Clash of Spirits

THE HISTORY OF POWER AND SUGAR PLANTER HEGEMONY ON A VISAYAN ISLAND

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Cockfights and *Engkantos*:
Gambling on Submission and Resistance

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**Spiritual Conquest and Colonial Enchant ment**

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

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

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

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

Demetrio adds:

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

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

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

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

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

That Spanish preternatural beings existed would not have been at all odd to the islanders. For if the friars who had boldly set foot on their soil were authentically human, they too, like the natives, would have possessed *dungan,* and they too would have come from a place filled with spirit-beings that mattered in the Spaniards' lives. What was even more certain was that those beings were no longer confined to wherever those white men originally came from, but were actual companions in the men's journeying. How else could they have subdued the best native warriors—and, by implication, the native deities—with a never-before experienced cosmic force? Confronted by a superior power, the islanders
grasped the meaning of colonial conquest in terms of the Spaniards’ alliance with their spirit-world. The main link to that newly present yet unseen realm was the priest, curiously a male, dressed in a drab, dark cassock.

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

The multiplicity of beings that inhabited what I believe the natives conceived of as the Spanish spirit-world, including the numerous *santos* and *santas* (saints), was not inconsistent with the structure of native cosmology, which accommodated the alien spirits in their respective niches in the cosmic order. As Alicia Magos’ (1992, 51–52) indispensable reconstruction of the contemporary shamanist worldview in Antique suggests, preconquest reality was hierarchically divided into seven strata, each of which had its distinctive territorial occupants, a belief system the islanders shared with other parts of the ancient “Hindu world.” Based on the cosmological map redrawn by Magos, the various layers can be seen as having been infiltrated by a host of Hispanic spirit-beings. For instance, the fourth layer, the earth’s surface, is said to be inhabited by invisible terrestrial beings in direct contact with human beings. Along
with indigenous preternatural creatures such as the aswang, tikbalang, kama-kama, sigben, and so on, can be found the Spanish engkanto, kapre, murro, and so on. In the sixth layer located at the “top” of the earth dwell the natives’ ancestors (kapapuan), as well as the Catholic saints and angels, an uncanny classification that combined “real” people who had achieved marvelous deeds in the Spaniards’ distant past with the spiritually favored “real” people in the islanders’ past.

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

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

The “golden age” of the missionary enterprise in Filipinas also coincided with the “golden age” of Catholicism in Spain in the second half of the sixteenth century, when piety encompassed all of human existence. Disruptions of everyday life immediately provoked a religious response: “floods or prolonged droughts, invasions of locusts, frosts, food shortages, epidemics, all evoked a cycle of processions and prayers, conjuratory or expiatory ceremonies which the end of the public calamity transformed into expressions of thanksgiving” (Bennassar 1979, 70). Religious devotion “assumed a propitiatory nature” (Defourneaux 1970,
118) closely resembling the indio’s religious practice. During this golden period the Marian cult began to flourish, a faith that made the Spanish belief system, with its emphasis on female power, more intimately proximate to the native worldview.

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

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

Overall, the islands claimed by Spain became the meeting point for two religious systems that were fundamentally alike. Sharing with the natives the same universe of discourse, the European clergy could easily locate the native religion in direct cognitive opposition to their Catholicism. The Spaniards’ sensitivity to religious difference made it possible for the inventory of native beliefs and practices to be recorded in colo-
nial chronicles and for these to be branded not merely as superstition but as creditable works of the devil.

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

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

Friar Power and the Submission of the Indio

As the friars went about their mission work, they projected the image of shamans whose magical ensemble included the Catholic sacraments, which served as powerful intercessory devices with the spiritual realm. In the late sixteenth century, countless missionaries extolled baptism as a most efficacious remedy for leprosy and other afflictions, as indicated by reports from Leyte, Samar, and Negros; baptism was also employed to revive a comatose man in Butuan (Chirino 1969, 367, 388–389, 396–397, 440, 487). Extreme unction cured an old woman and penance a sick man in Cebu, while confession stilled the “death rattle” of a woman in Negros (385, 446). The Jesuit Pedro Chirino made the happy report that “Many were cured of serious illnesses after receiving the Holy Sacraments, so that they all asked for them persistently and received them most devoutly” (355).

The friars’ paraphernalia were transformed into inherently potent
objects. Catholic icons, medallions, rosaries, scapulars, the cross, and water blessed by the priest became novel media for the transference of
power from the spiritual to the physical domain. As in Spain, a reliquary
 crucifix warded off a swarm of locusts in Luzon (Chirino 1969, 346–
347; Christian 1981, 184). Holy water became known as a medicine, and
the rapid spread of its popularity overshadowed the native curative prac-
tice of drinking water from a place where an idol had been dipped
(Cloquet 1906, 296). In Bohol, those who drank holy water were spared
from death in an epidemic that caused “pains in the head and stomach”
(Chirino 1969, 333). From Negros, Cebu, and Bohol, reports suggested
that holy water was also an effective remedy when sprinkled on or ap-

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

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

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

The friars’ dungan were tested and their strength confirmed through
their proven ability to appease and subdue the Hispanic spirits that im-
pined upon the native imagination. The friars effected a cure for the wandering disease prompted by the enghanta by using Catholic magical objects. The Tagalog who roamed aimlessly “against his will” was told “to put his trust in the power of the holy Agnus Dei” pendant, which a religious put “round the man’s neck. From that moment on the man felt at peace” (Chirino 1969, 378–379). The Cebuano haunted by “hideous black men” called for a priest, who heard his confession, and “There-upon the man felt very much relieved and recovered his peace of mind” (381). Life for the indio was proving to be inextricably bound up with the Iberian shamans, who had become indispensable to overcoming the physical and emotional ailments and cultural crises precipitated by the spiritual conquest.

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

Working under the instruction that they were to extirpate native beliefs and practices and not to rest until paganism was stamped out (Ortiz 1906, 195), the philistine friars sought to discover the images, implements, and meeting places the indios guarded with secrecy. Whenever indigenous icons were ferreted out, the friars celebrated their success by contemptuously desecrating them, to the bewilderment of the natives, who believed that anyone who committed such acts of sacrilege would perish. In Bohol a missionary awed villagers by touching their anito without dying; furthermore, he spat on the local idols, trampled them, and then had them burned and thrown into the river (L. de Jesus 1904, 384).

Unable to retaliate against the marauding Spanish shamans, local preternatural beings were evidently losing the battle instigated by the friars. In Zambales, “amid the great shouting and lamentations” of the natives, the fathers ordered a servant to fell a venerated bamboo thicket.
the natives thought could not be cut down lest they die (de San Nicolas 1904, 179). On another occasion, a missionary climbed a feared paho tree and gathered its fruits while reciting a Latin chant:

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

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

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

Friar conquest of the indigenous spirit-world also resulted in local spirits becoming benign, or even innocuous (the present-day translation of diwata being simply “fairy”), while the Hispanic spirits assumed the maleficient role of bearers of illness. Demetrio observes that in contemporary beliefs: “Engkantos are known to possess power to inflict diseases: fevers, boils and other skin diseases as result of their curse or Buyag. Without knowing it someone may brush against the invisible engkanto, and suddenly he is slapped in the face or his skull is cracked by a blow” (Demetrio 1968, 138). In agriculture, engkantos have replaced the ancient environmental spirits as those whose favors must be obtained before peasants can proceed to ready the land and harvest the crops; offerings must also be made to the engkantos before timber can be felled from the forest (Demetrio 1970, 364, 378).
By acting as dependable shamans deliberately performing the sacraments as healing rituals, the friars made themselves an integral part of native strategies for coping with life’s vicissitudes. The legitimacy established through Friar Power became the anchor of the Spanish imperial presence. Friar authority also became the basis for the extraction of surplus from the native population. Contrary to a royal edict, the Spanish priests began to charge sacramental fees (Phelan 1959, 63). The fathers were emboldened to reap their material rewards, for they saw that the natives would “bestow esteem, confidence, adoration and anything they own” on “anyone who can furnish [medical remedy] or promise to do so” (Chirino 1969, 300). There was therefore a monetary angle to the friars’ denunciation of the babaylan as frauds.

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

We can take a further cue from the engkanto belief that the human victim is said to disappear into the nether world of the engkanto, there to taste its extraordinary pleasures. With the unfolding of Friar Power, the desire to commune with the friar-qua-shaman, or at least the predisposition to respond positively to the friars’ advances, could be interpreted as the route chosen by natives to penetrate and know the colonizer’s awesome power. But as a mark of separation from all previously meaningful realities the islanders had known, to enter the world of the alien shamans through carnal union meant to disappear and depart from indigenous society. Yet that disappearance, that departure, also signified that the friar’s/engkanto’s victim would be transported into another realm of power, allowing the local maiden and her allies to enter into a special relationship with the regnant order. Her role as broker would be, in a sense, a mere variant of preconquest women’s role as negotiators.
with the spiritual. The fair-skinned offspring of friar–native trysts, today said to be the fusion of *engkanto* and native, also disappeared metaphorically, as the native’s deep-brown skin pigmentation was diluted by Castilian “blood”—causing the Spanish mestizo complexion to be widely admired, even desired, by natives. Friar concubinage, it would appear, became a mechanism for resolving the question of power for an earlier generation of *indios*, but it bore unintended consequences for later generations, who had to wrestle with issues of cultural integrity and identity.

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

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

Not all islanders submitted to colonial rule, however. A number of chiefs and native shamans resisted it. But given the nature of Spanish hegemony, which reinforced, perpetuated, but also altered indigenous cultural constructs, their resistance was ineluctably articulated in religious terms. Despite its failure to overturn the conquest, native resistance persisted, and to a degree subverted, colonial authority and weakened its grip over colonial space. Because of the Iberian rulers’ inability to eliminate this resistance, the natives who overtly submitted to colonial
rule soon found themselves in the middle of a power struggle between two opposing spheres of power—in effect between two conflicting claims to loyalty and identity. As though inflicted by the *engkanto*, the collective native soul (*dungan*) suffered from the disease of not being comfortably lodged and domiciled in the colonial corpus. To the natives, colonialism was a sorcerous enchantment. As though collectively struck by a spell, native society was prompted to wander between two realms of power. The resulting *indio* politics emanated from this tension and ambivalence.

Cultural Entrapment and the Colonial Cockpit

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

Believing in the battle waged by the indigenous spirit-world, native shamans were emboldened to challenge the colonial order.

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

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

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

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

But although many natives chose to flee, many others decided to remain within the ambit of Spanish colonialism and its orbit of power. Leaving a legacy of rural settlement patterns extant today (but not in Negros for reasons to be explained in Chapter 5), some natives moved right into the cabecera, the capital of the parish or town, while numerous
others struck a compromise by settling in hamlets of varying sizes (the visitas, and the even smaller sitios and rancherias), which were widely dispersed but still “bajo de la campana” or within hearing of the church bells.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As a rule, only cocks of equal prowess are matched in any fight, and the opposing center bets are equalized before the fight begins. However, the assumption of parity is reserved for the liminal period, from the matching of fowls and into the fight, during which moment the idea of superiority and hierarchy is both affirmed and disbelieved, only to be confirmed anew after the fight.\(^{18}\) During this liminal period when the birds are believed to have an even fighting chance, one of them is nonetheless invariably perceived as the superior, hence favorite, cock while the other is considered the underdog. Based on contemporary beliefs and practices, it is my conjecture that in the early Spanish period,
regardless of the plumage and hue of the birds in the ring, the language of the ritual game simplified the cocks' colors into either red (pula) or white (puiti), the first referring to the superior bird, the second to the inferior.

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

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

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

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

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

By the nineteenth century, with the routinization of colonial practice as well as the increased monetization of the economy, the earlier color signification appears to have become interchangeable, at least in the Tagalog cockpit. Jose Rizal (1958, 256), for instance, in his great nationalist novel, referred to the white cock as llamado, superior, and the red as dejado, the underdog. In this context, the underdog red's victory became even more emotionally charged and imbued with patriotic fervor: "A wild shouting greets the sentencia (the winner's proclamation), a shouting that is heard all over town, prolonged, uniform, and lasting for some time," so that everyone, including women and children, would know and share in the rejoicing that the underdog had won over the dominant power (259). The noise that burst through the rafters was noted by a Russian visitor in the 1850s, who wrote that "For a foreign spectator it was this uproar that was noteworthy" (Goncharov 1974, 203). Today, despite another transformation of signs, the cheering is always louder when the underdog defeats the favorite. Although social inequalities are accepted as a facet of reality, underdog victories are seen as suggesting that "the poor farmer also has a chance" (Guggenheim 1982, 26), allowing for social catharsis at least in the fictive world of gaming. In the cockpit, history and social structure can be momentarily suspended and phenomenologically forgotten as the players—all males—indulge in an infinite series of counterfactualities that make for pure fantastic entertainment.

In the 1770s, the cockpit began to fall under colonial state regulation and to be administered through licensing mechanisms and rules governing the days and times of play. Despite formal supervision, the meanings generated by the indios in the ritual game were beyond colonial ken and control. It must be noted, however, that it was the Spanish colonial state itself that lent the conceptual framework for the cockpit's system of inversion. For although cockfighting existed prior to colonialism, it was under Spain that the game's unwritten codes were systematized, as the
cockpit's argot would attest: the reading of omens (señal) hidden in the
cock's scales on the leg that might reveal an auspicious sign of baston
(the staff carried by the colonial elite), the regla or “rule” determining
the trend of luck, the logro or odds, the parada or inside bet, the casador
or betting master, the krísto or bookie, the largador or cockhandler, the
asentista or cockpit promoter or manager, the tasador or matchmaker,
the pago or payment by the cockpit management to equalize the center
bets, and the sentenciador (referee) as though the pit were a court of law
where sentence was passed (cf. Anima 1977, 1972; Lansang n.d.).

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

Males as Shamans, Imitation as Resistance

But the colonial cockpit properly belonged to only one sphere, the
sphere of the church bells. Beyond the hearing of the bells, native sha-
mans endeavored to adapt their resistance to the reconfigured social re-
ality. One fundamental feature of this shamanic adjustment pertained to
gender. With spiritual mediumship becoming a contested terrain, the
perceived superiority of Friar Power resulted in the development of na-
tive male shamanism in imitation of the Spanish friarship. As males be-
gan to predominate among local shamans and as the colonizers carved
out an exclusively male public sphere, the overt social role of females
was eclipsed.53 It must be noted, however, that, despite Spanish efforts to
inculcate their sexual mores in the natives, local reformulations of gen-
der remained more egalitarian than in the Mediterranean world (Blanc-
Szanton 1990). Women also persisted in their role as arbiters with the
spiritual, becoming devoted to Catholicism generally and, with little
stigma attached to it, to friar concubinage, in the case of a few native
women.

To resist more effectively, native male shamans began to alter their
practices to put them on a level with the friars. A ritual “invented . . . af-
after the Spaniards had come here” was reportedly concocted in which co-
conut oil and a crocodile’s tooth (the crocodile having become a multi-
valent figure) were consecrated to local spirits, who were invoked to
bestow upon the oil the power to kill (de Loarca 1903, 163). Subse-
quently, native shamans started furtively to steal—imitate—the magical
words used by the Spanish shamans who recited Latin verses to ward off evil spirits or conquer their putative abodes. The appropriation of Latin constituted the babaylan’s decisive riposte to Spanish shamanism.

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

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

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

Indicative of the natives’ desire to augment their potency and intrude into the colonizer’s power domain, the use of Latin in the form of urasyon and anting-anting became widespread among them. Along with indigenous magical objects, shamanic Latin was used to obtain luck and success, as natives negotiated between two power realms and quietly
challenged, even defied, the colonial state. Reversing the magical specialization of the preconquest age, native shamans evidently shared their newfound source of power and resistance with ordinary indios. By the 1730s it was observed that

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

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

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

But preconquest society and culture did not remain insulated, pristine, and unaffected by the colonial epoch. On the contrary, the practices of the natives, even of those who rebelled, and those of the colonizers had become mutually determining. On the one hand, indigenous culture had become indelibly transformed by native imitation and appropriation of friar magic, particularly the shamanic gender switch; even the Hispanic spirits were also transformed into localized entities. On the other hand, the hegemonic rulers made concessions that affected their colonial practice. Gauging from its prevalence today and observations made in the nineteenth century, it would appear that the Spanish priests effectively ignored (or were incapable of monitoring) male circumcision (turi, tuli), despite its initial inclusion among the so-called heathen practices targeted for suppression.\(^{25}\) The colonial rulers also allowed the cockfighting so much loved by the natives to flourish. Apparently, they
even indulged the native male by legislating against the entry of females to the cockpit. In so doing, colonial authority empathized with the native cockfighter and invented and formalized a prohibition without precedent in the Spanish bullfight. Given the interpenetration of cultures and the interlocking alliances that emerged in colonial society, it was not surprising that organized uprisings led by the shamans were quelled by the might of Spanish firepower as well as by the intervention of indio soldiers.

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

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

Atrophied Charisma and the Making of Native Elites

In the early 1800s the friars were credited with having assumed “the major part in the pacification of all instances of disquietude” during the
more than two centuries of Spanish rule in Filipinas. By this time, as a perceptive Englishman wrote, "In the most distant provinces, with no other safeguard than the respect with which he has inspired the [natives], the Padre exercises the most unlimited authority, and administers the whole of the civil and ecclesiastical government, not only of a parish, but often of a whole province" (Anon. 1907, 119). Notwithstanding efforts to assert civilian supremacy, "No order from the Alcalde [provincial governor], or even the government is executed without [the friar's] counsel and approbation." Thus the colonial state was established not so much as a complex of institutions that formed a formal legal order but as the personal, and often arbitrary, rule of the friar. What emerged in the colony was not an explicitly political community, as politics was subsumed under religion. Spanish political hegemony was fully indebted to the regime of Friar Power.

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

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

Writing in the late sixteenth century, Chirino (1969, 390) observed that among the islanders "whoever was powerful enough prevailed and ruled, and not one man alone but almost anyone could come to exercise such power and authority." The Boxer Codex (Anon. 1979, 310) corroborated that view by stating that "These (chiefs) are largely brave [natives] whom they have made lords because of their deeds." A Recollect missionary in early-seventeenth-century Mindanao also noticed that "The government of those people was neither elective nor hereditary; for he
who had the greatest valor or tyranny in defending himself was lord. Consequently, everything was reduced to violence, he who was most powerful dominating the others” (L. de Jesus 1904, 212).

Written in the late seventeenth century, the Jesuit Francisco Colin’s Labor Evangelica provides what I consider the most incisive statement on the path to datu-ship. That position was attained, he said, “through their blood; or, if not that, because of their energy and strength” in creating “some wealth,” usually “by robbery and tyranny.” Colin emphasized that the datu gains authority and reputation, and increases it the more he practices tyranny and violence. With these beginnings, he takes the name of dato; and others, whether his relatives or not, come to him, and . . . make him a leader. Thus there is no superior who gives him authority or title, beyond his own efforts and power. . . . If his children continued those tyrannies, they conserved that grandeur. If on the contrary, they were men of little ability, who allowed themselves to be subjugated, or were reduced either by misfortunes and disastrous happenings, or by sickness and losses, they lost their grandeur . . . and the fact that they had honored parents or relatives was of no avail to them. . . . In this way it has happened that the father might be a chief, and the son or brother a slave—and worse, even a slave to his own brother. (Colin 1906, 86–87)

The datu-ship, therefore, was not governed by an absolute rule of male succession. Although a son could well prove himself a worthy successor, and might have the social advantages of becoming one, the “energy and strength” and the “grandeur” ended with the datu’s death. The departure of the dungan, unleashed from the body (kalag) or literally vomited or thrown out of the mouth (kaluluwa), terminated the force, the will, and the power of the datu. As is suggested in the description given by Francisco Alcina, also a Jesuit, in his Historia de Las Islas é Indios de Bisaya, datu were buried with “all the wealth that they had when they were alive” (Alcina 1960, chap. 16). The successor, therefore, had to establish his own credentials, create his own wealth, and build his own grandeur. He had to embark on his own magical journey, for the route to becoming a datu was contingent upon individual feats and personal exploits and upon continually increasing those feats and exploits.51

In the absence of ostensible procedures for selection by a higher legal authority, the petty ruelship appeared to Spanish observers (who could not comprehend the indigenous ideological context of power) as a matter of naked force, a primitive contest for individual supremacy based on violence. However, in a situation of intermittent warfare, bravery was a sine qua non of leadership. Indeed, as far as the natives were concerned,
the path to datu ship followed its own logic, for leadership and the whole
compendium of village life were intimately related to the indigenous view
of the cosmos, the source of coherent meaning to the world for both
chiefs and followers.32

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Power in colonial society thus became ascriptive and closely intertwined with the colonial construct of “the family.” An imported concept that today’s Filipinos denote by using the borrowed terms pamilya or familia, the family was invented, not so much as a set of identifiable relationships in a kin group, but as a conscious ideological category denoting a monogamous institution with corporate boundaries framed by parenthood rather than siblingship (as in the Tagalog mag-anak). Marriages fell under the jurisdiction of the friar-qua-state, and the resulting union became bound with a fixed identity revolving around the colonially imposed and paternal surname—the “family name”—which became the primary criterion for the natives’ social identity. The former
datu's broad services to his kin and non-kin followers were narrowed to the family, which became the channel for the purposeful advancement of interests and the intergenerational transmission of property, power, and status—a reversal of the ancient Southeast Asian "indifference towards lineage descent" (Wolters 1982, 9). The Catholic prohibition of nuptial union between cousins and the introduction of a legal inheritance system fostered the tactical use of marriage by elite families to preserve wealth "within the family." Customary law (or its elements that were not suppressed), as well as Spanish legal norms, were subordinated to the pursuit of family interests, a private sphere hardly distinguishable from the public, as the latter was itself governed by the personalistic rule of the friar.

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

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

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

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

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

The Chinese man who converted to the colonial religion married a native woman, who, as Edgar Wickberg conjectures, most likely had “some business sense herself and could help him run his business” (Wickberg
1965, 33). Many of these women probably came from the old elite, whose fortunes were dwindling and who sought to take advantage of the emerging market economy in the eighteenth century by marrying an entrepreneurial person. But for the native women it meant crossing a cultural divide, for the indio did not have a high regard for the ethnic Chinese who, on several occasions, were massacred or expelled from the colony by the Spanish government at Manila. On the other hand, the Chinese who saw the indio as an inferior creature decided on a pragmatic course of action in view of the absence in the colony of Chinese women they could marry.

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

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

Structural opportunism, however, did not resolve the socially marginal person's dilemmas of power and culture. Witness the grotesque imitation of Spanish culture and the scorn heaped upon the indio by the inimitable Doctora Doña Victorina de los Reyes de Espadaña in Rizal's Noli Me Tangere. Fostered by the Chinese father's feelings of superiority
over the indio, on the one hand, and indio society's lack of regard for the Chinese, on the other, the mestizos became overzealous in their mimicry of the Spaniard, who generally held both indio and mestizo in contempt. In this manner, the mestizos, whose dungan were in virtual limbo, added another layer of ambivalence to the contradictions absorbed from received indio culture. As shown in the next chapter, notwithstanding the affluence they were beginning to reap from trade and agriculture, the Chinese mestizos did not enjoy any residual prestige from the ancient datu ship, nor did they sustain whatever prestige was left of the old native elite. The Chinese mestizos, who later comprised the ruling classes of the Philippines, were certainly not a traditional aristocracy. But, as the high point of the colonial invention of the family, the mestizo elites began a tradition of conjuring up genealogies of illustrious forebears with many a connection to an imaginary royalty.

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

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

Highlighting the dialectical inseparability of economics, politics, and culture, the pivotal conjuncture represented by Sturgis' wedding led to the accelerated incorporation of local agriculture into the circuits of global capitalism. In the wake of a triumphant Masonic Capitalism, the presence of Catholic Spain's enemies in the colony had to be tolerated, with the native reading of the situation fully in accord with the realities of Spain's twilight empire. Applauded by cheering natives, the success-
ful Protestant rite added impetus to native participation in the export economy. By protecting Sturgis’ Catholic wife from the clergy’s forebodings of infernal damnation, the foreigners demonstrated the sort of mystical strength that could serve as a counterpoint to Spanish shamanism. Condemned as evil but able to ward off friar opposition and Catholic reprisal, the Protestant/Masonic capitalists began to signify an alternative storehouse of power that could be tapped for luck as the natives negotiated their way through a changing world.

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

By the time of its full incorporation into global capitalism in the early nineteenth century, Philippine agriculture had already undergone a series of changes that became integral to the founding of export-crop production in various parts of the colony, including Negros. The changes in the economic structure of colonial society must be understood as inseparable from the same historical dynamic that produced the social and cultural transformations discussed in this chapter. The historical sociology of colonial agriculture is presented in the next chapter through a reconstruction of the relations of production prior to conquest and during the colonial era.
to him, she was born in Glasgow around 1826 of Catalan ancestry. In 1845, she sailed to the Spanish Philippines with her father, who very briefly held a position in one of the provincial governments. Orphaned at twenty and the only Spanish civilian on a remote island, she “adopted the native dress,” (38) which gave her the appearance of a mestiza. After about two years, she went to Manila to live with a creole family. She was about twenty-three when she married the thirty-two-year-old Sturgis. Santayana describes his mother as follows: “if she was not a Protestant, at least she was no bigoted Catholic, but a stern, philosophical, virtuous soul” (42). Santayana’s autobiography was recently republished; see Holzberger and Saatkamp 1986.

22. Two other chroniclers equated Laon, meaning Antiquity, with the Tagalog’s Bathala Meycapal, but did not mention Laon as inhabiting the Negros volcano (Chirino 1969, 279; Colin 1906, 70).

23. Combining themes of life and death, reproduction and destruction, “complementary dualism” is a prevalent feature of thought in island Southeast Asia (Fox 1987, 520–527).

24. Variants of this reputedly Visayan folktale can be found among the Tinguian of northern Luzon and the Mandaya of Mindanao (M. C. Cole 1916, 65, 145, 201).

25. The ng in dungan is pronounced as in English “singer.”

26. This custom was derided by a friar who wrote, “It is laughable to see them waken another who is sleeping like a stone, when they come up without making any noise and touching him very lightly with the point of the finger, will call him for two hours, until the sleeper finishes his sleep and awakens” (de San Agustin 1906, 211). The sleeper referred to could conceivably be a Spaniard, particularly a friar.

27. There is some parallelism between the concept of the dungan and its height among the hierarchical Visayan with the notion of the height of a man’s heart as determined by bêya (knowledge) and ligt (anger, passion, energy, force) among the more egalitarian Ilongot. See the fascinating ethnography of Michelle Rosaldo (1980).

28. The ng in dunganon is pronounced as in English “finger.”

29. For an interpretation of the fluid hierarchy of precolonial Tagalog society, see Rafael 1988.

30. Suggestive of the relationship nurtured with the spirit-world, a chief in Bohol “kept many cups and small jars full of charms, together with other instruments for casting lots” and divination (Chirino 1969, 384). The Tagalogs offered sacrifices in “certain private oratories” owned by chiefs (de San Agustin 1906, 334). Until the late nineteenth century, the principal Bukidnon datus were in exclusive possession of a highly respected “idol called Tigbas” (Clotet 1906, 295, 304–305).

In seventeenth-century Mindanao, Sultan Kudrat, who practiced “sorcery” according to a Jesuit report, was the exemplar of a datu’s magical
prowess. Among his extraordinary abilities, he could cause "the fish to enter his boat" and could make "a piece of artillery float on . . . water." He had tools for "good or evil augury." Because he talked "very familiarly with the devil," he became "a greater king than any of his forebears; for their fear of him is incredible, as they recognize in him one who has superior power to avenge himself" (Combes 1906, 138).

31. For the sociological connection between chief and shaman, cf., among the early Spanish accounts, Chirino (1969, 302) and More (1906, 204). For parallels in modern-day Bukidnon, see Cullen (1973, 8–9, 27–28).


CHAPTER 2 Cockfights and Enkantos

1. Until 1768, except for parish priests, some soldiers, and a handful of civilian officials, colonial law prohibited Spaniards from living in provinces beyond Manila. The friar was the only permanent colonial fixture in most areas outside the capital (Larkin 1972, 29).

2. Cited in Phelan 1959, 34. The same phrase was used in the conquest of Mexico (cf. Behar 1987, 34).

3. Some terms differ across ethnolinguistic groups, which is indicative of the absence of a national means of communication for most of the Spanish colonial epoch; other terms probably became generalized as a result of modern mass media. Nonetheless, the advent of colonial rule and increased mobility within given regions, I think, allowed for the common usage of these terms beyond the narrow confines of one village, town, or even province.

4. It was noted that the natives' "horror for Cafres and negroes . . . is so great that [they] would sooner suffer themselves to be killed than to receive them" (de San Agustin 1906, 254). Although kaffir is Islamic for "infidel," which might suggest that the entry to the islands of the word kapre might have predated Spanish colonialism, it is also probable that the dread of the kapre came with the cafres and other black slaves bought by Spaniards from Portuguese traders for use in the Spanish monastic estates in the Tagalog region, a practice that lasted until the 1690s (Cushner 1976, 47–48).

5. This list is certainly not exhaustive. There are also numerous terms to denote rites and implements, such as santiguas, bentusa, etc., which are of Spanish derivation.

6. For similar but less detailed descriptions arising from fieldwork in the Visayas, particularly Negros, see Hart 1966, 67, and Lieban 1962, 307.

7. Chapter 1, note 26 suggests that the natives perceived the Spaniards as possessing dungan.


10. *Agnus Dei* is Latin for “Lamb of God.”

11. An incident in early-seventeenth-century Binalbagan, Negros, demonstrated the process of substitution: a native chief who had a very sick two-year-old son offered the usual sacrifices, but “As he did not get what he was after, he begged father Fray Jacinto de San Fulgencio for a little water passed through the chalice. The father gave it to the sick child, and the latter was instantly cured” (L. de Jesus 1904, 244).


13. For a succinct discussion of egalitarian sex roles prior to Spanish colonialism, see Blanc-Szanton 1990, 354–358.

14. In present-day folklore, the fair-skinned child of a brown maiden is believed to have been sired by an *enkanto* (Demetrio 1970, 359).

15. The epidemiological havoc wrought by the Iberian conquest of the Americas is discussed by McNeill 1976, chap. 5.

16. The traditional forms of spirit appeasement were no longer possible in this context. Evidently, the generalized concept of pity and mercy (*awa, luyog*) denotes local constructs rooted in colonial Catholic imagery. In the preconquest age, the notion of pity and mercy had to give way to *dungan* contests, and even more so in war and plunder. Today, to show pity and mercy by preventing a child from experiencing *usug*, an adult recites the phrase *pawera usug*, clearly borrowing the Spanish command, *i fuera!* (“go away!”).

17. For a focused discussion on gambling and its relation to Philippine state formation and electoral politics, see Aguilar 1994d.

18. On liminality in the ritual process, see V. Turner 1967, chap. 4.


20. In 1858 an Austrian noted that cockfighting’s “cruel, murderous issue is strangely in contrast with the mild, soft, timid character of the natives” (von Scherzer 1974, 238).

21. Primarily as fervent card players, women were just as engrossed in gambling. However, unlike the men whose loss of *datuship* was, I imagine, analogous to castration, women were not driven by a compelling urge to identify with game fowls. Women were also prohibited by custom and the colonial state to enter the cockpit; cf. Capitulo 3 (chap. 3) of the 1861 cockfighting regulations in Artigas (1894, 154).
22. Natives later innovated with unlicensed cockfights, known as *tupada* (from the Spanish *topar*, to encounter) in inaccessible places.

23. But, in a profound continuity with the preconquest female priestly role, the Filipino Catholic priest has the image of being effeminate and unmanly (cf. Doherty 1964).

24. In the Visayas, three major uprisings occurred from the late sixteenth to the late eighteenth century: those led by Tamblot and Bankaw in Bohol and Samar in 1621, by Sumuroy in Samar in 1649, and by Dagohoy in Bohol in 1744. Angered at a curate’s refusal to bury his brother, the legendary Dagohoy mobilized an estimated three thousand followers who attacked the friar and then fled to the mountains. When the rebellion ended some eighty-five years later, the following had swelled to twenty thousand people (Phelan 1959, 147–149).

25. On male circumcision, see de Loarca 1903, 119; Candish 1904, 296; de Morga 1904, 134; P. de Jesus 1906, 318–319; Dampier 1906, 35–42; Colin 1906, 88; and Ortiz 1906, 110. Of these sources, only Ortiz is positive about female circumcision, which, according to his report, used to be called *sonad*.

26. See n. 21 above.

27. In the early nineteenth century, de la Gironiere (1962, 49) described the *mabuting tao* as “most respected amongst his countrymen” and as “a real piratical chief; a fellow that would not hesitate to commit five or six murders in one expedition; but he was brave.” Note how de la Gironiere is misunderstood by the editor. At the turn of the century, the unvanquished rebels in the final resistance against Spanish suzerainty, which spilled over to the war against American colonialism, were similarly known as *maga nga lañaki* (interview on 8 September 1990 with Julian C., about seventy-eight years old, in Sagay, Negros Occidental, who talked about his grandfather as a magical anticolonial fighter who lived in a cave in Bantayan Island at the century’s turn). In the 1990s, peasant men steeped in contemporary politics as well as magic are known as *maga ling na lañaki* in Central Luzon (Fegan 1994). Whereas the colonial “good men” acted outside of the state framework, in the postcolonial period the exploits of the *maga ling na lañaki* occur within it.


29. The processes of landownership and transformation of production relations are discussed in the next chapter.

30. For the invention of the village in other parts of Asia, see Breman 1988.

31. The personal power of the *datu* was congruent with the ideal type of the Big Man in historical Melanesia (cf. Sahlins 1963).

32. Informed by formal anthropology, modern-day missionary analysis of
the changing *datuship* in Mindanao suggests a remarkable continuity in that local leadership continues to be seen within a cosmological framework. The history of Bukidnon *datuship* is inscribed, along with traditional law and ceremonial prescriptions, in the *giling,* "a black stick the length of one's forearm and hand." The *giling's* sanctity emanates from its having been personally handed by a spirit called *dumatungdung* to a foremost *datu* of old (Biernatzi 1973, 19–20).

33. De Loarca (1903, 147, 149) observed that, among the Visayan *Pinta-
dos,* "If a timagua desires to live in a certain village, he joins himself to one of the chiefs . . . to whom he offers himself as his timagua . . . For this service the chief is under obligation to defend the timagua, in his own person and those of his relatives . . ."

34. The *gobernadorcillo* was an "elective" post during the first seventy-seven years of Spanish rule, but from 1642 it became appointive, although the officeholder was selected from a list of nominees annually drawn up by the *cabezas* and the parish priest (Phelan 1959, 124–125).

35. In a handful of cases, *indios,* predominantly Pampango, were gifted by the Spanish monarch with *encomiendas,* or tax farms, from the early seventeen to the early eighteenth centuries (Santiago 1990).

36. Larkin (1972, 35–36) provides the highly revealing illustration of the town of Macabebe in Pampanga Province where from 1615 to 1765, the position of *gobernadorcillo* was rotated around thirteen different families only.


38. Until the end of the Spanish period, as is the practice in the Penins-
ula, a married woman kept her father's surname. Only under the Ameri-
cans, with their Anglo-Saxon tradition, did a married woman assume the surname of her husband.

39. In contrast to the Catholic ban on cousin marriage to the third and fourth degrees, in the preconquest era first cousins could marry in some of the local societies.

40. In the Cagayan Valley, for example, despite an edict in 1642 proscri-
ing trade and social intercourse with "the heathen, apostate, and fugitive *indios,* negroes and Zambals, who inhabit the mountains and hills," the local *cabezas* and *gobernadorcillos* who were "largely drawn from the preconquest ruling elite" continued to trade salt, cotton, cloth, metal tools, and tobacco (the area's most valuable product) for mountain beeswax and gold, a pattern disrupted only by the temporary ban on local tobacco production from 1787 to 1800 (E. de Jesus 1978, 11, 88; E. de Jesus 1982, 27).

41. In the 1580s the lone bishop of the colony vehemently denounced this *encomendero* practice (D. de Salazar 1903, 222–224). In 1721, *encomien-
das* were ordered not to be reassigned, paving the way for their dissolution (Phelan 1959, 97).
CHAPTER 3  Elusive Peasant, Weak State

1. Consider, for instance, the alliance built upon intermarriage that linked Cebu and Mactan at the time of Magellan's arrival in 1521 and its subsequent breakdown under the pressure of Legazpi's conquest in 1565 (W. H. Scott 1992a).

2. A recent restatement of this canon is found in Corpuz (1989, 38–39). Romance and an erroneous understanding of social relations in the barangay are evident in the following portrait, attributed to Jaime Bulatao, of the precolonial settlement: "everything was cozy within and everything dangerous without and, accordingly, the kanayan (relatives) [sic] had to stick together for their own safety." The barangay and the family allegedly constituted the Philippines' "lost Paradise" (Ramirez 1993, 25, 27).


4. Focusing exclusively on labor exchanges and failing to consider the elements of fear, gift exchange, magic, and warfare, Filipino historiography has portrayed the barangay as the romantic origin of an idealized bayanihan or "cooperative labor" (cf. Constantino 1975, 33; Corpuz 1989, 13–14).

5. Not grown extensively, wet rice was raised in swampland or the floodplain of rivers and lakes.

6. For example, on the number of children from one set of parents serving in the datu's house, "when more [than one] are taken for service ... they hold this as a grievance and a tyranny." Likewise, a servant in the datu's house who had married was entitled to form a nuclear household, "unless the chief forces them to [return], which they consider as a great tyranny and offense" (Anon. 1979, 354).

7. Scott, for instance, says that "Most members of this [third] class live at such a low subsistence level that debt is a normal condition of their lives: it arises from outright loans for sustenance or from inability to pay fines, and its degree determines individual oripun rank" (W. H. Scott 1982, 123). Interestingly, he did not reconcile this need for "outright loans for sustenance" with his later description (W. H. Scott 1992b) of the exceedingly high carrying capacity of the environment that adequately fed permanent settlements.

8. I am here following the ideal-typical model set out by Collier (1988, chap. 2). As W. H. Scott (1994, 168) has also observed, "it was not uncommon for a suitor to offer himself to a prospective father-in-law if he could not meet the brideprice demanded."

9. Perhaps this would explain the substantial debt of gold owed by a Tagalog chief, together with his relatives and dependents, in the tenth century (Postuma 1992).

10. As the most valuable object, gold was used to "pay" the datu for adju-