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The *Pacto de Sangre* in the Late Nineteenth-Century Nationalist Emplotment of Philippine History

The *Pacto de Sangre* (Blood Compact), despite its crucial significance in Filipino conceptions of history, is seldom interrogated in Philippine historiography. The event that happened in Bohol in 1565, involving Sikatuna and Legazpi, was narrativized in the late nineteenth century and became integral to the nationalist emplotment of the past. However, the two principal narrative strands of Marcelo del Pilar and Andres Bonifacio differed owing to divergent political projects. This article revisits the making of a founding myth of Filipino nationhood in light of scholarship on ancient blood oaths and the historical account of the encounter of Sikatuna and Legazpi.

KEYWORDS: HISTORIOGRAPHY · BLOOD OATH · BLOOD BROTHERHOOD · NATIONALISM · MYTH MAKING

In his classic *The Propaganda Movement: 1880–1895*, Fr. John N. Schumacher, S.J., points out that the *Pacto de Sangre*—traditionally rendered in English as the Blood Compact—was one of the “principal points emphasized” in the historical writings of the *ilustrados*, the well-educated early Filipino nationalists (Schumacher 1973, 206; 1997, 228). The *Pacto de Sangre*, he points out, was based on the “custom among the ancient Filipinos of sealing a treaty of alliance and friendship by mixing the blood taken from an incision in the arms of the two leaders entering into alliance” in an alcoholic drink that both leaders drank (*ibid.*). Schumacher (1973, 134n; 1997, 150n) observes that the blood oath of “Legazpi and Sikatuna . . . [was a] token of friendship and allegiance” between a conquistador and a chief who was “undoubtedly merely a local datu” but the *ilustrados* “liked to look on this pact . . . as the agreement between equals on which Spain’s rights in the Philippines were based.”¹

Schumacher (1973, 206; 1997, 228) writes further, “Paterno, Rizal, Del Pilar, presented the pact as a contractual agreement between equals, by which the Filipinos had sworn loyalty to the king of Spain and simultaneously had become Spaniards in the full sense of the word.” For their part the Spaniards had to do their part in “assimilating” the Filipinos. However, “inasmuch as the Spaniards had violated their side of the contract,” the *Pacto de Sangre* was used to “signify the right of Filipinos to withdraw from the pact their ancestor had entered into” (*ibid.* 1973, 207; 1997, 229). Schumacher (1973, 207; 1997, 229–30) emphasizes that this understanding of Spain’s failure to abide by the agreement “between King Sikatuna and Legazpi” justified the position that “Filipinos are no longer bound by the *pacto de sangre*, and not subject to Spanish sovereignty”—concluding that “This, in fact, Andrés Bonifacio would do in 1896 to start the Revolution through the *Katipunan*.”

Laying out these ideas in 1973, Schumacher has provided a clear exposition of the meanings that *ilustrados* such as Marcelo del Pilar attached to the encounter of Sikatuna and Legazpi. Concomitantly Schumacher suggests that the *ilustrados* “liked to look on this pact” in a way that was inadmissible. Cesar Adib Majul (1967, 78) raised a similar point, saying that “The assertion that the Philippines came under Spanish sovereignty on account of a compact, if meant to refer to historical fact, is inaccurate” simply because “there was no such nation as the Philippines during the time the blood compact took place.” Majul (*ibid.*) also asserted that “Sikatuna was a local chief, and

there is no evidence that he negotiated for the whole Archipelago.” Along with Majul, Schumacher is one of the very few historians who have queried how the *Pacto de Sangre* has been regarded in Philippine historiography. These commentaries, however, have not altered the general conception of this event.

The *Pacto de Sangre* in Philippine History

In school and college textbooks, the treatment of the Blood Compact has been highly variable. Whether ignored, mentioned perfunctorily, or discussed at length, the *Pacto de Sangre* has lived on in the national imagination, underwritten by a grand narrative.

Interestingly, in the second half of the twentieth century, historians seemed to awaken to its importance by giving the Blood Compact a treatment more extended than in their earlier works. For example, Gregorio Zaide (1958, 39), in *History of the Filipino People*, wrote simply, “At Limasawa, he [Legazpi] was well received by Bankaw, king of the island. At Bohol, he made a blood compact with two Filipino kings of the island—Sikatuna and Sigala.” In *The Pageant of Philippine History*, Zaide (1979, 227–35) gave a longer account, detailing the background of Legazpi and Urdaneta, describing the voyage, and explaining the context of the Blood Compact, even mentioning the village where it was supposed to have transpired.² For his part Teodoro Agoncillo (1974), in *Introduction to Filipino History*, mentioned nothing but the scarcity of food supplies in Bohol.³ His example would be followed by Renato Constantino (1975), Jaime Veneracion (1987), and O. D. Corpuz (1989), who chose to be reticent about the *Pacto de Sangre*. In *History of the Filipino People* Agoncillo (1990, 74) thought it worth a quick mention: “By February 1565, Legazpi reached Cebu and contracted blood compacts with Si Katunaw and Si Gala at Bohol.”

The writers of *Tadhana* mentioned the *sandugo* (literally, unified blood) ceremony of Legazpi with Sikatuna and Sigala, as well as that of Kolambu and Magellan, but chose to emphasize the rite that transpired between Tupas and Legazpi in Cebu, explaining

Now, in the solemn ritual, native and foreigner would consecrate the friendship that eluded earlier efforts. But, though blood had blended, minds remained apart. To the Filipino, the blood compact was an agreement between equals, a pledge of eternal fraternity and alliance. In

the same instant that Tupas and Legazpi now drained their cups, it was clear on the other hand that to the Spaniard this was a ceremony between victor and vanquished foe.... (Marcos 1976, 45)

This interpretation has been endorsed by Zeus Salazar (2009).⁴

Fr. José Arcilla, S.J. (1984, 14–15), made no mention of the blood ceremony in *An Introduction to Philippine History*, a work that first appeared in 1971. In *Rizal and the Emergence of the Philippine Nation*, Arcilla (1991) began to mention the Blood Compact,⁵ his discussion becoming florid in the book's 2003 edition, which provided the context of Legazpi's expedition and the circumstances that led to the meeting with Sikatuna, culminating in

Legazpi's request . . . to invite a chief in Bohol, Si Katuna (or Katunao), to come on board and hold a parley with Legazpi. After some hesitation, the chief showed willingness to come, provided ransom was exchanged between the two parties. The traditional rite of kasing-kasing was duly performed with Katuna's son and the day after, Katuna himself came aboard to repeat the same ceremony. They collected a few drops of blood from their arms, mixed them with wine, and drank the mixture. In their native tradition, since the same blood now flowed in their veins, they had become members of the same family, bound to observe loyalty to one another. Finally, in the king's name on 15 April, Legazpi took possession of the island of Bohol. With nothing more to do in Bohol, Legazpi decided to proceed to Cebu. (Arcilla 2003, 36–37)

Other historical texts that appeared in the last decade of the twentieth century gave the Blood Compact more than a passing mention. Rosario Mendoza Cortes and colleagues (2000, 30) in *The Filipino Saga: History as Social Change* wrote, "Miguel Lopez de Legazpi arrived in Cebu, ruled by Rajah Tupas, on 27 April 1565. Earlier, he had landed in Bohol, where he befriended two native chiefs, Sikatuna and Sigala, with whom he performed blood compacts, first with Sikatuna on 16 March 1565 and, a few days later, with Sigala." In a piece that appeared on the front page of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Ambeth Ocampo (1999, 11) explained the Blood Compact within the frame of modern diplomacy: It was as a "treaty of peace" needed because "the Spaniards . . . were not allowed to land on Bohol." The resulting "blood compact or *sandugo* between Sikatuna and Legazpi," Ocampo (*ibid.*,

1) stressed, "can be seen not only as the first bond of friendship between the Philippines and Spain, but also the first international treaty between the Philippines and a foreign country" (*ibid.*). This "treaty" was entered into at "a time when the Spaniards went into agreements with Filipino leaders, a time in the distant past when the colonizers treated Filipino leaders as equals rather than slaves" (*ibid.*, 11).⁶

In 2003, as part of the official commemoration of Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day, Virgilio Almario (2003) put out a book titled *Pacto de Sangre: Spanish Legacy in Filipinas*, which gives the blood oath a transcendental significance that verges on a postnationalist reading. As Almario (*ibid.*, 2) contends, merging the historic event with the book of the same title, "*Pacto de Sangre* is symbolic of the cultural transfusion which transpired after Sikatuna drank the wine mixed with Legazpi's blood," but admits that, although the "Spanish blood [is] in our veins," "The transfusion, perhaps, is largely one-side." In any case, by drinking Legazpi's blood, Sikatuna wedded Filipinos to Spanish culture and civilization. For many it has been a literal transfusion: "Spanish blood now runs through the veins of many Filipinos and has become part of the Filipino genetic stock" (*ibid.*).

For all the variable treatment of this event in various history texts, the *Pacto de Sangre* appears to have become increasingly romanticized as the Spanish colonial past recedes and as various strands of Filipino nationalism mature, particularly in the wake of the centenary of the Filipinos' revolution against Spain. Undoubtedly the Blood Compact is deeply etched in the national consciousness. To many Filipinos there is a sense of Sikatuna standing tall in the face of the conquistador Legazpi, the latter compelled to abide by the indigenous custom as a way of "insuring friendly relations." From this Bohol chief is named the Order of Sikatuna, "the national order of diplomatic merit" instituted by Pres. Elpidio Quirino on 27 February 1953, through Executive Order 571, to celebrate "the first treaty (Pacto de Sangre) between the Philippines and a foreign country" (*Wikipedia* 2009; ICON Group 2008). As the official marker on the presumed site also declares: "Thus during this period of colonization, a bond was sealed in accordance with native practice, the first treaty of friendship and alliance between Spaniards and Filipinos." This event can be regarded as a defining moment—a founding myth—of Filipino nationhood. The event is memorialized in Napoleon Abueva's 1997 bronze sculpture of Sikatuna and Legazpi located along a shoreline of Bohol Island—called the Blood Compact Shrine⁷—that Filipino travelers visit in a



Fig. 1. Napoleon Abueva's *Blood Compact*, 1997

sort of pilgrimage to a holy ground of history and a touristy bow to the past. The Internet offers an abundant collection of photographs of this tableau (fig. 1) and of tourists posing with the monument in the background.

Given the salience of this event in Philippine historiography, this article revisits the Sikatuna-Legazpi encounter to probe deeper into the appropriation of this event in the context of the rise of Filipino nationalist consciousness in the late nineteenth century. Its meanings at present may be somewhat different from how it was apprehended in the late nineteenth century, but without its appropriation in that earlier period it can be argued that the Pacto de Sangre would not have resonated throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. To reexamine the late nineteenth century appropriation of the Pacto de Sangre, this article focuses primarily on the writings of Marcelo del Pilar and Andres Bonifacio, who interpreted it in rather different ways.³ Also discussed is Juan Luna's painting of this event. This article can be seen as a retracing of Fr. John N. Schumacher's discussion and an amplification of his provocative suggestion concerning the *ilustrados'* skewed perception, but this is done in the context of what we now understand as the dynamics of precolonial societies, bringing into stark relief the divergence

of the nationalist appropriation of this event from what is known about the preconquest practice of making blood oaths.

The Ancient Blood Oaths

In the age prior to the European conquest, the peoples that lived on the islands that would later be known as the Philippines held lavish feasts to build and cement alliances among rulers or chiefs and their followers. The forging of an alliance in the context of preventing bloodshed or ending a feud or warfare involved a ceremony in which drops of blood from the persons entering into this relationship were mixed in an alcoholic drink, which they then drank. Laura Lee Junker (2000, 301) prefers to call this ritual a blood oath.

Given the absence of indigenous sources, the only sources concerning this manner of building alliances come from Spanish chroniclers in the sixteenth century. Thus our knowledge of it is mediated, and perhaps compromised, by the challenges of intercultural communication. At the same time, Filipinos have also been heavily influenced by the perspectives of the late nineteenth century in viewing blood swearing events. Still it is worth looking at some of these early accounts, to which regrettably I have access only in their English translation. Miguel de Loarca (1582/1975, 98) is said to have reported:

Reconciliation between those who have quarreled, whether these are individuals or the people of different villages, is brought about by drawing blood from the arms of both parties, and each tasting the blood of the other, placed in a shell, sometimes mixed with a little wine; and such friendship is not to be broken.

The Boxer's Codex (Anon. 1975, 233) puts it thus:

When they make friends with those whom they are at war or with others, some are accustomed to take a little blood from the arms or other part of the body and give it to drink to those who wish to become their friends and the others do likewise and in this way they say peace and friendship are made perfectly and that it would not break.

Taken at their face value, these renditions suggested that a key principle in the Spanish accounts was their understanding of these oaths as a means to establish "friendship" to prevent or terminate a bloody dispute between

individuals presumably within one village or across two villages. The circumstances that brought individuals or entire villages to decide to become friends after a period of enmity were not stated. But once the parties—their numbers were not specified—had decided to become friends instead of enemies, they would “taste” or partake of each other’s blood, sealing a relationship that was not to be broken.

Distilling sources on the Visayas, William Henry Scott (1994, 156) suggests the following about blood oaths:

Hostilities were suspended or avoided by *sandugo*: peace pacts in which the two parties drank a few drops of one another’s blood in a draught of wine. . . . It was a procedure by which two men, not necessarily enemies, became blood brothers, vowing to stick together through thick and thin, war and peace, and to observe mourning restriction whenever they were separated from one another.

Perhaps in response to how blood oaths have been interpreted since the rise of Filipino nationalism, Scott (*ibid.*) clarifies that “These peace pacts were made between two datus, however, not between two nations or tribes, and so were binding on other members of the community only to the extent of the pact holder’s effective authority, and in no case on other datus.” Scott underscores the “localized” character of blood oaths. However, he informs us that the parties to such a pact need not have been enemies, but the expectation was similar whether or not there had been prior animosity: a bond that would survive through “war and peace.” Scott raises this ritually sealed friendship to the level of blood brotherhood.

Some light is thrown on this ancient practice by Thomas Kiefer’s (1968) study of ritual friendship among the Tausug in the late 1960s. The parties to a ritually solidified friendship became “brothers” by swearing on the Koran, a practice that could have replaced the drawing of blood and its joint partaking. Nevertheless, the basic contours of the Tausug practice appear to be very similar to what is known about the ancient blood oaths. Harkening to Scott’s portrait, Kiefer (*ibid.*, 228) reports that Tausug who entered ritual brotherhood could either be casual friends who wanted “to cement their relationship with supernatural sanctions . . . to prevent betrayal and to increase the solidarity of the bond”; or they could be former enemies who agree to “finalize an amicable settlement between them” through someone’s intermediation. The

relationship forged in this ritual is supposed to be “permanent and intensive—an extension of those found within the family” (*ibid.*). Breaking the oath would invite a terrible curse that could be passed on to many generations.

Note that the parties in a blood oath could not be too far apart in terms of status position (*ibid.*, 234). Kiefer also reports that “two headmen from adjacent or distant communities [could] swear together” and thus unite both communities in a large alliance (*ibid.*). However, oath taking is “basically dyadic. When a large group swears together it is not the entire group which is thought to be solidary, but only each of the various dyads within it” (*ibid.*, 233). Given the prevalence of dyadic ties in Philippine society at present, it could well have been the situation in the precolonial age—which would have made the blood oaths involving two relatively large social groups not only localized but also reducible to a series of dyads of sworn brothers.

However, as Kiefer suggests, in a bond of former enemies there was “often some ambivalence in the relationship, which may come to the surface with any precipitating event” (*ibid.*, 230). At the moment of swearing brotherhood, the strong motivation apparently was to have an ally in war, just as two men from distant villages would want to become sworn brothers for purposes of battle or a piracy expedition (*ibid.*, 233). In a highly fluid social world such as that of the Tausug in the 1960s or the preconquest islands with their internecine warfare, one needed allies. The ancient blood oath was most likely a strategy of negotiating one’s way through the thickets of conflict and warfare, to ensure that one had a friend who would fight alongside him against an enemy. This norm drew from the ideal solidarity of siblingship, a paramount relationship among peoples that practiced cognatic kinship in this part of the world.

It can be argued, therefore, that the ancient blood oath was a mechanism to create by means of ritual a bond analogous to that of siblings. Siblinghood was the ideal norm because siblings were believed to share a common blood substance and were reared to value unity and mutual assistance in various aspects of life, including warfare. Because blood was seen as the essence of life unique to individuals, persons created a solid tie by drinking each other’s blood after which they possessed in common the same essence of life. After the oath, their blood was seen to contain the blood of the other, thus forming a unity. If drinking milk from the breasts of the same woman could create siblingship (and human milk itself is said to be produced from blood circulating in the body), as Carsten (1995, 227–28) has shown for another part of

Southeast Asia, it is not farfetched that in the ancient blood oath the direct partaking of blood could create a bond of siblinghood that was foundational. Siblinghood as the model of blood oaths was also important because, amid sibling unity, hierarchy according to birth order existed. Allies who became blood brothers were not necessarily equal, as a chief could enter into a blood oath and become the vassal of a stronger chief in forming an alliance network.

Yet loyalty was not fully guaranteed and betrayal of a blood brother could happen, if for instance one party sided with a kinsman who had become the enemy of a ritual friend. After all siblings, even today, do have conflicts that tarnish the ideal, despite the fact that siblings strenuously avoid such an eventuality. Notwithstanding the possibility of betrayal, we may conclude that the blood ceremony was a ritual of sworn siblinghood, which was meant to create an indissoluble friendship, a dyadic bond that was part of a larger concatenation of dyads that formed an alliance network.

Viewing the blood oath in terms of sworn or blood brotherhood enables us to see that the blood oath of the ancient islanders in what would become the Philippines was akin to cultural practices found in many other societies around the world. For instance, “in the old Irish Sagas, there are traces of the old Scandinavian custom borrowed from the Vikings, of two men mingling their blood and becoming sworn brothers” (Hodges 1922, 385n). On the western islands of Scotland “the ancient islanders has ratified their leagues of friendship ‘by drinking a drop of each other’s blood’” (*ibid.*, 390). Hodges (*ibid.*, 389–90) argued in the 1920s that

It is now a well-established fact that covenanting by some use of the blood of the covenanters, the custom known as blood-brotherhood, has been practiced in nearly all parts of the world. Scores of examples are recorded, showing that blood-brotherhood has been known throughout the centuries, from hundreds of years before Christ among the early Scythians down to our own day among savage tribes. And the practice is found in such widely scattered regions as America, Australia, Africa, Europe, and Asia.⁹

In the 1910s a scholar had noted

“the notion that particularly by drinking the blood of another living being a man absorbs the nature or life into his own, one which appears

among primitive peoples in many forms”. . . . “But the most notable application of the idea is in the rite of blood brotherhood, examples of which are found all over the world. In the simplest form of this rite, two men become brothers by opening their veins and sucking one another’s blood. Thenceforth their lives are not two but one.” (Heather 1952, 158)

In Africa in the nineteenth century blood brotherhood was fairly common, especially in the Kenyan coastal region, as a mechanism by which travelers and traders of different ethnicities formed business networks that allowed strangers to be trusted and assured the safety of merchants (Herlehy 1984, 298). It was such a useful alliance that “even some of the early European travelers and colonial administrators had to become blood-brothers with local residents before they could expect an hospitable reception by host communities” (*ibid.*, 299). The parties rubbed a piece of roasted chicken or goat on a cut made in one’s chest “so that the meat mixes with their own blood”; they then exchanged and ate the meat while declaring a vow of brotherhood (*ibid.*).

Were the Spanish conquistadors familiar with the blood oaths practiced in ancient Europe and in other parts of the world? Whatever the case might have been, it is interesting that, in the early Spanish accounts, the blood oath was not described in a disparaging manner. Certainly it was not condemned as a heathen practice. On the contrary, the conquistadors participated in blood oaths, much as Europeans participated in blood oaths in Kenya in the nineteenth century. Based on what can be deduced about the past, despite the linguistic divide, Spanish conquistadors entered into blood pacts with the islanders with some understanding of what the ceremony meant and evidently without any squeamishness. Their understanding must have been more than superficial. Because they figured that chiefs had circumscribed authority and they wanted to position themselves strategically in local alliance networks, as Scott (1994, 156) acutely observes, “Spanish commanders usually drew blood with more than one chief when making treaties [of friendship]—Magellan in Cebu, Saavedra in Sarangani, Legazpi in Samar, Goiti in Leyte, Rodríguez in Negros.” Scott (*ibid.*) notes the irony “that the blood compact between Legazpi and Si Katuna of Bohol memorialized in Juan Luna’s famous 1883 *El Pacto de Sangre* was an exception to this practice of drawing blood with more than one chief.”

The Blood Oath of Legazpi and Sikatuna

One account of this event indicates that, when Legazpi's forces landed in Bohol in mid-March 1565, they were in dire need of provisions and their flagship needed major repairs. Initially Legazpi wondered why the islanders did not approach them to trade, so he sent "the Moro," a cooperative captive, to seek out Sikatuna, who could be found "near a river two leagues away" from where they had anchored, with assurances that Legazpi's forces meant no harm (Anon. [1990], 191). The following day the Moro returned with word that Sikatuna was skeptical because of the "trickery and injury that the Portuguese and the Moluccans had inflicted on them" a couple of years earlier (*ibid.*). Sikatuna reportedly made it a condition that, for the islanders to be "reassured," a Spaniard should meet him where he was "and make a blood compact with him" (*ibid.*). Legazpi then sent a soldier named Santiago, together with the Moro, to meet Sikatuna, who then gave them a warm reception: "He gave him food and told him to make a blood compact and sealed their friendship. Both drank the blood mixed with wine" (*ibid.*). With some level of trust established, Sikatuna promised he would go and see Legazpi another day.

Sikatuna did go to the coast where Legazpi's ships had anchored but would not board the ships. He wanted Legazpi to meet him on shore but he must be "alone to make a blood compact with him and make the natives feel safe with the Spaniards" (*ibid.*). Legazpi demurred, explaining through the Moro interpreter that "even if he wanted to go, his people would not let him; because someone like him, serving a prince so great and as powerful as the King of Castilla, was not to go alone anywhere" (*ibid.*, 192). Legazpi, of course, was being cautious, because he had experienced previously in Cibabao (Leyte) Island one of his men killed while in the act of making the blood ceremony (Legazpi 1903, 201). With assurances of safety and two men from the Spanish armada as escorts along with several of his own men, Sikatuna was prevailed upon to board the vessel and meet Legazpi. The Bohol chief's actions were explained repeatedly in the account as understandable "because of the past atrocities suffered here at the hands of the Portuguese" who initially offered friendship only to pillage the community: "they robbed, killed and captured many of them, a total of more than eight hundred" (Anon. [1990], 192).

Legazpi is reported to have "felt it meant so much to get these people to come to us" (*ibid.*). Eight days after the Spaniards had anchored the meeting of leaders finally took place.

When Si Catuna arrived at the flagship, the General [Legazpi] received him graciously with all the friendship and affection he could muster. The *principal* [Si Catuna] said that he wanted to make a blood compact with the General to seal their true friendship. And this was done, drawing from each breast two drops of blood, mixing them with wine in a silver cup, then dividing the contents into two cups equally, both drank at the same time, each of them his half of the wine-blood mixture. When this was over, the *principal* expressed great happiness. The General ordered that preserves and wine from Spain be brought in. The *principal* thought that this was not bad at all.

The blood ceremony, which the report states was wanted by Sikatuna, first with Santiago and then with Legazpi, was conducted without discussing any terms except the arrangements for the encounter and Sikatuna's desire for "true friendship." On board the flagship the feasting that Legazpi ordered right after the blood oath was conformable with indigenous practices of ritualized food events. Immediately following the sharing of food, according to the account, Legazpi began to explain his purposes: his monarch had wanted to extend "friendship" with all the local chiefs "of these islands" who would become the king's vassals; he was there to trade and barter, and he would pay them "very well and to their satisfaction"; he would keep discipline among his soldiers; and "he would always see to their well being and now that they had made the blood compact things would be even better from then on" (*ibid.*).

Legazpi reportedly took Sikatuna "for his friend and thus he loved him as if he were his own brother" (*ibid.*). Evidently, if this account can be trusted, Legazpi and Sikatuna would seem to have understood that they had solemnized a pact of blood brotherhood. Sikatuna reportedly said that "now that their friendship had been sealed they would come without fear" (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, Sikatuna was not entirely convinced: "Although this fear lingers on, he had entered into the pact of peace and amity with the General who it was hoped would keep it inviolate for as long as they did not break it. Only then could they be sure that what they shared was true friendship" (*ibid.*, 193).

The conversation shifted to the state of the local economy. Sikatuna explained, "that year they had suffered famine on this island due to drought and that they did not have rice nor anything to eat, nor pigs or goats or chickens" (*ibid.*). Whether this was an extreme portrait of the situation cannot

be ascertained, but Sikatuna did say he would try to secure supplies for the Spaniards from the island's interior. Legazpi expressed regret for the Portuguese actions and he asked Sikatuna to narrate what happened "so that an account of it could be given to the King of Castilla by his vassal" (*ibid.*). Legazpi stressed that Spaniards were different from Portuguese, but Sikatuna explained that they could not discern the difference because Portuguese and Spaniards "had the same gestures, arms and clothes" (*ibid.*). Legazpi reiterated, "the natives could rest assured that the word of friendship given by his men or by other Castilians would be kept without hesitation nor deceit" (*ibid.*). As if to further prove his sincerity, Legazpi gave Sikatuna "four yards of linen tablecloth, a mirror, a chamber pot, knives, scissors and necklaces" and Sikatuna's men were also given necklaces—and "After this, Si Catuna left very happy" (*ibid.*). Sikatuna seemed pleased at the end of the meeting and, together with Sigala, subsequently assisted Legazpi and guided him to Cebu. However, Legazpi (1903, 208) later reported that, "although Cícatuna and Cigala made friendship with me, we could put no confidence in them; nor would they sell us anything, but only made promises."

Taking the account at its face value, it can be deduced that Sikatuna desired the blood oath with Legazpi to prevent violence and ransacking, which could be inflicted by an armada that was initially indistinguishable from the forces at whose hands Sikatuna's followers suffered some two years previously. Blood brotherhood appeared to be the answer, and both men seemed to have understood what their swearing of friendship meant. However, Sikatuna appeared to have entertained some skepticism, which probably dissipated when Legazpi gave gifts—not because Sikatuna was dazzled by an object like a mirror, but because Legazpi as host of the feast had treated him as an elite guest by lavishing him with valuables, as was customary in the ritualized feasting of the precolonial age (Junker 2000, 314–18). In other words, Legazpi had acted according to the decorum of the islanders in a ritualized feast, and Sikatuna's status had been affirmed at the same time that he managed to form an alliance that could protect his polity from what was perceived as the predator Portuguese.

Del Pilar: Assimilation and the *Pacto de Sangre*

Over three centuries later, ilustrados certainly knew about the blood oath of Sikatuna and Legazpi, probably by reading the historical accounts from

that period. But their social context had changed drastically from the pre-conquest age and they seemed unable to fathom the precolonial framework of meaning, despite determined efforts to reconnect with the past as Rizal (1889/1961) exemplified in annotating Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, a work that appeared in late 1889. The complex world of alliance building, blood brotherhood, status competition, and social fluidities evidently had become murky to them, and it had become difficult to appreciate Sikatuna's attempt to maneuver through a time that was unlike all they had known previously, a world that was being turned upside down by European empire builders.

Heavily influenced by European political notions, the ilustrados thought in terms of colonization, assimilation, or independence—concepts and practices that did not apply to the precolonial world. A product of their times, ilustrados like Del Pilar framed their reading of the blood oath in Bohol in 1565 as the key event that commenced the process of Spanish colonization of the country they had come to know as Filipinas. Instead of viewing the blood oath as a localized event within a set of dyadic ties, Del Pilar saw it as a country-to-country or people-to-people agreement, even when a political entity called the Philippines had not existed. Del Pilar (1898, 3) opens his tract, *La Soberanía Monacal en Filipinas* (Monastic Sovereignty in the Philippines), which first appeared in February 1889, by calling to mind the blood oath:

Tres siglos hace que la sangre de Legazpi y Sicatuna mezclada en una copa que ambos apuraron en señal de eternal amistad, solemnizó el juramento de fundir desde entonces en un solo ideal las aspiraciones de España y Filipinas.

Pero el tiempo transcurrido, sin consolidar esta fusión, han fortificado sólo el predominio de los conventos que convirtieron las islas en colonia de explotación monacal.

Three centuries have passed since the blood of Legazpi and Sicatuna blended in a cup that both men consumed in a sign of eternal friendship; they celebrated their oath, from then on, to unite into a single ideal the aspirations of Spain and the Philippines.

But the time that has passed, without strengthening that unity, has only fortified the predominance of the monasteries, which have converted the islands into a colony for monastic exploitation.

Reading his present into the past, Del Pilar saw Sikatuna as standing for all of the Philippines, as if the Bohol chief was the duly nominated authority. For his part, Legazpi (rather than Santiago) represented all of Spain, not just the monarch he served at that time. Revealing an essentially Western point of view, Del Pilar conceived the blood oath of Sikatuna and Legazpi as a permanent political treaty: a Blood Compact. The tacit assumption was that both parties entered into the contract in good faith, that it was valid, but continuing respect for it was contingent upon Spain's fulfillment of its part. There seemed no doubt that the Philippines abided by its part of the agreement.

Del Pilar interpreted the blood oath as the pivotal event that established a lasting partnership between Spain and the Philippines.¹⁰ It defined the ideal. The mingling of the blood of two individuals was seen as signifying concomitantly the fusing of the aspirations of two countries. Those aspirations, Del Pilar asserted in his writings, did not include the power and dominance of the friars, as well as their pride and prejudice, which were also implied in the word soberanía.

In an article that appeared in *La Solidaridad* on 30 September 1889, Del Pilar specified what those aspirations were as he saw them. By this time leading the Propaganda Movement's campaign for assimilation, a central plank of which was representation in the Cortes, Del Pilar advanced the position that the assimilation of the Philippines in the Spanish body politic constituted the shared aspiration in the Blood Compact. Del Pilar (1889/1996, 380) argued against racist ideas that reduced "the Filipino race" to an inherent position of inferiority because of the Filipino's "anthropological conditions" (*condición antropológica*). On the contrary, he asserted assimilation as Spain's imperial responsibility:

Por de pronto la anexión de Filipinas á España se verificó bajo el compromiso de honor por parte de esta de asimilar á los isleños á las condiciones de España; los diferentes juramentos, que representantes de esta noble é hidalga nación sellaron con el *pacto de sangre*, han caracterizado de un modo especial la colonización española, de modo

que aconsejar la repulsión del *asimilismo* filipino es sencillamente aspirar al perjurio de España.

España no puede, no ha de ser perjura; desde sus leyes primitivas hasta la más modernas consagran el principio de asimilación para Filipinas. . . . (ibid.)

The annexation of the Philippines to Spain was effected under the honorable obligation on the part of the latter to assimilate the islanders to the conditions of Spain. The different oaths, which representatives of this noble and illustrious nation sealed with the *pacto de sangre*, have given Spanish colonization a special character, such that to advise the rejection of the *assimilation* of the Filipino is simply to desire the perjury of Spain.

Spain cannot and should not perjure itself. From its primitive laws to the most modern, all are consecrated to the principle of assimilation for the Philippines. . . .

The Pacto de Sangre was depicted as giving Spanish colonialism a distinctive character, which the French would later call *mission civilisatrice*. It was Spain's "honorable obligation" to assimilate Filipinos, in other words, to civilize and uplift the natives Spain had colonized. In its invasion of the Philippines, the United States would call upon its so-called manifest destiny and extend to its new subject people the rewards of "benevolent assimilation." Del Pilar probably would not have realized the full implications of what he propounded as the meaning of the Pacto de Sangre, but the U.S. invasion did end the soberanía monacal. He insisted the Blood Compact was a legal contract, a treaty that justified Spain's colonization of the Philippines. In his mind the blood oath of Sikatuna and Legazpi was a negotiated contractual exchange: Spain could annex the Philippines and in return the Philippines was to be assimilated. This legal contract was honored mostly in the breach because of friar hegemony, but it was time, Del Pilar asserted, to call Spain to account, lest Spain perjure itself.

Luna: Ambivalence in *El Pacto de Sangre*

The use of the word "pacto" and its usual English translation as "compact" has reinforced the interpretation of the blood oath as a legal treaty. Schumacher

(1973, 206; 1997, 228) suggests that the ilustrados “presented the pact as a contractual agreement between equals.” But how equal or unequal were the parties to such a supposed treaty? Even as Del Pilar, as well as Juan Luna, thought of the blood oath in Bohol as a pacto, there was ambivalence about whether the two parties could be deemed more or less at par. After all, if they were relatively equal, why would there be a need to assimilate the islanders? The position of the Philippines as “annexed territory” in need of redemptive assimilation indicated it was in a subordinate position, even as Del Pilar argued Filipinos should not be regarded as racially inferior.

The ambivalence of the ilustrados’ interpretation of the blood oath of Sikatuna and Legazpi is registered in Juan Luna’s painting *El Pacto de Sangre* (fig. 2), completed in Europe in 1885, which he executed, along with another painting (*Miguel Lopez de Legazpi*), in return for the scholarship he received from the Ayuntamiento de Manila (Kulay Diwa 2009). This ambivalence is manifested in divergent readings to which the painting—exhibited in Malacañang since the early twentieth century—has given rise.

Floro Quibuyen (1999, 188) sees the painting as encoding the basic superiority of Spain. He argues that the focus is on Legazpi, while Sikatuna is rendered faceless, the only islander in the scene dominated by Spanish conquistadors.

There is a striking imbalance in this Rembrandt-style painting: On the lower left edge is seated local chieftain Sikatuna, poised against six Spaniards, who fill up four-fifths of the whole canvas. Five of the Spaniards are standing tall, two of them wearing armor. Note the disparity in the visual representation of the two protagonists: Light falls on Legazpi who faces us, the viewers, whereas Sikatuna’s back is turned to us, as he sits oblique to the table. The play of light and shadow on Legazpi’s face creates a dramatic, imposing aura. (ibid.)

Quibuyen points out that Sikatuna is seemingly “pushed out of the frame by Legazpi and his retinue” (ibid.). Moreover, he observes that “Legazpi seems relaxed, [but] Sikatuna evinces tension as he holds on to his kris (native sword)” (ibid.).

In contrast to Quibuyen’s interpretation, Paul Zafaralla (1986) has offered a nuanced but quintessentially twentieth-century nationalist reading of Luna’s painting. Zafaralla (ibid., 54) claims that “The pictorial and



Fig. 2. Juan Luna’s *El Pacto de Sangre*, 1885

Source: Cover of Almario 2003

analytical sweep of the canvas with its assertion of the Filipino role in a new world of discovery transformed the historical event into a major cultural document.” He (ibid., 55) notes that Luna’s painting is “asymmetrically designed” but the “visual imbalance” is

solved . . . by bringing Sikatuna close to the viewer. . . . For while Sikatuna leans alone, his closeness to the viewer, his large build and downward thrust, are enhanced by the arrangement of the heads which form a diagonal line swooping down Sikatuna’s helmet. This is further reinforced by the figures themselves whose eyes are cast toward the Bohol chieftain.

Zafaralla (ibid.) argues that Luna “employed a compositional trick in bringing about the focal point” such that Sikatuna has “primacy in the composition.” He adds, “The contrast in orientation (the Spaniards are frontal oriented; Sikatuna is not) invests Sikatuna with an aura of mystery and the power to make the native viewer identify with him readily” (ibid.).

Zafaralla (ibid.) underscores the “systematic culture clash” in Luna’s painting. “Good faith and the honor system were the qualities which Sikatuna

brought with him to the celebration of the *kasikasi* tradition: he is alone in the painting. Bad faith and deceit characterized Legazpi: he is amply protected by armed officers and men" (*ibid.*, 55–56).¹¹

The question, of course, in Zafaralla's reading of Luna's painting is this: If the atmosphere was one of deceit, why did Sikatuna proceed with the blood ceremony? Was Sikatuna's a futile bravado?

Note that Luna's painting was completed over three years prior to Del Pilar's publication of his *La Soberanía Monacal*, which used the Pacto de Sangre as a watershed event in the conjoined histories of two countries. In fact, Del Pilar (1898, 3) credited Luna's role in "rekindling the memory of the Pacto de Sangre": *La paleta de Luna ha revivido del pacto de sangre entre Legazpi y Sicatuna*. However Del Pilar evidently set aside the unanswered questions raised by Luna's painting: Who was really the main man in this event? Why was Sikatuna all by himself? What was the atmosphere during the Pacto de Sangre? Was there deception? These questions were not crucial for Del Pilar, who, in his political campaign on assimilation, sought to wield the Pacto de Sangre to bring Spain to a position of accountability. Nevertheless, one fundamental, though largely unarticulated, question seemed to have lingered. Amid the bravery of men like Sikatuna, why was the Philippines colonized and brought to such an abject position, as early Filipino nationalism saw the situation at that time? Bonifacio would provide the answer.

Bonifacio: The "Fall" in the Plot of Nationalist History

The linear emplotment of nationalist history that the ilustrados began to conceptualize for the Philippines was evident in the linear projection to the past. Following a common primordialist strategy, they constructed the Philippines as having existed since time immemorial such that the Philippines and Spain could be conceived as entering into a political treaty in the Pacto de Sangre in 1565. The ilustrados, however, missed a crucial element in the nationalist construction of the past.

As Reynaldo Ileto (1988, 132) has shown, the stages in the standard nationalist plot begin with a Golden Age, followed by the Fall (as in the Garden of Eden), after which a Dark Age ensues. The moment of recovery begins with the Rise of Nationalist Consciousness, which eventually leads to the Birth of the Nation. Rizal did his part in envisioning the pre-Hispanic past in his annotations of Morga (1889/1961) and his essay "On the Indolence

of the Filipinos" (1890/1996), in the course of which he conceptualized a Glorious Past in which prosperity and justice reigned among "ancient Filipinos" who equaled, if not were superior to, the Spaniards (cf. Aguilar 2005). What had not been done was to enunciate the Fall.

Del Pilar's portrayal of the Pacto de Sangre was a step toward conceiving the Fall, but it did not qualify as a "real" Fall because Sikatuna was not portrayed as committing an error of judgment (as Adam and Eve did) in contracting the pact. In Del Pilar's narrative plot, only after the Pacto de Sangre would Spain renege on the supposed terms of the treaty, but the treaty itself was valid. However, Bonifacio built on the ilustrados' Golden Age and finally provided an explanation for the Fall. This step he accomplished in the manifesto that is conventionally attributed to him, "Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog" (What the Tagalog Should Know),¹² printed in the only issue of the Katipunan's publication, *Kalayaan*, which began its clandestine circulation in January 1896, becoming a factor in causing a surge in the membership of the Katipunan (Ileto 1979, 82).

Bonifacio's (1896/1963, 68) manifesto begins with a scene of a Golden Age, marked by prosperity, ease, and harmony before the coming of the Spaniards. It signified "the condition of wholeness of the pre-Spanish past" (*ibid.*, 83).

Ytong katagalugan na pinamamahalaan ng unang panahon ng ating tunay na mga kababayan nyaong hindi pa tumutungtong sa mga lupaing ito ang mga kastila ay nabubuhay sa lubos na kasaganaan, at kaguinhawahan. Kasundo niya ang mga kapit bayan at talung lalo na ang mga taga Japon sila'y kabilihan at kapalitan ng mga kalakal malabis ang pagyabong ng lahat ng pinagkakaitaan, kaya't dahil dito'y mayaman ag kaasalan ng lahat, bata't matanda sampung mga babae ay marunong sumulat ng talagang pagsulat ating mga tagalog.

This Katagalugan, which our true compatriots governed in olden times before the Kastila had set foot on this soil, was living in complete abundance and a full life (*kaguinhawahan*).¹³ It was on good terms with nearby places (*bayan*), and especially with those from Japan; they were buying and exchanging merchandise. All means of livelihood were thriving immensely, and as a result everyone behaved with honor. Young and old, including many women, knew how to write in our own Tagalog script.

The coming of Spaniards, according to the manifesto, was purportedly to offer friendship, but their actions were full of deceit:

Dumating ang mga kastila at dumulog na nakipagkaibigan. Sa mabuti nilang hikayat na di umano, tayo'y aakain sa lalung kagalingan at lalung imumulat an gating kaisipan, ang nasabing nagsisipamahala ay ng yaring nalamuyot sa tamis ng kanilang dila sa paghibo. Gayon man sila'y ipinailalim sa talagang kaugalian ng mga tagalog na sinaksihan at pinapagtibay ng kanilang pinagkayarian sa pamamaguitan ng isang panunumpa na kumuha ng kaunting dugo sa kanikanilang mga ugat, at yao'y inihalu't ininom nila kapua tanda ng tunay at lubos na pagtatapat na di mag tataksil sa pinagkayarian. Ytoy siang tinatawag na "Pacto de Sangre" ng haring Sikatuna at ni Legaspi na pinaka katawan ng hari ng España. (*ibid.*)

The Kastila arrived and came to offer friendship. With their forceful persuasion that they would guide us toward increased betterment and the further awakening of our minds, the said rulers happened to be seduced by the sweetness of their tempting words. Nevertheless, they [the Kastila] were placed under the genuine custom of the Tagalog. What they had agreed upon was witnessed and certified by means of an oath, by taking a little blood from their respective veins, which they mixed and drank as a sign of sincere and wholehearted pledge not to betray their agreement. This was what was called "Pacto de Sangre" of King Sikatuna and Legazpi, the representative of the King of Spain.

In Bonifacio's manifesto, the Spaniards were depicted as using their cunning to entrap, beguile, and deceive Sikatuna. Much like the serpent in Eden, and seemingly with no problems of translation, the Spaniards used sweet words that caused Sikatuna to succumb to the tempter's snare. Mesmerized, Sikatuna believed Legazpi's promises of enlightenment and prosperity. He agreed to a compact and, like eating the forbidden fruit, this act constituted the Fall. The dubious agreement was thus sealed with the Pacto de Sangre, the Spaniards cunningly submitting themselves to the indigenous practice only so they could lord it over the Filipinos.¹⁴ Unlike Del Pilar's plot, in Bonifacio's narrative the betrayal occurred at the outset—in the Garden,

so to speak. Yet in the manifesto the focus was not so much Sikatuna's susceptibility to deception (which was not confronted) but the deceitfulness of the Spaniards. The narrative strategy relied on the demonization of one party in the Blood Compact. With Bonifacio's manifesto the contours of nationalist history became coherent. The events surrounding the Pacto de Sangre constituted a critical juncture in the construction of the plot of Philippine history. The manifesto also sought to complete the emplotment as it was meant to lead directly to the Birth of the Nation.

Rizal did not discuss the Pacto de Sangre directly, but he alluded to the nature of contracts in the precolonial age and at the time of conquest. When Morga stated that "the contracts and negotiations of the natives were consummately illicit," Rizal's (1889/1961, 304) riposte was: "So are the contracts of all the nations and of all peoples, and so it is and was the very spirit of the contracts that the first Spaniards celebrated with the Filipino chiefs . . ." In this regard, he came close to what would become Bonifacio's reading of the Pacto de Sangre.

In the manifesto, the agreement should have been illegitimate from the start, given the circumstances in which it was purportedly reached. Nevertheless Bonifacio still asked what happened to the Spaniards' promises:

Ngayon sa lahat ng ito'y ano ang sa mga guinawa nating paggugol nakikitang kaguinhawahan ibinigay sa ating Bayan? Ano ang nakikita nating pagtupad sa kanilang kapangakuan na siang naging dahil ng ating paggugol! Wala kung di pawang kataksilan ang ganti sa ating mga pagpapala at mga pagtupad sa kanilang ipinangakung tayo'y lalung guiguisin sa kagalingan ay bagkus tayong binulag, inihawa tayo sa kanilang hamak na asal, pinilit na sinira ang mahal at magandang ugali ng ating Bayan; Yminulat tayo sa isang maling pagsampalataya at isinadlak sa lubak ng kasamaan ang kapurihan ng ating Bayan; . . . (*ibid.*)

Now, for all this, after all the hard work we have done [for Spain], what ease have we seen bestowed upon our Bayan? Do we see anything that fulfills their promise, which was the reason for our sacrifices? Nothing but treachery is the reward for our favors and our abiding by the agreement. Instead of keeping their promise to awaken us to a better life, they have blinded us and infected us with their debased

character and forcibly destroyed the valuable and beautiful customs of our Bayan. They reared us in a false faith, and cast the dignity of our Bayan into the mire of wretchedness; . . .

The people realized only much later that the Pacto de Sangre was illicit because they had been “blinded” and could not see their condition properly. The realization of Spanish treachery and of Sikatuna falling for the “sweetness of their tempting words” at the outset came belatedly as the light of nationalism began to cast aside the Dark Age.¹⁴

Apolinario Mabini (1931, 108), in the opening remarks of his “Ordenanzas de la Revolución” (1898), also alluded to the Pacto de Sangre, stating that “Our ancestors have recognized the ancient Kings of Castile as protectors and allies” in a “pact sealed with blood” (*un pacto sellado con sangre*); it led to “perfect solidarity” but “from the moment we submitted to its dominion” the Spanish government “shamelessly violated” the agreement (cf. Majul 1960, 314). In Mabini’s view, the Blood Compact was “perfect” (a la Del Pilar) for an indeterminate period, but it was shattered (after a month?) as soon as Spain subjugated the Filipinos. This view postulated the colonial conquest as illegitimate, justifying revolution. Evidently this storyline (which seemed redundant as the country was already in the throes of revolution) did not reverberate as much as Bonifacio’s, which portrayed the Blood Compact as null and void from the very beginning and thus had a clear notion of the Fall.

Bonifacio’s narrative would resonate in Zafaralla’s (1986, 53) reading of Luna’s *El Pacto de Sangre*: “Culture clash, however, was in the cup. Sikatuna who revered the tradition poured his honor into it. Legazpi made a mockery of the rite by diluting the mixture in the cup with intentions of deceit.” The same motif would resurface in *Tadhana*, although involving Tupas rather than Sikatuna: Tupas offering “eternal fraternity and alliance,” Legazpi brimming with the impudence and treachery of a conqueror (Marcos 1976, 45).

Because of the Pacto de Sangre, which resulted in banishment from paradise, the Dark Age came upon the Philippines. Despite the falsity of the agreement, Bonifacio wanted to hold the Spaniards responsible for not abiding by their promise. The manifesto concluded that the light of truth must prevail; the Tagalog must realize the sources of their misfortune and unite, and realize that reason dictates the justness of separating from Spain. To signal the genuineness of the Katipunan siblinghood in contrast to the

counterfeit brotherhood of Sikatuna and Legazpi, the Katipunan’s membership ritual involved the neophyte signing his name with his own blood.¹⁶

While hewing to Del Pilar’s script of a nondeceptive Pacto de Sangre,¹⁷ Bernadette Abrera (1994, 93, 102; cf. 1995) has interpreted the Katipunan ritual as a revival of sandugo (*binalikan at muling isinabuhay*) but in a new form (*nagbagong anyo*). In her view, the partaking of blood was bypassed because the primary relationship (*ang pangunahin nang ugnayan*) that was being established in the rite was with Inang Bayan (the Motherland) and everyone shared the same blood and all, therefore, were siblings (*Lahat ng nakipag-ugnayan sa Inang Bayan ay magiging magkakadugo at kung gayon, mga “kapatid”*) (*ibid.*, 100), apparently with no birth order. In the pursuit of collective “kaginhawahan,” this perspective saw the Katipunan’s putatively revivalist practice as part of a “cultural revolution” (*rebolusyong cultural*) that was meant to return to Filipino roots, to restore the Golden Age. The Pacto de Sangre, in this case, has spawned a nativist quest.

Conclusion

The late nineteenth-century views on the Pacto de Sangre of Sikatuna and Legazpi all averred that the Spaniards came to the Philippines to offer friendship, only for them to betray it. The event in Bohol in 1565 was represented in a manner that explicitly advanced a political agenda—from Del Pilar’s assimilation to Bonifacio’s revolution—in the process constructing the plot of nationalist history that would seek final realization in the revolution.

On one hand, because of Del Pilar’s specific political project, it had not been possible, it seems, to construe the Pacto de Sangre as a deception, for assimilation called upon the validity of an alleged agreement to assimilate and civilize the islanders. In the second half of the twentieth century this view has been revived and extended in two major approaches: (a) a hard “assimilationist” version found in the works of, for instance, Arcilla and Almario; and (b) a soft “equalist” version that are of two varieties: (i) the official state version embodied in the Order of Sikatuna and evident in the writings of Ocampo; and (ii) the perspective seen in the work of Abrera. On the other hand, because Bonifacio’s political project was separation from Spain by means of revolution, he could construct the Pacto de Sangre as illegitimate, which invalidated the whole of Spanish colonialism and justified revolution. Bonifacio’s plot line is echoed in commentaries such as those in *Tadhana* and of Zafaralla.

As far as can be ascertained, the late nineteenth-century constructions of the Pacto de Sangre diverged from the ancient blood oaths as well as the historical event in Bohol in 1565, in which, on the one hand, Sikatuna sought a way of dealing with a world that was changing radically because of European rivalries and the Spanish intent to colonize the islands and, on the other hand, Legazpi sought survival and a means to effect smooth conquest. The complex world of small polities, networks of rulers and vassal chiefs, status contests, interneccine warfare, and dyadic blood oaths had become by the late nineteenth century inaccessible to Spain's colonial subjects, precisely because Spanish colonialism had intervened and transformed the indigenous societies. Father Schumacher had glimpsed the incongruity of the late nineteenth-century nationalist readings of the blood oath of Sikatuna and Legazpi. This article has built on that seminal insight to demonstrate the virtual absence of historical grounding—and thus the myth making—in the early Filipino nationalists' appropriations of the blood oath in Bohol. At the same time, the repackaging of the blood oath depended upon the inspiration derived from divergent political projects, which together in their diversity created and bequeathed to later generations one of the founding myths of Filipino nationhood.

Notes

Many thanks are due to Caroline Sy Hau and Francis Gealogo for reading earlier versions of this paper. Francis also gave me a number of very helpful leads. Needless to say, the responsibility is mine alone. The photograph of Napoleon Abueva's "Blood Compact" (fig. 1) is from the Internet, found at <http://travel.webshots.com/photo/1375962633057910031ExZGLJ>, accessed on 17 May 2010. The editorial office has sought permission for use of this photo.

- 1 Throughout this article the contemporary spelling of the Bohol chief's name, Sikatuna, is used. However, the various spellings in cited extracts are retained. The same rule applies in the spelling of Legazpi's name.
- 2 "Legazpi, with the aid of the Malay pilot, explained to the two kings of Bohol, Katuna (*Sikatuna*) and Gala (*Sigala*) that the Spaniards were not Portuguese and that they had come on a mission of peace not to destroy, kill, or plunder. On learning this, the Bohol kings and their people became friendly and welcomed the Spaniards." On March 16, 1565, Legazpi and Katuna performed a blood compact to seal their friendship in the present site of Barrio Bo-ol, Baclagon. A few days later Legazpi had a similar pact with Gala. In his report to Philip II, Legazpi described the ceremony of the blood compact in the following words: 'It is observed in the following manner: one from each party draws two or three drops of blood from his own arms or breasts and mixes them in the same cup, with water or wine. Then the mixture must be divided equally between two cups,

and neither person may depart until both cups are alike drained'" (Zaide 1979, 234–35). Curiously Zaide quoted Legazpi's description of the blood oath, which was made specifically in relation to how one Spaniard, Francesco Gomez, had "disembarked to make blood-friendship with them [the islanders of Leyte], a ceremony that is considered inviolable," but who was murdered: "While this man was about to bleed himself, one of the natives pierced his breast from one side with a lance" (Legazpi 1903, 201).

- 3 "The expedition reached Cebu in February, 1565. Later Legazpi sailed to Cibabao (Leyte) then to Samar. Here he concluded a blood compact with some of the chieftains. Early in March, he sailed to Camiguin Island, then to Butuan in Mindanao, and then to Bohol. The scarcity of food in Bohol led Legazpi to order his men to sail for Cebu" (Agoncillo 1974, 39).
- 4 In the Pantayong Pananaw school of thought, Salazar (1997, 128–29) initially used 1565 for a new periodization of Philippine history, but subsequently moved the pivotal date to 1588 when Spain solidified its hold over the Philippines.
- 5 "At Legazpi's request, the Moro agreed to invite chief Sikatuna of Bohol to see Legazpi. The chief hesitated, but agreed to come aboard ship as long as ransom was exchanged, and the blood compact was first performed. Legazpi sent a soldier who performed the ceremony with Sikatuna's son, and the day after, Sikatuna came to the boat and performed the blood compact with Legazpi. They collected blood from their arms, and mixed it with wine in two cups which the two leaders drank simultaneously. Finally, on 15 April, Legazpi took possession of Bohol in the king's name" (Arcilla 1991, 22–24).
- 6 Ocampo (1999, 11) ended his piece with a double-edged statement that was also meant to elicit laughter: "Luna and Rizal took great pride in pre-colonial culture unlike people today who now remember Legaspi and Urdaneta as upscale Makati villages while Sikatuna had been downgraded to a Quezon City subdivision."
- 7 The Blood Compact Shrine is claimed to be located on the approximate spot where it happened, "on the side of the road between present-day Tagbilaran and Baclayon in Bohol," but Ocampo (2009) says it "has since been proven to be on the wrong side of history, because the site of the Legaspi-Sikatuna blood compact was in Loay, Bohol."
- 8 Excluded in this discussion is Pedro Paterno, but see Mojares 2006, 95–101.
- 9 Theologically the blood oath may be interpreted as prefiguring the covenant of Christ in the New Testament.
- 10 See Anon. 1891/1996 for another article in *La Solidaridad* that used the *Pacto de Sangre* as the great dividing line in history.
- 11 These ambivalences, but without the benefit of brush strokes on canvass, are reproduced in Abueva's Blood Compact, which obviously has been modeled on Luna's *El Pacto de Sangre*. As a comparison of figs. 1 and 2 shows, key aspects of the painting are found in the sculpture, such as a left-handed Sikatuna located on the left side of the frame, a right-handed Legazpi to Sikatuna's left, and a group of Spaniards to Legazpi's left, dominating the right side of the frame.
- 12 The full text of Bonifacio's manifesto can be found in Bonifacio 1896/1963; Richardson 2009; cf. Ileto 1979, 82–88.
- 13 The root word of *kaguinhawahan* (or *kaginhawahan*) is *guinhawa* or *ginhawa*, which connotes ease of life, satisfaction of needs, breathing, an essence of life.

- 14 In the nationalist construction of Indonesian history, one important question was "the cause of the transition from glorious past to dark present" (Reid 1979, 291). As in Bonifacio's schema, Mohammad Ali found the answer in Dutch trickery: "our fall and humiliation as a colonized nation was a consequence of the trickery, cunning, and deception of the Dutch and their divide and rule policy" (cited in *ibid.*).
- 15 In her discussion of Bonifacio's "Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog," Abrera (1994, 98–99; cf. 1995) omits all mention of deception, perhaps because it would run counter to the assertion: "Mahalagang ang ating pakikipag-ugnayan sa mga Kastila ay inilugat ni Bonifacio sa *sandugo*, dahil pumapasok sa kanyang kasulatan ang pag-unawa rito ng mga Pilipino bilang ugnayan ng magkakapantay na dapat humantong sa higit na kaginhawahan para sa isa't isa" (It is important that Bonifacio rooted our relationship with the Spaniards in *sandugo*, because the Filipinos' understanding of it as a relationship of equals that should eventuate in the heightened *kaginhawahan* of each side enters his text) (*ibid.*, 99).
- 16 Although there is no corroborating evidence from other sources, Isabelo de los Reyes (1899/1993, 35–36) made the intriguing report that marriage rites in the Katipunan were based on the *Pacto de Sangre*: "The bride and the bridegroom took blood from their arms by means of an *incision* made before a person recognized as authority and witnesses, then the blood thus taken was mixed with wine." The bride drank the mixture while making an oath of fidelity and invoking a curse in case she did otherwise, followed by the groom whose oath did not include fidelity but simply "to carry the burden of my family" failing which he invoked a curse (*ibid.*). Was this a vestige of the ancient blood oath? Oddly one of the terms used for blood brothers in ancient England was "wed brothers" (Heather 1952, 158). Or was this Katipunan ritual, if indeed it was practiced, an attempt to redeem the blood oath that Legazpi supposedly tarnished in the *Pacto de Sangre*?
- 17 See note 15.

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analyze using the splendid phrase the friars themselves used to describe their mission, which to them was a *conquista espiritual*.²

Despite the absence of conventional historical evidence, it can be argued that the circumstances of an imperial conquest led by a priestly caste impressed upon the natives a veritable "spiritual invasion," a massive intrusion of Hispanic spirit-beings into the islands. That this was the indigenous formulation of the Iberian conquest and the natives' way of coming to terms with the radical changes wrought by it can be inferred from Spanish words appropriated into various Philippine languages.³ Denoting preternatural entities of a distinctively Spanish origin, commonly used words in the contemporary Filipino spirit-world include *engkanto*, *engkantu* or *ingkanto*, referring to a generic spirit-being, a word derived from *encanto* (charm/enchantment/spell) or *encantado* (enchanted); *dwende* from *duende* (elf); *multo* or *murto* (meaning ghost) from *muerto* (dead); *maligno* (an evil spirit) from *maligno* (malicious/malignant); *kapre* (a dark, hairy, otherworldly giant) from *Cafre* (Kaffir);⁴ *santilmo* (a spirit or soul in the appearance of fire) from *fuego de Santelmo* (Saint Elmo's fire); *sirena* (sea nymph) from *sirena* (mermaid); *tag-lugar* (environmental spirit) in a *lugar* (place, spot, or site).⁵

The features and qualities ascribed to these imagined preternatural entities are particularly revealing, the first in the list being an exemplary case. In a pioneering paper on "The *Engkanto* Belief," the Jesuit Francisco Demetrio presents a portrait of the *engkanto* based on some eighty-seven folk narratives obtained from the Visayas and northern Mindanao (Demetrio 1968). The *engkantas* are described as being "of both sexes and varying ages" and "of fair complexion, golden haired, blue eyed; they have clean-cut features and perfectly chiselled faces" (137–138).⁶ Demetrio adds:

Though beautiful and fairskinned, *engkantas* are said to be romantically attracted to a brown-skinned girl or boy. Although spirits, they are said to indulge in dalliance with mortal beings. Though known to dislike noises, they themselves sometimes indulge in raucous noises while feasting or punishing a mortal who has refused their love or abandoned them.

They are whimsical and unpredictable; they play jokes on people; making them go astray in the forest at night, or transform themselves into the likenesses of mortal friends and relatives in order to dupe the objects of their desire. (Demetrio 1968, 137)

Interestingly, *engkantas* have purportedly been seen singly or as families, but hardly as communities, unlike indigenous spirits (Ramos 1971, 54).

It is my contention that the characteristics of the folkloric *engkantas*

Cockfights and *Engkantes*: Gambling on Submission and Resistance

Spiritual Conquest and Colonial Enchantment

By imperial design Catholic priests were at the forefront of Spanish colonialism. For the first two centuries of colonial rule, natives had virtually no contact with Spaniards other than the friars.¹ Engaged in their solemn duty of fighting heathenism, the friars distributed themselves throughout the archipelago, which, for missionary purposes, was administratively subdivided and allocated to different religious orders. Initially considered an alien enemy, the friars eventually overwhelmed and overpowered the natives. With minimal military support, the friars gradually but decisively extended the area of Spanish control.

The friar was seen through indigenous cosmological lenses, and justifiably so, for the *indio* and the friar were one in their belief in a spiritual realm inhabited by preternatural beings. It was on that common ground that colonial domination was built and the colonial state's foundations were laid. The ubiquitous friar set in train the beginnings of a collective memory for the *indios* who, to whatever important population center they traveled, saw a friar who could speak the locality's lingua franca. Under the aegis of friar dominance, the internecine warfare that had characterized the preconquest epoch also largely ceased. Spanish imperial hegemony thus could not be understood apart from an explication of the friars' relationship with the native population. And this relationship—founded on the art of dominating the *indio* spirit—I propose to

have been culled from the friars' idealized physiognomy and their historic sacerdotal misdemeanors. The *engkanto* belief mirrored those Caucasians dispersed throughout the islands who, because of their extremely small number, could hardly be considered as constituting a community in any given locality. In their imposing presence, the friars laid down new rules of the social game only they could break. They demanded silence in the rectory but broke it with their own noisy gatherings; their orders had to be obeyed lest the *indio* receive a severe beating; and their cravings for sexual gratification could not be spurned. Despite pretensions to clerical celibacy, those white men left Spanish mestizo offspring. As the friars were the first to infringe the rules they themselves laid down, colonial rule was founded upon their arbitrary word, a fact reflected in the *engkanto*'s "whimsical" and "unpredictable" character. Indeed, the *engkanto* figure constituted a telling critique of the colonizers who "duped," "led astray," and "made fun" of the natives.

But the *engkanto* belief had significance other than as a trope, for to the natives the *engkanto* represented a "real" entity in the spirit-world. That these alien preternatural beings had landed on their shores was a way of explaining the new sensations the natives had begun to experience with the Spanish conquest. For instance, the story was told of a Tagalog who "wandered off towards the mountains, as if in a daze, and roamed from hill to hill . . . impelled to wander away . . . against his will and control" (Chirino 1969, 378). A later generation of natives would have easily diagnosed the man's behavior as the work of an *engkanto*. The image of the dreaded *kapre* was evident in the experience of a Cebuano who "was afflicted with horrible visions" of "hideous black men" who "threatened him with death" (381). In Leyte, while some *indios* began to recite Catholic prayers and with no one else in sight, "stones began to fall on the house from outside, making a great noise and knocking down objects that they had left out in the open" (397). The novelty of such strange experiences impressed upon the natives the tangibility of the Spanish spirit-world, a force that had impinged upon the islands.

That Spanish preternatural beings existed would not have been at all odd to the islanders. For if the friars who had boldly set foot on their soil were authentically human, they too, like the natives, would have possessed *dungan*,⁷ and they too would have come from a place filled with spirit-beings that mattered in the Spaniards' lives. What was even more certain was that those beings were no longer confined to wherever those men originally came from, but were actual companions in the men's journeying. How else could they have subdued the best native warriors—and, by implication, the native deities—with a never-before experienced cosmic force? Confronted by a superior power, the islanders

grasped the meaning of colonial conquest in terms of the Spaniards' alliance with their spirit-world. The main link to that newly present yet unseen realm was the priest, curiously a male, dressed in a drab, dark cassock.

As the foreign male ritualists began to live in newly founded settlements and commenced their evangelizing mission by mastering the local language and performing Catholic rites, the *indios* received confirmation concerning the activities of alien spirits. The friars, in turn, interpreted the bizarre reports of their fresh subjects as signs of the latters' diabolical ties. The *indios'* accounts of "extraordinary accidents" arising from the conquest were conceptually framed by friars specifically in terms of "enchantments," namely, *encanto* (see de San Antonio 1906, 345–346). In the complex process of finding a correspondence between the preternatural entities whose presence the natives had discerned in their midst and the foreign words they heard used by the friars to refer to the natives' strange experiences, Spanish nouns and adjectives were appropriated, jumbled, and converted into proper nouns. Those nouns became the words by which the natives learned to call the alien spirit-beings by name: *engkanto*, *dwende*, *mуро*, *maligno*, *kapre*, *sirena*, *santilmo*, *tag-lugar*. And the spirits had to have names, for to the *indio* the act of naming constituted the formidable step of confronting and objectifying the altered realities triggered by the colonial conquest. Refusal to name would have been a sign of unquenchable fear, and inability to name an indication of the total absence of knowledge, consequently of absolute vulnerability.⁸ Although the native's fear remained, the Hispanic spirits at least had become knowable, even familiar. Those imagined preternatural beings were, in a sense, the genuine conquerors of Filipinas: they had inundated the islands and could not be made to depart. Truly it was a "*conquista espiritual*."

The multiplicity of beings that inhabited what I believe the natives conceived of as the Spanish spirit-world, including the numerous *santos* and *santas* (saints), was not inconsistent with the structure of native cosmogony, which accommodated the alien spirits in their respective niches in the cosmic order. As Alicia Magos' (1992, 51–52) indispensable reconstruction of the contemporary shamanist worldview in Antique suggests, preconquest reality was hierarchically divided into seven strata, each of which had its distinctive territorial occupants, a belief system the islanders shared with other parts of the ancient "Hindu world." Based on the cosmological map redrawn by Magos, the various layers can be seen as having been infiltrated by a host of Hispanic spirit-beings. For instance, the fourth layer, the earth's surface, is said to be inhabited by invisible terrestrial beings in direct contact with human beings. Along

with indigenous preternatural creatures such as the *aswang*, *tikbalang*, *kama-kama*, *sigben*, and so on, can be found the Spanish *engkanto*, *kapre*, *murlo*, and so on. In the sixth layer located at the "top" of the earth dwell the natives' ancestors (*kapapuan*), as well as the Catholic saints and angels, an uncanny classification that combined "real" people who had achieved marvelous deeds in the Spaniards' distant past with the spiritually favored "real" people in the islanders' past.

The natives deftly imposed their logic in apprehending a spiritual reality to which the Spaniards adhered. And rightly so, for their interpretation was reinforced by several defining parameters of the historical situation. First of all, in the Europe of the conquest period, the dominant cosmology divided reality into three domains: the truly supernatural (God's unmediated actions), the natural (what happens always or most of the time), and the preternatural (what happens rarely, but nonetheless by the agency of created beings and spirits such as angels, demons, ghosts, and other terrestrial beings; cf. Daston 1991). Only in the late seventeenth century would the erasure of the preternatural domain commence and the concept of spiritual power as centralized in the Supreme Being be theologically thinkable. At the time of conquest, the *indio* and the Spaniard shared an intrinsically similar worldview founded upon a solid belief in a nonmaterial yet palpable reality, particularly in a decentralized preternatural domain populated by spirit-beings with power to affect and even determine worldly affairs. With that spiritual realm humans communicated through words and actions performed by individuals possessing specialized sacral knowledge, hence the mediating role of priests and shamans.

Moreover, the centuries-long *reconquista* of Spain from the Moors, the emergence of Protestantism, and the avenging Inquisition of the Middle Ages set the Spanish belief system in a thoroughly aggressive and belligerent mood—the so-called crusading spirit. Eager to subdue and exterminate their spiritual opponents, the Spaniards, particularly those numbered among the Catholic missions, were unquestionably enacting the *indio*'s language of cosmic struggles.

The "golden age" of the missionary enterprise in Filipinas also coincided with the "golden age" of Catholicism in Spain in the second half of the sixteenth century, when piety encompassed all of human existence.⁹ Disruptions of everyday life immediately provoked a religious response: "floods or prolonged droughts, invasions of locusts, frosts, food shortages, epidemics, all evoked a cycle of processions and prayers, conjuratory or expiatory ceremonies which the end of the public calamity transformed into expressions of thanksgiving" (Bennassar 1979, 70). Religious devotion "assumed a propitiatory nature" (Defourneaux 1970,

118) closely resembling the *indio*'s religious practice. During this golden period the Marian cult began to flourish, a faith that made the Spanish belief system, with its emphasis on female power, more intimately proximate to the native worldview.

As a result of the Inquisition, little was required from the multitude but their attendance at ceremonies and the reproduction of officially sanctioned words and gestures. The prevailing orthodoxy encouraged the popularity of *ensalmadores* (casters of spells) and *saludadores* (healers) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They used magical objects and performed incantatory rituals whose formulas (*ensalmas*) were culled from the drama of the Crucifixion—practices treated indulgently by the Inquisition (Bennassar 1979, 87). Relying on "white magic," the Spanish folk practitioners evinced a striking similarity with the indigenous shamans of the islands colonized by Spain. Notwithstanding formal theology, unofficial but tolerated superstitions blended superbly with their official variants, producing the peculiar Catholicism the friar missionaries propagated in the Philippines.

The degenerate state of the Spanish church was aggravated by the process of recruitment to the Catholic priesthood. With the onset of economic decline in the Peninsula in the early seventeenth century, the priesthood became a safety valve for many Spanish youth who detested manual labor. In 1624 a bishop lamented: "Some say that religion has now become a way to gain a living, and many become religious just as they would enter any other occupation" (Defourneaux 1970, 107). The mediocrity of priestly morals was felt in the prevalence of curates living with concubines, called devil's mules, and having children by them, a breach also treated indulgently by the Inquisition. In the mission field, Spanish priests were quick to seize the monetary benefits that came with the occupation. For example, the Jesuits who were reputed to be the least prone to poor discipline early on in mission history paid disproportionate attention to the profitable beeswax trade in the Visayas (Phelan 1959, 37–38). Although it has been claimed that members of the regular clergy abided by "higher standards of discipline" and so were "better prepared for missionary work" than members of the secular clergy (31), the friars who went to the colony did not transcend the cultural norms and moral proclivities prevalent in the Peninsula.

Overall, the islands claimed by Spain became the meeting point for two religious systems that were fundamentally alike. Sharing with the natives the same universe of discourse, the European clergy could easily locate the native religion in direct cognitive opposition to their Catholicism. The Spaniards' sensitivity to religious difference made it possible for the inventory of native beliefs and practices to be recorded in col-

nial chronicles and for these to be branded not merely as superstition but as creditable works of the devil.

On the other hand, cosmological parallels allowed the natives to perceive the colonizers as similar to themselves despite overt signs of difference. The discernment of a basic alikeness made it possible for the natives to classify and localize the saints along with their ancestors, and the *engkantos* along with indigenous terrestrial beings. Just as the *Santo Niño* (Holy Child) image was initially known in Cebu as the *diwata* of the Spaniards (Chirino 1969, 235), so Catholic idols were seen as corresponding to, and hence were treated in the same way as, native icons, which until the nineteenth century were used in Bukidnon to touch "the ailing member, or the painful part, in order to find relief and even a total cure" (Clotet 1906, 296).

In the midst of such critical sameness, the colonizer triumphed. Backed by a host of Hispanic preternatural beings, the friars were seen by the colonized as founding their legitimacy and domination on the basis of their potency and superior cosmic strength. Viewed from the indigenous cultural framework, the friars were seen as alien shamans who engaged, both willfully and unintentionally, in innumerable acts of healing that the missionaries, for their part, interpreted as the windfalls of faith. As discussed in the next section, the friars' medical prowess was proven efficacious in subduing not only Hispanic spirit-beings but local entities as well. In the course of waging their spiritual battle, the friars overwhelmed the indigenous cosmology, shattered the precolonial meaning system, and altered the configuration of the islanders' social world.

Friar Power and the Submission of the *Indio*

As the friars went about their mission work, they projected the image of shamans whose magical ensemble included the Catholic sacraments, which served as powerful intercessory devices with the spiritual realm. In the late sixteenth century, countless missionaries extolled baptism as a most efficacious remedy for leprosy and other afflictions, as indicated by reports from Leyte, Samar, and Negros; baptism was also employed to revive a comatose man in Butuan (Chirino 1969, 367, 388–389, 396–397, 440, 487). Extreme unction cured an old woman and penance a sick man in Cebu, while confession stilled the "death rattle" of a woman in Negros (385, 440). The Jesuit Pedro Chirino made the happy report that "Many were cured of serious illnesses after receiving the Holy Sacraments, so that they all asked for them persistently and received them most devoutly" (355).

The friars' paraphernalia were transformed into inherently potent

objects. Catholic icons, medallions, rosaries, scapulars, the cross, and water blessed by the priest became novel media for the transference of power from the spiritual to the physical domain. As in Spain, a reliquary crucifix warded off a swarm of locusts in Luzon (Chirino 1969, 346–347; Christian 1981, 184). Holy water became known as a medicine, and the rapid spread of its popularity overshadowed the native curative practice of drinking water from a place where an idol had been dipped (Clotet 1906, 296). In Bohol, those who drank holy water were spared from death in an epidemic that caused "pains in the head and stomach" (Chirino 1969, 333). From Negros, Cebu, and Bohol, reports suggested that holy water was also an effective remedy when sprinkled on or applied to a patient's body (333–334, 385–386, 439–440).

The resulting "general custom all over the islands" saw natives abiding by "this holy devotion" of drinking blessed water, even from the church stoup (Chirino 1969, 334). Undoubtedly, the wellspring of the natives' new religious practices was none other than the friars themselves, who were the first to believe in the efficacy of holy water and who taught the natives to drink it as medicine. An illustrative case is that of a friar who, while officiating at a healing ritual, began by asking the woman if she believed that holy water could cure the sick: "She answered in the affirmative, whereupon he gave her a little of it to drink" (333).

It was only logical that, as men with healing powers, hence with special acumen to negotiate with the spirit-world whence diseases were believed to originate, the friars would be perceived by the natives as possessing forceful *dungan*. The islanders must have drawn such an inference from the moment of their initial contact with the friars, who, in advancing through dangerous unfamiliar territories, exuded courage and fortitude. The friars did fit the role of the strong *dungan*, as they cast themselves in the role of crusaders, some being so consumed with self-confidence that they deemed their very presence medicinal (Chirino 1969, 376).

The friars' *dungan* astounded the natives. In 1720, in a controversial but acutely observant letter, the Augustinian Gaspar de San Agustin (1906, 265) noted that "one must not shout at them, for that is a matter that frightens and terrifies them greatly, as can be seen if one cries out at them when they are unaware—when the whole body trembles; and they say that a single cry of the Spaniard penetrates quite to their souls." In the social contest of strength, many a startled native found his "soul penetrated," his *dungan* jarred and unable to withstand the friar's overbearing speech and thunderous voice. Repeatedly, the islanders were shaken by the male shamans who had chosen to live in their midst.

The friars' *dungan* were tested and their strength confirmed through their proven ability to appease and subdue the Hispanic spirits that im-

pinged upon the native imagination. The friars effected a cure for the wandering disease prompted by the *engkanto* by using Catholic magical objects. The Tagalog who roamed aimlessly "against his will" was told "to put his trust in the power of the holy *Agnus Dei*"¹⁰ pendant, which a religious put "round the man's neck. From that moment on the man felt at peace" (Chirino 1969, 378–379). The Cebuano haunted by "hideous black men" called for a priest, who heard his confession, and "Thereupon the man felt very much relieved and recovered his peace of mind" (381). Life for the *indio* was proving to be inextricably bound up with the Iberian shamans, who had become indispensable to overcoming the physical and emotional ailments and cultural crises precipitated by the spiritual conquest.

The friars were further vital to native existence as their intervention became necessary in subduing, not only the foreign spirits such as the *engkanto*, but local spirit-beings as well, which previously had been amenable to appeasement by native shamans alone. For instance, a friar used an *Agnus Dei* medallion to counter a sorceress' spells on a woman who, as a result of a quarrel, experienced violent convulsions (Chirino 1969, 466). To this day, Demetrio reports that "The *agnus* medal is used by natives as amulets, together with the *carmen* and the cross, to protect one from all sorts of danger, accidents or the bad intentions of others" (Demetrio 1970, 136–137). As a result of the exercise of Friar Power, Catholic objects and rituals gradually replaced preconquest mechanisms for dealing with afflictions attributed to the spirit-world.¹¹ The friars, in demonstrating their potency and centrality as shamans, began to attract a following and core of adherents who, for their health and well-being, resolved to identify, at least overtly, with the dominant power and the colonizing culture.

Working under the instruction that they were to extirpate native beliefs and practices and not to rest until paganism was stamped out (Ortiz 1906, 105), the philistine friars sought to discover the images, implements, and meeting places the *indios* guarded with secrecy. Whenever indigenous icons were ferreted out, the friars celebrated their success by contemptuously desecrating them, to the bewilderment of the natives, who believed that anyone who committed such acts of sacrilege would perish. In Bohol a missionary awed villagers by touching their *anito* without dying; furthermore, he spat on the local idols, trampled them, and then had them burned and thrown into the river (L. de Jesus 1904, 384).

Unable to retaliate against the marauding Spanish shamans, local preternatural beings were evidently losing the battle instigated by the friars. In Zambales, "amid the great shouting and lamentations" of the natives, the fathers ordered a servant to fell a venerated bamboo thicket

the natives thought could not be cut down lest they die (de San Nicolas 1904, 179). On another occasion, a missionary climbed a feared *paho* tree and gathered its fruits while reciting a Latin chant:

The [natives] were very sorrowful because father Fray Rodrigo had decided to eat of the fruit, and they accordingly begged him earnestly and humbly not to do it. But the good religious, arming himself with prayer and with the sign of the cross, and repeating the antiphony, *Ecce crucem Domini: fugite partes adversae. Vicit leo de tribu Juda*, began to break the branches and to climb the tree, where he gathered a great quantity of the fruit. He ate not a little of it before them all. . . . The [natives] looked at his face, expecting every moment to see him a dead man. (de San Nicolas 1904, 145.; cf. de la Concepcion 1904, 276–277)

Thus, with the aid of Catholic magical words, relics, and gestures, the friars demonstrated superior cosmic strength by their ability to vanquish local spiritual strongholds and break age-old taboos. The display of incomparable *dungan* in the fearless and successful confrontation with the indigenous spirit-world was a historic achievement of the Spanish friars.

With the unremitting success of Friar Power, the *anito* and *diwata* began to lose their abilities to cause as well as heal illnesses and, in general, to affect the course of human existence. Symbolic of the destruction of the islanders' precolonial identity and world of meaning, the indigenous deities eventually vanished. In their place today are found Hispanic spirits who, interestingly, exhibit the same behavior as the preconquest gods. For instance, like a pagan spirit the *Santo Niño* (Holy Child), which contemporary Filipinos have localized, is said to possess shamans bodily during a trance.¹² Similarly, Negros' fabled volcano, Kanlaon, formerly the abode of the female Laon of native antiquity, has become the regal seat of the Hispanic-inspired and uncertainly gendered entity called Sota.

Friar conquest of the indigenous spirit-world also resulted in local spirits becoming benign, or even innocuous (the present-day translation of *diwata* being simply "fairy"), while the Hispanic spirits assumed the maleficent role of bearers of illness. Demetrio observes that in contemporary beliefs: "*Engkantos* are known to possess power to inflict diseases: fevers, boils and other skin diseases as result of their curse or *Buyag*. Without knowing it someone may brush against the invisible *engkanto*, and suddenly he is slapped in the face or his skull is cracked by a blow" (Demetrio 1968, 138). In agriculture, *engkantos* have replaced the ancient environmental spirits as those whose favors must be obtained before peasants can proceed to ready the land and harvest the crops; offerings must also be made to the *engkantos* before timber can be felled from the forest (Demetrio 1970, 364, 378).

By acting as dependable shamans deliberately performing the sacraments as healing rituals, the friars made themselves an integral part of native strategies for coping with life's vicissitudes. The legitimacy established through Friar Power became the anchor of the Spanish imperial presence. Friar authority also became the basis for the extraction of surplus from the native population. Contrary to a royal edict, the Spanish priests began to charge sacramental fees (Phelan 1959, 63). The fathers were emboldened to reap their material rewards, for they saw that the natives would "bestow esteem, confidence, adoration and anything they own" on "anyone who can furnish [medical remedy] or promise to do so" (Chirino 1969, 300). There was therefore a monetary angle to the friars' denunciation of the *babaylan* as frauds.

But although the natives succumbed to the cosmic power and strength of the Iberian colonizers, they were not reduced to total passivity in the face of cataclysmic change. On the contrary, the alien shamans were possessed of a prowess that so mesmerized the *indios* that, as John Phelan speculates, "parents may even have encouraged their daughters to make liaisons with the clergy," a comment that must be understood in the context of the elevated status of preconquest women and of an indigenous sexuality unencumbered by European precepts (Phelan 1959, 39).¹³ Phelan's point is highly plausible and is buttressed by the observation that the native desire for amorous contact with the alien shamans has found a parallel expression in local folklore. For all the irascibility of the *engkantos*, Demetrio notes that twentieth-century Filipinos paradoxically entertain "a certain deep-seated attraction [to] or fascination for these creatures," prodding them to "secretly wish they enjoyed the special attention of these strange and dreadful but fascinating beings" (Demetrio 1968, 138).

We can take a further cue from the *engkanto* belief that the human victim is said to disappear into the nether world of the *engkantos*, there to taste its extraordinary pleasures. With the unfolding of Friar Power, the desire to commune with the friar-quia-shaman, or at least the predisposition to respond positively to the friars' advances, could be interpreted as the route chosen by natives to penetrate and know the colonizer's awesome power. But as a mark of separation from all previously meaningful realities the islanders had known, to enter the world of the alien shamans through carnal union meant to disappear and depart from indigenous society. Yet that disappearance, that departure, also signified that the friar's/*engkanto*'s victim would be transported into another realm of power, allowing the local maiden and her allies to enter into a special relationship with the regnant order. Her role as broker would be, in a sense, a mere variant of preconquest women's role as negotiators

with the spiritual. The fair-skinned offspring of friar-native trysts, today said to be the fusion of *engkanto* and native,¹⁴ also disappeared metaphorically, as the native's deep-brown skin pigmentation was diluted by Castilian "blood"—causing the Spanish mestizo complexion to be widely admired, even desired, by natives. Friar concubinage, it would appear, became a mechanism for resolving the question of power for an earlier generation of *indios*, but it bore unintended consequences for later generations, who had to wrestle with issues of cultural integrity and identity.

The alliance between some natives and the colonial power was echoed by entities in the indigenous spirit-world that, in an apparent switch of allegiance, started to behave in full accord with the friars. Called *nono* as one of the embodiments of ancestor spirits, the crocodile, by ancient tradition, was implored not to harm the islanders, who knelt and clasped their hands in supplicating the creature (de Morga 1904, 131–132). Under the regime of the friars, however, the *indios* were told to kneel before a different set of objects. The demand for the transfer of sacral gestures—hence of loyalty, emotion, and identification—became compelling when the crocodile itself began to be portrayed as favoring the colonizer's religion.

In San Juan del Monte, a man who allegedly mocked those who attended a Catholic prayer session and decided to remain in the river to bathe ended up being bitten by a crocodile, to the *indios'* "great horror and their renewed respect for the disciplines and the *Salve* [Litanies] of Our Lady" (Chirino 1969, 425). The reptile had ostensibly fully turned around to ally with Friar Power, as suggested by an incident in early-seventeenth-century Binalbagan, Negros: "a converted [native] woman, having been convicted of a grave sin, in order to deny it cursed, saying: May a crocodile eat me before I reach my house, if what I said was untrue. God punished her immediately, for while near her native place, called Passi, in the island of Panai, a crocodile attacked... and swallowed her" (L. de Jesus 1904, 244–245). Subjugated, disarmed, and finally converted, the self-aggrandizing crocodile (*buaya*) was emblematic of some natives' response to colonial rule that would provide institutional mechanisms for opportunistic alliances with the dominant power.

Not all islanders submitted to colonial rule, however. A number of chiefs and native shamans resisted it. But given the nature of Spanish hegemony, which reinforced, perpetuated, but also altered indigenous cultural constructs, their resistance was ineluctably articulated in religious terms. Despite its failure to overturn the conquest, native resistance persisted, and to a degree subverted, colonial authority and weakened its grip over colonial space. Because of the Iberian rulers' inability to eliminate this resistance, the natives who overtly submitted to colonial

rule soon found themselves in the middle of a power struggle between two opposing spheres of power—in effect between two conflicting claims to loyalty and identity. As though inflicted by the *engkanto*, the collective native soul (*dungan*) suffered from the disease of not being comfortably lodged and domiciled in the colonial corpus. To the natives, colonialism was a sorcerous enchantment: As though collectively struck by a spell, native society was prompted to wander between two realms of power. The resulting *indio* politics emanated from this tension and ambivalence.

Cultural Entrapment and the Colonial Cockpit

The indigenous spirit-world was not entirely defeated by the tempest caused by Spain's spiritual conquest; some local entities did fight back in the cosmic struggle that had enveloped the islands. In 1885 a missionary reported from Mindanao, pointing to traditional female shamans, that "those women are the most difficult to attract to our holy faith, and even to enter the presence of the father missionary" (Rosell 1906, 217–223). But as early as 1599 a *catalona* in Manila had told the people that "at first the God of the Christians had prevailed over their Anitos, but . . . the latter were now returning in triumph and were punishing those who had abandoned them" (Chirino 1969, 373). In Butuan indigenous spirits were said to have appeared to the natives, "persuading them not to admit those fathers into their country, because of whom . . . dire calamities and troubles must happen to them" (L. de Jesus 1904, 221). The warnings of spiritual reprisal were not unfounded, as indeed the global expansion of Iberian colonialism did fuel the transoceanic spread of diseases and gave rise to other "dire calamities."¹⁵ Believing in the battle waged by the indigenous spirit-world, native shamans were emboldened to challenge the colonial order.

Even within Spanish-controlled areas, the indigenous religion continued to be practiced clandestinely, with the cooperation of the old precolonial elite. In San Juan del Monte a silent procession was held "in the thick of night" to transfer an idol from the house where a deceased underground shaman had lived to that of her successor; although close to Manila, the forbidden religion was not discovered until it was disclosed two years later by a lower-stationed *indio* (Chirino 1969, 302–303). In Zambales the local elite, serving as the "principal priests," led their community's covert observance of animism, until children befriended by the Dominican friar divulged the secret (V. de Salazar 1906, 52). Local religion was betrayed by those who were either too young to have any affective attachments to the old practices or those who had little or no interest to protect, which derived from the ancient cosmology. The shamans and *datus*, in contrast, colluded to defend the indigenous belief system

that provided legitimacy to their respective social positions, both of which the friar singularly usurped.

No doubt, many chiefs willfully converted to the friar's religion. These important personages, in an apparent quest to reestablish the ancient pattern of legitimacy, exhibited "great zeal for bringing pagans," presumably their followers, to be proselytized and baptized (Chirino 1969, 454). Desirous of retaining the central role they had once played in the preconquest social milieu, the converted chiefs in a part of Leyte, for instance, sought preeminence during Holy Week by guarding the Blessed Sacrament with their "customary arms" (403–404). However, other chiefs, including some the Spaniards referred to as the truly "big fish," obstinately resisted conversion (356, 359–61).

Buffeted by the rising tide of conversions, some natives expressed their resistance in a less passive manner. In Zambales those "respected and venerated as the greatest chiefs" killed the resident missionary and set fire to the church and convent before fleeing to the mountains (de la Concepcion 1904, 282–283; de San Nicolas 1904, 180–181). Others poisoned friars or stoned them to death (de la Concepcion 1904, 274; de Morga 1904, 100). With unswerving passion and obduracy, many chiefs defended the indigenous religion and sought to regain their authority in terms of the old cultural framework.

Other natives resisted Spanish rule by simply withdrawing to the wild interior beyond the reach of the conquerors. Sometimes, entire mission villages retreated along with their *babaylan*, whom the friars blamed for causing their converts to apostatize (Chirino 1969, 377, 458; V. de Salazar 1906, 56). In following the shaman, those who fled decided on a course of noncompromise with the alien power. The resort to flight expressed their unyielding faith in the indigenous religious system as the sole provider of meaning and the only balm for the travails of human existence. Such outright resistance most probably accounted for the relative failure, particularly in the Visayas, of the *reducción*, the imperial program that intended to bodily aggregate the natives into compact settlements as in Mexico (Phelan 1959, 44–49). A fully successful *reducción* might have been the equivalent of a successful rite to domesticate and contain the collective native soul (*dungan*) within the corpus of colonial society. As it turned out, the native soul was only partially domiciled in its colonial abode and, thus, could and did wander off.

But although many natives chose to flee, many others decided to remain within the ambit of Spanish colonialism and its orbit of power. Leaving a legacy of rural settlement patterns extant today (but not in Negros for reasons to be explained in Chapter 5), some natives moved right into the *cabecera*, the capital of the parish or town, while numerous

others struck a compromise by settling in hamlets of varying sizes (the *viviendas*, and the even smaller *sitios* and *rancherías*), which were widely dispersed but still "bajo de la campana" or within hearing of the church bells.

By deciding to reside within the friar-dominated settlement, *indios* placed themselves in a situation of having to appease two spheres of power, the indigenous and the Hispanic. Trapped at the center of a clash of spirits, the colonial subjects were confronted with the competing claims to loyalty and identity pressed by two similar but opposed realms, both of which were seen as authoritative and valid. Because of these historical exigencies, the natives learned to negotiate between two cultures by adhering to two religious systems, openly imitating one and concealing the other, cultivating in the process a social practice of cultural ambivalence. Fearing both power sources and seeking to appease the spirits and shamans of both domains, the natives practiced colonial Catholicism at the overt level and the indigenous religion at the covert. As a Spanish priest lamented, the *indios* managed to "embrace the matters of the faith in such a manner that they should not become separated from the ancient worship" (V. de Salazar 1906, 51). Far from being syncretistic, the religion of the colonized native epitomized what it meant to live in two colliding worlds.

The equal appeasement of two conflicting spiritual powers was not always possible, however. There were unavoidable situations when natives were confronted with the choice of which power realm to follow. Whenever the indigenous spirits became compelling, some natives were reported to have been wont to "surrender their rosaries" to the *tikbalang* or the *bibit* and, in exchange, were given indigenous magical objects "such as hairs, grass, stones, and other things, in order to obtain all their intents and free themselves from all the dangers" (Ortiz 1906, 107; de San Antonio 1906, 342). In situations when the friar's orders had to be followed to the displeasure of the indigenous spirits, the native had no recourse but to implore the latter's mercy and plead that they withhold retribution.¹⁶ As a friar incisively observed in the early eighteenth century,

When they are obliged to cut any tree, or not to observe the things or ceremonies which they imagine to be pleasing to the genii [sic] or *nonos*, they ask pardon of them, and excuse themselves to those beings by saying, among many other things, that the [friar] commanded them to do it, and that they are not willingly lacking in respect to the genii, or that they do not willingly oppose [sic] their will. (Ortiz 1906, 105)

Surely, in such painful betrayals of native culture and meaning, the sentiments of the political underdog began to form.

The perceived clash of powers and the *indio* response of wandering between two realms nurtured the native's gambling outlook on life. Gambling, of course, is universal and of antediluvian origin, but its local character is the product of specific contingent histories. In the Philippines, the colonial epoch gave rise to gambling as an articulation of the subjugated natives' ambivalent response that concomitantly accepted and rejected colonial realities. Given the highly spiritualized texture of Spanish colonialism and native gambling's links to the spirit-world, gambling became the idiom that expressed the *indio*'s contradictory relationship to colonial power.

An external manifestation of the subjectively felt cultural entrapment, social gambling for the *indio* was a wavering form of wagering on the odds of power. If one was caught in an inescapable situation where equal appeasement of the realms was not possible, it became a sheer case of bad luck. Otherwise, the *indios* moved back and forth between the overlapping worlds constituted by the indigenous and the colonial in a gamble that they would not be caught in either one. The simultaneous avoidance and acceptance of the clash of spirits was graphically encoded in the various forms of gambling that flourished during the epoch of Spanish colonial rule.¹⁷

Foremost among the games of chance was cockfighting—*bulang sabong*, or, as the Spaniards called it, *juego de gallos*—a source of fun said to have been used to entice recalcitrant *indios* to join the colonial settlements. In cockfighting, the native could be entertained by witnessing what was essentially a cosmic battle. For the gambling contest was not confined to the participating individuals but connectively involved imagined preternatural entities who were divided by the granting of spiritual favor to the contending participants in the game. Ultimately, the shrewdness of one's gamecock or one's smart handling of a card game was reckoned as emanating from the superior otherworldly support extended to the winner. Gambling, especially in the cockfight, was a visual and thrilling display of the clash of power realms.

As a rule, only cocks of equal prowess are matched in any fight, and the opposing center bets are equalized before the fight begins. However, the assumption of parity is reserved for the liminal period, from the matching of fowls and into the fight, during which moment the idea of superiority and hierarchy is both affirmed and disbelieved, only to be confirmed anew after the fight.¹⁸ During this liminal period when the birds are believed to have an even fighting chance, one of them is nonetheless invariably perceived as the superior, hence favorite, cock while the other is considered the underdog. Based on contemporary beliefs and practices, it is my conjecture that in the early Spanish period,

regardless of the plumage and hue of the birds in the ring, the language of the ritual game simplified the cocks' colors into either red (*pula*) or white (*puti*), the first referring to the superior bird, the second to the inferior.

That the color red should connote superiority was rooted in the ancient preconquest belief in that color's potency, which signified life and courage, in contrast to white, which symbolized death and defeat. In the precolonial age, islanders who were the most valiant and had killed the most enemies in war wore, as a badge of honor, a red kerchief wrapped around the head (L. de Jesus 1904, 213; de Morga 1904, 76). Today, red continues to stand for life and strength, and the color itself is fetishistically believed to exude power that can augment one's bravery in combat.

If we take liberty of generalizing Pigafetta's observations in Palawan, it could be said that prior to the Spanish conquest certain venerated, hence spiritually linked, cocks were already made to fight for a prize: "each one puts up a certain amount on his cock, and the prize goes to him whose cock is the victor" (Pigafetta 1969, 55). It might then be speculated that, even in pre-Hispanic times, the clash of cosmic powers was already the game's message, albeit its story was that of warring, supernaturally gifted *datus*.¹⁹ And since the *datus* valued the color red, we might say that the superior cock was even then classified as red. Corollarily, it should be noted that during the colonial epoch, the shamanic groups that resisted Spanish rule continued to use red on their persons, that color forming the basis for one of the labels by which they were known: *pulahanes*, or "the red ones."

Under Spanish colonial rule, the popularity of cockfighting (like the prevalence of the *anting-anting* amulets widely used in the pit) could be attributed to the game's subtle subversion of the dominant colonial order. The *indios* who were trapped between submission and resistance would have read into the cockfight's red–white binary codes a political significance. As red stood for indigenous prowess—as well as the shamanic resistance that posed a perennial challenge to colonial authority—it is not farfetched to assume that white was made to signify the white Iberian colonizer. As spectators vicariously involved through identification with the fowls, the *indios* could wager on either side. The equal division of the center bet between red and white reflected the social cleavage in indigenous society between resistance and accommodation to colonial rule, as well as the feelings of submission and resistance that tore apart the individual *indio*.

Moreover, the cockpit's message was contradictory. On the one hand, hierarchy and dominance were omnipresent in cockfighting, as the outcome validated the native concept of power as being the rule of the spir-

itually mighty; on the other, cockfighting allowed for the inversion of hierarchy in colonial society. The internal message of the cockpit was counterhegemonic. The indigenous red was not the underdog; it could be asserted and bet on as the favorite by the real underdogs outside the cockpit. Red could win, but so could white. Since the outcome was never truly predictable, the native at least had an imaginary fifty-fifty chance. And so whenever red and white clashed in the cockpit arena, the power encounter between the indigenous and the Hispanic realms was reenacted all over again—much like the perpetual reenactment of Christ's sacrifice in the Catholic mass—as though the historical outcome was totally unknown.

By the nineteenth century, with the routinization of colonial practice as well as the increased monetization of the economy, the earlier color signification appears to have become interchangeable, at least in the Tagalog cockpit. Jose Rizal (1958, 256), for instance, in his great nationalist novel, referred to the white cock as *llamado*, superior, and the red as *dejado*, the underdog. In this context, the underdog red's victory became even more emotionally charged and imbued with patriotic fervor: "A wild shouting greets the *sentencia* (the winner's proclamation), a shouting that is heard all over town, prolonged, uniform, and lasting for some time," so that everyone, including women and children, would know and share in the rejoicing that the underdog had won over the dominant power (259). The noise that burst through the rafters was noted by a Russian visitor in the 1850s, who wrote that "For a foreign spectator it was this uproar that was noteworthy" (Goncharov 1974, 209).²⁰ Today, despite another transformation of signs, the cheering is always louder when the underdog defeats the favorite. Although social inequalities are accepted as a facet of reality, underdog victories are seen as suggesting that "the poor farmer also has a chance" (Guggenheim 1982, 26), allowing for social catharsis at least in the fictive world of gaming. In the cockpit, history and social structure can be momentarily suspended and phenomenologically forgotten as the players—all males—indulge in an infinite series of counterfactualities that make for pure fantastic entertainment.²¹

In the 1770s, the cockpit began to fall under colonial state regulation and to be administered through licensing mechanisms and rules governing the days and times of play.²² Despite formal supervision, the meanings generated by the *indios* in the ritual game were beyond colonial ken and control. It must be noted, however, that it was the Spanish colonial state itself that lent the conceptual framework for the cockpit's system of inversion. For although cockfighting existed prior to colonialism, it was under Spain that the game's unwritten codes were systematized, as the

cockpit's argot would attest: the reading of omens (*señal*) hidden in the cock's scales on the leg that might reveal an auspicious sign of *baston* (the staff carried by the colonial elite), the *regla* or "rule" determining the trend of luck, the *logro* or odds, the *parada* or inside bet, the *casador* or betting master, the *kristo* or bookie, the *largador* or cockhandler, the *asentista* or cockpit promoter or manager, the *tasador* or matchmaker, the *pago* or payment by the cockpit management to equalize the center bets, and the *sentenciador* (referee) as though the pit were a court of law where sentence was passed (cf. Anima 1977, 1972; Lansang n.d.).

So, in the cockpit, Spanish and indigenous forms and concepts melded, allowing the experience of colonial domination to be both accepted and rejected, inverted and reinvented, objectified and internalized by the subjugated natives. Thus, within the very space seemingly under full Spanish control, the natives could enjoy a subtle subversion of the colonial order, although, paradoxically, the same event also legitimated the colonial power structure. Cockfighting was a celebration of both fact and fiction.

Males as Shamans, Imitation as Resistance

But the colonial cockpit properly belonged to only one sphere, the sphere of the church bells. Beyond the hearing of the bells, native shamans endeavored to adapt their resistance to the reconfigured social reality. One fundamental feature of this shamanic adjustment pertained to gender. With spiritual mediumship becoming a contested terrain, the perceived superiority of Friar Power resulted in the development of native male shamanism in imitation of the Spanish friarship. As males began to predominate among local shamans and as the colonizers carved out an exclusively male public sphere, the overt social role of females was eclipsed.²⁹ It must be noted, however, that, despite Spanish efforts to inculcate their sexual mores in the natives, local reformulations of gender remained more egalitarian than in the Mediterranean world (Blanc-Szanton 1990). Women also persisted in their role as arbiters with the spiritual, becoming devoted to Catholicism generally and, with little stigma attached to it, to friar concubinage, in the case of a few native women.

To resist more effectively, native male shamans began to alter their practices to put them on a level with the friars. A ritual "invented . . . after the Spaniards had come here" was reportedly concocted in which coconut oil and a crocodile's tooth (the crocodile having become a multivalent figure) were consecrated to local spirits, who were invoked to bestow upon the oil the power to kill (de Loarca 1903, 163). Subsequently, native shamans started furtively to steal—imitate—the magical

words used by the Spanish shamans who recited Latin verses to ward off evil spirits or conquer their putative abodes. The appropriation of Latin constituted the *babaylan*'s decisive riposte to Spanish shamanism.

Prior to conquest, indigenous shamans apparently had already employed recondite words as special channels for negotiating with cosmic forces. According to early Spanish accounts, they resorted to foreign magical words that had the power to heal, what the accounts termed as "certain superstitious words" derived from "the Burneyan language which they all highly regard" (Anon. 1979, 320, 344, 349). Other accounts noted "badly-pronounced words" that were used for divination as well as the invocation of spirits (Anon. 1979, 335; L. de Jesus 1904, 204–205; de San Nicolas 1904, 137–138).

With the advent of the colonial epoch, the friars unwittingly demonstrated the heuristic value of Latin as the language of power, evinced by the frequently recited prayers such as the *Pater Noster* (which was mandatory for baptism) and the prayers said at exorcisms. Latin being the official language of the Roman Catholic Church, it was believed that the devil understood it and could be commanded only through that official language (Defourneaux 1970, 121). Consistent, then, with an earlier emphasis on the power of spoken cryptic words, Latin or Latin-sounding words and phrases began to compose the native shaman's formularies and incantations, which came to be known as *orasyon* or *urasyon* (from the Spanish *oración*, prayer). As unlawful knowledge, the appropriation of Latin proved to be the native's first truly subversive act. Emblematic of this subversion, still practiced by today's shamans, is the recitation of the *Pater Noster* in reverse order, starting with the Amen.

The *urasyon* was recited during healing rituals and, in imitation of European missals and breviaries, copied onto paper in tiny and easily concealable booklets (measuring about 1 by 1.5 inches) known in the Visayas as *libritu* (a small Spanish *libro*). Pig Latin words were also written and attached to pendants, or the booklet itself was carried on one's person to serve as an amulet or talisman, known as *anting-anting*. The booklet of Latin phrases was believed to make the native invincible and to endow him/her with the ability to negotiate or enter into alliances with spirits. Through shamanic Latin, the *engkantos* could be coaxed to effect healing, restore a wandering soul, produce a bountiful harvest, or bestow luck, as in the colonial cockpit.

Indicative of the natives' desire to augment their potency and intrude into the colonizer's power domain, the use of Latin in the form of *urasyon* and *anting-anting* became widespread among them. Along with indigenous magical objects, shamanic Latin was used to obtain luck and success, as natives negotiated between two power realms and quietly

challenged, even defied, the colonial state. Reversing the magical specialization of the preconquest age, native shamans evidently shared their newfound source of power and resistance with ordinary *indios*. By the 1730s it was observed that

It is very usual for the [natives] to carry about them various things in order that they might obtain marvellous effects: for example, written formulas, prayers, vitiated or interspersed with words arranged for their evil intent, herbs, roots, bark, hairs, skin, bones, stones, etc., so that they may not be killed, or apprehended by justice, or to obtain wealth, women, or other things. They are also very much inclined to believe in omens and in unlucky days, in regard to which they are wont to keep various books of manuscripts. . . . (Ortiz 1906, 109–110)

That nobody understood pig Latin did not matter, as those words were meant to address the unseen spirit-beings. What mattered was that the natives could tap into the cosmic source of colonial power. Unwittingly, the friars further confirmed the efficacy of shamanic Latin through their efforts to confiscate and destroy all the *libritu* and *anting-anting* they could lay their hands on.

As the only effective counterpoise to the friars, native shamans relied on their newfound war chest of magical power to animate the revolts and uprisings against Spanish colonial rule.²⁴ Armed with nothing but machetes and amulets, native male shamans and local chiefs fought to reassert their former source of meaning, power, and identity. Mustering mystical prowess from both power realms, they sought an end to the tyranny of having to contend with two opposing spirit-worlds and cultures. In seeking to reestablish the preconquest religion, they could be seen as attempting to restore the social order they once knew.

But preconquest society and culture did not remain insulated, pristine, and unaffected by the colonial epoch. On the contrary, the practices of the natives, even of those who rebelled, and those of the colonizers had become mutually determining. On the one hand, indigenous culture had become indelibly transformed by native imitation and appropriation of friar magic, particularly the shamanic gender switch; even the Hispanic spirits were also transformed into localized entities. On the other hand, the hegemonic rulers made concessions that affected their colonial practice. Gauging from its prevalence today and observations made in the nineteenth century, it would appear that the Spanish priests effectively ignored (or were incapable of monitoring) male circumcision (*turi, tuli*), despite its initial inclusion among the so-called heathen practices targeted for suppression.²⁵ The colonial rulers also allowed the cockfighting so much loved by the natives to flourish. Apparently, they

even indulged the native male by legislating against the entry of females to the cockpit.²⁶ In so doing, colonial authority empathized with the native cockfighter and invented and formalized a prohibition without precedent in the Spanish bullfight. Given the interpenetration of cultures and the interlocking alliances that emerged in colonial society, it was not surprising that organized uprisings led by the shamans were quelled by the might of Spanish firepower as well as by the intervention of *indio* soldiers.

The social order the shamans once knew was beyond restoration. But resistance persisted. Within the parish enclave, it was expressed through the covert practice of a suitably altered native religion. Outside the colonial centers, the marginalized native shamans, mostly but not exclusively male, continued to quietly draw a clientele. More importantly, the native shamans continued to enjoy a reputable status among the *indios*, still few of whom could penetrate the deepest secrets of the mystical to become masters of magical prowess. The power of the native shamans became that of the amulet-bearing fugitives and social bandits whom the natives called “good men” (*mabuting tao* or *maayo nga lalaki*, and probably *maga-ling na lalaki*).²⁷ As anticolonial fighters, fugitives and bandits became the embodiment of the idealized good (*ayo, buti*), for they possessed the enviable qualities of the strong *dungan*: a brave soul, an indomitable spirit, an invincible body, even ruthlessness toward one’s enemies. The red-kerchiefed rebels engaged the colonial state in a perennial battle. Failing to exterminate them, the colonial establishment sought to establish their deviant nature by branding them as criminals and evildoers (*malhechores*). But what to the state was a lawbreaker was to the people a fascinating risk taker who transgressed colonial rules with impunity.

Albeit only from a distance, the natives admired and respected the “good men,” the men who personified their longing for an unvanquished past. However, because they settled within hearing of the church bells, most natives had to put up with a life of cultural entrapment, of conflicting demands for identity that engendered a deep-seated ambivalence and inferiority. Deeply sentimental, they sang the dramas of their lives and became adept at music. But gambling was their passion. Informed by a gambling approach to life, the native elites took advantage of the circumstances enforced by colonialism to devise mechanisms for circumventing the dilemmas of culture and power, but their solutions only deepened the cultural ambivalence they had hoped to overcome.

Atrophied Charisma and the Making of Native Elites

In the early 1800s the friars were credited with having assumed “the major part in the pacification of all instances of disquietude” during the

more than two centuries of Spanish rule in Filipinas.²⁸ By this time, as a perceptive Englishman wrote, "In the most distant provinces, with no other safeguard than the respect with which he has inspired the [natives], the *Padre* exercises the most unlimited authority, and administers the whole of the civil and ecclesiastical government, not only of a parish, but often of a whole province" (Anon. 1907, 113). Notwithstanding efforts to assert civilian supremacy, "No order from the *Alcalde* [provincial governor], or even the government is executed without [the friar's] counsel and approbation." Thus the colonial state was established not so much as a complex of institutions that formed a formal legal order but as the personal, and often arbitrary, rule of the friar. What emerged in the colony was not an explicitly political community, as politics was subsumed under religion. Spanish political hegemony was fully indebted to the regime of Friar Power.

And to the friars were subordinated the native elites who became the private landowning class of *caciques*.²⁹ The fundamental change came with the petrification of the ancient *datanship*—conferred with the new title of *cabeza de barangay* or "village head"—into an inert hereditary institution. At the same time, "the village" (the barrio or today's *barangay*) was itself undergoing colonial invention as a formal political unit and as a standardized and spatially delimited social organization.³⁰ The recourse to heredity was a legal imposition based upon the Iberian rulers' preferred but mistaken view of the preconquest social order.

Drawing upon European legal constructs in which he was well versed, Antonio de Morga (1904, 119, 127) described the *datanship*, in his famed *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, as hereditary along the male line. However, other sources indicate that the claim to *datanship* had to be supported by acts of valor and might. In a setting with no formal legal institutions, magical achievements were relied upon as the primary criterion to confirm, in the manner of the empiricist, the authenticity of such a claim. This latter view was not accorded official hearing, because leadership on the basis of individual prowess impressed the European as tyrannical and haphazard. The reports describing the reign of brute force can nonetheless help us understand the essence of the ancient chiefship.

Writing in the late sixteenth century, Chirino (1969, 390) observed that among the islanders "whoever was powerful enough prevailed and ruled, and not one man alone but almost anyone could come to exercise such power and authority." The Boxer Codex (Anon. 1979, 310) corroborated that view by stating that "These (chiefs) are largely brave [natives] whom they have made lords because of their deeds." A Recollect missionary in early-seventeenth-century Mindanao also noticed that "The government of those people was neither elective nor hereditary; for he

who had the greatest valor or tyranny in defending himself was lord. Consequently, everything was reduced to violence, he who was most powerful dominating the others" (L. de Jesus 1904, 212).

Written in the late seventeenth century, the Jesuit Francisco Colin's *Labor Evangelica* provides what I consider the most incisive statement on the path to *datanship*. That position was attained, he said, "through their blood; or, if not that, because of their energy and strength" in creating "some wealth," usually "by robbery and tyranny." Colin emphasized that the *datu*

gains authority and reputation, and increases it the more he practices tyranny and violence. With these beginnings, he takes the name of *dato*; and others, whether his relatives or not, come to him, and . . . make him a leader. Thus there is no superior who gives him authority or title, beyond his own efforts and power. . . . If his children continued those tyrannies, they conserved that grandeur. If on the contrary, they were men of little ability, who allowed themselves to be subjugated, or were reduced either by misfortunes and disastrous happenings, or by sickness and losses, they lost their grandeur . . . and the fact that they had honored parents or relatives was of no avail to them. . . . In this way it has happened that the father might be a chief, and the son or brother a slave—and worse, even a slave to his own brother. (Colin 1906, 86–87)

The *datanship*, therefore, was not governed by an absolute rule of male succession. Although a son could well prove himself a worthy successor, and might have the social advantages of becoming one, the "energy and strength" and the "grandeur" ended with the *dato*'s death. The departure of the *dungan*, unleashed from the body (*kalag*) or literally vomited or thrown out of the mouth (*kaluluwa*), terminated the force, the will, and the power of the *dato*. As is suggested in the description given by Francisco Alcina, also a Jesuit, in his *Historia de Las Islas é Indios de Bisaya*, *datu*s were buried with "all the wealth that they had when they were alive" (Alcina 1960, chap. 16). The successor, therefore, had to establish his own credentials, create his own wealth, and build his own grandeur. He had to embark on his own magical journey, for the route to becoming a *dato* was contingent upon individual feats and personal exploits and upon continually increasing those feats and exploits.³¹

In the absence of ostensible procedures for selection by a higher legal authority, the petty rulerships appeared to Spanish observers (who could not comprehend the indigenous ideological context of power) as a matter of naked force, a primitive contest for individual supremacy based on violence. However, in a situation of intermittent warfare, bravery was a sine qua non of leadership. Indeed, as far as the natives were concerned,

the path to *datuship* followed its own logic, for leadership and the whole compendium of village life were intimately related to the indigenous view of the cosmos, the source of coherent meaning to the world for both chiefs and followers.³²

As an endowment from the spirit-world, bravery was both a personal quality inside a person (the *dungan*) as well as a tangible object, a charm or talisman, which equipped that person with powers of invincibility and with abilities to perform extraordinary deeds. But the favored individual must prove his otherworldly election, a practice almost akin to "spiritual positivism." Once proven by actual deeds, the attributes of power separated the truly valorous from the rest, who were tantalized and magnetized to form around the *datu* a community of warriors and dependents. Thus, bravery, not just theoretically but as proven by unquestionable feats of valor, confirmed the *datu's* personal worthiness and the goodwill of the spirits.

Recently, Vicente Rafael (1988, chap. 5) has cogently argued that Spanish colonialism relocated the *datuship* into a divinely ordained system of patron-client relationships, and that the *datu's* position finally found a stable source of authority by being linked to a centralized spiritual-cum-political realm. Earlier in this chapter, I argued for the fundamental similarity of the indigenous and Spanish worldviews in the period of contact. Testimony to the quality of this historic encounter is the structure of the spirit-world believed in by Filipinos in the late twentieth century, which, along with the localization of Hispanic spirit-beings, continues to retain its essentially decentralized character. In addition, it is my view that the preconquest *datuship* already rested upon the highest possible source of authority meaningful to the islanders, the spirit-world. A thoroughly spiritual affair that abided by rules which, to those involved, formed a consistent and nonarbitrary order, a *datu's* reign was intelligible to the islanders who "knew" its stability, as well as the dawning of periods of fluidity that accompanied a ruler's downfall or the death of the *datu*.

In cases where the legitimacy of an established *datu* was challenged by another claimant to cosmic prowess, which required a large following, the dispute was settled either through warfare or the formation of another relatively isolated settlement, which was possible given the expanse of land then available. The dispersion of settlements became a spatial expression of relative *dungan* strength among the native chiefs. Followers, especially warriors, shifted allegiance according to whomever they found more attractive among contending *datus*.³³ At any one time, however, especially in the Visayas, no single *datu* possessed undisputed charisma that might have justified elevating him to the position of a

superordinate leader who commanded the loyalty of lesser chiefs. The seemingly inexhaustible reserve of supernatural prowess accessible to a multiplicity of spiritually endowed Big Men manifested itself in political fragmentation.

In establishing Spanish sovereignty over the islands, the colonial state transformed the preconquest elites into a fixed institution characterized by hereditary succession but bereft of their preconquest prestige and magic, and devoid of the prerogative to rule singlehandedly their individual settlements. Forced to conform to a system of political primogeniture, the families of the old chiefs held their positions in the imperial administration uninterrupted for some two hundred and twenty years.

The transformed elites relished their honorific titles of *Don* and *Doña* and enjoyed exemption from tribute and corvee labor. They rose to social prominence as town magistrates known as *gobernadorcillos*³⁴ and as *fiscales* (sacristans) and cantors in the church.³⁵ Not until 1786, long after the Chinese mestizos had become a distinct element in colonial society, was village headship (the *cabeza de barangay*) made elective, and it retained the same perquisites as the hereditary *cabezas*. After more than two centuries, the descendants of the *datus* of old had intermarried and multiplied into a select circle of "leading families" who comprised the exclusive pool of candidates in the friar-controlled local elections.³⁶

After more than two hundred years, the descendants of the *datus* had lost the ability to conjure magic but nevertheless retained their formal positions of leadership. The *datu's* charisma was not routinized: it merely atrophied and grew stale. Through the imposition of hereditary succession, Spanish colonial rule introduced the concept of an institutional position of power that, in being separated from personal accomplishments and extraordinary feats as a sign of favor from the spirits, was thoroughly corrupted. Gone was the magical journey of achievement as the basis of exalted rank and status.

Power in colonial society thus became ascriptive and closely intertwined with the colonial construct of "the family." An imported concept that today's Filipinos denote by using the borrowed terms *familia* or *sa-milia*, the family was invented, not so much as a set of identifiable relationships in a kin group, but as a conscious ideological category denoting a monogamous institution with corporate boundaries framed by parenthood rather than siblingship (as in the Tagalog *mag-anak*).³⁷ Marriages fell under the jurisdiction of the friar-quasi-state, and the resulting union became bound with a fixed identity revolving around the colonially imposed and paternal surname—the "family name"—which became the primary criterion for the natives' social identity.³⁸ The former

datu's broad services to his kin and non-kin followers were narrowed to the family, which became the channel for the purposeful advancement of interests and the intergenerational transmission of property, power, and status—a reversal of the ancient Southeast Asian “indifference towards lineage descent” (Wolters 1982, 9). The Catholic prohibition of nuptial union between cousins³⁹ and the introduction of a legal inheritance system fostered the tactical use of marriage by elite families to preserve wealth “within the family.” Customary law (or its elements that were not suppressed), as well as Spanish legal norms, were subordinated to the pursuit of family interests, a private sphere hardly distinguishable from the public, as the latter was itself governed by the personalistic rule of the friar.

Nonetheless, the native elite's power had to be exercised in the context of a colonial setting marked by contending social forces. Organized as political families, the native elite continually had to court the local friar to earn his favor, which they did by providing services and monetary contributions to the local church. In return, they enjoyed prominent roles in Catholic ceremonies and rituals. It also became easy for them to obtain from the priest a favorable letter of reference, required by the central government at Manila in the appointment of town magistrates. The friar became the native elite's protector against the felt abuses of civilian administrators. The markers of colonial prestige and protection, which the elite constantly had to seek and augment, seemed like signs of approval from the dominant power realm personified by the friar/*engkanto*.

At the same time, because the colonial state retained the preconquest chieftainship, at least in its outward form, as a means of indirect rule, native elites were compelled to contrive a system of affirmation of their continuing legitimacy as local leaders. One mechanism was the largesse that flowed through their sponsorship of the feast of the town's patron saint, a shift in the flow of resources given that, as we shall further see in the next chapter, the *datu's* control of the surplus had been eroded and taken over by the friar. Not predisposed to recognizing their leadership, however, were the rebel segments of indigenous society. The latter, who contested colonial authority using their otherworldly prowess, could easily terrorize the native elites who, though nominal Catholics, were awed and frightened by magic—as even the mestizo elite of Negros would be in the late nineteenth century (cf. Worcester 1898, 272–273). The elites also had to devise ways of coexisting peacefully with the unsubmissive upland settlers who had pecuniary importance for the old elite's petty commerce.⁴⁰ The descendants of the *datu's*, therefore, endured further aggravation of their cultural ambivalence through the rigidified struc-

tural position they occupied, which required them to negotiate through a world dominated by the friar but also inhabited by the overtly loyal *indios* as well as the rebels, fugitives, and shamans lurking in the colonial shadows.

The old native elite's structural difficulty was heightened by the fact that the substance of the role they performed had departed from its pre-conquest meaning, for the *cabeza* had become a mere cog in the colonial administration. While the *datu* had rights of collection and disposition over a portion of his followers' produce, the *cabeza* was a mere tribute gatherer, a position not always enviable since, under a ruthless Spanish *encomendero* or tax farmer, the full yearly tribute was demanded on pain of torture.⁴¹ Whereas the *datu* had full command over the labor services of his followers, the *cabeza* under the colonial system of draft labor acted essentially as a foreman for the colonial state.

Deprived of the chance of being respected and revered as an ancestor (*papu*) in the afterlife, but also excluded from the basically European Catholic sainthood, the native *cacique* saw power from a more temporal and this-worldly perspective. The native elite's solution to the dilemma of power and culture was to use its structural position as a vehicle for the opportunistic exercise of a hereditary post that, as we shall see, was an extension of the art of gambling. Probably to compensate for their social demotion, the *cabeza* became involved in illicit activities, such as pocketing the villagers' nominal wages for draft labor, with few qualms of conscience (Phelan 1959, 99–101, 115, 156–157). The wealth gained thereby was conspicuously displayed in dress and personal ornamentation, which in preconquest times would have been a sign of spiritual approval, but which under colonialism became a symbol of their insecure status and questionable role as an aristocratic class.

The native elite's vitiated view of power was passed on to later generations, no doubt abetted by the Spaniards' own exercise of power from a similar mold. The Chinese mestizos, who replaced the old native elite, were groomed in an even more ambivalent and opportunistic environment shaped by their ethnic Chinese fathers and native mothers. As merchants and artisans, a sizeable segment of the migrant Chinese male population in Filipinas went through the ritual of baptism as a shrewd legal tactic. Besides entitling them to a Spanish godparent, nominal conversion to Catholicism reduced the head tax of the Chinese, entitled them to land grants, and lifted the restrictions on residence and travel to the countryside (Wickberg 1965, 16).

The Chinese man who converted to the colonial religion married a native woman, who, as Edgar Wickberg conjectures, most likely had “some business sense herself and could help him run his business” (Wickberg

1965, 33). Many of these women probably came from the old elite, whose fortunes were dwindling and who sought to take advantage of the emerging market economy in the eighteenth century by marrying an entrepreneurial person. But for the native women it meant crossing a cultural divide, for the *indio* did not have a high regard for the ethnic Chinese who, on several occasions, were massacred or expelled from the colony by the Spanish government at Manila. On the other hand, the Chinese who saw the *indio* as an inferior creature decided on a pragmatic course of action in view of the absence in the colony of Chinese women they could marry.

By the 1740s, as Wickberg's classic study shows, the progeny of those mixed marriages, the Chinese mestizos, were numerous enough to be classified by the colonial state as a separate entity within native society. Constituting a distinct legal category, the Chinese mestizos were levied tribute higher than that of the *indio* but lower than that of the Chinese; they were required to render a fixed amount of forced labor service every year like the *indio*, an exaction to which the Chinese were not subjected; but, unlike the Chinese, the mestizos were free to change residence and participate in local government (Wickberg 1965, 63–65). Thus, the Chinese mestizos straddled a formally recognized middle position in colonial society.

Socialized into their middling status, the Chinese mestizos not surprisingly learned to be masterful opportunists who, as contemporary observers suggested, instrumentalized roles, norms, and values. They became experts at the learned imitation of religion, language (Spanish and the vernaculars), mode of dress, and other aspects they found desirable—thus fostering the modern Filipino penchant for the copying of form, thinking it equivalent to substance. Although mestizo imitation was radically different from shamanic imitation, the mestizo strategy made possible a level of adeptness at practicing both Spanish and native cultures that turned the Chinese mestizo into a skillfully versatile trader. To safeguard their interests, they had to be able to identify with accuracy individuals on whom they would place their bets. From their vantage point, the mestizos learned to stand back and become acute spectators within colonial society. The mestizo therefore became the consummate middle person as well as the gambler who adroitly profited from the manipulation of risks and intermediary functions.

Structural opportunism, however, did not resolve the socially marginal person's dilemmas of power and culture. Witness the grotesque imitation of Spanish culture and the scorn heaped upon the *indio* by the inimitable *Doctora Doña Victorina de los Reyes de de Espadaña* in Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*. Fostered by the Chinese father's feelings of superiority

over the *indio*, on the one hand, and *indio* society's lack of regard for the Chinese, on the other, the mestizos became overzealous in their mimicry of the Spaniard, who generally held both *indio* and mestizo in contempt. In this manner, the mestizos, whose *dungan* were in virtual limbo, added another layer of ambivalence to the contradictions absorbed from received *indio* culture. As shown in the next chapter, notwithstanding the affluence they were beginning to reap from trade and agriculture, the Chinese mestizos did not enjoy any residual prestige from the ancient *datanship*, nor did they sustain whatever prestige was left of the old native elite. The Chinese mestizos, who later comprised the ruling classes of the Philippines, were certainly not a traditional aristocracy. But, as the high point of the colonial invention of the family, the mestizo elites began a tradition of conjuring up genealogies of illustrious forebears with many a connection to an imaginary royalty.

Although intermittently bothered by "evildoers," the friars by the early nineteenth century retained undisputed power in colonial society—until the merchant capitalists began to pose a serious challenge to the monopoly of Friar Power. The cholera epidemic that struck in October 1820 was an unprecedented disturbance of the health of the capital and suburbs, which, just a year earlier, had been described by an American sailor as "proverbial" (White 1962, 104). More significantly, in the midst of the epidemic, holy water and the friars' magical ensemble failed to neutralize the poison believed to have been sown by foreigners. It seemed as though only through massacre could Friar Power avenge itself against the enemy.

The subsequent growth in the presence of foreign merchant capitalists must have impressed the natives, who could well have arrived at the conclusion that, in the white man's spiritual realm where the Hispanic spirits also had their enemies, those in support of the Protestants/Masons were acquiring a strength sufficient, in a new clash of spirits, to allow them to challenge Friar Power. The wedding of George Sturgis at about the middle of the nineteenth century proved to be the crucial test. The specific attraction of the wedding episode to the natives was that it bore the mark of a spectator event on which those anxiously gathered at the Manila harbor could bet as to its eventual outcome.

Highlighting the dialectical inseparability of economics, politics, and culture, the pivotal conjuncture represented by Sturgis' wedding led to the accelerated incorporation of local agriculture into the circuits of global capitalism. In the wake of a triumphant Masonic Capitalism, the presence of Catholic Spain's enemies in the colony had to be tolerated, with the native reading of the situation fully in accord with the realities of Spain's twilight empire. Applauded by cheering natives, the success-

ful Protestant rite added impetus to native participation in the export economy. By protecting Sturgis' Catholic wife from the clergy's forebodings of infernal damnation, the foreigners demonstrated the sort of mystical strength that could serve as a counterpoint to Spanish shamanism. Condemned as evil but able to ward off friar opposition and Catholic reprisal, the Protestant/Masonic capitalists began to signify an alternative storehouse of power that could be tapped for luck as the natives negotiated their way through a changing world.

For the enterprising Chinese mestizos, the wedding's cosmic significance might well have meant that colonial categories could be transgressed and stakes safely wagered with the formerly denigrated "merchants of evil," from whose hands money—as in a gambling den—flowed to the winners. To the mestizos, the foreign merchants represented a clear opportunity for economic advancement as well as a cultural pole of identification to deal with the dilemmas of cultural ambivalence. There would prove to be no dissociation of the Chinese mestizo from the contradictions of received *indio* culture, but class and cultural differentiation was accentuated later in the nineteenth century by the liberal education wealthier mestizo children acquired in Europe, where the more activist became Masons. Education and travel were afforded by gains from export agriculture, particularly sugar.

By the time of its full incorporation into global capitalism in the early nineteenth century, Philippine agriculture had already undergone a series of changes that became integral to the founding of export-crop production in various parts of the colony, including Negros. The changes in the economic structure of colonial society must be understood as inseparable from the same historical dynamic that produced the social and cultural transformations discussed in this chapter. The historical sociology of colonial agriculture is presented in the next chapter through a reconstruction of the relations of production prior to conquest and during the colonial era.

3

Elusive Peasant, Weak State: Sharecropping and the Changing Meaning of Debt

Cosmology and Preconquest Production Relations

As we saw in the previous chapter, the islanders of the preconquest world had configured a hierarchized social order according to the distribution of charisma and prowess and the economy of prestige as ordained by the spirits. An islander who could not claim otherworldly prowess to be reckoned as *datu* entered the penumbra of one whose claim to individual supremacy was validated empirically by deeds of valor. Either as warriors or dependents, the *datu*'s followers were grouped in settlements, conventionally known as *barangay* in Tagalog (*hapon* or *haop* in Visayan), which were of highly variable character and size, some encompassing thirty, others about a hundred households. In a world splintered into dispersed bands and settlements locked in intermittent conflict, group membership was a requisite for individual survival. In that context, the *datu* managed the *barangay* as his protectorate. If the *datu* was not waging war on other settlements, he was entering or cementing alliances with other leaders, often by giving daughters in marriage. Such alliances were useful in confronting a common enemy or undertaking a common war effort, and in establishing a conducive environment for trade.¹ While at one level ensuring the safety of followers and dependents, the management of external relations at another level was crucial to a *datu*'s personal competition with other men of renown and the maintenance of power within his own settlement.