

Patriotism and Racism

In the preceding chapters I have tried to delineate the processes by which the nation came to be imagined, and, once imagined, modelled, adapted and transformed. Such an analysis has necessarily been concerned primarily with social change and different forms of consciousness. But it is doubtful whether either social change or transformed consciousnesses, in themselves, do much to explain the *attachment* that peoples feel for the inventions of their imaginations – or, to revive a question raised at the beginning of this text – why people are ready to die for these inventions.

In an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals (particularly in Europe?) to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism,¹ it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love. The cultural products of nationalism – poetry, prose fiction, music, plastic arts – show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles. On the other hand, how truly rare it is to find

1. Cf. the passage in Nairn's *Break-up of Britain*, pp. 14–15 above, and Hobsbawm's somewhat Biedermeier dictum: 'the basic fact [is] that Marxists as such are not nationalists.' 'Some Reflections,' p. 10.

analogous nationalist products expressing fear and loathing.² Even in the case of colonized peoples, who have every reason to feel hatred for their imperialist rulers, it is astonishing how insignificant the element of hatred is in these expressions of national feeling. Here, for example, are the first and last stanzas of *Último Adiós*, the famous poem written by Rizal as he awaited execution at the hands of Spanish imperialism.³

1. Adiós, Patria adorada, región del sol querida,
Perla del Mar de Oriente, nuestro perdido edén,
A darte voy, alegre, la triste mustia vida;
Y fuera más brillante, más fresca, más florida,
También por ti la diera, la diera por tu bien . . .
12. Entonces nada importa me pongas en olvido:
Tu atmósfera, tu espacio, tus valles cruzaré;
Vibrante y limpia nota seré par tu oído;
Aroma, luz, colores, rumor, canto, gemido,
Constante repitiendo la esencia de mi fe.
13. Mi Patria idolatrada, dolor de mis dolores,
Querida Filipinas, oye el postrer adiós.
Ahí, te dejo todo: mis padres, mis amores.
Voy donde no hay esclavos, verdugos ni opresores;
Donde la fe no mata, donde el que reina es Dios.
14. Adiós, padres y hermanos, trozos del alma mía,
Amigos de la infancia, en el perdido hogar;
Dad gracias, que descanso del fatigoso día;
Adiós, dulce extranjera, mi amiga, mi alegría;
Adiós, queridos seres. Morir es descansar.

2. Can the reader think immediately of even three Hymns of Hate? The second stanza of God Save the Queen/King is worded instructively: 'O Lord our God, arise/ Scatter her/his enemies,/And make them fall;/Confound their politics,/ Frustrate their knavish tricks;/On Thee our hopes we fix;/God save us all.' Notice that these enemies have no identity and could as well be Englishmen as anyone else since they are 'her/his' enemies *not* 'ours.' The entire anthem is a paean to monarchy, not to the/a nation – which is not once mentioned.

3. Or in the translation of Trinidad T. Subido:

Notice not only that the nationality of the 'tyrants' goes unmentioned, but that Rizal's passionate patriotism is expressed superbly in 'their' language.⁴

Something of the nature of this political love can be deciphered from the ways in which languages describe its object: either in the vocabulary of kinship (motherland, *Vaterland*, *patria*) or that of home (*heimat* or *tanah air* [earth and water, the phrase for the Indonesians' native archipelago]). Both idioms denote something to which one is naturally tied. As we have seen earlier, in everything 'natural' there is always something unchosen. In this way, nation-ness is assimilated to skin-colour, gender, parentage and birth-era – all those things one can not help. And in these 'natural ties' one senses what one might call 'the beauty of *gemeinschaft*'. To put it another way, precisely because such ties are not chosen, they have about them a halo of disinterestedness.

While it is true that in the past two decades the idea of the family-

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1. Farewell, dear Land, beloved of the sun,
Pearl of the Orient seas, lost Paradise!
Gladly, I will to you this life undone;
Were it a fairer, fresher, fuller one,
I'd cede it still, your weal to realize . . .
 12. What matters then that you forget me, when
I might explore your ev'ry dear retreat?
Be as a note, pulsing and pure; and then,
Be scent, light, tone; be song or sign, again;
And through it all, my theme of faith, repeat.
 13. Land I enshrine, list to my last farewell!
Philippines, Love, of pains my pain extreme,
I leave you all, all whom I love so well,
To go where neither slaves nor tyrants dwell,
Where Faith kills not, and where God reigns supreme.
 14. Farewell to all my soul does comprehend –
O kith and kin in my home dispossessed;
Give thanks my day oppressive is at end;
Farewell, sweet stranger, my delight and friend;
Farewell, dear ones. To die is but to rest.

Jaime C. de Veyra, *El 'Último Adiós' de Rizal: estudio crítico-expositivo*, pp. 89–90, and 101–102 (the translation).

4. It was, however, quickly translated into Tagalog by the great Filipino revolutionary Andrés Bonifacio. His version is given in *ibid.*, pp. 107–109.

as-articulated-power-structure has been much written about, such a conception is certainly foreign to the overwhelming bulk of mankind. Rather, the family has traditionally been conceived as the domain of disinterested love and solidarity. So too, if historians, diplomats, politicians, and social scientists are quite at ease with the idea of 'national interest,' for most ordinary people of whatever class the whole point of the nation is that it is interestless. Just for that reason, it can ask for sacrifices.

As noted earlier, the great wars of this century are extraordinary not so much in the unprecedented scale on which they permitted people to kill, as in the colossal numbers persuaded to lay down their lives. Is it not certain that the numbers of those killed vastly exceeded those who killed? The idea of the ultimate sacrifice comes only with an idea of purity, through fatality.

Dying for one's country, which usually one does not choose, assumes a moral grandeur which dying for the Labour Party, the American Medical Association, or perhaps even Amnesty International can not rival, for these are all bodies one can join or leave at easy will. Dying for the revolution also draws its grandeur from the degree to which it is felt to be something fundamentally pure. (If people imagined the proletariat *merely* as a group in hot pursuit of refrigerators, holidays, or power, how far would they, including members of the proletariat, be willing to die for it?)⁵ Ironically enough, it may be that to the extent that Marxist interpretations of history are felt (rather than intellected) as representations of ineluctable necessity, they also acquire an aura of purity and disinterestedness.

Here we may usefully return once more to language. First, one notes the primordialness of languages, even those known to be modern. No one can give the date for the birth of any language. Each looms up imperceptibly out of a horizonless past. (Insofar as *homo sapiens* is *homo dicens*, it can seem difficult to imagine an origin of

5. This formulation should not at all be taken to mean that revolutionary movements do not pursue material objectives. But these objectives are envisioned, not as a congeries of individual acquisitions, but as the conditions of Rousseau's shared *bonheur*.

language newer than the species itself.) Languages thus appear rooted beyond almost anything else in contemporary societies. At the same time, nothing connects us affectively to the dead more than language. If English-speakers hear the words 'Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust' – created almost four-and-a-half centuries ago – they get a ghostly intimation of simultaneity across homogeneous, empty time. The weight of the words derives only in part from their solemn meaning; it comes also from an as-it-were ancestral 'Englishness'.

Second, there is a special kind of contemporaneous community which language alone suggests – above all in the form of poetry and songs. Take national anthems, for example, sung on national holidays. No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: unisonance.⁶ Singing the Marseillaise, Waltzing Matilda, and Indonesia Raya provide occasions for unisonality, for the echoed physical realization of the imagined community. (So does listening to [and maybe silently chiming in with] the recitation of ceremonial poetry, such as sections of *The Book of Common Prayer*.) How selfless this unisonance feels! If we are aware that others are singing these songs precisely when and as we are, we have no idea who they may be, or even where, out of earshot, they are singing. Nothing connects us all but imagined sound.

Yet such choruses are joinable in time. If I am a Lett, my daughter may be an Australian. The son of an Italian immigrant to New York will find ancestors in the Pilgrim Fathers. If nationalness has about it an aura of fatality, it is nonetheless a fatality embedded in *history*. Here San Martín's edict baptizing Quechua-speaking Indians as 'Peruvians' – a movement that has affinities with religious conversion – is exemplary. For it shows that from the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood, and that one could be 'invited into' the imagined community. Thus today, even the most insular nations accept the principle of *naturalization* (wonderful word!), no matter how difficult in practice they may make it.

6. Contrast this *a capella* chorus with the language of everyday life, which is typically experienced decani/cantoris-fashion as dialogue and exchange.

Seen as both a *historical* fatality and as a community imagined through language, the nation presents itself as simultaneously open and closed. This paradox is well illustrated in the shifting rhythms of these famous lines on the death of John Moore during the battle of Coruña:⁷

1. Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.
2. We buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning;
By the struggling moonbeams' misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.
3. No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him . . .
5. We thought, as we hollowed his narrow bed,
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head
And we far away on the billow . . .
8. Slowly and sadly we laid him down.
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone –
But we left him alone with his glory!

The lines celebrate a heroic memory with a beauty inseparable from the English language – one untranslatable, audible only to its speakers and readers. Yet both Moore and his eulogist were Irishmen. And there is no reason why a descendant of Moore's French or Spanish 'foes' can not fully hear the poem's resonance: English, like any other language, is always open to new speakers, listeners, and readers.

7. 'The Burial of Sir John Moore,' in *The Poems of Charles Wolfe*, pp. 1–2.

Listen to Thomas Browne, encompassing in a pair of sentences the length and breadth of man's history:⁸

Even the old ambitions had the advantage of ours, in the attempts of their vainglories, who acting early and before the probable Meridian of time, have by this time found great accomplishment of their designs, whereby the ancient Heroes have already out-lasting their Monuments, and Mechanicall preservations. But in this latter Scene of time we cannot expect such Mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the Prophecy of Elias, and Charles the Fifth can never hope to live within two Methusela's of Hector.

Here ancient Egypt, Greece, and Judaea are united with the Holy Roman Empire, but their unification across thousands of years and thousands of miles is accomplished within the particularity of Browne's seventeenth-century English prose.⁹ The passage can, of course, up to a point be translated. But the eerie splendour of 'probable Meridian of time,' 'Mechanicall preservations,' 'such Mummies unto our memories,' and 'two Methusela's of Hector' can bring goose-flesh to the napes only of English-readers.

On this page, it opens itself wide to the reader. On the other hand, the no less eerie splendour of the final lines of 'Yang Sudah Hilang' by the great Indonesian author Pramoedya Ananta Toer:¹⁰

Suara itu hanya terdengar beberapa detik saja dalam hidup. Getarannya sebentar berdengung, takkan terulangi lagi. Tapi seperti juga halnya dengan kali Lusi yang abadi menggarisi kota Blora, dan seperti kali itu juga, suara yang tersimpan menggarisi kenangan dan ingatan itu mengalir juga – mengalir kemuaranya, kelaut yang tak bertepi. Dan tak seorangpun tahu kapan laut itu akan kering dan berhenti berdeburan.

8. *Hydriotaphia, Urne-Buriall, or, A Discourse of the Sepulchrall Urnes lately found in Norfolk*, pp. 72–73. On 'the probable Meridian of time' compare Bishop Otto of Freising.

9. Yet 'England' goes unmentioned in this unification. We are reminded of those provincial newspapers which brought the whole world, through Spanish, into Caracas and Bogotá.

10. In *Tjerita dari Blora* [Tales from Blora], pp. 15–44, at p. 44.

Hilang.

Semua itu sudah hilang dari jangkauan panc[h]a-indera.

on the same print page, are most likely closed.¹¹

If every language is acquirable, its acquisition requires a real portion of a person's life: each new conquest is measured against shortening days. What limits one's access to other languages is not their imperviousness but one's own mortality. Hence a certain privacy to all languages. French and American imperialists governed, exploited, and killed Vietnamese over many years. But whatever else they made off with, the Vietnamese language stayed put. Accordingly, only too often, a rage at Vietnamese 'inscrutability,' and that obscure despair which engenders the venomous argots of dying colonialisms: 'gooks,' 'ratons', etc.¹² (In the longer run, the only responses to the vast privacy of the language of the oppressed are retreat or further massacre.)

Such epithets are, in their inner form, characteristically racist, and decipherment of this form will serve to show why Nairn is basically mistaken in arguing that racism and anti-semitism derive from nationalism – and thus that 'seen in sufficient historical depth, fascism tells us more about nationalism than any other episode.'¹³ A word like 'slant,' for example, abbreviated from 'slant-eyed', does not simply express an ordinary political enmity. It erases nation-ness by reducing the adversary to his biological physiognomy.¹⁴ It denies, by substituting for, 'Vietnamese,' just as *raton* denies, by substituting for, 'Algerian'. At the same time, it stirs 'Vietnamese' into a nameless sludge along with 'Korean,' 'Chinese,' 'Filipino,' and so on. The character of this vocabulary may become still more evident if it is contrasted with other Vietnam-War-period words like 'Charlie' and

11. Still, listen to them! I have adapted the original spelling to accord with current convention and to make the quotation completely phonetic.

12. The logic here is: 1. I will be dead before I have penetrated them. 2. My power is such that they have had to learn my language. 3. But this means that my privacy has been penetrated. Terming them 'gooks' is small revenge.

13. *The Break-up of Britain*, pp. 337 and 347.

14. Notice that there is no obvious, selfconscious antonym to 'slant.' 'Round'? 'Straight'? 'Oval'?

'V.C.', or from an earlier era, 'Boches,' 'Huns,' 'Japs' and 'Frogs,' all of which apply only to *one* specific nationality, and thus concede, in hatred, the adversary's membership in a league of nations.¹⁵

The fact of the matter is that nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history. Niggers are, thanks to the invisible tar-brush, forever niggers; Jews, the seed of Abraham, forever Jews, no matter what passports they carry or what languages they speak and read. (Thus for the Nazi, the *Jewish* German was always an impostor.)¹⁶

The dreams of racism actually have their origin in ideologies of *class*, rather than in those of nation: above all in claims to divinity among rulers and to 'blue' or 'white' blood and 'breeding' among aristocracies.¹⁷ No surprise then that the putative sire of modern racism should be, not some petty-bourgeois nationalist, but Joseph Arthur, Comte de Gobineau.¹⁸ Nor that, on the whole, racism and

15. Not only, in fact, in an earlier era. Nonetheless, there is a whiff of the antique-shop about these words of Debray: 'I can conceive of no hope for Europe save under the hegemony of a revolutionary France, firmly grasping the banner of independence. Sometimes I wonder if the whole "anti-Boche" mythology and our secular antagonism to Germany may not be one day indispensable for saving the revolution, or even our national-democratic inheritance.' 'Marxism and the National Question,' p. 41.

16. The significance of the emergence of Zionism and the birth of Israel is that the former marks the reimagining of an ancient religious community as a nation, down there among the other nations – while the latter charts an alchemic change from wandering devotee to local patriot.

17. 'From the side of the landed aristocracy came conceptions of inherent superiority in the ruling class, and a sensitivity to status, prominent traits well into the twentieth century. Fed by new sources, these conceptions could later be vulgarized [sic] and made appealing to the German population as a whole in doctrines of racial superiority.' Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, p. 436.

18. Gobineau's dates are perfect. He was born in 1816, two years after the restoration of the Bourbons to the French throne. His diplomatic career, 1848–1877, blossomed under Louis Napoléon's Second Empire and the reactionary monarchist regime of Marie Edmé Patrice Maurice, Comte de MacMahon, former imperialist proconsul in Algiers. His *Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races Humaines* appeared in 1854 – should one say in response to the popular vernacular-nationalist insurrections of 1848?

anti-semitism manifest themselves, not across national boundaries, but within them. In other words, they justify not so much foreign wars as domestic repression and domination.¹⁹

Where racism developed outside Europe in the nineteenth century, it was always associated with European domination, for two converging reasons. First and most important was the rise of official nationalism and colonial 'Russification'. As has been repeatedly emphasized official nationalism was typically a response on the part of threatened dynastic and aristocratic groups – upper *classes* – to popular vernacular nationalism. Colonial racism was a major element in that conception of 'Empire' which attempted to weld dynastic legitimacy and national community. It did so by generalizing a principle of innate, inherited superiority on which its own domestic position was (however shakily) based to the vastness of the overseas possessions, covertly (or not so covertly) conveying the idea that if, say, English lords were naturally superior to other Englishmen, no matter: these other Englishmen were no less superior to the subjected natives. Indeed one is tempted to argue that the existence of late colonial empires even served to *shore up* domestic aristocratic bastions, since they appeared to confirm on a global, modern stage antique conceptions of power and privilege.

It could do so with some effect because – and here is our second reason – the colonial empire, with its rapidly expanding bureaucratic apparatus and its 'Russifying' policies, permitted sizeable numbers of bourgeois and petty bourgeois to play aristocrat off centre court: i.e. anywhere in the empire except at home. In each colony one found this grimly amusing *tableau vivant*: the bourgeois gentilhomme speaking poetry against a backcloth of spacious mansions and gardens filled with mimosa and bougainvillea, and a large supporting cast of houseboys, grooms, gardeners, cooks, amahs, maids, washer-

19. South African racism has not, in the age of Vorster and Botha, stood in the way of amicable relations (however discreetly handled) with prominent black politicians in certain independent African states. If Jews suffer discrimination in the Soviet Union, that did not prevent respectful working relations between Brezhnev and Kissinger.

women, and, above all, horses.²⁰ Even those who did not manage to live in this style, such as young bachelors, nonetheless had the grandly equivocal status of a French nobleman on the eve of a jacquerie.²¹

In Moulmein, in lower Burma [this obscure town needs explaining to readers in the metropole], I was hated by large numbers of people – the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town.

This ‘tropical Gothic’ was made possible by the overwhelming power that high capitalism had given the metropole – a power so great that it could be kept, so to speak, in the wings. Nothing better illustrates capitalism in feudal-aristocratic drag than colonial militaries, which were notoriously distinct from those of the metropolises, often even in formal institutional terms.²² Thus in Europe one had the ‘First Army,’ recruited by conscription on a mass, citizen, metropolitan base; ideologically conceived as the defender of the *heimat*; dressed in practical, utilitarian khaki; armed with the latest affordable weapons; in peacetime isolated in barracks, in war stationed in trenches or behind heavy field-guns. Outside Europe one had the ‘Second Army,’ recruited (below the officer level) from local religious or ethnic minorities on a mercenary basis; ideologically conceived as an internal police force; dressed to kill in bed- or ballroom; armed with swords and obsolete industrial weapons; in peace on display, in war on horseback. If the Prussian General Staff, Europe’s military teacher, stressed the anonymous solidarity of a professionalized corps, ballistics, railroads, engineering, strategic planning, and the like, the colonial army stressed glory, epaulettes, personal heroism, polo, and an archaizing courtliness among its officers. (It could afford to do so

20. For a stunning collection of photographs of such tableaux vivants in the Netherlands Indies (and an elegantly ironical text), see ‘E. Breton de Nijs,’ *Tempo Doeloe*.

21. George Orwell, ‘Shooting an Elephant,’ in *The Orwell Reader*, p. 3. The words in square brackets are of course my interpolation.

22. The KNIL (Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger) was quite separate from the KL (Koninklijk Leger) in Holland. The Légion Étrangère was almost from the start legally prohibited from operations on continental French soil.

because the First Army and the Navy were there in the background.) This mentality survived a long time. In Tonkin, in 1894, Lyautey wrote:²³

Quel dommage de n'être pas venu ici dix ans plus tôt! Quelles carrières à y fonder et à y mener. Il n'y a pas ici un de ces petits lieutenants, chefs de poste et de reconnaissance, qui ne développe en 6 mois plus d'initiative, de volonté, d'endurance, de *personnalité*, qu'un officier *de France* en toute sa carrière.

In Tonkin, in 1951, Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, 'who liked officers who combined guts with "style," took an immediate liking to the dashing cavalryman [Colonel de Castries] with his bright-red Spahi cap and scarf, his magnificent riding-crop, and his combination of easy-going manners and *ducal* mien, which made him as irresistible to women in Indochina in the 1950s as he had been to Parisiennes of the 1930s.'²⁴

Another instructive indication of the aristocratic or pseudo-aristocratic derivation of colonial racism was the typical 'solidarity

23. *Lettres du Tonkin et de Madagascar (1894–1899)*, p. 84. Letter of December 22, 1894, from Hanoi. Emphases added.

24. Bernard B. Fall, *Hell is a Very Small Place: The Siege of Dien Bien Phu*, p. 56. One can imagine the shudder of Clausewitz's ghost. [Spahi, derived like Sepoy from the Ottoman Sipahi, meant mercenary irregular cavalrymen of the 'Second Army' in Algeria.] It is true that the France of Lyautey and de Lattre was a Republican France. However, the often talkative Grande Muette had since the start of the Third Republic been an asylum for aristocrats increasingly excluded from power in all other important institutions of public life. By 1898, a full quarter of all Brigadier- and Major-Generals were aristocrats. Moreover, this aristocrat-dominated officer corps was crucial to nineteenth and twentieth-century French imperialism. 'The rigorous control imposed on the army in the *métropole* never extended fully to *la France d'outremer*. The extension of the French Empire in the nineteenth century was partially the result of uncontrolled initiative on the part of colonial military commanders. French West Africa, largely the creation of General Faidherbe, and the French Congo as well, owed most of their expansion to independent military forays into the hinterland. Military officers were also responsible for the *faits accomplis* which led to a French protectorate in Tahiti in 1842, and, to a lesser extent, to the French occupation of Tonkin in Indochina in the 1880's . . . In 1897 Galliéri summarily abolished the monarchy in Madagascar and deported the Queen, all without consulting the French government, which later accepted the *fait accompli* . . .' John S. Ambler, *The French Army in Politics, 1945–1962*, pp. 10–11 and 22.

among whites,' which linked colonial rulers from different national metropolises, whatever their internal rivalries and conflicts. This solidarity, in its curious trans-state character, reminds one instantly of the class solidarity of Europe's nineteenth-century aristocracies, mediated through each other's hunting-lodges, spas, and ballrooms; and of that brotherhood of 'officers and gentlemen,' which in the Geneva convention guaranteeing privileged treatment to captured enemy *officers*, as opposed to partisans or civilians, has an agreeably twentieth-century expression.

The argument adumbrated thus far can also be pursued from the side of colonial populations. For, the pronouncements of certain colonial ideologues aside, it is remarkable how little that dubious entity known as 'reverse racism' manifested itself in the anticolonial movements. In this matter it is easy to be deceived by language. There is, for example, a sense in which the Javanese word *londo* (derived from Hollander or Nederlander) meant not only 'Dutch' but 'whites.' But the derivation itself shows that, for Javanese peasants, who scarcely ever encountered any 'whites' but Dutch, the two meanings effectively overlapped. Similarly, in French colonial territories, '*les blancs*' meant rulers whose Frenchness was indistinguishable from their whiteness. In neither case, so far as I know, did *londo* or *blanc* either lose caste or breed derogatory secondary distinctions.²⁵

On the contrary, the spirit of anticolonial nationalism is that of the heart-rending Constitution of Makario Sakay's short-lived Republic of Katagalugan (1902), which said, among other things:²⁶

25. I have never heard of an abusive argot word in Indonesian or Javanese for either 'Dutch' or 'white.' Compare the Anglo-Saxon treasury: niggers, wops, kikes, gooks, slants, fuzzywuzzies, and a hundred more. It is possible that this innocence of racist argots is true primarily of colonized populations. Blacks in America – and surely elsewhere – have developed a varied counter-vocabulary (honkies, ofays, etc.).

26. As cited in Reynaldo Ileto's masterly *Pasyón and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840–1910*, p. 218. Sakay's rebel republic lasted until 1907, when he was captured and executed by the Americans. Understanding the first sentence requires remembering that three centuries of Spanish rule and Chinese immigration had produced a sizeable mestizo population in the islands.

No Tagalog, born in this Tagalog archipelago, shall exalt any person above the rest because of his race or the colour of his skin; fair, dark, rich, poor, educated and ignorant – all are completely equal, and should be in one *loób* [inward spirit]. There may be differences in education, wealth, or appearance, but never in essential nature (*pagkatao*) and ability to serve a cause.

One can find without difficulty analogies on the other side of the globe. Spanish-speaking mestizo Mexicans trace their ancestries, not to Castilian conquistadors, but to half-obliterated Aztecs, Mayans, Toltecs and Zapotecs. Uruguayan revolutionary patriots, creoles themselves, took up the name of Tupac Amarú, the last great indigenous rebel against creole oppression, who died under unspeakable tortures in 1781.

It may appear paradoxical that the objects of all these attachments are ‘imagined’ – anonymous, faceless fellow-Tagalogs, exterminated tribes, Mother Russia, or the *tanah air*. But *amor patriae* does not differ in this respect from the other affections, in which there is always an element of fond imagining. (This is why looking at the photo-albums of strangers’ weddings is like studying the archaeologist’s groundplan of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.) What the eye is to the lover – that particular, ordinary eye he or she is born with – language – whatever language history has made his or her mother-tongue – is to the patriot. Through that language, encountered at mother’s knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed.

The Angel of History

We began this brief study with the recent wars between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Democratic Kampuchea, and the People's Republic of China; so it is only fitting to return finally to that point of departure. Does anything of what has meantime been said help to deepen our understanding of their outbreak?

In *The Break-up of Britain*, Tom Nairn has some valuable words on the relationship between the British political system and those of the rest of the modern world.¹

Alone, [the British system] represented a 'slow, conventional growth, not like the others, the product of deliberate *invention*, resulting from a theory.' Arriving later, those others 'attempted to sum up at a stroke the fruits of the experience of the state which had evolved its constitutionalism through several centuries' . . . Because it was first, the English – later British – experience remained distinct. Because they came second, into a world where the English Revolution had already succeeded and expanded, later bourgeois societies could not repeat this early development. Their *study and imitation engendered something substantially different*: the truly modern doctrine of the

1. At pp. 17–18. Emphases added. The inner quotation is taken from Charles Frederick Strong's *Modern Political Constitutions*, p. 28.