



ASIAN STUDIES

Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia

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Influence of Political Parties on the Judicial Process in Nepal
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Vinod Raina (1950–2013)

VINOD RAINA, member of the editorial advisory board of **Asian Studies**, Indian educator, scientist, and activist, passed away on 12 September 2013 in Bhopal, India.

Born on 20 June 1950, Vinod was once a Naxalite guerrilla fighter and afterwards earned a PhD in elementary particle physics. He resigned from his teaching post at Delhi University's Physics Department in 1985 to work in a grassroots organization in the areas of education, literacy, ecology, and rural development. Co-founder of the NGO, Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (Indian Organization for Learning and Science), he also helped establish the All-India People's Science Network, an organization that empowers local people to implement their developmental ideas and needs.

In recent years, Vinod was associated with the Indian Rights Movement as a proponent of the Right to Education Act (2009) in India, a constitutional amendment that aims "to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen year." He was also prominent in successfully persuading the Indian Parliament to legislate for the Right to Information, the Right to Work for the rural poor, and in the ongoing battle for the Right to Food. These legislative actions have provided a platform for vibrant resistance to market-based neoliberal solutions that are sweeping across the globe.

Vinod tirelessly worked with the victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy and the anti-Narmada Dam movement, and published a book, *The Dispossessed: Victims of Development in Asia*, with the Asian Regional Exchange for New Alternatives (ARENA), of which he was a long-time executive board member. His other associations with civil society groups and movements in India, Asia, and globally include Jubilee South and the World Social Forum process.

He was a Homi Bhabha Fellow (1992-94); a senior Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (1994-97); an Asia Leadership Fellow (Japan, 2002); and an Honorary Fellow of the Indian Science Writers Association. He had also been promoting, as a way of explaining global inequalities, the concept of “ecological debt” that is continually being accumulated by the North to the South through the plunder of the latter’s resources.

Eduardo C. TADEM
Katrina S. NAVALLO

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Introduction

THE EDITORIAL BOARD AND TEAM are proud to launch the new *Asian Studies* with this first issue of 2013. Reborn as the “Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia,” it has been refreshed and strengthened with a new editorial staff, a full organizational structure, and a new cover and format. Auspiciously, the new *Asian Studies* also appears as it celebrates its 50th year of publication, having been founded in 1963, making it one of the oldest academic journals on Asian issues and concerns. To the usual content of academic papers and book reviews, the new format adds sections on commentaries, literary works, and travel narratives (forthcoming) – in recognition of the diverse ways that Asian peoples express their ideas, dreams, and aspirations.

The articles in this issue take off mainly from a historical base, which is then used to analyze succeeding events and circumstances. While not confined to one single theme, the articles nevertheless hew faithfully to the journal’s new advocacy of providing critical perspectives and introducing new ideas that aid in expanding knowledge and understanding of the Asian region.

George Aseniero presents a novel and radical perspective on José Rizal via an examination of the Filipino hero’s annotations to Antonio de Morga’s *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* and the constitution of *La Liga Filipina*. Aseniero argues that Rizal’s political ideas have a venerable pedigree that dates back to medieval Spanish political history. Aseniero notes the parallels between Rizal’s political writings and the ideas embodied in the 1812 Cádiz Constitution and uncovers the hitherto relatively unknown influence of the socialist-anarchist Spanish politician, Francesco Pi y Margall, on Rizal’s own political ideas.

Tsui Sit and Tak Hing Wong chart the developmental trajectory of China from the perspective of rural society. They show how rural China has played crucial roles in the industrialization and modernization of the

country, whether as sources of land, surplus, and labor or as buffers which enable Chinese society to endure the various attendant crises of rapid urbanization and capitalist development. Both these processes have resulted in the “siphoning of resources from the rural areas, land expropriations, erosion of local enterprises, and environmental degradation.” As an alternative, Sit and Wong present an overview of the rural reconstruction movement in China based on the “small peasantry and village community” and stress the continuing importance of rural society for the country’s subsequent economic and political development.

Looking at the ceiling murals of Southeastern Cebu in the Philippines, Reuben Ramas Cañete draws much-needed attention to local and regional traditions of the country. Relying on a “political aesthetics” framework, Cañete also provides highly detailed descriptions of the murals, their forms, themes, relationship to the architectural features of the Church, and authorship, among others. Cañete also compares and contrasts the five different murals and, utilizing an interdisciplinary angle to art studies, traces their emergence alongside the booming trade-based economy of Southeastern Cebu in the late 19th to the early 20th century.

Neal Matherne describes how the Pilipino Cultural Nights (PCN) events in Southern California “strategically manipulate the symbols of homeland (both the Philippines and the U.S.) through singing, playing instruments, acting and dancing.” Participating in one PCN, he takes us through four acts, interpreting it through the existing studies on Asian-American performance, its relation to Philippine-based performance groups, and its implications in the construction, if not imagining, of the Philippines by Filipino-American communities. Matherne provides us with an illuminating glimpse of how Filipino diaspora communities see and relate to their homeland.

In the commentary section, Kinhide Mushakoji examines a new concept of citizenship, one that straddles traditional state boundaries and results in dual or multiple identities that are poised to take the place of a single national identity. In East Asia, this is brought about by the crisis

facing the region's developmentalist states, which were created based on the modern but now increasingly irrelevant Westphalian model of absolute territorial sovereignty and a single national identity. The rise of two social forces figures prominently in this reconfiguration of identities – the growth of mobile diaspora communities and the increasing influence of a communitarian civil society. Mutually beneficial alliances between these two forces and sedentary citizens are a “precondition of any sustainable alternative to the neoliberal order.”

In another commentary, George Aseniero returns with an elaboration and further scrutiny of Rizal's relationship with Francesco Pi Y Margall. Aseniero solidifies his argument that the Spanish leader's socialist ideas could only have permeated the Filipino hero's own political aspirations for the country. Aseniero contends that the examination of *La Liga Filipina's* statutes within this context rather than that of the Enlightenment would surface a more complete Rizal persona—one not only concerned with shedding the colonial yoke but also creating “a civil society based on reciprocity and distributive justice.”

Nurul Momen describes how political parties have a huge influence on the judiciary and law enforcement in Nepal. He offers two examples and stresses the need for accountability and access to justice, which, he writes, is “the keystone to good governance.”

Asian Studies is fortunate to have two Palanca award-winners to inaugurate its literary section. Thomas David Chaves's *Winter Scene in the Desert of Gansu* is, among other things, a lament for the Silk Road. The persona (who comes across as time-traveling pilgrim) bemoans its emptiness and bewails the mindless tourism and commercialism that have befallen the place. Such imagery is contrasted with the Silk Road's shifting climates, changing landscapes, and more importantly, the memory of the Road as a teeming crossroads where different faiths, cultures, and economies once met.

Celine Socrates' *Alone: Three Haikus* departs from the Zen-Buddhist underpinnings of the haiku and instead adopts it to highlight the terror

felt by the lonely. A haiku usually stands alone and have the barest of narratives, if at all, but in creating and numbering a trilogy of the form, Socrates creates a story that moves from day, through dusk, to sunrise. It is interesting to note the irony and contrast between such progression and the stasis of the lonely persona.

The new *Asian Studies* will strive to live up to its reconstituted role in the context of an Asian region emerging as an important and influential player in global affairs. But more importantly, it will also act as a critical platform for expressing Asian peoples' hopes for a better life.

Eduardo C. TADEM
Janus Isaac V. NOLASCO

From Cádiz to La Liga: The Spanish Context of Rizal's Political Thought

George ASENIERO
Independent Researcher

Abstract

José Rizal wrote his major works in the 1880s but the prevailing view in Rizal scholarship today is that philosophically, his worldview was firmly rooted in the French Enlightenment; how then could the theories of the preceding century serve him in confronting the issues of the 19th century, so radically different from those that brought an end to the *ancien régime* everywhere? Most commentators say his limited exposure to 19th-century political economy—evidenced by the absence in his library of the major works of the period, coupled with the limitations of his class, being of the *ilustrado* elite and distant from the toiling masses—prevented him from understanding fully the contradictions of his time; hence his politics of reformism and his rejection of revolutionary practice. Taking a contrary stance, this essay seeks to understand Rizal's political thought in relation to the great political struggles of Spain, from the 1812 Cádiz Constitution of the original *ilustrados*, through the 1868 Glorious Revolution of the liberals, down to the aborted Spanish Republic of 1873/74 of the republicans, foremost of whom was the socialist-republican Francesc Pi y Margall, Rizal's intellectual mentor, political ally, and personal friend. A reading of Rizal's major essays in the context of Spain's constitutional struggles—the politics of transformation versus the politics of conservatism—and the revolutionary vision of Pi y Margall reveals the logic of his emancipatory discourse and displays the groundings of his political economic program of La Liga Filipina firmly in early 19th-century mutualist traditions of the European Left.

Key words: Rizal, spanish political thought, Cadiz constitution, Pi y Margall, La Liga Filipina

A POST-REVOLUTIONARY PHILIPPINES, having at long last liberated herself from a Spain oblivious to her demand for reforms, would most likely choose for its government “a federal republic,” hypothesizes José Rizal in *Filipinas dentro de cien años* (The Philippines a Century Hence), the “freest of governments” (Rizal 1889–1890, 161).¹ Years later, this stated political preference would be cited by American scholars, in their re-engineering of Rizal to serve the purposes of the new colonial order, as an endorsement of the American form of government. What Rizal expressed, however, was a *prise de position* within a historically specific ideological conflict. His ideas had nothing to do with the United States’ federal republic and had everything to do with the political struggles in Spain in which his struggle for national emancipation was fully imbricated.

To be precise, *República federal* (Federal republic) was the goal of a political movement in the second half of the 19th century that, like all the other liberal currents in Spain, had its source in the Cádiz Constitution of 1812. Spearheading the movement of *Republicanism federal* (Federal republicanism) through the convulsions of Spanish politics was a man unequalled in intellectual depth, moral rigor, and revolutionary fervor: Francesc Pi y Margall. Spain’s outstanding statesman and political theoretician of his epoch, and one-time head of the Spanish Government, he was also the political mentor and personal friend of Rizal.

A prolific writer on subjects ranging from art history to finance economics, Hegelian in philosophy and Proudhonian in political economy, Pi y Margall (1824 – 1900) was preeminently a constitutionalist. As such, he waged a lifetime crusade for a fundamental transformation of Spain through constitutional change, a quest that has been aptly called *constitucionalismo revolucionario* (Jutglar 1970; Hennesy 1962; Bernaus 1966). A new *design* of the system of governance was called for, one that would make possible revolutionary change in society. He saw Spain’s constitutional history as the collective effort of each generation to grapple with the problems of the day, and saw certain inevitability in the process of change that moved in the direction of freedom. The opening lines of

one of his major works, *La reacción y la revolución* (Reaction and Revolution), states this Hegelian premise forcefully.

Facts, says a German philosopher, are nothing else but the realization of ideas, and these in turn are but the evolution of an ever-generating and eternal Idea, whose development is that of beings in space, of events in time, of Spirit in the midst of the human species. Man's reason, adds the philosopher, can elevate itself to an understanding of this idea; but only by searching for it through reality, that is to say, through Nature and History. Allow me then, [...] to start with what has already been realized, the latest developments (Pi y Margall [1854] 1982, 67).

The latest developments referred to the immediately preceding revolutionary events in 1854, which landed him a brief stint in jail as an agitator at the barricades of Madrid; but the relevant historical context for his discourse on “la revolución forzosa, ineludible y permanente” (Pi y Margall [1854] 1982; the inexorable, inevitable, and permanent revolution) is the dialectical process of constitutional change that began in Cádiz in 1812 and led to subsequent uprisings, which were but ripples preceding the big wave that would surely come. The conflicts of the day—of the century—arise from resistance to change by the entrenched order, he asserts, and peace will come only at the end of struggle. Then shall Spain redo herself entirely. “Nuestra revolución no es puramente política; es social” (ibid.; Our revolution is not purely political; it is social).

Spain's constitutional history is also the relevant context within which one can more fully comprehend Rizal's conceptualization of the movement for national emancipation which he came to lead. A re-reading of his works in light of Spain's constitutional conflicts through the century reveals the Spanish sources of his political ideas, running from the original *ilustrados* (literally, the enlightened) of the Spanish Enlightenment who constituted the Cortes de Cádiz (1808), through the Glorious Revolution of 1868, to the aborted Republic and socialist-oriented program of Pi y Margall (1873).

These stimuli to strategic political thinking initially translated into a recasting of Rizal's reading of Philippine history in terms of the long-established juridical principles and political traditions of Spain that were the veritable sources of the Cádiz Constitution of 1812. Rizal turned around the arguments of Spanish colonial masters and took Spain to task in terms of her own principles and traditions. This critique culminated in the drafting of the organizational structure and developmental program of his own *La Liga Filipina*. It was the means he proposed so that a viable nation could emerge and take her stand among others, imbued with selfhood, autonomous, responsive to the needs of her people, and open to the future. With the sources of Rizal's political thought thus traced in a world-historical context, key concepts of La Liga can be more fully comprehended as pertaining to a tradition within the European Left, an ideological affinity barely discussed in the corpus of Rizal scholarship.²

The Sources of the Constitution of 1812

The world, not least the Spaniards themselves, was incredulous that a constitution so advanced in her principles, intentions, and substance could suddenly arise out of an absolutism so pervasive as that of inquisitorial Spain at the turn of the 19th century. It was dismissed by the returning monarch Fernando VII from the moment he had no further political use of it, seeing it as an invention of Jacobinism and entirely foreign to the Spanish soul; historians since then have tended to take this view that "*La Pepa*"—as it was popularly known—was an import, like so many other modern institutions, from revolutionary France. Others, equally critical, regarded it as a throwback to medieval times, when royal authority was held in check by the feudal privileges—the *fueros*—of the nobles; this view was held most notably by clerics, who had early on thrown in their lot with monarchical absolutism.

Karl Marx, like many others, was deeply impressed by the enigma of the sudden appearance *and* disappearance of this "curious phenomenon" under "circumstances ... without parallel in history," and

gives his view, "The truth is that the Constitution of 1812 is a reproduction of the ancient *fueros*, but read in the light of the French Revolution, and adapted to the wants of modern society." He concludes that

on a closer analysis, then, of the Constitution of 1812, we arrive at the conclusion that, so far from being a servile copy of the French Constitution of 1791, it was a genuine and original offspring of Spanish intellectual life, regenerating the ancient and national institutions, introducing the measures of reform loudly demanded by the most celebrated authors and statesmen of the eighteenth century, making inevitable concessions to popular prejudice (Marx 1854, Chapter VI).

What were those ancient and national institutions that found their way into the Cortes of Cádiz? Or, to answer in reverse, what were the sources of the fundamental principles of the Constitution of 1812?

It could not have been stated more forcefully: sovereignty resides in the nation, not in the King. The King rules as the executive power but this authority now emanates from the people, not from his person and not by divine right. To the sovereign people belongs exclusively the right to establish fundamental laws through the instrumentality of the Cortes, the assembly of deputies representing the nation, and elected by universal male suffrage. With legislative power vested in the Cortes and judicial power in tribunals independent of the king and Cortes, a separation of powers is effectively established. The King swears to obey the Constitution and to respect the civil liberty of the nation and the rights of every individual, and all contrary acts committed by him are null and void. This limitation of royal power is the most striking feature of the Cádiz Constitution and carries an ominous sanction: "If this I do [obey the Constitution], may God reward and protect me; if not, may it be at my own peril" (Villa 1997; *The Political Constitution*, Article 173).

Fernando VII found this right of insurrection at the heart of the Cádiz Constitution particularly repulsive; he saw it as an intrusion into the divinely ordained Spanish order, one that came from the infernal world

of the Jacobins who only recently had killed the French king, Fernando's cousin. But in truth, this is the same right as the *Privilegio de la unión* (privilege of the union) that can be found in the ancient *fueros*, or privileges, of Aragon. From their legendary beginnings, the *fueros* stood for centuries on the principle of the rule of law and the precedence of the law to the king; by oath, the king must accept the *fueros* in order to govern—if *not, not* (Giesey 1968). Similar principles of law can be found in the ancient Constitution of Castile, as well as in the Kingdom of Navarre, where a judge or select group (*Justicia*) stood between nobles and king with the task to watch over the strict observance of the laws by the king. The king's oath in the 1812 Constitution stems from this tradition, just as the Permanent Committee of the Cortes, which was created to watch over the strict observance of the Constitution during the prorogation of the Cortes, was a modern version of *Justicia*. Meanwhile, the State Council, whose members were chosen from nominees of the Cortes, was a revival of the privy royal council.

The *cortes* themselves emerged in the Middle Ages as an eminently feudal institution, a “corte” being an advisory council made up of the most powerful nobles closest to the king. Arguably, the Cortes of the Kingdom of León, dating from 1188, could claim to be the first parliamentary body in Europe. With the appearance of cities and the emergence of a merchant class—*burguesía*, from *burgo*, city—who made their fortune there, membership in the Cortes began to include representatives of the cities as well, who thus formed the third “estate” in the heretofore exclusive domain of nobles and prelates. The economic demands of the Reconquista made the financial resources of the cities indispensable, compelling the king to concede *fueros*—grants of autonomy—to the cities, which effectively gave them a measure of veto power over him (Braudel 1976).

The union of the kingdoms of Aragon, Castile, and Granada under the Catholic Kings upheld these ancient institutions of *fueros* and veritably became a feudal monarchy, resting on the twin pillars of Spanish liberty: the Cortes at the courtly level and, throughout the Union, the

ayuntamientos, municipal self-government with corresponding privileges dating from Roman times.³ It was this feudal monarchy that the grandson of the Catholic Kings, Carlos I (Emperor Charles V of the Habsburgs), turned into an absolute monarchy by force of arms to get his way in all matters of government.

This provoked the Revolt of the Comuneros (1520), which was, at bottom, the defense of the liberties of medieval Spain against the encroachments of modern absolutism. The defeat to the first of the Habsburgs resulted in the loss of influence of the cities as the third estate in the Cortes; nobles who declined to finance Carlos' foreign wars also saw their influence in the Cortes decline. Spain thus fell into the hands of absolutism, culminating in that most incompetent of monarchs at the time of Spain's greatest national ordeal: the occupation of the realm by Napoleon. The Cortes of Cádiz, and the constitution they crafted, was the response of Spain's *ilustrados* to seize the reins of power in the name of the nation, for the survival of the nation (Crow 1985, 243). To move beyond an antiquated, dysfunctional absolutism towards modern constitutional monarchy, they went back to the ancient roots of the kingdom.

The Cádiz Constitution declares that the Spanish nation is the collectivity of all Spaniards of both hemispheres—the Spanish homeland in Europe and the Spanish dominions overseas. *Españoles* are all free men born and settled in the Spanish dominions and as such have the right to be represented in the Cortes by deputies chosen by their electors. For all indigenous peoples *ultramar* (overseas), political rights are guaranteed, just as they are for Spaniards in Spain. Thus, both Spaniards and indigenous peoples are transformed from subjects of an absolute monarch to citizens of a nation founded on the doctrine that sovereignty resides in them and all state authority emanates from them.

This was a great conceptual leap, not just in the transformation of subject into citizen (this had been enshrined in the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen by the French) but even more so in the recognition that colonizer and colonized had equal rights guaranteed by

the Constitution. This reinstates the principle of the equality of the races which, modern-sounding as it might be, is a juridical doctrine stemming from natural law; it received classic formulation in the writings of Spanish jurists of the Renaissance following the navigational discoveries of the epoch.

Antonio Pigafetta, Magellan's Italian chronicler, observed at their various landings around the world that the indigenous islanders they encountered were *uomini di ragione* (rational people). This observation flows in the tradition of the fundamental premise of the School of Salamanca, Renaissance Spain's great contribution to the development of international law, whose founder, the Dominican theologian Franciscus de Vitoria (1492–1546), exercised considerable influence in his time and beyond. Vitoria conceived of a “republic of the whole world” (*res publica totius orbis*), affirming that mankind all over the world had the same rational capacity to direct their lives, establish their customs, and organize their own communities possessed with their own form of rulership. “Mankind” had just then been discovered to include a whole new world with cultures and civilizations of great diversity and of shocking dissimilarity to the old one, and Vitoria had to work out the legal implications of this discovery.

De Indis Noviter Inventis (1532), his treatise on “the Indians recently discovered,” resulted in the invention of a radically new system of international law that sought to apply the same secular principles (*jus gentium*, the law of nations) validly across the races of man. Empirically, the races recently discovered are rational. Axiomatically, all rational beings possess *dominium*, the right of ownership of a thing and all the dispositive rights thereto. And since all dominium comes from God alone, this right rests on natural law that no pope can apportion to others at will and no alien secular power can ignore.

Possessed with volition and dominium and engaged in mutual relations with others, the peoples of the New World are equally bound and protected by *jus gentium*. The dissimilar Spanish and Indian cultures

thus coexist as equals in a common framework—a system of international law—whose juridical principles and rules of conduct in mutual relations must be self-evident to one and all. The doctrinal groundwork has been laid for the ilustrados of Cádiz to declare three centuries later that all free peoples born and bred in the Spanish dominions have equal rights as citizens, including, most significantly, the right to make laws in a representative government.

Elaborating further Vitoria's doctrines on *jus gentium*, another jurist, Francisco Suárez, SJ (1548–1617), expounded in *Tractatus de legibus ac Deo Legislatore* (On the Laws and God the Lawgiver) the issues of sovereignty of nations and the nature of state authority. Human beings everywhere, being rational and living in organized collectivities (*comunitas*), are manifestly endowed with a natural social nature by the one and only true God, who is supreme over all. This social nature includes the potential to make laws for themselves. Axiomatically, all legislative power is derived from God and the authority of every law resolves itself into His, but the politics of peoples are made by men and therefore the governing authority thereof is not of divine but of human origin. People themselves exercise their rights freely and rationally provide mutual assistance to create their own political community. Authority comes into being with the creation of the community, but sovereignty resides in the people who entrust their natural legislative potential to the ruler. What is freely given with expected outcomes can be taken back if expectations are betrayed; ergo, the ruled have the right to disobey and to rebel. In the language of La Pepa, the king who acts contrary to the Constitution is warned to “be on [his] own peril” (The Political Constitution, Article 173).⁴

Where one political community is dominated by another, the same duty of the ruler to safeguard and promote the rights of the ruled arises. Supranational unity is the source of *jus gentium*, which is a positive law, customary and consensual in nature, acknowledged by reason, and accepted by all peoples as the basis for their mutual relations. In conferring citizenship to the indigenous peoples of the overseas dominions, with

right to representation in the Cortes, the Cádiz Constitution restates the doctrines of the School of Salamanca as inherent to the fundamental law of the land.

The Cádiz Constitution decrees that the nation is obliged to protect the liberty, property, and all other legitimate rights of every individual. The king's oath includes swearing to "respect private property and, above all, the civil liberty of the nation and rights of every individual." Amongst the powers and duties of the Cortes are to promote and encourage industry of all kinds and to remove obstacles which may stand in their way; to establish a general plan of public education throughout the whole monarchy; to approve the regulations for the general health; to provide police security of the kingdom; and to protect the political liberty of the press.

These provisions cover those reform measures systematically demanded by the ilustrados of the preceding half-century to transform Spain into a modern, efficient, and enlightened monarchy. The ministers of Carlos III, the enlightened monarch, had gone far in arguing for organic changes in civil society; they had written treatises on the need for public education as the key to national development under the supervision of the State and in line with *la filosofía moderna*; and had attacked exclusive, prohibitive, and privative feudal privileges and seigniorial jurisdictions which continued to hamper the growth of what they called "the new economy," which was based on private enterprise.

They designed and carried out administrative reforms both in the peninsula and overseas; and, being the master-planners and part of the royal council, the ministers established, where they could in Spain and overseas, the Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País (Economic Society of the Friends of the Country) as centers of reflection, social critique, and scientific research for the development of agriculture, commerce, and industry. They clashed with the Church on all fronts. The Church owned 16.5% percent of all lands in the peninsula despite just comprising 1.5% of the population; the nobility, 51.5%. Two-thirds of all Spain was owned by only 5% of the population (Maurin 1966).

The most eminent of the ilustrados, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, had proposed an agrarian reform programme that would allow the peasant class access to the extensive aristocratic and ecclesiastical latifundia by lease or purchase and to produce therein as demanded by the market (Carill 1993, 741–56). Equally revolutionary demands were the call for public education nationwide under the authority of the Government and not of the Church, and for the abolition of the Inquisition as a precondition for the freedom of political expression. The only concession to the Church—what Marx, in his *Revolutionary Spain*, meant by “inevitable concessions to popular prejudice” (Marx 1854, Chapter VI)—was for the Constitution to declare Catholicism as the only religion of Spain.

Rizal's Reconstruction of Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*

Rizal took it upon himself to present “to the Filipinos” the past of “our native land” by “invok[ing] the testimony of an illustrious Spaniard who governed the destinies of the Philippines in the beginning of her new era and witnessed the last moments of our ancient nationality” (Rizal [1890] 2011, xlvi). He values such testimony because “it is the shadow of the civilization of our ancestors which the author is now evoking before you” (vii). The author was Antonio de Morga (1559–1636), Lieutenant Governor-General and Captain General and later *oidor* or judge of the *Audiencia*, the highest appellate court. A decade younger than Suárez, he too studied canon law and civil law at the University of Salamanca and could well have had the Jesuit jurist as his teacher. The book is *Sucesos de la Islas Filipinas* (Events of the Philippine Islands), Morga's account of the Philippines from “their gentility and after the Spaniards had conquered them” up to his departure for Mexico in 1603.

Addressing his countrymen in the preface, Rizal thought that the book would be useful first of all “to awaken your consciousness of our past, already effaced from your memory, and to rectify what has been falsified and slandered” (xlvi). What he does not say is that in effect these are two books in one—Morga's integral text, unassailable in its loyalty to

Church and Crown, and his own (Rizal's) copious annotations running as footnotes throughout the text, commenting, correcting, commending, and debating points of fact and interpretation. Employing the methods of German historiography to arrive at the most rigorous scholarship possible and making full use of the British Museum to cross-reference all other books he could find on the history of the Islands, he constantly had in mind his Spanish readers to whom he would turn the annotated book as a challenge to Spain's own constitutional history.

Rizal starts off by ridiculing the partition of the world made by Pope Alexander VI to the Kings of Castile and Portugal via a demarcation line drawn across the globe. According to this treaty, Filipinas should have gone to the Portuguese, but thanks to Magellan's getting it wrong and thus transferring to Charles V his offer to explore the Moluccas, the islands didn't fall into the wrong hands. However, the papal bull itself was wrong to begin with because it did not recognize the right of *primi occupantis*. Having done so could have avoided "fratricidal struggles" (3n7) ("dragging the islanders along"[3n7]) amongst the early Spanish and Portuguese explorers as to who owned what. A pointless exercise it has turned out, since Protestant nations now possess India and the Moluccas in total disregard of the bull. The School of Salamanca argued that war was justified if the motive was for the good of the natives, for the historical realization of their ontological potential, or for turning them into Christians. Rizal affirms flatly that in all the Spanish incursions into neighboring countries out of Manila, at great cost of lives and resources, the motivation was greed and the ambition to dominate (3n7)—and nothing at all to do with the spread of Christianity (75n54).⁵

Morga recounts the history of colonization begun by Miguel López de Legazpi and the first settlement on Cebu where he "established the City of the Most Holy Name of Jesus" (12). Rizal adds that Legazpi "founded it with all the rights and privileges of the Spanish cities and political communities" (12n23). The factual premise is laid for the extension of the *privilegio de la unión* to the settlements established in the Philippine archipelago. Then comes Morga on the city of Manila.

Many changes and novel things have been the result of the arrival of the Spaniards in these Islands, and their pacification and conversion of the people and the change in the system of their Government, as well as what His Majesty has accomplished for their welfare, since the year fifteen hundred and sixty-four, as usually happens in kingdoms and provinces which are made to change their law and rulers. And the first thing that happened to them was that, besides acquiring the name of Philippine Islands which they received from the first day of their conquest, the entire Islands now constitute a new kingdom and domain, which our master, His Majesty Philip II has named the Kingdom of New Castile of which, in view of her Royal privileges, the City of Manila was made its capital (296-297).

The text has deep resonance in Spanish medieval history. The emergence of *España* as a unified kingdom came as a matter of adhesion and accretion, as over the centuries, the Reconquista freed one part of the peninsula after another and Moorish Spain steadily shrank as Christian Spain correspondingly grew. Having existed separately, these had been kingdoms unto themselves, and their eventual union under the Catholic Kings preserved their traditional privileges. The Reconquista expanded into *la Conquista* in the Americas, and the nations that were subjugated there became new kingdoms in turn: Nueva España, Nueva Granada, and now, in Asia, as Rizal highlights, *el Reyno de Nueva Castilla* (The Kingdom of New Castille).

What were these collectivities before? Morga writes that

[t]hroughout these islands, there were neither kings nor lords to rule them in the same manner as in kingdoms and provinces elsewhere. Instead, in every island and province many *principales* were known among the natives, some being more important and outstanding than others, each having their own followers and henchmen, forming barrios and families who obeyed and respected them. Those principal men used to have friendship and relationship with each other, and sometimes even wars and differences with each other (274–275).

Morga describes the *principalia* as based on succession and kinship, with the leaders duty-bound to govern and rule their subjects, and attend to their problems and needs; in exchange, the subjects would render them respect and esteem, and give their support in wars, expeditions, and all other laboring activities needed to sustain collective existence. These recall the premises of Vitoria and Suárez regarding the consistency of such political communities with the precepts of natural law. Morga observes the customs, religious beliefs, routines of daily life, social relations, sexual mores, cultural expressions, etc. as an anthropologist today would, or as a jurist from the School of Salamanca then would, upholding thereby the applicability of its doctrines to the Islanders and the consistency with *jus gentium* of their mutual relations with other communities.

Morga notes that in war and in other matters, any principal who stood out above others acquired more privileges and a greater following, “and he governed other people, even principales themselves, while retaining for himself his own authority over his particular *Barangai* or clan” (276). Rizal Europeanizes the interrelationships to lay down another premise for an argument building up: “They formed a kind of confederation, like the states of the Middle Ages, with their barons, counts, dukes who elected the bravest to lead them or they accepted the authority of the most important of them” (276n104). Morga elaborates on these mutual relations.

Their laws throughout the Islands were along similar lines following the tradition and customs of their ancients in accordance with the unwritten statutes. In some provinces, there were different customs in certain things, although generally speaking, they had uniform usages and procedure through the Islands (278).

Rizal agrees and, after commenting that custom as unwritten law may in fact be more effective than written law for being internalized and stable, suggests further that

this agreement of the laws at bottom and this general uniformity prove that the relations of the islands among themselves were very strong and the bonds of friendship were more common than wars and differences. Perhaps a confederation existed, for we know through the first Spaniards that the ruler of Manila was a generalissimo of the Sultan of Borneo. Moreover there exist other documents of the XII century that attest this (278n111).

What is his point? Bearing in mind the legal and traditional sources of the Cádiz Constitution, Rizal builds his case that this was the *jus gentium* sustained in practice by these pre-Hispanic communities amongst themselves and also with their foreign trading partners. Whilst Legazpi and his successors might think that they were extending Spain's legal principles to govern the new relations established by them with the indigenous inhabitants of the Archipelago, the latter could equally understand this development as the extension of *their* *jus gentium* to the foreigners.

At the heart of the matter is the *pact*. The communities entered into mutual relations with each other with clear expectations of mutual rights and obligations to be respected and preserved; even if they were to elect the strongest to rule over them all, it was still an agreement of one and all. If relations of friendship, symbolized by the traditional blood compacts between chiefs, carried with them a host of expectations of mutual benefits for their respective communities, so did those entered into by a local chief and a foreign captain. This was the famous accord between Legazpi and Sikatuna of Bohol, an agreement formalized precisely by the ritual of a blood compact. Morga notes that in the customary contracts of the natives, each party has to look out for himself that the terms are complied with by the other party; Rizal comments, "So are the contracts of all nations and of all people, and so also is and was the spirit of the contracts of the first Spaniards with the Filipino chiefs and God grant they might have always adhered to the letter of those contracts!" (286n134).

Morga describes the hierarchical structure of the “commonwealth” as consisting of three social stations: *principales*, *timawas* or freemen/plebeians, and slaves (278). Rizal remarks that this structure is the same as can be found in all kingdoms and republics: the ruling class (the head), the productive class (the social body), and at bottom the servant class (whether slaves or not, but workers all the same). He takes it that these class divisions, exploitative as any other vertically structured collectivity, have their consequent class antagonisms, and speculates that because of these social differences, it had been relatively easy for Spaniards to colonize the archipelago. Colonization was done primarily not because of conquest, but more generally because of a people’s pervasive sense of dissatisfaction with their abusive ruling classes and a consequent unwillingness to defend them.

Thanks to [the Filipinos’] social condition and to their number at that time, Spanish rule encountered little resistance and the Filipino chiefs easily lost their independence and liberty. The people, accustomed to bondage, would not defend them against the invader nor would they fight; for the people it was just a change of masters. The nobles, accustomed to tyrannize by force, had to accept foreign tyranny when they found it to be stronger than theirs, and not finding either love or lofty sentiments among the enslaved masses, found themselves without arms and without strength (280n118).⁶

The pressing reality of the “social condition” of the Filipinos of that time should not be any less grievous than the “social question” that class-conscious intellectuals in Rizal’s time grappled with (in addition to the “political question” which referred primarily to the form of government). That all class societies are beleaguered by contradictory class interests is axiomatic to socialism in its broadest acceptance, and as we shall see later in the discussion on Pi y Margall’s influence on Rizal, both men saw clearly that *la cuestión social* (the social issue) was inseparable from *la cuestión política* (the political issue). In *Morga*, Rizal theorizes that rule by the elite is tyrannical in nature, and speculates that with the arrival of superior foreign forces, the people (the masses) made their choice

logically enough. Defend the abusive ruling class whose interest is to perpetuate class exploitation? Why not try out the new masters instead? (Ibid. and Rizal 1889–1890, 137).

The “new masters” that held the hopes high for the Filipinos were personalized in Miguel López de Legazpi, a man of honour and true leadership, and especially his grandson, Juan de Salcedo, “who, through his astuteness, excellent qualities, talents, and personal valor won the sympathy of the Filipinos. He [...] inclined them to peace and amity with the Spaniards. [...] (Rizal [1890] 2011, 12n24). “[H]e is the only one we know who made the Indios of his *encomienda* of Bigan the heirs of the greater part of his estate” (Ibid.). Exemplars like this held great promise. The old political order, proven unsatisfactory, gave way to the new. With this basic narrative structure, Rizal began *Filipinas dentro de cien años*.

The ancient lords, who had sought only to conquer for themselves the fear and submission of their subjects, whom they inured to servitude, fell like leaves from a dried-up tree, and the people, who had no love for them nor knowledge of what liberty was, easily changed masters, hoping perhaps to gain something from the new. Then began a new era for the Filipinos (Rizal 1889–1890, 137).

This accord was not to last for long. Colonialism revealed itself to be utterly other. Upon Legazpi's death, “the Malay Filipinos began little by little to get undeceived and finding the yoke heavy, tried in vain to shake it off” (139). If they had willingly submitted themselves to Spanish rule, they could just as well withdraw from the union now. But this was no longer possible for the people, who were “disillusioned by force of sad experience,” and who “saw everywhere discord and disorder, apathy and brutalization in the lower classes, discouragement and disunion in the upper” (139). The new order destroyed the old. Three centuries passed, “the neck had grown used to the yoke, and each new generation, begotten in chains, adapted itself further each time to the new order of things”(139).

The new order of things is colonial domination, unmitigated though dissimulated. Having given up their freedom, Filipinos have been led to believe ever since that they should be forever grateful for the two great gifts of religion and traditions that lock them in humble devotion and proud fealty to Mother Spain. By Rizal's time, when demands for reform were continuously building up, this had become the dominant discourse: be grateful for what had been generously given to you and do not demand reforms. *La Voz de España* (The Voice of Spain), a Manila newspaper, argues that the only ties that bind the Islands to the Peninsula are religion and tradition; and that no common administration system, no economic progress, no juridical reforms, not even the diffusion of the Spanish language, even less the power of arms, can make these spiritual bonds stronger than they already are (Ibid., 87–88). In short, stop asking for reforms; they will just disrupt the union.

In an explosive essay, *Como se engaña a la patria* (How the Fatherland is Deceived), Rizal turns the tables around and reminds one and all of the fundamental premise of that relationship.

[D]ecir que “los únicos vínculos propiamente sociales que unen a Filipinas con la Península son la religión católica y los respetos tradicionales,” es ofender al acendrado patriotismo y la lealtad de los filipinos, que desde Legazpi se han unido con España, no por razones de religión ni de tradicionalismo, sino, al principio, por las de *la alta conveniencia política*, y después, por amor, por cariño a la madre patria (Rizal 1889, 88; [t]o say that the only proper social ties that unite the Philippines with the Peninsula are the Catholic faith and traditional considerations is to offend the pure patriotism and loyalty of the Filipinos, who, since Legazpi, have united themselves with Spain, not for religious reasons or tradition, but from the beginning for a *political accord of the highest import*, and only then for love, for affection for the Mother Country; italics mine).

The Filipinos since Legazpi's time have united themselves with Spain not for religious reasons nor for tradition, but for a *political accord of the*

highest import, the free meeting of the minds on a mutually beneficial political order. The time has come for a fundamental redefinition of the relationship, and this demand shall be made on the basis of rights and contractual obligations *which tie Spain to the Philippines*: Spain must answer to herself.

If not, not. If this is the essence of rule by consent, as enshrined in Spain's constitutional theory, if this is the very same principle which ties Spain and Filipinas to each other, and if after three centuries this is no longer so, then the Filipinos have the right to separate from Spain, by arms if necessary. The thrust of Rizal's argument fell on deaf ears in Spain, but reverberated in the Philippines. This line of thought, asserts Cesar Adib Majul, was absorbed by the *Katipunan* as the rationale for revolution. "It was a daring step for the *Katipunan* to take when it resorted to force in order to recapture those rights believed to have been granted by Nature — when all other means were believed to have been futile. The *Katipunan* in maintaining that Spanish rule in the Philippines was historically based on an original 'Blood Compact,' presented a technique utilized for justifying a revolt against Spain. The justification was that not only did the Spanish government not fulfill the terms of the compact but actually violated it by its tyranny" (Majul 1967, 192).

Spain in Rizal's Time: The Perspective of Pi y Margall

It was a constitutional monarchy that governed Spain when the 21-year-old student Rizal arrived there in 1882. Seven decades had passed since Cádiz 1812, a convoluted period which saw Spain move from one constitutional dispensation to another. There also was one military uprising after another, and the country alternated between liberal-moderate and clerico-monarchical absolutist alliances before experiencing an indecisive Carlist War for monarchical succession. There had been the Glorious Revolution of 1868—the most important of nineteenth-century revolutions (Carr 1980, 1)—that ousted the monarch, reinstated the constitutional principles of Cádiz and, like the 1968 global upheaval with

Paris as its epicenter, reverberated across the world with the exhilaration that freedom was possible *now*. A non-Spanish monarch had been found to rule by the Constitution but he gave up soon enough, finding the Kingdom “ungovernable.”

Thus was a republic suddenly thrust onto stage, *faute de mieux*, besieged in conflict from all sides from start to finish, and it was finished before it could get started by yet another military *pronunciamiento*. Constitutional monarchy in the person of the dethroned Queen’s son was reinstalled by *La Restauración*, with a two-party system that took turns in government via parliamentary elections, with the party leaders—Antonio Cánovas del Castillo (1828–1897) and Práxedes Mateo Sagasta (1827–1903)—oscillating in office as head of state. Into this political system stepped the Filipino ilustrados, with their demands for reform, starting with representation in the Cortes, which had been granted as a matter of political right to Filipinos under the Constitution of 1812. It was granted twice but definitively abrogated in 1837.

Within a few months of his arrival in Spain, Rizal met Pi y Margall. Thirty-seven years older, the Catalan statesman had been out of government since 1874 when he resigned from the impossible position of President of the Republic of Spain amidst the total chaos. This experience of heading government and his analysis of the political failure resulted in *La república de 1873* (The 1873 Republic). This was followed by *Las nacionalidades* (The Nationalities) in 1876, where the influence of the German philosophers Hegel and Herder on Margall’s concept of the nation is most apparent. The book also drew on Proudhon’s ideas on federalism. Later on, Pi y Margall also wrote *Las luchas de nuestros días* (The Struggles of our Times), a sustained discourse on philosophical matters of enduring significance, which would be enthusiastically reviewed by Rizal in *La Solidaridad* in 1890.

Years later in exile in Dapitan, Rizal revealed to the Spanish commandant there that he learned a whole lot about what was happening in the Philippines from Pi y Margall from their earliest meetings onwards

(Rizal in Retana 1907).⁷ With greater reason, it can be supposed that the student also learned about Spanish political history and contemporary developments from the veteran, whose home in Madrid he frequented. It would therefore be quite significantly from Pi y Margall's influential perspective of Spanish politics that Rizal would plot his own course of action for the emancipation of his people.

As statesman, political theoretician, and founder of the Republican Federal Party, Pi y Margall consistently identified himself as all at once a liberal, socialist, and anarchist. All these ideological positions belong to the *family* of Liberalism, says Pi y Margall. Liberalism is the progenitor of socialism and anarchism, its logical extensions.

“Como idea ¿qué hombre de espíritu recto y libre de preocupaciones puede rechazar el anarquismo? Sin quererlo ni advertirlo, vamos los liberales realizándolo (Pi y Margall quoted in Trias Vejerano 2001, 1; as an idea, what right-thinking man who is free from fear can reject anarchism? Without wanting or taking notice of it, we liberals are on our way to achieving it). Anarchism awaits at the end of the liberal historical trajectory, whether liberals want it or not. Thus he could affirm, “Yo soy anarquista, sábelo, hace muy cerca de medio siglo” (Pi y Margall, 1982, 270–271; I have been anarchist, let it be known, for nearly half a century now). That is, from the time he joined the liberals in the barricades of 1854 and wrote *La reacción y la revolución*, where he asserts, “El trabajo y el capital están ya en abierta y decidida lucha” (Pi y Margall 1982, 270–271; Labor and Capital are now in open and decisive conflict).

Equating liberalism with “democracy,” he asserts the same relationship with socialism.

“La democracia fue la generadora del socialismo, y se comprende fácilmente la causa. Proclamada la emancipación política de las últimas clases del pueblo, no podía menos de surgir la idea de su emancipación social... Salió el socialismo de la democracia, como la consecuencia de su premisa...” (Pi y Margall 1864, quoted in Trias Vejerano 2001, 96; Democracy was the progenitor of socialism, and one easily understands

why. Once the political emancipation of the last of the popular classes has been proclaimed, the idea of their social emancipation cannot but follow suit.....Socialism emerges from democracy as the consequence of its premise). In the beginning is liberalism.

As the political expression of modernity, liberalism has its intellectual origins in the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. The word itself, however, came a bit later; it was in the political clashes in the Cortes de Cádiz that the Spanish word “liberal” was first coined. One was *liberal* in contrast to being *conservador*. It was a *prise de position* on the acceptability of political change. Those who benefited from the *ancien régime*—the nobility and the clergy, both estates in support of monarchic absolutism—did all they could to prevent change, while the rising class, the bourgeoisie, did all they could to bring it about. It was understood by all that only through a change in government was any change possible at all. Immanuel Wallerstein sums up liberalism as an advocacy of two new worldviews: that political change was normal and not exceptional and that sovereignty resided in the “people” and not in a sovereign (Wallerstein 1994, 5).

This was exactly what the Constitution of 1812 declared, which drastically cut royal power and, appropriating law-making power for the representatives of the people endowed with civil liberties, was determined to bring about change. The return of Fernando VII to absolute power, as with the restoration of all the other *anciens régimes* elsewhere in Europe following Napoleon’s defeat, could not push back the wave of liberalism in Spain any more than the Restoration could in France and elsewhere; nor could any power prevent it from spreading to the colonies. As it triumphed after setbacks in one country after another through the rest of the century, Liberalism became the legitimating geoculture (Wallerstein 1994, 5) of a historical system that was all along sustained and promoted in its worldwide development by this *Weltanschauung*, capitalism. The political struggles that ensued in so many arenas resulted, in Eric Hobsbawm’s pithy encapsulation, “in the triumph of bourgeois-liberal capitalism” by the time that “long century” came to an end in 1914 (Hobsbawm 1987, 8–9).

The strategic goal of Pi y Margall's political struggles was for Spain to adopt a federal republican form of government, in contrast to the constitutional monarchy that was the intention of the Cádiz Constitution. This was also in contrast to a unitary republican form which would have simply replicated the highly centralized bureaucratic structure imposed by the Bourbons across diverse regions. Federalism, argued Pi y Margall, offered the best guarantees for the effective autonomy of each of the regions – “nations” – comprising Spain, and provided the workable mechanisms to empower all social groups by assuring them of some control of local politics (Pi y Margall [1877] 2009; Berlanga 2004).

Only through a federal republic could Spain address the most urgent matters facing her: the *political question* (autonomy for the nations/regions in a multi-national framework of government, decentralization of the ineffective administrative structure), the *colonial question* (national autonomy within a Spanish republican federal framework, or nationalist separatism; Cuba had just broken into open rebellion against the metropolis and demands for reform were beginning to be heard in Puerto Rico and in distant Philippines), and the *social question* (land reform, amelioration of the living conditions of the working classes, regulation of capital-labour relations, etc.) (ibid.).

In September 1868, a military coup dethroned Isabel II and a Constituent Cortes was elected to draft a new constitution. Pi y Margall returned from self-exile in Paris, was elected *diputado*, and as such sat as one of the framers of the 1869 Constitution. It appeared to be a worthy successor to La Pepa as the framework for a constitutional monarchy (which Pi y Margall naturally opposed, but he was on the losing side in the voting), with representation in the Cortes based on universal male suffrage. It was the first secular constitution of Spain, effecting the separation of Church and State. But it did not recognize the rights to parliamentary representation of the Empire's last three remaining colonies, leaving them instead under *Leyes de Indias* (Laws of the Indies), akin to martial law, which was declared in 1837. All the same, the Revolution of 1868, a triumph of liberalism by

any measure, set into motion a revolution of rising expectations in these far-flung islands.⁸

In Spain, chaos ensued. The Constitution required a king, and they found one, but the unresolved political conflicts of the century came to a head and the national economy went into a spin-dive. In 1873, two years into his throne, Amadeo I abdicated in despair, elections were quickly held, and with huge abstentions by the conservative parties who were in total disarray, the Republicans found themselves in power—but without power. It was their turn to find out, like the hapless monarch before them, that Spain was indeed a country impossible to govern. The most prominent republicans took quick turns at being president, Pi y Margall being the second.

He presented to the Cortes a resolutely transformative program never seen before. The aims included putting into effect the separation of Church and State, enactment of laws to bolster regional autonomy in the Peninsula and *ultramar*, reorganization of the military; establishment of mixed commissions of capital and labor to regulate working conditions and fix the minimum wage, support for the enhancement of labor and capital relations by institutionalizing circuits of negotiation, reduction of the working day to nine hours; regulation of child labor, sale through agrarian reform of uncultivated latifundia and State lands to peasant communities, the promotion of free and obligatory public education, etc. (Trias Vejerano 2001, 116).

The pronounced socialist orientation in this political programme was the singular influence of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1803–1865). In the context of the evolving history of socialism,⁹ it was pre-1848 socialism, dominated by the French and with Proudhon as the dominant theoretician, which Pi y Margall imbibed in Paris. He found in Proudhon's socio-economic analysis a powerful key to understanding the economic and political realities of Spain. Capitalism in Spain, he had noted earlier in *La reacción y la revolución*, was weak and highly localized in a few areas, and he thought the social question was less grave in “backward” Spain

with her slow-paced industrialization than in the advanced economies of France and England, "...gracias a nuestro mismo atraso y a lo poco extendido que está la industria manufacturera" (Pi y Margall 1968, 272; thanks to our own backwardness and to the limited growth of our manufacturing industry).

Pi y Margall also translated Proudhon's *Du principe fédératif* into Spanish and found in it a systematically worked-out material basis for his own theory of federalism. More than just a particular structure of government, federalism for Proudhon has its organic place within *civil society*, a system of autonomous local communities and industrial associations which relate to each other by contract and mutuality of interest rather than by laws. In cases of conflict, it takes recourse to arbitration rather than courts of justice. Administration is carried out by workers' management rather than by bureaucracy. The network that emerges from these social building blocks will constitute a natural social unity where government will function organically, not as an authority based on coercion in the Hobbesian sense (of having monopoly of violence) but as an authority based on cooperation. Authority itself, decentralized in mutually bound (voluntarily federated) communes (towns, provinces, regions) and industrial associations (factories, workshops, cooperatives) making autonomous decisions at their respective levels, will eventually dissolve. Authority was rendered unnecessary in the widening recognition of mutual interests of these diverse and pluralistic social units. In a federalist system of government, the State gradually gives way to—dissolves itself in—civil society (Proudhon 1868; Caglaio 2008).

If federalism is Proudhon's answer to the political question (what form of government?), his answer to the social one is "mutualist socialism." *Solution du problème social* (also translated by Pi y Margall) explains the concept: this is a programme of mutual financial cooperation amongst workers aimed at returning the control of the productive process back to themselves. This is to be accomplished by ensuring possession of their own means of production, assisted by reforms of credit and exchange.

“Organization of credit” is vital, Proudhon argues; exploitation would be abolished if associated groups of workers could produce and exchange under conditions of interest-free loans.

Equally crucial is “possession”—the right of a worker or group of workers to control the land or workshop or tools of their trade necessary for production—as the guarantee of freedom. Property as possession of the means of livelihood means freedom; but, in the hands of the landlord or capitalist who thereby exploits the labour of farmhands and workers bereft of their means of production, “property is theft.” Mutualist socialism envisions an egalitarian society of independent peasants and artisans, with factories and utilities run by workers’ associations, which are in turn supported by a system of mutual credit founded on people’s banks. Only federalism as the form of government can make this socio-economic programme possible; hence, the political question and the social question are necessarily one and the same; to settle the political at the sacrifice of the social was unacceptable (Proudhon 1868).

Proudhon had another name for “mutualist socialism.” He called it “anarchism,” and declared himself an anarchist, giving it a new meaning: one who seeks social order without authoritarian government. “As man seeks justice in equality, so society seeks order in anarchy.” With the eventual dissolution of authority a natural social order emerges. “Anarchy – the absence of a master, of a sovereign – such is the form of government to which we are everyday approximating” (Proudhon 1840).

In *Idée générale de la révolution au XIXe siècle* (The General Idea of Revolution in the 19th Century), Proudhon situates his concepts of federalism and mutualist socialism within the historical trends of his epoch. He sees in actual developments the inevitable historical progression toward greater liberty and equality, a process he calls “revolution.” This is also the permanent revolution that Pi y Margall sees for Spain with his *constitucionalismo revolucionario*.

What would have been a real transformative revolution in 1873 ended in chaos instead. The unresolved problems broke out in open

conflict; Carlists joined forces with Basque separatists in the north; peasants wrought destruction in the south; workers went on a general strike that brought the economy to a halt; and cantons, declaring themselves autonomous, went into an uprising that swept across the peninsula. Pi y Margall was paralyzed, his socialist program in shambles. Rather than order, as President, the military onslaught against the cantonalist rebels, he resigned.

Looking back years later, and one can imagine the young Rizal intently listening to the elderly statesman who had taken him in, Pi y Margall saw how hopeless it was from the start, because in truth there was no start, “una república que nace muerta” (a republic that was born dead), i.e., stillborn.

Rizal's La Liga Filipina

It took almost a decade for Pi y Margall to reorganize his *Partido republicano federal pactista* and have his political programme and draft of a new federal constitution approved by the party congress. Never promulgated because the party never had a chance at government, this draft of the Spanish Constitution of 1883 manifests his unique theory of a federal republic; a comparison with the Federal Constitution of 1873 shows the *differentia specifica*.

The Federal Constitution of 1873, also unpromulgated because it was undone by the *coup d'état* before it could be acted upon, begins by listing the sixteen states (*estados*) that comprise the Spanish Nation, including Cuba and Puerto Rico. Filipinas falls under Article 2 —“territories which as they progress may be elevated to States by public authorities”—together with Fernando Poo, Annobón, Corisco, and colonies in Africa.

By contrast, Pi y Margall's constitution of 1883 starts not by defining Spain as a listing of geographical entities comprising the nation nor by affirming the union of “dominions of both hemispheres” as in the Cádiz Constitution, but by recognizing the *volition* of regions to come together of their own accord to compose the Spanish Federation and to work together to achieve their common objectives. Article 1 declares that

La Federación española, constituida por las expresadas regiones, tiene por objeto: asegurar la democracia y la República en todo el territorio federal, mantenerlo íntegro e independiente, defenderlo contra todo ataque exterior, sostener en él la tranquilidad y el orden interiores y aumentar su propio bienestar y su progreso (Constitución Española de 1883; The Spanish Federation, constituted by the manifesting regions, has as objectives: to ensure democracy and the Republic in the entire federal territory, to keep it one and independent, to defend it against all external attack, to safeguard internal peace and order, and promote its own well-being and progress).

In Pi y Margall's theory of federalism, "*expresadas regiones*" refers to regions which have duly promulgated their respective Constitutions as a precondition for the union and have now formally expressed their will to join the Federation. They are not geographical parts of a broader entity nor administrative divisions of a bureaucracy, but are veritable nations entire unto themselves, with their traditions, customs and practices, their socio-economic structures, and natural endowments; with their specific culture and history; and now with the intention (*expresión*) to unite with others to work for common goals.

It is therefore perfectly consistent for Pi y Margall to support the autonomy of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines for their full entry into the Federal Republic if they so desire, or to support their drive for independence if that is the will of their people. In the end, Pi y Margall was alone amidst Spanish politicians in supporting the independence of the last remaining colonies (and, as a logical consequence of his position, in opposing the Spanish-American War).

Rizal was already in Madrid and had come to know Pi y Margall personally when the Catalan was writing up the 1883 Constitution. No doubt Rizal was aware of this constitution and understood fully its philosophy. What would have been clear to him is that, whether or not the Philippines was going to be an autonomous member in the Federation, *it must be a nation first*. Put in the reverse order, the Philippines, having

become a nation, will decide for herself if she wants to join the Spanish Federation as an autonomous region thereof, or alternatively, to become an independent sovereign state. Another option was to be an autonomous region now within the Federation and then separate as an independent state later. Each of these options had several good rationales and required specific political conditions, but however which way, it was her (the Philippines') decision, and hers alone, to make. This choice would have been possible under the 1883 Constitution of Pi y Margall.

But Pi y Margall's constitution was a vision, a hope for the future, perhaps even a chimera in the end; the stark reality of the present was the dominating force of the Constitution of 1876. Making a categorical distinction between *el territorio español* (i.e., the Iberian Peninsula) and *las provincias de ultramar* (overseas provinces), this law declares that Spaniards are persons born in *territorio español* and the child(ren) of a Spanish parent even if born outside Spain. It is only in Article 89 of *Del gobierno de las provincias de ultramar* (On the Governing of Overseas Provinces) that the declaration is made that the overseas provinces of Cuba and Puerto Rico shall be represented in the Cortes as shall be determined by a special law. No mention is made of Filipinas.

It was in this juridical framework that the Filipino ilustrados waged their propaganda movement in Spain to gain parliamentary representation for their country and to work for the much-needed reforms. Their hope was to win the support of a sufficient number of diputados to sponsor bills in the Cortes for these ends. Of the two parties that alternated in power, it was Sagasta's Liberals that would raise the hopes of Filipinos up some notches, but when it was the turn at the next election for Cánovas del Castillo's Conservatives, those hopes would be dashed again. And so it went on and on, hope and desperation taking turns in sync with the *turno* of politics in the *Restauración*.¹⁰

Rizal posed the Filipinos' demands to Spain as a constitutional—contractual—matter: does she recognize Filipinas as a province to be represented in the Cortes, an integral part of Spain, with all the civil rights

accorded to the Filipino people, as she had done before with the Constitution of Cádiz? By Spain's own constitutional traditions since 1812 and centuries earlier, the Filipinos now pressed their demands as a matter of right. Spain's nonperformance of contractual obligations brought about the colony's decline in the following three centuries. Now she must repair the damage and grant all the reforms that the people are clamoring for. This was the powerful message of *Filipinas dentro de cien años*: Spain has to answer to that obligation. And she must live up to her answer.

Recall Rizal's summation to Carnicero of what their goals were: grant representation in the Cortes to the country; secularize the friars, thus removing their influence over government and country; reform the Administration in all its branches; promote primary education freed from all intervention by the friars; share in halves the country's governmental posts between *peninsulares* and *insulares*; clean up the Administration; and create schools of arts and trades in all provincial capitals with more than 16,000 people (Retana 1907, 274). These reforms were perfectly consistent with the principles and goals of Spain's noblest statesmen from the ilustrados of the Enlightenment to the federalistas of the day.

But those who held the reins of power in Madrid and in Manila were not of this persuasion, so the reformists, after years of hard work and sacrifice, were going nowhere. Listen to two voices of frustration in their letters to Rizal three years apart. In his letter to Rizal, from Madrid on 16 March 1887, Lopez-Jaena writes that

the reason why the government does not want us to have representation in the Cortes is that the friars have intimidated it. In proof of that, Sagasta, Balaguer and Moret have called *diputado* la Guardia, who has initiated it, telling him that they would expel him from the majority if he continued supporting the three bills he has introduced in the Cortes in favor of the Philippines. Sagasta threatened Cañamaque also of expulsion if he carried out his plan to interpellate on Mindanao. The government has begged and requested [Cuban *diputado*] Labra to desist from interpellating on the general policy on the Philippines.

Meanwhile, José Basa in his letter to Rizal from Hongkong on 4 August 1890, writes that with the new ministry in Spain we have gone fifteen years backward.

Then Rizal himself says, in his letter to Marcelo del Pilar from Brussels on 4 April 1890, that

I am assiduously studying what's happening in the country. I believe that nothing can redeem us except our brains: *materialiter vel idealiter sumptum*. [...] Representation will bind the Philippines [to Spain] for a long time. If our compatriots are of a different mind, we should decline representation, but as we are now, with the indifference of our fellow countrymen, it is good enough. At least it's better to have the feet tied than the elbows. What can we do?

But then, he wrote to Mariano Ponce from Brussels on 18 July 1890, saying that

I want to return to the Philippines and though this might be rashness or imprudence, what does it matter? The Filipinos are all too prudent and that is why our country is thus, and it seems to me that we are not getting along well on the path of prudence. I am going to look for another.

People were eager to listen to the famous novelist upon his return to Manila in 1892 on what they could all do under his leadership. Rizal came with his *Estatuto de la Liga Filipina*. We have no record of what he said at those gatherings—though always well-attended, we are told—where he presented his proposal for an organization, so all we have is the publication itself.

The manuscript stands alone; no explanation, theoretical or practical, accompanies the text, no scholarly footnotes, no subsequent essay written. The text must speak for itself.

One is immediately struck by the language. It is austere, even severe, devoid of exhortations of any kind, so unlike Rizal. Solemn and grave, as

organizational statutes generally are, it is bereft of those powerful emotive words that Rizal deploys so effectively in his writings. *Pátria* (country; father land) is mentioned only once—not as that sacred home that stirs the passion of everyone—but simply a concern to be borne in mind, along with one’s family and loved ones, by all members of the Liga, who are entreated to sacrifice personal interest in total obedience to the mandates of their superiors. “*Filipinas*” appears only in the name of the organization itself and disappears in the text as simply “*Archipelago*.” “*Pueblo*”—never absent in all of Rizal’s writings—is this time nowhere; everywhere it is just *afiliados* (members, literally, affiliated) and no credentials are asked of them other than they be morally upright. There is also no mention of “government,” except in relation to a stern stipulation that no dispute between members should ever be taken to judicial or governmental authorities, under pain of severe punishment. “*España*,” in whatever role, as metropolis or colonizer, never mind as “mother-country,” is not to be found. Colonialism is not once mentioned. “State” is absent *tout court*. La Liga Filipina is all about Civil Society.

As statutes of an association, shorn of any historic particularity, this document could well have been written by another person, from another country, of another epoch. Consider France, 1840s, Proudhon. It will be seen that La Liga is at bottom a mutualist association; its goal: to create a compact, vigorous and homogeneous Civil Society.

The basic unit, the building block out of which Civil Society is to be constructed, is the people’s council (*consejo popular*) to be established at the local level all over the country. The councils are to be as numerous as possible and must regenerate themselves continuously. Most of all, they are all integrated within a pyramidal structure of councils from the ground level of *consejo popular* (popular council) through the *consejo provincial* (provincial council) up to the *consejo supremo* (supreme council), which is the highest level and situated at the capital of the Archipelago. Each council functions as a mutualist association where the members (*afiliados*) relate to each other in mutually beneficial ways which are well spelt out in the Statutes. The nature of these interrelationships both within and outside

a particular council and the Liga as a whole is summed up in the last article of the Statute, Article 15 of General Provisions.

“Beyond the confines of the council and in all matters not affecting generally the rule of conduct of la Liga Filipina, all members from the highest supreme chief (*gefè supremo*) to the last member shall in all social dealings regard themselves as brothers in blood; for such fraternal reason are all obliged to defend mutually the interests of all members, to console and comfort them in misfortune; let it be understood that what a member suffers from and endures is also what all the others suffer from and endure” (Ibid.). The last embodies all. The Liga’s motto: *Unus instar Omnium* (One is equal to all.)

The basic economic principle at work in the Liga, as Proudhon advocated in his mutualist socialism, is the *organization of credit*. The associated workers—artisans, peasants, workers, professionals—are enabled to produce and exchange on the basis of loans made available to them by the association itself; with the loans, they can invest in capital goods—their means of production, the tools of their trade—and working capital.

THE RIGHTS OF THE MEMBERS OF LA LIGA (*Estatuto, Derechos del A)**

1. Every member who fully justifies his need has the right to receive moral, material and pecuniary aid from his council and from the Liga.
2. Every member may demand that business preference be given to him in his trade or profession by all members for so long as he can make the same guarantees as the others. In his travels, whether for the Liga or for his own account, every member can count on assistance from his council or other councils at all levels, for his protection and need for contacts.

3. Every member may invoke the help of La Liga in every want, injury or injustice [This article repeats the second and third goals of the Liga: mutual protection in every want and necessity, and defence against all violence and injustice].
4. Every member may demand capital loan for any enterprise whatsoever, if the council has sufficient and disposable funds.
5. Every member may demand rebate for merchandise or services provided by establishments or professional services supported directly by the Liga.
6. No member may be judged without previously being granted defence.

Note that all the rights of the members of the Liga are economic in nature, designed to promote and facilitate the growth of productive enterprises and professional services through the extension of credit, discount on purchases and services, and other forms of support including protection and defence against injury or injustice. The last includes defence against accusation within the council itself. No mention is made of interest on loans; recall that in the Proudhonian system, credit is interest-free and is based on mutual lending via a people's bank. Liga members are to pay dues—one-time entry and monthly quotas—and are expected to make, as contributions to the council, an undertaking, an idea, a study, or a new applicant for membership. Thus the Liga grows in assets and strengths.

The Statute of La Liga dedicates an entire section, *Inversión de los Fondos*, on the investment of its funds:

1. To support a member or his son who, lacking means, demonstrates application and strong aptitudes for work and study
2. To support an impoverished member in his rights against someone “powerful”

3. To assist a member who has suffered loss
4. To lend capital to a member who needs it for any industrial or agricultural undertaking
5. To promote the introduction into the country of new machinery and industries
6. To open [coop] shops, warehouses and establishments where members can be accommodated more economically than elsewhere
7. The supreme chief has ample authority to dispose of the funds in cases of urgency, so long as accounting is made afterwards in the supreme council.

The investment funds are the means by which Goal 4 of the Liga — “development of education, agriculture and commerce”—is to be achieved. With these funds the Liga functions as a people’s bank or as a development agency directly involved with the members as they strive to develop their businesses. Those impoverished members who demonstrate particularly positive aptitudes for entrepreneurship or study are to be supported financially. The Liga also functions as a social support system, a social net ready to help out a member who has suffered losses, or to protect one who is under some form of oppression by “a powerful one;” given the urgency of such cases, the head of the council is pre-authorized to disburse the necessary funds outside the usual procedures. Defence of the rights of a member from being trampled upon has its corresponding obligation: members should not submit themselves to any humiliation, nor should they treat others with arrogance and disrespect. Cooperative stores and establishments are to be set up where members can obtain goods and services more cheaply than elsewhere.¹¹ Given the rapid advance of science, technology and industry in the western world, the economy is to be modernized by importing advanced technology and introducing new industries financed by the Liga’s investment funds.

Amongst the duties of the members stands out a particular obligation which carries a definite sanction: in all their daily transactions, members

must always give preference to the businesses of the other members; they must not buy from any store other than that of a member, or if one is selling to another member, he or she must do so with rebate. All things being equal, members shall always favour members. Otherwise comes the sanction, “Toda infracción de este artículo será severamente castigada” (Deberes de los A*, 5; All violations of this rule will be severely punished). This is a matter of discipline and total commitment to the common cause; the mutualist association can function and thrive only if all members dutifully comply with their obligations of reciprocity, mutuality, and cooperation “en todos los actos de la vida” (Estatuto, Deberes de los A*, 5; literally, “in all life activities”).

Another duty is equally necessary: any member in a position to help but refuses to extend assistance to another in danger or in dire need shall be punished with the same burden that the other has suffered from. Should conflict arise between members, it is for the council itself to resolve their dispute based on the principles of mutualism; members who take their dispute to judicial or governmental authorities instead shall be “severely punished.”

The rest of the duties of the members have to do with the security of La Liga itself. There is an unsaid presumption in Rizal’s statutes that La Liga has to grow and survive in a hostile environment, and must protect itself at all moments. Hence the dictatorial command and communication structure of the organization: top-to-bottom channels of communication; immediate implementation of orders without question; absolute secrecy of everyone on everything; information on a need-to-know basis only; the use of pseudonyms and codes for members and councils; constant and systematic reporting of any signs of trouble; no horizontal sharing of information but bottom-to-top flow only; and readiness to replace any post or part of La Liga which may be rendered disabled for any reason whatsoever (Estatuto, Disposiciones generales).

Emphatically,

“the member must guard in absolute secrecy from all outsiders, even if these may be his parents, brothers, sons, etc. at the cost of his own life, all facts, acts and decisions of his council and of the Liga Filipina in general, this being the means by which the member can attain that which he loves most in life” (Estatuto, Deberes de los A*, 4).

Here, La Liga appears as a conspiratorial or revolutionary organization, like a Leninist vanguard party or, as it happened subsequently, as the revolutionary organizational structure of Katipunan, inheritor of La Liga. The argument could well be advanced: from the start La Liga *is already designed* to act as a revolutionary party if and when the moment comes: La Liga awaits Ang Katipunan.

So what then was La Liga as conceived by Rizal? Historians have battled each other for decades on their answers. A separatist organization, and therefore Rizal was revolutionary? Or an assimilationist programme, and therefore Rizal was a reformist? Because La Liga aimed at “the study and application of reforms,” was it therefore premised on gradualism and dependent on Spain’s pace in granting those reforms? Was Ang Katipunan a repudiation of La Liga?

Rather than ask what the appropriate label is to attach to La Liga from the outside, and retrospectively, why not ask what La Liga aimed to do from the inside, there and then? The fact is that La Liga aimed to create the Civil Society that still was not there—“to unite the entire Archipelago into one compact, vigorous and homogeneous body” (*Fines*, 1). Majul made a good case of showing that the unification of the archipelago that had been done by the Spaniards—political integration as a colony of Spain, religious integration as a Catholic community—was not satisfactory for the purposes of the emerging nationalist movement. Thus, Rizal aimed for a third integration, which is that of a viable national community centered on itself (Majul 1959).

But how is this “nation” to come to life? If it is dormant from the past, how then to awaken it? If it is yet to be born, how then to conceive it? In *Morga*, Rizal had dug up the past, to make his countrymen “recall” their nationhood from before the impact of colonialism. In *Cien Años*, he had looked into the future, based on decisions taken or not taken today by both Spain and the Philippines. There he declared that should the Islands break away from Spain, they would choose a “federal republic” for their government. So if this is the answer to the political question, what is the answer to the social question?

Rizal’s answer is La Liga itself. Its architectural structure rests on an integration of building blocks, people’s councils spread all over the country, mutualist associations of producers and consumers united on the basis of cooperation and reciprocity. La Liga Filipina is at the national level an association of associations, vertically integrated but self-managing at all levels. Through the organization of credit and mutual help, the association aims to promote individual and cooperative entrepreneurship, a step towards the ideal of a non-exploitative social order because workers and peasants can possess their means of production, and each identifies his interests in relation to the whole.

Thus is Civil Society created, the realm of economic activities and social relations that comprise the material basis wherefrom the State arises.¹² That state, *theoretically*, could be a federal republic such as that envisioned by Pi y Margall for “la Federación española” in his Constitution of 1883, the union of autonomous regions, each with their own constitution, with the Philippines among them as a compact, vigorous, and homogeneous body the equal of any. Or it could be an independent federal republic with its own regions from Mindanao to Luzon united into one compact, vigorous and homogeneous body. *Theoretically*. But Rizal already knew, before he conceived of La Liga, that the autonomous union with Spain would never happen because it would have required as a precondition the transformation of Spain herself into a federation, and the balance of forces was against that. The only course of action, therefore, was to work

for the independence of the Philippines. Rizal came back to his country for that, and, organizationally and conceptually, La Liga Filipina was to be the first step to freedom.

Notes

- ¹ All translations of Spanish texts in this essay are mine except those from Rizal's Annotations to Morga's *Sucesos de la Islas Filipinas*.
- ² An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Filipino-Spanish Conference on the 200th Anniversary of the Cádiz Constitution of 1812 held at the University of the Philippines in June 2012, a rare occasion for scholars from both countries to revisit the intellectual and political ties between Spanish and Filipino political movements in the 19th century.
- ³ See Braudel 1976, Part Two, Chapter V: "Societies," pp. 704 –756 for the political system of 16th-century Spain.
- ⁴ Rejecting the divine right of kings and the social-contract theories of Hobbes and Locke, Suárez has been described as "the first convinced and avowed republican" (Villa 1997). <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/article/other/57jnv9.htm>
- ⁵ Rizal's footnote: "The conversion of the Philippines into the Christian faith was the only excuse that gave the kings the right to the possession of the Islands, in the opinion of all men then, military as well as civilians and theologians..." But this was not true of the Philippines, as of so many other peoples, "the Catholic Faith [being but] a Palladian pretext to give an honest appearance to the rule" (Morga [1890] 2011, 342n261).
- ⁶ Rizal may have felt that he was conceding too much for his line of argumentation. In several footnotes he qualifies his own assertion: "these slaves were not always in such dismal condition [...] but tyrants and brutal men who abused their authority were not lacking, though they could not have surpassed the *encomenderos* [...]" Rizal repeatedly cites sources to prove that the pre-existing class structure was not more tyrannical here than elsewhere, in Europe and in history (Morga [1890] 2011, 276n106).
- ⁷ Rizal, quoted verbatim by Ricardo Carnicero, Military Commandant of Dapitan, in his Report to Gov. Gen. Eulogio Despujol. Reproduced in Retana 1907, 274.
- ⁸ In the Philippines, La Gloriosa led to the Cavite Mutiny of 1872 after the liberal Gov. Gen. Carlos Ma. de la Torre was recalled and replaced by another who, under clerical pressure, promptly revoked the reformist measures initiated by his predecessor, setting into motion this revolt, a milestone in Philippine revolutionary history. Because of the martyrdom of the three priests inculpated in the mutiny, this was a milestone too in Rizal's life. "Without 1872, Rizal would now be a Jesuit, and instead of writing *Noli me tangere*, would have written the contrary..." Rizal's letter to Mariano Ponce, 18 April 1889.

- ⁹ That is to say, pre-Marxist socialism, taking the publication of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848 as the milestone and that of Marx's critique of Proudhon in *The Poverty of Philosophy* the year before. Marx had said of the three currents of French socialism, and of Proudhon in particular, back in 1842 that "writings such as those of Leroux, Considérant, and above all Proudhon's penetrating work, can be criticized only after long and deep study" (Karl Marx. 1842. "Communism and the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung*" in *Rheinische Zeitung*, 16 October, Number 289. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1842/10/16.htm>).
- ¹⁰ This part of Philippine history is well-researched, the best single volume being Schumacher 1997.
- ¹¹ Rizal had a chance to establish a cooperative of producers and consumers whilst on exile in Dapitan. This is discussed in the memoirs (unpublished) of José Aseniero, one of Rizal's students in Dapitan. For an exposition of Rizal's initiatives in Dapitan in relation to contemporary issues of development, see Quibuyen 2011, 1–29.
- ¹² The question will be asked: would Rizal's "development strategy" have been viable had it been given a chance? Avoiding counterfactual historiography, it should be borne in mind that premonopoly capitalism was very different in its structure and in the opportunities it presented to entrepreneurs from how it has developed since, and many cooperatives in 19th-century Western Europe had grown into significant business concerns, contributing substantially to economic development. And some of the utopian socialists like Robert Owen made great fortunes starting out with a small credit.

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Rural China: From Modernization to Reconstruction

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Abstract

Chinese rural society has played a significant role in the modernization, industrialization, and economic development of the People's Republic of China from the 1950s onwards, albeit at great cost. This process was characterized by, among others, the siphoning of resources away from the rural areas; the ongoing expropriation of land; human and environmental degradation; the erosion of local enterprises in the name of export-oriented growth; and the undercutting of local governance. Rural China has also absorbed the attendant crises—massive unemployment, among others—that have been generated by the country's economic policies. Despite the fate that has befallen rural China, it will and should continue to play a role in the future developmental trajectory of the country. It is in this light that the historical and contemporary manifestations of rural reconstruction movements in China, which are based on the small peasantry and village community, provide an alternative to destructive modernization. This will ensure the protection of rural livelihoods and function as a resistance hub to the external crisis derived from global capitalism.

Key words: modernization, small peasantry, village community, rural reconstruction

Introduction: The Four Phases of Industrialization of a Peasant State

CHINA'S KEYNOTE HISTORICAL project of the last 150 years has been forced modernization and industrialization. Underlying this drive to industrialize and modernize was the desire to erase the shameful memory of being a defeated semi-colony and the anxiety of lagging as a backward peasant country. It also inevitably had a strong tinge of self-defense and anti-colonialism. A strong modern nation, it was thought, could counter Western hegemony. Industrialization was thus regarded as the vital means to secure independence and safeguard sovereignty.

For Wen Tiejun (2001) China's development since the mid-19th century has undergone 'the four phases of industrialization of a peasant state,' whose ultimate aim was to become a powerful modern nation; counter European and Japanese imperialism; and resist the United States' embargo during the Cold War. The first phase was the *Yangwu Yudong* or Western Affairs Movement initiated by the Qing dynasty from 1850 to 1895; the second, the industrialization policy pursued by the Republican government from 1920s to the 1940s; the third, the "State Primitive Accumulation of Capital" practiced by the Communist regime from the 1950s to the 1970s; and the fourth, the reform and open-door policy promoted by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s.

After 1949, modernization was imperative. Though established as a socialist state that year, China did not see socialism as an exclusive mandate. Even before its final victory, the new government had initially opted to orient China's development toward a "national capitalism" under the leadership and tutelage of the State. At one point, even the possibility of introducing investment from capitalist states was on the table (Wen et. al. 2013). However, the Cold War, in the form of pre-emptive measures against communist China by the Western bloc, sealed China's subsequent development trajectory. Under this geopolitical condition, the new regime opted for rapid industrialization that followed the Soviet model (Wen et. al. 2013). However, a weak country's affiliation with a powerful ally does

not usually come without a cost. China had to establish an asymmetric dual system that would exploit rural society.

Rural China and Frank's Theory of "Dual System"

Andre Gunder Frank (1969) challenged the "dual society" argument which depicted a dichotomized Latin America. On the one hand was a stagnant, backward traditional rural sector; on the other, a thriving capitalist sector. The goal of development was to modernize or assimilate the former into the latter. However, Frank pointed out that instead of a neat, smooth dichotomy, an internal colonialism was at work, in which urban sectors extracted surplus from the rural areas. Defined by the dynamics between these two sectors, Latin American societies mirrored the "center-periphery" relationship of the developed and underdeveloped regions at the global level. In fact, the correspondence was not accidental. They originated from the same historical process known as capitalism, but manifested at different correlated levels.

One discovers a similar developmental dynamic in China's industrialization after the 1950s, which has accounted for China's trajectory in the last 60 years. First, to obtain technology and industry transfer from the Soviet Union, China submitted to that country's geopolitical orbit (Wen et. al. 2013). Armed with a powerful industrial capacity, the Soviet Union occupied a prime position to export its products and capital, along with its political, ideological, and military influence. China did align itself with Moscow, and the price was, among other things, the massive loss of human life during the Korean War. The institutional cost of aligning with the Soviets was equally significant, as Russian aid translated into foreign debt. Plus, China's institutions were transplanted from the Soviet model, from industrial administration to bureaucracy and its tertiary education; this indebtedness generated a sort of path-dependency that would affect China's developmental trajectory (Wen et. al. 2013).

In order to industrialize and modernize while maintaining this high-cost "superstructure" (institutions in general), China had to have a recourse

strategy common among developing countries. Unlike early industrialized countries, which could extract resources and surplus from colonies or externalize institutional costs by transferring them to the less powerful periphery, countries like China had to pursue a sort of “internal colonialism” (Hechter 1977). It had to extract resources or surplus from less privileged domestic sectors, which was often rural society. In this light, rural collectivization (the People’s Commune) was less an ideological maneuver than an institutional strategy to systemically extract rural surplus at a lower transaction cost. The State thus controlled all surplus value produced by both rural and urban labor, and had a monopoly on production, purchasing, and marketing. The central government thereby allocated resources to expand production based on heavy industry.

Modernization and the Exploitation of Rural China

Rural China has been stigmatized as a backward region with low productivity. For some intellectuals, especially early in the 20th century, it was the root cause of China’s submission to the capitalist world order. Rural China needed to be abnegated so that the country could modernize (Jiang 2011). As in the relationship between colonized and the colonizer, this process usually implied brutal exploitation. While advanced Western countries had colonies to exploit and a periphery to which they could transfer the costs of development, China could only rely on internal exploitation in order to achieve industrialization. As Wen Tiejun and his colleagues summarized, China before 1978 adopted three kinds of industrialization strategies that affected the rural sector:

- Extraction of surplus value from the agricultural sector through low pricing of agricultural products and high pricing of industrial products
- Forced modernization of agriculture (mechanization and using agrochemicals) to absorb domestic industrial products through rural collectivization

- Mobilization of intensive and massive labor input to substitute for capital factors under condition of extreme capital scarcity. When faced with economic crises, the State tried to ride them out by transferring the redundant labor force to the rural sector through ideological mobilization (Wen et. al. 2013).

According to Kong Xiangzhi's research, the contribution of peasants to nation-building in the first 60 years of the People's Republic of China amounted to around RMB 17.3 trillion, all of which are made possible by policies such as the price-cutting system of agricultural and nonagricultural products, the mobilization of cheap labor, and land acquisition (Kong 2009).

Land Expropriation in Rural China

Another way rural China has underpinned the economic development of the country is through an ongoing and systematic expropriation of peasants' lands. In rural China, land ownership is a form of collective ownership. Indoctrinated by neoliberal ideology, however, many Chinese intellectuals today advocate a radical privatization of land, which may facilitate and accelerate the commodification of land. But one must ask an essential question: who then will take a larger share of the institutional returns? Not the small holding peasant households with their last small parcel of land, but most likely the real-estate interest bloc and rent-seeking authorities. Who will eventually bear a greater part of the consequent institutional costs and resulting social destabilization? Yet again, the powerless peasants.

Under a relentless drive for privatization, more and more peasants are losing their land. The government estimates that the current amount of arable land is roughly 122 million hectares, which has remained unchanged since 2005. According to Tan Shuhou's research, the ratio of construction site in arable land occupation has continuously increased from

around 10% in 2002 to 80% in 2008 (Tan 2011). The Ministry of Land and Resources disclosed that of the loss of arable land, 77% goes to construction projects.

According to *2011 China Urban Development Report* by China's Academy of Social Sciences (CASS 2011), the number of Chinese peasants who have totally or partially lost their land currently amounts to 40 to 50 million. The number is expected to increase by 2 to 3 million per year. Land expropriation is propelled by local governments and speculative financial capital. Since 2000, only 20 to 30% of the capital gain obtained from value added to land has been distributed to the village level and merely 5 to 10% is eventually allotted as compensation for the peasants. Local governments take away 20 to 30% of the added value, whereas real estate developers take a lion's share of 40 to 50%. Sixty percent (60%) of peasants' petitions arose out of land disputes, and a third of these cases are related to land expropriation. Sixty percent (60%) of those surveyed are facing difficult living conditions, particularly in regard to the issues of income, retirement, and healthcare.

Local government's fiscal constraint has been a major cause of extensive large-scale land expropriation. Since the 1978 reform, there have been intermittent deficit crises on several occasions. The central government responded by decentralizing the tax and revenue system, which led in turn to the local government's dependence on local revenues (Yang and Wen 2010). From 1984, local governments occupied farmland for local industrialization in order to generate income; it was the period of "land for local industrialization" (Yang and Wen 2010). In 1994, China was confronted with a triple crisis (balance of payment crisis, fiscal deficit crisis, and bank system crisis), which also marked the period of China's reckless embrace of globalization. To cope, the central government implemented yet another drastic tax and revenue system reform. Before 1994, about 70% of local tax revenues went to local governments but since then, about 50% has gone to the central government. To compensate for a drop in their share of revenues, local governments again appropriated farmland to invest in commercial projects. This was the period of "land

for commercial fortunes.” Since 2003, local governments have increasingly collateralized farmland for mortgage loans from commercialized banks. Financialization has launched a period of “land for mortgage loans” (Yang and Wen 2010).

In 2003, the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Land Contract in Rural Areas was promulgated. It stated that new inhabitants would obtain contracted land only if land was reserved, increased through reclamation, or refused by other contractors. The law essentially precluded those born from that time onwards from being beneficiaries of land distribution. Once arable land is no longer evenly distributed and the peasants are no longer expected to share in the benefits of land, a rural community’s risk management through internalization would be greatly weakened. Moreover, because they are less tied to the land, the new, younger generations of rural China will be radically dislocated from agriculture and rural society (Wen 2008, 81–97). Indeed, partly because of land expropriation, according to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, in 2012, there are now around 262 million peasant migrant workers in Chinese cities (NBSC 2012). Unlike previous generations of migrant workers seeking urban employment, the new generations are no longer content with simply earning enough cash to maintain the reproduction of peasant households, assuming they still have to till of course. Furthermore, their expenditures – on education and medical care for instance – have far exceeded the income they could generate through agriculture; hence the exodus to the cities (Wen 2008, 81–97).

“Rise” at the Expense of the Rural

Much has been made of China’s spectacular rise. In 2010, China stood as the second largest economy after the United States. According to the *2011 Annual Report of State Administration of Foreign Exchange of China*, China’s foreign reserves reached 3.18 trillion at the end of 2011 (SAFE 2011), which accounted for nearly one-third of the share of the world’s foreign reserves (China Global Trade 2011). According to the World

Trade Organization secretariat (2011), China's share of the global GDP was 9.6% in 2008, 9.1% in 2009, and 10.3% in 2010. Nevertheless, this kind of "rise" has been achieved at a dear disproportionate cost to rural China, its environment, and its people, especially the peasants and workers from rural areas.

After China resumed diplomatic relations with the West and re-introduced foreign investments on a massive scale in the early 1970s, serious fiscal and debt crises broke out almost instantly. China's famous reform and open policy in 1978 actually originated from the response to these problems (Wen et. al. 2013). At the beginning of reform, the peasants enjoyed the benefit of new policies and witnessed a substantial improvement in income. However, by the early 1990s, the central government had systematically suppressed the development of township enterprises (Wen et. al. 2013). The income growth of peasants declined and has fallen since then. A major turn took place in 1993, when China was struck by triple crises: fiscal deficit, balance of payment crisis, and a banking crisis (Wen et. al. 2013). To cope, earn foreign exchange reserves, and resolve the foreign debt crisis, the government suppressed the domestic market and embraced a predominantly export-oriented strategy. Today, after more than 20 years of participating in globalization, China has now been facing the increasing pressure of global excess financial capital. The tension between domestic and international interests is approaching a critical point of explosion (Wen et. al. 2013).

In spite of stunning economic growth, the environmental and ecological devastation in the wake of China's rise has been cataclysmic. Water and air pollution is constantly at harmful levels. Sixteen (16) of the world's 20 most air-polluted cities are located in China, with a population of 400 million under daily threat. One third of the land is contaminated by acid rain, while almost 100% of soil crust is hardened (Impact Lab 2006). In addition, China has also become a dumping ground of waste from the West. According to Greenpeace's research in 2009, "inspections of 18 European seaports in 2005 found as much as 47 percent of waste destined for export, including e-waste, was illegal. In the UK alone, at

least 23,000 metric tonnes of undeclared or ‘grey’ market electronic waste was illegally shipped in 2003 to the Far East, India, Africa, and China. In the US, it is estimated that 50 to 80 percent of the waste collected for recycling is being exported in this way” (Greenpeace 2009).

The National Bureau of Statistics of China announced that, according to sample surveys and comprehensive statistics conducted in 31 provinces throughout the nation, the total grain production was 54,641 million tons in 2010, up from 1,559 million tons (2.9% increase) in 2009. This is the seventh consecutive year of increasing grain production (NBSC 2010). At the same time, however, the use of chemical fertilizers has increased from around 1 million tons in 1979 to around 5.5 million tons in 2009 (NBSC 2009). Indeed, industrial agriculture has become the largest source of water and soil pollution in China, and peasants suffer the most from chronic agrochemical poisoning.

According to the National Environmental Statistics Report of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China, in 2006, 60% of the country’s rivers were too polluted to be potable sources of water. Continuous polluted emissions come from industrial and municipal sources, as well as from pesticides and fertilizers (MEPC 2006). The environmental impact is compounded by the perennial problem of water shortage, with 400 out of 600 surveyed Chinese cities were reportedly short of drinking water. According to the Ministry of Water Resources, in 2005, about 300 million people in China were unable to access to safe drinking water. Drinking water for roughly 190 million rural populations contains harmful substance that exceeds health standards (MWRC 2013).

The social cost of specializing in low-end manufacture is also enormous. In China, about 200 million people suffer from occupational diseases, over 90% of them are migrant workers from rural areas. In the Pearl Delta Zone alone each year, at least 30 thousand cases of finger-cutting machinery accidents are reported, with over 40 thousand fingers mutilated. Again, most of the victims are migrant workers from the rural areas (70.2%, merely 4.3% are from the cities) and many of them fail to receive any compensation in the end (Zhang 2005, 4–27).

On top of these problems, China is facing two (though not only) major structural contradictions. The first is the huge income gap between the urban and the rural sectors; the second is the developmental disparity between the coastal regions and the hinterlands. The peasantry is directly bound up in these two contradictions (Wen et. al. 2013).

Rural China as Social Stabilizer

While the Chinese government has always sought to siphon resources away from the rural sector, the latter also serves as a buffer that absorbs social risks and the inherent crises of modernization and procapital reforms. Wen Tiejun and his colleagues argue that from 1949 to 2009, China went through eight notable crises, all of which have coincided with the introduction of foreign investment. Indeed, the introduction foreign capital in pursuit of industrialization, be it Soviet or western capital, renders a nation vulnerable to economic risk. Crisis is inexorably endogenous to capital (Wen et. al. 2013).

The first crisis related to the introduction of foreign investment occurred when China-USSR relations deteriorated. Between 1950 and 1956, the USSR's total aid investment in China was worth US\$ 5.4 billion. In 1960, the USSR aborted all assistance, thrusting China's economy into crisis first in 1960 and then again in 1968 (Wen et. al. 2013).

The second began in 1971 when China accepted US\$4.3 billion in investments, which led to an economic crisis in 1974 and 1979. The third took place in 1980s. Many local governments sought to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and amassed a lot of foreign debts in the process, which again proved to be a recipe for economic crises in 1988 and 1993. These foreign investment-induced economic crises derived from domestic fiscal deficits. Another set of crises broke out in 1998 and 2008 after China had embraced globalization. Both can be categorized as an "imported crisis," a consequence of the external and global financial woes (Wen et. al. 2013).

Rural China helped absorb the costs and impact of these crises. Wen Tiejun and others (Wen et.al. 2013) point out that in 1960, 12 million unemployed educated youths were sent by the state to the countryside to re-educate peasants and build a new socialist village. In the crisis of 1968, at the height of the Cultural Revolution, another 17 million youths were sent to the countryside to ease pressures from large-scale unemployment. In 1974, more than 10 million were dispatched, and the total number added up to around 40 million. Wen has pointed out the regularity of crisis and reform in China over the last 60 years. He concludes that if the foreign-investment induced economic crisis could be contained by displacing the adverse conditions towards the rural sector and the crisis in the capital-intensive urban-industry sector could thus be abated, China would achieve a soft landing and existing institutions could be maintained. In this sense, rural China has acted as a safety valve that helps defuse and de-escalate potential socio-political tensions. Thus, in cases of “hard-landing” in the urban sector, the central government would be forced to reform the fiscal and economic system (Wen et. al. 2013).

Wen and his colleagues also show (2013) that rural China has also helped absorb the institutional impact arising from massive and repeated urban unemployment. This was the case in three occasions before 1978, in which the regime initiated a massive population migration to the rural areas. In the post-1978 era, the rural sector has served as a source of employment. For example, in 2008 when the global financial crisis broke out, 20 million workers from rural areas lost their jobs in the coastal cities. A sudden upsurge of unemployment on such a scale would mean social and political disaster in any country. Yet no major social unrest happened in China. The peasant workers simply returned to their home villages to sit through the period of temporary unemployment. Despite ongoing land expropriation, many of them still had a small plot of land, a house, and a family to rely on. Their small holdings became their “base of social security.” The urban sector, as a capital-intensive pool, is necessarily vagarious and risk-generating, and constantly destabilizes society through cyclic crises. However, the rural sector can regulate the labor market by re-absorbing

unemployed migrant workers from the cities. As we have seen, this stabilizing capacity is partly attributed to a system of rural land ownership, one that has been in place since the 1950s (Wen et. al. 2013).

This system of ownership has its roots in a land reform policy initiated by the Chinese Communist Party between 1949 and 1952. CPC used the traditional slogan “*land to the tillers*” to mobilize hundreds of thousands of peasants to fight for land revolutions and national liberation. After 1949, CPC took power and facilitated the equal distribution of land; at least 85% of peasants enjoyed the benefits (Wen 2001). Each peasant household had and most of them still have a small parcel of arable land. Per capita arable land stood at 1.4 *mu* (around 0.09 hectare) in 2005.

How has this been a buffer? Since 1989, the contribution of agriculture to GDP and peasant household income has been declining. After 1993, the development of rural enterprises was systematically curbed in order to boost export-oriented growth (i.e. globalization). This resulted in the massive flow of migrant workers from the rural areas into cities. They endured irregularly paid wages, accepted employment without social benefits, and consciously suppressed consumption to collect (once a year in some cases) their cash income. What underpinned this tolerance was land ownership. Though they sell their labor power just like the proletariat, they had arable land to own and fall back on for subsistence. It is the reason why they put up, even supported, the state’s industrialization policy, even though it meant the exploitation of rural society. More importantly, this land ownership has also been the real foundation for China’s ability to maintain low labor costs for 20 years. Indeed, the rural sector has taken up the cost of social reproduction of labor, a cost capital that the state generally aims to shrug off. Peasants and workers are increasingly suffering from exploitation and social injustice, but the legacy of land reform, as well as a few residual socialist practices, continues to insulate, more or less, Chinese society from being ruthlessly plagued by the neoliberal globalization and its destructive projects of modernization (Wen et. al. 2013).

The State and Rural Development

The Chinese government may have conducted the systematic extraction of resources for rural areas, but to be fair, it has taken steps to address problems in rural development. Several prorural poor policy has been carried out: the elimination of agricultural tax (for the first time in 2600 years in China's history!); comprehensive aid to agriculture; the cooperative medical service system; the cancellation of educational fees in poor western regions; a substantial increase of government investment in public services; and new rural finance polices, among others (Wen 2012).

In October 2005, the Chinese government highlighted the "New Rural Development" as a national strategy. The Central Government's No.1 Document, issued in February 2006, illustrated that "the building of a new socialist countryside" is "characterized by enhanced productivity, higher living standards, healthy rural culture, neat and clean villages and democratic administration." In 2006, Hu Jintao, who was then the General Secretary of the Central Committee of CPC, emphasized that "as the resolution of issues concerning agriculture, rural areas and peasants [*sannong wenti*] has an overall impact on China's target of building a moderately prosperous society, in all respects, we must always make it a top priority in the work of the whole Party." In October 2007, the articulation of an 'Ecological Civilization' was set as a guiding principle. From 2005 to 2012, RMB 6000 billion was invested into New Socialist Countryside programmes; ninety-five percent of administrative villages have been provided with water, electricity, roads, telephone, and internet connection (Wen 2012).

In an attempt to assert their authority to govern or reverse the degradation of rural society, the central government and village committees have also endeavored to address the detrimental role money plays in destroying social relations. However, the focus of their solutions is still in terms of money: increase the investment in the rural sector or set up equitable profit-sharing initiatives. In that sense, they are not yet critical of the destructive aspects of modernization or developmentalism (Wen 2007).

“Three Dimensional Problem” of Rural China

Rural China has been constantly appropriated and systematically exploited for national modernization. It is in this context that Wen Tiejun coined the renowned notion of the “three dimensional problem of rural China:” *sannong wenti* (Wen 2001). Wen explains that the issues affecting rural China cannot simply be regarded as an agricultural issue. On the contrary, they involve the complex and dynamic interrelations among “rural people (income disparity/migrant workers), rural society (multifold socioeconomic issues and governance), and production (agricultural vertical integration/township and village enterprises development).” Given this complexity and in light of China’s history, it follows that China’s rural problem cannot be simply solved by industrializing agriculture according to the US model, a task naïvely imagined by many proponents of modernization.

Plus, despite increasing attempts to modernize and industrialize (rural) China, and to facilitate rural-to-urban migration, the fact is that about 600 million people will still be living in the rural areas (Wen 2008) even if the rate of urbanization in China has exceeded 50%. At any rate, even if one puts aside the nonsustainability of industrial agriculture—because of ecological devastation and energy consumption—the surplus labor force (maybe up to 200 million) (Wen 2008), liberated by highly mechanized agricultural production, simply cannot be absorbed by the expansion of industrial capacity. In other words, peasant agriculture remains an indispensable mode of production in China, whether the single-minded advocates of modernization like it or not.

The indispensability of land, agriculture, and rural society should and will still play a role in China. It is in this light that one can see, among other things, the significance of land ownership in rural China. As has been pointed out, it has helped insulate rural from the crises arising from urbanization and industrialization. Though neglected in light of the dominant neoliberal ideology, rural land ownership should be safeguarded, and the legacy of the 1949 land reform should be preserved. However, one doesn’t stop there.

The Rural Reconstruction Movement in China

In the 1920s, all major strands of Chinese intellectual thought were in agreement that China needed a social overhaul. The only and main point of contention was whether the model should be American capitalism or Russian socialism. Yet there was also another alternative: the rural reconstruction movement, which was represented by Liang Shuming and James Yen during the 1920s and 1930s. It was a much-neglected social initiative. Today, however, in light of the preceding discussions, this intellectual and social heritage is of particular relevance to contemporary China. The Rural Reconstruction Movement is the biggest yet peaceful social movement in China with several organizations and tens of thousands of volunteers (Wen et al. 2012).

The Rural Reconstruction movement traces its lineage to the time before the Japanese invasion of 1937. At that time, some Chinese intellectuals, such as Liang Qichao (1873–1929) and Liang Shuming (1893–1988), challenged Marx’s idea of five stages of the world history, namely: primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and socialism or communism. However, they agreed with Marx’s formulation of the Asiatic Mode of Production and its application to Chinese society. Marx saw ancient oriental civilizations like India and China as characterized by this mode of production, which referred to an integration of peasant agriculture, household industry, and village community, a social arrangement that had been resistant to historical change. Marx’s knowledge of Asia was limited, and his articulation of Asiatic mode of production was mainly based on “the unity of small-scale agriculture and home industry” and “the form of village communities built upon the common ownership of land.”

The obstacles presented by the internal solidity and organisation of pre-capitalistic, national modes of production to the corrosive influence of commerce are strikingly illustrated in the intercourse of the English with India and China. The broad basis of the mode of production here is formed by the unity of small-scale agriculture and

home industry, to which in India we should add the form of village communities built upon the common ownership of land, which, incidentally, was the original form in China as well (Marx 1991, 451).

Claude Lefort interprets that Marx's ancient mode of production is generally based on the double determination of the individual, as a property owner and as a member of the community. Each individual has the status of proprietor or possessor only as a member of the community. Communitarity of blood, language, and customs is the primordial condition of all appropriation (Lefort 1986). Marx remarks in *Grundrisse* that "land is the great workshop, the arsenal which furnishes both means and material of labor, as well as the seat, the base of the community" (Marx 1993, 472). Therefore, Marx elaborates, "in the oriental form the loss [of property] is hardly possible, except by means of altogether external influences, since the individual member of the commune never enters into the relation of freedom towards it in which he could lose his (objective, economic) bond with it. He is rooted to the spot, ingrown. This also has to do with the combination of manufacture and agriculture, of town (village) and countryside" (Marx 1993, 494).

As Lefort further elaborates, "the communes are sheltered from all the torments of the political domain, but also that a given mode of communal existence proves to be shielded from outside attacks" (Lefort 1986). This simplicity has made Asiatic societies endure social stability. Marx later remarks that

[t]he simplicity of the productive organism in these self-sufficing communities which constantly reproduce themselves in the same form and, when accidentally destroyed, spring up again on the same spot and with the same name – this simplicity supplies the key to the riddle of the unchangeability of Asiatic societies, which is in such striking contrast with the constant dissolution and refounding of Asiatic states, and their never-ceasing changes of dynasty. The structure of the fundamental economic elements of society remains untouched by the storms which blow up in the cloudy regions of politics (Marx 1990, 479).

Although the idea of a changeless Asia, one unaffected by the general progress of history, is a Eurocentric fabrication, Marx did capture some aspects of social stability in Asian states. Indeed, amidst various crises throughout its history, China had a tenacious capacity to manage them through internal cooperation and the management of common resources. Liang Qichao and Liang Shuming saw Chinese society in similar terms; it featured rural governance based on the small peasantry and village community, and promoted a combination of private and public ownership of land and labor. This sociopolitical arrangement had existed for at least two thousand years.

The notion of the peasantry and Asiatic mode of production ignited a debate about China's history and future among Chinese intellectuals. Many of them saw the "peasantry" as the stagnant and backward element which (had) hindered China's progress. Both the rightist and leftist intellectuals largely embraced the idea of 'modernization' in the name of 'sciences' and 'democracy.' China, they thought, should pursue industrialization in order to resist imperialist invasion (Liang 2006). However, a different intellectual and practical trajectory was at work, and it was critical of industrial modernization. Instead of doing away with the small peasantry, this movement saw it as the starting point of China's transformation.

The foundation and the centre of Chinese society is the village. All cultures mainly come from and are practised in rural society – for example, the legal system, secular customs and commerce, among others. Over the past hundred years, imperialist invasion certainly destroyed the village, directly and indirectly. Even the Chinese people ruined the village, like those revolutionaries who were involved in the Hundred Days Reform or the nationalists who promoted national self-salvation. Therefore, Chinese history over the past hundred years is also a history of village destruction (Liang 2006, 10–11).

Intellectuals like Liang Qichao rediscovered the importance of rural society and its culture. A renowned modern intellectual and politician, he

visited Europe during 1918 and 1919. He had been involved in pushing for western democracy and parliamentary government. But he changed his views completely after witnessing the war and the disaster in Europe. He then went back to China to study Chinese traditions. In his book, *A History of Chinese Culture* (1923), he concluded that Europe was founded on urban governance, whereas “China is based on village governance but not urban governance.” Chinese civilization had always relied on irrigation and small-scale agriculture, carried out by small peasantry and village communities.

Liang argued that small peasantry comprised the nature of China’s society for at least two thousand years. During the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), for instance, it was mandated that family property be divided up equally among one’s offspring. The result was the creation and proliferation of small-holding peasants or small landowners. Village governance on the other hand is composed of two main factors: small peasantry and village community (Liang 2003, 52). Moreover, a village community usually contains three crossed layers of relations: kinship (blood), neighborhood (locality), and agricultural fellows (farmers).

Small peasant households, however, cannot individually solve problems such as flood, drought, and other external crises. Their very survival demanded that a cluster of villages, especially those along the rivers (Yellow or Yangtze), work together to manage public affairs and deal with external threats. There had to be cooperative collective labor and the protection of common property (Wen 2001).

This, then, was the basis of village community-building and of local governance, in which lay the roots of the modern nation/state formation. The set-up not only helped solve or at least manage natural disasters but also turned the crisis into a reinforcement of crisis-management capacities. This requires, as we have seen, mass mobilization among peasant families and village communities. Thus, the practice of sharing common property and solving common problems is inclusive and cooperative (Wen 2001).

During the 1920s, the rural reconstruction movement attempted to re-activate these historical legacies of Chinese rural society, with its small-scale agriculture, and traditions of cooperative and village governance. Liang Shuming (1893–1988) was one of the movement’s leaders. He was not only a Confucian and Buddhist intellectual but also a political and social activist. He was involved in the reconciliation between the Kuomintang and Chinese Communist Party during the Sino-Japanese War (1939–1945). In 1977, he reflected on his engagement in rural reconstruction during Republican China. “At the very beginning, I was no more than childishly believing that we must learn from the West. Shortly afterwards, I was awoken to understanding that it was impossible for China to become a westernized capitalist society. So I have the idea of ‘village as the national base’” (Liang 1977, 424).

In 1937, Japan, an emerging capitalist country, invaded China. Liang Shuming was forced to stop his experiments in rural construction. In the same year, his book, *Theory of Rural Reconstruction* (*The Future of Chinese Nation* as another title) was published. In the book, he theorized his working experiences in *The Institute of Village Governance* in Henan province in central China (1929–1930) and *The Research Institute of Rural Construction* in Zhouping Township, Shandong Province, north China (1931–1937). Counteracting Western and Japanese imperialism and going against the dominant understanding, Liang did not urge complete Westernization and industrialization, as Japan did. Liang not only condemned foreign imperialists but also reprimanded Chinese nationalists and radical revolutionaries, who, he thought, fundamentally destroyed rural society. Although Liang was born into an urban intellectual’s family, he considered the countryside as the base of Chinese rule and democracy.

In the face of village destruction, Liang devoted himself to the rural reconstruction movement. Liang’s experiments included the “village school as the basic administrative unit,” organization of peasants’ association, setting up of cooperatives, small-scale village industries, and the improvement of agricultural technologies, among others. Liang designed the village school as a learning unit that was composed of local elites,

villagers, and outsiders, which included intellectuals and professionals. They aimed to activate the communal capacity of problem-solving at the grassroots level. Therefore, Liang's theorization of and praxis for the future of China are rooted in the village community. He treats 'the rural' as an alternative to modern capitalist society (Liang 2006).

Liang thought that village regeneration could help revive Chinese culture. Rather than being a conservative and chauvinist Confucian, Liang reinforced the importance of nurturing a "new ethics" from the tradition and of distancing oneself from aggressive bourgeois culture and belief. He criticized that the powerful development of Western culture was based on a drive "to conquer Nature and to take advantage of Nature" and that capitalism is "individualistic and self-centered" (Liang 2006, 29).

Liang used a metaphor of "new buds on the old tree" to describe the rural reconstruction movement. In 1977, he wrote a paper to reflect on his experiences, in which he concluded that it was also a question of ethics. "To be positive towards life and to remember the importance of ethics and friendship" was an answer to the capitalist value system. Furthermore, discussing the revival of "Chinese culture," he poses a question, "If you ask me, 'what is actually the revival of Chinese culture in the world in the near future?', I will simply answer that when it proceeds from socialism to communism, religion declines and it is replaced with a self-awakening and self-disciplined morality; national law disappears and it is replaced with social customs" (Liang 1977, 428).

Another famous leader of the rural reconstruction movement is James Yen (1890–1990). Yen dedicated his life to the education of the *ping-min* (the common people). He served with Chinese coolies working with the Allies in France during World War I. In particular, he helped the illiterate coolies write letters to their families in mainland China. This experience of working for the poor enabled him to promote and engage in a literacy campaign. Returning to China, Yen organized for mass education and became involved in the rural reconstruction movement in 1923. The PING (literally means common, ordinary, and equal) was the logo of the

movement for mass education and rural reconstruction, which was founded in China in 1923. It is also the logo of the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, which was established in 1960 (Wu 2011).

Yen saw that the majority of the poor, who came from rural areas, were plagued by poverty, physical weakness, ignorance, and selfishness. It was necessary to provide a new, better quality of life, and Yen saw its basis in rural reconstruction. His experimental area was Ding County in Hebei Province, some 200 miles south of Beijing. Working together with the village committee and local government, Yen coordinated innovations ranging from hybrid pigs and economic cooperatives to village drama and village health centers. But his work was also disrupted by Japanese invasion of 1937. He later founded the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) in the Philippines in 1960 (Wu 2001).

The early development of the rural reconstruction movement was superseded by the modernization that China promptly undertook. The following section discusses how the movement has fared today in light of these changes.

The Rural Reconstruction Movement Today

Following Liang's and James Yen's spirit of rural reconstruction, a new rural reconstruction movement emerged at the turn of the 21st century. Its emergence comes amidst rural degradation, which has been brought about by China's export-led manufacturing industries, the demand for cheap labor, and the impact on the Chinese economy of the global financial crisis, among others.

There has been a heated debate about the *sannong wenti* (three dimensional aspects of the agrarian issue) in the academe and media. Intellectuals, NGO workers, and local villagers worked together and explored projects to help regenerate rural society. Some see their efforts as part of poverty alleviation while others perceive their commitment as a way to provide, in the spirit of Liang and Yen, an alternative to Western,

and urban-based model of development and modernization (Wen et. al. 2012).

One of these initiatives was the James Yen Rural Reconstruction Institute (2004–2007), which gave peasants free training courses and mobilized university students to work for the countryside. Similarly, Green Ground Eco-Center was founded in 2006, which promotes ecological farming and rural-urban cooperation. Little Donkey Farm was established in 2008. Comprising 230 *mu* (Chinese unit of measurement for area) and situated in a Beijing suburb, it is a partnership project between Haidian District Government and Renmin University of China. It promotes community-supported agriculture and facilitates rural-urban interaction. Liang Shuming Rural Reconstruction Centre was set up in 2004, providing university students with training programs wherein they would work in the countryside (Wen et. al. 2012).

The above experiments operate on the following premise: the advent of capitalist modernization and developmentalism, with its emphasis on growth and wealth generation, has gradually eroded rural society and communal relations. The predominant solution usually adopted by the government or village committee revolves around the increase of monetary investments. Cash investments and profit-sharing schemes have been typical. There is a popular phrase saying that “RMB (PRC’s currency) is the solution of settling contradictions among people.” But human relations to the land and to the community, which are largely damaged by modernization, are yet to be addressed (Wen 2007).

Rural reconstruction projects concern themselves with rebuilding one’s links to nature and to others. Peasant agriculture is an important way of repairing human relations to Mother Earth. Currently, the world’s food system is mainly controlled by capitalist transnational agrocompanies, which reap huge profits through mechanized and chemical monoagriculture. To help reverse this trend, rural reconstruction promotes and protects small peasantry and peasant agriculture, which practice organic farming and local knowledge. Organic food products can be one of the

foundations of rural-urban solidarity. At the same time, communal capacity is practiced through the common use of common resources and participatory problem-solving mechanism (Wen et. al. 2012).

Rural Reconstruction: Overview of Case Studies

Huojiagou Village Enterprise of Shanxi Province exemplifies the values of equality and solidarity amidst the forces of individualism and monetization. The village community covers 5 km², with 191 households and a population of 776. It had a small coal mine, which had become the primordial resource for Huojiagou's industrialization. Later, the community built a refinery and a power plant (Wen et. al. 2011).

The people implemented a policy to help ensure the fair distribution of wealth. For example, in December 2004, the assets of the enterprise amounted to about 500 million RMB while the net asset was 300 million RMB, 33% of which was reserved for the village community. The remaining 67% became shares distributed to the villagers in three parts: individual share, seniority share, and post and duty share. They still insist on collective ownership despite intensive capitalization (Wen et. al. 2011).

Another example of rural reconstruction is Yongji Peasants' Association of Shanxi Province. It was formerly the Center for Women's Cultural Activities and Women's Association, which was established in 2003. Today, it has 3,865 members from 35 villages in 2 counties. It manages six technological service centers, a handicrafts cooperative, steamed buns workshops, and an ecological agriculture zone. Socialized voluntary labor, redistribution of resources, and concern for the young generation are central to these initiatives (Sit 2011).

Participating in collective activities rooted in daily practices creates a feeling of life-transforming solidarity. Indeed, doing so embodies Marx's conception of revolutionary practice as a conjuncture of social and self-change (Marx 1845). By devoting labor to social redistribution rather than to capitalist accumulation, peasants take pleasure in helping others as they

gain others' respect for their contributions. Working for others through socialized labor may mistakenly be regarded as a residual, rural practice, but it is also a radical one in the face of the globalization, individualism, and entrepreneurship. Building a culture of collectivity through voluntary labor and profit redistribution is a profound mode of being that counteracts the violence of capitalist economic endeavors. This is what rural reconstruction is all about: overcoming capitalism by rediscovering valuable practices such as cooperative labor (creativity), collective ownership (sustainable management of the commons), and communal credit creation, etc. (Liang 2006).

Claude Lefort once asked an astounding yet most meaningful question on Marx's thought, "Should we say that [the proletariat] is the destroyer of the social imaginary or the last product of Marx's imagination?" (Lefort 1986, 180). Maybe the peasantry with its historical agency, not unlike the proletariat, too, is a social imaginary. But it is a timely and efficacious one.

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A Preliminary Study of Ceiling Murals from Five Southeastern Cebu Churches

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Abstract

This is a preliminary study on the iconography, spatial distribution, and stylistic pattern of church ceiling painting based on case studies of five colonial-era Southeastern Cebu churches, done during the early decades of the 20th century. Each display comprehensive ceiling decoration programs executed by various Cebu-based painters, three of whom have dominated the available literature: Canuto Avila (Carcar and Dalaguete), Raymundo Francia (Sibonga and Argao), and Miguel Villareal (Boljoon). Utilizing concepts in iconography and visual culture, these ceiling paintings are analyzed and evaluated based on an understanding of Catholic catechism and the role that the church's interiors played in the teachings of Church doctrine. There is also a need to explicate a preliminary realization of the conditions and contexts of artistic production and reception of these paintings, a process that was determined by each parish's capacity to imagine, fund, and execute these elaborate visual decoration schemes. The paintings are integrated into a complex system of parochial art patronage, in which empowered parishioners, ambitious parish priests, and a visually literate public interact and intersect their common ideological and political aesthetic interests to fulfill a commonly felt, but differently interpreted project: to ennoble the town's chief religious space with their expression of faith and secular power, as well as their indexical assertion of social and economic ascendancy during the American Colonial Period.

Key words: southeastern Cebu, church ceiling murals, political economy, modernity, patron-client relations

Preliminaries to the Field: A Short Review of Relevant Literature

DOCUMENTING THE PATTERNS of political and economic exchange of rural lowland towns has been an established field in Philippine Studies, particularly through the lens of religion and its articulation through cultural production and art patronage. Foremost among these is Reynaldo Ileto's *Pasyon and Revolution* (1979), which captures the idea of a "history from below" by a re-reading of millenarian and popular political movements in southern and central Luzon from the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries as (to paraphrase Benedict Anderson) "imagined communities;" Ileto's work also shows that this "history from below" is foregrounded through the hermeneutic of the hybridized folk Catholic text of the *pasyon*. This cultural history is rooted in the ability to intuit the "folk Catholic imagination" that Timoteo Gener has teased out from his critique of David Tracey's analysis of "popular religiosity and inculturation in lowland Philippines" (Gener 2005, 25). Smita Lahiri, in her analysis of the interaction between empowered actors of spiritist communities in southern Luzon like the Ciudad Mystica de Dios, and the national political elites based in Manila, also foregrounds this discourse as integral to the fabric of Philippine Studies. More potently, Lahiri redirects the critical gaze back towards the propagators of this discourse of re-identifying with the native as an essentialized icon of national cultural politics. She unveils the authors of such nativist nationalist projects like Pilipinohiya led by Zeus Salazar, Virgilio Almario, and Prospero Covar who were chiefly responsible for its dominance in contemporary studies of Filipino folk culture (Lahiri in Willford and George 2005, 34–35).

This focus and critical attention has led some scholars like Fenella Cannel to question the validity of Filipino Christian lowland culture as a legitimate object of scholarly attention (Cannel 1998, 241–245). This recent disavowal is rooted in the gender-biased perspective that is seen to inflict both nativist nationalist scholarship and Western faith-based analysis with an orthodox patriarchy that ignores questions of subjectivity,

femininity, and other hitherto marginalized social categories like queer identity in mapping the topography—as well as invoking the possibilities—of the Filipino folk mind and body.

This paper wishes to contribute to a more “constructionist” framework in analyzing and interrelating Filipino folk culture, as well as the political economy of both colonialism and modernity under whose collective rubric the study of the “folk” has been bracketed. Such an approach necessitates opening up the textual nature of culture based on Eric Hobsbawm’s idea of “invented traditions,” wherein such is “taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overt or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual of symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (Hobsbawm 1983, 1). These invented traditions construe the “necessity” of culture as an intersection of political, social, and economic interests that are configured by distinct social classes and hierarchies of a community, particularly a nation state. Such configurations are therefore subject to analysis based on the manner by which certain traditions are emphasized over others, and the need to anchor this tradition upon a preordained and preferably primordial past so as to erase questions of authenticity and legitimacy.

It is in this approach to studying culture that the paper also unveils the need for understanding the effects of artistic production not merely as a corollary or “mirror” that reflects larger economic and political forces, but also as a generative determinant of such forces in the first place. This is explored through the idea of political aesthetics which was teased by, among others, Emilie Gomart and Walter Benjamin, who spoke of the “aestheticization of politics” in which art simply does not follow political processes, but themselves manipulate the spaces of political possibility through its deployment within the sphere of contesting publics. This implies that the political forces that configure the Filipino folk worldview and its “performativity” (to paraphrase Judith Butler) can be measured through the kinds of imagery, rituals, and spaces that seek to invoke certain

ideologies, or for that matter, configure others to contest dominating ideologies. This now requires us to reconsider the modality of folk Filipino Catholicism not merely through the parameters of Church-sanctioned and imperialist-administered dogma, and its antithesis through folk-derived spiritism and anticolonial resistance. Rather, we should look at folk Filipino Catholicism as a hybridized space within which both hegemonic colonialism and native resistance cohabit and fuse into a dialectic of redemption through an assertion of local difference, one that is often construed by more secular analysts as “nationalist.”

Focusing on the nature of this cultural local-ness by situating the study at the “margins” of the national center, in this case, five towns on the southeastern coast of Cebu island, the paper also reiterates connections to the study of modernity. This is done through the mechanisms of social and economic progress, anchored via distinct modalities of political organization (such as *rentier* politics, agro-industrial mercantilism, and *mestizo* landlord capitalism) and rooted in colonialism and incipient nationalism, that manifests as tangible and exchangeable values within the social topography of the rural seaside community. This is especially true when the intersection of such values is conflated with faith and social distinction, and realized through the distinct and unavoidably colonial structure of the Filipino church-plaza complex. Mary Cita Hufana, in her study of the church plaza complex at San Fernando, La Union, called for a new approach in relating the colonial economy with the social structure of the *pueblo* to arrive at concrete determinations that lead to the production of certain forms of church art, from the stone fabric to the internal décor. This paper takes off from this premise by combining political economy and political aesthetics, both of which are necessary interstices in relocating the effect of local culture and the economy of the colonial *pueblo* in the hegemonic “possibility space,” what Foucault would call “heterotopia,” of the rural colonial-era church art.

Introduction: Five Towns, Five Churches

A tradition of elaborately programmed church art often characterizes the Catholic parishes of the Central Visayas during the late 18th to the early 20th century. Corresponding to the late Spanish colonial era to the end of American colonial up to Japanese Occupation, this period also coincided with the emergence of Central Visayas, particularly Cebu and Bohol, from decades of economic stagnation, which was partly caused by pirate attacks of raiding Sulu or Iranun fleets, particularly between 1720 and 1786. The subsequent strengthening of Spanish coastal defenses, particularly under Fray Julian Bermejo, OSA, between 1802 and 1837, as well as the opening of the Port of Cebu to international trade starting in 1860, helped end this stagnation. The opening of trade allowed agricultural surpluses throughout the area¹ to be concentrated in trading entrepôts, resulting in a dramatic expansion of economic wealth by landowners, planters, traders, and shippers based not only in the city of Cebu, but also in outlying towns that controlled trade routes and served as trading hubs themselves to other towns and islands.

It is in this context that we view the significance of the five towns whose church ceilings are part of this survey. All five are located on the long, southeastern flank of Cebu island, and are currently connected together by the South Cebu National Highway that runs from Cebu City and circumnavigates the rest of the island through its narrow coastal plain. Carcar City (N 10° 06' E 123° 38'), the largest of these towns in terms of population (Philippine Census, 2010, 107, 323), is also the oldest of the five towns in the survey and the closest to Cebu City, at about 35.94 kilometers southwest of the city's historical heart in Santo Niño and Ermita. Founded as a *reducción* originally called Sialo in 1582, and subsequently centered on the modern-day *barangay* of Valladolid (Mojares 1985, 6–20), Carcar became the major settlement south of Cebu City in the 17th and early 18th centuries that claimed all subsequent towns further south as its *visitas*, most of whom would be constituted as separate *pueblos* from the 1760s to the 1840s. Sibonga (N 10° 02' E 123°34') lies 10.20 kilometers

southwest of Carcar City, and is a smaller, first-class municipality of 43,641 people (2010 Census). Argao (N 9° 53' E 123° 36'), another first-class municipality with a population of 69,503 (2010 Census) lies 15.5 kilometers further southwest from Sibonga. Dalaguete (N 9° 46' E 123° 32') is another first-class municipality 14.9 kilometers southwest of Argao, and has a population of 63,239 (2010 Census). Finally, Boljoon (N 9° 38' E 123° 29') is a fifth-class municipality that lies 16.06 kilometers southwest of Dalaguete, and has the smallest population at 15,027 (2010 Census). All five towns face the Bohol Strait to the east, and the Trans-Cebu Mountains to the west.

Before the National Highway was completed sometime in the 1930s, these towns were interconnected through seaports that served as trading and freight hubs not only between themselves and Cebu City but also with Bohol, Negros Oriental, Siquijor, and as far away as Iloilo, Capiz, Western and Southern Leyte, Surigao del Norte, Bukidnon, Misamis Occidental and Oriental, and Zamboanga del Norte. It was the brisk movement of trade goods and agricultural produce through these ports, and the economic wealth they generated, that formed the basis for expending large amounts of capital for secular and religious architecture, applied arts, and paintings, as well as the more ephemeral performing arts traditions, such as passion plays and secular theatre. In particular, Mojares (1985) and Ramas (2002) have both discussed the oral and theatrical traditions found in Carcar and Cebu City, such as the *linambay*, *balitaw*, *pamalaye*, *duplo*, and *kolisisi*, most of which were actively undertaken during the late 19th to the early mid-20th centuries—a period roughly contiguous to the decoration of church ceilings of the churches concerned.

It was the comparatively recent introduction of international cash crop trading in the latter half of the 19th century, resulting in a rapid monetization of the agricultural economies of these towns, that formed the economic logic for the development of art patronage along the southeastern coast. Coupled with movements of newly enriched Spanish and *mestizo* Chinese-Filipino merchant families from the old districts of Cebu City to the more airy expanses of these seaside towns (wherein they

built their second homes in their *pueblos*), the growth of the rural-based upper class through land ownership, harvesting, and trading assured a consistent base for religious and secular taxation. The new residents were also a source of surpluses that helped maintain native sea patrols securing the coastline, and rebuild or refurbish church complexes that were originally founded in the 17th and 18th centuries, but which were allowed to deteriorate because of pirate attacks. More importantly, the period between the 1850s and the 1920s also saw the active construction and embellishment of church structures and interiors using a variety of hybridized styles that became popular in the period, such as Revival Gothic, Revival Baroque, Neo-Rococo, Neo-Mudejar, Second Empire Eclecticism, and Neoclassicism.

These can be seen in the external fabric of the churches themselves. Saint Catherine of Alexandria at Carcar follows the basilica plan with two engaged belfries in its façade, utilizes elements of Neo-Mudejar mixed with Austrian Baroque and Neoclassicism dating from between 1858 and 1871. Situated on top of a hill that also contains the convent, city hall, and a public elementary school, the church offers a commanding view of the coastline of Carcar facing the Bohol Strait—most likely the result of pirate attacks in the 18th century that forced colonial planners to situate the *pueblo* and its church-plaza complex on higher, defensible ground, since the belfry also served as the watch and alarm tower.

Nuestra Señora del Pilar at Sibonga, also constructed using the basilica plan with two engaged belfries at the façade, mainly integrates Revival Gothic elements into the fabric of a Neo-Renaissance footprint in the manner of the Escorial School of Juan de Herrera. Built in stages from 1839 to 1907, Nuestra Señora del Pilar, like many churches in Cebu, was constructed on level ground facing the beach—an indication of the more recent vintage of this church, since no fortifications or defensive works are seen surrounding its plaza. The façade currently faces the National Highway—a consequence of American demands for efficient road transport routes that bisected many colonial-era plazas, and allowed automobiles and buses direct access to the front of the church.

San Miguel de Arcangel at Argao, on the other hand, dates from 1768, and its structure is based on the Escorial School style. It also has a Latin cross plan, a detached belfry connected to the façade by a ground floor room, and an attached convent building facing a vast walled plaza. The entire style is marked as an affiliation with the Basilica of Santo Niño de Cebu, both of which originated from the period when these churches were built and run by the Jesuits before their expulsion from the Philippines. The church is located facing the beach near a large sandbar (currently the location of several beach resorts) and a pier at the old eastern “core” of the town, far enough from the National Highway that marks the town’s western section, with its market district.

San Guillermo de Aquitania, built in stages from 1802 to 1860, also closely follows the plan of Saint Miguel at Argao, with the church complex facing a large walled plaza next to the beach and with the national highway located a few blocks to the west. The difference between San Guillermo de Aquitania and San Miguel Arcangel is that the former was built by the Augustinians, who replaced the Jesuits as the provincialate holders of these southeastern Cebu parishes in the 19th century. The defensive fortifications that deterred Moro attacks in Dalaguete could still be seen in the watchtower between the plaza and the beach, which contains a bronze cannon.

Lastly, Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio at Boljoon was rebuilt after a devastating Moro raid in 1782, most of whose stonework was completed by 1829, but whose interiors would not be considered finished until 1948. Boljoon also followed, in its own way, the format of Argao and Santo Niño de Cebu, with the exception of a more archaic belfry, and the existence of walled defenses and blockhouses that were built by the energetic Fray Julian de Bermejo (1777–1851) to counter pirate attacks. The church-plaza complex forms the expansive core of a compactly planned and easily defensible town protected on the north by a large seaward cliff, and winding hills to the south that formed a deepwater bay facing the church to the east, now grown over by centuries of coral reef formations. Like all the parish churches of southeastern Cebu, Boljoon

was protected on its west flank by the Trans-Cebu Mountains that form a towering spine around the center of the island, eventually descending into a sheer cliff at the southern point of the island in the town of Santander.

The Painted Ceilings

...A group of primitives who had almost no formal training in painting techniques at all...these people earned their bread and butter with brush and paint, and on their own, learned the techniques of the Renaissance and Classical period masters.

- Romola Savellon and Ma. Lilibeth Abaquita

Executed in a period between 1920 and 1957, the painted ceilings of the churches of Carcar, Sibonga, Argao, Dalaguete, and Boljoon testify to the imaginative adaptation of Cebuano painters to the dictates of Catholic iconography, the sometimes-erratic religious art patronage, and the rapid changes in stylistic preference that occurred throughout the early to mid-20th century era. These five church ceilings attest to only a fragment of the total output of three distinct groups of artists who operated out of Cebu. A far larger output can still be seen in at least nineteen churches in neighboring Bohol. Meanwhile, several colonial-era churches in metropolitan Cebu City, including Santo Niño, the Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral, and the churches of Mandaue, Oton, and Lapu-Lapu, have lost their painted ceilings because of changes in taste following the Vatican II reforms in the early 1960s. While very little is known about these artists, their names have nonetheless been preserved in the form of autographs in some church ceilings. A preliminary survey of their works through fieldwork done by Savellon and Abaquita (2004) has also managed to glean some insights into the circumstances behind their production.

These groups congregate around the names of three recognized “masters” who designed and executed these ceiling paintings: Canuto Avila, Raymundo Rubi Francia, and Mariano Villareal. Of the three, Francia

seemed to have been the most senior, and the most accomplished in terms of designing a visual program for church ceilings. Francia led a group that also included his children, like Edilberto Francia; on other occasions (such as his Bohol church commissions), the elder Francia often collaborated with Avila. It was Francia who executed the complete ceiling program at Sibonga, and part of Argao. Canuto Avila, on the other hand, is regarded as the founder of a line of painters that includes his children, Ricardo and Maria Salome (who were also his collaborators), most of whom accompanied him when he executed his ceiling commissions. Avila is credited with the ceiling program at Dalaguete, and supposedly at Carcar. The third is Mariano Villareal, who is a native of Boljoon, and who seemed to have either led a group in completing the Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio church ceiling—or executed the entire commission himself. However, there also seem to be instances in which other painters repainted certain church ceilings after the initial commissions, which were done between 1920 and 1935. In the case of Carcar, a recent assertion has been made that most of the ceiling originally done by Avila was painted over by a local painter named Vicente Poncardas (Galicano 2012) between 1957 and 1961. On the other hand, Savellon and Abaquita (2004) also documented that an unnamed Bohol-based artist, who took over from Francia midway through his commission, completed the major part of the ceiling at Argao.

These changes and the transformations of church ceiling painting practice beg the question: what were the dynamics in visualizing and producing ceiling paintings for these churches? At another level, the nature of art patronage in these towns may also help explain some of the instances in which a comprehensive program (such as that found in Sibonga) would be forsaken in exchange for a hybridized mix-up of motifs (like that of Argao). More ominously, it may also indicate the motivations by which ceiling painting was discontinued, covered over with newer designs (in the case of Carcar), or whitewashed altogether. The attempt to answer these questions would necessarily invoke an analysis of artistic relations of production between painters and clients; the notion of an “appropriate style” as a precondition for an acceptable

schema in church decoration; and the ideological or aesthetic parameters in establishing the iconography of ceiling design that reflects collective desires and interests, such as catechetical instruction, communal desires for symbolic capitalization, and affective inclusivity to a visualizing rhetoric of faith and/or nationhood.

Sibonga: Triumph of a Canonical Program

Of the five churches in the study, Nuestra Señora del Pilar at Sibonga contains the most complete version of a canonical mural program. Finished by Raymundo Francia and his assistants in 1924 (National Historical Commission 2010), the murals extend throughout the entire nave ceiling, which is of a barrel vault; the flat-mounted aisle ceilings; and the ceiling holding up the choir loft near the main entrance. All these ceilings are made from wood timbering, most likely dating from the completion of the church in 1907.² The paintings themselves are endangered by numerous small cavities in the nave where water seepage from the roof has penetrated to the paint layer. The joints of the timbers also show numerous water intrusions that are slowly dissolving the murals. Despite extensive water damage, the general presence of surface mold, and the smell of wood rot and bat droppings, the murals are in a remarkable state of visual preservation, showing the entire compositional program that was designed by Francia. This revolved around the theme of the Seven Sacraments, which occupies the main panels that straddle the length of the nave [See Illustration 1 on the next page].³

Each of these main panels is then paired by smaller panels featuring various saints and episodes of the life of Christ.⁴ All together, the twenty-one illustrated panels in the nave ceiling are framed by a complex *tromp l'oeil* coffered framing that is centered upon elaborate rose garlands and rose-decorated bosses with leaf motifs that border the apex of the frames.

The barrel vault section over the choir loft contains the scene of the triple crucifixion (Christ and the two thieves) at Golgotha. On the other, the hemispherical section that terminates at the apse above the main altar contains



ILLUSTRATION 1: View of the barrel vault over the nave of Nuestra Señora del Pilar, painted in sections featuring the Seven Sacraments by Raymundo Francia and his assistants, c. 1924. PHOTO BY: Joselito A. de Guzman (taken May 2011).

a remarkable visual representation of the Creation found in Genesis. Here, Francia maximized the curving shape of the apse barrel vault to narrate the Seven Days of Creation in a frame-by-frame separation that starts with the outermost hemispheric frame with Day One (the Separation of Light from Darkness) to the innermost hemisphere that terminates the apse with Day Seven (the Rest of the Lord). Done in a by-now recognizable format of the *komiks* narrative,⁵ Francia's Genesis scenery masterfully adopts modern visual devices of mass communication in reiterating the canonic purpose of church ceiling paintings as instructional devices.

By contrast, the section holding up the choir loft near the main entrance contains three panels that deal with the challenges of accepting Christianity. The central panel contains a dramatic retelling of the persecution of early Christians in Rome at the arena of the Coliseum, with a descriptive caption painted on the bottom frame in both English and Cebuano: "First Christians Defending Their Faith" (*Unang Cristianos nga Naglaban sa ilang Tinoho-an*). This is complemented by a side panel featuring Christ driving away the moneylenders, and which is also equipped with a descriptive caption, again in both English and Cebuano: "Christ Purging the Temple" (*Ang Ginoo Nagsilot sa Nanag-panahastamas sa Simbahan, Pagbaton Kamo ug Kahadlok sa Balay sa Dios*). As the captions of this panel indicate, the rather abbreviated titles in English are substantially translated and interpellated in Cebuano, leading to a clearer understanding of the scene as an instructional moment in the struggle between commerce and piety in the eyes of local viewers. The final panel is an allegorical double portrait of Saints Peter and Paul set in an imaginary (perhaps Roman) landscape, with their respective iconic instruments (the Bible and Sword for St. Paul, and the Keys and Rooster nestled in an upper window for St. Peter). This panel, which contains the dark band on the bottom of the frame where the captions would be hand-lettered, does not have any captions, leading us to suspect that this particular painting is unfinished.

The paintings at the Nuestra Señora del Pilar church at Sibonga attest to the high degree of planning and systematized use of visual catechism

that was required of Catholic churches at the dawn of mass communication. This visual catechism was an iconographic system that was gradually being supplanted by secular entertainment like cinema at the time that the paintings was being done. Moreover, the use of *komiks*-styled illustration techniques hints at the stylistic hybridity being implemented by the painters. They attempted to recreate a traditional church painting program without the benefit of formal academic training, while living at a time when published illustrations were at its infancy, albeit the most accessible means of visual expression and visual education. The degree of decorative programming of the entire church ceiling hints at the creative power of the artistic group headed by Raymundo Francia. The group planned a comprehensive scheme that followed the metropolitan practice of painted ceiling decorations introduced by Spanish friars, and which adopted a style brought by foreign artists like the Italian Cesare Alberoni and Giovanni Dibella. Alberoni and Dibella popularized the use of *tromp l'oeil* ceiling paintings in Manila at the last quarter of the 19th century.⁶ At the same time, however, the level of figurative finish of the paintings seems to be of a comparatively coarser and native bent, indicating a vicarious transfer of painterly training from the academy in Manila to the rural setting of southeastern Cebu, and lending support to the assertion by Savellon and Abaquita that these painters “had almost no formal training in painting techniques at all” (2004, 1).

However, we may also look at this figurative schema from the viewpoint of the native painter and viewer who, uneducated perhaps in the Western classical academe, consistently and successfully utilized this form of figural representation as a consequence of colonial tutelage; at the same time, one can gauge the degree of schematic acceptance that the viewers and patrons of these paintings had. Such schemas of religious art that were formerly labeled as “crude” or “charming” because of its “folk” (thus unlettered but innately learned) element can also be seen in Angono, Rizal, where extant icon paintings of Francia’s historical contemporary Juan Senson display similar characteristics (Saguinsin 2006). We should thus look into the phenomena of this “folk native” style of painting

decoration in churches not only as an extension of colonial church art patronage that sanctioned “illiterate” artists, but also as efforts of pious Filipinos who continued to be devoted to Roman Catholicism despite the church’s losses during the period of Americanization and secularization of social life. We should also look into the contention that these forms of “naïve” church art also demonstrated a collective awareness of native talent and creativity in translating metropolitan aesthetic standards to suit local sensibilities, modes of visual representation, and cultural habitus in far-flung but newly empowered trading and planting towns throughout the Visayas.

In the case of Sibonga, the patronage of talent resulted in a uniquely integrated visual design that completely immerses the upward-looking parishioner within the epistemic coordinates of canonic dogma and the mysteries of the Catholic faith. Rendered in a style that was both traditionally familiar and yet up-to-date, the program at Sibonga could be argued as the “default setting” of any Visayan church community during the 1920s before further inroads of modernization and shifts of taste would render this canonic convention irrelevant by the 1930s.

Argao: Transition from Canon to Decoration

In the case of San Miguel Arcangel at nearby Argao, however, the completion of the canonic program that Francia started would be abruptly terminated. It would be replaced by a more decorative approach to ceiling design that seems to indicate not only a fundamental change of artistic patronage but also a shift in attitude towards church ceiling painting as an effective means of visual education. In some ways, the decorative program at Argao extends some of the tendencies in Sibonga, where the ceiling’s decorative program followed a specific set of imagery via a series of bands containing central panels and secondary panels that progress from the choir loft to the apse of San Miguel Arcangel’s barrel-shaped vault. In this case, the decoration program honors the titular patron of Argao, Saint Michael the Archangel, and thus follows the theme of the history of angels as encountered in biblical scripture.

However, the contrast between the sections that cover the apse and the transept, and those that obscure the nave to the choir loft reveals striking differences not only in motific emplacement but also in the treatment of subject matter, decorative stylization, and depiction. The former [See Illustration 2 on the next page] is an ambitious and masterful deployment of iconography and catechism, weaving episodes from the Old Testament with the contemporary duties of Christians. It is divided into a quadripartite design framed by an elaborate trefoil arch centered on the apex of the transept (where the large brass censer is hung), and forms a pattern of four “broadswords” radiating away—an appropriately military motif teased out for the church’s patron. This division into four panels starts with the semihemispherical apse section that features a contrast between a fanciful building built on two levels that contains scenes from the Seven Sacraments; and an upper section with a mystical waterfall that culminates in a mystical depiction of the Trinity with the Virgin. The sections facing the transept wings each feature a separate episode from Genesis that shows the dueling aspects between the fallen angel (Satan) and Saint Michael, the Temptation of Eve, and the Expulsion from Paradise. Interestingly, the artists manipulated the circular space in these trefoil arches to insert the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil within these segments, continuing an organic motif that starts from these Trees and goes on throughout the rest of the frame, which is decorated in Francia’s familiar style of rose garlands. The last section facing the nave is perhaps the most dramatic and ambitious section of the entire ceiling program; it depicts the Battle of the Angels, fought between St. Michael on one side and Lucifer on the other. This apocalyptic episode, found in the Book of Revelations,⁷ and most notably exploited by John Milton in *Paradise Lost*, appears to have been truncated. The section depicting the red-skinned demons battling the angels abruptly ends, and commences with a different design program focusing on other Biblical or canonic instances of the appearances of angels.

The latter section, covering the rest of the nave ceiling, attempts to mimic the decorative program at Sibonga, anchored on a series of bands (eight, in this instance) that follows the tie beam holding the timbering of



ILLUSTRATION 2: Second and third panels of the quadripartite section at San Miguel Arcangel depicting the Temptation of Eve (left side) with the Expulsion from Paradise (right side). Note the ogive arches that terminate each panel, forming radiating sword patterns for the frames. PHOTO BY: Joselito A. de Guzman (taken May 2011).

the barrel vault together as its “borders.” Within each section is a central panel at the apex of the nave, followed by two side panels on the slopes facing the north and south walls.⁸ This section, however, is even more crudely painted compared with the lavish and carefully calibrated design of the transept and apse, leading us to affirm Savellon and Abaquita’s (2004, 11) assertion that “...such defects are definitely not characteristic of Francia’s work.” Rather, a local informant provides a partial explanation.

...Lola Laling (Geverola) maintains that it was Francia who was originally commissioned by the parish priest to paint the ceiling, but that, even before he was halfway through, a female friend of the padre persuaded the latter to let her cousin from Bohol take over. So Francia was able to paint only the apse and the transept; the remaining 2/3 was done by the cousin and his friends (15).

The name of this Bohol-based painter, unfortunately, has not been recorded, but the commissions for the ceiling paintings were handled by the parish priest, Fr. Julio Fernandez, who, Savellon and Abaquita maintains, was “the same priest who had the Sibonga Church ceiling painted. The task was started in 1928 (four years after that of the Sibonga Church) and completed in 1930. There were six painters who worked on the ceiling” (14). As an aside, Savellon and Abaquita also mentioned that the previous information was based “on the official version” (15), presumably that of existing parish records and other documentary accounts that were not cited.

The heterogeneous mixture found in the ceiling at San Miguel Arcangel begs the question: is the canonic program a sufficient rationale in determining what kind of painting results from the church commission? A comparative stylistic analysis seems to rule out consistency as a factor in determining this program. The formerly lavish, if not thematically militant treatment of the attributes of angels by Francia in the apse and transept is not sustained by the unidentified Bohol painter in the nave. Instead of continuing the established motif of a struggle between light and dark (or using the Catholic dogmatic convention, the narrative of the eventual triumph of good versus evil), the unidentified Bohol painter reproduces a rather bland set of scenes and allegorical devices that results in a more *decorative* effect, rather than sustaining a catechetical pedagogy started by Francia. Indeed, when one looks at the allegorical devices, as well as the sequence of the central panels, one is taken aback by the lack of dialectical consistency and a sense of chronological mismatch, with Old Testament scenes involving angels interspersed with new Testaments scenes in a seemingly random order. If canonic prescriptions, which require a clear dialectic progression from one earlier narrative to the next within a seamless discursive flow of meaning and truth assertion, are not the operating parameters, then what is the “design logic” of the ceiling at San Miguel Arcangel?

It is at this point that visual aesthetics within the cultural, political, economic, and ideological context of small town communities in southeastern Cebu has to be foregrounded. Since the production of these

ceiling paintings can be traced to a specific time frame in the early mid-20th century, we can postulate some conditions in which the patronage and practice of such ceiling paintings are anchored. Firstly, the rapid economic ascension of Cebu during the American colonial period, especially during the implementation of “special relations” (when agricultural exports from the Philippines to the United States at highly advantageous rates to the former thrived) from the early 1920s to the late 1930s, formed an arguable base of agricultural wealth concentrated on these trading and/or planting towns. The surplus would be invested by local elites in socially significant projects like enlarging private houses and engaging in lavish banquets and parties; building new public school buildings, parks, and plazas; and renovating or redecorating the town church. It was most likely that the “lady friend of the padre” at Argao was the sponsor of the church ceiling decoration herself, since only local patrons of the church’s fabric would be listened to and consented by the parish priest.

Secondly, that the tastes of these patrons were “uneven,” resulting in a change from the formerly valorized Francia to a now-favored Bohol artist (reputed to be the cousin of the lady herself) speaks of the secondary nature of canonic programming relative to the primary significance of social capital held by the investing patron. It also indicates the links and importance of personal attachment that define the relationship of this patron vis-à-vis the object of patronage, as well as the manner in which such patronage is consummated. Whether this shift in patronage occurred as a result of the disenchantment of the patron to Francia’s emerging design, or her own partiality to her cousin-artist is unknown, but a casual comparison of the stylization between the Francia portion and that of the unidentified Bohol painter reveals dramatic aesthetic differences.

Francia’s program is a dramatic and bold retelling of the obligations of faith and piety, as well as the risks of heresy and disobedience. By showing an almost Manichean splitting of the ceiling between the equally militant roles of angels and demons, Francia challenges the presumption of a congregation that cursory religious obligations are sufficient in

discharging the obligations of a parishioner. Instead, Francia shows how easily the chosen ones (Adam and Eve, for example) can become sinners in practically a single turn, as the ceiling shows. In addition, the unexpected formation of “broadsword” patterns resulting from the interlacing frames at the transept would have made this militaristic task of defeating evil clearer in the minds of viewers. Why this was not continued may speak of the attitudes of its patron towards this treatment of the frame (which is after all a strictly decorative affair). What is more, Francia’s dramatization of the battle of the Angels above the central part of the nave would not only have made the demons far more visually prominent than they should otherwise be, but the sudden truncation of that scene already shows deep conflicts between Francia’s apocalyptic vision of the ceiling program, and perhaps the more prosaic expectations of his patron.

By contrast, the unidentified Bohol painter’s design program is geometrically regulated according to an ascending order of arched coffers climaxing in rectangular panels at the apex of the barrel vaults, in which the predominant motif are the stylized rococo borders that define the panel frames of the allegorical devices, and are mirrored by the extravagant woodwork at the church that probably dates back to the late 18th century. Here, the emphasis is not so much on canonic consistency and instructional narration of the conflict between good and evil. The focus lies on a more pedestrian depiction of allegorical devices and biblical scenes featuring angels in pastel tones, which are done in a way that is as roughly naïf as Francia’s is “folk Romantic.” As has been noted earlier, the comparatively random nature of the sequence of scenes and devices in this section speaks less about the ability of the painter to achieve a canonic program, and more of the capacity to convert this program into a strictly *decorative* scheme that uses repeating motifs of regularly shaped coffers, *faux* wood frames and mouldings, and lightly-painted scenes that sharply contrast with the *sturm und drang* of Francia’s battling dualities.

One is thus tempted to believe that the abrupt shift in tone and treatment of the ceiling program at San Miguel Arcangel spoke of a newer

trend in decorating churches in Cebu: from the earlier, perhaps darker contrasts between figure and ground (if not between faith and heresy) that may have pervaded in the late 19th to early 20th century; to a later aesthetic that focused on lighter, gayer depictions of religious art (perhaps even copied or inspired from picture books and magazines of church interiors coming from Europe or Latin America) which evidently became more popular in the late 1920s to the mid-1930s—a pattern that would repeat itself in church commissions further south.

Dalaguete and Boljoon: Triumphs of Decorative Iconography

If one compares the extant ceiling paintings of San Guillermo de Aquitania at Dalaguete done by Canuto Avila and his assistants between July and December 1935,⁹ as well as that of Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio at Boljoon [See Illustration 3 on the next page], done by Mariano Villareal between 1930-1933,¹⁰ both exhibit a clearer bias towards a decorative approach in iconography rather than a canonic one. The earlier of the two, that at Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio, seems to continue the aesthetic of the unidentified Bohol painter at Argao. It reveals Villareal's use of large areas devoted to framing and coffering, the dominance of light, pastel colors, and the division of the nave into band-like sections dominated by a central panel at the apex of the barrel vault, paired with lesser panels on the north and south sides. However, the muddled, flat painting and uninspired pairings found at San Miguel Arcangel are absent at Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio. Instead, what greets the viewer is a series of larger, more impressive sections that divide the vault into six parts. Each section is highlighted by a central “medallion” motif that is paired by either two, four, or even eight side panels divided either axially or laterally.¹¹ The section over the “transept” section¹² serves as an anchor of the entire composition, with a large single circular panel terminating in a *faux* oculus centered upon a fanciful monogram bearing the name of the Virgin as Queen of Heaven. The painterly treatment is crisply done, with tonal contrasts of depicted motifs like building facades, shrubbery, and details



ILLUSTRATION 3: Details of the painted ceiling at San Guillermo de Aquitania at Dalaguete (upper portion) painted by Canuto Avila and Sons in 1935; and painted ceiling at Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio at Boljoon, painted by Mariano Villareal between 1930-1933.
 PHOTO BY: Joselito A. de Guzman (taken May 2011).

of allegorical devices seen clearly. What is more, however, is that Villareal seems to have established a clear preference for the framing scheme as a means to unite the disparate elements of the iconography into a tapestry-like organization of the ceiling. The framing scheme rationalizes the relationships between central and sidereal motifs through these geometric bands of decorative corncicing that sometimes appear bare of detailing, while at other times are encrusted with numerous geometric or floral details. This may be comparable to the Alberoni and Dibella scheme at San Agustin de Intramuros, where the various iconographic motifs are subsumed under a lush and ornate series of coffers, frames, and bands that unite the overall scheme of the ceilings into a single composition. Villareal, however, does not use a unifying tonal element of shading that produces in San Agustin a permanently ethereal lighting that results from the painted shadows and highlights of the ceiling scheme. Instead, the flat, decorative patterning, akin to that of fabric art, is reproduced in the ceiling of Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio, giving it a more naïve and “folk local” feel that may have been more in tune with the visual sensibility of the parishioners of Boljoon, rather than Villareal’s lack of mastery in the *tromp l’oeil* technique.

This flat patterning on the ceiling that replicates a tapestry is also seen at San Guillermo de Aquitania. Here, however, the ceiling framing is divided between architectural niches on the side panels and a rose-colored frieze band in the center that looks remarkably like the *calado* geometric and floral cutout patterns found in the eaves of colonial-era *bahay na bato*. Transposed into a frieze band, the *calado* patterns become a unifying motif that surrounds and frames each central motif down the nave, while the transept (this time with actual wings on the north and south sides) and apse again borrows from Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio’s motifs of a circular oculus motif followed by a large medallion above the altar.¹³ Another unique addition is the insertion of *faux* stone angels on plinths in the space of the engaged double columns that “anchor” the central medallions to the sides (called *aedicules*) and define the threshold of each niche, completing an architectonic program. These *aedicules* conform to the generally Roman Baroque theme established by the iconography and

stylization of the ceiling motifs, one that, though consistent with each other, conflicts with the general architectural style of the building itself. It is as if Avila and sons wished to transport their viewers beyond a provincial world and into the rarified realm of imperial Rome, which is suggested by the monumental *faux* architecture. However, this shift is disrupted by the native motifs that still remain, such as the *calado* design, and the pastel-colored but flat-toned planes that govern the vault's panelling. This resulting stylistic hybridity can be attributed to the dual forces of native nationalist awareness and metropolitan ecumenism that increasingly characterized not only parochial aesthetics but also the very real divisions and confluences between the Philippine Catholic Church and State at this period; the first Philippine Constitution after the American period was just recently approved, and elections that formed the Philippine Commonwealth Republic government were being held.

The later dates of the ceiling paintings at Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio and San Guillermo de Aquitania also indicate a shift in stylization that privileges the decorative form of religious iconography over that of a canonic program. The result is a replication of a fragmentary catechism, reproducing motifs based on mystical allegories, instructional devices of the church, and symbols as patterns that subdivide and "instruct" individual sections of the ceiling. It does not require viewers to progress from one motif to another in a sequential, dialectical flow, one that is exploited to the fullest at Nuestra Señora del Pilar. This seemingly sudden decision to eschew eschatological arguments in favor of a repetitive mystical symbolism also transforms the viewer's relationship with the ceiling from that of a linear narrative flow (akin to reading a devotional booklet) to a series of random portals where narration is acquired only upon intense reflection of the iconography. What results, then, is a more mystical and less didactic ceiling art. It also favors the treatment of the ceiling design as part of an overall decorative scheme in which motifs can be easily emplaced or rearranged without necessarily breaking up a larger narrative flow, allowing a dynamic choice of motific emplacement and thematic division to be implemented. That the ceiling designs at Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio

and San Guillermo de Aquitania followed a more decorative strategy compared with Nuestra Señora del Pilar, and perhaps were inspired by the second ceiling painter at San Miguel Arcangel, may be seen in the progression of increasing decorative frames and allegorical motifs. It also adheres to an eschatological program that systemically follows a progression of instructional images. It also seems evident that such a programmatic shift occurred during a moment in which the preferences of patronage also shifted to a more visually appealing scheme that favored lighter tones, brighter colors, and more playful motifs compared to the darker, heavier, and more dramatic tonal contrasts of the older canonic scheme. This may indicate that the conditions of patronage followed increasingly secular demands on church art to represent more the cultural sensibilities of the local elite, sensibilities that presumably focused on displays of visual ostentation and decorative patterning rather than grim catechism. This relationship between an assertive local secular patronage and the transformation of church ceiling art in southeastern Cebu can be gauged by looking at the last, perhaps most recent, sample of this study, that at Carcar.

Carcar: Modern Décor Triumphant

The Church of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, completed by 1871 under Fray Manuel Rubio Fernandez, was extensively redecorated in the mid- to late 1920s under the long-serving parish priest Father Anastasio Nuñez del Corro, also known as Padre Tatyong. It is at this period that the altar *retablo*, pulpit, and distinctive decorative sculptures of angels carrying electric candelabras along the nave were installed. The late 1920s was also the period in which Canuto Avila and his sons were said to have completed the ceiling paintings. However, if one observed the ceilings today [See Illustration 4 on the next page], both the motif and stylization of the painting scheme do not conform to what we know of the Avilas' manner of painting. Unlike San Guillermo de Aquitania, Saint Catherine of Alexandria does not have the monumental architectonic features, Neoclassical detailing in the frames, or niches containing saints and biblical

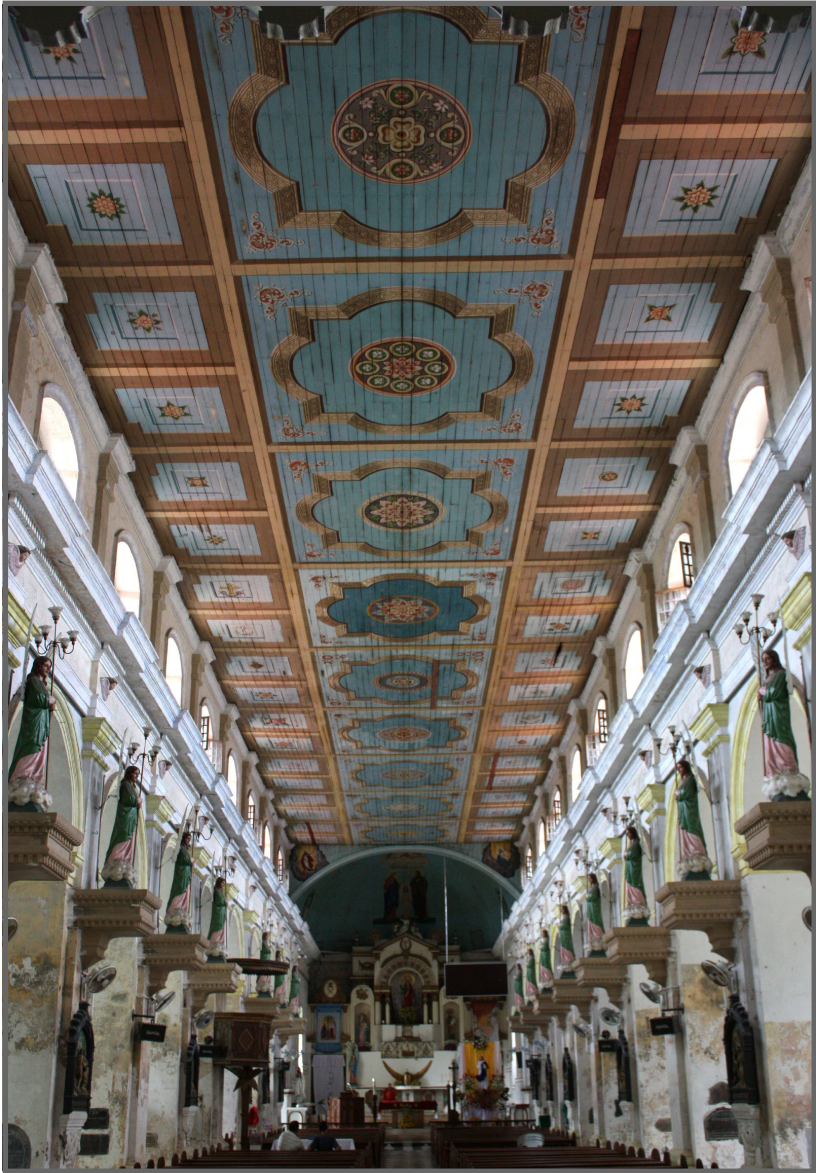


ILLUSTRATION 4: General view of the nave facing the altar at Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Carcar, showing the sculpted angels carrying candelabras, and the painted ceilings allegedly done by Vicente Poncardas in the late-1950s. PHOTO BY: Joselito A. de Guzman (taken May 2011).

scenes on the flat-timbered roof. Indeed, the flat timbering of the nave stands in contrast to the section closest to the apse, where the remains of the older barrel vault timbering are still to be found, along with the older, lower cornice level. Apparently, one of the renovations undertaken during the 1920s and a more recent wave of undocumented renovations between the late 1950s and the 1970s was the addition of an attic level at the nave, which opens up into a series of clerestory windows that allows light into the main nave. This was apparently done in order to increase the height of the nave and create a nave-aisle profile that closely matches major basilicas in Rome, such as the old Saint Peter's (before it was reconstructed from 1510 to 1605). This evidence of extensive renovation of the church's elevation is not found at the other four churches, all of whose vaults start at the cornice level where the vaulting course of the buttressed outer walls are located. Nuestra Señora del Pilar also has a nave-aisle profile, but does not have an attic level with clerestory windows. Instead, the large Gothic windows on its retaining walls are the primary source of light on the nave. Nuestra Señora del Pilar also has an arcade of columns that define the transition between the aisles and the nave, but these are made from wood, and are so slender as to be almost non-load bearing. By contrast, San Miguel Arcangel, San Guillermo de Aquitania, and Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio all follow the older convention of having windows on its thick coral stone curtain walls without an attic level, though Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio has a clerestory level immediately above the main windows, and form part of the upper register of the retaining wall.

The addition of an attic level at Saint Catherine of Alexandria also necessitated reinforcing the arcade that runs through the sides of the nave, whose load-bearing columns are now made from coral stone or concrete masonry, with a thick layer of *palitada* or lime plaster. The thicker arcade thus blocks the light from the windows on the retaining walls. It would have resulted in a gloomier interior had the clerestory windows not been pierced through the nave attic. Curiously, the aisle ceilings at Saint Catherine of Alexandria seem to copy the design motif of Nuestra Señora del Pilar, the form of a tiled diamond coffering centered on a bossed

rosette [See Illustration 5 on the next page]. Assuming that Francia and his assistants also executed the aisle ceiling paintings at Nuestra Señora del Pilar, one could argue that the unidentified designer at Saint Catherine of Alexandria simply transposed this design onto the aisle ceilings using more modern wood mouldings and frames. The modernity of this transposition can be seen in the more angular and simplified lines of the diamond coffer frames, and the flatter and mass-produced design of the sculpted boss rosettes, which are common after World War II, and no doubt date from at most the mid-1950s, if not slightly later.

The more extensive renovations of Saint Catherine of Alexandria also apply to the ceiling. Romulo Galicano, who grew up in Carcar, asserts that the flat expanse of the nave was done in the late 1950s by Vicente Poncardas, who lived in Carcar not far from the church, and was in fact a neighbor of the Galicanos (Galicano 2012).¹⁴ He also asserts that Poncardas' house, now ruined, used to also have a ceiling painted with a similar design as the church. Poncardas divided the flat ceiling at Saint Catherine of Alexandria into ten "bands" composed of a central square panel bordered by two smaller square panels each on the north and south sides that march off from the choir loft to the threshold just before the apse, where it reverts back to the older barrel vault. In comparison with the other four church ceiling paintings, the ones at Carcar are even more decorative, and appear "flatter" because of the plain, pastel-hued tonalities of the paint colors; the lack of chiaroscuro that often defined the older paintings; and the more rigid and linear quality of the design. The main design is composed of variations of the Mystical Rose motif centered on each panel, framed by a roundel and then superimposed on a dodecagonal *tromp l'oeil* golden frame which is bordered at each quadrant of the main square panel by vine garlands. The side panels, on the other hand, are of various coats of arms and floral motifs that are painted flat upon *tromp l'oeil* plaques. The overall impression is geometric and hard-edged, attempting to replicate the linear quality of timbering through the use of flat tones that frame the peach and ochre borders. One can arguably characterize this stylization as decidedly Modern because of the flat planar

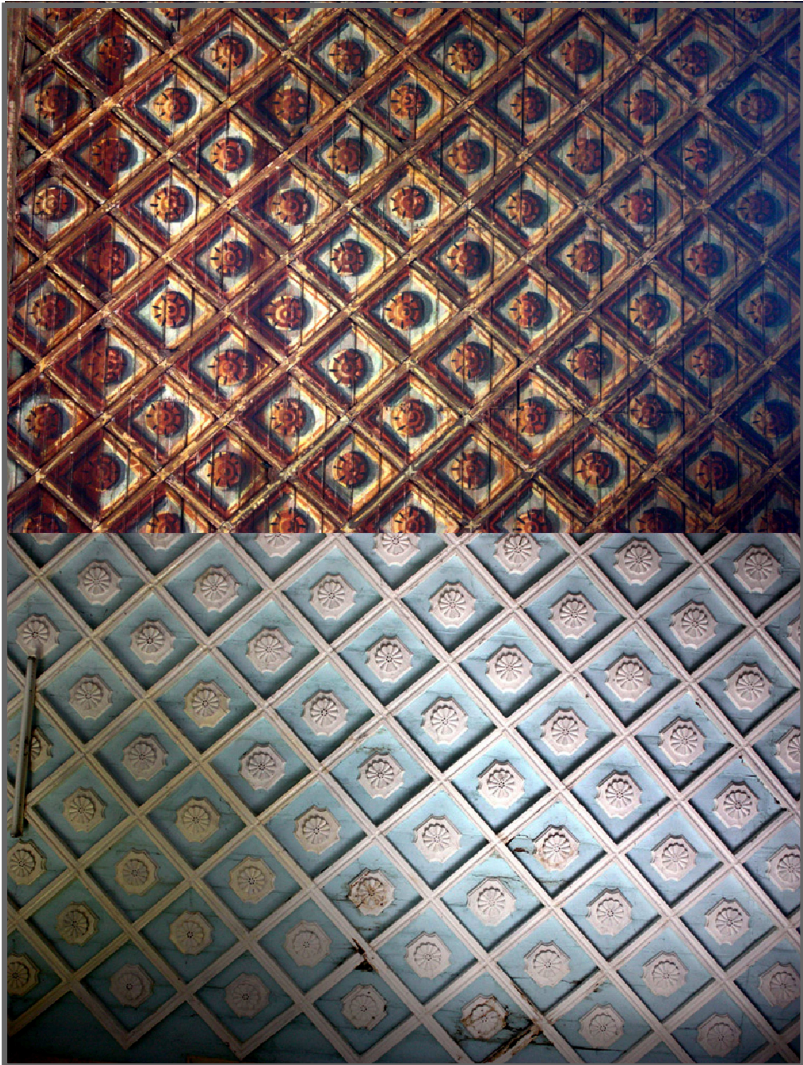


ILLUSTRATION 5: Comparison of the detail on the older aisle ceilings at Nuestra Señora del Pilar (top), showing the tiled formation of diamond coffers framing central boss-shaped rosettes; and the newer aisle ceilings at Saint Catherine of Alexandria (bottom), showing a similar tiled diamond coffer design framing a central rosette on a boss, done using woodworking instead of paint. PHOTO BY: Joselito A. de Guzman (taken May 2011).

design, the linearity, and the color value; it brings the local tradition of church ceiling painting firmly into the mid-latter part of the 20th century.

This modernity can also rationalize the decorative nature of the ceiling program, as motifs and symbols are increasingly abstracted and formalized into seemingly repetitive elements that are stabilized on the linear and planar regularity of a grid. Exuberant decoration is eschewed into minor details, as the few floral garlands are literally shunted to the corners of the main panels; at the same time, major motifs become highly hierarchized into rigid polygons and stamp-like impressions that float on vast fields of empty space. Reminiscent of coats-of-arms of family dynasts and warrior clans in Asia (especially Japan), the formality of these design motifs compares with the circular pendant design found in Turkish and Persian rugs, whose combination of calligraphy and mysticism is also circumscribed within allegory and abstraction. Its translation into the ceiling at Saint Catherine of Alexandria speaks of the artist's ability to visually reinterpret these aesthetic forms into the local setting, where regular patronage from a community well-known for its surplus economy affords the parish numerous occasions to renovate and "update" their decorative program to follow the latest trends and fashion in interior church design. Though this did not extend into the sculptural program as well as the architectural fabric itself, this kind of "updated patronage" could nonetheless be indulged in an area, ceiling painting, that is both comparatively recent in vintage and more inexpensive to execute.

Conclusion: The Economy of Nostalgia

What is ironic, however, is that with the advent of local tourism beginning in the late 1980s, the interiors of Saint Catherine of Alexandria, along with those of Nuestra Señora del Pilar, San Miguel Arcangel, San Guillermo de Aquitania, and Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio, among others throughout Cebu, have become chief sites of "cultural heritage" that appeal to a visitor's sense of nostalgia and imagined communion with centuries-old artworks. This appeal, and the subsequent efforts required to transform

the discourse of church art from instruments of catechetical instruction to artworks that speak of a unique cultural expression accessed by the travelling viewer, results in a hybridized epistemology of local culture that is either essentialized for its “folk Otherness” or valorized as manifestations of native national difference. A third knowledge system, formed by foreign visitors and writers like Gerschwiler, can also equate these ceiling paintings with a continuity of religious art that is valued for its comparative (if exoticized) articulation to ultimately Western canons and sources—ideas that are necessarily subscribed by the postcolonial order in rural Cebu. What each of these perspectives necessitate, however, is a common aspiration to review and recapture the general aesthetic of Cebuano church ceiling painting as aspects of larger epistemic formations introduced by modernity in Cebu: the rise of the folk nation; the interpellation of the global by the native; and the bonds that facilitate the exchange relations among materiality, spirituality, and aesthetics, and between local communities and the intervening systems of imperial cultures and polities that intersect in these artworks. As manifestations of pious sameness and political aesthetic difference, the ceiling paintings of these five southeastern Cebu churches continue to serve contemporary publics in ways that both reiterate the purpose of their existence (as instructional aids to Catholicism, and signifiers of social standing by their patrons and makers), while contributing to a newer economic logic in the continued development of a folk nationed narrative (Cebu as the Philippines) as part of a global region (Southeast Asia) caught in the throes of a self-denying modernity.

Notes

- ¹ Most significantly, the cash crop planting system, devised by the Basco Reforms from the 1780s onward and which put emphasis on producing chocolate and copra in Cebu, Manila hemp from Bicol, and sugar from Negros, was the primary beneficiaries of this opening, allowing local shipping from various towns to offload into Cebu City, and into cargo ships from Spain, Britain, the United States, and France, which reloaded them for export.
- ² A marble plaque installed above the stoup of holy water on its north wall near the main entrance details Sibonga’s dedication ceremony in Spanish: *Esta Iglesia ha sido Bendecida*

por Mgr. Jeremías Harty, Arzobispado de Manila, en 17 de Noviembre de 1907, después de la Bendición celebró Misa Pontifical, Mgr. Thomas A. Hendrick, Obispo de Cebu, predicando Mgr. J.P. Gorordo con asistencia de 17 sacerdotes y un inmenso gentío, siendo parroco el R.D. Francisco la Torre.

- ³ These are, in order of appearance from the façade to the apse: Baptism, Confirmation, Confession or Penance, Communion or the Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick or Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Marriage.
- ⁴ For the Baptism section, the panel facing the south wall features the Baptism of Christ at the Jordan River, while the panel facing the north wall is the Circumcision of Christ at the Temple. For the Confirmation section, the panel facing the south wall features the martyrdom of St. Peter, while that facing the north wall is the martyrdom of St. Sebastian. For the Confession section, the panel facing the south wall shows Christ forgiving the female adulterer, while that facing the north wall shows the parable of the manservant forgiven by the King—in this case, represented by Christ. In the Communion section, the panel facing the south wall features the miracle at the Marriage of Cana, while the panel facing the north wall is a mystical symbol of a stork feeding chicks in the nest. In the Anointing of the Sick section, the panel facing the south wall features Christ raising Lazarus from the dead; while on the panel facing the north wall is another mystical scene of a dying man visited by a priest, with a red-skinned demon on one side carrying a portrait of the Virgin. In the Holy Orders section, the panel facing the south wall features Peter answering the call of Christ at Lake Galilee; while the panel facing the north wall shows Christ as the Good Shepherd. Finally, the Marriage section features a panel facing the south wall with the image of the Immaculate Conception; while the panel facing the north wall features St. Joseph the Carpenter with the child Jesus.
- ⁵ Decisively introduced at the beginning of American rule in the Philippines, the use of newspaper comics illustration, called *komiks* in Pilipino, gained widespread currency after 1907, when *Lipang Kalabaw*, published in Manila, included highly charged satiric cartoon strip illustrations drawn by *Makahiya*, an assumed pen name of Jorge Pineda. Political aspirations of independence, or commentaries about local governance and social issues thus became represented and narrated for large reading publics throughout the Philippines through the use of *komiks*. Francia's adaptation of the *komiks* in mural painting could thus be argued as part of the visual cultural praxis of the period that melded mass communications with church art as visualized catechism.
- ⁶ In particular, Alberoni and Dibella's completion, in 1875, of the ceiling and nave *tromp l'oeil* decoration program for San Agustín at Intramuros is credited for fostering a mania among local churches for new painted ceilings, which continued until the eve of the Katipunan revolution. We may surmise that the translation of this particular aspect of late Spanish colonial church art patronage continued in the central Visayas region well into the early 20th century, among Filipino secular priests and parochial friars intent on mimicking the imperial grandeur of "Spanish-held" churches like that in Intramuros.
- ⁷ Revelation Chapter 12, Verses 7–9.

- ⁸ The sections portray the following (from transept to choirloft): Guardian Angel with Children, bordered by the Papal Seal of the triple tiara and keys on the south wall side, and a Cross and Anchor on the north wall side; Angel offering Christ a chalice in Gethsemane, with the Great Inundation on the south wall side, and Noah and his children giving thanks to the miraculous rainbow on the north wall side; Angel offering Elijah food in the desert, with the Mystical lamb on a table on the south wall side, and the Cross and Holy Eucharist with Veronica's Veil on the north wall side; Angel watching over the Call of Peter scene to the blind man, with Jacob's Dream on the south wall side, and Jacob worshipping the Angel on the north wall side; the encounter between Abraham and the Three Angels, with Bible and Crucifix on the south wall side, and a black Bible, flower, and spade on the north wall side; the Flying Angel of Revelations holding the flaming sword over the city, with Moses bowing before the Burning Bush on the south wall side, and Moses with the Ten Commandments on the north wall side; the Angel in the Assumption of Mary, with the Sacred Heart and Cross on the south wall side, and the Monstrance on the north wall side; and the Angel before Christ and the Female Sinner, with Saint Peter forgiving Saul on the south wall side, and Christ calling the Disciples from the Sea of Galilee on the north wall side.
- ⁹ Savellon and Abaquita note the following: "On the margin of the first frame (on the north wall nearest the choirloft, containing the image of *La Templanza*), the artist left this inscription: *Canuto M. Avial e hijos pintaron a esta Sta. Iglesia ciendo comenzando el 12 de Julio y termino el 16 de Diciembre de 1935* [35]. The inscription still survives despite a recent repainting in 2011 to "restore" the ceiling paintings, which had badly eroded and peeled.
- ¹⁰ Here, the accounts of Savillon and Abaquita conflict with the later research done by Paul Gerschwiler, a Swiss citizen who has since settled in Argao, and published *Boljoon: A Cultural Sketch* (2009). Savellon and Abaquita (16) assert that it was Antonio Villareal who did the Boljoon ceiling paintings, while Gerschwiler points to Mariano Villareal. Between the two, Gerschwiler has more in-depth documentation, and his book has the blessings of the Augustinian parish where Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio in Boljoon is constituted. Gerschwiler writes that "[t]he beautiful frescos (*sic*) on the vaulted ceiling were painted in from 1930-1933 by a son of a wide-spread family whose ancestral roots go far back in Boljoon: Mariano Villareal" (85). For this reason, the study takes Gerschwiler's position that it was Mariano, and not Antonio Villareal, who was the painter of the Boljoon church ceiling. Further clarification of this matter of documentation, however, is pending.
- ¹¹ The six sections, preceded by a decorative band featuring a stylized Golgotha Cross above the choir loft, are organized into the following themes (from choir loft to apse): a central motif of The City of God (in the form of St. Peter's basilica at Rome) with Christ looming over the sky, paired with panels on the Carpenter's House and the insignia of the Papal See on the south wall side, which are repeated on the north wall side; an Idealized Basilica surrounded by two Towers, a Cathedral, and a Monument featuring the Ark of the Covenant in quatrefoil pattern, which is doubled by smaller panels containing gated

gardens and fountains, and again framed on the north and south sides by lamps, flowers, and astronomical bodies; the great seal of the Augustinian Order surrounded by the *tolle, lege* scene and scene of missionary arrival in the Philippines on the south side, with the City of God and Cathedral Tabernacle on the north side; a quatrefoil central motif with the Monstrance at center, surrounded by instruments of the Office of the Priesthood, and bordered by the Ambry on the south side and the Hearth of the Sacrificial Lamb on the north side; a triple-banded Neoclassical roundel frame centered on an oculus panel with clouds and a floating royal monogram; and a central round panel with Monstrance surrounded by twin images of the Instruments of Christ's Passion on the south and north sides.

- ¹² Since Nuestra Señora de Patrocinio is built according to the rectangular basilica plan, there are actually no “wings” on the north and south sides that intersect to form a transept. Instead, an imaginary transept is produced in the otherwise continuous timber vaulting by the design of a larger painted section that aims to “center” the decoration scheme through this *tromp l'oeil* evocation of a domed structure pierced by an oculus, a Neoclassical device that adds upon the stylistic hybridity of the church fabric, as well as the stylistic heterogeneity of the painting decoration scheme itself, which mixes Neoclassical, Baroque Revival, as well as Vernacular forms together.
- ¹³ The motifs from the choirloft to the apse are as follows: niches containing the allegorical images of La Fortaleza (south side) and La Templanza (north side) followed by a central medallion of the Papal coat of arms; niches containing the image of Jonah and the Whale (south side) and Moses receiving the Ten Commandments from God (north side) followed by a central medallion of St. Peter's in Rome as the City of God; niches containing the Ark of the Covenant (south side) and Moses before the Burning Bush (north side) followed by a central panel containing the Cross and Globe; niches containing the loading of Noah's Ark (south side) and the Angel staying Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac (north side), followed by a central rosette boss; the transept section containing medallion portraits of the Evangelists San Marcos and San Mateo (south side), and San Lucas and San Juan (north side) surrounding a large central *faux* oculus panel containing the Lamb of God, and rosette bosses on the joints of the transept's north and south intersections; and the apse section featuring the Holy Trinity in the central panel flanked by four identical angels, two each on the north and south sides.
- ¹⁴ This assertion by Galicano was bolstered by similar reminiscences of the ceiling paintings by senior artist Sofronio Y. Mendoza, who frequently traveled to Carcar during the 1950s as a young art student of Martino Abellana; as well as Dodong Tallo, Galicano's brother, who also grew up hearing masses at St. Catherine in the late-1950s.

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Bayan Nila: Pilipino Culture Nights and Student Performance at Home in Southern California

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Abstract

In this work, I interpret Filipina/o-American cultural production and question the bounded nature of ethnomusicology, area studies, ethnic studies, and cultural anthropology. I describe the challenges of ethnographic research on music and performance at “home” in Southern California among college students, who take part in a Pilipino Culture Night (PCN). PCN performers strategically manipulate the symbols of homeland (both the Philippines and the U.S.) through singing, playing instruments, acting, and dancing. I interpret this practice by drawing on existing literature on Asian-American performance and identifying key critical discourses in Filipina/o-American performance offered by the PCN model.

Key words: Asian American, Filipino-American, Performance, PCN, Home

IN THE CLASSIC ANTHROPOLOGICAL sense, “home” is the place the “field” is not: there is nothing to collect and no informants whose practice needs to be explained to others at home.¹ Home is where you write your ethnography, not where you observe action to be inscribed; it is not a place you experience; it is where you translate experience gained elsewhere. You do not have to research home because the immediacy of events there are commonsensical. They are self-evident.² However, once presence in the field becomes more complicated, home is suddenly an unfamiliar *elsewhere*. Once the field worker realizes that the words she translated into her home language do not fit into commensurable conceptual categories, culturally inherent meanings are complicated. Further, once common sense and rationality are questioned and revealed as culturally relative, the formerly pure nature of everyday life at home becomes a complex confluence of judgments and events.

I have been privy to many examples of the unflagging effort and enthusiasm by Filipina/o-American students as they prepare for Pilipino Culture Nights (PCNs).³ My home field site in Southern California is complicated and privileged by such moments of serendipity. I live and work among Filipinas/os and Filipina/o-Americans who have allowed me (an outsider and a non-Filipino) a great deal of access to this particular form of cultural production, which I have been documenting and researching on as a graduate student at the University of California Riverside. In classes, rehearsals, and the world of random asides and passing communications, I have encountered Filipina/o-American student performers who are sensitive to the problems of the imagined, disjointed homeland often presented in the PCN, even as they benefit from these now-naturalized representations of heterogeneity in the Philippines. The PCN is driven by critical identity work that is potentially at odds with the accepted narratives of the genre itself. Criticisms of the PCN are generally aimed at the “dance suites” that present an essentialized, exotic version of the Philippines. Nevertheless, for many student performers, the PCN is a powerful transformative experience that lingers in their memory long after their college days have passed. By employing this performance model as

a means of ethnic self-realization, the participants take on the herculean task of navigating different representations of Filipina/o-America.

This essay is my attempt to understand Filipina/o-American cultural production and to question the bounded nature of ethnomusicology, area studies, ethnic studies, and cultural anthropology. Can we understand Filipina/o-American cultural practices without reifying an essentialized, authentic Filipina/o experience in the diaspora? Does the ethnomusicological method of participant observation hold the answer? More specifically, does this method (borrowed by ethnomusicologists from cultural anthropologists) work well when applied to music and performance at home? I pose these questions because this genre of performance strategically manipulates the symbols of a homeland. At the same time, it blurs the ethnomusicological separation between homeland practices and representation abroad. I illustrate the problems and possibilities of ethnomusicological field work at home by discussing the most promising progress in this effort: the work of performance scholars in Asian-American studies who are forced to face the inherent contradictions of this dichotomy “where they live” (so to speak). After an outline of studies of home in ethnomusicology and cultural anthropology, I discuss the use of the home trope in Asian-American performance scholarship, and draw on existing literature on Asian-American performance to understand the complexities of the PCN. Lastly, I will identify key critical discourses in Filipina/o-American performance offered by the PCN model.

Ethnographic Research at Home

The most readily identifiable methodology of ethnomusicology is fieldwork. The methods of fieldwork are drawn from cultural anthropology, originally modeled on the study of “others” (foreigners, villagers or “quaint subjects”) (Bourgois 1995, 14) who live in the “field,” defined broadly as another place where fieldwork is done. In *Shadows in the Field* (2008), Timothy Rice elaborates that since field presence and fieldwork activities are rites of passage that “make” an ethnomusicologist, the field is not an

area where theories are tested but a place of practice or experience. Shifting definitional discourse within ethnomusicology means that doing faraway fieldwork is increasingly less important than the ends of experience.

Despite this focus on the primacy of experience, ethnomusicologists have been slow to engage critically with the question of home and field because of an institutional reliance on this dichotomy. Cultural anthropologists have broadened this definition by studying “home” in places as varied as nuclear arms research centers and urban drug corners (Bourgois 1995; Gusterson 1996). In cultural anthropology, the relationship of theory and methodology to colonialism and imperialism led to an inquisition of broader, tacit assumptions within the discipline (Asad 1973; Hymes 1972; Ortner 1984). Kamala Visweswaran cites the Dell Hymes collection, *Reinventing Anthropology* (1972), as a milestone in the reform in cultural anthropology. This collection, recalls Visweswaran, was the first to suggest the idea of “bringing it back home” (1994, 101) or “studying up” (Nader 1972). Visweswaran notes the synergistic relationship between the anthropology of home and a re-examination of the discipline’s colonialist role. She writes that

[a]nthropology at home...was not acceptable until the move to decolonize anthropology arose; a decolonized anthropology assumed that a critical eye would necessarily be cast on a whole range of practices at ‘home’ that authorized American intervention in the ‘Third World’” (Visweswaran 1994, 101).

Visweswaran views the provocation of *Reinventing Anthropology* as an unfinished project; it is not about the nature of fieldwork per se but the nature of “homework” (1994, 102). If normative ethnography is “speaking from a place where one is not, where location and locution are tightly bound by a distant imaginary,” (102) then homework is “anthropology in reverse” (104).⁴

Ethnomusicologists’ engagements with the consideration of home as fieldsite have taken a different character. Ethnomusicology at home

materialized after the 1970s, with the establishment of urban ethnomusicology at Columbia (Reyes Schramm 1982; Shelemay 1988). When ethnomusicologists began to study minority ethnic groups in the United States (sometimes from an insider's perspective), the discipline stretched and expanded through a re-examination of subject positions and a consideration of multicited and reflexive representations.

Ethnomusicology and Asian America

Ethnomusicologists who addressed the performance of Asian Americans in the late 1980s and early 1990s explored the complicated nature of subject/object positions by dealing with the inconsistencies of traditional research models.⁵ These scholars faced a critical disjuncture between ethnomusicological presentations of Asian and Asian-American music cultures. Researchers focused less on the traditional musical object and more on how music-making constitutes lived experience. Deborah Wong's *Speak it Louder: Asian Americans Making Music* (2004) deals with various contexts for Asian music-making in the United States and problematizes the nature of traditional ethnomusicological enquiry into this area by incorporating an interdisciplinary approach. Following the work of music scholars such as Joseph Lam (1999), Wong distills various intellectual approaches to the Asian music-making experience in America.

To summarize, existing work on Asian musics in the U.S. is characterized by two contrasting approaches. Some scholars treat music as a pocket of traditionality and essentially present the artifact as 'Asian music'. Others take a completely different path by asking how issues of movement and diaspora can be considered through performance practices. These contrasting approaches situate 'the music' in significantly different ways: the first regards the sounds and practices as something isolatable and the second extends the central ethnomusicological proposition – that music is culture – into questions of cultural movement and transformation (Wong 2004, 15–16).

Two important points are established here. First, the performative object of study (e.g., Cambodian dance in Van Nuys, California, or Vietnamese refugee songs in New Jersey) must be considered within the immediate political context of performance. *Why* is the trope of homeland used at *that* moment, and to what end?⁶ Second, the performative nature of that moment requires treatment as a political statement on its own terms—not simply an evocation of homeland, but a new reality created through performance with a completely new set of meanings. The new meanings in Asian America may (or may not) reflect their counterparts in Cambodia or Vietnam.

Ricardo Trimillos adjusts traditional ethnomusicological concepts to the immediacy of the cultural present in his scholarship on Philippines and Filipina/o-Americans. Trimillos is the first music scholar of the Philippines to use skills honed for music ethnography abroad in order to engage critically with issues of Philippine diaspora and Filipina/o-American musical culture. In his article “Music and Ethnic Identity: Strategies Among Overseas Filipino Youth,” Trimillos evaluates “six strategies of ethnic identity” production through music (1986, 10–11). His framework is based on the degree that Filipina/o-American youth use Philippine music in fostering a cultural identity. In his evaluation of these six strategies, Trimillos blurs distinctions among Filipina/o (people) practices, Filipina/o-American practices, and the work of ethnomusicologists of the Philippines (those who study the music of or in the Philippines) in order to create what Joseph Lam would later call a heuristic device to interpret a wide variety of Filipina/o signifiers in the diaspora (Lam 1999). Trimillos creates an all-inclusive framework in order to examine the total activities of Filipina/o youths in the modern diasporic setting.

Trimillos (2001) refines his discussion of Filipina/o-Americans in the United States volume of the *Garland Encyclopedia* series. He provides a wider scope of Filipina/o-American musical practices and reveals a more sophisticated critical framework, which is possibly informed by his heightened involvement with the Filipina/o-American community. He also addresses the diversity of Filipina/o and Filipina/o-American

experiences, “encompassing both American-born descendants of early laborers and families of newly arrived professionals” (1024), and the difficulty of addressing only their music. “(These) music events may be simultaneously dance, theater, and oral literature” (1025). His concluding paragraph to the *Garland* chapter is a dynamic revision of his earlier discursive strategy in “Music and Ethnic Identity.”

Musical traditions and practices for Filipino Americans cover a broad continuum between the imaginary polarities of “pure Filipino” and “pure American” and their implicit Asian/Western dyad. Diachronic and synchronic cultural spaces inhabited by Filipino Americans provide access to and potential for rich and diverse participation in music. They also problematize issues of identity, commitment and belonging (2001,1026).

Thus, Trimillos presents here a more nuanced and dynamic approach than in his earlier work on Filipina/o and Filipina/o-American musical strategies. He divides the subject of Filipina/o-American music into three categories: continuity of homeland culture (which includes *rondalla* groups and other United States practices), reconstruction of a minority homeland culture (*kulintang* and Southern Philippine musics), and the appropriation of majority culture(s) (art and popular music). For diasporic Filipinas/os, the culture of the Southern Philippines is an icon for decolonization even though they themselves may have no ties to the Southern Philippines (1026). Here, Trimillos recognizes the complicated nature of heritage politics and its manifestation in musical practices overseas. The members or descendants of majority ethnic groups in the Philippines practice Filipina/o minority music in the United States in accordance with complex identity politics. The official national doctrine of Marcos-era Philippines held Southern Philippine artistic forms in high regard because they symbolized an unconquered Philippine people (Gaerlan 1999, 271). The practice of appropriating Southern Philippine music was taken further by the dance troupe, *Bayanihan*, and its practices subsequently defined the ways that the music and dance of the Philippines is practiced in the United

States today (255).⁷ Trimillos and Gaerlan thus identify the complex origins of diasporic practices, whose meanings have changed over time.

In any discussion of Asian-American performance, homeland practices and representation should be understood within this dynamic exchange between Asia and America (rather than one practice simply informing the other). Within the Filipina/o context, the history of these practices cannot be understood without a consideration of nationalist efforts in postcolonial Philippines. In her dissertation *Music, Politics and Nation at the Cultural Centre of the Philippines* (2001), Christi-Anne Castro addresses cultural production in the Philippines and its effects on American practice. The Cultural Centre of the Philippines (CCP) was designed to represent a unified nationalist statement. It successfully resonated as a homeland construction throughout the diaspora. Castro writes "... 'Philippines' referred to a country unified by a vague notion of accepted cultural diversity" (2001, 7–8). For community-building purposes in the United States, Filipina/o-Americans employ cultural developments in the Philippines whose symbolic nature is then transferred to the diasporic site. Castro notices that homeland developments such as the CCP are magnified abroad (and their unifying nature is at times exaggerated) in diasporic cultural identity work (13). Filipinas/os in the United States are thus empowered to find beauty and power in representations of homeland practices (which may or may not reflect the daily lives of the Filipina/o citizen) (15).

Until recently, Asian-American performance was largely ignored because those practices, rooted in the experiences of second- or third-generation migrants, were viewed as not "different" enough to merit interest by traditional ethnomusicologists. Or to use Renato Rosaldo's terminology, these processes were "culturally invisible" (Rosaldo 1993, 196). A survey of any canon of ethnographic work reveals the amount of research on non-Westernized or indigenous cultures, as opposed to Westernized or modernized peoples (196). Academics thus map the world's peoples into relative zones of cultural visibility and invisibility (198). Since this constructed nature of difference informs all aspects of anthropological

worth, it would be no challenge to research other less indigenous societies because they are more similar to “us.” This search for cultural visibility informs much research on ethnic minority music in the U.S.⁸ Scholars of Asian-American performance must re-situate both “invisible” and “visible” cultural practices and thereby question the nature of the divide. Asian-American performance accounts are written almost exclusively by those with an immediate concern in the community; they are practitioners or “native” anthropologists who are faced with the much more complicated matter of discussing homeland reconstruction as a dynamic performative force. These new ethnomusicologists are well-equipped to interpret the heterogeneity of Asian-American musical practices in the United States, problematizing the nature of conceiving any community as static and bounded.

Pilipino Culture Nights

In an effort to interpret Asian-American performance on its own terms, I discuss Pilipino Culture Nights (PCNs), an elaborate genre of cultural production that has been staged in high school and college campuses in the United States since the late 1970s. PCNs are generally designed, performed, and produced by students who operate in the context of campus or community groups. Students begin planning the show in October or November⁹ and stage it in March or April. A committee is formed with a chair and a co-chair (generally, both are participants from the previous school year’s production). Each year, the students design their PCN according to the strengths of that year’s organizing committee, participants, and the knowledge gained from PCN workshops and faculty consultation.¹⁰ The following five months, November through March, are spent in meetings and rehearsals that culminate in an intensive week of full dress rehearsals. During this aptly named “hell week” (one week before the performance), the students practice every night for five consecutive days. One can find them walking through meticulous production details, speaking the same line of script over and over again (without giggling this time), spray-painting coconuts for the *maglalatik* dance, or picking the ubiquitous glitter out of

their hair as they hurriedly put the last stitch on an elaborately feathered costume.¹¹

Many PCNs follow a similar format. Theo Gonzalves observes that PCNs consist of two kinds of performance: folkloric materials and theatrical narration.¹² Filipina/o folkloric materials—dance, music, and costuming—are the central and most recognizable component of the PCN (Gonzalves 2001b, 245). The participants present separate semi-dramatic “dance suites” during the course of the performance, intended to represent the diversity of the Philippine nation and the heterogeneity of its culture. With a few exceptions, these suites are present in all PCNs and serve as the ‘traditional’ aspect of the performance. The second category of the PCN is staged drama, or “theatrical narration.” Throughout the performance, a unifying narrative thread is present in short sketches that alternate with sections of dance and music. Gonzalves writes that

[a]t their worst, as I have said, some plays have merely been clumsy vehicles for moving the dance suites along. But when narrations have been more carefully conceived and written, they have done more. (Again, a lot of this depends on the ambitions of those tasked to write and edit scripts.) It is in the theatrical narrations that the PCN is more fully defined as a genre – one not originated nor performed in the Philippines, and later adapted to American needs, but rooted in and reflective of Filipina/o American young folks’ concerns, anxieties and aspirations (2001b, 246–247).

Put together, the sketches and choreographed dances constitute a metanarrative on the transformative experience that occurs through PCN presentation.

To illustrate this, I describe the design and execution of the 2002 Pilipino Culture Night at the University of California Riverside (UCR). The students allowed me to observe the preparation and practice sessions during the 2001–2002 school year and asked me to participate in some of the musical numbers. The 2002 UCR PCN consisted of segments that alternated between dance suites and four three-scene dramatic acts.¹³

Act 1 of the drama began with a group of PCN actors portraying a group of college students on a quest for self-discovery in a fictional classroom. The scene opened in a “History of the Philippines Class.” After he lectured the students on the history of colonial Philippine domination, the demonstrative, overbearing teacher ordered his students to visit the old Filipinas/os in a retirement home in order to learn about their culture. The rest of the Act was devoted to the students discussing the implications of this project as they parodied their teacher who spoke too loudly and stood too close to them. The stage faded to black and the stage crew prepared for the “Cordillera” suite (sometimes called the “Mountain” suite), a theatrical representation of the upland peoples of Northern Luzon. Male undergrad dancers in loin cloths circled the stage repeatedly and each dancer stopped for a short solo at the front of the loop. The musicians of the Rondalla Club of Los Angeles provided live accompaniment with *gangsa* (handheld flat gongs).

Once the dancers exited the stage, the production crew prepared for Act 2. The three scenes depicted Filipina/o senior citizens at a retirement home who told folktales to their young visitors. As the older characters told their stories, other actors represented their memories in separate sketches about the youthful days of the storytellers or their legends and tales in a split-stage format. This was followed by the “Muslim” or “Moro” suite of dances, which was a more eclectic mix than that which preceded them. A *kulintang* player provided accompaniment and the percussive sound of long wooden poles was incorporated into the dance, played by pairs of students who knelt onstage. The scenes portrayed in this semicontiguous suite depicted several mythic Moro princes and princesses in a stylized battle.

An intermission followed and the participants and the audience were all treated to an abundance of food and a short intermission performance that featured one of the actors, who performed a stand-up comedy act that focused on the experiences of Filipina/o American youth. He relied on traditional (stereotypical) Fil-Am humor as he donned a heavy accent and imitated his father who ordered him to “Close the light” and “Turn

off the window.” But the comedian also ventured into the messy nature of identity politics, criticizing Filipina/os who deny their heritage, “Your last name is Angeles? You’re not Spanish! You’re from the jungle, like me!” This reflexive and self-essentializing humor offered yet another version of Filipina/o-American self-representation; the comedian simultaneously ridicules obvious markers of Filipino identity in his own background while criticizing others who de-emphasize ethnic difference.

Act 3 of the drama displayed the fictional students discussing their different experiences at the retirement home. One scene consisted of a fictional school *rondalla* ensemble, played by a select group of students from the *real* UCR *Rondalla Ensemble* (myself included). We performed “*Bayan Ko*,” the nostalgic homeland tale of longing. This was followed by the “*Maria Clara*” suite, which represents the Spanish influence on Filipina/o culture. These dances were accompanied by live *rondalla* music provided by the *Rondalla Club* of Los Angeles.

Finally, the drama was resolved in Act 4. The students returned to school and their teacher was pleased to see that they had learned a great deal about Filipina/o history. I sensed a certain generational tension at this point. Although the students listened carefully to the older people in the previous act and appreciated the empowering nature of their long ago/far away tales, they weren’t completely sold on the values of the story. This same tension (present in the comedian’s stand-up routine) contradicts the home motif identified by Gonzalves. Acts of returning home (to the imagined Philippines through the stories of their elders) in memory are complicated and met with ambivalence by the characters. Act 4 concluded with another performance of “*Bayan Ko*,” and the PCN ended with the “*Rural*” suite (sometimes called the “*Country*” suite) of dances, a collection of animated pieces in which the rest of the students cheer on the participants from the sides of the stage. The 2002 UCR PCN closed with a round of cast introductions and “thank yous.”

The narrative theme, content, and sequencing of the 2002 UCR PCN were typical of many performances I have witnessed during those

years and since. Gonzalves (1995) noted that the unifying “reverse exile” theme is common in the PCN genre; the young Filipinas/os characters do not know their history or culture and must return to the Philippines as a conceptual repository of knowledge (in this case, symbolically, through the stories of their elders). He has criticized the connotations of such a journey: the imagined Philippines is mythicized, unchanged, and often unaffected by the outside world. Some PCN participants feel that the political import is weakened by the repetition of these themes, year after year, and the similarity of the dramatic structure and the overall predictability of the performance. The strongest criticisms of the PCN have focused on the “traditional dances,” which potentially serve to reinforce static, essentialized views of Filipina/o history.

Indeed, the Bayanihan folk dance company—the source of the dances found in virtually all PCNs and a Philippine nationalist project that featured a number of decontextualized and stylized representations of various ethnic groups in the Philippines—has been critiqued in exactly the same way. The dance suites popularized in the Bayanihan and perpetuated in PCNs are the result of a self-conscious nationalist program to define and disseminate Philippine culture in the early twentieth century, generally credited to choreographer Francisca Reyes Aquino. Aquino began to collect folk songs, dances, and games from villages in 1924 as part of a mission to create a national culture of post-Commonwealth, preindependent Philippines, and essentially invented many of the modern national folkloric dance forms (Gonzalves 2001b, 32, 46). In her manual, *Philippine Folk Dances and Games* (1927), Aquino discussed the construction of Filipina/o arts as a proactive means of creating an impermeable base of nationalism against foreign (i.e., American) popular culture (Gonzalves 2001b, 35); that is, she choreographed “authentic” Filipina/o dances in a postcolonial environment.¹⁴ Her repertoire consisted of indigenized costumes and authenticated dances and is a direct ancestor of the dance suites used in the contemporary Pilipino Culture Night (69).

With the foundation of Aquino’s existing scholarship, Lucretia Reyes-Urtula established the Bayanihan Dance Troupe in postindependent

Philippines in the 1950s. Urtula, a choreographer at the Philippine Women's University, created a dance/theatre troupe whose repertoire was based exclusively on the folk arts. These folk arts were "authenticated" by researchers who built upon an existing body of Aquino-inspired ethnographic research from notable Philippine arts scholars such as Lucrecia Kasilag, Aurora Diño, and José Maceda. Urtula's work was guided by two principles: the preservation of the indigenous group's authentic performance and the enhancement of the original material for the stage. This program resulted in the establishment of the Bayanihan Folk Arts Center at the Philippine Women's University in 1957 through a grant from the Philippine government. The mission of this Center was not only to research and preserve Philippine art forms in music, dance, and costume, but also to promote these arts in an international arena. The Bayanihan Dance Troupe was a successful export that achieved international acclaim at the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels, Belgium. The Bayanihan still performs today and has inspired similar groups in the Philippines and in the Filipino diasporic communities.

Thus, the format of the modern Pilipino Culture Night, as it became a prominent feature on American college campuses in the 1980s, was derived from what Gonzalves calls a "kineticized nationalism culled from encounters with native folk art" (2001b, 110). This nationalism is, however, not without its own politic in multiethnic and regional Philippines. In a 1999 article, "In the Court of the Sultan: Orientalism, Nationalism, and Minority in Philippine and Filipino American Dance," Barbara Gaerlan critiques the static, essentialized representations in the Bayanihan dance suites and by extension, the modern PCN. The *Singkil* dance found in the "Muslim" or "Moro" suite, for instance, offers a highly distorted view of the culture of the Southern Philippines. This view has the potential to obscure the history of intranational conflict and subvert the efforts of students who are attempting to celebrate cultural heterogeneity in the PCN by exoticizing "proud sultans" and "mythic battles." Gaerlan interprets this as

“...an attempt to dominate and control Filipino Muslims by making their dances the ‘signature pieces’ of the Philippines’ premier national dance troupe. The Bayanihan appropriates the right to represent Moros and Moro culture without Moro consent. It bases its ‘right’ on its nationalist imprimatur” (1999, 269).

Gaerlan’s critique is a valuable warning against “strategic essentializing” within the PCN. By packaging the Philippines in performance, PCNs freeze intransular and regional relationships in time and create a level playing field that does not necessarily reflect any moment in time (historical or otherwise).¹⁵ This is also evident in the almost exclusive use of Filipino and English in PCNs rather than the numerous dialects spoken by the parents of PCN participants; in one sense, the heterogeneity of performance is homogenized through language and national culture is privileged over the many *cultures* within the Philippines.

Conclusion

In both academic discourse and highly charged discussions among PCN members, a fear exists that spectators of and participants in the PCN will mistake these colorful and performance-amplified versions of folk practices for everyday life in *the real Philippines*. Within Gaerlan’s critique of the canonized, dehistoricized nature of the PCN rests an implied essentialization of the participants. Gaerlan writes that

[i]n my interviews with Filipino American students about the source of their interest in learning such dances for the PCN, invariably they cited a desire to learn about indigenous cultures of the Philippines of which they were previously unaware. They perceived the dances as an anthropological window on Philippine culture. At the same time, without observing a contradiction, they appreciated the modern theatricality of the Bayanihan genre, saying that it gave them a venue for expressing Filipino culture in the United States of which they could be proud (1999, 257).

With the hindsight of a decade since this statement, I believe that the students Gaerlan observed represent one end of a spectrum of PCN participants' attitudes. Some participants might possibly still perceive these dances as an anthropological window to the Philippines. In my research, I engaged the participants in nuanced discussions about their reasons for participation. Although authenticity and culture were discussed on a superficial level, none of my interviewees assumed that they were encountering a completely accurate picture of the Philippines in the PCN. They instead stressed the importance of tradition, often differentiating it from 'modern culture' or 'American culture.' Their concerns were generational in nature, not wholly different from those of many first- or second-generation Asian-American children of immigrants.¹⁶

In order to address the Filipina/o-American myth-making that Gaerlan and Gonzalves criticize, I return to the "reverse exile" motif in the 2002 UCR PCN on a presentational level. Yes, the characters in the four-act drama were in search of a repository of knowledge, but they did not find it in the Philippines; they instead saw it within Filipina/o-America. Two repositories of knowledge shaped this discursive space: the Filipina/o-American history class and the senior citizens. The UCR participants subverted the PCN model in order to show that they are, in fact, aware of their history, and they know where to find it. This history can be found in the classroom. Indeed, many of the students who participated in the 2002 UCR PCN took the Filipina/o-American History Class in the Ethnic Studies Department (i.e. the parodied instructor in the History sketch). The only trips to the Philippines portrayed in the sketches were in the stories of the elderly people. And their young listeners did not, in every case, appreciate these stories. They were disappointed by the old folks' tale of the original Filipinos, *Malakas and Maganda*; the students expected (as any good college student would) more character development and symbolism within the story. But I think this sketch also reveals a deep ambivalence toward learning history in this way: what exactly *are* we supposed to do with these myths, these legends, and stories that told about things wholly unreal in manners that are somewhat elusive? How do we

move from scholarly discourse to the primordial, qualitative realness and moral force of *this* body of cultural knowledge (whether it is considered constructed or authentic)? The students hear a lot of voices: mom and dad, *lolo* (grandfather), and *lola* (grandmother), the reactionary and radical, the informed and the misinformed, the Philippine and the American. Performance and the possibilities of the performative resolve and resituate the diasporic forces of heritage and history with the day-to-day pressures of college, success, and family life, even as the postcollege real world looms large over the horizon of graduation.

Also, unlike the model Gonzalves describes, the UCR PCN creators made no attempt to connect the dance suites to the overall sketch of the drama. Each vignette of learning history was preceded and followed by one of the four dance suites without any attempt to create a contiguous narrative. This design effectively framed each performance as something wholly separate from the sketches; it distanced the stylized representations of diverse Philippine cultures from the everyday reality of these students. It highlighted the constructed nature of each dance suite. The participants thus reclaimed history and self-awareness: by acknowledging the constructed nature of these pieces, the students implicitly responded to critique, as if to say, “We know what this is supposed to be. We are aware of the arguments against it. But we have subverted the form for our own ends.” More recently, college groups have been radically altering the PCN model and highlighting these issues and many more in creative and provocative ways. In the 2009 UCR PCN, the students engaged in critical discussions about the nature of representation throughout the design and production of their show and even included this passage in the program:

DISCLAIMER: Katipunan at UCR feels that it is important to acknowledge that the dances you see tonight are theatrical interpretations inspired by traditional culture in the Philippines. They are not step by step (sic) recreations, but derivatives choreographed for entertainment. Our intension (sic) is not to represent specific ethnic or tribal groups to a wider audience, but to display our own

talents and creative ambitions. We do not intend to essentialize or characterize a group of people, simply participate in a theatrical style of dance propagated (sic) by dance companies in the Philippines. It is for this reason that we stress we are only representing ourselves as student performers that want to be part of a bigger community and culture.¹⁷

Might this be the model for a more politically informed 21st-century PCN genre? I hope so. Acknowledging this underscores the need to examine Asian-American performing culture within a completely different ethnomusicological framework. Rather than treat PCNs as the result of misused and misunderstood nationalist art forms, they are better understood as a transformation of these materials, directed toward community building and ethnic solidarity by students whose most immediate goal is understanding these materials on their terms. The *Tinikling* dance and the *Cordillera* are highly visible survivals of a twentieth-century nationalist project in the Philippines. Yet, their appropriation by informed students at a vital time of ethnic realization and self-awareness is a phenomenon that is entirely Filipina/o-American and celebrated in a performance that will *knock your socks off*.

Thus, the study of home within the context of Asian American studies allowed me to further scrutinize the subject rather than judge it merely as a clever manipulation of homeland practices. By focusing on the participatory social aesthetics of the PCN, I created a window through which I could observe a special form of modern Asian-American ethnic self-realization. I was able to observe young people who performatively carved out their place within a world of mixed messages from parents and teachers, and I tried to learn from their generational sensibilities within a certain time and place. My understanding of their cultural work took place within the discursive space of Asian America as a heuristic device (Lam 1999, 36), within the multigenerational context of young people developing their own voices through performance.

Notes

- ¹ This article is based on research for my 2002 Master's Thesis in Music, "'Ang Bayan Niya': Filipina/o American Music Making and Cultural Performance at Home in Southern California" (University of California Riverside), and a paper presented at the 2009 Society for Ethnomusicology Southern California and Hawai'i Chapter annual meeting (University of California Los Angeles), "Performing Filipina/o America: The PCN Genre and the Politics of Heritage Performance in Asian America." I would like to sincerely thank Ricardo Trimillos, who provided commentary on an earlier draft; Deborah Wong; Jonathan Ritter; and Sally Ness, who read through various versions of this work; and every past and present member of UCR Katipunan.
- ² The opening commentary on "home" in this essay is homage to Timothy Rice's discussion of "the field" (2008, 45).
- ³ The University of California Riverside has a relatively large Asian-Pacific Islander student population compared to other University of California schools and colleges in the United States. In the fall of 2008, API students consisted of 40.8% of the student body, with at least 920 Filipina/o American students (personal communication, Deborah Wong and Joe Virata, Director of Asian Pacific Student Programs, UCR, 5/5/2009). California and Hawai'i have the largest numbers of Filipinas/os in the United States. Although Filipinas/os arrived in the Louisiana territory as early as 1765, the largest number of immigrants entered the continental U.S. after 1965. A change in immigration policy allowed for the reunification of families and the entrance of skilled workers in the U.S (Okamura 1998, 42). This wave of doctors, surgeons, engineers, and nurses is commonly referred to as the "brain drainers" (Okamura 1998, 34; Pido 1997, 33; Lott 1997).
- ⁴ Indeed, many anthropologists turned homeward in the next two decades following the lead of *Reinventing Anthropology* and its 1990 counterpart, *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (Fox 1991) (Visweswaran 1994, 100–101). See Rosaldo 1993, Gusterson 1996, and Bourgois 1995 for discussion.
- ⁵ Casey Man Kong Lum's *In Search of a Voice: Karaoke and the Construction of Identity in Chinese America* (1996) focuses on Chinese American music and the practice of self-entertainment. Mari Yoshihara's *Musicians from a Different Shore: Asians and Asian Americans in Classical Music* (2007) is a bold challenge to the racial formation of Western European Art Music performance in the Asian diaspora. Deborah Wong discusses this first generation of scholars of Asian American music research in *Speak It Louder* (2004: 13). This includes Su Zheng's work on Chinese Americans (1993, 1994), Susan Asai's research on Japanese American music (1985, 1995, 1997) and Joseph Lam's landmark article on "Asian American music" as a heuristic device (1999). To this list, I add Parnes (1999), Reyes (1999), and a number of recent scholars chronicling Asian American popular music and performance such as Oliver Wang (2001, 2006, 2007), Christine Balance (2007), and Rachel Devitt (2008).
- ⁶ See the work of Reyes (1999) and Catlin-Jairazbhoy (1991).
- ⁷ Sally Ness discusses aspects of *Bayanihan* and other modern appropriations of Filipino folk dances in "Originality in the Postcolony: Choreographing the Neoethnic Body of Philippine Ballet" (1997).

- ⁸ The history of alterity in music is outlined by Born and Hesmondhalgh in the “Introduction” to *Western Music and Its Others* (2000) and is the through line in Radano and Bohlman’s collection *Music and the Racial Imagination* (2000). Also, Wong recognizes a number of publications in “Ethnomusicology and Difference” from the 1990s that “offered a new engagement with cultural theory and critical studies” (2006, 264). This engagement includes the scrutiny of power in shaping discourse of difference with the re-examination of the colonial/postcolonial nature of music research.
- ⁹ Ricardo Trimillos suggested that the PCN format as well as the time of year it is performed is a survival from the *bodabil* (from vaudeville), a staged variety show in the Philippines in the early twentieth century (conversation at the University of California Los Angeles, February 21st, 2009). Doreen Fernandez has written about the history of *bodabil* in *Palabas: Essays on Philippine Theater* (1996).
- ¹⁰ UCR has many academic resources for PCN performers. In years past, the Department of Dance offered a Philippine Dance Class, in which instructor Patrick Alcedo focused on the dances featured in the PCN. Currently, the Department offers a course directed toward Culture Night performance that attracts students involved in the PCN as well as those producing the Vietnamese, Chinese, and Indian Culture Nights.
- ¹¹ “*Maglalatik*” literally means, “performing the coconut dance” from the root word “*latik*,” (coconut). This is a prominent dance in the Pilipino Cultural Night’s Rural or Country dance suite. The performers wear coconut shells and manipulate them as percussion instruments while dancing.
- ¹² In his dissertation, Gonzalves (2001b) builds on a definition of the PCN Genre provided by Joel Jacinto at the Asian Pacific American Roundtable, 12 April 1996, California State University, Los Angeles.
- ¹³ April 16th, 2002, Riverside Municipal Auditorium.
- ¹⁴ About these research efforts, Elena Mirano writes, “The researchers, by their own admission...simplified dance figures to make the dances useful in the classes...this resulted in a body of material that lost much of its meaning after having been separated from its original context” (Mirano 2004, 51). In this statement, Mirano echoes the concerns of many scholars who reconsider these so-called “folk” dances in their collected, authenticated, stylized “folkloric” performance forms.
- ¹⁵ Stylized representations of Philippine expressive art are complex phenomena that may be interpreted in a number of ways. For instance, in “The Neoethnic Body of Philippine Ballet,” Sally Ness describes the ballet *Igorot* as an attempt to “recuperate” a colonial stereotype (1997, 72). However, Ness describes exchanges with Philippine dance experts who disagree about the appropriateness of this representation (1997, 86-88).
- ¹⁶ This is informed by Joseph Lam’s (1999) idea of generational difference as a unifying factor in creating an Asian-American discourse on music, and by extension, performance (47).
- ¹⁷ Program for “One Fall: 20th Annual Philippine Cultural Night” by the Katipunan Pilipino Student Organization (April 25th, 2009). Justin Pansacola (Cultural Chairperson for Katipunan) wrote the disclaimer because of concerns about misrepresenting the Philippines, Filipinas/os, and Filipina/o Americans in the PCN (personal communication 27 April 2009).
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Commentaries

Identity Politics in the Developmentalist States of East Asia: The Role of Diaspora Communities in the Growth of Civil Societies¹

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EAST ASIAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION—in which China, Korea (North and South), and Japan can coexist peacefully—is a question commonly discussed in contemporary Japan, if not the region and the rest of the world. However, the matter is generally posed within the context of the now prevailing global order, with its present neoliberal leadership structure. It does not look into the fact that East Asian regional integration, if not general political reform, must take into account the crises facing the East Asian developmental states and the emergence and increasing prominence of diaspora communities and civil societies within the region.

This commentary goes beyond a conventional assessment of regional integration and poses new ecocultural leadership alternatives to the prevailing leadership style in the four developmentalist states of China, North and South Korea, and Japan. Such alternatives are based on a multilayered, post-Westphalian notion of identity. And they can be found in civil society movements that include diaspora communities, who are often in partnership with local, sedentary citizens.

The East Asian Developmental State

The developmentalist states of East Asia arose in no small part as a modernization project and as a response to colonialism and imperialism in the 19th and early 20th century. Through a three-phase, colonial-

imperialist infiltration, the states of region successfully became Westernized and modernized. The first phase corresponded to the internalization of colonialism through the formation of the reactive-colonial nation of Japan, which became the first developmentalist state.² It turned a colonial power in order to counteract Western colonial pressures.

These states later went through the bipolar, hegemonic-colonialist division of the world during the Cold War and fell under the hegemony of neoliberal economics, which polarizes nations between North and South, between a rich sector extracting surplus from its poor(er) counterpart. Similarly, the global neocolonial world order has split the Westphalian state system into two types of competing states; on the one hand, the hegemonic industrial democracies, composed by North America and Europe (with Japan admitted as an honorary white country), consider the democratization of other states in the nonWestern world as a civilizational mission, combining internal democratic governance with international neocolonial expansion; on the other, the counterhegemonic developmentalist states, defined as latecomer modernizing nations mobilizing all their national capital to one end, seek to acquire power and compete with Western industrial democracies. To be precise, the latter developmentalist states can be subdivided into antidemocratic developmentalist nations like Libya on the one hand and those that strive to become industrial democracies, such as China and the Republic of Korea, on the other.

Mutatis mutandis, the four developmental states of East Asia compete with hegemonic industrial democracies. North Korea aspires to become a nuclear and military power and tries to obtain maximum concessions from the United States. It maintains a total war state system based on a strong national unification of its people. China competes in the neoliberal financial market through its economic growth, which relies on a massive population of peasants and cheap labour workers. Japan and South Korea use their technological knowhow as aspirants to industrial democracies. These four states all exercise their respective competing power to survive within the neoliberal global market. The problem is that they

are not prepared to meet the effects of the worldwide crisis of neoliberal governance and a rapidly deteriorating global financial system.

The Crisis of East Asian Developmental States: Impact on Regional Integration and East Asian Society

Despite the success of these East Asian states, both geopolitics and internal trends helped undermine the foundations of regionalism. First, the development of Japan as a War State (Noguchi 2007)³ and colonial power has been one major obstacle to regionalism. The double colonialism in and of the Cold War is yet another, dividing the Korean peninsula into two states, one of which turned into another total war state, North Korea. The third hindrance came in the wake of the global emergence of the BRICs, especially China, who, as a new champion of State-led development, became an eventual counterhegemon to the United States. Lastly, busy adapting themselves to the neoliberal rule of the globalizing interstate power game, the four countries, which were supposed to build a common house of East Asia (Kang 2001),⁴ follow mutually exclusive trajectories of developmentalist statism.

All these factors undercut the three conditions for East Asian regional integration: overcoming internal conflict between Japan, a colonialist aggressor state and its targets; resolving North Korea's antagonistic relations with the global hegemon, the United States; and creating a mutual agreement among China, Korea, and Japan, one based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and mutual benefit.

But the crisis of East Asian developmental states extends not only to regionalism but also to society and economy. The developmentalist states have also been transformed into arenas of identity politics because of the polarization of rich and poor local communities and the globalization of migration. The latter has resulted in a direct encounter of different identity communities within and between the developmentalist states of the region (Mushakoji 2003).⁵ Three recent events highlight the nature of this crisis.

In the case of Japan, the combination of 9/11, 3/11 and the Lehman Shock has polarized Japanese civil society between the supporters and opponents of the Developmentalist Total War State Project. 9/11 strengthened support for a Total War State project that wanted to control suspicious foreign migrants and keep American military bases in Okinawa. But it also triggered a variety of counterhegemonic citizen movements against unconditional Japanese support to the United States. These movements included the sedentary residents of Ryukyu-Okinawa and the indigenous residents of the annexed Kingdom of Ryukyu; another came in support of migrant worker communities, who were concerned about the violation of their rights to live in peace.

The Lehman Shock was the occasion of an antipoverty movement of sedentary citizens, as well as a joint campaign of local (Japanese) residents and migrant communities, who were suddenly facing massive loss of jobs and an involuntary return to their home country where a(nother) jobless situation was waiting. This was the case of the Brazilian migrant communities in different parts of Japan.

These people-based, counterhegemonic manifestations were, however, unable to change the developmentalist thrust of the State,⁶ which was supported by the majority of Japanese citizens. Many consented to and supported the financial policies of the Government, who, in alliance with the corporate sector, allocated funds in support of big industries, whose prospective bankruptcy would lead to the default of the Japanese economy. This and other policies contributed to forcing sedentary and migrant citizens to a life devoid of job guarantees.

The 3/11 Earthquake, especially the explosion of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plants, also polarized Japanese public opinion. On the one hand, a hegemonic project sought to reactivate the Japanese economy rather than tend to the victims of tsunami and the radioactive fallout from the nuclear plant explosion. On the other, popular campaigns for the support of the victims were organized by both sedentary citizens and migrant groups. A series of large-scale antinuclear plant manifestations

mobilized ten thousand participants; citizens supported their activities, sharing information hidden to the Japanese public through Facebook and other SNS systems.

The 3/11 Earthquake and the explosion of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plants also triggered three post-developmental, citizen-based projects. One was a political-economic movement to transcend a developmentalist high-growth policy that wanted to continue using electricity derived from nuclear energy. A second was an ecological project that sought to develop local ecocultural communities and reorganize top-heavy industrial development, which ignores the need to coexist with nature and seeks to raise national power and wealth through exploitative planning. A third movement advocates that life and society must not be demolished by a civilization which ignores cultural diversity. This project links sedentary and migrant citizens, reevaluating the diversity of ecocultural local wisdom in Japan and in the communities of origin of the migrant workers.⁷

9/11, 3/11, and the Lehman Shock were all used by Japanese developmentalist technocrats to redress and strengthen the Japanese economy. In the process, however, they sacrificed migrants from Islamic countries, victims of the tsunami and hibakushas, and destitute citizens, sedentary and migrants alike. These victims of high human insecurity learned to help each other, however, when and where the developmentalist state did not extend any help or support. They are now, sedentary and migrant alike, beginning to search for an alternative to the developmentalist state.

These citizen and diaspora movements posit counterhegemonic social forces that are based on multiple identities and multilocal livelihoods,⁸ which are combined according to the principle of subsidiarity and strongly anchored in an ecocultural local community as a matrix of endogenous intellectual creativity.⁹

This new identity comes amidst the gradual deterioration and the deconstruction of the individualistic citizenship model, which is based on the security contract between states and its citizens under a Westphalian

state system. This deconstruction is inevitable because of, among other things, the failure of exogenous imposition of Western individualism. Although the hope to modernize in the Western manner still exists in the four states in varying degrees, it is no more possible to keep an illusory hope to follow the West in building a civil society along the lines of the Western Enlightenment model. The new citizen is no longer in a contractual relation with the state¹⁰ and is attached not only to her or his native community but also to the community she or he enters as foreign migrant.¹¹

This multilocal communitarian approach requires openness to the massive input of various identity groups, whose demand for recognition will have to be satisfied. It will, more importantly, replace the standardization of identities forced upon the citizens of the developmentalist states. This pluralism is necessary in view of the massive influx of diaspora communities, each with specific identities. It also requires an overlapping multilevel hierarchy of such identities, which is quite different from the State/individual Westphalian security contractual system.¹² It also implies a democratic component.

A new democracy may evolve out of a common antihegemonic front composed by sedentary and mobile citizens.¹³ This new identity-political development follows the example of many macrohistorical situations of social transformation, which had been brought about by the interaction and cooperation between sedentary and nomadic groups (Tsurumi 1993).¹⁴ Their encounter can develop an alternative vision combining values well embedded in past traditions and an entirely new perspective free from local constraints.

This new politics, based on multiple identities, builds alliances between diaspora communities and sedentary citizens, and can help them overcome their zero-sum opposition under a neoliberal system of winners and losers. The peaceful coexistence, and potential, mutual benefits between these two groups are likely to become a precondition of any sustainable alternative to the neoliberal order. It is a multicultural, local-dominated, and self-organized bottom-up alternative.

Once local citizens and migrant citizens arrive at a win-win coalition, they can play a major role in the regional reorganization of East Asia. They can create a multilayer, multicultural regional order, one that inherits the positive universal values of Western enlightenment, integrating them in the context of a multicivilizational global system. This system is made sustainable by its isomorphism with the ecological and cultural diversity among local communities with specific combinations of multiple identities.¹⁵

The emergence of this new type of order—local, national, regional and interregional—will be based on a non-Westphalian type of citizenship (as described above), one which recognizes, regionally integrates, and lowers the borders between and among different identity communities.¹⁶ This will help develop a new, East Asian regional identity shared by citizens of China, the two Koreas, and Japan; it is an identity that will be built on top of local community identities, subsumed under national ones, but cognizant and respectful of divergences and differences.¹⁷ It involves a renouncement of the demand to make national identity the only legitimate one under the prevailing developmentalist state hegemony. This is where the role of migrants, in cooperation with sedentary citizens, will become essential. Indeed, migrants are already multi-identity groups who live in the local communities they have migrated into as well as in their states of origin.¹⁸

Towards a New Regional Order Based on a New Citizenship: The Role of Diaspora Communities

The diaspora communities in the East Asia developmentalist states are free spaces where a *homo novus* can emerge, along with the necessary conditions for a new democratic counterhegemonic agency that is indispensable for a post-Westphalian global and regional order proposed here.¹⁹ This alternative order is essential because of the following: the inadequate identity structure of the Westphalian states' crises; the need to respect ecological specificities; the anti-Development Racist human rights culture towards newcomers in the civil societies; and the presence of migrant

workers affected by the feminization and the informalization of contemporary global migration.²⁰

The developmentalist states of East Asia, especially Japan, have developed a system of social reproduction, which combines education, media, and other cultural institutions, to create a passive citizenship docile to the authoritative decisions of the ruling elite and the technocrats in their service. Moreover, because the developmentalist states are only concerned with the reproduction of their national identity with its “glorious past,” they cannot accept diaspora communities as equal partners. This is so especially in the case of Japan and its relations with the North Korean diaspora. Indeed, diaspora communities from other parts of East Asia are frequently made the victims of discriminations.

The counterhegemonic alliance between sedentary citizens and migrant citizens will have to turn this situation of human insecurity into a situation where Japanese citizens and diaspora communities can unite and help transform the identity politics of the country, among others. And there are encouraging trends, one of which is the cooperation between Japanese citizens and overseas Koreans in the fight against the Japanese government’s refusal to address the issue of “comfort women.”

Diaspora communities will help open (further) East Asian regional integration to the outside world. Organic and free-floating, migrants and diaspora groups live embedded in two societies, and yet keep a certain distance from local conflicts. They are also citizens with a multilocal livelihood, playing a double role, negative for them and positive for their communities of origin and destination. Overseas Koreans in Japan, for example, are caught between Korea and Japan and are not treated as true citizens in both countries. Yet they are the ones who created a “Kanryu” boom, a boom of Korean drama and music among the Japanese youth, by translating the scripts of Korean films into Japanese. The North Korean migrants in Japan have also been traditionally contributing to the economic development of their home country, and help open North Korea to the outside world.

Through their economic activities, the East Asian diaspora communities within East Asian states can help build a social capital common

to the four countries. This includes the cooperation between informal sectors excluded from civil societies by the developmentalist states; victims of human trafficking, for instance. Diaspora communities can develop capacities for social promotion and move people out of the informal sector into the local citizenship.

As the new foci of multi-identity, multicultural families and communities, diaspora communities are developing fair-trade exchanges, linking their livelihoods, both present and past (in their home country). They bridge the two communities of North and South and develop equal mutual benefit exchanges, economic as well as cultural. Under the joint efforts of the sedentary and migrant citizens, East Asian diaspora communities within the region can also become the foci of intellectual creativity where the Chinese, Korean and Japanese cultural specificities will mix and may enrich the region with new forms of arts and lifestyles.

Notes

- ¹ This commentary is based on a paper presented in an international symposium organized by Ritsumeikan University (Kyoto) on 24-25 March 2012.
- ² The term “developmentalist state” refers to non-Western emerging states in which the State Project was and still is to emulate and become equal to the Western colonialist states. They develop into Total War States even in peace time. Cf. Mushakoji, Kinhide. 2011. “State and Immigrant Community in Contemporary Japan: From Developmentalist State Ethics to Development Ethics of Common Human Security.” In *Transnational Migration and Human Security: The Migration-Development-Security Nexus*, edited by Thanh-Dam Truong and Des Gasper. Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag.
- ³ On the Total War State project in post-WW II Japan, cf: Noguchi, Yukio (2007). *Sengo-Nihon Keizai-Shi* [Economic History of Post-War Japan]. Japan: Chikuma Shobo.
- ⁴ Cf: Kang, Sanjung. 2001. *Touhoku-Asia Kyoutsu no Ie wo Mezashite* [Towards A Common-House of North East Asia]. Heibon-Sha.
- ⁵ Cf: Mushakoji, Kinhide. 2003. *The Phenomenon of Xenophobia: In Relation to Racism and Racial Discrimination*. Report Submitted to UNESCO. UNESCO.
- ⁶ This thrust of the State is part of the “imperial common-sense” which triggered the emergence of a “postmodern Prince” supported by organic intellectuals. Cf: Gill, Stephen. 2012. “Towards a Radical Concept of Praxis - Imperial ‘common sense’ Versus the Post-modern Prince.” *Millennium*. 40(3): 505–524.
- ⁷ On the three projects and their respective roles in the Anti-Nuclear-Base Movement, cf: Mushakoji, Kinhide. 2011. “*Gendai Nihon no Rekishi-chiri-teki Shiza to sono Shiou-teki Kadai; Post-311 Nihon ‘Han-Genpatsu’ Undou to Sekai no Shisou-teki Houkousei*” [The

Historico-Geographic perspective of Japan and Its Intellectual Problematique: The Anti-Nuclear-Plant Movement in Japan and the Intellectual Orientation in the World]. Paper presented at the Sino-Japanese Symposium on “The Philosophy in a Time of Global Transformation” at Beijing University.

- ⁸ At the base of the concept of multilocal livelihood is an awareness of the fact that localization of livelihood intensifies with globalization. Cf. De Haan, Leo. 2006. “Globalization, Localization, and Sustainable Livelihood.” *Sociologia Ruralis* 40 (3): 339–563.
- ⁹ The Rio+20 Global Forum was an occasion for such a world order to be proposed. This order is a radical ecological democracy based on local bio-regions as units of governance, with which States should cooperate according to the subsidiarity principle of this new democracy.
- ¹⁰ Rio+20 has published a draft of a sustainable treaty on “Radical Ecological Democracy.” It proposes a democracy where citizens are no longer in a contractual relation with their State, and where their eco-cultural local community becomes the basic unit through which decisions are implemented by states and international organizations. Cf. Rio+20 Portal, Information-Proposals-Radical Ecological Democracy. <http://rio20.net/en/propuestas/radical-ecological-democracy>.
- ¹¹ Cf. Mushakoji. 2011. “State and Immigrant Community in Contemporary Japan.”
- ¹² Cf. Mushakoji, Kinhide. 2003. *Ningen Anzen-Hosho-Ron Josetsu: Global Fascism ni koushite* [Introduction to Human Security Studies: Opposing Global Fascism]. Kokusai-Shobo. 122–125.
- ¹³ The creation of multicultural communities requires close cooperation between local sedentary citizens on the one hand, and the migrants, victims and transformer of the societies they migrate into, on the other. This is why common security between citizens and migrant communities play a key role in building a new citizenship detached from States. Cf. Mushakoji, Kinhide and Mustafa Kamal Pasha, eds. 2008. *Human (In)Security in the Networks of Global Cities: The Final Report*. Kasugai, Japan: Centre for Human Security Studies, Chubu University.
- ¹⁴ Tsurumi, Kazuko. 1993. *Hyohaku to Teiju to* [The Nomads and the Sedentary]. Chikuma Shobo.
- ¹⁵ See end note 10.
- ¹⁶ We proposed to replace developmentalism by a developmental ethics which recognizes the right to identity of all identity communities, including diaspora communities. Cf. Mushakoji 2011, “State and Immigrant Community in Contemporary Japan.”
- ¹⁷ The development in China of the concept of *zhonghua minzu* (Chinese Nation) defining a multi-ethnic identity of China including non-Han-minorities is an interesting example of such pluralism.
- ¹⁸ The inclusion of overseas fellow Koreans as a third actor besides North and South Koreans in building a unified Korean Nation is an interesting recognition of the role of migrants in the official documents of the DPRK.
- ¹⁹ An Asian Ontology/epistemology is at the basis of this position. Cf. Komamiya, Hiroo. 2011. “Seibutsu-Tayousei Jouyaku 2020 Nen Target Zenbun ni Tetsugaku wo” [Formulate the Philosophy of CBD in the Preamble of the 2020 Target Document]. In *Seibutsu-Tayousei Jouyaku Shimin Network teigen 2010*, 138–148. Seibutsu Tayousei Shimin Network.
- ²⁰ They cannot accept the development racism of the developmentalist states. On this racism, cf. Mushakoji, Kinhide. 1992. “Development and Racism in Asia and the Pacific.” Volume 4 of *International Movement Against Discrimination and Racism Yearbook*.

La Liga in Rizal Scholarship

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THE VAST AND CONTINUALLY growing body of Rizal studies has surprisingly paid little attention to the *Statutes of La Liga Filipina*. Most commentators are drawn to the fifth aim— study and application of reforms—and conclude that La Liga was Rizal’s last vain effort at reformist politics, which was cut short by his sudden deportation to Dapitan and replaced by Bonifacio’s revolutionary organization, the *Katipunan*. The document itself is hard to find, as it appears only in varying brevity in a few compilations. Remarkably, even the official edition of Rizal’s complete works published by the Centennial Commission in 1961 included only the abridged version by Wenceslao Retana. Thankfully, this serious omission in historiography has been redressed in the digital age with the online publication of the original text by Project Gutenberg.

Doubts have been cast on the authorship of La Liga, as noted by Benedict Anderson.

It is not easy to believe that this authoritarian structure, evidently adapted from Masonry’s ancestral lore, was Rizal’s brainchild... It is much more likely that structure was the brainchild of Andres Bonifacio, who formed the underground revolutionary Katipunan not long after Rizal’s deportation to Mindanao and the Liga’s abrupt disintegration (2005, 130).

While it is true that no existing manuscript can be traced to Rizal, the *Statutes* was published in Hong Kong while he was living there and was disseminated to political activists in Manila whom he addressed in organized gatherings. Most significantly, he never denied authorship of it even though, as he averred truthfully at his trial, he had no knowledge of

what came out of those meetings after his sudden deportation. What we do know is that Bonifacio revived the Liga almost a year after he had founded the Katipunan; only this time, conflicts among the members brought it to a definite end. Rizal could truthfully deny that the Katipunan was La Liga, but had Bonifacio been asked, he would have likely declared that his Katipunan was Rizal's Liga resurrected.

Most students of Rizal regard La Liga as a political program whose goals and aspirations were the veritable product of the Enlightenment. It was the organizational concretization of Rizal's masterful absorption of the political thought of *le siècle de Lumières*. Guided by Reason, it was an emancipatory movement aimed at the creation of a national consciousness which, once embodied into a subject of history, would choose its own course of action.¹

But this interpretation must contend with the fact that Rizal was a man of his time, and that the 19th century was a period like no other, with its own *problématique* which must be grasped with its own theoretical and practical tools. If the preceding century was, as Eric Hobsbawm puts it, the "Age of Revolution," which saw the pervasive dissolution of the *ancien régime* into the modern world, what followed was the "Age of Capital," where capitalism defined the issues of the day. If, in the Age of Revolution, the political question was the discovery of freedom, in the Age of Capital, the social question was the discovery of inequality at the heart of society.

Encapsulating the drama of his century, Pi y Margall (1857) wrote, "La cuestión social es la cuestión del siglo" (Quoted in Trias Vejerano 2001, 97; The social question is the question of the century). If the political question had been the agenda of the Third Estate desirous of political power, the social question was that of "*el cuarto estado*" (The Fourth Estate)—*las clases jornaleras*, the working classes, who needed better working conditions, a secure place in society, and a voice in the affairs of government. A new type of revolution, "a democratic revolution," was called for. As president of the short-lived Republic of Spain, Pi y Margall presented his government's program of reform with this opening line:

“All political revolutions are, at bottom, a class war” (99). It was his government’s objective to pave the way for the emancipation of the working classes through radical reforms. “The social question is the concern of all,” declares Pi y Margall. And this brings us right to Rizal (98).²

It is the prevailing view that Rizal was not theoretically equipped to grasp the issues of the 19th century, a lacuna in his learning manifested by the absence in his library of books on political thought after the time of the *philosophes* and the *Aufklärung*.³ Leon Ma. Guerrero set the premise of this observation in his biography of Rizal (1963, 431).

Rizal read Voltaire and Bonifacio read Carlyle and the “Lives of the American Presidents,” neither seems to have read Marx or Bakunin or Proudhon. Both the Liga and the Katipunan, *therefore*, were based on the comfortable theory of the social compact: unity, mutual protection and mutual help. But neither was aware of the issue that was already tearing western civilization apart: the choice between liberty and equality (emphasis added).

Guerrero presumes that since both Rizal and Bonifacio apparently had not read the works of these socialist intellectuals, therefore their organizations could not go beyond Rousseau’s theory of the social contract and they were likely unaware of the social issue of their time. This hasty presumption effectively narrows Guerrero’s interpretation of Rizal’s works in light of the Enlightenment, unmindful of the fact that Enlightenment political thought had given way to an increasingly radical interpretation in emerging socialist thought, and the social compact theory had evolved well beyond the initial premises of Rousseau.

There is, to begin with, Proudhon, who critiques Rousseau’s concept of social contract for being confined to political relations between ruler and ruled. In effect, Rousseau’s compact was neither an act of reciprocity nor an act of association of free people but the instrumentality for resignation of the free will of the individual in order to form popular sovereignty. For Rousseau, the idea of the social contract is that each of us places his person

and authority under the supreme direction of the general will, and that the group receives each individual as an indivisible part of the whole. By contrast, Proudhon's concept of *contrat social*, ever distrustful of State power, explains the organizational principle of La Liga better than Rousseau's.

What really is the Social Contract? An agreement of the citizen with the government? No, that would mean but the continuation of (Rousseau's) idea. The social contract is an agreement of man with man; an agreement from which must result what we call society. In this, the notion of commutative justice, first brought forward by the primitive fact of exchange... is substituted for that of *distributive justice*... Translating these words, contract, commutative justice, which are the language of the law, into the language of business, and you have commerce, that is to say, in its highest significance, the act by which man and man declare themselves essentially producers, and abdicate all pretension to govern each other...

The Social Contract is the supreme act by which each citizen pledges to the association his love, his intelligence, his work, his services, his goods, in return for the affection, ideas, labor, products, services and good of his fellows; the measure of the right of each being determined by the importance of his contributions, and the recovery that can be demanded in proportion to his deliveries (1851, 114).

Each theory addresses the practical demands of the day. Rousseau's "general will" is the conceptual force needed to oppose the absolutism of the *ancien régime*, the historic task of the Third Estate in the 18th century. Proudhon's "distributive justice" addresses in its turn the central issue of inequality in 19th-century society and argues that societies have a duty to individuals in need and that all individuals have a duty to help others in need. This Proudhonian principle pervades all of La Liga and must have made the most eminent sense to Bonifacio, yet was lost on Guerrero.

Pi y Margall was the man who introduced Proudhon to the Spanish-speaking world through his translations of Proudhon's, as well as Hegel's, philosophical writings. More than just translating and interpreting their

works, Pi y Margall created a social theory and political party program distinctly his own. His theory of federalism, using *el pacto* as the fundamental element of state formation, contributed to the social compact theory of the 19th century.

“The pact is the legitimate origin of all juridical relations among men who have reached in life the plenitude of reason,” he declares (Margall in Peyrou 2005, 17). The pact as the foundation of the State is linked to his ideal of a society of small producers associated in cooperatives and sustained by a decentralized state. The pact is thus the principle of consent that binds together different types and levels of collectivities, from the local, to the provincial and up to the state, confederating them as autonomous bodies in pursuit of common goals and under conditions agreed upon in the Constitution. He sees in the pact a principle of universal application, serving equally well to bind together cities as well as nations (Pi y Margall 1874). He explains that federalism comes from the Latin word *foedus*, which means pact, alliance; it cannot come into existence unless the contracting parties are free, that is to say, *sui juris*. Federation therefore necessarily means an equal and perfect autonomy of the constituencies from the bottom up (Pi y Margall 1882, 295).

Rizal’s terms acquire a definitive meaning and a theoretical unity when understood in the revolutionary semiotics of the 19th century. These terms include the motto of La Liga—*Unus instar omnium* (one is equal to all); its aim—a compact, vigorous, homogenous civil society arising from a federation of associations all based on the principle of mutualism and animated with a national sentiment; and its preferred form of state—a federal republic. All these terms cohere into one rational whole and each reveals its full significance in light of nineteenth-century political thought.

The ideological provenance of Rizal’s political language did not go unperceived by his enemies. In June 1888, amidst the tensions generated by the Hacienda de Calamba case, when the Rizal family was desperately trying to elevate the matter to the Supreme Court in Madrid, the Spanish

Senate debated on the agitations in the Philippines. A certain Senator Fernando Vida blamed Rizal personally for the perturbations against friar-owned lands, and decried *Noli Me Tangere* as “anti-Catholic, Protestant, Socialist, Proudhonian, and in it the indios are told that the estates possessed by the religious orders are usurpations of property, and that within a year, these properties will be taken away from the religious orders” (quoted in Retana 1907, 132 and in Schumacher 1997, 96).

Pi y Margall and Rizal

“Socialist” was how the Filipino propagandists referred to their great supporter Pi y Margall,⁴ as did Friedrich Engels,⁵ and as did Pi y Margall when referring to himself. The question then is: who was this venerable Catalan to Rizal and what influence did he have on the latter? This can only be answered adequately by original research, for this friendship between two men, likened by some to a father-son relationship, has been largely ignored by biographers of Rizal. What we do have written expressly about this relationship we owe to Manuel Sarkisyanz (1995, 199–200).

Del Pilar called Pi y Margall one of the greatest glories of Spain, who desired to conquer the love and affection of the Filipinos. In the year of Rizal’s coming to Madrid, Pi y Margall already had contacts with a family in the Philippines. Rizal formed a close friendship with this former president of Spain’s First Republic, and frequently visited him at his home. They were friends, when Rizal had been studying in Madrid since 1882, and when he returned in 1890. Pi y Margall’s daughter was said to have loved Rizal, who used to play chess with her father.

Sarkisyanz goes on to inform us that the redoubtable jurist was among the lawyers in Madrid representing the Rizal family in the Calamba friar lands case against the Dominicans. Poignantly, in his old age, Pi y Margall went in that dead of winter to Prime Minister Cánovas to plead for the life of Rizal “for the sake of humanity and for the sake of the fatherland” (1995, 199–200).

The young Rizal met Pi y Margall in Madrid in 1882, at the time when the jurist was writing the constitution for a Spanish Federal Republic. We are told that the newly arrived student frequented the statesman's home where they played chess and he found time to develop a love interest in the host's daughter. Based on these accounts, for which Sarkisyanz cites primary sources, is it not reasonable to presume that Rizal profitably used his time reading the books in Pi y Margall's collection, which undoubtedly included Proudhon, among other contemporary works? As a prominent political leader of the Spanish left and former prime minister, the Catalan had had decades of experience in and against the government, which would serve as important political lessons to the young Rizal. In fact, Rizal revealed to Carnicero, while in Dapitan, that he learned the politics of his country from Pi y Margall. Notably in his review of *Las luchas de nuestros días* (The Struggles of our Times) in 1890, Rizal could not quite contain his admiration for his mentor's works, and encouraged his countrymen to read as much of them as they could (Rizal 1963, 271–282). Logically, the impecunious Rizal had no need to acquire his own copies of those books he had read at Pi y Margall's; hence their absence from Esteban de Ocampo's bibliographic listing. Pi y Margall's numerous books and his translations of French books on political theory and contemporary affairs offered the reader a good exposure to radical European political thought. Although this reading *per se* would not have necessarily led Rizal to German radical thinkers such as Marx, whose debate with Proudhon marked the first schism of the International, it certainly would have given him a vital introduction to socialist discourse. It did lead him to British social theory via Herbert Spencer's works, most notably *Man Versus State*. At the time, the author was the most influential British sociologist, a fact recognized by Marx himself despite their disagreements.

If Pi y Margall is the missing link in most biographies of Rizal, La Liga Filipina remains largely unknown in Rizal studies. As long as it is read in the context of the Enlightenment and not beyond the premises of this philosophy, it will not be understood for what it really was intended to be. Anderson's *Under Three Flags*, for instance, can be

faulted for missing out on both; remarkably for a study of anarchism, it contains no discussion at all on Pi y Margall, a self-professed anarchist/socialist whose political party and writings gave support to the anticolonial struggle in the remnants of the Spanish Empire. The book just refers the reader to Sarkisyanz's accounts of the friendship between Rizal and Pi y Margall. While it is true that Sarkisyanz has done more than anyone else in unearthing the profound relationship between the two, it must also be recognized that he does not articulate how Pi y Margall influenced the internal development of Rizal's political thought; surprisingly, he offers no discussion of La Liga at all.

Anderson does write a short commentary on the Liga, but it is all too short, and includes a rather long footnote on Isabelo de los Reyes' views on the organization.

When I read in these statutes about 'blind obedience and the penalty of death for anyone revealing any League secret'... my character and opinions are very independent, and maybe my joining would serve only to disturb the discipline that is very necessary for any association (2005, 130–131n16).

The fact of the matter is that nowhere in the *Statutes* is there a sanction imposing the death penalty for disclosing the Liga's secrets. The second paragraph of *Deberes de los Afiliados* (Duties of the Members) demands sacrifice of personal interest and blind obedience to the Liga, whilst the fourth paragraph demands secrecy "a costa de su propia vida" (at the cost of one's life), but nowhere is the phrase "a pena de muerte" (death penalty) to be seen in the *Statutes*.

Up till now, La Liga has been a virtual conundrum. The influence of Proudhon's mutualist socialism is evident in the pages of the *Statutes*, but as long as Rizal is presumed to be unaware of social inequality and class exploitation of his time because of limitations of his political consciousness and his class bias, the Liga's radical program to create a civil society based on reciprocity and distributive justice will remain misunderstood.

Bonifacio understood it. So did de los Reyes, who, despite initial reservations on membership commitments, subsequently made the Liga's mission his very own. Sarkisyanz writes that

[i]n that year [1898], [Pi y Margall's] newspaper reprinted "*Memoria sobre la revolución Filipina*" by Isabelo de los Reyes. It seems that Pi y Margall's idea of converting proletarians into owners, his emphasis on workers' instruction and mutual assistance, contributed to De los Reyes advocating, in 1903 and 1904 – in the tradition of Proudhon (having brought his works, translated into Spanish by Pi y Margall, from Barcelona to Manila in 1901) – mutual exchange of services and the workers' claim to profit-sharing (as well as participating in the administration). Thereby, De los Reyes conceived an alliance between labor and capital – becoming the first modern socialist⁶ of the Philippines and of Southeast Asia – envisaging a future "when the Filipino people shall bring forth only *María Claras* and patriotic *Ibarras*, instead of false politicians" (1995, 201).

This paucity of comment on de los Reyes' advocacy, the fact that La Liga is not mentioned at all in its connection, reveals that despite his vast erudition on Rizal and his Spanish links, Sarkisyanz had not given the Statutes his usual scholarly attention. Tentatively he suggests, a few pages earlier, that "if there were Proudhonian elements in Rizal's thought, they had been transmitted by Pi y Margall"—but goes no further (196). Yet nothing could be more glaring: what de los Reyes says in his memoirs about what he was trying to do could well have been said of Rizal's own enterprise, for are not the two initiatives one and the same? Except for a couple of differences perhaps: the Ilocano brought home Proudhon in his trunk; the Tagalog brought him in his head. And both had divergent fates. De los Reyes founded the first labor union in the Philippines, the *Unión obrera democrática*, launched the first labor newspaper to champion the rights of the working class, and organized general strikes. Rizal was exiled to Dapitan where he practiced what he preached in a community he made his own, went on to meet his martyrdom, and with his death galvanized the Filipino people into a nation. Rightfully, de los Reyes has come down in history as the First Filipino Socialist, and Rizal the First Filipino.

Notes

- ¹ The most perceptive interpretation of the Statutes of La Liga as a product of the Enlightenment is made by Cesar Adib Majul (1959).
- ² This was the opening line of the Manifesto of the Federal Republican Party in 1894, “La cuestion social preocupa todos los animos.”
- ³ Not quite true, unless the great works of 19th-century French and Russian literature are considered “non-political.” Rizal’s library listed the works of Balzac, Hugo, Zola, translations of Turgenev, to name but these few; and what books could be more penetrating in their understanding of the 19th century?
- ⁴ As mentioned by Lopez Jaena to Rizal in a correspondence dated 6 March 1887 in Rizal (1963, 85).
- ⁵ Friedrich Engels writes in “The Bakuninists at Work: An account of the Spanish Revolt in the summer of 1873” (in Marx and Engels 1939), “Of all the official republicans, Pi (y Margall) was the only Socialist, the only one who realized that the republic had to depend on the support of the workers. He promptly produced a programme of social measures which could be carried out immediately and would not only benefit the workers directly but eventually lead to further steps, thus at least giving the first impetus to the social revolution.” But this “revolution from above” was undermined by a “revolution from below” of the anarchist followers of Bakunin.
- ⁶ Note that the (*) asterisk cites William H. Scott, “U.O.D., First Filipino Labor Union” in *Social Sciences and Humanities Review* (Manila 1983, 140).

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Influence of Political Parties on the Judicial Process in Nepal

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THIS COMMENTARY ARGUES that access to justice in Nepal is problematic because political parties wield a lot of influence on the judiciary and on law-enforcement personnel. They use the judicial process to eliminate opponents, boost interests, or ensure that are crimes never prosecuted.

The commentary specifically cites examples of how such political parties obstruct the judicial process by directly intervening on the prosecution of human rights violators and corrupt officials in the country. This has severely eroded the effective functioning of the judiciary.

Aria and Bhuwan (2010) report that different opinion surveys show that people perceive the influence of the Nepalese government on the judicial process. The political system in the country is characterized by a constant changing of the ruling party, who, among other things, protect corrupt members from criminal prosecution. Indeed, succeeding governments in Nepal since 1991 have misused criminal prosecution to serve party interests. Influential party representatives at the local level intervene in the investigation of cases by pressuring the police force and the criminal courts to release party members who have been accused of crimes under the law.

This is shown in the case of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (CPN), the previous ruling party in the Nepalese government. During the 2008 elections, CPN party members were elected into the Constituent Assembly of Nepal. The government was reported to have provided NR

500,000 to NR 800,000 (US\$10,148) to over 7,000 former CPN fighters, who had been demobilized after the civil war. The amount varied according to their military rank, but the cash aimed to help ease their return to civilian life. Also, about 9,000 former CPN Maoist fighters are now part of the army (BBC 2012).

All these despite the fact that many CPN party members were convicted of human rights violations during the armed revolutionary years. In 2012, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) published a report stating that there were 30,000 cases of human rights violations during the armed struggle from 1996 to 2006. These included 9,000 cases which were “serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law” (Suhās 2012).

Another instance of the politicization of the judicial process in Nepal is evident in the case of a former government minister. The Nepal Monitor (2012) published a report on the corruption case against Jaya Prakash Prasad Gupta, former Minister for Information and Communication. It was filed by the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA). On the 21st of February 2012, the verdict found that Gupta was guilty of having “accumulated money and property from unknown sources while holding public offices in different capacities since 1992.” The Supreme Court slapped on him an NR 8.4 million-fine (US\$100,500) and ruled that he be jailed for 18 months. After the verdict was delivered, Gupta and his political party protested, saying that he was being sentenced for his opposition to other parties and not for his corruption. His fellow party members backed Gupta’s claim by stating that the verdict was politically biased and ill-intended, forcing the court to revise their verdict (ibid.).

As seen in these instances, the judicial process has been tampered with and hindered by political entities. This has a profound impact on Nepalese political life. In 2005, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 126) found that a lack of independence of the Nepalese police force encourages a culture of impunity, and unless they

become accountable to the rule of law and observant of the national and international framework of human rights, their ability to protect the public is seriously compromised. There is also widespread public sentiment that the peace process will only result in a blanket amnesty for the criminals. A hope of peace or justice is neither to be expected as access to justice is seriously undermined in the country. Such access to justice is the keystone of good governance. Despite the hope of the public that justice will be served, the so-called democracy in Nepal has not brought any significant change to the people's lives.

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Reviews

Book Reviews

Sacrificial Bodies: The Oblation and the Political Aesthetics of Masculine Representations in Philippine Visual Cultures. Reuben Ramas Cañete. 2012. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press. xii, 380 pp., figures, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. Paperback, Php 750.00.

SCULPTURE, UNLIKE PAINTING, does not normally carry its frame with it and does not open into a virtual space of say, a landscape, a portrait or a nude. It moves into a site, takes up its space, obtrudes it and changes it, to borrow from W.J.T. Mitchell (2005). As the sculpture takes its place in a location or station, it demands to be seen, felt, held, beheld, and encountered by other bodies in that space; it wants to be touched and attached, dressed up, mimicked (e.g., the Oblation Run), re-performed, reproduced, re-formed, to be our friend and companion. And when the sculpture takes the form of a lithe, tanned, and toned male body, the space is all the more activated, and becomes a highly charged site of ambivalent and “heteroglottal” political effects and actions. The sculpture is a desiring, vital, animated, and relatively autonomous agent that has a political and social life of its own (Appadurai in Mitchell 2005, 146) and whose artistic body, form, and symbolisms impact into the body politic and its multiple publics.

The political effect of artistic actions—in this case the *Oblation*—is the project of Reuben Ramas Cañete’s comprehensive study aiming to investigate the *Oblation* as a social, political, and aesthetic phenomenon. Anchoring his theoretical position around the term “political aesthetics,” Cañete premised his study on the notion, as was already hinted at, of “politics being produced as a result of aesthetic interventions in the social space” (3).

To develop and en flesh this theoretical position, Cañete deploys four more terms to complement the key concept of political aesthetics: “*sacrificial, embodiment, masculinity, representations*” (2). The idea of the *Oblation* as a *Sacrificial* body threads and structures the book and its chapters. From this idea, we deduce—taking the cue from Mitchell again—that the *Oblation* wants to give itself away in “total servitude” in the service of an imagined communal identity. Carefully disciplined and shaped according to noble and classic proportions, it projects strength, restraint, self-control, and service to a higher, messianic mission. Drawing on Christian imagery and the idea of the value of pain and abjection offset by the nobility of sacrifice and the spirit reigning over the flesh, the *Oblation* wants to be deified to be purged of dross humanity.

However, instead of a singular, homogenous, hegemonic heterosexual body, the *Oblation* wants to be many *bodies*, embodying the competing, intersecting heteroglottal positions, feelings, and expressions of its multiple publics. For the founding fathers, the *Oblation* functions as a totem of the UP “tribe,” bound by its laws and political aesthetics; and as the stand-in victim, sacrificed at the altar of UP-as-postcolonial-and-modernizing nation. For the mysterious group that conducts a ritual at its foot in the Oblation Plaza at UP Diliman, the *Oblation* is an idol who desires things: flowers, rice, “blood,” adoration, respect. Like its stance, the *Oblation* stands open as a seat of contradictions—vulnerable yet brimming with health and contained energy, receptive yet elusive, sacrificial yet monumental.

Cañete’s ably argued construction of the *Oblation* as a hybrid figure that eludes easy interpretation deconstructs monolithic masculinities, and opens up spaces for alternative models and politics of manhood: less individualistic, less self-absorbed, and more giving than older male stereotypes. It is also from this strength that I *want*—as a feminist critic—to reclaim this study’s theoretical maneuver as an offshoot of feminism. Though implied in the claim that the study lies at the intersection of cultural studies and masculinity, the feminist context and feminist origins of masculinity studies are not fully and explicitly articulated and credited.

Unlike for instance, in his earlier essay on billboards, where the author's context is clearer when he wrote that he "comes from a position sympathetic to (because originating from) the feminist experience," (Cañete 2012, 52) feminism in this study appears to have been subsumed under more macrodisciplinal contexts and theoretical categories: postcolonial studies, cultural studies, visual culture, which in their turn are methodologically enabled by anthropology (particularly ethnography), political economy, aesthetics, and art history. I could only presume that these methods are reconfigured and reframed by an unacknowledged feminist viewpoint, evident in his very critique of the Sacrificial's encoding as male, and its *representation* as *masculine*, two other key terms that expose the erasure of other "sexed/gendered/embodied agents of the field"(3) within a patriarchal visual culture.

Similarly, feminism in this study also tends to disappear under comprehensive and overarching concerns about race and "being Filipino" when it locates the *Oblation* as the "'anticolonial/anti-imperial' but silenced sacrificial body..." (Cañete 2012, 298). As such, this manifests what Kavita Daiya (2006) would describe as the "vexed relationship" in "much of current scholarship between nationalism and gender, especially feminist cultural criticism and the postcolonial critique of nationalist discourses"(1).

As a comprehensive survey, the study is understandably diffused and horizontal. Perhaps, had the study grounded itself in the emerging yet still under-investigated field of masculinity studies, around which other key terms and methods would have revolved, then fresher political directions and effects could have opened up all the more for the *Oblation* as a Sacrificial masculine body. Judith Newton (2002) refers to one such direction as a new "politics of feeling," which involves "the massive reconstruction of dominant masculine behaviors and ideals" such as obsessive competition, avoidance of the "lowly labor of doing for others," and eschewing the building of relationships around "trust and care," among others (190). As earlier stated, Cañete's study has hinted at but not fully

moved towards this direction in masculinity studies, and it is one towards which the sculpture of a lithe, tanned, and toned male body can move more productively as it transforms the space it occupies with other desiring, wanting, and sacrificing bodies.

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Re-reading the Salaryman in Japan: Crafting Masculinities. Romit Dasgupta. 2012. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. xii, 210 pp., notes, bibliography, index. Hardcover, £85.00.

OVER THE PAST TEN to fifteen years, a growing number of scholars and writers have focused their attention on critical understandings of the gendered-ness of masculine ideologies, identities, experiences, and practices in Japan. Much of this work has attempted to deconstruct or dislocate ahistorical, essentializing, and unproblematized assumptions about and representations of men and masculinities in Japan. However, until very recently most of this work has been published as individual journal articles or book chapters, has been collected in edited volumes or has been either broadly historical or cultural and queer studies-based analyses. In *Re-reading the Salaryman in Japan*, Romit Dasgupta, who has made important prior contributions to this literature, offers one of the currently very few full-length monographs based on ethnographic fieldwork that examine the gendered constructions, or craftings, of modern Japanese men's identities and lives.

Using extensive ethnographic interviews conducted in 1998 and 1999 with some forty young male employees of two companies, the large enterprise Northern Energy and medium-sized Northern Print, Dasgupta provides sensitive yet critical readings of the microlevel individual craftings of masculine salaryman identities and life-paths as complexly articulated in macrolevel politico-economic and ideological contexts. Thus, while focusing on ostensible representatives of the ideologically hegemonic white-collar, middle-class, heterosexual salaryman, Dasgupta combines ethnographic data and text analysis with historical contextualization and gender-based theorization to “dislocate” the salaryman from within, as it were.

The book is organized into eight chapters. Two beginning chapters and one concluding chapter provide the necessary macrotheoretical

framework and historical contexts with which to understand the lived craftings of masculinity among Dasgupta's young informants. Here, Dasgupta introduces the key theoretical dynamic between "hegemonic masculinity" and the "crafting" of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity refers to the ideologically most powerful, ascendant or dominant construct of masculinity vis-à-vis both femininity and, importantly, other forms of masculinity. Though with prewar antecedents, the salaryman-ideal—typically heterosexual, urban, middle-class, white-collar employees of (large) stable enterprises—emerged as the hegemonic form of masculinity in Japan especially in the postwar years. This hegemony, Dasgupta explains, is an ongoing process "crafted" at both societal and personal levels. It is historically contingent and shifting, and despite recent challenges, is at present still powerful; and, it is an embodied process involving individual negotiations, ambiguities, and slippages.

The heart of the book is composed of five ethnographic chapters that describe the microindividually gendered projects and processes of becoming, being, and crafting salarymen masculinities in post-Bubble, late 1990s Japan. Each chapter is introduced with theoretical and ethnographic discussions that more specifically frame and contextualize the detailed descriptions of Dasgupta's informants' experiences. Together, these chapters show the life-path-related craftings of masculine identities and relationships. Thus, Chapter 3 describes the young men's reflections on becoming boys, emotionally, physically, and sexually. The next chapter focuses on the important school-to-work transition, when the school/college boys (are) transform(ed) into becoming responsible working social adults, *shakaijin*. The centrality of work in crafting salaryman corporate masculinity in these men's lives and identities is further explored in Chapter 5. Another key component of salaryman masculinity, regulated heterosexuality, is explored in discussions of expectations and experiences of marriage and fatherhood—importantly qualified by the inclusion of one homosexual man's case. Finally, Chapter 7 describes the significance, shifts, tensions and potential desires related to homosocial relationships, *tsukiai* and friendships, among salarymen.

Throughout, the strength of Dasgupta's work is in "re-reading" the salaryman and hegemonic salaryman ideology and discourses not as stereotypes or doxic ideals but as "crafted," negotiated, and sometimes internally conflicted and contested ongoing accomplishments that are the processual outcomes of the rather complex articulations of individually embodied practices, experiences, and identities with historically contingent ideological and politico-economic structures. Dasgupta allows and requires us to understand salarymen as gendered individuals crafting and re-crafting themselves across historically contexted life-paths. Furthermore, Dasgupta accomplishes this by combining an impressive array of Japanese and English language resources and data—detailed ethnography, popular cultural texts, historical analysis—with theoretically informed analysis. To do this in readily readable fashion is no small task.

I have elsewhere and often criticized the continuing representational bias, in both scholarly and popular writing, of discussions of middle-class, white-collar salarymen, and I might otherwise fault Dasgupta for this choice. However, as noted above, Dasgupta critically and sensitively portrays his salaryman informants, working to provide them with agency and humanity and thus working to deconstruct (perhaps my own) overly simplistic notions of hegemonic salarymen and salaryman corporate masculinities.

I do hope, however, that Dasgupta will in fact take up his own suggestion at the end of the book to conduct new fieldwork and interviews with his informants, now fifteen or so years later, to explore how they have continued their salaryman craftsmanship across the yet unrelenting Heisei recession and into their early middle-ages. And, more ideally perhaps, it is my hope that Dasgupta's work will inspire others to pursue similar ethnographically based, intertextual, and theoretically informed research among nonhegemonic men and masculinities in Japan.

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An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. 2012. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. xvi, 608 pp., photographs, index. Hardcover, US\$35.00.

“GLOBALIZATION TAKES PLACE only in capital and data. Everything else is damage control” (1). So begins *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*, an anthology of the essays of exilic Bengali literary scholar, South Asian radical feminist, and Western-based deconstructivist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Comprised of twenty-five essays spanning twenty-three years, and written in her forbidding, often controversial prose, *An Aesthetic Education* is Spivak’s attempt to redress the imbalances caused by globalization, which bulldozes cultural differences and nondeveloped societies through the illusion of a universal individualized choice achieved via ever more efficient forms of capital instrumentalization. Lost in the contemporary miasma of social networks, consumer “freedoms” and the tyranny of science and technology is the disempowerment and decay of knowledge in the humanities and social sciences; a condition that Spivak stringently reproaches by reiterating the revolutionary potentials inherent in the humanistic language of modernity. Spivak grounds this critical premise in the Enlightenment promise not only of a phantasmatically progressive present, but also of a reflective and skeptical human subject.

This critique takes form through Spivak’s reification of Gregory Bateson’s concept of “the double bind,” in which a participant of a game or project encounters contradictory instructions in the act of implementation, and is forced to live through this condition in a state of perpetually deferred or “frustrated” goals. Using Marx—as transformed by Gramsci—Spivak tweaks the role of the skeptical intellectual grounded in the conditions of communal life (Gramsci’s “organic intellectual”) as a critical position that gives cognizance of the need for the humanities to “educate” publics submerged under the dominant specter of capitalism, while at the same time question the certainty of this knowledge as grounded

either in the imperialist imagination of Western humanities (in particular, English literature), or in the nativist invented tradition of essentialized primevalism.

This impetus to “defer” the fulfillment of an epistemic *logos* explains why Spivak rereads the giants of Bengali literary canons, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahasweta Devi and R. K. Narayan; and revisits and deconstructs Western theoretical figures from Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Schiller to Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. This rereading and revisiting seems to achieve two simultaneous goals: to differ in their assumptions of certainty and closure, and to defer the claim of a triumphal counternarrative rooted in the suspicion of grand narratives. Such a doubled movement also belies Spivak’s own epistemic debt to deconstruction, a discipline she learned under Paul de Man, the legacy of which she ultimately acknowledges to Jacques Derrida (Spivak’s first major publication in 1977 was the English translation of Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*). Spivak’s introspection of this discipline also suffuses her writing, which is not merely thematic, but also autobiographical, a critical tactic borne of her feminist (and Marxist) leanings, and more importantly, of her nation(ed) and race(d) cipher as the Other teaching amongst the (West’s) Self.

But as the essays of her contemporary postcolonial writers like the Algerian feminist Assia Djebar or the South African J. M. Coetzee; events like the War on Terror; and aesthetic insights into “artists of color” like Tsong Pu, Chittrovanu Mazumdar, Abderrahame Sissako, and Anish Kapoor all show, Spivak is equally at home interpellating in the nebulous site of globally produced, and diffusely gendered art and politics in locations like New York and London. These productions cannot be so easily pigeonholed into locations, tropes, sexes and ethnic identities. Rather, as a consequence of the globalization that abetted and informed them, the works of these writers and artists underwrite the task that Spivak sets out: to use the humanities as the radical term that unhinges the centrality of knowledge in the Other (that is, the peoples of the underdeveloped world) through its “performative locution” as text/image dwellers located both in the West and Non-West, simultaneously.

Throughout her essays, Spivak reminds readers of the radical possibilities of rethinking the “subaltern” (a term that she immortalized in “Can The Subaltern Speak?,” an essay that, unfortunately, is not included in this collection) as both possibility and textuality. Reminding us of her first rereading of South Asian radical femininity through the life and death of Spivak’s first “martyr,” Bhubaneshwari Bhaduri, essays detailing Spivak’s own efforts at educating poor Bengali women in Bangladesh—and the ultimate failure of that effort due to male elite interference—are amongst the most poignant and empathic in the collection. Admittedly, this experience would, to the uninformed reader, explain the tone of “bitterness” that is often ascribed to her recent work. But as *An Aesthetic Education* indicates, Spivak’s adherence to her reified insight of the double bind forestalls an easy resolution of (Western-based) progressing the (Asian/African-based) underdeveloped. This realization is rooted in the deconstructive commitment to constant deferral, eloquently summarized by Spivak in two pregnant and eventually revealing words: “false hope.”

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Film Review

Ang Babae sa Septic Tank (The Woman in the Septic Tank). 2011. Directed by Marlon Rivera. Written by Chris Martinez. Produced by Martinez-Rivera Films and Quantum Films. 87 minutes.

THE TAGALOG MOVIE, *Ang Babae sa Septic Tank* (The Woman in the Septic Tank), is about two young indie filmmakers, Bing Bong and Rainer, together with their production assistant, Jocelyn. They are in the process of creating a movie entitled, “*Walang-wala* (With Nothing),” which they hope will garner them awards and recognition particularly in film festivals abroad.

In the “theater-in-a-theater” setting, Bing Bong, the film’s producer, was particularly optimistic that their movie would win awards especially since the subject matter that they tackled was that of poverty and the plight of the urban poor in Metro Manila, which for him was a sure-fire formula to win awards in international film festivals. As he says in the film — in English, particularly that of the educated Filipinos — their movie was “Oscar’s” material since it “works on so many levels, metaphorically and sociologically...” and is “controversial.” And in a moment of hubris, he even adds, “It’s what the country needs right now!”

One of the points that Homi Bhabha raised in his article, “The Commitment to Theory,” was whether Third World countries have escaped the chains of colonialism or imperialism (Bhabha 1994, 19–38). He cites the example of “(A) large film festival in the West — even an alternative cultural event such as Edinburg’s Third Cinema Conference” as revealing “the disproportionate influence of the West as cultural forum, in all three senses of that word: as a place of public exhibition and discussion, as a place of judgment, and as a market-place” (21). Bhabha uses the example of a film about Bombay’s pavement dwellers winning an award in international film festivals that opened the doors for the film to be distributed in India.

In the movie, *Ang Babae sa Septic Tank*, the protagonists' eagerness and drive to win recognition at an international festival seems to imply their belief that winning an award there would validate how good/talented/genius they are as filmmakers. This indicates Bhabha's view of the West having an influence as "a place of judgment" (21). In what seems to be an ironic twist of life imitating art, the movie was the Philippine's entry for the Best Foreign Language Film category during the 2011 Academy Awards.

At the same time, the protagonists' envy of the good fortune of their colleague who won an award in the Venice Film Festival and the seemingly massive outpouring of film projects that he has experienced when he came back to the Philippines are indications of the West's influence as a "market-place," which opens opportunities for aspiring indie filmmakers. This seems to imply that we have not yet moved beyond the confines of colonialist or imperialist thinking when it comes to the relationships between nations. Instead, in this post-colonial world that we live in, new means of colonialism have emerged through popular media.

The protagonist's belief that using the formula of Third World poverty as a subject for their film would win them awards indicates somehow that the First World/West has a partiality to recognize films that it views as representing the gritty "reality" of living in the Third World. The protagonists, who probably come from the middle- or upperclass and are greatly influenced by Western perspectives, exploit this by presenting poverty according to the Western view of how poverty should look like.

As seen in the dialogue between the two protagonists (rendered predominantly in English), Ranier, the director, wants their movie to be "as real as possible" and "believable and not put on." To which Bing Bong replies, "Festival programmers won't have it any other way."

They were "pleased" to find a suitable location for a scene: a neighborhood with shanty houses. But there, they were confronted with the reality of poverty when they were robbed and their car was stripped off its parts. And they could not do anything but wail and cry. Even when they reported it to the police, they somehow knew that it was hopeless.

Their idea of poverty, which was of a mother being forced to sell her child to prostitution, showed only one side of poverty and did not represent its entire reality in the Third World. Aside from representations of poverty, another interesting point that the movie makes is how the representation of the characters in Bing Bong and Ranier's film can change the overall tone or impact of their movie. In one scene, the protagonists imagined how their film would be perceived if they used another actress with a different skin color or age or if they used a different gender for the child playing the role of victim. Even using a different race or nationality for the pedophile character can alter their film's message and the metaphorical meanings attached to it. In addition, the genre that will be used for their film (whether documentary, musical or drama) and even the perspective of the storyteller can shape the film's representation of reality to the audience. This is seen in the portion of the film where the lead actress, Eugene Domingo, playing as herself, tries to put her interpretation of the movie's sequences.

As a whole, *Ang Babae sa Septic Tank* seems to parody the indie film industry by showing representations of what an indie filmmaker looks, acts, and thinks like through the characters of Bing Bong and Ranier. It seems to characterize the indie film industry as one that is obsessed with winning awards from international festivals. In the same vein, the lead actress, Eugene Domingo, plays a caricatured version of herself — another representation of what a famous, award-winning actress looks, thinks, aspires to, and acts like.

The movie makes the audience ponder whether the representations in the movie are the actual reality or just a version of reality that the author or director wants them to see.

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Reference

Bhabha, Homi. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Literary Writings

Winter Scene in the Desert of Gansu

The Old Silk Road is sparse
After the frozen Yellow River
Pierces the heart of Gansu
In Chinese Turkestan on my
Way to the caves of Dunhuang.
The yellow desert now turned
White in the snow that ripples
The ribs of trodden paths the hill
After undulating hill of crystal lit
Up by traces of the dying sun.
Not a shadow of bone nor flesh
Here in this neck of nothing where
Once dreams inflamed of
Fortunes and faiths and tongues
Exchanged for silver and silk.
There are only the cloudiest clicks
Of nine or ten Nikons that rush
From cave to cave their bearers
Unsmiling in the cold their
Delicate lips tourniqueted in
Bloomsbury scarves.
Only the bootsteps of Pradas
And Armanis follow them like
Ghosts in the slush.

Thomas David CHAVES

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Alone: Three Haikus

1.

Stillness of the air
My hand upon your portrait
Quiet of my room

2.

Foggy windows shut
Dim light shines from a lamppost
Dusk echoes my song

3.

Murmurs from outside
The world awakes from slumber
Haunted by the thought

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About the Authors

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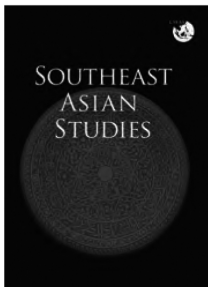
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