historical images. It isolates us from the international community in our bubble of resentment and misplaced pride, the absurdity of such an attitude being that the objects of our resentment are long dead and even the country who wronged our forebears no longer exists.

Thus these attitudes cannot produce anything but a perpetration of the distortion of Filipino identity. The ultimate inefficiency of responses such as historical denial and isolationism are illustrated by the failed experiment of the African American currents which advocated the return to Africa and the raising of Liberia as the state where the descendants of slaves would recover their unenslaved, archaic selves, as though enslavement had been nothing more than a bad dream. But it is impossible to return physically to the past; freedom cannot be found or asserted over the basis of an induced mental state of

historical denial. We have no other possibility, if we are to grow and expand outwards, but to face the present *as it is*, with all that this implies, welcome the future and join the world community -- at peace with ourselves, and at peace with others.

## A Fluid, Dynamic Identity

The Philippines, as a South Asian country in geographic terms shares with her neighbors, according to Reynaldo Ileto in a paper he presented in U.P. Diliman in January 1998, the "...fluidity of Southeast Asia's borders, the multiculturalism and openness to outside influences of its peoples." In this paper, which summarized the historiographical trends among the historian-philosopher-social visionaries of the Southeast Asian community, Ileto´s reference to Mohammed Raduan's research on the Sulu Sea community struck a chord of deep resonance in me. It "...presented us with an alternative picture of Southeast Asia -- one linked by the seas and riverine systems, where people constantly moved around and identities could shift one way or the other." This fluid, connective nature of Filipino identity, as a part of the greater Southeast Asian community, contrasts with the geographically differentiated, largely landlocked identities of the Aztecs, Incas and Mapuches of the American continent, as well as of the Africans, and seems to me to be the underlying root of the Filipino behavior of intrinsic openness to other cultures and astonishing capacity for mimesis with them. A purist, culturally-differentiating posture, more than a faithful conceptualization of the universalist Filipino mode of being, seems to me to be the backlash response of a highly-educated minority reacting against and anxiously seeking to build a containing wall –- as Uslar-Pietri tells us that the Incas have done – to render invisible the historical reality of serial colonization and the damage it continues to wreak over Filipino mentality and identity.[105]

## The Recovery of our Hispanic-Filipino Memory

In the Philippines in the last 25 years there has been an explosion of literature on the past. Many Filipinos -- especially women -- have hurled themselves at the task of preserving the memory of grandparents and parents, family histories, ancestral homes, traumatic wartime experiences, even personal struggles that require ventilating sensitive, intimate experiences -- revelations that Filipinos traditionally shy away from making.

---

[105] Please see Appendix A for a discussion of this point.

According to Oliver Sacks, the loss of memory produces a "cut-offness" and a psychological "state of exile," and to recover it gives psychological grounding and reality, "an ultimate serenity and security of spirit as is only given to those who possess, or recall, the true past.[106]"

I believe that this literary outpouring is an indicator of our collective desire and preparedness today to recover the true past. However, I am equally convinced that the rescuing of the Hispanic-Filipino past must go beyond personal memoir, or the hanging on to dead things that cannot return. That lost memory must be a bridge to future happiness and to other human beings. We have reached a point in our maturation in which we are ready to develop a more balanced intellectual discipline as well, no longer dominated by the look of the United States or Europe. This can be achieved by breaking out of our cultural isolation -- or cultural overemphasis if you prefer -- on the Anglo-Saxon countries and establishing new dialogue with Spain, Latin America and Asia. As for Asia, we can approach our Asian neighbors with full respect for their individuality and listen to their evolving thinking about themselves and their own passage from colonialism to redefinition in freedom. The undertaking of meaningful comparative studies of our histories, cultures, intellectual traditions and present realities -- whether framed within the colonialist period and experience or not -- seems to me to be a fertile direction for our educational and cultural present and future.

- **Flight or Diaspora**

It is easy to understand why the Filipinos are leaving the Philippines today: overpopulation, unemployment and underemployment, endemic, catastrophic social and environmental crises, political violence and corruption. But the diaspora began much earlier, with the dispossessed peasants -- the manongs, followed by the 1960s professionals of the Brain Drain. I believe that at its root, the Filipino Diaspora is a response to the secret perception of one's country as not belonging to oneself, but to the others who have co-opted her historically, and a deep belief that there is nothing one can do about anything

[106] Sacks points to extreme dissociation from the self that is manifested in certain types of schizophrenia as uncontrollable silliness and shallow social chatter: "There ceases to be any 'centre' to the mind, though its formal intellectual powers may be perfectly preserved. The end point of such states is an unfathomable 'silliness,' an abyss of superficiality, in which all is ungrounded and afloat and comes apart. Luria once spoke of the mind as reduced, in such states, to 'mere Brownian movement.'" In a normal neurotic personality, silliness is probably symptomatic of the inability or refusal to feel true emotion, possibly because there is so much deep trauma that the self would risk disintegration if it allowed that trauma to make itself present.

except save oneself by leaving. Like the allegory of rats being the first to leave a sinking ship. A sensation of foreclosure, of no future.

How many parents took their children to the United States, assuring them that they had no economic future in the Philippines? And yet how many of them told their children, once in the U.S., "We´ll never be anything but second-class citizens here"? And because they believed it, they acted in confirmation of their belief and made it true.

But why did the post-1965 generations leave? I believe it was because they had internalized a fantasy self and wanted to be Americans. This was the direct consequence of the forgetting of the Hispanic-Filipino identity and of the new cultural vassalage wrought by the change of language and the conversion of the Filipinos to U.S. mass-consumer anticulture, especially of the generations born during U.S. rule, and who lived through the privations and suffering of the war. It was also undoubtedly in answer to the need of those psychically battered yet intelligent and forward-looking generations to find an environment that could provide them and their children with real professional opportunities. However, because they left, their country, already co-opted, became definitely foreclosed, because her strongest children opted for desertion without considering the consequences.

They could not do otherwise.

The Filipinos who did not take part in the first two waves of the Diaspora were the ethnic tribes and the Islamic Filipinos, who were not fully incorporated into the colonial society established by the Spaniards and did not buy into the dreams of democracy nor participated in the cultural reengineering carried out by the United States. However, Islamic Filipinos have joined the third wave of Overseas Filipino Workers in increasing numbers.

**Waves of Diaspora**
**First Wave: The Manong Generation**

Soon after the consolidation of U.S. rule over the Philippines, young male Filipino peasant-serfs, believing in the rhetoric of democracy, equality and non-discrimination of the North American governors of the Philippines, migrated to the U.S. mainland in search of jobs. They planned only to stay until they had enough money to return to the Philippines, but for many this never happened. Mostly uneducated and unable to speak English, the manongs were

hounded by white society's virulent racism and subjected to savage economic exploitation. They responded by fighting back, organizing and winning union victories throughout three decades, which culminated in the fusion of their labor union, the AWOC, with that of the Mexican farm workers under César Chávez in the 1960s and the formation of the United Farmworkers Union, which organized and successfully carried out the five-year Delano Grape Strike of California.

However, César Chávez and the Mexicans received the most press and public recognition and are remembered today erroneously as having been the main protagonists of that labor movement. The Filipino union leaders and organizers: Larry Itliong (the brains behind the fusion of AWOC and the Farmworkers Union), Philip Vera Cruz, Carlos Bulosan and many others, are unknown, even to most Filipino Americans, and even more to mainland Filipinos.

**Second Wave: The Post-1965 Professionals**

During the Viet Nam war, immigration limits were loosened and the post-1965 immigrants began flowing into the United States. Many young men were drafted and served in the war to receive automatic U.S. citizenship and petition for residence for their families. The post-1965 wave was made up this time of a majority of professionals: doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers, engineers. After the declaration of martial law in the Philippines, the exodus intensified. By the 1970s many Filipinos were entering the U.S. on tourist visas to find some way to stay illegally and, with time, obtain legal residence through marriage with U.S. nationals or other means.

## Third Wave: The Modern Slavery of the OFWs

In the 1970s, with the oil bonanza in the Middle East, skilled and semi-skilled Filipino workers began to contract themselves out to Saudia Arabia, Kuwait, and other OPEC countries. There was also an upsurge in the exodus of Filipinos to Hong Kong, Singapore, and Europe to work as domestics and childcare providers.

Between 2.5 and 3.5 million OFWs send most of their earnings to their families in the Philippines to finance the education of siblings and children and to support parents and spouses. Many are women and their husbands must assume the double parenting role. The total amount of these remittances, according to former Philippine Ambassador to Chile Mr. Rodolfo Arizala, was US$2 billion in 1996.[107] Surely a conservative figure.

The Diaspora has meant the departure of the most dynamic, able-bodied and educated from the country. The Philippines now is mainly home to those with enough wealth to live in isolated splendor behind their walled and guarded compounds, and those who work for the economy they own, with the added help, if they are fortunate, of relatives who hire out their labor abroad.

And this national tragedy is celebrated as the final solution for the Philippines. And I dare say it will be, if we let it.

- **Apathy and Fatalism**

As I have developed previously, the combination of loss of cultural memory and disempowerment means that the "I" is unmoored from a sense of reality and meaningful relationship with its environment, since the "I" is only an object of predetermined social and historical conditions, which it has no power to transform and can only cope with through resignation or flight. The active, future-oriented consciousness, finding its future closed off by the impossibility of dignified self-development and the creation of a loved image of country and world, must still find a channel for its energies through self-preservation.

[107] Then Philippine ambassador to Chile Mr. Rodolfo Arizala wrote in the English language newspaper News Review on August 17, 1996: "...Filipino overseas workers [totaling] around 2.6 million send around US$2 billion annually to the Philippines in the form of remittances to their families...."

Thus the conducts in homeland Filipinos of fatalism, apathy and cynical opportunism.

On the other hand, transplanted emigrants also manifest the same lack of empowered, positive identity in the behavior of non-engagement with their new milieux beyond the securing of survival or material prosperity. In the United States, the Filipino communities, though much longer established than, for example, the Hispanics and Koreans, show a notably lesser degree of political and cultural protagonism.

- **Materialism and Conformism**

Filipinos, whether in the Philippines or immigrants, in their lack of a vital project that goes beyond the sphere of personal or family benefit, in the absence of a larger sense of identity that is manifested in a posture of commitment to social progress, manifest this lack most of all in the behavior of conformist materialism. Conformism is the logical result of disempowerment or denial of personal responsibility in a situation of social crisis. Materialism is a response to past emergencies of war trauma and poverty, the memory of which so many emigrants sought and still seek to erase from their minds (even though the situations are no longer present, and are nothing but personal ghosts) by clinging to the material ease of life in the U.S. and eliminating themselves from the Philippines´ present and future.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the Philippines' serial colonization from the perspective of the formation of a Filipino identity are the following:

- Loss of true cultural memory as the consequence of divestment of narrative and the transformation of language into a factor of division instead of unification and self-determined cultural development.

- Two external colonizations were followed by internal colonization, under the guise of titular independence from the United States and formal democracy.

- Negative (fragmented, false and fantasy) identities arose from a psychic condition of estrangement and disempowerment imprinted on the collective consciousness by colonization. This condition continues in the present be-

cause of internal colonization and is expressed in the behaviors of flight, materialism, apathy and opportunism (complicity with corruption).

The legacy of the Filipinos' serial colonization: ignorance, disunity, lack of national identity and consciousness, disempowerment as a result of divestment of one's narrative and memory, and the incapacity to use language with propriety to re-possess that memory and recreate a world in which the true self is the center -- cannot be overcome without the creation of a new consciousness among the entire family of Filipinos, both in the Philippines and in the adoptive lands.

The re-possessing of the Filipinos' true historical narrative and true memory is an inescapable requirement if the global Filipino community, whether in the homeland or in their new adopted countries, is to create a new level of self-awareness -- a positive individual and collective identity -- that is the fundamental prerequisite for any human group to forge a meaningful construction out of existence beyond pathetic survival or the compulsive accumulation of material wealth.

The evolution of a true identity demands life-affirming responses to the challenges of self-recognition and acceptance in the present, and the acknowledgment of and reconciliation with one's true past. These unifying psychic acts lead to the arising of a new cohesive and joyful self-image, accompanied by the liberation of energies previously wasted in mental conflict, emotional contradiction and corporal immobilization. The freed energy can then mobilize empowered, original behavior. Thus, the indicator that a new evolutionary step is being taken by the collective Filipino identity toward the stage of *nation* (which last occurred in 1896, but this time will be a global nationhood), will most surely be a concomitant social and cultural transformation in the Philippines.

# EPILOGUE

The arising of knowledge is a mystery. Where does it come from? Where did Rizal and all great human beings derive their inspiration from? Books? Universities? Only in part. And from where do books and universities derive theirs?

From the mind. From the consciousness.

Knowledge reaches the consciousness from many sources. Even when one does research, one begins from an intuition, to later carry out a search for corroborative referents, which prove that one is not alone but a link in a chain of discovery of new knowledge.

For myself, I have written much of this from intuition because many of these thoughts and feelings either are not in books, or the books may exist, but gaining physical access to them was out of the question. I have studied and read everything that came to me, and used many people's insights as steps over which I built new ones. I hope the new steps I have built will be useful and not end up dangling futilely in empty space. However, I cannot stay long in the dwelling of doubt and so I seize the moment and say, "If I am wrong, challenge and correct me!" -- because the only way to know if I am mistaken is to speak. And I speak principally from my soul to other Filipino souls; from my awareness to other Filipino awarenesses -- though we Filipinos are human beings first, and therefore what is true for us will also be true for other humans, even if their stories have been different from ours.

Knowledge, I believe, comes from a fountain or source of wisdom that reveals itself to us when we ask correctly for its guidance. That fount of wisdom is described by the Buddhist teacher, Tarthang Tulku, as a "Field" that encompasses all we know and all we don't know, as well as ourselves. It is energy, and its knowledge is available to us when we open our minds to receive it.

If my ideas and intuitions have come from the Source or the Field, they will be met by an answering resonance from within you. There is no need to convince or to impose -- there is simply respect. You respect me by listening to me, and I respect you by speaking as clearly and sincerely as I can.

Thank you for having listened. I am most willing to listen to you in turn.

Elizabeth Medina
Santiago de Chile
May 1999

# APPENDIX A

## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The following are key terms of Evolutionary Psychology, or the Psychology of the Consciousness, developed by M. Rodríguez (Silo). They are explained in depth in a collection of informal talks entitled "The Book of School," and in the books entitled *Humanizar la Tierra* and *Contribuciones al Pensamiento* . I include definitions of other words of more common usage, also in the interest of assuring that the reader will understand how they are used in this book.

**Cenesthetic sense or cenesthesia*** The external senses are sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. The internal senses are the cenesthesia and the kinesthesia. The internal senses send impulses to the consciousness on the state of the intrabody, in which numerous tiny organs are continuously taking chemical, thermal and pressure samples. The kinesthesia or kinesthetic sense provides data on movement, corporal posture, physical equilibrium and disequilibrium. The cenesthetic sense carries out a very complex and varied function, which will be shortly described in some detail. However, we can briefly define it as the sense that tracks and regulates internal registers and functions such as temperature, pressure, oxygen production, food digestion, elimination of waste products, growth, healing, etc. -- all the involuntary life supporting mechanisms.

All the senses have terminal nervous localizations which may either be precise or diffuse, but all are connected to the central nervous system and to the peripheral or autonomous system, from which the apparatus of coordination (the consciousness) operates. The internal senses (body position and intrabody sensations) are not localized in the face as almost all the others are; their localization is diffuse, which is congruent with their function of tracking the organic state of the entire body. Thus the internal senses can "invade" the entire body and they emit impulses and supply data without our control. One can, for example, close one's eyes and the image that was reaching the eye will disappear. However, one cannot close the internal doors; one can pay closer attention to certain internal sensations, but the internal sensorial apparatuses do not have mobility (we cannot direct them), and they cannot be shut off. Our

* The definitions of terms followed by an asterisk are taken from The Book of School (See Bibliography).

awareness of them is merely reduced when we are active in the world, but when there is an organic problem present, their impulses break through our threshold of awareness so that we can give an effective response to their emergencies.

We can speak of a theoretical apparatus in the body which encompasses all the centers of response (the intellectual, emotional, motor, vegetative-sexual centers), whose functioning we can register. The register of the activities of this apparatus is a cenesthetic one, provided by the internal senses. We can feel our emotions, we can feel ourselves thinking while we carry out mathematical operations, we have sensations of our systems when we are digesting dinner, playing golf, etc., all thanks to our cenesthetic registers and the work of the cenesthesia. There is also an activity carried out by our consciousness, and the register of this activity of the consciousness is also cenesthetic. We know when we are sleepy, or tired, or finally awake, thanks to our cenesthetic registers. We are also able register the activities of the memory and of the imagination, and we do not confuse what is a remembrance with what is fantasy, because the cenesthesia knows the difference between the two (though in some cases the consciousness can make mistakes because of false or poorly-interpreted data from the memory and/or the other senses).

It is because of the very nature of the cenesthetic sense -- diffuse, non-rational, involuntary -- that the phenomena of the emotional life and inner bodily experiences in general are left out of the conventional accounts of history -- in fact they are mostly left out of conventional, daily communication. It is also generally believed that the consciousness is synonymous to the level of vigil or the waking state, that consciousness is ratiocination, when in actuality the rational faculties are merely most active at that level of consciousness, and consciousness actually works with several levels, besides acting as a coordinator of internal and external behavior.

The primordial function of the external and internal senses is to enable our organism to detect and avoid pain, and to detect and move toward pleasure. The senses can commit errors: a sense can become blocked due to sensorial irritation, from a defect or a deficiency (as in nearsightedness, deafness, etc.); errors can also arise from the lack of intervention of another or other senses that provide perceptual parameters or additional references to the sense in question. These errors are generically called "illusion."

**Climate*** A diffuse sensation accompanied by an emotional tone, commonly referred to as a "mood." These emotional states invade everything and have great inertia, so that one is so "taken" by them that one's capacity to act in the world can even be impaired -- sometimes seriously so. The clearest examples of emotional climates are negative ones: fear, anxiety, a feeling of impending catastrophe, suspicion, resentment, or the diffuse, all-pervading sensation that everything is "wrong." When the climate is congruent with the external situation (for example, suspicion when one is dealing with persons whom one already knows to be dishonest), it is an appropriate response. However, when the external situation is neutral or even positive, but a person is in a depressed or otherwise inappropriate climate, it is an indicator of a problem in one's relationship with the world.

Also used in the sense of "(emotional) atmosphere." For example, a climate of camaraderie.

**Colonization** Co-optation of the physical territory, natural resources, political will and historical awareness of a people by an external power.

**Compensation** The mechanism of compensation is used in this writing in the following sense: the human being is fragile and requires shelter from the natural elements in order to survive; thus he discovers how to create man-made dwellings and make clothing out of the skin of animals; he needs a steady supply of food for a growing, sedentary human group, and thus discovers agriculture; he needs to extend his body's capacity for manipulating the environment in order to find food, build shelter and protect himself, and thus he discovers how to make tools and weapons.

Nature works on the basis of compensation to restore her equilibrium or to overcome obstacles to her growth. A water course will find the way to continue its flow until it reaches the sea. The human body has multiple ways to compensate for a physical dysfunction through backup systems, to prevent organic damage and death. Nature herself, according to physics, is "redundant" and never relies on just one backup system to respond to disequilibria. In other words, Nature is generous with her resources and works in a structural manner, never in a linear, one-cause, one-effect way. The science of ecology is just beginning to discover the complex structural interrelationships among natural phenomena within ecosystems.

From the internal point of view, the law of compensation is also one of the basic mechanisms of the human consciousness and is registered as the continual arising of mental images -- in Siloism called "reveries" -- which mobilize the body to compensate for deficiencies or unfilled needs, whether instinctive (food, safety, shelter, etc.) or psychological (security, belongingness, power, etc.). The ability or inability of human beings to compensate for their basic deficiencies gives rise to problems of relationship with the environment, which can either be overcome and surpassed, or lead to physical pain and/or mental suffering, and the social consequences entailed by both.

**Culture** From a static perspective, the particular form through which the mind and life of a person, of a family, of a society and a people is codified into customs and externalized as art. It is manifested in a way of life and social customs which reflect and express a common mentality, a shared structure of beliefs about life and the world, and the place occupied in it by the collectivity as a whole and by each individual within it. According to the historian of religions Mircea Eliade, all human beings are cultural beings. All cultures are built on the basis of existential experience, because to live as a human being is to create -- to produce a culture, a religion, an aesthetic. Human beings, Eliade concludes, must create culture if they are to survive.[108] Seen from the perspective of its dynamics, culture is the evolving expression of man's dramas, tensions, hopes, values and meanings -- in other words, of his developing inner, spiritual life. From this point of view, as Uslar-Pietri so clearly expressed, the role of the artist is to shed light on the dark regions of the collective soul and point to new paths toward human re-creation and renewal, through the transformation of suffering, crisis and death into beauty, rebirth and transcendence.

Lately the word "culture" has begun to be applied to specific spheres of human activity, for example one says that a given society has a particular "culture of work," a "political culture," or that such and such currents in theater or music are a manifestation of "alternative culture." This usage applies to multiple, new and well-defined conceptions, orientations or attitudes developed by individuals through active engagement in a sphere of human activity. It also points to the proliferation of individual and collective innovation and creativity that mark this era in every aspect of social life. The disappearance of the old containing boundaries between countries, races, religions and philosophies has given rise to planetary cultural syncretism and the emergence of a new

---

[108] Mircea Eliade, *Ordeal by Labyrinth.*

global culture that coexists with diversity and whose dynamic is nourished by it.

Another hallmark of postmodern, postindustrial life is the breakdown of institutions and the crisis of values which has led to the emergence into view of what in other times were hidden social problems, now converted into full-blown sociocultural phenomena; for example, "gang culture" and "drug culture." Each "culture" in this sense is a separate world (or an anti-system) existing in parallel to the mainstream culture, created by marginalized groups to respond to the pressures exerted on them by a fragmented, destructured and violent social environment (a system in crisis). The parallel culture is a new social context that enables the group to create an identity and, through it, forge psychological cohesion and increase its chances for survival. Of course, like any evolutionary response, it may be adaptive, in which case it will result in the group's viability, or inadaptive, and the group will in time disappear. With the emergence of new parallel cultures, an environment is created that will allow the birth of the new civilizational paradigm.

**Consciousness*** The consciousness is a theoretical unity constituted by diverse points in the brain, whose functions are twofold: 1) To structure the perceptions of the external world according to a meaningful "mental form" which creates and maintains a coherent, dynamic feedback loop between the external and internal worlds; and 2) To act as coordinator of (i) the levels of functioning, or levels of consciousness, of our organism, which we will delimit into three principal levels of vigil (waking state), semi-sleep (the transition between waking and sleeping), and sleep; and (ii) of the integrated circuit between the senses (internal/external), the centers of response (intellectual, emotional, motor and vegetative/sexual), the memory and the imagination.

A simple example of the first function is how the consciousness, through a center of intellectual activity, interprets such categories as "north-south-east-west" and "up-down-inside-outside"; or "pleasure" (response: approach) and "pain" (response: flight). An example of the second is how the consciousness receives impulses from the intrabody, or cenesthesia, when this internal sense detects levels of toxicity that must be restored to homeostasis, say through rest. The consciousness then sends signals to the centers of external response to reduce their activity, whereupon the cenesthesia's activity augments, somnolence is induced and the level of consciousness descends to semi-sleep, and finally to sleep.

To state things in a very simple way, the consciousness coordinates and processes impulses received from the senses, memory and imagination, and thus works in three temporal dimensions simultaneously: present (sense), past (memory) and future (imagination). If there are any problems in any of these three times and pathways, there will be problems in a person's behavior and relations with the world. That is, if there is a blockage in the memory (past experiences which are erased, for instance or traumas that have not been integrated), in the senses (as in problems with correctly perceiving the outer and/or the inner worlds) and in the imagination (for ex., difficulties with one's image of the future), these blockages will be manifested in problems in one's relationship with the world -- in other words, suffering.

When people speak of the subconscious or the unconscious, they usually refer to perceptions that we are unaware of receiving through the rational, intellectual channels and at the level of vigil. However, our external and internal senses and our emotions or "intuitive intelligence" are capable of capturing impressions at thresholds that our rational intellect is incapable of perceiving at the vigilic level. However, everything that we are able to capture, whether from the external world or from our internal world, is "registered" at some level of functioning (for example, in semi-sleep or sleep) by the consciousness. Anything that is not registered simply does not exist for us. As human beings evolve they become capable of refining their senses and so, theoretically, as we expand our consciousness we begin to perceive -- register -- things that a human being at a more elementary level of consciousness is unable to perceive in a meaningful way. Our thresholds of perception expand, and we are also able to establish relations between this new data in ways that a 'less conscious' individual cannot access.

Expanded consciousness is not produced through magic or spectacular illuminations. The basic requirement for it to occur is to allow the psychism (See) to function normally. In other words, without alteration and tension; without suffering.

**"I"*** The "I" or "psychological I" is a codification of the sensations of the body, which takes place through the memory as life experience develops and accumulates. A child does not have an "I" but a "we" until around age three. Until then she has a very fuzzy idea of her bodily boundaries and distinguishes very little between her own body and that of her mother. Young children also manifest their little-developed sense of an "I" when they do such things as stick a piece of cake in their ear instead of in their mouth.

The "I" can be confused with the consciousness, but it is not the same as the consciousness. An example of this is that a person may suffer amnesia and not remember who he is, but he will still have the capacity to coordinate different perceptions and to interact with his environment.

The "I" is configured by the accumulation of data in the memory. I begin to form an idea of who I am, based on my interactions within my family, and as I grow up my spheres of activity expand. Then I begin going to school, playing with the other children in the neighborhood, I get to know the members of my larger family, and so on. In each new sphere of relation and activity, I get feedback from other people on "how" and "what" I am like. I am given a nickname at home and another one in school. I have accidents and illnesses, adventures and friendships with people who are different from myself, I go on trips, etc. As my world grows, my identity, my data bank with a growing store of information on my "I", expands. The "I" has a strong emotional component which is first constituted through the phenomenon of "mirroring" between mother and infant. Positive, profound bonding between mother and child builds a basis in the child of ontological security. The child feels one with her mother, contained and secure. The emotional climate of safety and belonging will thus be a strong background or frame for future data on the self. The cenesthetic register of security will also be the background register for the child as she moves about in the world, and it will probably stay with her until adulthood, unless important accidents take place that, depending on whether her consciousness is able to integrate them or not, may or may not seriously alter her basic register of the world as a safe and loving place, and of herself as a lovable and competent person.

**Identity** At the personal level, identity is synonymous with the "I". It is the image that one forms of oneself, based on one's life experiences and the interactions that one has had and continues to have within the different environments of one's life. It is a core identity or register of oneself which does not change although one is able to assume a variety of roles adequate for responding to the demands of different life situations and social settings.

Identity in the cultural sense can be understood as the psychological "I" expanded to a collective register.

Lack of identity, or loss of identity would be registerable as a gap, or as an interruption in the oneness, fusion, or at-home-ness within oneself and in the

external world. Amnesia, traumatic experiences (torture, war, slavery, genocide, exile, any form of violent co-optation) have an impact on the process of identity formation at both the individual and collective level, since they produce a rupture in the continuum experience of ontological security and growing adaptation to the external world.

Lack of identity is registered internally as disorientation, drifting, and is accompanied by a permanent background climate of anxiety. From the outside, it can be registered as a non-definition, ambiguity, shifting presence, non-engagement.

There is also a negative identity and a false identity, each accompanied by specific climates and registers that can be traced and studied with a view to producing integration of unresolved contents, whose indicator will be a positive modification in the individual's behavior.

**Intention** A complex concept that reflects the unity and interaction of different processes which predetermine a practical course of human behavior. Intention brings together a chain of events: 1) An intuitive or rational determination that transforms a desire into an aspiration which is directed toward the attainment of an objective; 2) Formulation for oneself and for others of the meaning or significance of the objective; 3) Choosing the means for its achievement; and 4) Practical action for its realization. Thus, we can think of intention as a fundament, force, or energy that mobilizes any creative human undertaking, including the construction of the individual's own life. Without intention, there is no existence.[109]

**Internal Colonization** Adoption of the pattern of external colonization by a minority sector of the population which arrogates to itself exclusive ownership and right of exploitation of resources which belong to the social whole. It also adopts the behavior learned from the external colonizer of exploitation of its own kind, based on justifications of cultural, economic or ethnic inferiority/superiority (Menchú/Burgos-Debray).

**Manong Generation** First significant wave of diaspora or flight from the Philippines in the 20th century. The "manongs", or older brothers, began arriving in the U.S. in the late 1900s and through the twenties and thirties, in search of jobs in Hawaiian plantations, California farms and Alaskan canner-

[109] *Diccionario del Nuevo Humanismo*.

ies. Their labor union struggles on the West Coast United States led to important victories for farm workers in the 1960s (Bulosan, Imutan).

**Mimesis or Mimetization** Refers to the imitation or mimicry found in nature, when living beings acquire the coloring of their environment as protection from predators. Used here in the sense of human adaptation to society through the acquiring of certain characteristics that confer social recognition, acceptance and integration.

**Ontological** Relating to, or based upon, being or existence (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.).

**Psychism** An integrated system that is dynamically inter-regulated by the senses, the memory, the consciousness as coordinator of the attention, and the levels of consciousness.

**Register*** Data reaches a given sense that is in motion, in constant movement. The sense detects changes in the environment and this is how it captures data -- when a variation occurs in the environment which the sense is continually scanning. The sense detects the new data and structures it (translates it according to the sense's particular mode) and then configures it into a perception that can be processed by the consciousness. "To register" is therefore the sum of two distinct events: first, mechanical detection of the data reaching the sense and, second, the structuring activity that the sense carries out on the data, transforming it into a perception.

The senses structure the data that reaches them on the basis of the following characteristics: 1) the particular memory of each sense, 2) a range (threshold) and tone (energetic intensity) that the incoming stimulus must alter in order for it to be detected, 3) the particular mechanism of translation that each sense has (the chemical, mechanical, physical and internal senses each translate sensorial data into a homogeneous system of impulses which the consciousness can then read and structure into meaningful information), and 4) using the parameters provided by a realtime stream of supplementary information from the other senses.

In other words, for a perception to take place, the stimulus must break through the sensory threshold and leave an impression on the consciousness. Otherwise, the sense data is just a part of the background of perceptual "noise." I can hear people talking around me, but unless one of them succeeds in attract-

ing my attention, I will not structure their speech into meaningful communication. I will only register what they are saying when they intentionally capture my attention, or when I intentionally focus my attention on what they are saying. Without the mechanism of attention, which enables me to register a perception, the information will just buzz past my senses without leaving a trace. This is why, if one is distracted, one forgets where one has left one's keys. Distraction means that the information was not registered by the consciousness, though it was registered by the sense. Then, to remember what we did with the keys, we have to evoke the registers of our senses, and this requires a much greater effort than simply evoking the memory that we imprinted on the consciousness when we said at one moment: "Now, *take note*: you are putting your keys *in your coat pocket*."

Perception with attention is called *reversibility*, but I won't elaborate on this concept, merely mention it, since this Glossary is just an introduction to some terms used in the psychology of the consciousness, to assist the reader in understanding the ideas developed herein with regard to connecting the study of history with the life of the body and the emotions.

Registers are *always* internal, even when we are registering phenomena that occur outside our bodies. There can be no registers that are not in the body. Sensation, memory and imagination are always internal, but there can be errors, generically called illusions, in which we believe something is coming from the outside when we are in reality projecting an internal register outside of ourselves. This can vary from seeing visions (for example when one is running a high fever) to imagining that someone is in love with us as a result of projecting on them our powerful wish for them to love us. Illusions and hallucinations are quite common in ordinary human behavior. The identification of the "I" with the consciousness is also a type of illusion.

**Psychology of the Consciousness** Descriptive psychology developed by Mario Rodríguez C., Argentine thinker who writes under the pseudonym Silo. Describes the function of images as transporters of energetic impulses to the centers of thought, feeling and action. To the extent that the consciousness configures clear, brilliant and correctly emplaced images within an internal "space of representation," coherent and efficient behavior is triggered toward the world that simultaneously produces phenomena of unity in the human psychism, in the three times of consciousness: past (reconciliation), present (self-knowledge and existential orientation) and future (humanizing transformation). When the images are poorly configured, contradictory or incorrectly

emplaced, the resulting behavior and relationship with the world is contradictory, confused, inefficient, and produces the register of mental suffering.

**Serial Colonization** A series of colonizations. The Philippines was colonized by Spain in 1521, in 1898 by the United States, and at present can be said to be internally colonized (See 'Internal Colonization').

**Somatic** Of, relating to, or affecting the body, esp. as distinguished from the germ plasm or the psyche (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.)

**Somatic History** In his complex and far ranging book, *Coming to Our Senses: Body and Spirit in the Hidden History of the West*,[110] Morris Berman develops a concept of a somatic history that moves away from the mind/body split that he perceives as forming the bedrock of orthodox historiography, and in fact of all Western civilization. Such a history would not be obsessively focused on visible, heightened "traumatic" events such as economic depressions, political revolutions, and major or minor wars, nor portray people as categorized clusters: workers, the elderly, union members, marginal elements, etc., caught up in larger forces alien to their lives. Somatic historical analysis would delve into people's day-to-day existence, because "the life of the body, of the emotions, the subjective experiences of how the mind and body interact constitute the real events of our lives and condition, if not cause, everything that happens 'historically.'" The somatic dimension is the invisible, the immediate, the local, the experiential basis of all historical dramas, and to understand it is to grasp the iceberg-like underpinnings of historical happenings. One of the many authors whose fascinating works Berman cites is Carlo Ginzburg and his book on 16th-century heresy, *The Cheese and the Worms*. The book reconstructs the story of Domenico Scandella, a peasant who for thirty years disseminated a syncretic teaching of Catholicism and ancient animist traditions in the Friuli region (the northern part of the Venetian provinces), until he was denounced to the Inquisition by a priest and burned at the stake in 1599. Ginzburg asserts that a reciprocal relationship exists between written (visible) and oral (invisible) culture, and there is a need for the creation of a new method and standards of proof in historical research that will balance the heretofore unfair advantage enjoyed by the dominant academic culture, which has resulted in the predominance of educated circles' views on the ideas that finally shape official culture, leaving unofficial culture (which is

[110] Please see Part I, pages 23 to 34 for the full development of the points touched on in this entry.

somatic and more closely linked to the life of the unschooled and therefore silent majority) so little taken into account as to be left out of the picture. A situation which, according to Berman, has resulted in the current fatigue that permeates the discipline. Ginzburg writes that the challenge cannot be evaded, and historiography will have to incorporate a new line of research based on "heterogeneous, in fact unbalanced, documentation" and draws a parallel with the impact of quantum mechanics on classical physics:

> That a new field of investigation alters not only the methods but the very criteria of proofs in a given discipline is shown, for example, in the history of physics: the acceptance of atomic theory has necessitated a change in the standards of evidence that had developed within the sphere of classical physics.

In his book, Berman actually defines and presents research on several areas of study of somatic history: (1) the development of Western civilization from the point of view of the mind/body split, which Berman terms the "nemo" or "basic fault," and the nemo's manifestation in the existential problem of Self vs. Other. He incorporates the ideas of the object relations school of psychology into his development of this concept; (2) the marginalization of animal life from human society; (3) body image and the evolution of the use of mirrors; (4) the development of toys, and (5) the history of religious heresy in the West.

The approach I propose in Chapter 2 is quite simply to keep the body co-present, more than to take the mapping of man's changing relationship with the body and emotions as a specific object of study from a historical perspective, though clearly this is a potentially rich vein of investigation, as Berman more than amply demonstrates. The idea I put forward is much simpler and proposes that the somatic element *not* be excluded, and less "consecrated" materials such as oral history and popular traditions be incorporated into the discipline, finding ways to bring together subjective, personal experience (microhistory) and the larger life of nations (macrohistory) into one meaningful whole. Berman does include this idea in his sprawling and ambitious work, citing historian Theodore Zeldin:

> Zeldin adds that he looks forward to the day when 'the historian who can discover the links between his own life and what has happened in past centuries, who can express in a new way how the past is alive, or who can give

it a new coloring through the sieve of his own idiosyncracies, will no longer be idiosyncratic.'

# APPENDIX B

## THE ANTI-COLONIAL vs. COLONIAL DIALECTIC IN PHILIPPINE HISTORIOGRAPHY

R. Ileto wrote in "Perspectives on the Study of Southeast Asia," describing the posture of Pantayong Pananaw:

> Traditionally, historical scholarship in the Philippines has addressed the agendas set by colonialism; reacting to colonialism was already being caught up in its parameters. Pantayong Pananaw proponents were saying: no, Philippine history develops out of its own internal dynamic, independent of colonial processes. Furthermore, it is crucial that such a history be conceived of and written in the indigenous languages, rather than English, so that it can address local concerns and avoid being caught up in the dialectic of anticolonial versus colonial, or natives writing back against their former rulers. Such a history, according to the Pantayong Pananaw school, ought and can be based on indigenous reference points rather than those set by 400 years of colonial rule. Pan-tayo means "we" in the sense of what we share and have in common, or what is intrinsic in being Filipino, in contrast to Pan-kami, meaning "we" in the sense of "not them," or defining Filipino as against the colonizing Other.

The foregoing exemplifies the traditional, static, black-and-white, either-or intellectual frame for the discussion of: Should Filipino history be viewed, studied and taught from the point of view of pre-Hispanic, indigenous times, colonial times, or post-colonial times?

There is no morality implicit in thinking; neither does the development of one point of view automatically establish that point of view as the epistemological zenith, the *only* valid approach, the enunciation of reality-itself, things as they are, unquestionable, eternal and absolute.

We can approach our history from whatever vantage point we choose, depending on our interest, on what specific area of knowledge we choose to focus on and develop in new directions. The mind, the awareness, the consciousness is the supreme arbiter of reality, but it cannot fool itself that a consensual focus, exercised by one or two generations, is the absolute focus. New generations will inevitably pit their own internal mindscape against that of the preceding generations. I see this intellectual polemic as therefore *generational* in nature,

and at this point it is already ceding to a new moment -- it has already been surpassed by a new generational vision that has been shaped by the experience of *globalization* and the intellectual breakthroughs of relativity theory and quantum mechanics.

When the Spanish were still a fresh memory, and the Americans were the active presence in our awareness, alternately beguiling and repulsing us, and given our condition of cultural underdevelopment and isolation, it was inescapable for us to have trained on ourselves the look of our colonizers.

I posit that both approaches are valid, and that neither contradicts the other. It is unarguable that colonialism has marked our history, and, as a result, our consciousness and mentality, in an indelible way. But it is equally true that Philippine history has its own internal dynamic, because the Filipino people are active consciousnesses developing toward a future that is only created and materialized from within and through the action of our bodies, wherever such bodies may be. However, for many generations, a coercive external colonial power was the major frame of national life, and Western imperialism was the major, conditioning process within which the internal Filipino dynamic had to evolve -- with all the deformations and transformations this implied -- and that major frame imposed certain forms on that substance. Expressed in a simple image: colonialism shaped the Filipino soma and consciousness just as you can gather water, pour it into a plastic tray with divisions that, after you leave the tray in the freezer for a few hours, will transform the water into small cubes of ice.

In this sense, if the Filipino consciousness was water free-flowing in a wild stream, and colonialism siphoned it off into a bucket and then poured it into a tray and stuck it in the freezer to use the ice for cocktails, we cannot deny that the Filipino consciousness was shaped by the refrigerator of colonialism in a determined way. Neither can we assert that Filipino consciousness in the moment of free-flowing stream is more genuine than in the moment of frozen ice cubes. They are merely different moments of process, and a coherent vision of our reality would be not to contraposition one moment against the other, but to envision the flow, understand the dynamic that unfolded as the Filipino consciousness experienced reiterated changes and transformations. We can also project those moments of process toward a future and think of how those ice cubes could be melted and whether they should be returned to the stream. Does the stream still exist, or has it been cemented over and

turned into a mall? What are the needs of the Filipino consciousness: to gather that water and use it to clean out the mall's parking lot, or to return it to the streams and create small hydropower facilities that would serve mountain communities?

Each moment of process presents its advantages and disadvantages. But in any case, we must move toward mental flexibility and a more discerning intelligence that focuses on the looker (the observer) and the observer's look as well, and not just on the object of observation. The object of observation cannot be confused with reality itself. There is no One Absolute Reality – at least, not for us – because the human consciousness is incapable of structuring it, due to the intrinsic limitations of our consciousness: we cannot perceive everything, understand everything, fit everything into our structuring capacity. However, we can certainly perceive meaning and non-meaning and guide ourselves by our inner registers of growing meaning, moving away from what we register as the contrary.

We can study Philippine history from whatever angle we choose. We can deny that colonialism ever left its mark on us, and we can praise it to the heavens, saying it saved us from barbarism. We can also choose not to identify with either stand, but to study the mentality that causes each one to arise. We can opt for a description of how world processes conditioned our national history. We can compare our process to the processes of other countries likewise affected by the macro processes. And we can study how our national process has evolved, despite the pressures from the larger ones, and preserved what is intrinsically part of our mentality and our national soul...and the possible reasons why this is so.

In any case, the more profoundly we wish to deal with our historical process, the more knowledge we will need, at all levels, of all disciplines, including a descriptive psychology, because history cannot be understood without psychology. Neither can we reduce ourselves to studying and communicating only in our native languages, no matter how sovereignly Filipino this may convince us that we become when we do so. *We must do it all*: use our own languages, and use the languages of the world, making them our own. We must open up to the larger world as well as to our most intimate one, and realize that the human spirit is not limited by geography, economic regimes, political systems, cultural conditionings -- not even by religious faiths. Broader and richer knowledge of ourselves is brought by deeper knowledge of the world, and vice versa. Even more: we must break through the constraints of

merely intellectual exercise, and leap toward forging genuine human bonds with other nations. This is the sign of the future.

The Filipino nation is one of the most privileged in this historical moment, because of our human process. We are already making a unique contribution to world culture, to which we can give enormous impetus in a conscious, humanizing direction.

This is, in fact, our empirical, phenomenological experience, though up to this moment it had not been named and acknowledged by ourselves.

# APPENDIX C

## THE HISPANIC-FILIPINO COSMOLOGY

Cosmology refers to an image of the world (including the origin and nature of the universe, of time, space, eternity, necessity, change, etc.) which informs a human group's beliefs about itself and its relationship with the outer world, with the cosmos. Spanish colonization replaced the native world's basic social unit, and undoubtedly its organizing symbolic center, the *barangay*, with what Ileto terms the "church-convent complex" (CCC) or the "first realm." The CCC became the center of Hispanic-Filipino colonial society and was configured by a trinity: the parish priest, the church, and the priest's residence, or *convento*. Ileto writes:

> In the usual town histories, the foundation of a town coincides with the building of some kind of church and convent to house the parish priest. The *indio* populace was organized around this center in fixed settlements called barrios or sitios, within hearing distance of the church bells.
>
> The church-convent complex was what we might term a "codifying" or "organizing" center. The indios willingly organized their lives around this church center, which was the "house of God." From it emanated a promise of salvation, an end to uncertainty and suffering on earth. The priest who occupied the center was in a privileged position vis à vis the source of all power and authority. Not only that, Catholic priests were believed to have access to supernatural powers; only they could read the Latin inscriptions which could activate the powers of amulets....The church and convent were imposing structures, often built on high ground which once housed altars for ancestral worship....

### The Native Filipino Traditional, Religious Cosmology

An explanation of the term "native cosmology" is, however, in order, to transmit the weight of meaning that gives coherence to Ileto's cogent theory of a Hispanic-Filipino world that consisted of 'three realms.' Ileto does not give clues as to how he arrived at his concept; however, I have found the works of religious historian Mircea Eliade useful for suggesting the outlines of the iceberg of meaning that supported the external social and religious organization

of that world –- an invisible dimension which has always been and always will be an essential component of the Filipinos' form of relating to the world. First I will present what each realm consisted of, citing Ileto, then I will cite passages from Eliade's book, *The Sacred and the Profane*, which shed light on the vital grounding of meaning and reality that coexistence with the sacred gives to traditional societies.

**The Three Realms (Tiaong, Dolores, Sariaya and San Pablo, 1897)**

In these Southern Tagalog towns, the subjects of Ileto's study, he observed that while the 'first realm' was the manifest center of church and convent, the ′second realm′ was configured by the *principalía* or the prominent residents of the town, who acknowledged the CCC as the seat of authority though they held to their awareness of their own importance (a power relationship which mirrors the tension between the religious establishment as a whole and the Spanish colonial administration). The revolution produced a displacement of the parish priest's traditional power to the revolutionary government and the fighting units and their commanders, manifested in the incidents of violence that sometimes took place when *revolucionarios* entered the towns. However, the 'third realm' -- the sacred mountain of Banahaw -- was the CCC's true opposite pole of tension, as the tacit center of power for the natives, and it acquired increasingly more visible importance as the revolutionary process tipped the balance of power away from the Hispanic cosmology toward the native Filipino one. The third realm would eventually topple the Spanish priest from his position of preeminence, and in the areas of Central Philippines where the Katipunan did not have enough men, such religious movements as the Colorum Society and the followers of the messiah Felipe Salvador would enforce the authority and sovereignty of the revolution.

Ileto explains:

> Since the eighteenth century the "first realm" had subordinated to itself the mobile, family- or barangay-centered system of precolonial times. The Spanish priest was the equivalent of the god-king elsewhere in Southeast Asia. He maintained his position of dominance in a manner that was supposed to transcend the competition for power among the major families of the town.
>
> The principalía, however, maintained its own autonomous sociopolitical sphere while identifying with the church. The "second realm" as I term it,

> was that space or sphere of town life dominated by the mayor, his allies, tenants, police, and kinfolk. While they were plugged into the church-convento circuit for part of their existence, particularly their ritual life, they maintained their own concerns and even manipulated the Spanish priest for their own ends.

The 'third realm,' whose center was the holy mountain, Mt. Banahaw, would ultimately subvert the first realm and become the manifest center during the Revolution:

> The movement of people to and from the church-convento (i.e., between inner and outer parts of the town) was paralleled by the regular movement of people from the town to Mt. Banahaw. True, the Spanish priest in his church was in a privileged position and was a source of power because of his direct connection with God. The holy mountain in the distance, however, was, and still is, recognized as a source of supernatural powers as well. At certain times of the year, such as holy week, such potency was accessible to those who made the pilgrimage to the mountain.

There was thus a separate, native world whose center was Mt. Banahaw, which had its own spiritual guides:

> ...Called *maestro* (venerable teacher), *pator* [sic] (pastor), or *suprema*, these men and women knew the secrets of the mountain. Through their guidance, young men in the town could obtain protective powers called anting-anting; the sick could be cured; people could communicate with their dead relatives, and so forth. The shamans offered an alternative community or church on the mountain.

Ileto's language ("...offered an alternative community or church...") does not however communicate the deep significance of the relationship between the rural people and the sacred mountain and its guardians. Much more was really occurring, something that went far above and beyond the 'patron-client' relations of the first and second realms. True, the first realm was an authentic religious center, but it was already tainted and its power diluted by its wider context: the culture of profane society founded over the European paradigm of modern civilization. The community around Mt. Banahaw was a survival of the ancient sacred world of the indigenous forebears. Thus, it concentrated very real power and posed an effective challenge to the Hispanic-Filipino cosmology, which was in a state of disintegration because its hold over the

natives' somatic, spiritual existence had been fatally eroded over time by the abuses that weakened the essential bonds of faith and loyalty. Mt. Banahaw, as both symbol and sacred place, provided an intrinsically religious and long-besieged people with something absolutely vital for their psychic survival: a connection to a transcendent reality charged with power and being, that gave their suffering lives meaning and offered a vision/promise of salvation/future liberation.

## The Sacred and the Profane

In this landmark work, Eliade develops the "significance of religious myth, symbolism, and ritual within life and culture." Anyone who reads this precious book will recognize that the mentalities of both the Spanish and the native Filipinos corresponded, even at the end of the 19th century, to the category of religious, traditional (agriculture-based) societies, while that of the United States was a profane and materialist (industrialized, technology-oriented) one. In 1897, the native population of the Philippines was still deeply immersed in a mentality proper to the archaic world. The imprint of modernity that Spanish rule had conferred was superficial and confined to urban areas that were little developed, still surrounded by an untamed, mysterious and dangerous countryside, teeming with spirits and mythical divinities.

The Spanish conquistadors had brought a new Christian cosmology to the archipelago which they imposed on the natives and which the latter accepted or tolerated, but without ever completely relinquishing their own, based as it was on their relationship with their natural environment. God to the Spanish was present in their churches and in their religious symbols; the Divinity for the indigenous Filipinos resided in nature and in sacred places.

## The Sacred

Eliade explains that there are two fundamentally different modes of facing the world: with the profane attitude or with the religious attitude. The profane attitude is expressed in the modern, scientific position in front of natural phenomena and human existence, which reduces both to their material dimension, ruled by natural laws which can be explained. The religious attitude, historically proper to pre-scientific man, ascribes certain properties to materiality that elevate it to a higher hierarchy of being that is imbued with greater power and reality.

We are not concerned here with discussing whether one modality is valid and the other invalid; rather our interest is to better understand the behavior of *homus religiosus*, on the basis of the assumption that the native Filipino mentality and the cosmology it is based on belongs to this category of relationship with the world. We can say that, in general, the Filipinos who were not fully incorporated into the Hispanic-Filipino ilustrado culture lived in greater immersion in the religious world, and, further, that their experience of religiousness, though most visible through the Catholic rites and social customs, was grounded on a deeper layer of pre-Christian religiosity, which was somatic and informed by their relationship with sacralized nature.

This situation differed from that of the urban Filipinos, who were already incorporated into a colonial society moving toward modern desacralization, following a European model of industrial, technological progress. Thus, from the point of view of mentality, the Philippines at the end of the 19th century was a very mixed bag indeed, a tapestry of human coexistence whose warp and woof consisted of the complete range of mentalities possible, from a minority that identified with the currents of the European Enlightenment, Thomism, Scholasticism, positivism, rationalism and materialism, to a majority of indigenous animists with a showy but merely superficial coating of Christianity.

**The Mentality of Archaic, Religious Man**

Archaic, religious man is characterized by his need to live in a sacralized cosmos. Eliade writes:

> The man of the archaic societies tends to live as much as possible *in* the sacred or in close proximity to consecrated objects. The tendency is perfectly understandable, because, for primitives as for the man of all premodern societies, the *sacred* is equivalent to a *power*, and, in the last analysis, to *reality*. The sacred is saturated with *being*. Sacred power means reality and at the same time enduringness and efficacity.... Thus it is easy to understand that religious man deeply desires *to be*, to participate in *reality*, to be saturated with power.
>
> ...Religious man's desire to live *in the sacred* is in fact equivalent to his desire to take up his abode in objective reality, not to let himself be paralyzed by the never-ceasing relativity of purely subjective experiences, to

live in a real and effective world, and not in an illusion.

**Sacred Space**

To religious man, space is not homogeneous, all the same; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others because they are "stronger," more significant than the surrounding space. In comparison with such places, the surroundings lack consistency, structure, they feel amorphous. Sacred space is such because it is imbued with power, it is charged with greater energy, which is that of the divine. As with space, so with objects.

Is there scientific confirmation of the existence of differences between sacred and non-sacred spaces? According to James Swan (*Sacred Places: How the Living Earth Seeks Our Friendship*), special electromagnetic variations occur in sacred places:

> The Earth has a bipolar electromagnetic field which normally has a positive charge of 120-150 volts per meter intensity. In response to the ever-changing universe, the field also varies on day-to-day, monthly, annual, and eleven-year cycles. The eleven-year cycle is linked to solar activity. This field intensity also varies according to time, location, altitude, weather conditions, and atmospheric phenomena like the northern lights.
>
> ...Many of the world's sacred mountains are known for displays of unusual lights, glows, and halos. Sorté Mountain in Venezuela is frequently said to have spectacular natural light shows over it, with flares and veils not unlike the northern lights. Mount Banahaw in the Philippines has similar light displays.... As underground geological strata move and shift, strong energetic discharges occur along earthquake fault lines, which frequently lie near sacred places.

A break is effected in space when sacrality is manifested, and this is what makes it possible to fix a point or central axis for all future orientation. In that point where the energy is felt as qualitatively different, which religious man identifies as possessed with power, being and reality, as opposed to the nonreality of the surrounding space, the world is founded and a center is revealed.

For religious man this founding of a center is absolutely vital because nothing can begin, nothing can be done without first establishing an orientation. Eliade writes, “It is for this reason that religious man has always sought to fix his abode at the ‘center of the world.’ *If the world is to be lived in*, it must be *founded* – and no world can come to birth in the homogeneity and relativity of profane space.”

Thus, to locate a sacred space is to be able to repeat the paradigmatic work of the gods, and recreate the world. Once the sacred has indicated a point of absolute orientation, then a world with structure and order can be constructed.

The conquistadors manifested this cosmogonic behavior (cosmogony meaning world creation, by fixing of a point of reference, sacralizing new ground) when they took possession of a discovered territory by consecrating it with a celebration of Holy Mass:

> The Spanish and Portuguese conquistadores, discovering and conquering territories, took possession of them in the name of Jesus Christ. The raising of the Cross was equivalent to consecrating the country, hence in some sort to a "new birth." For through Christ, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"(II Corinthians, 5, 17). The newly discovered country was "renewed," "recreated" by the Cross.

Finally, the image of the sacred mountain corresponds to the center of the world, the *axis mundi* that connects Heaven to Earth, and Earth to Hell:

> Such a cosmic pillar can be only at the very center of the universe, for the whole of the habitable world extends around it. Here, then, we have a sequence of religious conceptions and cosmological images that are inseparably connected and form a system that may be called the "system of the world" prevalent in traditional societies: (a) a sacred place constitutes a break in the homogeneity of space; (b) this break is symbolized by an opening by which passage from one cosmic region to another is made possible (from heaven to earth and vice versa; from earth to the underworld); (c) communication with heaven is expressed by one or another of certain images, all of which refer to the *axis mundi* (cf. The *universalis columna*), ladder (cf. Jacob’s ladder), mountain, tree, vine, etc.; (d) around this cos-

mic axis lies the world (= our world), hence the axis is located "in the middle," at the "navel of the earth"; it is the Center of the World.

**The Revolution: Return to the Native Cosmology**

According to Ileto, "The 'magical center' of the Laguna katipunans was Mount Makiling, an extinct volcano in the vicinity of Calamba, Rizal's hometown. Mount Makiling, like Mount Banahaw to the east, is considered a sacred mountain by the inhabitants of the region." In the *pasyon awit*, a version of the revolutionary story is presented that does not correspond to the historical facts, but to the people's somatic experience, a popular mythification that accords, above all, with a collective internal experience. Ileto's analysis reveals the differences between the ilustrados, whose preoccupation with the acceptance of the new republic by the international community rested on outward form (the use of Spanish and European dress and ritual, a constitution patterned after that of Cuba, etc.), and the common people, whose desire for and commitment to the goal of freedom the Americans later found remarkable. The common people understood the revolution above all as an internal -- i.e., religious -- transformation. Their clarity and single-mindedness disturbed the ilustrados, who finally declared their mystique –- which became a threat to the ilustrados' project of outward order without social transformation –- as 'anti-revolutionary'.

The rift between the faction of the 'rational' and the 'irrational,' the cerebral and the somatic-emotional, would ultimately undo the First Republic. Ileto points out that this alienation is indicated by the *awit*'s simple exclusion of the traditional historical interpretation of our revolutionary process:

> The ilustrado view that the revolution evolved from the Katipunan or secret society stage to a republican stage is simply ignored by the awit and, implicitly, in folk memories of the revolution. There indeed was an evolution in political organization but, as we shall see, that was not what the revolution meant to the masses.

To the "masses" –- I prefer the term 'common people' –- *the revolution was a religious crusade to restore the original native cosmology*. In effect, the Revolution of 1896 was a social phenomenon driven by two differentiated visions that intersected at certain moments and unified the struggle, and at others were estranged, thus weakening and ultimately unraveling a national project of liberation and re-creation. These two visions were the political

emancipation that was the aspiration of the ilustrados on one hand, and on the other, the spiritual redemption and social liberation that was the age-old dream of the common people, who, having inherited a foreign cosmology that had been imposed on their forefathers, had become alienated from it and now wished to reinstate the ancient religion and world order (*kaginhawaan*, *kapayapaan*, *kasaganahan* –- ease of breath, tranquillity and plenty). It could be no other way, because the ancient sacred order had never ceased to sustain and ground them in an effective reality, an intimate register of authentic being; and, upon the disintegration of their bonds with the first realm (Mother Spain), it was there to reconnect them to the Source of power.

The cosmology of Christianity crumbled and the reawakening of the ancient religion filled the void. The eruption of the sacred had a destructuring effect, which was manifested in a state of external chaos ("guló"). Chaos was inevitable upon the dissolution of the old order, a bardo that preceded the arising of the new one. The longed-for new order, however, never arrived. It is interesting that the Americans executed the katipuneros they captured and imprisoned in Bilibid, as well as Felipe Salvador, the last of the spiritual leaders of the Revolution. They instinctively understood that all popular religious leadership and the remnants of the Katipunan had to be eliminated before they could consolidate their profane rule.

Here I would point out that in Rizal's zarzuela, "Junto al Pasig," which he wrote when he was 19 years old in 1880, he accurately represented the schism within the native mind between the Spanish and the indigenous cosmologies. Although in the play Rizal awarded the final triumph to the Archangel and the Virgin (and the preservation of the colonial order), the final outcome of the actual historical-psychosomatic drama would be decided by the ancient gods.

It is commonly said that the friars maintained the native population in abeyance to their power. There is another reading, based on somatic historical interpretation, that would assert that it was in fact the common people whose loyalty and submission –- freely given -- enabled the friars and the Spanish civil government to keep the Philippines a colony for almost 400 years. And it was the common people who, upon undergoing a change in their awareness, put an end to both the religious and secular authority of the Spaniards over them. When they decided to withhold their loyalty and their faith, an era ended.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY


Agoncillo, Teodoro A. *A Short History of the Philippines.* Caloocan City: Philippine Graphic Arts, by arrangement with The New American Library Inc. New York, 1975.

Arcilla, Jose S., S.J. *An Introduction to Philippine History.* Quezon City: Ateneo UP, 1973.

Barzini, Luigi. *The Italians.* Touchtone ed. Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996.

Berman, Morris. *Coming to Our Senses: Body and Spirit in the Hidden History of the West*. Published in arrangement with Simon & Schuster. New York: Bantam Books, 1990.

Bulosan, Carlos. *America is in the Heart*. Seattle: U of Washington P, 1994.

Campbell, Joseph. *Myths to Live By. How we re-create ancient legends in our daily lives to release human potential*. New York: Arkana/Penguin Group, 1993.

Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion.* Tr. W.R. Trask. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co. 1987.

Encina, Francisco A., and Castedo, Leopoldo, ed. *Resumen de la Historia de Chile. Redacción , iconografía y apéndices de L. Castedo.* 2 vols. Santiago: Editorial Zig Zag. 1953.

"Argentina," "Costa Rica," "Uruguay." Encyclopaedia Britannica. 1968 ed.

Fernández Larraín, Sergio. *Cartas Inéditas de Miguel de Unamuno.* 2ª Ed. Madrid: Ediciones Rodas, S.A., 1972.

Flew, Anthony. *A Dictionary of Philosophy*. 2nd ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984.

Galdames, Luis. *Historia de Chile.* 15ª ed. Actualizada por Francisco Galdames Ramírez y Osvaldo Silva Galdames. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, 1995.

Galeano, Eduardo. *The Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent.* Tr. Cedric Belfrage. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973.

Herren Crosio, Ricardo. *La conquista erótica de las Indias*. Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, S.A., 1991.

Herring, Hubert. *A History of Latin America From the Beginnings to the Present.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956.

Huetz de Lemps, Xavier. "La corruption au niveau provincial dans les Philippines de la seconde moitié du XIXe. siècle." 1997.

Ileto, Reynaldo Clemeña. *Pasyon and Revolution. Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila UP, 1997.

---, *Filipinos and their Revolution: Event, Discourse, and Historiography*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila UP, 1998

---, "Perspectives on the Study of Southeast Asia." 1998.

Imutan, Andy. Autobiography, ms., 1998.

Karnow, Stanley. *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines*. New York: Random House, 1989.

Kepes, Gyorgy. *El lenguaje de la visión*. Buenos Aires: Ed. Infinito, 1969.

*Larousse universal ilustrado*. Diccionario en tres volúmenes. Paris: Editorial Larousse, 1958.

Maltés, Julio and Concha Cruz, Alejandro. *Historia de Chile*. Santiago de Chile: Bibliografía Internacional S.A., 1992.

Mander, Jerry. *In the Absence of the Sacred: The Failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations* . San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1991.

Medina, Elizabeth. *Rizal According to Retana: Portrait of a Hero and a Revolution*. Santiago: Virtual Ediciones, 1998.

---, "Discovery in Chile: My Journey from Alienation to Identity." ms., 1997.

Menchú, Rigoberta. *I, Rigoberta Menchú, An Indian Woman in Guatemala* . Ed. Elisabeth Burgos-Debray. Tr. Ann Wright. New York: Verso (New Left Books), 1996.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition. Springfield: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1993.

Nagano, Yoshiko. "Re-examining the Foreign Trade Structure of the Colonial Philippines: With Special Reference to the 'Intra-Asian Trade'." Kanagawa University, 1997.

National Statistics Office, Manila. Press Release of 1996 OFWs 10/29/97. http://www.census.gov.ph/data/pressrelease/of19600tx.html

Olson, Sam L., et al., eds. *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Empire, 1402-1975*. Westport: Greenwood P, 1992.

Pigafetta, Antonio. *Primer viaje alrededor del mundo*. Edición de Leoncio Cabrero. Crónicas de América 12. Madrid: Historia 16, 1985 - Información y Revistas, S.A., 1988.

*Pequeño Larousse ilustrado*. García-Pelayo y Gross, Ramón, ed. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Larousse: 1986.

Retana y Gamboa, Wenceslao Emilio. "Vida y escritos del Dr. José Rizal." Nuestro Tiempo, Enero 1905 - Septiembre 1906.

Rocquet, Claude-Henri. *Mircea Eliade: Ordeal by Labyrinth. Conversations with Claude-Henri Rocquet.* Tr. Derek Coltman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Sacks, Oliver. *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and other clinical tales*. New York: Harper and Row, First Perennial Library Edition, 1987.

Schumacher, John N., S.J. *The Making of a Nation. Essays on Nineteenth-Century Filipino Nationalism* . Manila: Ateneo de Manila UP, 1996.

Silo. *Contribuciones al pensamiento: Sicología de la imagen y Discusiones historiológicas*. Buenos Aires: Ed. Planeta SAIC, 1990.

---, *Diccionario del nuevo humanismo.* Santiago: Ed. Virtual, 1997.

---, "The Book of School." Unpublished collection of the talks given in Corfu, Greece in 1976.

---, *Humanizar la tierra*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta, 1988.

Swan, James A. *Sacred Places: How the Living Earth Seeks Our Friendship*. Santa Fe: Bear & Company Inc, 1990.

Timson, Lia. "Modern Day Slaves." Snoop, Spring 1995. Filipino Labour. http://138.25.138.94/acij/snoop/issue4/Filipino.html

Trinh Minh-ha. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1989.

Unamuno, Miguel de. *Viejos y jóvenes.* 6ª Ed. Madrid: Espasa Calpe S.A., 1980.

---, *Mi religión y otros ensayos breves.* Colección Austral. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, S.A., 1978.

Uslar-Pietri, Arturo. *En Busca del Nuevo Mundo.* Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1969.

Villalobos, Sergio et al. *Historia y Geografía de Chile, 3er Año de Educación Media.* Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1984.

*Visión de los Vencidos.* (Textos nahuatls y notas explicativas). Ed. Casa de las Américas. Prólogo del Dr. Miguel León-Portilla. Tr. Dr. Angel María Garibay K. Colección literatura latinoamericana. Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1969.

Whorf, Benjamin. "Language, Mind and Reality." *Language, Thought and Reality*. John B. Carroll, ed. 5th ed. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1962.

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States.* New York: Harper Perennial, 1980.