PASYON AND REVOLUTION

Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840–1910

Reynaldo Clemeña Ileto

Ateneo de Manila University Press
CHAPTER 3

Tradition and Revolt: The Katipunan

The armed uprising against Spain in 1896 was initiated by a secret society called Kataas-taasan Kagalang-galang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (The Highest and Most Honorable Society of the Sons of the Country). The flame of rebellion that began in the outskirts of Manila spread quickly throughout the countryside of central and southern Luzon, as Katipunan chapters and other groups concertedy turned against the symbols and representatives of Spanish rule. It was during this time that the Cofradia based at Mount San Cristobal underwent a tremendous expansion. It attracted many, predominantly peasants, who had fled to the mountains and forests of southern Luzon in order to escape the bloody reprisals being inflicted by the Spanish army upon the populace at large. The Colorum Society, as the brotherhood came to be called, soon became involved in the revolution largely through the efforts of a pastor (padre) named Sebastian Caneo, a native of Taal, Batangas, who later settled in San Pablo, Laguna. He was primarily responsible for interpreting separation from Spain as a sign that the world was about to undergo a substantive change, for which his brotherhood must prepare through prayer and participation in the struggle.

---

1. The word “colorum” seems to have been derived from the phrase “per omnia saecula saeculum,” with which the Cofradia ended its prayers. “Colorum” also means, in contemporary Philippine usage, any unlicensed property or business. This reflects to a certain extent today’s popular image of these religious groups (see Milagros Guerrero, “The Colorum Uprisings: 1924–1931,” Asian Studies 5 [April 1967]: 65).
According to Santiago Alvarez, a prominent Katipunan leader who provides us with the bulk of information about the Colorum participation in the revolt, the prominence of Caneo resulted from a miracle that occurred in the hills of eastern Cavite. It was then a time of drought when, all of a sudden, a spring of water began to flow from a crack on a dry mountain top. Caneo first saw it as he was walking, and out of surprise or fear fell on his knees and prayed. The people who happened to be nearby all knelt with awe at the miracle. Soon the word spread around that Caneo was a prophet whose devoutness and concern for his fellowmen in thirst caused God to respond with the miracle. From that time on people began to gather about Caneo, not only because of the sign but also because of his “gentle and good manners.” He instructed them on the ways of leading a pure and devout life, and informed them of the cult center at Banahaw where the sage prophet, Agripino Lontok, lived as a hermit.

Caneo perceived that the Katipunan revolt against Spain was a sign of an approaching cataclysm that would bring about the fulfillment of the faithful’s hopes. But the brotherhood was not going to stand aside while the divine plan for the world unfolded itself. Man had to participate in the process. For Caneo this meant that the kapatid (brothers) must strengthen themselves through prayer and join the revolt against Spain. Thus, he called upon his assistants, Juan Magdalo and Eligio Dius-Diusan, to gather as many of the brethren as possible in preparation for the struggle for kalayaan (liberty). He told them that according to the Santong Bocas (Holy Voice), with whom he communicated in the caves of Banahaw, the Spaniards would be forced to surrender without a fight by means of the following stratagem: They would all march to the Spanish garrison at Tayabas, the provincial capital, each of them bearing a piece of rope, about a yard long, tied around their waists. As they approached the cuartel of the guardia civil, they would throw these pieces of rope at the Spaniards, who would be miraculously tied up. Their real weapon would be intense prayer. Caneo announced his plan to the sage, Agripino Lontok, who gave his blessing to Caneo saying that, indeed, everything should be done for the defense of the country’s kalayaan, and that through prayer their victory would be assured by God.

Caneo’s assistant, Juan Magdalo, wrote to all the pastors in the vicinity, asking them to gather all the brethren, men and women alike, at the foot of Banahaw. Before about five thousand people who were immediately assembled, Juan Magdalo announced that they had been commanded by the Santong Boces to fight for their country’s kalayaan and that their strongest weapon would be prayer. He then outlined their battle plan, particularly the manner in which the ropes were to be thrown. Obviously it was to be a ritualistic movement, involving great bodily control.

At the dawn of 24 June 1897, a huge procession of men, women and children, all praying in unison and carrying lighted candles, entered the town of Tayabas. The older pilgrims wore long white robes, similar to the attire of Christ’s apostles. In the middle of the procession was a caro (a platform upon which a saint’s statue is borne during processions) on which stood Juan Magdalo dressed in the attire of John the Baptist. As they neared the soldiers’ quarters, the guardia civil opened fire upon seeing the devotees reach for the ropes around their waists. At the first volley, scores of men and women of all ages fell dead or wounded. The devotees broke from their ranks and fled in the direction their leader, Juan Magdalo, was running.

When Sebastian Caneo brought up the subject of the massacre before the Santong Boces on the mountain, the reply was: “They did not have enough faith (lulang ng pag sampalatataya) and during the time of battle those who died or sustained wounds had failed to utter my name.” When Caneo repeated these words to the kapatid, they regained their serenity. Alvarez notes that “this explanation was sufficient, and all were happy with the continuation of their devotions (sampalatataya), without even feeling sadness and loss at the death of their brothers, spouses, children or parents.” They brought candles which they arranged along the banks of a deep stream, on the slopes of the mountain, believing that the souls of the departed pass through there on their way to heaven.

The entry into Tayabas appears to have been the only occasion in which the Colorum fought as a group during the war against Spain. Nevertheless, as Alvarez and Artemio Ricarte point out, the brotherhood was always ready to aid Katipunan fighters who came for help and protection. The cult center at Mount San Cristobal had been transformed into a patriotic shrine by mid-1897, at the latest. Patriotic martyrs like Fr. Jose Burgos and Jose Rizal were said to be living there, apparently to render prophetic advice to pilgrims.

Agoncillo views the Colorum fiasco of 1897 as no more than “an interesting sidelight” to the real struggle going on elsewhere. He concludes that “this painful experience taught the Colorum a lesson: henceforth, they were not to

---


4. See also chapter 2, p. 62, which describes the Cafiadá of 1841 as going to battle “dancing.” Such control of external movement reflects the firm control of food that has been attained through prayer. This is consistent with the notion, expressed in various parts of this study, that no discontinuity exists between external appearance and internal states of being.


6. Telesforo Caneo, “Historia de la Insurreccion Filipina en Cavite” (1897). Archivo de la Provincia del Santisimo Rosario, p. 98 (page reference is to the typescript in the Ateneo de Manila’s Rizal Library).
concern themselves with the revolution but instead contribute in kind to the rebels as their patriotic duty.  

Sturtevant surprisingly ignores this event altogether, perhaps because it blurs the distinction he makes between the revolution (a “Great Tradition” phenomenon) and messianic movements (a “Little Tradition” phenomenon). Actually, the incident of 1897 is a manifestation of how the revolution, in its Katipunan phase, was perceived from below. Santiago Alvarez, in his account, hardly regards the Colorum as a curiosity. In fact, he notes that, with the exception of the brotherhood’s unique rituals and devotions, it was “just like the Katipunan of the Sons of the People at the time brotherly love had not been dissolved.”

This is a key statement, which not only connects the Cofradia and the Katipunan but almost makes a distinction between two phases of the revolution characterized by the presence and absence of brotherly love. By seeing the Katipunan as only one of many types of brotherhoods that Filipinos from all walks of life were attracted to join, and by asking ourselves what part these brotherhoods played in the interpretation of everyday experience, we may begin to assess the real impact of the revolution upon the masses.

Unfortunately, rather than attempt to describe the revolutionary experience, scholars have chosen to focus on the evolution of the struggle from its Katipunan, or secret society, stage to various stages of revolutionary government culminating, in 1898, in a constitutional republic. By positing, at the outset, that the Filipino people had a common goal—indeed, scholars have simplified the problems of the revolution, reducing them to personality differences, regional differences, military weakness, corruption, and the like. The execution of the Katipunan’s founder, Andres Bonifacio by Emilio Aguinaldo and other prominent Cavite leaders, for instance, is “explained away” by the argument that, although both Bonifacio and Aguinaldo sought the same goal—independence—one or the other had to be cast aside for the sake of revolutionary unity. Bonifacio’s execution is taken as a sign that the “secret society” phase of the revolution had given way to a more progressive “national” movement led by a more capable military leader, Aguinaldo. But is it true that progress had taken place simply because of the use of more sophisticated political language and forms by a few men in power? Have we bothered to investigate what those who joined the Katipunan or even the Cofradia de San Jose and the Colorum, were trying to voice out regarding the shape of the society they wanted to create? Perhaps there is more in Bonifacio than the rabble-rouser and frustrated leader.

A serious obstacle to a contemporary understanding of the Katipunan is the established view that the rise of nationalism culminating in the revolution of 1896-1900 was purely a consequence of heightened Westernization in the nineteenth century. The general argument is that the rise of liberalism in Spain and the opening up of key Philippine cities to world trade encouraged the formation of a well-to-do native and mestizo class that could afford to send its son to Europe, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Japan to study. It was only during their stay abroad that these young, educated Filipinos called “ilustrados” realized what freedom meant. To quote a respected scholar, “they learned languages, read history, discussed politics and joined the lodges of freemasonry. Most important of all was their discovery that they, as Filipinos, were not inferior to other peoples, certainly not to Spaniards.”

This heightened consciousness led to the dissolution of the “aura of authority and the halo of grace” that had bound Filipinos to the colonial order. Realizing such injustices done to them, as forced labor, taxes, and inequality before the law, the ilustrados began to wage a propaganda campaign aimed to make Filipinos and Spaniards equal within the existing colonial framework; they wanted reforms, not independence. In spite of their limited aims, however, the ilustrados are credited with having first conceived of a Filipino national community.

Thus, the fact that a self-educated, lower-middle-class clerk named Andres Bonifacio founded the Katipunan in 1892, is excessively attributed to the influence of ilustrados like Del Pilar and Rizal. Furthermore, Bonifacio’s movement is placed in an evolutionary framework: since the ilustrado efforts at reform were constantly frustrated, the time had come for a complete break with Spain by means of armed revolution. It is emphasized that Bonifacio, though not an ilustrado, was nevertheless well-read on Rizal’s works, and on such topics as the French revolution and the lives of United States presidents. These things considered, however, no one has seriously asked why the revolutionary impulse had to start “from below.” Nor have the Tagalog writings of Katipunan leaders and other documents of the period been viewed beyond their obviously patriotic content, as the articulation of folk perceptions of change. The acceptance of the independence ideal by the masses has been interpreted in terms of the vertical patron-client ties that link the lower and upper classes of society. Thus, a discontinuity exists, in our present understanding of the revolution, between “folk traditions” and the liberal ideas of the nineteenth century that are said to have triggered aspirations for change.

---


11. That the events of the revolution have not been interpreted in terms of traditional ideas can perhaps be traced to the social and cultural background of Filipino scholars. Bred in the intellectual milieu of Philippine universities, they have unconsciously inherited the nationalist and revolution-
fact, very rarely are folk traditions referred to except as political, manipulative
devices to gain mass support for the movement. Some even see the concept
of a secret society and the “bizarre” initiation rites of the Katipunan as totally
Masonic in origin. Little has been done to alter or amplify the observations of
a Spaniard in 1897 that the masses responded to the revolutionary call with
intense resolve because of their volatile character, their “propensity toward
the portentous,” their “blind obedience” to their patrons, their “stoicism in
the manner of the fakirs,” and their susceptibility to the rule of their superstitious
imagination. In other words, the majority of those who fought in the
revolution are regarded as essentially passive beings suddenly mobilized into
action by “blind obedience” to patrons or supernatural forces.

That the “poor and ignorant” masses who swelled the ranks of the Katipu-
unan had certain ideas about the world and their places in it, ideas quite
different from those of the “better classes” of society, is hinted at by Isbelo de
los Reyes in statements based on interviews of hundreds of Katipuneros in
1898. “It would seem,” he says, “that the Katipunan was an association to be
feared, because it was composed of common ignorant people, yet although
the plebeian thinks little, for this little he will die before giving it up.” Later on,
De los Reyes says the same thing more emphatically:

I have said, and I will repeat a thousand times, that the Katipunan was a plebeian
society; that is certain. But never have I wished to say that it was insignificant; on
the contrary, the people speak little and perhaps think little, and I wish to say,
perhaps without the artificial complication of a cultivated intelligence, but the
little they think is intense, forms their second nature, and that which they believe
is their faith, is fanaticism in them and works miracles, moves mountains, creates
new worlds and other prodigies.

Unfortunately, De los Reyes does not elaborate upon what the intensely held
ideas of the masses were. But he does assert outright that “the limit of the
aspirations of the Katipunan was a communist republic,” and that the masses
had great faith in the Katipunan’s triumph which would bring about a
“community of property,” a “brilliant future . . . in an atmosphere of liberty and
general happiness, based on honourable work for all.” These are socialist
ideas, to be sure and it might be argued that De los Reyes’s radical sympathies,
which he himself admits to, colored his interpretation of the Katipunan. But
he insists that his conclusions are based on what “the thousand and one”
Katipuneros confided to him. In the absence of De los Reyes’s original
interviews, is there a way of reconstructing the masses’ perceptions of the
Katipunan and their role in it?

If we cease, for the moment, to regard the Katipunan as a radically unique
phenomenon or as the mere creation of individuals like Bonifacio and Jacinto,
then we can begin to examine its roots in Philippine society and culture. We
can begin to discover continuities in the form and language of movements
before and after it. One perceptive Spanish observer of the Katipunan seemed
to find little difference in the behavior of leaders and followers of past and
present revolts:

If you put Diego Silang in Andres Bonifacio’s place, Juan de la Cruz Palarinf in
Emilio Aguinaldo’s place, Juan Mariano in Mariano Llanera’s place, you would
find in them the same personalities, the same obscure caciques of old, using the
same methods to attract and sustain a following. Apolinario enrolled them in the
cofradia of St. Joseph; the present chiefs enroll the people in the Katipunan
brotherhood. Diego Silang called himself a petty chief (cabu) of Jesus Nazareno;
Emilio Aguinaldo appropriated the title of special agent of God for the liberty of
his brothers.

There was also a difference, of course. We have to examine carefully the sense
in which these movements are all the same or continuous, and where the
Katipunan strikes a new chord. There had been katipunans, or associations,
before the Katipunan, and many continued to flourish independently during
the revolution. There were friar-sponsored groups like the Katipunan nang
Sagrada Familia (Katipunan of the Holy Family), the Guardia de Honor de
Maria (Guards of Honor of Mary), and the Katipunan nang Laguing Pag-
estación (Katipunan Devoted to the Stations of the Cross), not to mention the
countless sodalities in the towns. Others were purely native and antiestablish-
ment, like the Gabinista, the Colorum and remontado hill communities. In
order to mobilize large numbers of Filipinos, the revolutionary Katipunan had
to speak the common language of katipunans, tap the undercurrent of popular

appears in Report on the Philippine Revolution of 1896–1897 (Madrid, 1898), originally in
Spanish in BIA 2291–96.
14. Ibid.
15. Caro y Mora, La Situación, p. 13. Silang and Palarins were eighteenth-century rebels in the
Ilocos and Pangasinan regions. Llanera was a Katipunan leader from Nueva Ecija province.
16. The Guardia de Honor, Gabinista and remontado groups are examined in later chapters.
See B.P. Gregorio Azagra, Munding Casespyun na ng Katipunan na nang laguning Pagestación
(Manila, 1894), for an interesting use of pajear language to define a conservative, religious
Katipunan.
Tradition and Revolt

82 Tradition and Revolt

expectations and hopes, and channel the people’s energies toward achieving independence from Spain.

Katipunan Manifestos

One way to understand the swift spread of the Katipunan society in 1896 is to examine the contents of the one and only issue of its organ, Kalyeuan, that was disseminated among the populace of central and southern Luzon. Only about one thousand copies were printed, but these were passed from hand to hand. Pio Valenzuela, one of the organizers of the Katipunan, says that around the end of March 1896, when copies of Kalyeuan had been distributed over a fairly wide area, “hundreds of people nightly joined the Katipunan in the municipalities of San Juan del Monte, San Felipe Neri, Pasig, Pateros, Marikina, Caloocan, Malabon, and other places.” Bonifacio himself was surprised at the rapid growth of the society. From the time he had founded it in 1892 to the appearance of Kalyeuan in January 1896, it had only some three hundred members. But from the middle of March to the outbreak of hostilities against Spain in August 1896, its membership rose sharply to 30,000. Valenzuela attributes the sharp rise in membership to “the effect of the periodical on the people.”

The most important item in the Kalyeuan issue is Bonifacio’s manifesto, “Ang Daupat Malabid ng mga Tagalog” (“What the Tagalogs Should Know.”) Its importance stems from the fact that it places the struggle for independence in a framework of meaning which is “traditional.” In the first three paragraphs, Bonifacio interprets the past, beginning with an account of the “Fall” of the Tagalog race:

18. In Teodoro Agoncillo, ed., The Writings and Trial of Andres Bonifacio (Manila: Bonifacio Centennial Commission, 1963), pp. 58-69. I have made a new translation, not because Agoncillo’s is inadequate but because certain nuances of Tagalog terms relevant to this study are not brought out in his translation.


Rizal, in his annotations to Morga’s Succeos de las Islas Filipinas (1609), had pointed out that an indigenous civilization flourished in the archipelago before the arrival of the Spaniards, and it has rightly been assumed by historians of the revolution that Bonifacio’s manifesto was inspired by the writings of ilustrados like Rizal. What we are calling attention to is not the historical content of Bonifacio’s work but its form and language. Whether Bonifacio was a Mason or a Catholic is irrelevant here; to communicate what he regarded as a matter of sublime importance to each Filipino, he used the form that traditionally conveyed such matters—the pasyon form.

To begin with, Bonifacio uses the words kasaganaan (root word: seagana) and kaganibawaan (root word: giniibawa), to describe the pre-Spanish situation. These are common attributes of paradise. The word giniibawaconnotes, besides “prosperity,” a general ease of life, relief from pain, sickness or difficulties. Furthermore, the Tagalogs, he writes, could read and write, and thus had knowledge, just as Adam and Eve could name all the plants and animals in paradise. The mention of good relations and trade with the neighbors of Katagalugan further defines the condition of wholeness of the pre-Spanish past.

Then the Spaniards arrived, offering increased prosperity and knowledge if the Tagalogs would ally with them. Any reader of the manifesto would immediately think in terms of the pasyon story, particularly when Bonifacio says that the leaders of Katagalugan “became seduced by the sweetness of such enticing words.” For in the pasyon the delightful existence of Adam and
Eve begins to fall apart precisely when Eve, because of her “weak mind,” succumbs to the words of the serpent. The serpent’s words, however, are not a true reflection of his loth, which is “always in confusion and turmoil” because of envy (8:3). The serpent’s description matches that of the Spanish friars in Katipunan documents. The Tagalogs accepted the offer of union, of “genuine and wholehearted sincerity” symbolized by the blood compact between Sikatuna and Legaspi. Only later did they realize that the outward appearance of the Spaniards did not match their true intention. The mutual, or dyadic, relationship that had been established was false. Bonifacio dwells on its implications:

But that ng ito’y mangyari ay bumihiang na ngayon sa tatlong dlang tsol mahiguit na ang lahi ni Legaspi ay ating binubuhay sa lubos na kasaganaan, ating pinigatamasan at binubusog, kahit abutin natin ang kasalatan at kadayukdakan; iginugugol natin ang yaman dugo at sampu ng tayang na mga kalahayan na aayaw pumayag na sa kanilang pasakop, at gayon din naman nakipagbakla tayo sa mga Ynisk at taga Holanda ng nagbabang umangaw sa kanila nitong katagalugan.

Ngayon sa halat ng ito’y ano ang sa mga guinahawa nating pagguugol naktukang kaunghawahang ibinigay sa ating Bayan? Ano ang nakikita nating pagtupad sa kanilang kapangkaping na ikag na nagiging dahil ng ating pagguugol? Wala kung di pwagwag katakaslan ang ganti sa ating mga pagpapala at mga pagtupad sa kanilang ipinangakang tayo’y lalung gugugingin sa katuladang ay bagkus tayong imhihay, inihawa tayo sa kanilang hamak na asal, pinilit na sinira ang mahal at magandang ugal ng ating Bayan; Ynilatul tayo sa isang maling pagsumpaltaya at isanfadak sa lubak ng kasamaan ang kapurihan ng ating Bayan; at kung tayo’y mangahas humingi ng kahit gahabihan ng lipang, ang naguguuguhang kasugatan ay ang tayo’y itapon at ilay at sa piling ng ating minamahal na anak, asawa at matandang magulang. Ang bawat isang himuto na pumutak sa ating dibidi ay ‘inuting na isang malaking pagkakasala at kara-karaang nilalapat sa ating hayop na kahangisan.

Since then, for three hundred years, we have been giving a most prosperous life to the race of Legaspi, we have let them enjoy abundance and famine themselves, even if we ourselves were deprived and hungry. We have wasted our wealth and blood in defending them even against our own countrymen who refused to submit to their rule; and we have fought the Chinese and Hollanders who tried to take Katagalugan from them.

Now, after all this, what prosperity [gusaan] have they given to our land? Do we see them fulfilling their side of the contract which we ourselves fulfilled with sacrifices? We see nothing but treachery as a reward for our favors; as their fulfillment of the promise to awaken us to a better life, they have only blinded us more, contaminating us with their lowly behavior, forcibly destroying the good customs of our land. They have awakened us to false beliefs, and have cast into a mere the honor [pano] of our land. And if we beg for scraps of compassion, their reply is banishment and separation from our beloved children, spouses, and parents. Every sigh we utter is branded by them a great sin and punished with inhuman cruelty.

In the first place, the Tagalogs are said to have fulfilled their obligations to the Spaniards. But the Spaniards, declares Bonifacio, have refused to honor the pact; they have incurred a heavy debt (utang) to the Filipinos which they "pay" in the form of treachery (litaksilan). In a society whose smooth functioning hinges a lot upon honor and reciprocity, such treachery on Spain’s part is disruptive; the world of the Tagalogs is disjointed and confused. The “fall” of the Tagalog is expressed in terms of increasing blindness or absence of liwanag. This condition precisely has enabled the people to accept for so long an inauthentic relationship that has reduced them to “lowly behavior” and dishonor. They have failed to respond to a sign of lingap (compassionate care), even when the Tagalogs in their suffering beg for it. Because there is no love, compassion and honor, the conditions are present for the breaking of the relationship.

The next paragraph begins with a continued description of the effects of Spain’s inability to have compassion and her increasing cruelty to the Tagalogs. There is much weeping and wailing in the land from orphans, widows, and parents bereft of their children. “Now we are drowning in the flood of tears from mothers whose children’s lives have ended, and orphans crying for their parents.” Bonifacio’s description of the pain and hardships of the people is reminiscent of the lengthy pasyon passages describing not only the suffering Christ but also of those like his mother, Mary, who participated in Christ’s experience. The description of hardship and weeping in the pasyon is meant to evoke, from the reader or listener, compassion and demay, signs of relief and change in the loob. In similar fashion, Bonifacio dwells on the language of suffering and oppression and then, having “softened” the loob of his audience, shifts in midparagraph to a discussion of the changes that must take place:

Ano ang narrapat nating gamitin? Ano anaw ng katuluan sa umiisip sa Silihang, ay malinaw na itinuro sa ating mga matang malalang nabuhatan ang landas na dapat nating tuphin, ang liwanag niya’t tanaw sa ating mga mata, ang kukong nag akma ng kanayahan alay sa atin mga mاغwad na asal. Tinuturo ng katuluan, na wala tayo iba pang maanted kundi halat lahing kaharian, halat lahat katalaksan, halat lahat kapisanaan at halat lahat kaapihan. Tinuturo ng katuluan, na huwag nating sayaging ang pambahay sa pagasa sa ipinagkakong kaunghawahan sa hindi durating at hindi mangyari. Tinuturo ng katuluan ang tayo’y umasa sa ating sarili at huwag antin sa iba ang akating kaharian. Tinuturo ng katuluan ang tayo’y nagaisang loob magka isa at akala ng tayo’y magkatulungan na malalap sa iisip at nagpakating kasamaan sa ating Bayan.

What should be done, then? The sun of reason that shines in the East clearly shows, to our eyes long blind, the way liwanag that must be taken; its liwanag
enables us to see the claws of those of inhuman character who brought us death. Reason *katuwiran* shows that we cannot expect anything but more and more hardships, more and more treachery, more and more contempt, more and more enslavement. Reason tells us not to waste our time waiting for the promised *ginhawa* that will never arrive. Reason tells us that we must rely upon ourselves alone and never entrust our right to life to anybody. Reason tells us to be one in loh, one in thought, so that we may have the strength in finding that evil reigns in our land.

The word “reason” does not quite bring out the root meaning of *katuwiran*, which is “straightness.” This connotation is important because in the context of blindness or darkness what is lost is the ability to keep to the “straight path.” Katuwiran is also associated with the livanag of the sun which shows the “way” (*landas*). The direction from which livanag comes—the East—is associated with the life-giving powers of the rising sun, with rebirth, and also is the destination of the “way of the cross.” The “sun of reason,” then, is a beacon that enables the Tagalogs to “see,” but does not by itself restore wholeness; it merely points to the path toward death that must be taken. It is characteristic of both Katipunan and Colorum appeals that the mere awaiting of ginawa is discouraged, that man must participate by “taking the straight path.” Specifically, the Tagalogs must not “entrust their right to life to anybody” but instead be one in heart and thought, meaning that “wholeness” can no longer be defined in terms of a pact between the Tagalogs and “Mother Spain” who shows no love. The Tagalogs must die to this relationship and be “reborn” in a new condition of wholeness—i.e., katipunan or kalayaan.

In a footnote to his classic study of the Katipunan, Agoncillo discusses the confusion in scholarly circles over the meaning of the letter *K* in a Katipunan (Magsulato faction) flag of 1896. The letter *K*, in old Tagalog script, occupied the center of a sun with an indefinite (later reduced to eight) number of white rays. Did the *K* signify “Kalayaan” as General Rizal contends, or “Katipunan,” according to General Aguinaldo? Accepting the letter’s view, Agoncillo demonstrates that the *K* must have stood for “Katipunan,” the organization’s name, although he admits that by 1897 it may have changed its significance to “Kalayaan,” probably because the din of battle and the intense nationalistic feeling forced into the consciousness of the revolutionists the aptness of the letter *K* to symbolize their ideal—Liberty.19 The apparently unsettled issue perfectly illustrates the multiplicity of meanings that signs like the letter *K* in the center of a radiant sun had to Katipuneros, particularly rank-and-file members, who interpreted them in terms of their experience. What, indeed, is the difference between “katipunan” and “kalayaan,” between “brotherhood” and “liberty”? The root word *laya* does not appear in Noceda and Sanlucar’s nineteenth-century Tagalog dictionary; there is only *layo*, defined as “bodily pleasure,” “satisfaction of necessities,” and “giving to another what he wants.” Recently, Jose Villa Panginan has tried to make a clear distinction between *laya* (freedom) and *layo* or *layaw* (much pampered, willful, self-abandoned). He says, “Distinguish between *laya* and *layaw*. Consequently, between *kalayaan*: freedom, independence, liberty and *kalayaan*: self-abandonment, libertinage. However, those untrained in language make no such distinctions.”20 Panganiban’s last comment is of utmost importance. It suggests that a term like *kalayaan* has several layers of meaning. What the experience of the people contributed to its meaning is no less important than the definition that nationalist leaders assigned to it.

The meaning of “wholeness” or “becoming one” implied by the term *katipunan* is also contained in *kalayaan*. Prior to the rise of the separatist movement, *kalayaan* did not mean “freedom” or “independence.” In translating into Tagalog the ideas of “liberty, fraternity, equality” learned from the West, propagandists like Bonifacio, Jacinto, and perhaps Marcelo H. del Pilar built upon the word *layaw* or *laya*, which means “satisfaction of one’s needs,” “pampering treatment by parents” or “freedom from strict parental control.” Thus, *kalayaan*, as a political term, is inseparable from its connotations of parent-child relationship, reflecting social values like the tendency of mothers in the lowland Philippines to pamper their children and develop strong emotional ties with them. Childhood is fondly remembered as a kind of “lost Eden,” a time of *baguhawan* (contentment) and *kasingganaan* (prosperity), unless one was brought up in abject poverty or by an uncaring (pabaya) stepmother. In “kalayaan,” revolutionists found an ideal term for independence that combined separation from a colonial ruler (i.e., a mother who showed cruelty even of love) and the “coming together” of people in the Katipunan. Katipunan is kalayaan in that it is a recovery of the country’s pre-Spanish condition of wholeness, bliss and contentment, a condition that is experienced as layaw by the individual, who is thus able to leap from the “familial” to the “national.”21 As a revolutionary document puts it, the

19. Agoncillo, Revolt, p. 326.


21. A comparison between *kalayaan* and the Tausug *karayawan* is instructive. Literally, *karayawan* means “goodness.” It also implies a state of peace and happiness in the afterlife. Anthropologist Thomas Kiefer’s informants described it as “analogous to a state of perpetual orgasm.” Since the religious merit of a killer is transferred to his victim, most Tausug fighters believe that if they die in battle they will be automatically “inside of karayawan.” (The Tausug: Violence and Law in a Philippine Muslim Society [New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972] p. 126-29). It seems to me that in the Tagalog context, dying for kalayaan could mean automatically entering a state of bliss in heaven, particularly if the struggle is interpreted as a pasyon.
from blindness and can think clearly, until men realize that, without her, "true
and perfect happiness" can never be extended over the face of the earth. Still
the youth cannot recognize the visitor, who claims in astonishment:

    Does this mean that you don't recognize me anymore? But I am not surprised,
for it has been more than three hundred years since I visited your land. It is
the will of your people to adore false gods of religion and men, your fellow-creatures,
that is why my memory has been erased from your minds.

Do you want to know who I am? Then listen: I am the origin of all things great,
most beautiful and praiseworthy, precious and dignified, that is possible for
humanity. Due to me heads of kings fall; thrones are demolished or transferred,
crowns of gold destroyed; due to me the flame of the 'Holy Inquisition' in
which the friars tortured thousands upon thousands of men, was extinguished.
For my cause men unite, each one forgetting his selfish interests, seeing nothing but
the good of all; because of me slaves are rescued and lifted up from the mire
of degradation and shame, the pride and malice of their cruel masters broken . . .
My name is Kalayaan.

Having recognized Kalayaan, the youth proceeds to tell her about the mock-
eries and sufferings inflicted upon his people, in the hope that she will pity
and give them protective care. The grievances take the form of contradictions
between the Christian teachings and the actual practices of the Spanish friars:

    "We," they say, "are hungry," and they who teach us to feed the hungry reply:
    "Eat the refuse and the crumbs of our savory fare and our sumptuous food."

    My brothers say: "We are thirsty," and they who teach us to give drink to the
    thirsty, reply: "Drink your tears and sweat, because we will see to it that there shall
    be enough of both."

    My brothers clamor: "We are without clothes; we are completely naked," and
    they who command us to dress the naked reply: "We shall, right now, wrap your
    bodies in chains, one above the other . . . ."

    My brothers say: "A little love, a little clemency and compassion," and the
    superiors and chiefs who govern us judicially and spiritually reply: "These men
    are filibusters, enemies of God and Mother Spain; exile them!"

The youth asks Kalayaan if the grievances are sufficient cause for despair
and tears. In a somewhat sarcastic vein she replies that tears are only for those
without life and blood in their veins to average the wrongs inflicted upon the
people. "To weep in one's house, in the silence and darkness of night, is
inconceivable; it is all the more improper for a youth . . . it is not proper." The
youth, however, cannot conceive of any other recourse: "From the time we
were in our mother's womb we have learned to suffer and endure all kinds of
affliction, contempt, and rebuff. What more can you ask us to do but weep?"
He cannot understand Kalayaan's advice that men cast away their "bad
inclinations." With the youth eventually speechless, Kalayaan proceeds to
explain:

---

22. "Ang Katipunan ng Tao" (manuscript; Box 9, PII-PNL). The author is most probably
Apolinario Mahinay.

23. In Wenceslao Retana, Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino, vol. 3 (Madrid, 1895-1905), pp. 52-
04. The original has not been found, and Agencillo himself had to rely on the Spanish translation
in Retana and on a translation, presumably by Epifanio de los Santos, in The Philippine Review
(July 1918). This manifesto is not found in the published collection of Jacinto's writings, Bulat
at mga Susingul ni Emilio Jacinto (Manila: Jose P. Santos, 1935), edited by Jose P. Santos. In
other words, it appears that an extant copy of the influential first (and only distributed) issue of
Kalayaan has not been found. Even the translation by De los Santos, Agencillo concludes, is from
the Spanish version in Retana. I have made a new translation based on this Spanish text.
Listen. In the early days, when the good customs of your ancestors were not sunk in cowardice and isolation or imprisonment, the Tagalog or native people lived in the shade of my protection, and in my bosom she was happy and breathed the air that gave her life and strength. Her knowledge was increased by my light and she was respected by her neighbors. But one day, which must be executed and accursed, Slavery arrived saying that she was Virtue and Justice, and promised Glory to all who would believe in her.

Notwithstanding the fact that she came disguised with a mask of loveliness and goodness, and was smooth and affectionate in her behavior, I recognized her. I knew that the happiness of the country was over, that she had pierced your unhappy people... and your brothers believed in her and almost adored her... and forgot me, even abhorred me and were irritated by my presence... But now your sighs have reached me, filled me with sadness, which is why I have come. And now I must leave.

The youth begs Kalayaan to stay, to have pity and once more take the Tagalogs into her fold. She replies that indeed her heart feels the suffering of the Tagalogs, and that it is precisely her calling to come to the aid of the afflicted. "But no man is worthy of my protection and care who is not fond of me, does not love me and is not able to die for me. You can announce this to your compatriots." Suddenly, the flame of the oil lamp flickers and dies.

Some of the nuances of the Tagalog language such are found in Bonifacio’s manifesto are missing in Jacinto’s manifesto, which is available only in Spanish translation. Nevertheless, the translation seems to be faithful enough to the original, for we find in it certain images that point to a “traditional” frame of meaning in talking about revolution and independence. The flickering oil lamp illuminating the room is reminiscent of the solitary candle during Easter Vigil rituals and the candles the cofrades lighted during prayer to give the presence of liwanag. For the episode is a moment of liwanag in which a connection is made between human and pasyon time in the person of Kalayaan. She comes in the form of an apparition with a “sad, sweet-sounding voice,” which reminds us of Apolinario’s appearance in 1870 and the Santong Boses that bade Caneo to join the revolt against Spain.

The youth had known Kalayaan before, in a time that corresponds to Bonifacio’s pre-Spanish past. His failure to recognize her now reflects his blindness. Kalayaan has to explain what she is and in doing so reveals herself in terms of possibilities for man: elimination of despotism and cruelty, unity and love among men, liberation of slaves, and punishment of oppressors. In other words, she is the condition in which society is turned on its head.

Knowing who Kalayaan is gives the youth hope that she will show pity on his people. He proceeds to enumerate their grievances—not only the friars’ cruelty but also the discontinuity between their words and their intentions. They had come preaching fine Christian precepts only to seduce the natives; their eventual cruelty to the natives who ask for compassion is only a reflection of the lack of fit between external appearance and interior state. The pasyon repeatedly warns against being seduced by “appealing exteriors” which are all daya, or trickery. The enslaved condition of the youth and his people is a result of weakness in loób, and a way out of this condition is pointed to by the pasyon. The youth, however, cannot see this “way” because of his blindness; all he does is weep and despair in spite of Kalayaan’s advice that the Tagalogs shed their “bad inclinations.” Kalayaan has to explain further, and at this point the manifestos of Jacinto and Bonifacio converge.

The youth can comprehend the future only when Kalayaan explains his past and present in terms of the pasyon. Thus, she elaborates upon her previous assertion that the Tagalogs had known her, that under her “protective care” they had experienced happiness, prosperity, and knowledge—a condition akin to layaw. Then Slavery came and, like the serpent in paradise, offered ultimate glory to the Tagalogs, who were seduced by Slavery’s appearance of beauty, goodness, and “smoothness.” They “forgot” or no longer recognized Kalayaan in a classic case of failure to show utang na loób, a familiar situation exemplified by Judas’s turning away from his maestro who loved him, and failing to “reflect upon” the motherly care that Mary had shown him:

Di mo na guinunam gunam ang madlang pagpapalayao
sa iyo nang Virgeng madal
ano mang carim sa bahay
ala-ala cang matibay.

And you [Judas] did not reflect upon
the layaw showered upon you
by the Holy Virgin,
whenever there was food in the house
she never failed to remember you.

(90:5)

Having realized the worthlessness of the pieces of silver, Judas was cast in despair which he never overcome. For the youth, however, there is hope: first, in recognizing Kalayaan and the layaw she showered upon his ancestors; then in heeding her call for the oppressed to love her and be willing to die for her. The “future” Kalayaan points to is the people’s experiencing of the pasyon, a dying to a state of darkness. The next morning, a “smoldering project” is seen in the youth’s eyes. Liwanag is in him because he is now conscious of the “way” that must be traversed.

Initiation Rites

When a person signified his intention to join the Katipunan, he was sponsored by a member who brought him, blindfolded, to a secret place where initiation rites were performed. The underlying meaning of these rites has never been adequately examined. Outwardly, they appear to be Masonic. But if they were truly so, could unlettered peasants have embraced the Katipunan as truly their own? Our key to understanding the rites is De los Reyes’s statement that “at first, [Katipunan leaders] adopted the Masonic formulas, but
later simplified them to suit the cultural level of the members, who belonged
to the workmen and peasant classes.24

When the blindfold was removed inside the ritual chamber, the first thing
that met the neophyte's eye was an oil lamp on a table before him. A woman
who joined the society described the experience of being blinded by this light:
"I was in a tiny room lit only by a single 'tingboy' lamp that was flickering
like a person out of breath. The light was blinding to my eyes."25 As the neophyte
became accustomed to the dimly lit surroundings, he discerned tablets on the
walls with the following warnings:

If you have strength and valor, you may proceed.
If only curiosity has brought you here—go away!
If you do not know how to control your passions—go away. Never will the
gates of the venerable and respected Society of the Sons of the Country open
for you.26

In some cases, the same warnings were voiced by an officer called metbalas-
isk, a sort of "terrible brother" who guarded the entrance to the gates of the
society. The initial experience of blinding light, or liwanag, was accompanied
by a firm resolve in the loob of the individual. He would not move a step closer
toward the light if he did not have strength, valor, and at least the firm intention
to control his "passions."

The neophyte was next required to answer the following questions in a
printed questionnaire: (1) What was the condition of the country in early
times? (2) What is her condition today? (3) What will be her condition in the
future? The replies to the questionnaire were taught to the neophyte by his
sponsor, and were similar to what Bonifacio said in his manifesto: before the
Spaniards came, the country enjoyed perfect harmony, wealth, and inter-
course with other nations of Asia. Then the friars came and taught the external
forms of Catholicism and its shallow trappings, blinding the natives to the true
nature of religion through spectacular and costly festivals. What must be done
was to recover the country's condition of kalayaan, freedom and independ-
ence, by means of faith, valor, and perseverance.27

This stage of the ritual was meant not merely to make the neophyte aware
of certain facts about his country and its future but to place them in a
meaningful context. It is significant that the dark initiation hall was illuminated
by a single "blinding" oil lamp, with all its connotations. The Katipunan
initiate would, in fact, have found many aspects of the ritual familiar. His
experience of religious rituals would have facilitated his understanding of
 Philippine history as a "fall" that would be followed by redemption. In a
variation of the initiation ritual used by a katipunan of 1900, the message is
clear to every Indio: joining the society entails one's "last agony" and death,
an experience analogous to Christ's redemptive act:

(Leader): Who is this who has never been initiated who wants to take part in
the works of the temple?
(Answer): One who wants light and who wants to be a Son of the People.
(Leader): Profane man, think well whether you are able to fulfill all of these
obligations. If at this very hour the society demands your life and your body, are
you able to give them? The sound of the bells which you have just heard, what
does it mean?

It means that you are quitting your former life as the man in his last agony is
quitting his, and your anguish is the sign of your separation from your past life,
at the same time it is the sign of your entrance into the society where you will see
the true light.28

In the world of the Colorum pilgrim, paradise is at the end of a long and
torturous search which takes place during Holy Week. Paradise is the
equivalent of liwanag which, to quote the author of the pilgrim's avist, is the
aftermath of the experience of hardship.29 These notions are also found in
the literature of the Katipunan revolt against Spain. The revolutionary experience
is conceived of as a search for kalayaan, a term which, in Katipunan literature,
is often juxtaposed with liwanag and paradise.30 In the portion of the initiation
ritual quoted above, the neophyte arrives at the gates of the society in search
of liwanag and brotherhood, and then he is told that he must die to his past
life in order to enter the society where he will see the true liwanag.

These themes are brought out even more vividly in an unpublished
manuscript detailing a Katipunan form of initiation.31 The title of the document,

Philippine Insurrection, vol. 1, p. 219. I have not found the original Tagalog document.
30. Cf. "Ang Liwanag sa Katipunan" by Soliman, in "Documentos de la Revolución Filipina"
(1952), PNA. This document, which is undated, states basically that the Katipunan is a "great
light," which means "the true recognition of the unparalleled power of the Lord God" which also
revealed the cruel exploitation by the Spaniards and the fact that the Filipinos owe no uang na
loob (debt of gratitude) to Spain in spite of what the friars have always insisted.
31. PIR-SD 514-10. Another copy of the manuscript is found in a bundle of papers on the
sandatahan formed by Ricarte in Manila in 1899, and also called "Banal na Kalayaan" apparently
based in San Francisco de Malabon, Cavite (PIR, reel 160, frame 271F.)
Buhat sa lusak ng pagkaalipin imago sa kuko ng bulag kapagkatapos ay naglalagos sa balabalaking kapansanan at kapahamakan ngayon't tumataas sa mahal mo pong pintuan at hinahanap ang kalayaan.

We have come from the mire of slavery, saved from the claws of blindness; we have repeatedly passed through various obstacles and dangers and now are here calling before your holy gate in search of kalayaan.

The phrase “holy gate” (mabal na pinto) in this and other initiation documents is another indication of the connection between Katipunan and pasyon idioms. In the latter, the word “gate” first appears in the episode where Adam and Eve are driven out through the “gate of paradise” which is then shut close and guarded by an angel. The passage through the gate marks, for Adam and Eve, the beginning of a life of “exhaustion, hunger and fear, incomparable hardship”:

Ano pa t, hindi maisip
pangamba at madlang saquit
narating nila t, nasapit
nung puntano at umalis
doon sa lupang mariquit.

And we cannot imagine
the fear and manifold pain
thrust upon them
when they departed
from the radiant land.

At cung canilang maquila
door at maala-ala,
ang una nilang guinhawa
lapik lumay sa ibinahin pa
ng canilang kalolou.

(10:15-16)

The gate of paradise marks the boundary between suffering and a life of guinhawa, between darkness and liwanag. Elsewhere in the pasyon and related texts, the “holy gate” is alluded to as the barrier to man’s complete fulfillment until opened by the completion of Christ’s passion and death. In explaining why the door, or gate, of the synagogue was closed when Christ entered Jerusalem, the pasyon reveals a talinbaga:

Sapagkat, si Cristong Ama
at dili pa nagelusina
ning mahal na Pasion niya,
ay tetoong nasasara
ang pintong mahal na Gloria.

Since Christ our Father
had not yet suffered
his holy passion
so the holy gate of glory
was truly shut.

Tutumbuquin capagcouan
niyong Cruz niyang tangan
at ang pinto nang Simbahang

This will be struck squarely
by the cross he will bear
and the gate of the synagogue
will at once open; this is what it means.

When this is done and when he is crucified and has died in suffering at that moment will open the gate of glory.

In 1840, Apolinario de la Cruz referred to "the holy gate of the nineteenth day" (mabal na pinto ng Arao Diesmytebe)—the day of the Cofradía’s Mass—as a stage they have reached on the way to the "holy land of peace" (mabal na Bayan ng kalaulalahan). Not surprisingly, the Colorum also appropriated the notion of a “holy gate” in their rituals. The narrow cave entrances and other passages through which the pilgrims passed, often with great physical effort, were called pinto. Special prayers were said at these entrances to avoid, so the belief went, being crushed by the pillars of the gates. According to one account, "far from the chapel of Amang Dios is a gate where the keeper loudly asks for the name of the pilgrim and all other necessary information. Then giving him a supply of wax candles he is allowed to begin his subterranean trip." For the Colorum pilgrims, the gates were visible markers of the experienced stages of hardship and concomitant purification and control of loób, culminating in the ascent of Calvary.

The term “holy gate,” then, has various layers of significance. Katipunan leaders merely added another layer, a "nationalist" one, by incorporating it in the "opening of the pinnacle." Having knocked on the "holy gate in search of kalayaan," the neophytes are told by the leader that they must "prepare the loób for every test of hardship that will be inflicted." Then the neophytes are subjected to certain trials of ordeal, such as jumping into a well or crawling through a narrow tunnel. The parallel with the trials that a pilgrim undergoes in Banahaw is unmistakable. Moreover, the meaning of the experience is similar. As the initiates emerge from their ordeal, the mabalasik presents them to the leader, who replies: "In that case, brother mabalasik, you have not noticed any drawing back of their loób." Here we are reminded of Apolinario de la Cruz, who once said that Octavio had a "truly converted loób" because he had experienced many trials. The gate of the society is opened; the new Katipuneros have died to their former state of blindness and disorientation. Only then are they allowed to sign the oath of membership with their own blood.

32. Apolinario de la Cruz to the Cofradía, Manila 6 July 1840 (PNA).

At the end of the ceremonies, the leader gives a sermon beginning with the following appeal:

Ynirog kong piling nga kababayan, kababayan mo ako, nasaan hagaa ang taglay mong lakas na na isinimpan, malaon ngurao at ipinakakait sa akin. Yuolot mo nga at damayan akong na sa malabia na pagcapit at hirap na di maagnanta. Aguin niño ako sa kuko ng liro. Ako baga ay nilalimutan mo na? ... (titigul ng kaonte) ...

Ako ang matandang kalayaan na na biliibitan ang katawan ng katalot na tanikaling balak at napipilan ng hibong maraya at ng matapos ay pinagbabatuan patain. Ako ang guinhawa ng unang panahon na nauulay sa fahing tagalog at nag duolot ng sarising guinhawa sa puso, hangganin mo ako upang tayo ay magasama sa lubos na kapatutapan, huwag kag mang hinayang sa kaontaing dugong pupulunan at magaganti ko rin na ulang talad sa biya. Ymanyang sumupit na ang panahon dapat ipaghiganti ng napakakayop nating bawan sa mga kuhiling kasila ang dugong hihikbok sa pamamahala ng abang frayle.

My beloved compatriots, have compassion for me. Where is the strength you possess that has been saved up through all these years and kept from me? Offer it to me, and have damay for me in my state of unbearable oppression and hardship. Save me from the claws of traitors. Have you already forgotten me? (pause)

I am old Kalayaan whose body is wrapped in frightful chains of metal, subjected to deceitful temptations and threatened with death. I am the guinhawa of former times that gives many kinds of guinhawa to the heart. Rescue me so that we can be together in ultimate peace. Do not forget at the blood you shall shed as puhunan (investment) for you shall be rewarded a thousandfold with grace. For the time has come for our most humiliated country to seek revenge from the Spanish betrayers for the blood that has flowed during friar rule.

Most notable about the sermon is the fact that the leader is only a vehicle through whom personified Kalayaan speaks. This phenomenon manifests an old Tagalog view (which the friars attempted to suppress) that disembodied spirits may enter the “personalities” of certain mediums and speak through them. Even though it is not specifically stated in the sources, it may be said that Apolinario de la Cruz was not dead in 1870 but lived in the person of Januario Labios. In later periods, as we shall see, Jose Rizal and Felipe Salvador spoke to the people through leaders that came after them. In much the same way did “old Kalayaan,” or Mother Country, embodying the guinhawa of former times, enter the “persons” of Katipunan leaders and speak through them. Notable also is an instruction scribbled in the manuscript of the initiation ritual, about the mode of presenting Kalayaan’s appeal. The tone of the exhortation should be one of plaintive evocation. The leader should speak with the gentle,
sacrifice your lives and all your resources in order to defend the banner of our tearfully lamenting religion and native land.

Return of King Bernardo Carpio

The significance of many little details which has escaped previous scholars can be seen in the light of what has been said so far. For example, in April 1895, about a year before the start of the revolution, Andres Bonifacio and eight leading members of the Katipunan went on a week-long excursion in the mountains of San Mateo, southeast of Manila. Previous scholars have not seen anything more in this event than a search for a safe haven in the mountains to retreat to in the event of difficulties in the struggle; indeed, that is the reason one of the survivors gave Agoncillo in an interview in 1949. Could it be merely coincidental, though, that the group chose the Holy Week of April, from Holy Tuesday to Holy Saturday, to make the climb? Led by an old man named Tandang Pelis, they reached their destination—the caves in Mount Tapusi—on Good Friday. In the “cave of Bernardo Carpio,” Bonifacio wrote with a piece of charcoal, “Long live Philippine Independence!” and each Katipunero signed his name with trembling hands and tears in his eyes.

The ascent of Mount Tapusi, more than being a search for a safe haven, was a gesture of deepest significance to the Katipunan and to the inhabitants of the region. For the peasants believed that the legendary Tagalog folk hero—Bernardo Carpio—was imprisoned in the caves of the mountain, awaiting the day when he would break loose and return to free the people. Let us examine the implications of the Katipunan’s choice of the “cave of Bernardo Carpio” as its place of refuge.

Bernardo Carpio was one of the favorite characters in awits and comedias of the nineteenth century. Although his story originates from the M sentenced of Spanish writer Lope de Vega, the Tagalog version, set in the traditional “dodecasyllabic quatrain” form, departs from the Spanish original in several ways. In the main, the story is familiar. Bernardo Carpio is the bastard son of a courtier and the sister of the king of Spain. The king, learning about the illicit

37. Santos, Bulatay at nga Sinulat, p. 16; Kasandugo (pseud.), Ang Katipunan at si Gat Andres Bonifacio (manuscript, n.d., p. 82, FNLS); also Agoncillo, Revolt, p. 70. Agoncillo’s informant was Guilleremo Masangkay, who was with the group that made the “pilgrimage.”

romance, banishes the courtier and detains his sister in a monastery. The boy grows up to be a great general, a staunch defender of the Spanish crown, only to find out that his true parents are unknown. So he makes it a vow to search for his parents. In the course of his adventures, a letter drops from heaven telling him where his father has been imprisoned. Unfortunately, his father dies in his arms. This does not prevent Bernardo from legitimizing his tie to his parents. He brings his father, covered with a cloth on the pretext that he must not be exposed to cold air, to the king's palace, where the wedding with the king's sister takes place. Only when father, mother, and son are formally reunited does Bernardo pretend to discover that his father is dead.

The awit does not end here, as it does in the Spanish originals. Bernardo, having declined the Spanish throne, continues his travels in search of idolaters to destroy. He arrives before a churchlike structure with two lion statues by the entrance. Because the gate is shut, he kneels outside and prays. A bolt of lightning strikes and destroys one of the lions. Angered by the lightning's challenge, Bernardo hurls the other lion away and vows to search for the lightning and destroy it. Not far away, he sees two mountains hitting each other at regular intervals. Then a handsome youth—an angel—appears in dazzling brightness and tells Bernardo that the lightning has entered the mountain. God commands that Bernardo shall not see, much less capture it. When the angel himself takes the path of the lightning, Bernardo stubbornly follows, the twin peaks closing in on him.

Bernardo does not die, however. Some report seeing him in a dream, asleep, his body stretched out on a slab of stone. A man enters the cave where Bernardo lies and converses with the imprisoned hero, who says: "I am Bernardo Carpio who has lain here for a long time. If you want to acquire my strength, give me your hand, let's be friends." Seeing the many skeletons lying around the marble bed, the stranger offers instead a piece of bone, which crumbles to pieces when Bernardo holds it. Then Bernardo tells him:

You are lucky. Because you are intelligent, I am your friend on whom you can depend. Take the little cross near my head as a gift from me. When you are in danger, just say devoutly 'Christus' and the danger will be averted by the power of the Son of God. I am being punished here by God for my sins, but God is good and I am still alive. I am hoping that the time will come when I can arise from my imprisonment. So go, and tell the people about my condition, so that they will be reminded that Jesus after he was interred rose again. In the same manner, I that am now confined in my stone bed inside a cave will, in time, be able to return to the land. For Almighty God has his reasons; He singles out one man as saviour of the oppressed. So tell the oppressed people that their Bernardo will soon rise and save them."

The Tagalog version of the story thus ends in a manner curiously reminiscent of Colorum rituals. Bernardo Carpio follows the lightning, a form of liwanag, to the gates of paradise, the pillars of which consist of twin peaks hitting each other. Because his loob has not been fully cleansed, he is barred from entering paradise. When he follows the angel, nevertheless, he is cast in a limbo, a state of sleep. He is alive, a potential of power, and only the completion of a redemptive event will bring about his freedom. Only then will he, together with the oppressed people who participate in the liberation process, see paradise.

Rizal was very much aware of the folk belief in a "king of the Indios" imprisoned in the San Mateo cave who would one day return to free the people. "For no apparent reason," comments Rizal, "the natives called him King Bernardo, confusing him perhaps with Bernardo del Carpio." A disgruntled rig driver in *El Filibusterismo* is made to mutter with a suppressed sigh: "When he [Bernardo Carpio] gets his right foot free, I shall give him my horse, put myself under his orders, and die for him. He will free us from the constabulary." 39 In the decade or so prior to the rise of the Katipunan, the Bernardo Carpio story appears to have been appropriated by the peasants as one way of imaging their hopes for a better life, free from oppression and foreign rule. And while Rizal was content to note down this fact, Andres Bonifacio built upon it in mobilizing the Indies against Spain.

Of all the Tagalog plays with which Bonifacio, as an actor, was deeply familiar, the Bernardo Carpio play was his favorite. In his copy of the awit, he even went to the extent of changing Spanish names of places, events and mountains to Tagalog ones.41 What, one wonders, struck Bonifacio about this awit? The answer is clear if we see Bernardo Carpio, no longer as a Spanish hero, but a Filipino whose life constitutes a talinhang. Here is a boy whose energy cannot be utilized properly and meaningfully because his parents' identities are unknown to him. Only when he has repudiated his deceitful stepfather and his patron the king is he able to set out in search of his imprisoned parents. When, like a flash of liwanag, his parents' names are revealed to him by heaven, Bernardo becomes ever more aware of his mission in life. Among other things, he undertakes the supremely political act of intimidating the French court into dissolving Spain's vassal status to her.

Bonifacio and other Filipino nationalists of some education appear to have found in the Bernardo Carpio story a popular perception of events on which


to hinge their separatist ideas. The Filipino people would, like Bernardo, discover their identity only by repudiating their false parents—Spain and the friars. Bonifacio eloquently expresses this in the following stanzas from the poem *Katupusang Hihik* (Final Lament):

Sumisikat na ina sa sinisilangan  
ang araw ng poot ng katagalugan.  
tatlong daang taong aming iningatan  
sa dagat ng dusa ng karalitaan.

*Mother at the horizon, has risen  
the sun of Tagalog fury;  
three centuries we kept it  
in the sea of woes wrought by poverty.*

Walang isinuhay kaming iyong anok  
sa bagyong masasal ng dalat't hirap,  
iisa ang puso nitong Pilipinas  
at ikaw ay di na inaining lahat.*

*Your children’s hut had nothing to hold it up  
during the terrible storm of pains and troubles,  
all in Filipinas are one of heart—no longer a mother you are to us.*

Like Bernardo’s outburst of strength, the people’s emergence from a condition of ignorance and suffering is accompanied by a release of their energy, or “fury,” in a fruitful manner. And finally, the Filipino people themselves would conclude the Bernardo Carpio story by participating in the culmination of his pasyon—his emergence from the depths of his mountain grave. Miranda notes that, north of Manila, “the masses were awaiting the liberation of Bernardo Carpio, a character in a Tagalog legend, from the two enormous cliffs of Biak-na-Bato so that he may exterminate the *cazadores* who defended the Spanish outposts. They say *paa na lamang ang kulang* [only a foot remains pinned].” Meanwhile, continues Miranda, the masses, armed only with bladed weapons, were fighting ferociously to the end. For Bonifacio and his men who trekked to Mount Tapusui during the Holy Week of 1893, the search for Bernardo Carpio’s cave had two levels of meaning. On one hand, it was purely military, a search for a haven. On the other, it was a gesture of identifying with the folk hero entombed in the mountain. No wonder many came to the cave to be initiated into the

Katipunan. We can also understand why Bonifacio’s hand trembled with fierce emotion as he wrote on the walls of the cave: “Long live Philippine Independence!” This slogan must be interpreted in its entire form—*Panahon na! Mabuhay ang Kalayaan!*—which was the battlecry of the Katipunan. Its common translation as “The time has come! Long live Liberty!” does not quite capture its meaning. *Panahon na! (It is time!)* implies, not only that the revolution has begun, but that a totally new era (panahon) is about to succeed the old which has irreversibly winded down. And *Mabuhay* should be translated literally as “May it live” or “May it come to life.” “Long live” or “Cheers” fails to capture the meaning of the struggle as the experience of hardship in order to redeem or give life to a “dead” or “slumbering” condition called kalayaan.

Bonifacio’s appropriation of the Bernardo Carpio story served the same purpose as the pasyon layer of Katipunan appeals discussed earlier. They both enabled the masses to grasp the meaning of nationalism and separatism through the mediation of familiar awit and pasyon language. Bonifacio’s poem *Katupusang Hihik* (Final Lament), which we earlier linked to the theme of Bernardo Carpio’s liberation through repudiation of his false parents, also recalls the pasyon in its use of the image of the “rising sun of Tagalog fury.”

In the resurrection scene there is the following striking passage:

*Mamimipit sa sisilang  
ang arko sa Silangan  
nang lumabas sa baunan,  
yaong sumacap sa tanan  
siya na nang pagcabuhay*  
(177: 12)

*The dawn was breaking  
the sun rising in the East  
when from the grave emerged,  
the redeemer of all mankind  
he had truly come alive.*

Compare this with the language of the Katipunan in which the dawn, rising sun, lamp flame and other images of liwanag are associated with the awakening or “coming alive” of kalayaan, Mother Country, the youth, Bernardo Carpio, and even the martyrs Rizal, Gomez, Burgos and Zamora. Obviously, without the masses’ experience of the pasyon, the revolution against Spain would have taken a much different form.

**Lakaran of the Sons**

Often ignored documents like poems, songs and even dreams are rich in allusions to the revolution’s framework of meaning. The following poem is attributed to Procopio Bonifacio, brother of Andres:

44. According to Zaide, it was Aurelio Tolentino who scribbled “Viva la Independencia Filipina” on the wall (*The Philippine Revolution* [Manila: Modern Book Co., rev. ed., 1968], p. 98).  
in terms of the bond between mother and child. Together they form a self-contained universe bound by ties of love and utang na loob. A tearful crisis usually occurs when the grown-up son or daughter has to leave home. The preoccupation with the mother-child separation theme has left a strong imprint on Tagalog literature. In the pasyon's development through the centuries, for instance, the dialogues between Christ and the Virgin Mary grew all out of proportion, making the pasyon just as much an epic of Mother Mary's loss.\(^{47}\) In effect, the everyday theme of separation was raised to a higher level of meaning.

In Bonifacio's poem, the Filipinos are about to embark upon the struggle, which is imaged as everyman's *lakaran*. Just as the start of Christ's passion is marked by his emotional and painful separation from Mary, so does the struggle of the Filipinos, following the contours of tradition, begin with separation from Mother Spain. In the pasyon text, lengthy dialogues between Jesus and Mary, and between Mary and God the Father, bring to light the irreversibility and “fatedness” of the event. The Day of Redemption has come, Jesus tells his mother, and so we must separate (78:7). In the poem there is a striking parallel in the declaration: "The time has come for us to separate." Bonifacio goes on to exhort his compatriots: "Let us, lowly men, walk on, each to experience hardship / head for the hills and forests." The struggle is imaged as an arduous journey on foot, a lakaran, toward the "hills and forests" where for centuries Indios "fleeing from the bells" found refuge. Bonifacio sees the struggle as a lakaran-onto-death—hence his farewell to the land—but with death comes more liwanag over the land. Kalayaan is imaged as the blinding light of the sun, just as, in the pasyon, the outcome of the lakaran-onto-death is a radiant "victory." Rising from his grave, Christ is described as:

- lubos ang pagcaluluangan
- nitong nanalang nang gubat
- na icaalauang Personas. (177:13)
- completely engulfed in liwanag
- was lie who had gone to the hills
- this victorious second Person.

In the poems of the Bonifacio brothers, a dominant theme is the changing of mothers—from Spain to Inang Bayan (Mother Country). Now it is not only the separation from Mother Spain that the pasyon tradition rendered intelligible to the masses. The very notion of Mother Country rode on popular images of the Virgin Mary, who appears in the pasyon as the ideal Filipino mother, behaving in the traditional fashion as the son persists in his untraditional mission.

There is a story told by Aurelio Tolentino that one night, as Andres Bonifacio, Emilio Jacinto, himself and others were asleep in Tandang Sora's house in Balintawak, one of them dreamt of a beautiful woman leading by the

---


hand a handsome child. The woman looked exactly like the Virgin Mary in church statues, except that she wore a native costume, the balintawak. The child was dressed in peasant garb, armed with a glittering bolo, and shouting "kalayaan!" The woman approached the dreamer to warn him about something. Roused from his sleep, he narrated his dream to his companions, who all concluded that the Virgin was warning them against proceeding to Manila that morning. They all decided to carry a while longer in Balintawak. Later, the news arrived that the Katipunan-infiltrated printing shop of the Diario de Manila had been raided by the guardia civil. Without the Virgin's warning, alleged Tolentino, Bonifacio would have been captured along with the others and executed, and the revolution delayed indefinitely.

The story may be entirely apocryphal, but it was deemed fit to be published in the newspaper La Vanguardia—the successor to El Renacimiento—sometime before Tolentino's death in 1915. The point is, such a story was entirely credible to Tolentino's audience. Why was the Virgin in native costume; why was she leading a Katipunero by the hand? Was she Mother Country herself? For the popular mind there was no clear distinction, no crisis of meaning as one image flowed into the other. One of the reasons why, as we shall see, religiopolitical groups and the Philippine Independent Church swelled with peasant members during the days of the republic and the succeeding years was because "nationalist" and "religious" idioms merged in them. Bishop Gregorio Aglipay, for example, continued to instill among his adherents the teachings of Mabini, Rizal and Bonifacio. But at the same time, without hesitation, he could proclaim: Ang Virgen sa Balintawak ay ang Inang Bayan (The Virgin at Balintawak is the Mother Country).48

A fine example of how meaningful images of the revolution are combined in a popular song is the following kundiman:

Sa dalampasan ng dagat Maynila,
Luneta ang tawag ng mga kastila
ay doon binaril ang kawayawa
pobreng Pilipino, martyr nito ang Lupa.

On the shores of Manila bay
called by the Spaniards "Luneta"
there was shot the pitiful
humble Filipino, martyr of this land.

Narumay sa duha ang ating tanyakan
pangmay na Burgos at bunsong si Rizal
sa naggit at takot ng prah Frauen sukaban
pinatay at sukot, walang kasalanan.

Our defenders fell into grief
the eldest Burgos, the youngest Rizal
sons without stain of guilt
were treacherously killed by the envious, fearful friars.

Hindi na inisp ang kanilang buhay
kung ito'y matapos tapos din ang layaw,
paris na nga ngayon, ang kinasapitan
kaming Pilipino'y kusang humiwalay.

They did not think of their lives
when life is ended, so is layaw;
just as it is now, it all ended up
in we Filipinos willingly separating.

Oh mga kalahi! Lakad, pagpilitang
tunguin ang bundok, kalawakan parang,
ganitin ang gulok at silat sa damay,
atipan ang lupang timuuan.

Oh compassionate! Walk on, strive
to reach the mountain and the forest
use the bolos and spears in your hands,
let us defend the land of our birth.

Huwag manganib, Inang Pilipinas
sa kahin ano ng likod na patla,
di kami tutugon hanggang di matupad
itong kalayaang ating hinaharap.49

Fear not, Mother Filipinas
whatever fate has in store for us,
we will not cease to struggle until
the kalayaan we search for is found.

The first thing to be noted about this kundiman is that its composer is unknown, and that several versions of it exist. The longest, though incomplete, version published by Ronquillo in 1910 lacks a title; two others are titled Ang mga Martin (The Martyrs) and Ang Dalampasigan (The Seashore), respectively.48 Ronquillo comments that "the author of the poem evidently had a very confused mind, expressed himself unintelligibly, and knew nothing about the life of Burgos." Such information points, if not to the folk origins, at least to the

---

folk appropriation of the song. Although the poetry is “crude” from the literary critic’s view, it nevertheless reveals popular perceptions of events, more than sophisticated or urbane Tagalog poetry does.

There is a preoccupation with the martyrdoms of the ilustrados Burgos and Rizal who, because of their mode of death, belong to the family of folk heroes. They are pobre (poor) not necessarily because of their economic status but because of their identification with the paradigm of the poor and suffering Christ. The friars, of course, are described just like the parishioners—guardians of the official religion who are motivated by “envy and fear” to condemn innocent men to death. In the third stanza, the martyrdoms of Burgos and Rizal and their consequent loss of layaw are juxtaposed with the separation of the Filipinos from Spain—as if each patriot who participates in the struggle reenacts the experience of the martyrs. In the fourth stanza, we have again the image of the lakaran. With Mother Country hovering in the background, her sons pursue the struggle, not ceasing until kalayaan is found.

As long as the struggle is perceived as a sacred mission—a people’s pasyon—the path toward kalayaan is narrow and straight, and there is no turning back until the end is reached. In view of this, it no longer appears irrational that Katipunan units mostly armed only with bladed weapons and sticks fought the Spaniards with determination. A Spanish observer notes that the Katipuneros seemed to be “hallucinated unto death.” When, for example, the Spanish army recaptured a Katipunan town, “the masses were made to believe that they had to return and retaliate,” so that the river was reddened with the blood of the slain, both Filipino and Spanish. And having been “defeated a hundred and one times and driven to the mountains,” the “fanaticized” masses were made to believe in the aid of a foreign power or a supernatural being. Isabelo de los Reyes notes that the natives of Pandakan were not frightened when some of their men were executed by the Spaniards:

The peasants, far from being intimidated by these tests, went with enthusiasm and emotion at having in this immortal association a glimpse into the brilliant future of the Philippines, and they went with emotion at finding that their country thought them worthy of saving it from its then sad situation.

The tears of the “country people” were not the result of what is usually termed “sentimentality.” They reveal to us that the people had damay and compassion and thus took the path in search of kalayaan.

Was kalayaan ever attained during the Katipunan revolution? In a description of the liberated town of San Francisco de Malabon, Cavite, Santiago Alvarez seems to capture the experience of kalayaan during the latter days of September 1896:

The people were truly happy, free to enjoy life in all sorts of ways. Food was plentiful; all things were cheap; there were no perversities, no robberies, no thefts, no pickpockets. Everyone had love for his fellow men, and in every place the Katipunan’s teaching of brotherly love held sway. Frightful threats of death, like the whistling cannonballs, were viewed calmly as everyone simply ducked to avoid them. And with hope in the grace of God, the children, elders, women and men had no fear of death... no news of the enemy’s advance was ever cause for fear.  ... The cannon bursts were no longer feared and even came to be regarded as fireworks in a celebration. ... The women’s stores were opened all day and night; singing, dancing, feasting beneath the trees, gambling and cockfighting everywhere, served to make them forget the impending sacrifice of their lives and blood. But at the first sign of fighting, all the men and women would straighten up and grab their weapons of war.

Other sources confirm that the first few months of the revolution were remembered particularly during the difficult years of the war against the United States as some kind of a “Lost Eden.” The experience of release from Spanish rule was indeed exhilarating. Food was cheap and plentiful. And there was an attempt, at least, to practice the Katipunan ideals of love, brotherhood and good moral conduct. But this was a fleeting experience. Not only would the Spanish armies return in force, but in the liberated areas, principala rivalry and vacillation would harm the revolution from within. When Andres Bonifacio arrived in late 1896 to unite the warring Magdalo and Magdiwang factions of the Katipunan in Cavite, little did he realize that he would die at the hands of pinunong bayan.

Ironically, Bonifacio’s downfall can be traced to his preoccupation with “sacred ideals” and moral transformation. He was led to this not so much by his personality and Masonic background as his familiarity with popular perceptions of change. Folk poetry and drama undoubtedly provided him with basic insights into the “folk mind.” Between him and Apolinario de la Cruz in fact exists a strong affinity. Their sermons and exhortations, rooted in the people’s language and experience, drew similar responses and gave rise to similar problems. In Bonifacio’s case, the concept of national unity as each citizen’s rebirth in a society of irwanag was found by others to be unworkable.

---

in a time of massive recruitment of revolutionists. For example, Roman Basa was expelled or withdrew from the Katipunan because he wanted to do away with “the tedious process of initiation, which Bonifacio never wanted to give up.” 55 In fact, Emilio Aguinaldo and others practically abandoned the initiation rituals while retaining Katipunan rhetoric to incite the people to revolt.56

In Cavite, Bonifacio got embroiled in the question of kingship which scholars briefly mention but understandably avoid discussion of. Santiago Alvarez, an eyewitness, says that, as the welcome parade in honor of Bonifacio wound its way from Noveleta to San Francisco de Malabon, some people in the crowd shouted “Mabuhay ang Hari!” (Long live the King!), to which Bonifacio replied “Mabuhay ang Inang Bayani!” (Long live Mother Country!)57 Aguinaldo, in his memoirs, adds that the cabinet of the Magdiwang government conferred upon Bonifacio the highest title they could give: Haring Bayan (sovereign). He describes what happened as Bonifacio and the Magdiwang leaders visited the towns under their jurisdiction:

“They gave speeches and lessons about love of country and said other inspiring words concerning our kalayaan. How overjoyed the people (taong bayan) were, so filled with pomp and solemnity was their reception that it seemed as if a real king had arrived."58

Scholars have paid scant attention to Aguinaldo’s insistence that conflict between the two wings of the Katipunan was inevitable because the Magdiwang faction was Maka-Hari (monarchist), while the Magdalo faction was Republikano.59 Our sympathies in this modern age tend to lie with Aguinaldo.60 But if we put ourselves in the context of his time, we can understand why some people greeted Bonifacio as the Filipino king. Some fifty-five years prior to that incident, Apolinario de la Cruz, whether he, liked it or not, was crowned “king of the Tagalogs” by his peasant followers. For did not the masses, steeped in the world of awit and korialda, await the coming of Christ the King or Bernardo Carpio, the Tagalog king? Telesforo Canseco, an admittedly profitor witness, says that while people in his town laments the execution of Spanish priests, many prayed for “the triumph of the insurrection” and, during Holy Week, theoadjutor led public prayers for “the triumph of the king of the Tagalogs.” Was this king Bonifacio himself? Or was it Bernardo Carpio? For Bonifacio himself, as Carlos Ronquillo reports, told his followers that their legendary king Bernardo would descend from Mount Tapusi to aid the Katipunan rebels. Whatever the exact rumors were, the fact is that Bonifacio was so adept at tapping popular feelings to serve his revolutionary ends that he was unavoidably incorporated into the folk view of events.61 He and some Magdiwang leaders, notably the poet Diego Mojica, appear to have encouraged such beliefs in the hope of consolidating their government’s hold over the people.62

Bonifacio eventually drew the ire of the leading citizens, not the people of Cavite as some would have us believe. They called him an ignoramus, an outsider from Tonko, a poor military strategist, a Mason, a monarchist, a tulisan (bandit) even. But beneath these accusations, most of which are valid, lies the simple fact that Bonifacio’s Katipunan, if allowed to progress, would have threatened existing boundaries and hierarchies in the province. A comparison of Bonifacio’s case with that of other leaders of popular brotherhoods and secret societies like Apolinario de la Cruz, Sebastian Caneto, and Felipe Salvador, reveals similar reactions on the part of the maginoo or pinunong bayan toward upstarts with a powerful message to the masses. In

57. Alvarez, Ang Katipunan, p. 116. Agoncillo translates the crowd’s greetings as “Long live the ruler of the Filipinos” (Revolt, p. 204).
58. Mga Gunita, pp. 140–41. In Laguna, too, several towns looked up to Bonifacio as “the Supremo, the King of the People” (Antonino Guerra to Emilio Jacinto, 6 May 1899, in Epifanio de los Santos, The Revolutionists: Aguinaldo, Bonifacio, Jacinto [Manila: National Historical Commission], p. 133).
59. Ibid., p. 143.
60. For example, Carlos Quirino (The Trial of Andres Bonifacio [Manila: Ateneo de Manila, 1968], p. 8) states that “when acclaimed publicly upon his first arrival in San Francisco de Malabon that December, Bonifacio allowed them to hail him with the words ‘Mabuhay ang hari ng bayan’”
keeping with this pattern, it is significant that Bonifacio's counter-accusations harp on the sad state of his rivals' loób. In a letter to Emilio Jacinto, he describes the Magdalo leaders as "envious" (matatiglitin). "The selfishness (pagkagabi- man) of Magdalo," he says, "is truly nauseating (nakasusuklam) and even led to many reverses." In two other letters, he reiterates the connection he perceives between state of loób and military defeats. On 24 April 1897, he tells Jacinto that the enemy took three or four towns without a fight and that other towns will be similarly captured if kasahihan (greed) and pag-imbhot (selfishness) continue to reign; this, he concludes, is "the sole cause of the misfortune (kasawian) of these pueblos." In another letter, Bonifacio attributes frequent enemy attacks on certain towns to "infighting and lack of unity among the leaders who continue to have hardness of loób (matitigas ang kalooban) while ordinary people suffer." These charges all reveal Bonifacio's preoccupation with inner transformation as a condition for revolution.

In the preface to his essay Liwanag at Dilim, Emilio Jacinto describes Bonifacio as "bearing on his shoulder all the burdens on the face of the earth" (pumapasan ng madlang kabigatan sa balat ng lupa). No other image would have brought home to his audience the nature of Bonifacio's commitment to the struggle. After all, Jacinto states later on, kalayaan is a panatang lakaran—a goal that one devotes his life to pursue—which involves hardship and the shedding of blood. Bonifacio, at the age of thirty-three, did give his life in the struggle for kalayaan. But almost in anticipation of the future struggle, his executioners were his own compatriots. One early morning in April 1897, he and his companions were attacked by a detachment of Aguinaldo's army. Understandably, the Katipunan supremo was stunned by the sight of kapatid killing fellow kapatid. Himself wounded in the neck, he was carried to Naik, the capital, where began a mock trial that ended five days later in Maragondon. There the Bonifacio brothers, Andres and Procopio, were pronounced guilty of plotting to assassinate President Aguinaldo and overthrow the revolutionary government. On 10 May 1897, the two were brought to the hills of Maragondon and shot; because of the lack of reliable witnesses, the precise details of their deaths may never be known.

With Bonifacio's execution came the final dissolution of the Katipunan secret society in favor of a truly "national" revolution. This is the standard interpretation, at least. From an organizational point of view, undoubtedly Aguinaldo was now able to form a government with a broader principia base, culminating in the birth of the Filipino nation. But, as we shall see in later chapters, the Katipunan survived in various forms, often taking stands opposed to those of the revolutionary center. This phenomenon can be understood if we view Bonifacio's Katipunan as the embodiment of a revolutionary style, a sort of language which enabled the ordinary Indio to relate his personal experience with the "national." Granted that the Katipunan of Bonifacio was not the totality of the revolution, its appeals for a national rebirth, the redemption of Mother Country and the struggle for kalayaan became part of every revolutionary leader's vocabulary in arousing the people. The language born in the early stages of the struggle far outlived the personalities who created it.

64. In Santos, Bubay at mga Simulat, p. 26.
65. Ibid., p. 35.
CHAPTER 4

The Republic and the Spirit of 1896

The proclamation of Philippine independence in 1898 climaxed the popular struggle against Spain waged by the revolutionary army and the revived Katipunan. Ironically, however, independence brought less than fulfillment to the actual participants in the war. It signified a final break with the Katipunan definition of Inang Bayan, Mother Country, as a brotherhood of her sons who have experienced the passage from darkness to light by participating in her redemption. The ilustrados who quickly took over the affairs of the new nation succeeded in institutionalizing their definition, borrowed from the West, of “sovereign nation” as a bounded territory encompassing all of its inhabitants who pledge loyalty to the government and constitution. As interpreted by the principales and ilustrados who flocked to the capital at Malolos, separation from Mother Spain had brought forth a new entity—Inang Filipinas (Mother Philippines)—and it was the task of the “better classes” to solidify “national unity” so that the Philippines could take her proper place in the international community.

On President Emilio Aguinaldo fell the unenviable task of preserving the Filipino elite’s conservative definition of the state while, as a commander-in-chief of the army, channeling the people’s energies toward the war with the United States. Perhaps no other individual could have played that role. Aguinaldo was a veteran of the early national struggles. His successful military exploits, attributed no doubt by many to his powerful anting-anting, conferred an aura of power about him. He was considered by his followers “as possessed of magic powers; he could foresee the future, he was invulnerable; he had a magic sword by waving which he could turn bullets in their flight.”

In the eyes of many, he was no different from Apolinario de la Cruz, who liked to appear before his followers brandishing a luminous, magical saber. Furthermore, Aguinaldo was an effective orator, familiar with the traditional idiom of struggle. "His words," says Taylor, "produced an effect upon his hearers which men who have to read them in translation will not understand. There is a strong love for music and poetry among the Filipinos and Aguinaldo's florid speeches moved them strongly." Whatever he had to say in public had to reconcile the views and interests of all classes of society, no matter how grave the inherent contradictions were.

The republic's ideas of nationalism and revolution can be gleaned from the following excerpt of a speech by Aguinaldo before local principales who were to form "revolutionary municipal councils".

Pacitainon nating lahat na Filipinos na tayo'y anac na parapara nang isang lupa, nang isang Filipino: palahaba'y pagcamulat natin ay inadycha na tayo sa caniyang cardungan, pinasamyo ng bungo nang caniyang hangin, linsuaman nang caniyang arao at binuhay na parapara sa bunga nang caniyang lupa. Gaya ang lahat na naturales, lahat nang mestizong castila para nang mestizong Sangley sa Filipinos ay paung isang anac ni bathala dito, isang laruan nia at isang capadat co. At ano ang pag-iinun na ng mga capadat nang mabigyang-ubos ang mairugan nating isang Buayan, cundi ang magsasanang loob sa caniyang icabubuti.

Sa pagcasa isang loob angh lahat nang provincia nito ang Filipinos, cahit ano mang tayo ay magalipat at mabooob sa isang nais—anging nais ng pagcasaritan sa uang pagcasalikunan.

Let all of us Filipinos understand that we are all children of a single Mother, of Mother Filipinas since from the time we left her womb she has sheltered us under her care, let us breathe her fragrance, brought us the light of her sun and nourished us with the fruits of her soil. For this reason all her native inhabitants, all the Spanish mestizos as well as the Chinese mestizos in the Philippines are like a single child of God here, and in each one I see God's image and a brother of mine. And what better offering can all of us brothers give to make our loving Motherland happy, than to be one in loob for her sake?

In the effort of becoming one in loob of all the provinces of the Philippines, even those that are distant will be brought closer in a union of views and aspirations—namely, independence and freedom from foreign domination.

Reference in the speech to the protection and light of Mother Filipinas reflects consciousness of the new entity born out of the separation of Spain and Filipinas. It is also an image that invokes the spirit of the 1896 revolution. But the idea of unity that follows is ultimately based not on the experience of unity but on the fact that each inhabitant of the nation is an image of God. That is why many of the ilustrados, wealthy principals, and mestizos who had generally been unsympathetic or hostile to the 1896 struggle could, because of education, wealth and social status, be placed on an equal (or even higher) plane with veterans of the Katipunan. Either missing or entirely subdued in this and other speeches and manifestos emanating from the government is the Katipunan idea that unity is accomplished through the transformation and "direction" of each Filipino's loob or, to put it differently, in the individual experience of the struggle. The absence of the notion of participation in the redemption of Mother Filipinas reflects the ilustrado and upper principalia composition of the Malolos government and congress. Cabinet President Apolinario Mabini, born of very poor parents, was one of the few exceptions. This may well explain the harrassment he was subjected to in Malolos in 1899, and his later condemnation of Aguinaldo's manner of governing. For Mabini was not convinced that the nation could come into being by definition and the mere possession of all the external trappings. In the introduction to his "Decalogue," he echoes Bonifacio's earlier complaint that self-interest, jealousy, and favoritism among self-proclaimed revolutionaries were destructive of the common good. "A veritable blood-letting is necessary," writes Mabini, "in order to shed so much vitiated and corrupt blood, inoculated in your veins by your stepmother in order to bind you to eternal thankfulness. Therein lies the internal revolution which I proposed."

Aguinaldo's speech to the principales defines "nationalism" as "a union of views and aspirations" centered on independence, or "freedom from foreign domination." Because the ilustrados reserved for themselves the right to define Filipino "aspirations" and had, in fact, defined independence as political autonomy or self-government by Filipinos, radical interpretations of independence from elements of the "poor and ignorant class" (to paraphrase the ilustrados) were branded as "antirevolutionary image" by the leaders of the republic. The internal problems that Malolos had to contend with were largely caused by the ramifications of the independence ideal among the populace. The revolutionary message of the 1896 Katipunan—that independence (kalayaan) would bring about a condition of brotherhood, equality, contentment (kaginhawanan) and material abundance (kasaganaan) —had been communicated so effectively to the people, that by the time separation from Spain was fully

---

3. Taylor, Philippine Insurrection, p. 175.
4. "Talumpati na isinalaysay na ring Presidente M. Emilio Aguinaldo at Famy sa Cavite Viejo ng 3 ng Agosto ng 1898" (P.IR-SD-157.3). Also printed in Spanish.
5. See Aguinaldo's apologetic proclamation, "To the Katipunan," Cavite, 15 July 1898 (Taylor, Philippine Insurrection, vol. 3, p. 162). Aguinaldo tells the Katipunan not to "grow disheartened" when it seems that the office is bestowed "upon those who have not been our companions" since, after all, the whole country is the Katipunan.
attained in 1898, broad economic and social changes were expected by many rank-and-file Katipuneros and peasant fighters.

The language of revolutionary literature and slogans urging the people to fight could often be interpreted in broader terms than originally intended. Take the following *catotohanan* (truth) that appeared in the newspaper *Ang Kaibigan ng Bayan* (The Friend of the People) on 2 February 1899:

> Ang bunga ng pagbabasa ay itong sumusunod:
> Nabubabasan ang capalalan nang manunungong.
> Nabubabasan ang calupitan nang malutas.
> Dumudumong ang mangmang.
> At nadadagdagan ang dikit na mondo,
> palibhasa'y nabubuesan ang isip nang karamihan.7

The fruits of struggle are the following:
The educated become less arrogant.
The powerful become less cruel.
The ignorant gain knowledge.
And the world grows more radiant and beautiful,
as the minds of the masses are opened.

Social levelling is implied in the above “truth.” How could readers of the newspaper not expect it after struggling so hard? In the following song of earlier vintage, social inversion is the fruit of victory:

> Ang kastila kung lumaban
> ayao sila ng tagaan
> ang gusto nila ang barilan
> mi trincheran pang kantungan.

> Wala na Tapus na ang Maynila;
> sumuko ng lahath pati kura;
> ang konvenio nila at hacienda
> ibingay sa aming lahat na.

> Ang kura sa Bulakan
> nananalsay sa parang
> sapagkat siya'y pinagutusan
> ni Don Salgario del Pilar.

> When the Spaniards fought
> they avoided hand to hand combat
> preferring the security of trenches
> from which to fire their guns.

> It is all over! Manila is taken,
> friars and all have surrendered;
> their conventos and estates
> have all been given to us.

> The parish priest of Bulacan
> was furiously tilling the fields
> having been ordered to do so
> by Don Salgario del Pilar.

In Bulacan, the Spaniards all were practically servants:
going to market to buy fish doing practically all the chores.

“It is all over!” proclaims the song, and then follow the economic and social consequences of the event: redistribution of friar property, and erstwhile colonial rulers becoming tillers and household servants. The revolutionary elite was anxious to leave it at that, to limit the meaning of the song to the defeat and humiliation of Spain. But the hopeful among the oppressed and those who fought doggedly to achieve this victory expected more sweeping changes. To them the above song expressed the beginning rather than the end.

**Challenges to Malolos**

Toward the end of 1898, the Malolos-based government began to receive alarming reports from provincial officials in both central and southern Luzon concerning the spread of “anti-revolutionary” movements. These peasant bands ignored directives from government officials, even going to the extent of threatening the lives and properties of the wealthy. The complex background of such discontent has been described in an incisive study by Milagros Guerrero.8 She points to the ilustrados’ resistance to “internal revolution,” the localism and abusiveness of many municipal officials, and the exigencies of the guerrilla resistance. For one thing, the imposition of the *cedula personal* and other forms of revenue and labor service simply recalled the “dark age” of Spanish rule. Furthermore, the control of local government by the principales gave them an opportunity to assert ownership of vast tracts of land, some of which were claimed by less sophisticated and powerless tillers. The realities of national independence were far from the expectations, nurtured during the war, not only of a release from the burdens of Spanish rule but of a society “turned upside down.” Even from the earliest days of victory, Mabini was aware of the contradictions that would plague the republic.

While forming part of the Malolos Government, the complaint was made to the writer by certain alarmed individuals that this talk of liberties had caused to

---

7. PIR, Box 7, PNL.


germinate in the minds of the masses certain socialist or communist ideas which for the future of certain properties of doubtful origin.\textsuperscript{10}

As it was perceived that the acts of the revolutionary center contradicted its language of struggle and redemption, many religiopolitical brotherhoods turned away from it. Their ranks swelled in the latter part of 1898 as disappointed peasants and other aggrieved parties sought alternative vehicles for the pursuit of their ideals.

One of the more "spectacular" cases of disorder that Malolos had to contend with was the so-called Pensacola affair in Zambales, northwest of Manila. The brothers Teodoro and Doroteo Pensacola were veterans of the war against Spain, having been responsible for liberating a town or two from Spanish rule. But when the towns of the province were reorganized according to the government decree of 18 June 1898, the Pensacola brothers encouraged the populace to disobey the local principales who controlled the municipal governments, and to refrain from paying the "personal contributions" required by the government. They began to form parties in the towns to oppose all orders from Malolos and were even successful in inducing some detachments of the revolutionary army to abandon their posts and form a rebel group. The Pensacola brothers harrassed "various wealthy and educated persons" of Botolan, Zambales, with the aim of forcing them to leave the town, their object being to secure their real property and distribute it among their followers, as according to their doctrine it was already time for the rich to be poor and for the poor to become rich, endeavoring to make the people believe that the ignorant should direct the towns and the intelligent be subordinated to them; with these extravagant theories, they have succeeded in deceiving the masses and securing their adhesion. \textsuperscript{11}

This report, coming from a government administrator, does not quite give us the outlook of the Pensacola brothers themselves. But it is clear how the outcome of the war against Spain was easily perceived by the masses of Zambales as an inversion of traditional relationships in society.

In the previous chapter, we pointed out the ideological kinship of the Katipunan and the Colorum of Southern Luzon, and now in 1897 Sebastian Cano led the latter against the Spaniards. But as the leadership of the revolution came to rest increasingly in ilustrado hands, resulting in government neglect of local problems, a change occurred in the Colorum's posture vis-à-vis the revolutionary center. In late 1898, Cano's group, now calling itself the "Katipunan ni San Cristobal," was ordered suppressed by the Malolos government for having aims that were "almost diametrically anti-revolutionary.\textsuperscript{12}

Branches of this katipunan were discovered in the provinces of Morong, Batangas, Laguna, and Tayabas. In the latter three provinces, the Magbubundoc (lit., "uncouth mountain dwellers"), as the Colorums were also called, had a following of over thirty thousand by September 1898. Manuel Arguelles, the provincial governor of Tayabas, in an urgent report to Aguinaldo warned that the "heretic" and "absurd" ideas of the Katipunan ni San Cristobal were encouraging the gente proletaria to abandon their fields, to the detriment of the landlords. Many serfs were leaving the homes of their masters. In general, they were "a constant threat to public order" but it was fruitless, and dangerous, to pursue them because they were "prepared to die in defense of their cause." \textsuperscript{13}

The ilustrado Arguelles also noted that this katipunan's leader, Sebastian Cano, was a man of no education at all and "a great impostor." And yet by wandering around, preaching his message, he was able to undermine the traditional dominance of the principales and ilustrados. Arguelles himself offered an explanation for this: "Since the country today is passing through a critical period, it seems that the spread of this society is swift... and geometrically proportional.\textsuperscript{14} What Arguelles meant was that the spread of the Katipunan ni San Cristobal directly followed upon the overall state of dislocation in the country in the wake of the war against Spain. This war was tantamount to a cataclysm leading to a total reordering of the universe. The Colorums were mobilized by Cano to support it wholeheartedly, inspired by the promise of a perfect society in which the faithful of the earth would be united in a community of brotherhood and equality. The style of Bonifacio's Katipunan, its use of traditional imagery and its ethos of brotherhood, encouraged this fusion of popular "religious" aspirations and new, patriotic goals. Cano's use of the Katipunan name in late 1898, at a time when the original secret society was proscribed by the government, suggests that the Katipunan ethos lived on and gave form to hopes that the revolution would still run its course.

Similar movements sprouted at about the same time all over Luzon. A little-known group calling itself "Cruz na Bituin" (Cross of Stars) and the Santa Iglesia, which will be described in a later chapter, flourished in the provinces of Pampanga, Bulacan, and Tarlac. Pangasinan and the southern Ilocano

\textsuperscript{10} El Comercio, 1 February 1900, p. 7 (RIA 2291–96, USNA). See also Cesar A. Majul, Mindanao and the Philippine Revolution (Manila: National Commission, 1964), p. 37 and passim.


\textsuperscript{12} Jose Blas to Aguinaldo, Antipolo, 3 November 1898 (Taylor, Philippine Insurrection, vol. 3, pp. 395-96).

\textsuperscript{13} Manuel Arguelles to Aguinaldo, Bacooc, 10 September 1898 (PIR-SD 243).

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
provinces saw the rapid growth of the Guardia de Honor.15 Flooded with reports of “disturbances” in the countryside, President Aguinaldo, in February 1899, appealed to “those various katipunan” to unite with the country as a whole. Announcing that the Americans had come to succeed the Spaniards, that they intended to make the Filipinos worship the friars again, and that they would hand back to the latter the properties that belonged rightfully to the people, Aguinaldo assured the nation that the congress, government and army were one in loyōb with the people in the struggle. However, many brothers who, confused by certain teachings, refused to abolish their katipunans:

Dito sa Mundo’i hindi natin maaliis ang manga kahirapan, at yaon ay tga nga laman nitong latay tin kinahasan—datupa’t kung sino man ang may agrario o kahirapan inangstaw, huwag sanang bigla biglang hihalasay sa Katipunan natin manga Filipinos, at gagaau nga ibang partido, dahil sa ye’t makasisira totoong sa tin linataked na independencia.16

In this world, there will always be hardship, and that is inflicted by the conditions of the land we live in—however, if anyone bears grievances or hardship, let him not suddenly turn away from the katipunan of us Filipinos and form another party, for that damages our budding independence.

What frustrated Aguinaldo was the difficulty of reconciling the interests of the peasantry and the nation, as he and other leaders saw it:

Yuan nang lahat ang mga partido at isa pang nakakagulo sa ating pagkakaisa, at tayong lahat ay mag-isa na lamang nag pangalan—Filipinos—senal baga na isa lamang tayong nacion, isa lamang tayong loyōb, at isa lamang tayong Katipunan.17

Let us leave behind all these parties and other things that cripple our unity, and let us all be one in name—Filipinos—a sign that we are one nation, one loyōb, one katipunan.

Aguinaldo gave the parties concerned ten days to present themselves and air their grievances. Otherwise, those caught would be imprisoned for two years or, particularly for members of the Santa Iglesia, Guardia de Honor, and Cruz na Bituin, death would be meted out.18

Another phenomenon that disturbed the Malolos government was the increasing frequency of labor strikes directed mainly at foreign-owned compa-

17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.

ries based in American-occupied Manila. Again, this was unheard of in pre-Katipunan days and must be attributed to the desire of workers to realize certain possibilities which had opened up to them with independence. In late 1898, some laborers in Manila instigated a strike against a Chinese-owned tobacco factory. Then followed a strike of domestic servants and local artisans of Manila. Teamsters, tram and railway operators, shopkeepers and employees of private firms followed suit.19 The strikes aimed at lowering or eliminating taxes as well as securing wage increases. They had, however, clearly also a political dimension. Among the most enthusiastic participants were members of the Katipunan being revived by Gen. Teodoro Sandiko in the occupied district. According to Taylor, the upper classes of Manila were already tacitly, if not openly, supporting the Americans at this time. Thus, Sandiko could only appeal to the “poor and ignorant.” Many of those who rallied to the revived Katipunan or sandalaban (army) were Katipuneros of 1896–97, imprisoned by the Spaniards but released by the Americans who found the Manila jails overflowing with political prisoners. Assuring the Americans that he was merely forming athletic clubs, Sandiko disguised his organizational activities until the general strike occurred. When interviewed about it, he called the strike a good thing because it tends to better the situation of the laborers—that is, the poor class.20

These events, however, perturbed the Malolos government. The revolutionary provincial governor of Manila, Ambrosio Flores, in a proclamation, exhorted the inhabitants of Manila to follow their habitual occupations, to disregard the nationality of their employers, and to seek redress for grievances through “legal and prudent methods.” Continuing, he said:

In no case should you resort to violence or cause disorders which only serve to belie your naturally pacific, docile and honorable character. . . . Furthermore, can you not understand . . . that at this time when the future of our country is being decided, when the whole civilized world has its eyes fixed upon us to see if we possess the requisite ability and culture for self-government and if we sufficiently guarantee order to protect foreign interests in our country, can you not see, I repeat, that at this precise moment the disturbances you cause by these strikes, your reasons not being known to the outside world, may give rise to false impressions concerning the depth of our national character?21

What we should especially note is the preoccupation with the outward form of the republic in order to merit recognition by the “whole civilized world.” This

is a particularly ilustrado conception which rests upon a disjunction between internal states and outward forms. To ilustrados like Flores, unity seems to rest not upon the release of energy and potential through mass mobilization but in the preservation of order—"to protect foreign interests"—within the republic, which in turn is based upon mass acquiescence to the vertical relationships of pre-Katipunan days. In order to sustain this argument, Flores takes refuge in a definition of the Filipino character as "naturally pacific, docile and honorable," and ultimately blames the strikes on "foreign influences" and on enemies trying to "disparage the virile and powerful Philippine race." 22 For decades, Spanish friars and officials had said the same thing of the "docile" natives who gave trouble. But the natives may have found this understandable, if not predictable. In their beloved pasyon, did not the pharisees accuse the "foreigner" (iba ang himinuan) Jesus of bringing disorder to once-peaceful Judea (11:8:7)?

Aguinaldo himself echoes Flores in a proclamation issued in the midst of a railroad strike in Pangasinan in September 1898. The laborers did not report for duty in order to pressure the foreign-owned company to increase wages. Aguinaldo's attitude toward them is clear even from the first sentence of the proclamation in which he says he finds it worthwhile to address the strikers because the workers, having a "submissive disposition," will listen to him. Later he insists that the idea to strike cannot come from the nates themselves and must have been "advised by our enemy in order that the foreigners may have occasion to criticize us." But Aguinaldo also points out that the strikers' attitude "shows our union which is the fountain and strength of our present struggle against the Spaniards." Somehow this hesitance to either condemn or praise reflects Aguinaldo's intermediate position between masses and ilustrados, and partly explains why he could hold the republic together for a time in spite of its leaders' essentially conservative outlook. Eventually, Aguinaldo tells the strikers that their action is mistaken, and explains why:

Our union does not lie in what you have done—refusing to go to work with the railroad company. There should be a union in hailing the sacred liberty of our native land and in defending the same from being again taken from us by the Spaniards or by any other foreign nation. Our union should not consist in small things, as what you have done, i.e., refusing to go to work, which disciples you and all of us in the eyes of other nations who are now observing us. 23

Aginsin we find a preoccupation with the external appearance of the republic, which leads Aguinaldo to define "union," first in terms of common acquiescence to an abstract notion of "sacred liberty of our native land," and second in terms of the Filipino nation's identity vis à vis foreign nations. The strikers' concrete experience of unity is dismissed as irrelevant.

The ilustrados, confronted by the awesome specter of American armed might, soon proved themselves incapable of maintaining their commitment even to republican independence when American overtures for collaboration were made. By 1899, serious splits had developed in the government between pro- and anticapitulationist factions. Somehow, the superficial and indecisive leadership, combined with personal rivalries for power, was reflected in increasing disunity among factions of the army and flagging morale of the part of the common soldiers. The "mood" of the time is expressed in a poem about a common soldier's sorrow at leaving home ("which is like the fondest paradise") in response to orders to march to the frontlines:

Sa saliubang palad ano'ng dumating sa liliim ng touang nilalasap nunin arao ng juvis ng aming tangapan ang otor na hulos sa buhay quietiti.

When the stroke of misfortune arrived we were secretly enjoying our happy life it was Thursday when we received the orders that almost choked us.

Na ang pugecasabi otor na mahhipit nayong Sanjamanoy ay lisising pilik huag malibutan at uag omanis itong saring otor ay gapaning pilik.

The strict orders said:
you must leave harrio Sanjamanoy do not delay, march immediately force yourselves to obey this order.

Nang aming matangot cesang malaman nayong Sanjamanoy cesang maliliyan nagulo ang isip puso't alinlangan sa biglang paglahap ng capibahan. (3-5) 24

As soon as we fully understood that we had to leave Sanjamanoy our minds were in turmoil, our hearts in doubt at this sudden taste of anguish.

---

22. ibid., p. 379.
24. "Ahin," by a certain "Gaspar" (manuscript, FIR-SD, Box I-19, PNL). Sanjamanoy is a barrio of San Francisco de Malahon, Cavite, one of the strongholds of the revolution of 1896.
Reluctantly, the author and his friends carry out the orders. Throughout the forty-eight stanzas of the poem, there is no reference to the standard Katipunan themes of “love,” “brotherhood,” or “defense of Mother Country.” Instead we find a personal account of loneliness, of hardships caused by the harsh environment and American “guerrillas,” of boredom and the desire to return to the heavenly barrio. In stanza 17, there is even mention of some companions who, unable to endure it all, have gone home. The author understands that suffering is a progressive dying to the world, death being the avenue for reward (in heaven?), but he is not sure of his commitment to the hardship of the struggle. His cynicism and vacillation betray the absence of a social meaning for the event in which he participates:

Ang iba pang dusa'y dicona sabihin
at ualarin yatang tingin sa amin
sa aua ng langit ito' n natilis din
cahit anong hirap ay nabata namin.

The other sorrows I won't bother to mention
for no one is likely to render a compassionate glance
we endured it all through heaven's mercy
patiently suffered through all hardships.

Ang buhay nga namin sa mundo't ualana
catinbang nga hirap dinadaladala
ngunit ang panahon capagdumating na
ang biliha sa dusa ay ating labat na.

Our life in this world fades away
in proportion to the hardship we bear
but when the fateful day arrives
the reward for suffering will be ours.

Manhil pay cami ang siang mainis
yoracan ng paa ang pagmamasulit
at asputapin guinahuang sumeplit
at sa laong longcut cami'y ibubild.

But perhaps we might become disgusted
trample underfoot, with disdain, our sacrifices
and blindly grope for a life of comfort
and fall into even greater sorrow.

Recovering the Past

It is during the same period (ca. 1899) that we begin to find essays and poems that suggest a groping for the social meaning of the revolution. With the breakdown of spirit and morale during the latter part of the republican period, individuals concerned about the turn of events interpreted their past, present, and future in terms of the experience of 1896. The narration of the Katipunan revolt assumed the form of epics like the pasyon, restored a dimension of meaning to the troubled present and pointed to the “way” that ought to be taken.

In September 1899, a small and poorly printed tabloid entitled Ang Bayang Kababaisan (The Deeply Grieving Country) appeared in the town of San Francisco de Malabon, where Bonifacio and the Magdiwang wing of the Katipunan had had their headquarters. It was edited by Diego Mojica, a poet and former president of the Katipunan in San Francisco de Malabon. In the first issue, Mojica states that he has started the publication to announce humbly to his kapitid (brothers) certain matters and truths related to the “straight and holy path” (Santong Matuid), so that they will discover the “delightful things” that come with the right way of life prescribed in the Holy Scriptures (santong casulatan). When the lives of the kapitid are ordered and oriented in this manner, they will obtain freedom and peace; in their souls will shine “that pure beacon of light and brilliance” (yuang dalitsay na itao ng puspos carikitikan at calisanang) rivaling the stars in the sky.

Although Diego Mojica seems to have been a devout person, having written several pieces of religious poetry including the Pasion Bagong Katha (New Pasyon Composition), his concern in the above passages was not merely for the devout and moral life in itself. His newspaper was conceived with the growing sad state of the country in mind. In another article in the same issue, Mojica writes about the light (ilaw) of Mother Filipinas which is flickering under the onslaught of the Americans. But, he continues, heaven is bound to help the Filipinos, and he ends with the saying: “King Nabucadnasor likened himself to a beast, but humility and lowliness saved the good Moses” (tumalad sa haysap ang Haring Nabucadnasos, ngunit ang kapagpambabaan ang naglilutas sa nabati na Moses). Reflected in this saying is the connection between struggle and the state of one’s loób. It is not implied that the individual simply be passive and seek refuge from the turmoil of the world by turning inward. Nor does it mean that the masses must, in their lowliness, follow their leaders blindly. Heaven will help the Filipinos if they pattern their lives after the lowly but powerful and victorious Christ. Each inner transformation and perhaps death for the country will hasten the coming of kalayaan. The light of Mother Filipinas is flickering because men of the republic have turned away

---

25. This tabloid seems to have been connected with Sandiko’s revival of the Katipunan. Only two issues (nos. 1 and 2) have been found and are in Box 7, PIR, PNL.
26. His religious poetry include the following titles: “Ang Anghel at ang Demonio sa Bawat Isang Tao” RENFIL 1 (28 January 1911): 34; “Geona Católica,” RENFIL 1 (28 April 1911): 34; (7 May 1911): 33; and “Pasyong Bagong Katha,” RENFIL 1 (21 March 1911): 33. These were all composed much earlier than their publication dates.
from the experience of the "straight and holy path;" the resulting state of their loób is manifested in external events.

The same ideas are developed in Moycita's view of the past. He devotes the whole front page of the newspaper's second issue to an article entitled "Ang Catapusan ng Araw ng Agosto 1896" (The Last Day of August 1896), which treats of the beginning of the war against Spain in Cavite, in which he participated. Moycita does not really relate what happened, or what he did; what he does is try to recapture the meaning of 1896. To perceive this meaning in his work is to regain a sense of the "straight and holy path;"

A las once ng umaga ng araw ng lunes catapusan araw ng Agosto ng 1896 ng simultán sa bayang S. Francisco Malabon ang cahambal hambal at caapi aping panghahimagsac o revolution at somonod naman an lawat ng bayang saaep ng Hocomang Cavite, inaring langlit ng mga mataapang at bayaning loób ang calunos-lunos natangis ng bayan, lua, buhangin ang amigan at camatayan, ipina-
ngayon ang ilang balit na luma, sibat na bucum sa mga gulo sa Courtel ng Guardia Civil at Hacienda ng mga Frayle napapau na sa mga sunduta at iba pang cahang ouel sa parkequillas, asapat ang ngalit ng bayan ang ilang humigad na saugali sa pucuan ang mga caayu, ng mga areo at oras na yam nahehik ad laih ng binot ang caraguan at caalisaguan, bumbucal ang tapang sa libo libong puso, bai at abayan, isa ang loób at pagdaramdam sumbitbasa'sang lahat sa mag cahangap sa patong patong na husa ng cahang buan ng mga cahang buan, hind ngumang sa livibing limang aro at tinahimik ang boong Hocomang Cavite nasupil ang mga cahual at Hacienda pinangco ng caraguan ang mga caayu hingalipng loób ang caanilang mga sunduta at iba pang mga cahangap, marami ang napata sa camila at nangga sugatan.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning of the last day of August 1896, when San Francisco de Malabon began the sad and oppressive war or revolution, and all the rest of the towns in the jurisdiction of Cavite followed suit; the most pathetic weeping, the tears, sighs and dying of the country were taken to heart by the brave and heroic of loób; several rusty muskets, spears, and bamboo sticks were dared pitted against the cuartel of the civil guard and the hacienda of the friars, which were well-armed and provisioned, in spite of which the fury of the country spread even more, overrunning and annihilating the enemy; during those days and those times, cowardice and indolence rested in the grave of the forgotten; in many thousands of hearts sprang forth bravery, goodness and heroism, loób and feelings were one, for they were one people, in each other's embrace they had suffered the grief of subjugation and enslavement; hardly five days had passed when the whole jurisdiction of Cavite quieted down, the cuartel and hacienda were overthrown; the enemy, overcome by cowardice, peacefully surrendered their weapons and supplies, many among them were killed or wounded.

The whole event is told in a single sentence. Moycita did not see fit to break up the account into smaller segments because the lengthy sentence is itself an image of a complete process—the beginning, the spread, and end of a popular uprising. Rather than being pure narrative, the account tries to capture through language the experience of 1896. The event, he says at the outset, is "sad" and "oppressive." The original word for "sad" is cahambalbambal, which connotes a dismal or doleful atmosphere that "infects" people in it; it is often used to describe the mood in a funeral. The original Tagalog word translated as "oppressive" is caaping-api, which literally refers to a pitiful situation that evokes compassion. Both cahambalbambal and caaping-api denote the pasyon framework in which the event and its narration are situated.

Moycita states that the revolt took place when people "took to heart" the "pathetic weeping, tears, sighs and dying of the country." The word "pathetic" is, in the original Tagalog, calunos-lunos, a word which evokes a sympathetic feeling of pity. Thus it not only "describes" the sad state of the country but, together with the words for "weeping, tears, sighs and dying," evokes the experience of pity in the reader. This is essential in view of Moycita's intention, in 1899, of reviving the spirit of 1896. The revolt of 1896 took place when men's loób carried damay and compassion.

Moycita uses the phrase inaring langlit, which I have translated as "taken to heart," to describe the people's response to the country's suffering. But the literal translation of inaring langlit is "to interpret as heaven-sent," and may also be translated as "to respond to something as a sign of heaven." The implication here is that the experience of pity for the suffering country also meant situating events in the context of divine time. This would explain the force that is suddenly released and which "overruns" and "annihilates" the enemy. The people can fight with "rusty muskets, spears and bamboo sticks" against a well-equipped enemy because they are acting out an event whose outcome is, in a way, part of a divine framework. The force or "fury" mentioned is, however, not heaven-sent but concomitant to men acting out the event. This involves a movement in the loób of each individual which releases the potentialities of "courage, goodness and heroism" while casting off "cowardice and indolence." In the common experience of suffering, compassion, struggle, and self-control is found the basis of unity, the "oneness of loób and feeling."

The whole first sentence is thus about the country's experience of her pasyon—a redemptive act, the completion of a divine plan, the painful death to a former state of being. That is another reason why the event is sad, even though the outcome, as we could expect, is rebirth, described in the next sentence of Moycita's account:
na cadugo na nabuburo sa buntong ng duwa at caraguinan, ang canilang mga libingan iguinalgaling at binubuanan ng ayat luha hindi mapaparam sa ala-ala ng Katagalugan ang canilang pag panao sa mundo.

The revolt of 1872 that was also started in this jurisdiction, came alive, the seed of unity and mutual concern came alive, that bountiful love of former days came alive and spread throughout Katagalugan; as if the heroes Burgos, Zamora, Gomez, Rizal and others whose courage and pure feelings came alive; they had spurned death because of love for their native land and love for the countless brothers buried in the heap of suffering and oppression; their graves are revered and showered with sighs and tears, remembrances by their brothers of their departure from this world.

Then Mojica condemns Spain and the friars who caused the people's suffering and oppression:

O hangal na Ina! Sino ca ngayon?... Ay sa abo mo! Hulugan mo ang iyong mapait na dili at pag sisid. Simula sa balintos mo ng iyong calilohan ay guminat mo ang cahina hinayang na Filipinas na iyong ipinsangasya. Uula cang dapat pang higantahan cundi ang mga Frayleng lumapastangan sa iyong Gobernong na nagapangap na sila ca hahalili sa catoto ni Jesus. Si Jesus baga'i may mga pabuison... may bodga ng pilas, nagpapatay ng tausang, nag pasto, o destierro at iba pang para magpumabaya na bagay? Uula si Jesus nito, cundi puang santong capacumbahan, sa crus na cahimpan sa lahag ng bagay ang naguing buhay, Cordero, at Hari sa paghig at panghinayang sa lahag ng quinapal, siya ang nag pagsayat, ng tayo'i mabuhay na lahat; datupana ang Frayle, ang ibigay macuyom ang sang daigdigian, sila na ang mag Hari na macapangyanahan lahat, sila ang mabuhay at tayo ang mamatay.

Oh stupid Mother! What have you become now!... How destitute you are! Let fall your bitter reflections and regrets. Through the eyes of your treachery, gaze at Filipinas whose misfortune you, now regretfully, caused; you can only seek vengeance from the friars who blasphemed your government and pretended that they were the soldiers and successors of Jesus. Did Jesus undertake tax collections... did he have storehouses of silver, did he have people killed or exiled and do other ugly things? Jesus did none of these; he was but holy lowliness, he bore the cross of hardship that all things may come alive, he was the lamb, a king in love and compassion for all of creation. He caused himself to die, so that all of us may live; the friars, however, wanted the world in their fist, they wanted to be king and exercise power over all, they wanted to live and us to die.

Mojica’s explicit reference to the figure of Christ as a model to be followed answers the question of how leading a life according to the “straight and holy path” will make the light of Filipinas shine brightly once more. Mojica emphasizes the need for humility, love, compassion, the willingness to die so that others may live, because the events in his time showed a departure from the “straight and holy path” that the Katipunan of 1896 had taken. Perhaps Mojica never forgave the Aguinaldo group for purging him from the revolution-ary ranks, aside from executing his friend Andres Bonifacio.7 Now he could justifiably hint that the ilustrados who, in the heyday of the republic, had indulged themselves in the glory and status of office were vacillating in their commitment to the revolution. The president of the Filipino republic himself, in violation of the model that Mojica suggests, seemed to relish the power and glory of high office. Such behavior was what undoubtedly led Mabini, while in exile in Guam, to make the following comments:

Mr. Aguinaldo believed that one can serve his country with honor and glory only from high office, and this is an error which is very dangerous to the common welfare; it is the principal cause of the civil wars which impoverish and exhaust many states, and [it] contributed greatly to the failure of the Revolution. Only he is truly a patriot who, whatever his post, high or low, tries to do the greatest possible good to his countrymen. ... True honor can be discerned in the simple manifestations of an upright and honest soul, not in brilliant pomp and ornament which scarcely serve to mask the deformities of the body.8

Ricarte, in the original Tagalog version of his memoirs, concurs with Mabini, adding that the latter’s admonitions “are fully deserved by a man who willingly deviated from purity of heart and the clarity of katuturan.”9

Aside from the contradiction between ideal and actual modes of leadership, Mojica’s essay implies a contrast between the irresistible power released by the Katipunan uprising of 1896 and the flickering light of Mother Filipinas in 1899. Mojica’s narration of the “last day of August 1896” was, in both form and content, an attempt to recapture the experience of 1896 that was moving beyond the grasp of the present. If to us the attempt is not fully successful, it is because of the inherent limitations of the narrative form. Traditional Tagalog poetry and music are more effective forms for recapturing the experience of compassion, unity, revolutionary energy, and loss. Fortunately, there are a few examples of these which we can fruitfully analyze.

Poetry and Revolution

During the Filipino-American war, awit (metrical romances) about the war with Spain appear to have been circulated in rough, pamphlet form. One such awit, most likely written by Eulogio Julian de Tandigma (whom we know next

---

9. Himagsikan nang manga Filipino Laban sa Kastila (Yokohama, 1927), p. 82.
revolutionary government of Nauik, the "departmental government" in central Luzon, the "republican government" at Biak-na-Bato and other developments all of which took place within the time span of the awit. The ilustrado view that the evolution revolved from Katipunan or secret society stage to a republican stage is simply ignored by the awit and, implicitly, in folk memories of the revolution. There indeed was an evolution in political organization but, as we shall see, that was not what the revolution meant to the masses.

As far as the "unmentioned" leaders are concerned, we might note that some of them are mentioned in the longer awit version, but the latter contains even more insignificant names, e.g., Leon Juanching, Isidora Carmona, Juan Gutierrez. The personalities of these leaders and men are in fact irrelevant to the theme of the awit. Estrella comments that "the facts of the story are somewhat obscure. But the way the story progresses is somewhat convincing." Ronquillo himself admits that the awit is about the "spirit" of the war rather than about personalities and events per se:

Massaying boong diwa ng naging dahil ng Panghihimagsik ay naibadha ryan. Iyong ang katats. Iyong ang sigaw ng bayang noo'y napiliang manghihimagsik at humanap sa sariing lakas ng lunas na kailangan sa malubhang salit na idinaraing.

It can be said that the whole spirit of what brought about the war has been traced in the awit. That is the essence thus, katats. That is the cry of the country that was forced to wage war and to find in its own strength the cure that was needed for the grave illness that made her moan in pain.

Ronquillo could make the statement because he was a participant in the revolution. But why is it that by 1910 or earlier, only beggars and the like remembered and sang the awit? We shall note in future chapters that the Katipunan ethos was, in fact, kept alive in this century among the so-called poor and ignorant people. The awit itself, from internal evidence in the longer version, seems to have been composed during the latter days of the republic and is a statement about the increasing loss of "Katipunan experience" since the war against Spain. A similarity exists between the awit and the writings of Diego Mojica we have looked into. They both speak about the experience of revolution, the force or energy that comes from the union of men. The three versions we have of the awit emphasize this energy and its overpowering effect on the Spaniards. Ultimately, personalities and events are subordinated to the images of union and energy that constitutes the "essence" of the awit. It must be noted that the awit's content analyzed below is in the form of regulated verse.
recited or sung. What Mojica tried to communicate through the careful use of prose would have been rendered more effectively by the singer of the awit. The awit begins with the image of a relentless storm:

Sa dahus ng unos na di magpatantàn
na bumabagbag sa nangangalâcal
syang di itugul sa puyat at pagal
ng tunga bhissâ sa pagpapatayn.

So violent and unrelenting is the storm that disrupts the activities of traders and rages on through the tireless efforts of those who are hardened to slaughter.

The storm is said to disrupt the whole of Filipinas, “from the good clerics down to the people who are trampled upon.” Its relation to death is immediately established: the image of the ceaseless slaughter of men (papapatayn) is juxtaposed with that of a storm that destroys and uproots. The storm, which in other stanzas finds its equivalent in the word gulo (chaos, turmoil), begins at a certain point in the past and rages unceasing up to the time in which victory over Spain is complete. The storm is the temporal framework of the awit, the context in which events take place. The theme is stated repeatedly in the course of the poem, and is recognized by the stress patterns of the first two lines of the awit:

Sa dahus ng unos na di magpatantàn
na bumabagbag sa nangangalâcal

The phenomenon of disruption is said to have originated with the friars. Unlike other types of revolutionary literature, however, this awit does not portray the friars as the archetype of evil. It averts the direct flow of moral outburst by inserting complimentary adjectives in what is otherwise an enumeration of their misdeeds. In the stanzas describing the activities of Father Gil (the discoverer of the Katipunan), he is said to be “all right” (maigui). It is out of his “goodness” (cabuhitan) that many are shot or exiled. He is awarded “honors” for his services. He is “famous” (bantog); by his “beautiful handling of things” his name is acclaimed even in Spain. The awit, of course, does not approve of Gil’s acts, one of which was to open a campaign of terror against suspected members of the Katipunan. But the use of poetic irony, verging on the humorous, limits condemnation. Even the Spanish government which Gil served is merely described as “mute” (pupô). The awit, as we shall see, is not a condemnation of Spain’s brutal acts, nor is it supposed to portray the triumph of good over evil.

Friar Gil’s discovery of the Katipunan is not mentioned explicitly. But he is said to participate in the creation of chaos (3). His role in the awit is to illustrate that a condition of chaos has set upon the land. “As if at a certain appointed hour” (7), the “good” friars everywhere begin to persecute the “wealthy and educated” citizens of the towns. The simultaneity of the friars’ activities everywhere contributes to the impression that the event is almost fated rather than the result of an insidious plot.

The descriptions in stanzas 8-12 build up an image of a multitude of innocent individuals from disparate towns being compressed into a limited space, i.e., the “prison”:

Na cun caya lumang parang lumulubag
sa saquip ang madla na nasasa-birap,
un binaharal na o caya ipapat
sa nga destierro ang cahabaghâbag . . .

Only did relief come
from this crowded state
when they were killed
or exiled, these pitiful men . . .

Bagamat, sa curoc cun na, naiuuan
na di nararamay sa pinarasahan,
di maglipad buan hubugso na naman
macapal na taung tanga ibang bayan.

Though the prison had a few left
of those who escaped punishment
hardly a month passed when it again overflowed
with masses of people from other towns.

Ano pa,i, ang lagay carcel rang Bilibid
na gripong mastulà ang macaparis,
maguing arao gabi ang balang unigulb
hindi nagugulang ang nasaying tubig.

Bilibid prison in fact could be
lined to a faucet
which though used day and night
was never without water.

The description of the “pitiful” principales serves as the introduction to the rise of the Katipunan which, in a sense, is prefigured by the coming together of
individuals in prison; the image of the ceaseless flow of water is analogous to the common flow of blood (i.e., the blood compact) that symbolizes Katipunan unity. But the experience of the principals is still different in that they are forcibly compressed into one.

The transition to the episode of the Katipunan’s “coming to being” is made by reiterating the image of the storm:

Ang bilis nang dusa na di magpatatang
nang tanang pinunong na sa bayan-bayan
doon sa pahara ay ilang magatang
ang iniis nga loob nitong CATIPUNAN. (14)

The grief of all the principals in the towns was sweeping and unrelenting, in this mounting hardship the heat of the Katipunan’s loob intensified, burst into flames.

The first two lines of the stanza recall the main theme introduced in stanza 1 by the identity of stress patterns and the presence of the word magpatatang. Dusa (grief) does not seem to be merely a private emotion but moves in a “rushing manner” and so has the quality of an uprooting force, the equivalent of unos (storm) in stanza 1. It is then implied that this “rushing” grief led to the rise of the Katipunan, expressed in terms of the “bursting into flames” of the “heat” of the Katipunan’s loob. But why should the Katipunan, composed largely of nonprincipals, elements be ignited by the experience of the principals? The answer lies in the image of “grief” and “hardship” of the principals, which is made an element of the overall chaos. Grief and hardship, irrespective of the personalities or class that experienced them, evoke and release in society such emotive forces as damay and compassion. In this context, we recall Mabini’s comment that in spite of the fact that the martyrs Burgos, Gomez, and Zamora “had striven for the right of a class and not of the people in general,” their execution brought about “deep pity and pain for the victims. This pain wrought up a miracle; it caused the Filipinos to think for the first time of themselves.”

In Mabini’s view, the experience of damay in 1972 involved all classes of society and signified a budding national consciousness. In stanza 14 of the awit, damay is a social experience, a Katipunan experience. Since damay is a manifestation of a whole and controlled loob, the Katipunan’s loob radiates heat and flame, just as Christ and other individuals of exemplary loob radiate liwanag.

The first “gathering of men” (ipon, root word of Katipunan) takes place at Balintawak. The awit does not say that Bonifacio organized this group. Many men simply “come together” and then follow their leader, the “intelligent”

(natalino) Bonifacio. The second leader mentioned, Valentin de la Cruz, together with his many companions are the first to bring chaos (gumulo) to Santa Mesa. The key word here is gumulo, whose stem, gulo, is often used to refer to battles or to the general situation in which the Katipunan mobilizes. An alternative word used is paggapatayan (killing of each other), which we shall translate as “holocaust.” In stanza 54 the battlefield is called campong pateyan (field of death).

We mentioned previously that the image of the uprooting storm (unos) provides the temporal framework of the awit. Chaos (gulo) and holocaust (paggapatayan) are like the storm in being manifestations of a fundamental disruption in the order of things. In order to understand how an entity such as the Katipunan can be conceived of as arising out of a disruption in the world order, we have to refer to the pasyon’s particular use of the “storm” and “chaos” images.

In the pasyon, the word gulo first appears in reference to the turmoil among most inhabitants of Jerusalem upon hearing various rumors concerning the Messiah’s birth. Later on Herod, the pharisaees, and “leading men of the towns” regard Christ’s teaching as the cause of gulo among the common people. Anas, for example, confronts Jesus:

ano bagang manga saysay
ang iyong iniintetar
nacagugulo sa bayan’ (107:4)

Or as Pilate says before sentencing Christ:

Anila ay iong tao
palaman’at ulang toto
sa hari pa’i magiliilo,
boong bayay’ ginugulo
ang ugal’i binahug. (136:5)

They say this man
is a traitor without friends
disoial even to the king,
putting the whole land in gulo
changing attitudes and customs.

Christ’s presence among men brings about gulo because it changes attitudes toward the self and society. It may even be said that traditional relationships in society are disrupted; for example, the pharisaees accuse Christ of causing men to disobey their king, Herod. This gulo, however, is still only a prelude to the gulo that comes about as soon as Christ has died on the cross. Suddenly there are “unceasing earthquakes” and other manifestations of chaos:

Ito na, ang siyang mula
niyang capuluhang paua
ang paraan, tiulambay nga
pagcamaatay na mistula
ng Panginoong Mayga’u . . .

This was the beginning
of all that gulo
the sessions grieved
over the true death
of the Lord Creator . . .

Ang dilang bagay sa mundo
sampilung apan na elemento

All things in the world
including the four elements

---

The pasyon explains at length that the chaos in the elements of the universe is really a sign that the material world, apart from man, has sorrow and pity for the dead Creator. This juxtaposition of chaos and compassion gives us another insight into the awit's similar juxtaposition of damay, storm/chaos, and the rise of the Katipunan. On the matter of the storm imagery, clearly the pasyon line *lindo ay di magpatatàn* (the unceasing earthquake) parallels the awit's recurrent motif *unos na di magpatatàn* (the unceasing storm). This is found in another line of the pasyon, *quidlat ay di magpatatàn* (the unceasing lightning), in relation to the Apocalypse. Moreover, the resurrected Christ himself tells his mother: "The storm (unos) of suffering and pain / has ceased and passed" (181:8).

The final appearance of the storm/chaos theme is in the treatment of the Apocalypse. Gulo is a sign of the second coming of Christ. As the pasyon describes it, the earth and even the heavens will turn into gulo. The sun will darken, the sky turn bloodred. Stars will flicker and fall to the ground. Wild animals will swarm into the towns. Huge tidal waves will inundate the land, and terrible sounds like that of armies clashing will be heard.

Unbearable gulo
shall people on earth suffer
they shall turn pale
their tongues paralyzed
their senses lost.

No longer friends
young and old shall be
for gulo shall reign
and fellow Christians too
shall fight each other truly.

Other aspects of the gulo will be the appearance of traitors and anti-Christians. Those who oppose the anti-Christ will suffer martyrdom. But this gulo is also a sign of the coming of the Kingdom. Forty days will pass in which men will be given a chance to change their loob and share in the coming victory. Storm and chaos thus provide the context in which men come together in Christ.

Our discussion of the layers of meaning in the word gulo illustrates the relationship between the awit and the Indo's experience, and helps explain why beggars and the like continued to remember it. For through it they could hold on to what Ronquillo calls the "essence" of the revolution, which is not the armed revolt or the military battles per se, but rather the condition of chaos and uprootedness in which men come together in the Katipunan. It is the force—i.e. the flame and heat—of this apocalyptic event that actually confronts the superior military strength of the Spaniards. Thus when General Blanco, having learned about the "swift spread" of the Katipunan, sends the *guardia civil* to the front, the result is disastrous; the flame spreads even faster when the "good Spaniards" attempt to extinguish it:

Ulal ring mangyari tanan inacala
nitong manga punong matutig castila,
hanggang limalabas laong lumahala
yaong Catipunan na lumilipana. (189)

In vain their efforts were
thought these good Spanish chiefs
suppression only intensified
the Catipunan's rapid spread.

Stanza 19 is about the rise of the Katipunan in Cavite province. At this point, the two versions of the awit become identical. The notable difference in the first 22 stanzas comprising the Ronquillo variation is that the stirrings of revolt are conceptualized in terms of the breaking of an *utang na loob* relationship between the Filipinos and Mother Spain.

The awit begins with an acknowledgment of a debt of "education" to Spain accompanied by profuse thanks. In return for what is regarded as Spain's love for her "youngest child," the Filipinos have "shed blood" to defend their mother against her enemies, particularly the Moros. But in time the Filipinos are treated like animals, especially at the instigation of the friars. This violates the Katipunan definition of human relationship. A Katipunan document states that love between mother and child is what distinguishes man from beast, "catipunan" being but an extension of this primordial love. In treating the natives like animals, says the awit, Spain even negates the possibility of love's existence. In stanza 8-16, the atrocities of the friars are vividly listed, but this description is made meaningful only as it reflects the breaking down of the bond between mother and daughter because there is no love:

Ito baga ina ang iyong pagkas\-i
na kami'y lunarin sa luhang marami,
sa maraming hampas ng mga prayle?
Diwa'y binigyan ka ng kuwarta marami! (6)

Is this, Mother, your kind of love
that you left us to drown in a blood of tears
from the friars' many blows?
Perhaps with lots of money you were bribed!

41. *Ang Catipunan ng Tao* (manuscript, PIR, Box 9 PNL).
Is there a connection between this image and the "chaos" in the written version of the avit? In a sense, the breaking of an utang na loob relationship between Mother Spain and daughter Filipinas is equivalent to uprootedness and chaos. The Ronquillo version, in fact, makes this more specific:

At sumilak na nga sa Kasiliangan
ang araw ng puot ng ating si Rizal,
tatlong daang taong lagiging iningatan
sa dagat ng dusa at kariliuan.

And in the East rose
the sun of our Rizal’s anger
for three hundred years submerged
in the sea of sorrow and suffering.

Mula nang isuhay kaming iyong anak
sa bagyong masasaal ng dulot't hinap,
ila ang puso nitong Filipinas
na ikaw ay di na ini naming laban.

Ever since your children held fast
in the raging storm of suffering and hardship
Filipinas was one of heart
in no longer calling you "mother."

We have here a close copy of the opening stanzas of Andres Bonifacio’s poem *Katapusan Hzik ng Pilipinas* (The Final Lament of Filipinas). That a wandering beggar used to chant it in the streets of Cavite testifies to Bonifacio’s influence among the “folk.” But we must also explain why these particular passages stuck in the folk memory, and how the beggar’s version differs from Bonifacio’s. If Agoncillo’s transcription is accurate, the second stanza of Bonifacio’s poem begins with the lines *walang isinubay kaming iyong anak/ sa bagyong masasaal ng dalita’t birap,* which Agoncillo translates as “We, your children, had nothing to shore up/ against the terrible storm of suffering.” In the beggar’s version, clearly the “sun of Rizal’s anger” shores up the children during the storm of suffering. The “storm” is a metaphor for the revolution against Spain, while the “sun of anger” recalls the image of flame and heat that accompanies the Katipunan’s spread. These images are juxtaposed with the last two lines: the heart of Filipinas becomes one as the bond between her and Mother Spain is broken. Taken as a whole, the stanza situates the breaking of the utang na loob relationship within the context of an “intense storm,” a time of utter disorder, during which a simultaneous horizontal “ordering” or “coming together” takes place in the Katipunan. This is the “essence” of the war as the beggar captured it.

The stanzas that follow, in both versions, deal with the spread of the Katipunan in Cavite. The event is presented in the image of spreading turmoil by virtue of the prosody of the verse. In the enumeration of place names in stanzas 19–20 and elsewhere, the lines become interrupted more frequently by commas and by the stringing together of place names. The following is an example:

Hocomang Cavite nama, i, nagsiquitoc
Noveleta, i, Cuit, Binasaya, t, Imus,
Pasay at Palayag, Las Piñas unayos
Zapote at Silang at taga Bacood.

The province of Cavite began to stir
Noveleta, Cuit, Binalayan, Imus,
Pasay and Palayag, Las Piñas all got organized
those, too, from Zapote, Silang and Bacood.

Although the tempo of recitation never changes, the breaking up of the lines into elements that follow each other in quick succession does give the effect of speed.

The coming together of men which takes place in a condition of chaos is itself a process of ordering. In stanzas 19 to 21, the various places are said to have “put themselves in order” (*umayos*) as they joined the holocaust or as they “moved into action” (*cumilos* in the gulo. There cannot be unity without disruption. Even the “naughty” (*maliqueito*), a probable reference to bandits and vagabonds, are caught up in the movement which centers on Imus, where the “illustrious” (*buning* or) Aguinaldo resides.

Then comes an enumeration of outstanding leaders who have “emerged” from the gulo:

Na sa gulong yaon lumitao ang ngalan
bayaning Jimenez taka Bagong-Bayan,
saca si Licerio na taongo Montalban
may sari-sarili silang manga caual.

In that gulo, there emerged the names
of patriar Jimenez from Bagong-Bayan
and Licerio native of Montalban
each with his own soldiers.

Saca si Julian sa tapang ay bantog
taung Mariluina na mga mandang loob.
at yaong sargent na taga Sampaloc
may manga caual din silang buced-bucod.
Also Juan renowned for valor
native of Marikina with a beautiful loób,
and that sergeant from Sampaloc
they too had their own soldiers.

Lumiao ang Luis saka si Eusebio
Antoniong bayaning bunying Montenegro
na ang tatlóng lingong ngulong sinabi co
may sari-sariling manga vasallos.

There appeared Luis and Eusebio
the illustrious patriot Antonio Montenegro
these three names I have mentioned
lead their own vassals.

Na sa gulong ito siyang pagsasanghal
nang tanga Malihay na Pio del Pilar,
ito, pinuno rin na maruming caual
na natatulungan sa cacastilaan. (23–26)

In this gulo became famous
that Pio del Pilar, native of Malihay
he was also a leader with many soldiers
all poised against the Spaniards.

Many prominent patriots are omitted from this list, while some like “Jimenez”
and “Luis” cannot be identified and are probably local Katipunan chiefs.
Ironically, Julian de la Cruz and Antonio Montenegro are placed practically
side by side. De la Cruz was a brigadier general appointed by the Biak-na-
bato government, while Montenegro never led men in battle and was, in fact,
a prime suspect in the cold-blooded murder of De la Cruz in November 1897.43
The personalities mentioned are not significant in themselves. They are
emptied of meaning in the awit. Being an extension of the previous enumeration
of place names constitutes their “value” in the work. Each patriot is
identified with a particular locality and a particular cluster of followers—a
conventional picture of political leadership in the Philippines. But
strung together in the awit, in the thematic context of chaos and spreading conflagration,
these particularities merge into a whole, the Katipunan. Thus, the very
form and recitation of the awit conveys the meaning of unity.

Soon thereafter, the storm motif is reiterated, with gulo being substituted
for unos:

Na ang gulong yanon na lumalagablab
matay mang pugawin di maampat-ampat. (29)
The gulo that was raging like wild fire
could not be controlled, despite all efforts.

Reiterating the theme at this point signals the beginning of the narrative of
armed confrontations between Katipuneros and Spaniards (including their
native allies). Events are clearly situated in a context of gulo, of a disruptive
momentum seemingly fed by superhuman forces. In stanza 30, General
Blanco in panic sends a letter to the Queen of Spain announcing merely that
“in the present gulo a multitude of people cannot get along well.” Viewed
from the Spanish side, the phenomenon is pure disruption, the breaking of
“traditional” ties, a movement of the Tagalogs away from the previous
center—Spain. From Blanco’s standpoint, people can’t seem to get along with
each other. But from the Katipunan’s standpoint, the people “have organized
themselves” (nagsasayo). Blanco, the “renowned general,” and the “honorable
Queen” are not objects of hatred or disdain in the awit. Rather, they play
necessary roles in the unfolding of the themes of chaos, separation, unity, and
power.

The Queen of Spain responds by sending a contingent of around fifty
thousand men to reinforce Blanco’s troops:

Isinabog nitong bayan ng general
sa madiang hukuma at, manga banyan-banyan,
nang sa Katipunan sila i matanunang
di na tinigulan ang pagpapatawan.

These men were set loose by the famed general
throughout the provinces and towns,
when they were sighted by the Katipunan
a never-ending holocaust took place.

Maguming saró gabí, ulang bigong quilos
manga cazadores parang sinaasalot,
halo ná, ang tusong manga taga Imus
castilang pinatay ay catatoc-tatoc. (31–32)

Day or night, no action ever failed
a plague seemed to strike the Spanish troops
the people of Imus, in particular,
killed an awesome number of Spaniards.

Instead of voicing out triumph, the awit, referring to the number of
Spaniards slaughtered by the people of Imus, finds the effects of the
Katipunan’s power frightening. The image of the plague devastating the
cazadores (lit., “hunters”) corresponds to the destructive aspect of the flame
raging beyond the control of the human will.

---
43. Juan Aguilà to the Director of War, Sampaloc, 25 October 1898 (Taylor, Philippine
News of the massacre is communicated to Blanco as the fact that "the gulo cannot be set in order" (35). He responds to the situation by ordering his troops to initiate a siege of Imus, the capital. In addition, the Spanish naval squadron in Manila Bay bombards the town. During several months of continuous bombardment, however, the cannon shells and bullets aimed at Imus "only bury themselves in the sand" (35). There does not seem to be a human explanation for this; a mysterious force seems to have guided the missiles to their harmless graves. The Spaniards neither wish to take Imus by deceit (dayaing macupoit) nor overrun the town's fortifications and trenches, because they are afraid (natatacot). In stanza 70, a tiny band of thirty-eight Katipuneros causes a hundred well-armed troops to flee by simply lighting firecrackers. The cazadores have not noticed that the Katipunan band has only six rifles; it is the sound of the firecrackers that portends disaster.

One of the charges filed against Bonifacio during the 1897 power struggle in Cavite was that he "was bribed by the friars in order to establish a Katipunan and launch the Filipinos in a war without arms against the well-armed Spanish government." Unless one accepts the friar's view that the Katipunan was a criminal organization, the charge is laughable. Who would believe the friars' perfidy? In stanza 61, the friars are afraid that the Katipunan will become a "nation" (niunong) and "clout" (dilang) against the Spanish. The friars and the Spanish are a mere "collection" (ningting) of "ballet" (karat) and "stumbling" (kapag) in an attempt to show the friars that the Katipunan is nothing but a bunch of "dancing" (sangit) and "stumbling" (kapag) that will never be a true threat.

In stanza 70, the Katipunan leaders are not surprised by the friars' view that the Katipunan is nothing but a "dancing" and "stumbling" that will never be a true threat. They are confident that the Katipunan will continue to grow and will eventually be a true threat to the Spanish. The friars, on the other hand, are afraid that the Katipunan will grow and become a true threat to the Spanish. They are afraid that the Katipunan will become a "nation" (niunong) and "clout" (dilang) against the Spanish, and they are afraid that the Katipunan will become a true threat to the Spanish.

Clearly, the Katipunan strength is not in armed might but in the invincible power generated by the people's unity, a power symbolized by the rays of the sun or a triangle in Katipunan flags and seals.

Realizing that armed might alone will not cause the Katipunan to budge, the Spaniards resort to deceit (dayaing), the particulars of which are not stated. They cannot win this way, however, because Emilio Aguinaldo has maganda lang isip, a phrase which literally means "a good (or beautiful) mind." In stanza 15, Bonifacio is said to have "intelligence." In stanza 47, the qualities that render Katipunan leaders immune from deceptive plots are taping (valor) and diunong (knowledge). At the outset, the awit's conception of true knowledge must be distinguished from the knowledge acquired through formal education, which is associated with being ilustrado. In the language of the Katipunan, a distinction is made between the perception of ningting or "glittering," empty externals, and true knowledge that sees the reality of things because liwanag permeates the mind. In other words, true knowledge is associated with a state of being or loob permeated by liwanag. This concept is fundamental in the pasyon: the pharisées and pinunong bayan disdainfully refer to Christ and his disciples as poor, humble, and uneducated, but there is not doubt as to who have "good minds." In chapter 2, we pointed out that in Apolinario de la Cruz's definition, a "good mind" is that which sees the relationship between "suffering" and the attainment of a "good union of men." "Knowing" implies a loob that maintains its equilibrium in the face of threats or pressures to abandon its commitment to a cause. Apolinario de la Cruz thus provides the explanation for the awit's conjoining of "valor" and "knowledge" as qualities that frustrate the enemy's deceptive plots.

In stanza 42, the Spaniards are described as being in an "oppressive" situation. General Blanco's "deep sadness" renders him practically ill. We have come to a point in the awit where the "enemy" is portrayed in practically the same terms as the principals who suffered under the friars. Blanco's sorrow is intended to evoke compassion, pity for the innocent, although he is the commanding general of the Spanish forces. But in a sense he is innocent.

44. Agoncillo, Revolt of the Masses, p. 238. The complaints received by Aguinaldo regarding Bonifacio's behavior, says Agoncillo (ibid.), "were probably not true but nonetheless believed in by the majority." It should be added that the rumor campaign waged by the anti-Bonifacio principals was responsible for this accusation.

The force of the Katipunan belongs to an order against which armed opposition from a foreign enemy is powerless. The foreigners can be pitied because they are not, and have never been, a real threat.

The real threat comes from within:

Na cun caya lamang na suas-suasan
dahil sa ilongong dito,i, nagisdatal,
at ang macabeong taong salangapang
nangayong matibay sa bunying general. (43)

[Blanco's] sadness was alleviated
only by the timely arrival of Ilonggos
and Macabebes, roguish people
who made a firm pledge to the illustrious general.

For the first time in the awit, an enemy of the Katipunan is morally condemned.
The "roguish" traitors promise to overrun Imus and capture Aguinaldo alive.
Blanco even orders an iron cage built. But the plot fails:

Hindi rin naganap binanta sa loób
nitong maniliilo na may asal hayop,
ang pinagnasa,i, niligtas nang Dios
at itong nagnasa buhay ang nanaposa. (46)

The threats from the loób
of these traitors, beastly characters
were nevertheless frustrated,
the intended victim was saved by God
and the plotters' lives cut short.

The Macabebes cannot be placed on the same plane as the cazadores or even friars. Moral condemnation and death are their due. For if power comes from the coming together of men in the Katipunan, traitors weaken this power by subverting the whole. The Macabebes, and not the Ilonggos, are singled out because the Kapampangans in later stanzas are considered participants in the Katipunan phenomenon. The punishment of death accords the traitors
is even more significant when contrasted with the outcome of events in the preceding episode. There, "the Spanish leaders, soldiers and friar-curates are not killed, but taken captive" (41). This outcome, says the awit, is what makes the battle "astonishing" (catatunachtsa). But why should traitors die, if Spanish lives can be spared? The answer lies in stanza 47:

Caya ang sinoma,i, di dapat mangahas
na sa catapangan at dunong na ingat,
mahaba,i, maici chapin ma,t, chinelas
ay may manga paung naiqinguing casuad.

That is why no one should dare weak violence
on those who have valor and knowledge;
long or short, clogs or slippers
each has a pair of feet that fits.

The last two lines of the stanza is a common folk saying that warns against envy. The acts of the Macabebes are motivated by envy; that of the cazadores by their loyalty to Spain. The moral condemnation of the Macabebes is reminiscent of the pasyon where envy, always associated with a distorted loób, is the reason given for the behavior of the serpent, Herod, the pharisees and Judas. Envy, which reflects the condition of the traitors' loób, is the very antithesis of damay and love. By underlining the very conditions of Katipunan, the traitors threaten to destroy the whole. Thus, stanza 48 contains this warning to those with evil hearts (buding masamang ugañ):

ang camunting sira cundi laguian tagpi
pagacara-anan rang malaquing guiño.

if a small tear is not repaired
a huge rent will run through.

Actually, this is not so much a warning to traitors as an admission of the fragility of that entity which has come into being.
The Ronquillo version of the awit ends right after the episode of the traitors and the sermon on envy. The final stanza simply reasserts the David-vs.-Goliath quality of the war: sticks and bladed weapons against muskets and cannon.
The main awit version continues after restating the central theme:

Sa bilis nang bangis na di nagtilla
cun mascatumuan ay nangsabanga,
sa arto at gabi tagalog castila
patay ay nagalat magebicabili. (50)

In the unabating gale of ferocity
day and night when Tagalog and Spanish
saw each other they collided
dead were scattered on all sides.

In spite of many reinforcements arriving from Spain, the Tagalogs continue to be invincible because they have tapang (valor). The Queen of Spain is cast in grief. She finally sends to Pilipinas the very "prop" of Spain—General Polavieja. The Spanish general appears at the head of a formidable Spanish contingent, known for their "hardened bodies," expertise, courage, and daring. They are awaited in the "field of death" by Aguinaldo, who is also famous for tapang (53–54).
The sequence of events after the retreat of the Spanish generals practically destroys the Spanish strategy.

Not a few among those accosted by Ennio and Nappo were retreating Spaniards, who were permitted to carry off their property, and even to refresh themselves at the wells. The Spaniards tried to escape by turning the field of the battle, but the French troops ranged on either side, and made an attack on them. 

The French, who had been waiting for this moment, gave the signal, and the Spaniards were routed. The French pursued them in great disorder, and many were taken prisoner. The battle was a complete victory for the French, who added to their reputation as a brave and victorious army. 

The French troops then advanced to the village of Bannockburn, where they encountered a strong body of Spanish troops, who were entrenched in a strong position. The French attack wasrepulsed with great loss, and the French troops retreated in disorder. 

The French general, who had been wounded in the battle, was taken prisoner by the Spanish troops. The French army was in great confusion, and it was feared that it would be entirely destroyed. 

The Spanish general, who had been defeated in the battle, retreated with his army to the village of Montmartre, where he was joined by a large body of Spanish troops, who had been detached from the main army. The Spanish troops then advanced to the village of Bannockburn, where they encountered the French troops, who were陣方を退じる。但し、この敗北は、フランス軍にとっては大失敗であり、その全軍が破壊される懸念が生じた。フランス総督、彼が戦傷を負ったことで、フランス軍は大混乱し、完全に破壊される危機に瀕した。

フランス総督は、戦場から撤退した際に、フランス軍は降伏を余儀なくされた。フランス軍は破壊され、その全軍が破壊される懸念が生じた。フランス総督は、彼が戦傷を負ったことで、フランス軍は大混乱し、完全に破壊される危機に瀕した。

フランス総督は、戦場から撤退した際に、フランス軍は降伏を余儀なくされた。フランス軍は破壊され、その全軍が破壊される懸念が生じた。フランス総督は、彼が戦傷を負ったことで、フランス軍は大混乱し、完全に破壊される危機に瀕した。
The actual reason for the transfer to Biak-na-bato was Primo de Rivera’s spirited campaign against the Katipunan, forcing Aguinaldo to transfer his headquarters to different vague locations until he established himself in the secure foothills of southern Bulacan province. Mabini views the retreat from Cavite as a result of Bonifacio’s execution, which had sapped the morale of the Magdiwang forces, aggravating the cleavage within the Katipunan until the Spaniards were able to harass Aguinaldo effectively. Why does the awit refuse to grapple with these events? This can only be explained by the fact that the awit’s real concern is not the reconstruction of events but the articulation of meaning. The Katipunan is still seen as a whole, the events are shaped in order to highlight or bring into focus the meaningful aspects of this “whole.” For example, in the stanzas that follow, the awit describes the cazadores’ delight at having occupied Katipunan territory. But the point is continually emphasized that “the Spaniards came upon so much land/ without encountering people.” In stanza 64, several places are enumerated, but the reason these were taken, was that “the foe had gone.” Stanza 66 describes the victory celebrations:

Ang viva España, i, magcabi-cabila
ualong igui i naman tungog rang campana,
ibisandaling nanalo sa digma
Panasalang yato, i, kalaban sa lupa.

Viva España was heard on all sides amidst the endless ringing of church bells they were proclaiming they won the war a victory gained from battling the land.

By elaborating upon the emptiness of the Spanish victory a statement is made about the nature of the Katipunan. It is the union of men rather than expanse of territory that counts; the Spanish capture of some towns has made no dent in the “whole.” There is also an implicit contrast between the boisterous and noisy Spanish celebrations, which signify “glitter,” and the images of chaos and wild fire which are the manifestations of real victory.

After mentioning a few skirmishes that took place in the localities adjoining Manila, including Antonio Montenegro’s incredible death in the battle of Barranca, the awit returns to the subject of the Katipunan in Biak-na-bato. Primo de Rivera is “in such great sorrow,”

Ang cahulahan, i, di na mamasucool
tanang Katipunan ngaca-ayon ayon,
baga ma, i, mara ming umang na paiibong
di na masisilo nila, i, macucidong. (75)

The reason being that the whole Katipunan moving in unison could not be cornered, all the traps and snares laid out failed to catch it.

We are reminded, in this stanza, of Apolinario de la Cruz’s organic conception of unity: the cofradies are the leaves of a single tree; they should also move “as one body” (parang yung catu-an). Similarly the Katipunan is so unified that it moves like an agile and wily creature, evading all traps and snares.

Having again failed militarily to stamp out the Katipunan, the Spaniards resort to deceit, or dava, once more. Primo de Rivera gives the leaders and men of the Katipunan “passes to enter the towns” (76). His objective is to attract the Katipunan away from the parang (countryside) into towns largely controlled by the Spaniards and their principals allies. Just as in the sequels to Blanco’s and Polavieja’s fruitless offensives, the awit probes into the nature of the Katipunan entity by narrating the Spanish efforts to subvert it from within. The “devious attempt” to attract Katipuneros by means of “passes” falls but Primo de Rivera has another plan: “to win over the leaders through words (ang tanang punuto, i, cuwain sa salita). He sends his nephew and the ilustrado Pedro Paterno, “who in reality was like an envoy” of Spain, to talk to Aguinaldo:

Na anim na buan ang hininga ning taning
na may manga saging natala sa papel,
sa pinag-usapang uiang magagalang
si guinoon Emilio nanam ay umamin. (75)

A six-month truce was requested in a treaty signed by witnesses, to the fine language of the agreement Don Emilio for his part acquiesced.

Immediately, the awit points to the motive of the Spaniards to deceive the Tagalogs by taking advantage of the respite to build trenches (80). It is implied that Aguinaldo has failed to see through the ruse. That is why, for the first time in the awit, the Katipunan itself is the party in grief. The image of wholeness breaks down as some leaders, obeying the terms of the truce, return home:

Nang-aalis dito ang pinunong iba
at ang mga uhang alaga sa dusa,
tau hang castilla, i, lubos na umasa
na ang Katipunan, malicmo nila. (81)

Some of the leaders left this place and those who remained were cast in grief, to the delight of the Spaniards who hoped finally to dismantle the Katipunan.
The Katipunan’s sadness is not really the consequence of Spanish action. It follows Aguinaldo’s acceptance of the truce which can in turn be attributed to a weakness of loob that enabled it to be influenced by “fine language” (uiicang magagaling). The overpowering role of language, especially at the hands of manipulators, continually crops up in documents related to popular politics. To understand folk perceptions of politics, it is useful to dig into the associations of common terms, like wika-wika (word play). In the pasyon, wika has the power to entice individuals to commit wrongdoing. Eve, for example, who is said to have a “weak mind” (mabinang isip), succumbs immediately upon hearing the serpent’s wika (9:4). Later, she makes the excuse before God that the serpent “tricked” her, “seduced” her, and “played around with words” (nag uica-uica) (9:16). The Pharisees use the same argument in condemning Jesus. Because the followers of Jesus are allegedly “people of weak loob” (11:13), they have succumbed to his “deceitful” teachings which are nothing but “a manipulation of language” (gatang uica-uica) (99:7). The point is that succumbing to wika-wika, implying failure to see the truth behind the appealing sounds of words, is a sign of a weak mind or a weak loob—a state of darkness. The awit, then, implicitly chides Aguinaldo in terms of a popular criterion of judgment. As if to stress the importance of this turn of events, Aguinaldo is no longer mentioned in the awit even though it continues for another forty-three stanzas.

Historically, Emilio Aguinaldo signed not merely a six-month truce but the so-called Pact of Biak-na-bato which called for the surrender of rebel arms in exchange for a huge sum of money to be divided among the leaders. The awit, however, cannot possibly speak in terms of a “pact” and reconciliation with Spain, from whom the separation of Filipinas is total. After the disruption of the universe that bound Spain and Filipinas together, the various disjointed elements within Filipinas came together to form a new condition of wholeness, in a process that produced heat and energy. Mentioning Aguinaldo’s signing of a pact with Spain would contradict the awit’s basic conception. Actually, Aguinaldo himself broke the terms of the pact when he returned from exile in May 1898, six months after the pact’s signing, to resume Katipunan activity. To take this into account, the awit asserts that a six-month truce (not pact) was negotiated. Thus, when the gulo breaks out again, it is simply a continuation of the phenomenon of disruption after a temporary lull:

Hindi rin nangyari sa laba,i, madaig
ang tanang tagalog mahiguit sa ganid,
Primo de Rivera,i, naghago ng isip
na ipinasangsaang hahat na rang pasas.

Even the truce did not help to subdue
the Tagalog people more ferocious than beasts,
Primo de Rivera changed his mind
and had all the passes confiscated.

Sa palad niya ay hilong nagdoop
yang cagalan na nag tanang tagalog,
madiang bayan-bayan pilot na pinasoc
at ang cazadores canilang linusob.

(82-83)

At this turn of events, the anger of the Tagalogs
all the more burst into flames,
all the towns were forcibly entered
and the Spanish positions were stormed.

in the awit’s view, the resurgence has nothing to do with Aguinaldo’s return from Hongkong to direct the struggle. The reason why Aguinaldo is ignored has been hinted at already. But the awit intends not necessarily to downgrade the man. In terms of its logic, Aguinaldo breaks off from the whole when he succumbs to the “fine language” of the truce negotiators. The leader of the “revolution” is not necessarily a component of the “Katipunan” whose nature the awit articulates. It is Primo de Rivera’s wrong move, not Aguinaldo’s return, that “ignites” the Katipunan, and leads the awit to recall the prosodic theme:

Silacbo rang init mahiguit sa quidlat
yang carahamang di maewat-awat (86)

Burst of heat more powerful than lightning
cannot be reduced by withdrawing fuel.

Primo de Rivera is “unable to stop the gloomy holocaust” (84). He parts from the scene and is replaced by General Agustin, who “likewise failed to turn the gulo into peace / or put a stop to the holocaust” (85). To add to the misery of the Spaniards, the Americans “burst forth in abundance” in Manila Bay (86):

Dito sa nanyari sa calunos-lunos
general Augustin ay naghihimitoc,
ang cadahalana,i, bagay sa tagalog
sa anyaya niya,i, ayao pahihimukad. (87)

In the wake of these pitiful events
General Augustin cried in sorrow
for the Tagalogs
would not respond to his appeal.

The “appeal” corresponds to Spain’s actual attempt, as American warships prepared to meet the inferior Spanish Fleet in Manila Bay, to induce the Filipinos to fight on the side of “Mother Spain.” The attempt failed as Aguinaldo, having arrived from Hongkong on an American warship, announced a resumption of the revolution. The awit chooses to focus upon the tears of General Agustin for they reflect Mother Spain’s feelings of loss and
perhaps regret for having caused her daughter’s final departure. This type of scene is commonly found in Tagalog popular literature, and in daily life as well.

Since nothing further can be done, General Agustin orders the cazadores in the provinces to withdraw to the Manila district. Thus, they become “scattered” all over the place, occupying every street and alley. In stanzas 89–93, various localities in Manila and its environs are enumerated in a manner reminiscent of previous stanzas. But while the enumeration of Katipunan towns always takes place in the context of the image of a storm or conflagration that breaks boundaries, in the case of the cazadores it is an enumeration of points within a limited space. “Even the famous cemetery of Binundok” is occupied (92). The number of cazadores being crammed into Manila is termed “frightening” (91). But is this the terror that strikes one who is confronted with an uncontrollable force? As we shall see later, Manila is really empty of power and offers no resistance.

The awit continues:

Baybay ‘ang Maynila magpahangang loob
Pauang cazadores ang naguiguing tanod,
Na mading nararaan ang tanang tagalog
Na di mangyaring lumabas pumasoc.

Manila’s perimeter as well as interior teemed with cazadores standing guard all the Tagalogs were given warning that entering or leaving the city was forbidden.

Sa palasad niton, gumalaw ang lahat,
Malabot, Obando bayang aluhalas,
Puloon, Meycauayan, Marilao at Angat,
Sa paggapatay ng lahat, nagagayac.

Upon this turn of events, all started to move, Malabon and Obando, that spacious town, Pulo and Meycauayan, Marilao and Angat they readied themselves for the holocaust.

The enumeration of places and outstanding patriots that moved into action continues for the next twenty-four stanzas, surpassing in scale all previous enumerations. Starting from places just north of Manila, the storm or conflagration moves northeast across Bulacan to another Tagalog province, Nueva Ecija. It swings around, sweeps the towns of Pampanga (except Macabebe, where the “traitors” hail from), across more Bulacan towns, descends through Morong province east of Manila and hits Laguna province in southern Luzon. Laguna is swept completely: “the terrifying Katipunan spread even up the mountains” (105). The Katipunan touches another Tagalog province to the east—Tayabas. The unification of the towns of Batangas, south of Laguna, completes the Katipunan sweep and the establishment of its new boundaries.

There is more to the awit than the listing down of those towns that joined the revolution or the glorification of heroes. More important, and consistent with what has been said so far, is what it says about the nature of “coming together” in the Katipunan. The latter part of the awit is an expression of a final burst of power. Katipunan activity had previously been limited to Manila, Cavite, and southern Bulacan. With the withdrawal of cazadores from the provinces, the final step in the process of total separation from Mother Spain, a final burst of energy takes place as the Katipunan breaks its previous boundaries.

The first line of stanza 104 states succinctly the nature of the events taking place: sa gulong ‘to nang paggacausa (in this gulo of becoming one). In the enumeration of places and people, it is repeatedly stated that they have prepared for the holocaust and are ready to die. Unification takes place as each element in the whole delineated by the path of the storm participates in the common struggle. Individual towns do not confront the enemy alone; they are first joined together with others and ultimately with the whole. For example, in stanza 98, one Tagalog and nine Pampangan towns are nalancaup, or “joined together into a whole.” Elements of two different ethnic groups are thus caught up in the speed of enumeration; the verse itself becomes a medium for “coming together.” In stanza 101, four Bulacan towns are nagcalagrip-naugrip, “enclosed together.” As a result of their unification, which is said to take place “in the gulo,” they are able to isolate the Macabebe and their Spanish allies who are described as “trapped” and “compressed in a corner.” We recall that this is precisely what Primo de Rivera had tried and failed to do to the Katipunan because of the latter’s swift, unified movement.

The awit also illustrates, for the last time, the powerful and terrifying force that is generated by unity:

Lahat nang hocoma, nagcagubad-sunod
Sa paggapatay lahat, nagpayos,
lalot, un ang hayan nila ang pinasoc
Liting cazadores parang sinalador. (117)

All the provinces, one after the other were readied and ordered as they faced the holocaust, whenever the Spanish-held towns were entered the cazadores seemed to be hit by a plague.

In Batangas, the Katipunan that has “come to order” is said to be calatoc-tacot, “most frightening.” In Laguna, the Spanish commander Alberti, who is previously credited with a “serene loob” (106), breaks down before the Katipunan onrush:

Nang lumagamp na ang gulong nanabog
Nilong CATIPUNAN sa tapang ng bantog,
coronel Alberti sa malaquilin tacot
Sumuco na siya sa tanang calamos. (111)
At the height of the grito
sparked by the Catipunan famed for valor
Colonel Alberti in great fear
to all his opponents surrendered.

As the lengthy enumeration concludes, focus shifts to the cazadores concentrated in Manila. The final episode of the war against Spain sees the Spaniards being dealt the final blow by the Americans:

Sa uulng magsasang ang cacastilaaan
sa americano nang pasiquilabas,
nalis si Augusting huyag na general
nol na Espaha, sa ang mando, intusan.

The Spaniards having failed repeatedly
to turn the tide of battle against the Americans,
the famed General Augustin
abandoned his command and returned to Spain.

General Jaúdenes ang siyang nagdulot
ng capangranghan dahil sa tacos,
anomang ang gauin di macapamutlos sa yaman st capal ng americanos.

General Jaúdenes, overcome by fear
unleashed all his power,
but whatever he did was useless
against the wealth and numbers of the Americans.

The narration of the war ends here. Spain is pushed out of the scene not by her former children but by the Americans, whose power rests upon "wealth" and "numbers." Spain was a necessary presence in the process of "becoming one" as her children, the Filipinos, came into their own and defined their world in Katipunan terms. Now, Spain's departure points to a new situation for the Katipunan. In the final stanza, the awit abruptly reveals its standpoint in time—we find the "I" of the awit talking about the "youngest child" who is in hardship:

Sucat hanggang dito kayo na ang siyang
lumingap sa bunsong na sa cahirapan,
sila ang panganay bilang mag-aatang
sa susunungin cung mang cahihian.

Enough to this point, now you be the ones
to bring care and compassion to the youngest child in trouble;
these are the first-born who will lift to my head
the shame I will bear.

The published awit carries no date, but the statement "youngest child in trouble" indicates that the awit was first composed during the Filipino-American War. This work belongs to an order different from what the awit has narrated—no longer a separation from Mother Spain and a recovery of wholeness in the Katipunan, but a war in which the Katipunan's sacred ideals and moving spirit are threatened with extinction. On 7 August 1898, a month after the proclamation of the republic at Malolos, not long after the proclamation of independence at Kuwait, President Aguinaldo declared that "there is no Katipunan today because the entire Philippines, our most dear mother country, is the true Katipunan in which all her sons are united and agreed in one desire and one wish, that is, to rescue the mother country which groans in terror." Could the "nation," however, be the Katipunan if it was merely an abstract entity then led by ilustrados who had either repudiated or never experienced "katipunan" (supreme union)? Moreover, the Americans are said to have "wealth" which, to paraphrase the pasyon, has the power to "seduce" the weak of loob. The "I" of the awit seems to be situated at the point in time when the ilustrados were succumbing to the "fine language" of the Americans. This historical context is important in bringing out the significance of the final stanza and its relationship to the rest of the awit. Reflecting historical circumstances, a break with the "I" of the awit's past is signified by the sudden shift in tense (i.e., from past to present/future) and the distinction made between "youngest child" and "first born." The "youngest child" represents the revolutionaries then engaged in a difficult struggle against the Americans, the "first born" are the patriots who emerged during the war against Spain (usually referred to in Tagalog sources as the "first war"). In talking about her offspring, the "I" of the awit suggests that she is Mother Country (Nang Bayan) herself. The "I" must surely be a feminine person since, in the last line, she says she will carry her burden on her head (rather than shoulder), following the custom of native women. The main point of the final stanza is that the condition of unity that the awit has described no longer exists in the present. In the first place, Mother Country appeals for "care and compassion" for her youngest child, implying that there is at present a lack or absence of these essential aspects of the Katipunan mode of struggle. Secondly, Mother Country talks about the "shame" (kahihayan) that she will bear. Now biya, the stem of kahihayan, is a category of experience which among several things, denotes the individual's sensitivity to his mode of relating to others. A person without biya is also one whose loob is hard as rock—a common Tagalog saying—and therefore has no damay or caring. A situation is kabiya-biya (shameful) when an individual fails to respond to or

deliberately ignores the "other" who shows him love, caring, or simply hospitality. A few passages from the pasyon episode of Peter's denial of Jesus illustrates this idea:

Tiniguan na si Pedro nitong mamong Maestro cahi-hiya totok, sintang hindi mamapacano at hinayang sa cato.

Para nang unica niya niyong pagtigil nang mata ay aba Pedro ay aban, dl mo ako naquiqualala ay naquiqualala quita?

This gentle teacher fixed his gaze on Peter a truly shameful situation, he had such immeasurable love and regret for his close friend.

As if he was saying by the look of his eyes,

Alas, Peter, alas

why do you not recognize me when I recognize you fully?

(104:5-6)

The appearance in the awit of the plural of kabahiyan, meaning "shameful things or events," implies a preoccupation with the social rather than the purely political and military dimensions of the Filipino-American War. To be specific, the awit calls the attention of the audience to "shameful events" which can only mean certain people's acting with disregard for the social whole represented by Mother Country. Bonifacio once said that all he needed in the Katipunan were people with love for Mother Country and hiya, for "only a person with such virtues can devote his whole life and love so that Mother Country may be given secure foundation." Hiya, therefore, is one of the conditions of katipunan or unity; the final episode of the awit reveals that this has weakened or ceased to exist.

The awit ends in a spirit of hope. Just as, in the literature of the 1896 Katipunan, the "Lost Eden" of precolonial days will be regained when there is damay and the people interpret the struggle as a redemptive experience, so does Mother Country's gesture of bearing the kakahiyan on her head, which signifies her pasyon, herald a better future for her "youngest sons in trouble." Perhaps it is significant that her pasyon is initiated — i.e., the burden is raised to her head — by her "first-born." Since the latter represents the patriots of the "first war," it can be concluded that the awit's narration of their experiences is a way of pulling them back to the present so that the audience will understand why the struggle must go on. The awit itself, as it is recited or sung, will evoke the initial conditions for the pasyon to begin.

From the analysis of a Katipunan awit, we have shown how the struggle for independence was perceived in terms of the breaking of the relationship with Mother Spain, the chaos that ensued, and the release of tremendous power and energy from the masses, energy which was channeled by the Katipunan toward the reordering and unification of the masses under their true mother—Mother Filipinas. The awit reveals that during the later republican period and the war with the United States, the experience of unity through struggle was perceived, in some quarters, to be lost. The author of the awit attempted to relive it through the form and content of his work, so that anyone who heard the awit recited or sung could somehow experience that loss in himself through a juxtaposition of the poetic experience with the events of his time. Thus, there could be meaning and purpose in the continuing struggle.

During the republican period (1898-1900), katinpons continued to exist in some towns and rural areas; in most cases they simply pledged their allegiance to the republic. Generally, however, the ilustrados of the republic sensed in the continued existence of katinpons a potential threat to the atmosphere of stability and internal order that they wished to maintain. Only when the republican army had suffered defeat after defeat, and Aguinaldo himself was fleeing for his life in north-central Luzon, did the katinpons once more come to the forefront as the "approved" mode of organization for guerrilla warfare. According to Agoncillo, Aguinaldo himself, in his hideouts in the north, "came to realize that only the masses could be depended upon. It was a desperate hope, but even so he tried his best to repair the damage by recreating Bonifacio's Katipunan, the plebeian society which gave form and substance to the Filipino people's struggle for freedom and independence." But Aguinaldo did not "recreate" the Katipunan in 1900; he merely acknowledged that the Katipunan mode more effectively articulated mass aspirations. Reorganizing the republican forces in 1901, Miguel Malvar, as we shall see, returned to basic Katipunan appeals in reviving the spirit of 1896. Upon his surrender in 1902, the armed struggle for independence was waged almost solely by the Katipunan and similar peasant societies.

In a Katipunan initiation document of 1900, the following statement from the leader's speech not only expresses what the Katipunan of 1896 meant to those who would continue the struggle in the twentieth century, but in the image of the beacon guiding a ship through stormy seas, recalls what Apolinario de la Cruz once said to the disoriented cofrades in 1841:

It is indisputable that the Katipunan Society was the beacon which guided us to the shores of liberty after four centuries of navigation in the sea of slavery, and likewise was the light which illuminated the path traced out by Divine Providence, along which Filipinos, our dear country, took such gigantic steps placing her sons on the road to glory, and bringing with it that nectar of independence which we so ardently desire.

48. Kasandugo (pseud.), "Ang Katipunan" (manuscript, n.d. PNL), p. 1. Such words of Bonifacio, says Kasandugo, arc "up to now remembered by veterans of the Katipunan."

49. Teodora A. Agoncillo, Malolos, the Crisis of the Republic (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1950), pp. 688-69.

50. Katipunan initiation document (in translation) January 1900 (P1R-SD55-7); a portion of this document is in Taylor, Philippine Insurrection, vol. 1, pp. 219-20.