

***EL CUERPO, RAZON AT KAPANGYARIHAN / THE BODY,  
REASON AND POWER: FILIPINO ELITE COSMOLOGIES  
OF STATE UNDER AMERICAN COLONIAL RULE,  
1890s-1920s***

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In 1905, just a few years after the United States had declared the end of the Philippine-American war and had begun enacting colonial rule, the U.S. Secretary of War and a party of U.S. Congressmen held public hearings in Manila. Apparently, it was to let the Filipinos air their opinions about the new colonial relationship in which they had found themselves. As it marked one of the first discussions among the Americans and the Filipino elites (Cullinane 1989:201). It also marked, according to the nationalist historian Maximo M. Kalaw, the historical passage of Filipino politics out of the “period of suppressed nationalism” (Kalaw 1927; 294). At these hearings, one particular Filipino elite, Senor Vicente Ilustre, stood before the visiting committee and argued that the United States should grant more political autonomy to the Philippines, claiming that the Philippines was a country of very high “political capacity”, that it was, contrary to the Americans views on the matter, quite capable of “self-government.” He then submitted a petition signed by him and others which read in part.<sup>1</sup>

If the Philippine archipelago has a governable popular mass called upon to obey and a *directing class* charged with the duty of governing, it is in condition to govern itself. These factors ... are the only two by which to determine the political capacity of a country; an entity that knows how to govern, the *directing class*, and an entity that knows how to obey, the popular masses, (*Hearings* 1905: 12).

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What is so remarkable about the petition is that the authors intended it to be an argument for more self-rule and autonomy--remarkable because the elite's proposition that there are two classes, a directing class and the popular masses, must have had little effect upon the Americans but to lend credence to the very imperial discourse which was preventing the Filipinos from having political autonomy in the first place. Indeed, American policy-makers and administrators had justified their possession of the Philippines on the grounds that without America's imperial "benevolence," control over the islands would fall into the hands of the local Filipino elite "half-civilized" by the Spaniards, who did know what "liberty" and "free government" meant, and who would thus perpetuate a "tyranny" and "oligarchy" where they ruled "despotically" over the "ignorant" and "credulous" masses (Special Report of Taft 1908 [hereafter referred to as SRT:75; Stanley 1974:66]. The Philippines as fundamentally feudal, and mired in a state of political primitivity, had no doubt informed the Americans' imperial project in "democratic tutelage," and the Filipino elites' talk of "directing" and "directed" classes must have helped perpetuate the image. Key colonial policy-makers such as Elihu Root and W. F. Taft, in fact, later derided the ideas expressed in the petition, referring to them as further documentation of the Filipino elites' tyrannical orientation, their ignorance of "free government" and therefore exemplary of the need for continued American control (SRT 1908:25).

Considering that the authors of this petition would soon make up the leadership of Nationalista political party<sup>2</sup> (the party which would dominate internal colonial politics for the rest of the American period), American policy-makers and administrators were quite on the mark in treating the petition of 1905 as indicative of the Filipino elites' political orientation.<sup>3</sup> They were less on the mark, however, in their characterization of that orientation and in dismissing the ideas expressed in the petition as evidence of the elites' "tyrannical" and "despotic" nature. This is not to say that the Americans' characterization on this account is surprising. They were merely localizing the signs offered by the elites at the hearings into their extant teleological schema, one which inserted the Philippines into a low point on the narrative of political, social, and cultural development that ran from a Hobbesian state-of-nature (embodied by "uncivilized", "chaotic", and "non-Teutonic" peoples) up towards the epitome of the scale: the liberal-democratic social contract (Moses 1905). They were also relating the ideas expressed by the elites to their post-Jacksonian (and post-bellum) populism cum early-Progressivism, which purported to defend the rights of the "common" Filipino man, or *tao*,

against the brutalities of an "aristocratic" Filipino elite. This is to say, though, that in so localizing, administrators such as Taft and Root were tearing the ideas in the petition from their local referents, conducting in effect, an act of epistemic violence.

Below, I map out those local referents, to demonstrate that the ideas expressed in the petition carried the traces of an elite political subjectivity which was not contained nor fully apprehended by the terms of the Americans' colonial discourse. The elites' notion of a "directing class" and an "obeying class" in other words, carried a host of meanings and associations whose complexity and internal logic remained irreducible to the temporalities and images into which it was inserted by the policy-makers and administrators. The "directing class" idea was but one aspect of a larger set of Filipino elite visions and imaginings about what their "state" (both as a political cosmology which prescribed certain definitions of social and political relations, of proper governance, of legitimate political leadership and adequate types of authority -- all of which were quite different from the American point of views.

Historically concurrent with but not the same as an elite nationalism, the cosmology of the state articulated by the elites made up more than an simple political "ideology." Nor is reducible to a set of supposedly-essential set of "values." It rather helped constitute an historically-constructed political field<sup>5</sup> which, in its own way, defined political propriety, prescribed schemas about the proper structure and operation of political relations, and offered notions about what is good, desirable, and legitimate in politics. Upon this field and through its structuring principles, then, would elite political action and practice unfold throughout the American regime.<sup>6</sup>

This elite political cosmology and its attended field of action has yet to be fully problematized in Philippine historiography. Just as the Americans' colonial discourse had folded the multivocal discourses and practices of the Filipino political elite into their narrow post-Enlightenment narratives of political progress and Reason, so have dominant strands within Philippine historiography reduced them, through their own particular way. As Paredes (1988) argues, a nuanced understanding of the elite has long been impeded by a certain brand of nationalist historiography which, in effect, has relegated the Filipino elite to the analytic confines of a "resistance" vs. 'collaboration' dichotomy. This dichotomy, Paredes continues, creates unavoidable gaps in (historiographical) perception and

impeded a systematic analysis of the character, role, and behaviour of the Filipino elite" (1988:4-5). Much in the same way that the colonial knowledge has reduced the subjectivity of the rebellious Filipino peasant into weighted terms such as "banditry" -- and likewise the orientation of the elite into terms as "*caciqueism*"-- so have extant scholarly studies reduced the subjectivity and practices of the Filipino elite to the narrow categories of "resistor" or "collaborator."<sup>7</sup>

Due in part to this unfortunate state of historiography, my attempt to map out the visions and imaginings of the Filipino elite is necessarily tentative. At its most basic level, my attempt will involve a reading of a few representative texts and documents contextualized within the historical conditions of their emergence and articulation. As we will see, these texts taken together worked through a set of metaphor and imagery which provided particular and particularized ideas regarding reciprocal relations and the codification of those relations into political practice and the political institutions of colonial rule. The petition of the 1905 which we earlier underscored is but one of these texts which I hope to unpack, and will do so, first in relation to the political ideas and ideals emerging in the midst of the Philippine revolution (1890's), and second, in relation to other Nationalista political documents and texts (such as Tagalog civic guides) written during the first decades of American rule. Lastly, I will relate the ideas expressed in the texts to elite political practice. Through this exploratory interrogation, then, we will be taking a tour through more than the Philippines' "directing class" and its "popular masses", but through the Philippines' body, reason, and power--or more precisely, the Philippines' *el cuerpo, razon, and kapangyarihan*.<sup>8</sup>

## Reciprocity and the Social Order

I reiterate that the elites' "directing class" idea cannot be reduced to a set of Philippine "values." That is, it should not be treated as "essential" or inherent, but socially and historically-constructed through the events and happenings, changes and developments preceding its enunciation. To begin, then, a bit must be said of its historicity.

One of the most prominent, overriding and consistent social logics evident amidst the discontinuities of Tagalog history is that of reciprocal exchange, involving personalized relations of obligation and debt.<sup>9</sup> While something of a universal phenomenon, reciprocal exchange within the

Tagalog order has had its own particular manifestations and localizations, applying at a number of registers. Extended kinship ties throughout the pre-Hispanic period to this day, for example, have been established and sustained upon bilateral, contingent relations of debt and obligation, not upon matrilineal or patrilineal genealogies (Kaut 1965; Scott 1994:217-219). In the realm of political authority, the *datus* of the pre-Hispanic period and Filipino municipal elites in the Spanish administration rose to power through their ability to position themselves at a certain place within circulations of reciprocity and exchange (as we discuss in more detail below). Socio-economic life was often structured in reciprocal terms as well-- say for example, in relations between landlord and tenant, *hacendero* and peasant, or even through communitarian types of organization such as the *sugu* system (Fegan 1982:97-98; Larkin 1993:81-84; McLennan 1982:66).<sup>10</sup> Attendant to such objective practices has been a certain subjectivity or *habitus* of the actors involved, manifesting in various ways. The Tagalog concepts of *utang na loob* and *hiya* most often provided the schemas of this subjectivity.<sup>11</sup> The patron-client ties which defined socio-economic relations in the 19th and early 20th centuries, for example, had involved a sense of heartfelt obligation or affection (*utang na loob*) on the part of both parties.<sup>12</sup>

Such practices and their attendant sensibilities might be said to have been more or less hegemonic for much of Tagalog history. That is, they made up the unquestioned taken-for-granted realm of quotidian Tagalog life.<sup>13</sup> Thus they provided the conditions into which new elements from the outside would be inserted. Rafael (1993), for example, has shown how reciprocity played into the Spaniards' attempts to convert natives to the terms of Castilian Catholicism. The Tagalogs' sensibilities regarding *utang na loob* and *hiya* which had been for so long rooted in their daily reciprocal practices -- provided the terms by which elements of Catholicism were localized so as to form novel ideas about death and hunting, most often exceeding the Spaniards' missionary effort (Rafael 1993). Reciprocal sensibilities were also employed by various peasant-based movements of the Spanish period. The *utang na loob* relationship between the mother and her children, for example, served as a basis for anti-colonial rebellions, as peasant movements scripted Spanish sovereignty in the Philippines as a reciprocal pact unjustly broken (Ileto 1979).

I suggest that the predominance of reciprocal ties in structuring Tagalog life provided the practical conditions for ideal or idealized notion of reciprocity to figure not only as a primary trope in peasant ideologies,

but also as a cornerstone and basic structuring principle of Filipino elite thought as well.<sup>14</sup> Social types of reciprocity were discursively objectified by the elites; the more unconscious reciprocal practices of everyday life became conscious through often politically-charged and reflective writings and debates occurring in the late 19th century. Reciprocity, as a socially-constitutive set of practices and sensibilities, became in a word, “ideological.”<sup>15</sup>

The late 19th century was, to be sure, a profound and determining period in Filipino intellectual and cultural history. The anti-colonial propagandists’ and *ilustrados*’ imagining of the nation, their hitherto-unwritten histories of the Philippines, the emergence of Filipino literature, and art, and philosophy; such signifying practices were indicative of that which had not happened before in Philippine history -- that is, ‘Filipinos’ actively and consciously reflecting upon ‘Filipinos’-- constructing in fact that very identity. Privileged European educated members of the elite, as well as their colleagues, became for the first time conscious of themselves as people, conscious of their society, and reflective upon their predicament resulting in a multiplicity of self-representations manifested in literature, art and philosophy (Schumacher 1991). The Filipino social and political philosophy written in the midst of the movements against the Spaniards were no small part of this process. And these works, I suggest, proffered a host of ideas about reciprocity, giving the quotidian practices a certain philosophical and politicized form. Indeed ideas about reciprocity precisely informed the elites’ visions of social relations, upon which would be based on ideas about proper governance, political legitimacy and authority.

Reciprocity as an ungrounded concept, of course, is by definition an abstract notion. But various Filipino elites put their own particular spin upon it, figuring it through various metaphors and imagery, and relating it to a number of social and political practices. Let us begin then with one influential thinker of the late 19th century in particular, Apolinario Mabini. Writing against the grain of Spanish imperial rule, Mabini perhaps had the most integrated and systematic ideas about man and society. His definition of “society” is as follows:

La sociedad es una reunion de hombres que se ayudan *mutuamente*, para que cada uno disfrute de la mayor suma posible de bienestar, que por si solo y sin ayuda de otros no podria alcanzar. (1931 II: 68; my italics) Society is an association of men who are together for mutual help, so that

each could enjoy the highest possible well-being; a situation that can never be arrived at by the sole efforts of individuals without the aid of others.

Here, Mabini must have employed local notions of reciprocity, exchange, and debt to formulate his definition of society, just as the peasants had relied upon notions of reciprocity to formulate their ideas about death, hunting and rebellion. Mabini's definition of society as an association of men for "mutual help" figures here as but another term for dyadic reciprocal relations. Indeed, in related portions of his thought, Mabini raises the idea that "mutual exchange" between persons is the necessary condition for life (1931:22-23).<sup>16</sup>

Of course, Mabini's idea of "mutual help" and "mutual exchange" seems to mimic the ideas regarding social relations and exchange articulated by European thinkers such as Rousseau, Hobbes, or Adam Smith-- ideas upon which were founded Anglo-Western liberalism. A closer examination, though, reveals how Mabini's vision of social relations and exchange particularly turned upon dyadic reciprocity whereas the European social contract theorists did not. Hobbes, for example, believed that the state of nature was one in which the atom-like individuals pursue their self-interests and their natural lust for power. Consequently, "society" was only possible when said individuals could come into a codified agreement or social contract (making up something like a civil society with a state) so that the violent and brutish state of nature could be transcended. This idea of Hobbesian state of nature and social contract had fed indirectly into American imperial ideology, as the Americans had feared that the Philippines would "retrogress" into "chaos" without their intervention. Mabini, though, proposed no such Hobbesian idea of Man-in-nature. Instead, he folded his concept of the state of nature into his definition of society. He proposed that "natural laws" existed purely in the social realm, in 'la sociedad'-- which is to say that the "natural" state of Man was the state of mutual help and mutual exchange (Hartendorp 1965:13; Majul 1960:283). Unlike Hobbes who saw man in nature as 'brutish' and 'nasty', and unlike James Madison and Jeremy Bentham after him, Mabini saw man in a state of nature as necessarily and mutually helping one another (Majul 1960:286-87). This is why, again unlike Rousseau and Hobbes, Mabini believed that society was prior to the state; that it could actually exist without it (Hartendorp 1965: 13; Majul 1960: 285). Persons in society (i.e., man in nature) could sustain themselves without a state or social contract precisely because their life-sustaining

activity of exchange was naturally beneficial to both. The activity of “mutual help” was, in other words, reciprocal. By contrast, the assumption underlying the European social contract theorists’ idea about the necessity of some sort of state or social contract was that man in a state of nature was ‘nasty’ and ‘brutish.’ If exchanging at all, man would more or less self-destruct, exchange would not be mutual nor reciprocal. Some sort of social contract or codified agreement was logically needed in order to ensure against “chaos.”

As Mabini imagined “society” to be a web of reciprocal ties between persons engaged in mutual exchange, his views on morality and rights preceeded logically from these ideas. Morality and virtue (*‘virtud’*) to Mabini was nothing but the “conformity of man’s actions to natural law”; that is, conformity to the terms of reciprocity (Majul 1960:289). Relatedly, ‘freedom’ figured in Mabini’s thought as the unhindered ability to play take a position in the necessary and definitive circulations of mutual exchange (Mabini 1931 II:271).<sup>17</sup> It was not, as the European social contract theorists and later the American democratic theorists had it, a condition in which power-seeking, calculating and egoistic individuals could pursue their self-maximizing interests in accordance with terms of a social contract. Lastly and similarly, “rights” and “justice” unfolded, for Mabini, from the basic right to exchange mutually and hence survive. That which was “just” was that which adhered to the terms of reciprocity, and one had a natural “right” to engage in reciprocity (Mabini 1931 II 104; Majul 1960:288-289).

To match all of these ideas, Mabini had a specific notion of reason (*la razon*). Mabini defined *razon* as, in Majul’s (1960:285) terms, “a regulative power constraining men from violating the rights of others to self-preservation.” This idea appears not unlike that of those such as Hobbes. For the latter, Reason was the faculty which restrained the actions of man so that their self-perservation could be secured. But since Mabini and Hobbes had very different ideas about self-preservation, these two apparently similar definitions of Reason meant different things. For Hobbes, man needed a social contract in order to secure his self-preservation. Without it, man would remain in constant war leading to self-destruction. Reason thus dictated that man needed some sort of social contract. For Mabini, however, self-preservation was possible through natural reciprocal exchanges and mutual help. *Razon* for Mabini was therefore that faculty which helped enable and sustain mutual help and exchange.

The Tagalog equivalent to '*razon*'- *catouiran* (or *katwiran*)-condenses Mabini's connections between reciprocity, reason, rights, and justice.<sup>18</sup> *Katwiran* (derived from '*tuwid*' which means 'straight') translates into more than "reason" / '*la razon*.' It also means "right" (as in political or moral right) and "justice" (Nigg 1904). We have seen how for Mabini "justice" and "right" were intimately embedded in reciprocity: that which was just facilitated reciprocal exchange, and one's fundamental "rights" were based upon the basic right to engage in reciprocal exchange. Thus, as '*razon*' facilitates reciprocity, so it is also the condition for 'justice' and 'rights.'<sup>19</sup>

We will return to these ideas below. For now, let us consider the 1905 petition presented by the Nationalistas within the context of Mabini's philosophy. The notion of a 'directing class' and an 'obeying class' proposed in the petition, in fact, parallels ideas about reciprocal relations very much akin to Mabini's.<sup>20</sup> Like Mabini, the elites writing the petition perceived relations between people -- in this case, between the 'directing class' and the directed class -- as based upon ties of mutual exchange. In referring to what might have happened had not the Americans occupied the islands, the petition holds:

If the country should have ruled its own destinies, far from being tyrannical -- according to the scruples of some people -- the government established *would have been a model of justice*, for neither the culture of the directing class is great enough to impose *obedience in a tyrannical sense* nor is the culture of the popular masses so wanting as to allow themselves to be tyrannized. It is only where there is positive want of *equilibrium* between the culture of one class and the ignorance of another that a government is able to tyrannize a people, which condition does not exist in the Philippines where the culture of one and the ignorance of the other is merely relative (Hearings 1905: 12 my italics)

The 'equilibrium' here conjures up Mabini's idea of mutual dependence. Like the latter's idea, the idea in the 1905 petition implies a mutual state of exchanges and a converge of interests between the parties. A 1917 article written by one of the writers of the original 1905 petition, Macario Adriatico, confirms this.<sup>21</sup> Elaborating upon this idea of 'equilibrium' between the classes, Adriatico contended that when there is a

‘directing class’ leading the masses, “there would not be the danger of one class ... governing the rest, because even so there would be no clashing of interest ... because there would be *mutual dependence* among the several elements of which it is composed” (1917:42; my italics).<sup>22</sup>

Note also how both the Nationalista texts counterpose ‘equilibrium’ and ‘mutual dependence’ to ‘tyranny’. In the elites’ view, when there is a directing class leading the masses in an ‘equilibrium’ and a mutually dependent relationship, there is no ‘tyranny’. Mabini makes the very same counterposition between mutual exchange and help, on the one hand, and ‘tyranny’ on the other, as we will see in a moment. Note further, how the elites chose to describe the qualifications for self-government in terms of a ‘directing class’ that knows how to rule and the “popular masses” who know “how to obey.” This was fundamentally different from the American administrators’ list of qualifications, which included governmental rationalization and legal-rational offices, the existence of a set of liberal institutions, and certain economic conditions measured in quantitative terms such as GNP, levels of taxation, etc. (Perkins 1962:218). Instead of these abstractions, the Filipino elites considered government secondary to social relations -- as if, in other words, they felt society preceded the state.

Imagining their social order to be made up of reciprocal ties, then, the elites at the 1905 hearings did not at all find it problematic to speak before the Americans of a “directing class” guiding the “popular masses.” To them, the existence of these two classes did not mark tyranny nor Hobbesian chaos. Paralleling Mabini’s ideas, their existence marked but the natural and legitimate state of things. Thus, such notions of reciprocity served as a basis by which to legitimate calls for self-rule. And as we will now see, such notions provided the discursive structure for an imagined logic of state. They provided a basis for ideas and ideals about political practice and political institutions, for political leadership and authority, as Mabini and the pre-Nationalistas would take notions of reciprocity to another register -- a political institutional one, and would figure them through a number of Spanish and vernacular terms.

### **The Social Body, Authority, and ‘Razon’**

If the natural social order was made up of mutually-beneficial ties that operated prior to a state or social contract, why would the likes of

Mabini find a government necessary at all? There were very good reasons for a "state", in Mabini's view. First was the idea that within society it was possible for 'injustices' or 'exploitation' to occur, such that the natural and normatively positive state of reciprocal exchanges might be threatened. Such a possibility existed because although *razon* was the facilitator and regulator of reciprocity, it was not infallible. These are cases in which the *medios de vivir* of others are appropriated without proper return, i.e., through force. In such cases the terms of reciprocity are transgressed, and are therefore unreasonable, immoral, unnatural, not virtuous (Mabini 1931 II:23; Majul 1960: 288). Thus arose the utility of a state. For Mabini, a state or government-- or more precisely in his terms, an 'authority'-- could guard against instances when '*razon*' functioned improperly.

The other reason for a state was that it could give the natural condition of mutual help and exchange some further direction. The condition of mutual help and exchange was, for Mabini, adequate to sustain life and happiness, no doubt. But such a condition unfortunately ran the risk of being "without direction, order, or coordination." Such a condition Mabini likened to a "dead body." To give it life, then the body of society needed a soul. "This soul, wrote Mabini, "is Authority"-- or in other terms, a state" or "government" (Mabini 193 II: 68).<sup>23</sup>

That Mabini saw the need for a government does not mean that his view can be reduced to those of European social contract theorists, recall, a state or some sort of 'third term' was integral and necessary for the functioning of 'society.' The natural state of Man in their eyes was that, without a third term, Man would fall into a chaotic state to the detriment of all. For Mabini, to the contrary, any lack or fault within society which was to be remedied by a state or institutionalized contract was a deviation, not a norm or necessity. It was the improper or the unnatural functioning of *razon*. Mabini thereby treated the state to be, while useful for the natural condition of reciprocal relations, secondary at best, supplementing an already-existing norm or reciprocity which could ideally sustain by itself the social order. At the level of Mabini's philosophical logic there was no necessity for there to be a state in order for there to be a society.

If there was in Mabini's view no *logical necessity* for a society to have a state, there was an urgent *historical necessity* for the Philippines to overthrow Spanish rule and institute a new government, precisely because the Spaniards had deviated from '*razon*.' Like M. H. del Pilar, Andres Bonifacio, and Felipe Agoncillo, Mabini alluded to the idea that the

Spanish had broken their “blood compact” between Sicutuna and Miguel Lopez de Legazpi-- a break which dissolved the “obligations willingly assumed by Filipinos” (Majul 1960: 313-17). In other words, the Spaniards had transgressed the ‘natural’ and ‘moral’ state of reciprocity. Thus did the Spanish figure as the embodiment of the improper use of *razon*, of non-virtue and immorality -- of in fact tyranny itself (Mabini 1931: 184). Revolution against Spain, consequently, was morally justified by Mabini, and a new state was necessary to guard against further deviations from *razon* and hence, from the natural tenets of reciprocity. “A revolution,” wrote Mabini, “is the violent means utilized by a people ... to destroy a duly constituted government, substituting it another more in consonance with *razon* and justice”(Mabini 1931 I:108 italics mine).

Such ideas fed into the makings of what would be the temporary independent Malolos government formed in the midst of the revolution against Spain, as indeed Mabini was of one the key makers. The government consisted of three branches: a judiciary, an executive, and a legislature, not unlike the formal structure of the American state.<sup>24</sup> The content and operation of this Philippine state structure, however, was to be very different than the federalist American system. One key difference was that, while the three branches of the American system were built according to the balance-of-power principle, the Malolos government was to be guided by the legislative branch, which was prioritized over the other branches. Mabini proposed that the judiciary and the executive were to be subordinate to the legislature; to follow its dictates and its direction. Another related difference was that the three branches were to move together as a unified entity led by the legislature (Hartendorp 1965: 51). Whereas in the American system disagreements among the various branches was integral to the system of checks and balances; it was not to be so for Mabini. In fact the very notion of ‘good government’ for Mabini was harmony among the branches (Mabini 1931 II:69).<sup>25</sup>

The primary justification for the primacy of the legislature and a harmony among the branches has to do with the way in which Mabini, as have already intimated, metaphorically scripted the state as the ‘soul’ of the social body, Mabini wrote:

La sociedad, pues, debe tener un alma: la autoridad. Esta autoridad debe tener una razon que guie y dirija: el poder legislativo. Una voluntad que haga y haga obrar: el

ejecutivo. Una conciencia que juzgue y castigue a los malos: el poder judicial (1931 II:69).

Society should have a soul: authority. This authority needs an intellect to guide and direct it: the legislature power. It also needs a will that is active and will make it work: the executive. It needs a conscience that judges and punishes what is bad: the judicial power.

Mabini thereby privileged the legislature because it was the embodiment of *razon*: the intellect. "The power to legislate," wrote Mabini "is the highest manifestation of authority, just as the intellect is the noblest faculty of the soul" ["es que la potestad de legislar es la manifestacion mas alta de la autoridad, como la razon es la potencia mas noble de nuestra alma"] (Mabini 1932 II:69). Mabini also wrote that the executive and judiciary "should be subordinated to the first, in the same manner that both will and conscience are subordinate to the intellect" ["los dos ultimos deben subordinarse al primero, con la voluntad y la conciencia se subordinan a la *razon*"] (ibid). In other words, since the state was the 'soul' of society, and the legislature embodied *razon*, the legislature at the same time embodied that which was good and just, regulating the natural state of reciprocity. So it was to be prioritized, to guide the other branches in "order and harmony" such that from such a harmony, led by *razon*, could "the greatness of society and the well-being of its members" be furthered ["el buen gobierno rinde el engrandecimiento de la sociedad y el bienestar de los asociados"] (ibid).<sup>26</sup>

It is noteworthy on this count to reiterate that *razon* translates into Tagalog as *katwiran*. *Katwiran* means 'right' and 'justice', as we have discussed above, but it also can mean "lawfulness" (Nigg 1904). Indeed, Mabini imagined law to flow from *razon* -- he imagined it to be its institutional expression. This derived logically from the scripting of the legislature, and because the legislature was the embodiment of *razon*, so were laws to be the extension of *razon* (Majul 1960:298). By definition, then, to follow the laws laid down by the legislature was to follow the natural laws of reciprocity and its regulator, *razon*.

These basic elements of Mabini's state, premised upon the ideal of reciprocal elements, informed the visions of governance articulated by political elites under the American regime. In fact, the idea of the legislature as *razon* regulating reciprocal regulations provided the basis for

how the elites viewed themselves and structured their practices as elected officials and bureaucrats within the ostensible hegemony of the American colonial state apparatus.<sup>27</sup> As we will now see, political elites would take *razon* and its associated norm of reciprocity to a logic of political leadership and colonial state power; or more precisely, a logic of state *kapangyarihan*.

### **From Malolos to the American Colonial State: *La Razon to Kapangyarihan***

Expanding upon the 1905 idea of the “directing class”, Macario Adriatico in 1917 referred to that class as “the aristocracy of intelligence.” This “aristocracy” was for Adriatico not quite the same as the feudal European aristocracy in that it was to have as its institutional base the modern legislature, first constructed as part of the American colonial state structure:

Las Camaras legislativas son los centro nerviosos de las sociedades modernas; por lo mismo, deben ser tambien el Cenaculo de los hombres de privilegiada inteligencia pues, asi como la salud del individuo dependene en gran parte de la buena organizacion de su sistema nervioso, no de otro modo el bienestar de un pueblo depende casi siempre de la buena organizacion de su poder legislativo. (1917: 4)

The legislative houses are the nerve centers of modern society and for this reason they must also be the meeting place of men of privileged intelligence, because just as the health of the individual depends largely upon the proper organization of his nervous system, so does the welfare of a people almost always depend upon the pro organization of its legislative power.

Like Mabini, the elites under the American regime construed the legislature as the embodiment of intelligence and *razon*. Adriatico’s idea of the legislature as the nerve center brings this out quite brilliantly. The term “nerve center” connotes the brain of the body; thus it makes a reference to Mabini’s notion of the legislative power as the ‘intellect’ and *razon* of the social body, also at the same time refers to the center which organizes and

processes the multiplicity of nerves in the body -- that is, the brain which animates, facilitates, and regulates the “nervous system.”<sup>28</sup> What we see here is the way in which Adriatico envisioned the legislature, as *razon*, to be the animator, facilitator, and regulator of the web-like networks of reciprocal ties that make up the social body. He imagined it to be the primary nodal point or center of circulations of reciprocal exchange. Much in the same way that the *razon* of the social body provides for its well-being by its central role in structuring reciprocal ties, so was the legislature to provide for “the welfare of a people” (as Adriatico puts it) by structuring the “mutual dependence” among the “elements” of which society is composed (1917:42). For the Nationalistas, then, the relationship between the directing class and the masses was to be codified and institutionalized in the state apparatus. The social condition of mutual help and exchange between the directing class was to facilitate and structure their ‘mutual dependence’ with the rest of the Filipinos through their position as state managers and legislators.

Such a vision of governance was more than extension of Mabini’s Malolos ideals, wherein the legislature, embodying *razon*, was to guide and lead the state and society, regulating and facilitating reciprocal exchange. It was also an institutionalized extension and historical continuation of the role which political leaders had long played in Tagalog society. For, in imagining political leaders as center of reciprocal exchange, the Nationalistas were making a gesture to the political leaders of pre-Hispanic times: the barangay *puno or datu* and his kin, the *maginoo*. Some brief words on these leaders highlights the logic of state and political leadership as envisioned by Adriatico.

As Raphael points out (drawing from the work of W. H. Scott) the position of the pre-Hispanic *datu* had been dependent upon their “ability to initiate the establishment of obligations with others (1993:139).” He explains:

To lead in Tagalog is *mamono*, from the root word *pono*, ‘a leader who governs’, but also a conduit of sorts, in that it refers to the roots and trunk of a tree. In the expression *Mamono ca*, “You lead,” it implies beginning something ... [T] he *datu*, as the *pono* of the village, was able to lead his followers in war and trade with other villages. He would thus be regarded as the most capable of securing the surplus with which to engage in a series of

reciprocal exchanges with others in the community. As a *pono*, the *datu* was the initiator of indebtedness... (139-140)

The *maginoo* similarly, were defined by, and attained their position by, their position within circulations of exchange -- that is, their ability to render debts from others in the barangay: "*Maginoo* referred less to the distinct social class than to a code of behavior attendant upon a certain position on the map of debt transactions" (Rafael 1993: 142). In this way, certain people in the barangay were naturalized as leaders through a series of contingent actions which had the effect of placing them in the center of circulations of reciprocity and exchange. Logically, anyone could attain such a position. But regardless, once in that position, they were rendered tokens of respect for their paternalistic actions, and were thereby naturalized as leaders and benefactors.<sup>29</sup>

Adriatico makes a direct reference to the naturalized, benefactive position of the barangay leader: "Our directing class has derived its gifts of government from the past, because the chronicles<sup>30</sup> tell us that in the infancy of our people, the directing class ... was nothing but the *best friend* of the barangays"(1917:44; my italics). Here Adriatico envisions, and rather precisely, the new directing class under the American regime to be the historical and logical extension of the pre-Hispanic *datus*.<sup>31</sup> This means that he envisioned the Filipino political elites under the American regime to be the ones who, like their historical predecessors, would animate and center the social circulations of reciprocity through their position as state managers and legislators sitting at the "nerve center" of society.

To further apprehend this imagined connection between the pre-Hispanic and Nationalista political leaders, note that *makapangyarihan* was one common name in Tagalog for a political leader or legislator in the American period (e.g., Lopez 1915:12). *Makapangyarihan* simply means "one in power" but it carries much more weight than that. It is derived from *kapangyarihan*, which, since pre-Hispanic times, was the name given to the "spiritual substance that 'animates' the universe and [which] is often concentrated in certain power-full beings and objects" (Sidel 1995:150). The pre-Hispanic *datus* were believed to have access to the cosmos and thus to have the ability to mediate between that cosmos and the earth (Rafael 1993:14; Sidel 1995:150). *Datus* demonstrated this capacity -- or "prowess" or "lakas"-- "through supernatural feats and bravery in battle, provision of sumptuous feasts, and prodigious generation of offspring"

amongst other acts (Sidel 1995: 150). Such acts served to provide a surplus from the outside to be inserted into circulations of debt and exchange and at the very same time to neutralize one as *makapangyarihan*, as having the power to be initiators and center of reciprocal exchange (Rafael 1993: 14). Hence, material and spiritual access to the 'outside' (access to material surpluses and access to cosmos) combined into a singular instance or moment, giving the certain individuals who had that access a leadership position.<sup>32</sup> This combination, wherein "culture" or the spirit is inseparable from the "material" of power, is reflected in the many meanings of the word *kapangyarihan*. Even during the American period, the word meant more than cosmic or mystical power. It could also mean "authority, jurisdiction, means, command" -- plus much more, as we will see (Nigg 1904: 51).<sup>33</sup> Thus to refer to a political leader as *makapangyarihan* was to situate that leader not only as having a political position, but also as having the certain 'prowess' and 'lakas' to access and bring in surpluses from the outside and distribute it to their followers. And this is precisely the idea of the 'directing class' proffered by the likes of Mabini and Adriatico. Legislators and political leaders were to be the ones who secured surpluses for their communities and the ones who thus placed them into local circulations of reciprocal exchange. In this way they were to be the bearers of 'razon' (the facilitator and regulator of reciprocal exchange), the epitome of 'virtud' (the act of or adherence to reciprocity), and they would be *makapangyarihan*, mediating between the inside and outside so as to enact reciprocal exchange. They were to be all of these at once -- as indeed, all three were related to the fundamental ideal of reciprocity. Hence, as Mabini referred to the government as '*la autoridad*', so did '*la autoridad*' in Tagalog carry the meaning of *capangyarihan* (Ignacio 1922: 85; Noceda and Sanlucar 1860:4 47). Similarly, '*la virtud*' when translated into Tagalog meant *kapangyarihang makagawa* and *lakas*, and *kapangyarihan* in English could mean in turn, "virtue" (Ignacio 1922: 534; Nigg 1904: 51). As the legislators and political leaders were to therefore act as such -- to be at once *makapangyarihan*, the embodiment of 'razon' and the epitome of 'virtud' - - the legislature was to be the arena through which their acts were institutionally-solidified.

The state apparatus as a whole was to be one instance of *kapangyarihan* to which these political elites had access. This logic is clear in Adriatico's discussion of the directing class as he perceived them to have been operating in the first decades of the American regime:

La actual clase directora, que podria ser la “aristocracia de la inteligencia”, da hoy la medida de lo que ella ha de ser en el porvenir. Por medio de la Legislatura y de los gobiernos provinciales y municipales, sus obras son la conversacion del orden, el desarrollo de la instruccion, el mejoramiento de las carreteras, puentes y edificios publicos, la introduccion de metodos sanitarios o higienicos, la creacion del Banco Nacional, el establecimiento de sistemas de riego, la revision de los Codigos... la nationalization del ferrocarril y la adopcion de medidas de todo genero para el bienestar de la comunidad. (1917:44)

The present directing class, which could be called the “aristocracy of intelligence”, gives us now a measure of what it will be in the future. Through the legislature and the provincial and municipal governments, it has achived the preservation of order, the development of education, the improvement of roads, bridges, and public buildings, the introduction of sanitary or hygienic measures, the creation of a National Bank, the establishment of irrigation systems, the revision of the codes... the nationalization of railroad, and the adoption of measures of all kinds for the welfare of the community.

Such was the Filipino ‘modernization’, if you will, of the practices of the *datus* of old. Instead of bringing in surpluses attained through their access to the cosmos (*kapangyarihan*), the modern directing class are portayed by Adriatico as bringing in new infrastructural developemnts to their local communities through their access to the state-- now conceived of as the political-institutional articulation of *kapangyarihan*.

In proffering such notions, Adriatico was describing exactly what had happened since the onset of American rule. With the introduction of the new American-style political institutions, extant personal ties of exchanging political resources took on a dimension unprecedented. The heirarchical form, national reach, and Filipinization of the new colonial state apparatus had pushed personal ties of exchange into outward directions, traversing local space. Through the establishment of local governments in the first years of colonial rule to the creation of the National Assembly in 1907, connections between the local and national

leaders were connected at a national scale, as factions were triangulated into one large national pyramid of exchange networks (Anderson 1988: 11-12; Cullinane 1989: 217-56; Hutchcroft 1991: 421; McCoy 1993: 11-12). In this way, personal ties of exchange were melted into the very institutional hierarchy of the colonial state apparatus and political parties (Paredes 1988:44; Lande 1965). The National Assembly became a forum in which infrastructural and educational resources, state funds, and political appointments became new bases of patronage flowing from the capital center to the provinces and municipalities, all in exchange for votes and other resources flowing in the opposite direction (Hollsteiner 1963:188; Sidel 1995:151). This formed, in effect, what Bayart (1993:220) has called in another context a state "rhizome": an "infinitely variable multiplicity of [reciprocal] networks" institutionalized as the state.

American administrative discourse, of course, coded the practices associated with this state rhizome as "pork barrelling" and "corruption." Adriatico, however, was able to describe such practices, and perhaps idealize them, in more local and specific terms, informed by his and others' visions of reciprocity and *kapangyarihan*. In Adriatico's political cosmology, 'pork-barreling' or 'corruption' was but a grafting of *kapangyarihan* and its natural, associated logics of exchange -- deemed necessary and good for the existence of society -- onto the nexus of modern state institutions.<sup>34</sup> Today, in fact, the state center from which resources get distributed down to the local level is referred to as *kapangyarihan* (Alejo, et. al. 1996:88). The "outside" power or *kapangyarihan* to which the *makapangyarihan* were to have access included more than state coffers and material goods and resources. It also, at the same time, meant all that which was 'outside.' Given the socio-spatial and political map of the archipelago, everything 'outside' as single community could figure as a totality: the *labas*.<sup>35</sup> As *loob* (or the inside of the community) figures not merely as a material, spatial, or physical dimension but also as a "container" or "receptacle" for reciprocal exchange within the *loob* (Miranda 1989: 77-79; Rafael 1993: 124-26). One such element from the 'outside' besides state resources was knowledge which lay outside of the local community typically unavailable to the *tao*. The *makapangyarihan*, or political leaders, were to be intellectually-oriented, that is, to have a good education; which meant in a sense that they were to have had access to centers of knowledge in Europe.

To understand this, recall how legislators and political elites were to be, as both Calderon and Mabini had said, embodiments of '*la razon*'

and the 'intellect.' '*La razon*' and the 'intellect' of course meant the facilitation and regulation of reciprocal exchange. But it seems that it was at the same time conflated with educational attainment as well, as if education or intellectualism was, in part, a credential which proved one's '*la razon*'. In other words, the capacity to bring in a material surplus and insert it into circulations of exchange and debt for the good of the community was conflated with the possession of intelligence and education. The history of education under the Spanish regime shows this. Education of certain Filipinos under Spanish rule had created social divisions between those with access to Spanish knowledge and higher education and those without. Education had indeed created the very category of *ilustrado* itself, in fact (Cullinane 1989: 35-48). Those with higher education thereby had access to Spanish laws and codes through their ability to read and write Spanish, and had access to the bureaucracy, as Spanish-educated *indios* or *mestizos* took up positions in the colonial state apparatus. With such access to the outside, the educated elites could mediate between the outside and their localities, ostensibly for the good of their community (Cullinane 1989: 40 ; Corpuz 1957: 110; Palma 1972 II: 531-532; Robles 1969:202, 206; Rafael 1993: 163-66; Sidel 1995: 150-151.) With such access, the educated elites had the '*lakas*' and 'prowess' associated with *kapangyarihan*. Ignacio's *Diccionario Hispano-Tagalo* (1922) defines '*intelligencia*' as *kasanayan* derived from *sanay*, which in English means "experienced, able, skillful, capable, fit, adroit, graceful, deft, dexterous" (Nigg 1904: 126).<sup>36</sup>

Another sort of 'outside' to which the elites were to have access was a temporal outside. Take, for example, Adriatico's discussion of the role of the directing class during the "middle ages" (the Spanish period). "In our middle ages," he writes, "the directing class (...the aristocracy of valor, morality, and sentiment) delivered the people from the oppression and iniquities [sic] that follow in the wake of every conquest" (1917: 42). The idea of 'deliverance' here equates in no small sense with the "millenarian" visions of the peasantry which looked towards the idyllic future state of national independence from the standpoint of the unfulfilled present (Ileto 1979; Sturtevant 1976). The difference of course was that Adriatico situates the Filipino elites as the "deliverer." Like the *principale-fiscales* who mediated between life and paradise by initiating prayers for the dying *tao*,<sup>37</sup> the directing class in Adriatico's vision was to deliver the Filipinos and the Philippines to the idealized goal of national independence. They were the ones who would mediate between the colonial present and the the post-colonial future, wrestling from the American colonial masters

the promised goal of national independence. It is not surprising, then, that Filipino politicians consistently made millenarian appeals to national independence (*kalayaan*) in their fiery public orations, regardless of what their “real” stance on independence might have been. In making such appeals, the elites could portray their continuity with the nationalist martyrs of the revolution, thereby displaying their *kapangyarihan*.<sup>38</sup>

### **Political Legitimacy, Authority, and Practice**

The vision that the political leaders, managers, and legislators were to be, in the aforementioned various ways, the embodiments of ‘*la razon*’ and *kapangyarihan* laid down the logics for what would be considered legitimate political practice and political authority -- logics which differed from the Americans’ conception wherein legal-rational norms were to prevail (on this latter point, see Go 1996b: 2-5). Given that the legislators and political elites were to ideally sit at the center of circulations of exchange, for example, it is no surprise that the key issue for Filipino elites was access to state resources for their local communities and the autonomy to use those resources without hindrance from the Americans. Most of the bills introduced by the Philippine Assembly, for example, were oriented towards securing sources for distribution to the local level and for securing more local autonomy (Jenista 1971). Moreover, it is no surprise that ‘corruption’ at the local level seemed so prevalent throughout American rule. In order to sustain their political positions, and indeed fulfill their obligations as the animators of reciprocity and the bearers of resources from the center, the elites often distributed resources acquired from the state center to their friends and followers and used the prerogatives of office in ways which often transgressed the Americans’ beloved bureaucratic ideal (Cullinane 1971; Forbes 1928 I: 155, 164-7; Hayden 1950: 278-285; Sidel 1994: 118). So necessary was such distribution that local Filipino officials sometimes used their own money to construct school buildings, waterworks, and the like (Forbes 1928 I: 158-9).

It followed similarly that in order to qualify for office, a candidate had to display their *kapangyarihan* -- their ability to mediate between the inside and the outside. Observers of pre-election activities in Tarlac thereby found that the candidates held meetings to which the candidates brought “such things as wine, soft drinks, liquor, cigars and cigarettes and even money to be given to the people. One month before the election, the candidates tolerate the practice of making the electors eat in their homes

everyday at any time. Those candidates even invite the voters from remote villages and barrios conveying them gratuitously in trucks, carromatas, and on horsebacks for them to dine at the candidates' home" (Reyes 1930: 191-2). Of course, such acts might be easily read, as they were by the American colonial administrators, as simple instances of 'vote-buying'. In some cases, this may have been true, but it could not have been so for all cases. Most candidates were wealthy or had access to wealthy patrons, such that it could be assumed all of them practiced 'vote-buying.' Thus, a majority would not be attained only by the pre-election distribution of goods, lest the election turned into a free market in which votes spiraled upward to ridiculous costs. Indeed, if vote-buying was all that was needed, then the many elaborate and expensive pre-election parades and public gatherings sponsored by political parties, at which some 10,000 to 20,000 often attended, would have had no use; especially since the electorate had been originally limited to the elite portion of the populace (Hollsteiner 1963: Reyes 1930:200). Similarly, candidates oftentimes handed out less important goods than wine or food. One report noted the prevalence of handing out cards containing the candidates' signatures (Reyes 1930: 192-3). Perhaps, then, what underlied such practices was not so much the attempt to "buy" votes than it was the necessary attempt to display one's *kapangyarihan* by showing one's ability to command various resources (however minor such resources may have been) and circulate them, and at the same time by showing one's ability to attract a large, public following - as indeed, the ability to attract the latter was itself, as it had been in the pre-Hispanic period, a sign of one's *kapangyarihan* (Scott 1982:102). Massive, colorful demonstrations of songs and dance, public oratories connecting the speaker with the martyrs of the past, the distribution of personalized items and cards listing the candidate's educational achievements, inviting people to one's home, the practice of *compadrazgo*, and so on: all of these made up the necessary rituals of Philippine elections in which *kapangyarihan* was to be displayed. Power served pomp, as Geertz (1980:13) might say, not pomp power.<sup>39</sup>

Many of the campaigning methods clearly reveal the display of paternalistic '*razon*' and *kapangyarihan*. It was said in a campaign speech in 1925, for example: "Vote for Don Claro M. Recto because he is a man of rare ability and of uncommon achievement. He possesses many titles and degrees. He is a poet, a novelist, an essayist, a scholarly jurist, a brilliant lawyer, a defender of the poor, a Filipino patriot" (Reyes 1930:268). Other examples show candidates tried to undercut the '*razon*' and *kapangyarihan* of the rival candidate. In the 1905 elections in Leyte,

campaign cartoons showed the rival “holding-up an elector at the point of a revolver with a demand for his vote or his life”-- an image which condensed Mabini’s notion that the improper functioning of ‘*razon*’ was the resort to force. Another cartoon showed the rival being carried by an eagle “from the land of light (Leyte) to the land of darkness (Oblivion)”-- a dark and dramatic display of *daya*; that is, a false or deceptive deliverance on the part of the leader (Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Secretary 1906: 40; Iletto 1984:332).

But in any case, even the practice of what is called “buying votes” was not to be derided by the Filipino elite. While complaints to the American authorities about vote-buying in election periods, as well as other ‘illegal’ activities, were most likely read as but another display of a candidates’ ‘prowess’ and ‘*lakas*’ (Gleeck 1976: 304-5, 317; Romualdez 1925:30). Fegan (1993) finds that today, acts of illegality and ‘corruption’ are bragged about by political actors as an attempt to show their “extraordinary” abilities (38-39).<sup>40</sup>

In sum, then, practices so antithetical or deviant to the Americans’ vision of a rational-legal, democratic system were deemed normal, legitimate, and even necessary within the elites’ ideo-logic. The localized norm for political practice was not the bureaucratic ideal, but the norm of providing for community welfare by bringing resources and paternalistic care through their access to the *labas* and *kapangyarihan*. The norm was to dictate political action: reciprocal exchange between spaces -- between the inner spaces (or *loob*) of individuals in ‘*la sociedad*’ or between the *labas* and *loob* of spaces between communities, cultural formations and knowledges, state branches or levels, and so on. It followed, then, that a “bad” leader was not necessarily one who transgressed the bureaucratic ideal, but one who did not embody the proper use of ‘*razon*’, one who could not mediate between the outside and the inside, who could not provide surpluses for their community.

The traces of such ideas about political legitimacy can be seen in various civics texts of the period written in Tagalog by Filipino elites.<sup>41</sup> Let us then conclude our substantive analysis with one such text, written by Honorio Lopez.<sup>42</sup> In his *Mga Katuiran ng Filipino* (1905), Lopez offers the following notions about leadership:

Kapag naman ang punong sino pa man, ay di maalam  
magbigay sa kanyang pinagpupunuan, ay maaring isakdal

sa lalong puno ang kakulangan, ó kung di kaya naman ay ihiyao sa kalahatan upang pagkaisahang iya'y alisin sa tunkol ó halinan ng ibang maalam gumagalang sa kanyang pinamumunuan, at kung ang lalong kapunupunuan ang magkulang sa sarili naman ó ng kalahatan ay ipaglaban at ipaaninao ang ini-inis na katuiran ng maunaua ang kaniyang kamalian; sapagkat ang katuiran ay ang kalayaang hindi lamang dapat nating tunkulin, kundi talagang kahambuan ng tao. (1905:21)

If any leader does not know how to give to his subjects, one can bring an action against him to a higher leader on account of his shortcomings or one can shout to all so that everyone can unite towards overthrowing him from this position or replacing him with someone who knows how to respect his subjects, and if the highest leader fails to satisfy he should defend and clarify to himself and to all the *katuiran* that he violates in order to make everyone understand his mistake, because *katuiran* is the freedom that is not only made into a duty, but the real cleansing of people.

Lopez here qualifies a leader who deserves to be removed from office as one who “fails to satisfy”, and more tellingly, as one who violates *katwiran*. Neither of these qualifications rely upon the bureaucratic-ideal or rational-legal norms. Indeed, had Lopez wanted to qualify leadership in the latter terms, he might have more precisely used the words *batas* or *kautusan* for *katuiran* -- words which were also used at the time and were used even by Lopez in other portions of his text to refer to “law.” Instead, however, Lopez specifically uses the word *katwiran*. Whereas the former terms, *batas* or *kautusan*, are devoid of a normative sense of justice and hence equate more clearly with the Americans’ use of the word ‘law’, *katwiran* thus shows how Lopez, like his Nationalista counterparts, wished to express the idea that the norm for political leadership was adherence to the terms of reciprocal exchange.<sup>43</sup>

In another section, Lopez discusses corruption during election periods:

Ang humalal naman ng sa paraan ng pagkakaibigan o sa pagkukumpari o napakuartahan kaya ng may nasang

mamuno, ay nanagot din ng isang pagkakasala, at kung ang mahalal ay lumabas pang masama, sila ang ugat na buntunan ng sisi, paghihirap at kasauian ng tanang namamayan. (1905: 15)

The vote based on friendship, *compadrazgo*, or bribery [*napakuartahan*, literally, “to have money given”] of the one who wishes to rule will also take responsibility for sinning [*pagkakasala*], and if the ones voted turn out to be evil, they are the source to be blamed for the poverty and the state of depression of the entire citizenry.

In this passage Lopez seems to treat votes based on personal ties which violate the legal-rational norm (friendship, *compadrazgo*, or ‘bribery’) in a negative sense. There is, however, a strong sense in which Lopez undercuts this predictable legal-rational normativity. He construes votes based on personal ties as detrimental only if their effect is negative, not because they transgressed the bureaucratic ideal. It is only, he writes, “if the one voted turns out [*lumabas*] to be evil” that votes based on personalized connections are to be denigrated. To be sure, Lopez equates an evil elected leader with the emergence of “poverty” and a “state of depression” in the community that the action of voting on the basis of personal connections is to be deemed wrong. It is therefore not surprising that Lopez uses the word *pagkakasala*, or in English, “sin” or “act of sinning”, to characterize the act of voting on the basis of friendship, *compadrazgo*, or bribery. The word *pagkakasala*, notes Rafael (1993: 132-33), carried heavy weight from the Spanish period onward. Its root and sometimes its synonym, *sala*, could also mean “fault” (inflected as “*magbigay-sala*” or “*bigyang-sala*”, it meant “to blame” or “find fault with”). Such meanings as played out in Lopez’ passage thereby connote that for one to vote based on personal relations is to act in such a way so as others can blame said person for any negative *effects* which that act might have. That is, one who votes on personalized connections can be blamed *if* the elected one turns out to be ‘evil’ Here, contingent results, not abstract norms of legality and the bureaucratic ideal, provide the measure of a bad leader.

There is another related sense of the word *sala* which brings out this elusion of legal-rationality even clearer, “*Sala* denotes an error in counting”, notes Rafael, “*Sala* is also synonymous with *ligaw*, to become lost, to become confused and disconcerted. Thus, sin as *sala* receives the

charge of *hiya*, that is, the sense of being remiss in one's acknowledgment of one's debt to another" (Rafael 1993:132-33). To vote in a way which transgresses legal-rational norms is only a "sin" in its effectual activation -- it only receives its full force or its realization when the act results in the violation of reciprocal exchange and mutual help, thereby gaining the force of *hiya*. Again, in the Filipino elite political imagination as evidenced by Lopez, the rational-legal norm is eluded and the norm of reciprocity takes its place. Just as the ideal of reciprocity had provided the basis for alternative visions of "society" and state operations, so did that ideal (once taken to the level of a political logic structured around its personification, the *makapangyarihan*) serve as an alternative to the terms of legal-rationality so crucial to the Americans' conception of political office and leadership.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusion

I have stressed from the onset how the Filipino elites' visions and imaginings eluded the terms of American "democratic tutelage." The latter's construction of the elite as "*caciques*" and "tyrants" surely failed to capture the Filipino elites' own particular imaginary, one which hardly saw elite political practices as "tyrannical" at all. But if American colonial discourse failed to attend to elite subjectivity, so does extant historiography and scholarship. Even the proliferation of studies which have been part of, and which have followed, Paredes' seminal volume on elite politics (1988) have remained mired in a new sort of reductionism. The previous terms to describe the elite, such as 'resistor' and 'collaborator', have been replaced by other problematic terms, such as "*cacique*", "oligarch", or "boss." The use of these latter terms clearly mark something of a regression to (or reinsertion of) colonialist epistemology. As we have seen, those very terms to describe the elites were used by the American colonialists themselves. In this way, post colonial historiography, in denying the specificity of political practices by eliding the semantical content of their operation, has perpetuated the discourse of American colonial rule. The alternative to these extant approaches is to identify local concepts of social relations, governance, political leadership and authority, to try to grasp the elites' political practices in their own terms. This has been my attempt here.

We might already hear the objections. Does not such an analysis romanticize the violence exercised by the Filipino elites? Does it not provide justification for the corrupt elite form of rule which has been so

long determinant in Philippine politics? Does it not simply reproduce another kind of hegemony, replacing that of the American colonialists with that of the Filipino tyrants? In addressing such questions, we must keep in mind the grounds upon which they would necessarily be based. No doubt, the standpoint would be one which purports to step outside of local contexts and critique from without. It is one which tries to move analytically above local concepts and discourses and elucidate how they mask or hide the "real" or "true" nature of power. Many extant studies of the elite, for example, take a critical stance back from what is known as the elite "language of paternalism" (Sidel 1995) and attempt to show how, in reality, such a language or discourse masks and legitimates the true nature of Philippine politics -- which, it is so often asserted, lies not in reciprocity nor paternalism but in 'corruption', 'bossism', '*cacique-ism*', and so on. Such an approach seeks to take an objective position outside of local concepts and ideologies -- a move which allows one to, ostensibly, step outside power and make certain claims about its 'real' bases. It also, by implication, enables one to make claims about the falsity or 'ideology' associated with local political concepts and cosmologies. It is from this standpoint, then, that one can question any sort of analysis which remains within the boundaries of local political concepts and cosmologies. It is from this standpoint that one can contend that a romanticization or idealization of local concepts and cosmologies reproduces the "real" bases of power.

Without diminishing the substance nor intent of such a position upon which many extant studies are based, it must be clear that the standpoint which they take is, again, not unlike that of the American colonialists themselves. It was the American administrators who went to great lengths to deride the Filipino elites' "innocent ideals" of governance which, they said, had no real "practical ground." It was they who could affirm that the "real" nature of power in the Philippines was 'tyrannical' and conclude that it demanded alteration from above. In this sense, claims about the "real" nature of power in the Philippines are not at all outside of power relations. They are embedded within the very knowledge/power complex upon which imperialism has been based and through which it has operated.

The point is not to get into the endless and fruitless game of which analytic standpoint is more complicitous with imperialism or not. Nor is it to affirm an ostensibly "native" knowledge position over a "Western" one.<sup>45</sup> Rather, the point is much like Marx's point in *Das Kapital*: a

critique should be immanent to its object. In our case, rather than stepping outside of the object (elite political discourse and practice) so that one can view it “objectively” and hence ‘benevolently’ change it, a critique should be adequate or immanent to the terms of that object, to the terms of *kapangyarihan*, in other words. This might mean stepping within the elite political field and challenging the claims to paternalism and reciprocity on the very grounds of paternalism and reciprocity -- to find, as Marx did in the commodity-form, their internal contradictions and tensions. It might mean something different.<sup>46</sup> But in any case, in order to conduct such a critique, it is crucial to understand the terms of elite political discourse, on its own grounds. Mapping out elite cosmologies might thereby help to not only better apprehend elite subjectivity and practice, but also to enact engagements with post-colonial criticism.<sup>47</sup>

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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The petition is found in *Hearings Before the Secretary of War and the Congressional Party Accompanying Him to the Philippine Islands* (1905). Hereafter referred to as *Hearings*.

<sup>2</sup>Many of the ideas presented by this pre-Nationalista group at the Hearings of 1905 are comparable to the ideas evident in the later Nationalista document, *Memorial Politico del Partido Nacionalista* (1911). For purposes of simplicity in our discussion, though, we will remain focused on the 1905 document.

<sup>3</sup>The organization endorsing the petition was a part of the short-lived Comité de Intereses Filipino, whose membership included Rafael Palma, Fernando Guerrero, Alberto Barreto, Sergio Osmeña, Jamie C. de Veyra, Pablo Ocampo, and Macario Adriatico, amongst others (Cullinane 1988: 104; 1989: 191-203).

<sup>4</sup>This double-definition of the “state” comes from Comaroff and Comaroff (1991:5).

<sup>5</sup>I lay out a theoretical discussion of discourse, practice, and fields in Go (1996b: 405-409).

<sup>6</sup>In this sense, the political field articulated by the elites may be said to make up an alternative “governmentality.” Mapping it out is thus intended as a critique of Scott’s (1995a) Foucauldian formulation of “colonial governmentality” which elides the possibility of alternative political modernities. I have registered a more complete critique of Scott in Go (1996a). On the general issue of alternative political modernities, see Bayart (1993) and Mbembe (1992). See also the controversy in *Public Culture* (Fall 1992) which erupted from Mbembe’s essay. In the Philippine context, moments can be found in Rafael (1993).

<sup>7</sup>On historiography and the Filipino peasant, see Geologo(1990); 1994: 1-4); Ileteo (1979).

<sup>8</sup>We might say that the ultimate purpose of our discussion is to consider the existence, and perhaps the perpetuation, of an *alternative* political modernity, one perhaps long lost not only in the codings of American.

colonial discourse but also in historiographical translation. Attempts to rethink political modernity in ways which are not exhausted by extant social-scientific or historiographical categories can be seen in Bayart (1993) and Mbembe (1992). See also the controversy in *Public Culture* (Fall 1992) which erupted from Mbembe's essay. In the Philippine context, moments can be found in Rafael (1995).

<sup>9</sup>In this section and in other parts of the paper I draw from literature on the Tagalog-speaking region, and specify it as such. The cosmology I map out though, is not to be confined to that region, as many of the Nacionalista elites I discuss came from other areas. I use the term "Filipino" elite cosmology as shorthand to refer to the basic ideological commonalities evidenced by these cross-regional political elites.

<sup>10</sup>Even with the advent of export-oriented production, and the concomitant integration of many parts of the Philippines into the capitalist world-market (1780 to 1920), much of rural economic life remained structured as such, however oscillating between contractual, quasi-contractual, and less formalized reciprocal arrangements (Fegan 1981; McCoy 1982:6-10; McLennan 1973; Rivera 1982; Pelzer 1945: 94).

<sup>11</sup>The literature on these concepts is extensive and inappropriate use of them at times has been controversial. Early studies were forwarded by Bulatao (1964), Hollsteiner (1973), Lynch (1973), Kaut (1961), Sibley (1965). Criticisms, some more implicit than the others, can be found in Bennagen (1985), Gonzales (1982), and Enriquez (1994:68-70). Other discussions and usages, with varied inflections and emphases, include Alejo (1986) de Mesa (1987), Salazar (1981), Samonte (1973), Rafael (1993: 121-135), Mercado (1974: 53-65), Miranda (1989).

<sup>12</sup>Kervkiet's discussion of the paternalistic sensibilities of the landlord, Manuel Tinio, and the affection returned by his tenants, is but one possible example among many on this count (Kervkiet 1979: 5-8). Patronage, notes Gellner, is at once "a system, a style, a moral climate" (Gellner 1977:1).

<sup>13</sup>I use "hegemony" here as theorized in relation to Bourdieu by Comaroff and Comaroff (1991:23).

<sup>14</sup>Indeed, reciprocity involves both parties, such that even elites (e.g. landowners, political patrons) had to engage in it.

<sup>15</sup>On the movement from the hegemonic to the ideological, see Comaroff and Comaroff (1991: 19-32).

<sup>16</sup>The fundamental element of reciprocity in Mabini's thought seems to have been aluded in extant studies. Once elucidated, I would contend, much of his philosophical elements are cast in a different light. What follows, then, is my reading of elements of Mabini's thought and secondary treatments of Mabini in precisely that light.

<sup>17</sup>"Whereas in a state of society (without government) freedom consisted mainly in doing what was right, in a civil society, it consisted in obeying the laws, provided that government was legitimate in the sense that it expressed the will of the people. This was 'true freedom.' It may be suggested too, that Mabini considered freedom to consist of doing actions that tended to produce 'order' or 'unity of action' in society, in order to attain the general well-being" (Majul 1967: 63-4).

<sup>18</sup>See Ileto (1979: 86-87) for the masses' Pasyon-oriented meanings of *katwiran*.

<sup>19</sup>Hispano-Tagalog dictionaries of the period also translate "razon" as *katarungan* which translates into English as "justice" also (Ignacio 1922: 450) *Katarungan* is derived from *tarong* which means 'straight, upright, appropriate, correct.' They also translate 'razonable' as *carampatan*, from *dapat*, signifying fitting, appropriate, correct, all with normative overtones (Diokno 1983: 6).

<sup>20</sup>Mabini, of course, was not of the same socio-economic class of many Nationalistas. But his education would have made up for that fact partially, since social divisions in Philippine society were based on education as well as on mere wealth (Cullinane 1989: 15-48). In fact, Mabini was no small figure to the early 20th century elites. Rafael Palma, one of the members of the Comité, elevated him to the status of Rizal (Palma 1931: 91). Quezon's advisor Kalaw as well had clear appreciation and respect for Mabini's ideology, taking the effort in fact to publish a tract on his ideology and to edit the 1931 publication of *La Revolucion Filipina* in which would be found Mabini's social and political thought (Kalaw 1995: 108). Further, Mabini's role as advisor to Aguinaldo and as one of the framers of the Malolos Constitution must be remembered, especially in light of the fact that most of signers of the 1905 petition were involved in the revolution. At least five of them, we

note, had been delegates to the Malolos Congress (Justo Lucban, Jose Ma. de la Viña, Alberto Barreto, Felix Ferrer Pascual, Miguel Zaragoza). Of course, Mabini represented only one side at the Congress, conflicting at some points with Calderon's contingent. However, as Majul (1969: 160-182) notes, the differences and conflicts within the Congress had less to do with ideology than it did with differences over what type of organization was most preferable during crisis periods such as wartime.

<sup>21</sup> Adriatico was a representative to the Philippine Assembly from Mindoro until 1912.

<sup>22</sup> "no habria peligro en que clase ... gobierno a las demas, porque aun asi no habria intereses encontrados ... porque habria mutua dependencia entre los various elementos que la integran."

<sup>23</sup> The idea of a "social body" appears to have been quite prominent in this period. Rizal, of course, spoke of the "social cancer" of the body, referring to the evils of Spanish colonial rule. The metaphor of the "body" for society or "the social" was prominent even in the United States, as various thinkers conceived of the interconnections within society as making up a whole body. There were major differences, however. For Mabini, parts of the body were connected through reciprocal exchange and mutual dependence. For the late 19th to 20th century American thinkers, by contrast, the parts of the social body were imagined to be connected through the abstractions of capitalism, e.g. industry and the wage. On this, and its relation to the conceptions of the industrial workers' body, see Go (1996b). Agpalo (1996) would later find the body metaphor as crucial for understanding politics in Mindoro in the post-war era. He would also use the metaphor himself for the various writings on what he called a "pangulo" regime (1996: 161-234).

<sup>24</sup> It also included a federalist system of local governments, a constitutional bill of rightss, and elections. See Guerrero (1982: 159-65).

<sup>25</sup> We might note here how the idea of harmony among the state elements must have fed into the ideas of Quezon and Osmeña, who placed great emphasis upon and actually pursued "harmony" and "cooperation" among the branches of government and various interest groups (see for example Osmeña 1926: 10-11; McCoy 1988; Hayden 1950:377). The idea of harmony might also be the basis for what Agpalo calls "the politics of incorporation" or *pakiusap* (Agpalo 1996:213).

<sup>26</sup>This was not an isolated or marginalized notion in the *milieu* of the revolutionary government. Mabini's idea of the legislature's primacy was shared by the other key framer of the Malolos government, Felipe Calderon. Calderon also scripted the legislature as the 'intellect.' The "congress would be," he wrote, "composed of the most intelligent elements of the nation" (Majul 1967:163). Relatedly, then, Calderon believed in the separation of powers without checks and balances, as instead the legislature should guide the other branches (Majul 1967: 173-4).

<sup>27</sup>The structure of American colonial state apparatus was but a colonial version of the liberal-democratic state at home. It consisted of three branches, but the American-dominated Philippine Commission, as the executive branch, had ultimate veto power over the entire system, including the Philippine Legislature. It also consisted of local governments, whose officials were mostly elected Filipinos but who were supervised on the side by American field agents of sort.

<sup>28</sup>Adriatico's metaphor here must have been drawn from Rizal, who in 1889, wrote that the *ilustrado* class would be the "brains of the nation" leading the nation's "nervous system" (Rizal 1922:151; Cullinane 1989:39).

<sup>29</sup>For more on pre-Hispanic authority, status and politics, see Hutterer (1977:191), Rafael (193: 14-15, 137-146), Scott (1994:219-30) Wolters (1982: 17-24).

<sup>30</sup>The 1880's and 1890's had brought forth a proliferation of new histories written by Filipinos about the Philippine past. These works, written by propagandists and *ilustrados* such as Isabelo de los Reyes, Pedro Paterno, T. H. Pardo de Tavera, and even Rizal, portrayed the pre-hispanic barangays in idealized terms, as well-ordered "Tagalog kingdoms" wherein there was no slavery and wherein "justice" had been administered to its fullest (Paterno 1892; Morga 1890); Schumacher 1991: 108-116). The petition of 1905 drew precisely from this idealized image, contending that "historical data affirm that the Filipino people, prior to Spanish domination, had a civilization and culture of their own, derived from the purity of customs, moral practices, and conditions of its native inhabitants. It is evident that at that time an orderly government existed in the Philippines; property rights were not violated nor personal prerogatives profaned..." (11).

- <sup>31</sup>Much like the *datus* and the *maginoo*, then, many Filipino elites demanded signs of deference and respect from others, as when Pedro Paterno suggested to the Philippine Commission in 1901 that “decorations” and “orders of nobility” be bestowed upon political office-holders (Williams 1913: 284) or when municipal officials protested to the Executive Bureau that they were not receiving the proper salutes from other officials visiting their locality (Forbes 1928 VII).
- <sup>32</sup>In the Spanish period, the local political leaders’ position as mediator between the outside and inside was perpetuated by that leaders’ ability to appropriate the power offered by the Spaniards and deploy it within their own municipalities (Rafael 1993: 163-4; Sidel 1995: 150-1).
- <sup>33</sup>There is a strong sense in which this meaning of *kapangyarihan* remained even through the early American period and beyond. The wearing of amulets believed to embody *kapangyarihan* was a common practice during the revolutionary period, and many elites believed in their power (Alvarez 1992; Osias 1971: 49).
- <sup>34</sup>One particular instance of how normal the elites thought such patronage practices to be, at least in the early years, can be seen in Daniel Williams’ account of Pedro Paterno’s speech before the Philippine Commission in 1901. Williams noted that, in speaking before the Commission, “the only thing the speaker [Paterno] wanted was that members of the Municipal Board should receive \$1,000 a month instead of \$4,500 a year, as provided, based on the theory that they would be so beset by the churchmen and landowners generally that they should have big pay” (Williams 1913: 284-5). Paterno here not only assumed that he would have to dole out money to “churchmen” and “landowners”, but he also gave it no second thought to admit as much to the Americans.
- <sup>35</sup>On the concept of the *labas* and its many semantical inflections and possible personifications, see Alejo, et. al (1996: 88-110) and Geologo (1989).
- <sup>36</sup>The connection between *kapangyarihan* and intelligence/education is perhaps why the *ilustrados* and theorists of the revolution, from Rizal to Mabini to Calderon, never questioned the elite intellectuals’ proper place as the leader of the revolution and as the managers of the Malolos government (Majul 1967:38, 163, 196). This was also perhaps why under the American regime, most if not all of the Filipino elites endorsed

the literacy restrictions on the electorate to those with knowledge of Spanish and English; knowledge derived from the 'outside'. Whereas in the Americans' view, such requirements were to differentiate between the "educated" and "ignorant", in the Filipinos' view, the requirements must have figured as gesturing towards the division between those with some semblance of *kapangyarihan* and those without.

<sup>37</sup>On the role of the *principales-fiscales* in administering rites of passage to the dying, see Rafael (1993: 167-209).

<sup>38</sup>See Iletto (1984). Fiery, and to the Americans', often flowery, oration was one of the typical practices of Filipino elites during this period, perhaps another display of *kapangyarihan*. See the various Westerners' reactions to such a practice in Dauncey (1906:326-7), Fee (1910: 131, 144-5), Williams (1913: 238). For a copy of one telling text which captures the display of *kapangyarihan*, see the text written by Dominador Gomez in support of the Nacionalista candidate Osario in Cavite (printed in the Manila Times, 3 February 1907).

<sup>39</sup>These and other campaigning techniques can be seen in the various *Reports of the Executive Secretary*, in Reyes (1930: 189-268), in the *Manila Times*, (esp. 1-10 July 1907, 1909, 1912), and in Sidel (1995: 156-161).

<sup>40</sup>I have discussed this display of illegality in relation to political code-switching in Go (1996c).

<sup>41</sup>E.g., Lopez (1905, 1915), Calderon (1908).

<sup>42</sup>Lopez was an aid to Gen. Artemio Ricarte during the Revolution. He also served under Gen. Mariano Trias. Under American rule, he was a prolific writer, dramatist, essayist, and journalist in Tagalog. He was editor of Tagalog sections of various nationalist papers, and later, in 1916, was elected to the municipal board of Manila, and eventually became technical assistant to Presidents Magsaysay and Garcia (National Historical Institute 1992 III: 154).

<sup>43</sup>Indeed, in discussing the "respect" which a citizen should have towards the government and political leaders, Lopez refers to *katwiran* as a norm for mutuality between the citizen and government. "In our respect [for government leaders]", he writes, "we should not however be fooled nor

should our rights be trampled upon because as I have said we are equal in front of *katuiran*. The respect that we should give is equal to the respect the government should give” (1905: 20).

<sup>44</sup>On the centrality of legal-rationality within the Americans’ notion of democracy, see Go (1996c). The point is not, of course, that the ideal of reciprocity was always realized. Rather, the point is that the ideal of reciprocity was in fact an ideal within the political cosmology of the Filipino elite, and was related to an entire host of associated local meanings and concepts.

<sup>45</sup>Both positions, in any case, are not essential “traditions” or “values” but are, as we have seen above in part, historically and socially-constructed.

<sup>46</sup>Chakrabarty (1996) of the Subaltern Studies Collective offers what I see as a brilliant and seminal way of criticizing historiographical knowledge from within, drawing from both the mature Marx and Derrida.

<sup>47</sup>See for example the strategic type of criticism proffered by Chakrabarty (1992) and Scott (1995b), amongst others.

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