

UNITAS

SEMI-ANNUAL PEER-REVIEWED INTERNATIONAL ONLINE JOURNAL
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH IN LITERATURE, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY

Transpacific Connections of Philippine Literature in Spanish

EDITED BY JORGE MOJARRO

A Mexican Princess in the Tagalog
Sultan's Court: Floripes of the
Doce Pares and the Transpacific
Efflorescence of Colonial Philippine
Romance and Theater

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Bad English and Fresh Spaniards:
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UNITAS is an international online peer-reviewed open-access journal of advanced research in literature, culture, and society published bi-annually (May and November).

UNITAS is published by the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines, the oldest university in Asia. It is hosted by the Department of Literature, with its editorial address at the Office of the Scholar-in-Residence under the auspices of the Faculty of Arts and Letters. Hard copies are printed on demand or in a limited edition.

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Transpacific Connections of Philippine Literature in Spanish

An Introduction

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Research Center for Culture, Arts, and Humanities

Not too many years ago, the study of Philippine Literature in Spanish was a very odd thing to do. With the exception of a few translations and some master's dissertations in the Philippines, it was virtually a *res nullius*, an area of research practically abandoned. This neglect created some problems for the few well-intentioned scholars who aimed to understand and research about it. A personal anecdote may illustrate this point. A few years ago, I submitted an article to a very prestigious literary academic journal of a Spanish university. The said journal publishes articles dealing with Spanish and Latin American literature covering all periods and also researches on Hispanic Linguistics. Surprisingly, the editors replied to me in less than 24 hours alleging they just do not publish Philippine Literature. This awkward situation made me think about what would happen if all journals observed the same strict criterion: the study of Philippine Literature in Spanish would sadly be silenced and the recovery of texts for readers—an important and ultimate goal—would be prevented. Fortunately, the article was accepted last year by another prestigious journal from Mexico¹; but I should add that many colleagues encountered similar problems such as articles whose publication

was getting absurdly delayed because the board of a certain journal could not find reviewers for “such a strange thing” or papers whose acceptance in international symposia was being relegated to a peripheral session.

We are living, however, in optimistic times: scholarly monographs—the ones by Adam Lifshey, for example—and annotated re-editions are being published; international conferences are being held; and doctoral dissertations are being defended. Despite these very welcome developments, this particular field of literature remains deeply understudied. Annotated editions are needed² so that the original sources can be made available and accessible to scholars in the field; translations are also urgent so Filipinos with intellectual curiosity might access a literature made inaccessible simply due to the language barrier; and finally, the study of single authors and their literary careers and the recovery and compilation of literary texts from newspapers and literary journals are particularly necessary. There is, therefore, a need to study Philippine Literature in Spanish not as an isolated, odd, and peripheral phenomenon but as an unavoidable cultural consequence of early globalization. It needs to be appreciated as a rich literary system that holds deep connections with other fields, especially Latin American Literature.

Among the important advances developed in the field of Philippine Literature in Spanish during the last decade, the recovery of forgotten texts must be mentioned. Instituto Cervantes launched in 2009 a collection of books aimed to rescue in philological editions the best of this relatively unknown Philippine literary tradition (the prose of Adelina Gurrea, Jesús Balmori, Antonio Abad, Enrique Laygo have been published). I myself edited two texts (by Teodoro M. Kalaw and by Buenaventura Campa) for a well-known Spanish publishing house and Georgina Zóbel published in 2013 a bilingual edition of *La Oveja de Nathan* by Antonio Abad. *Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino* published in 2016 a Tagalog translation—sadly, without introduction or notes—of a travel book by Antonio Luna: *Impresiones* (1891).

In 2003, two prestigious peer-reviewed journals (*Kritika Kultura* from Ateneo de Manila and *Transmodernity* from University of California-Merced) published special issues devoted to the study of Philippine Literature in

Spanish. December 2018 was indeed a *mensis mirabilis* for the field: *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*—a top-ranked journal of Latin American Literature—published a special issue covering this literature from colonial times, and University of Antwerp organized for the first time a major international symposium on exactly this literature with 39 enthusiastic scholars coming from the US, Mexico, Europe, and the Philippines. Many issues were discussed in that meeting, an essential one being the fact that Philippine Literature in Spanish could not be understood in isolation but in connection with other contending literary traditions of the archipelago: namely, the Tagalog and English traditions. Another important topic was the very fact that Philippine authors were in contact with and read other authors in Spanish both from Spain and Latin America, thus making this literature a central piece in the globalized network of literatures in the Spanish language.

Therefore, this special issue of UNITAS appropriately titled “Transpacific Connections of Philippine Literature in Spanish” comes at a very suitable moment. A group of international scholars fills the above-mentioned gap by using a comparative approach in order to provide a better understanding of the relevant literary influences and overlooked intellectual exchanges that took place on both sides of the Pacific Ocean. John Blanco explores how the literary figure of the Moor was present in both Mexican and Philippine late colonial period and the importance of considering the necessity and value of considering the country as a transpacific frontier province of New Spain: they were not only part of the same trade space but certainly of a cultural one, too. Kristina Escondo and Ernest Hartwell show the strong similarities between the anticolonial ideas in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines by analyzing the works of José Rizal, José Martí, Antonio Luna, and the intellectual work of the *Ilustrados*, all of whom undoubtedly aimed to shape their respective national identities. Gasquet offers a reading of a little known travel text by Pardo De Tavera and his critical encounter of *Hispanidad* in Argentina. The hidden subversive meanings in the apparently innocent short romantic novels of Pedro Paterno, published a few years before his death, are scrutinized in López-Calvo’s contribution while the particular reception of *Modernismo*, the most relevant literary trend in the Spanish-

speaking world at the end of the 19th century, is the core of the researches of Álvarez-Tardío in poetry, Barrera in a novel by Jesús Balmori, and Mojarro in a travel book by Teodoro Kalaw where the lipéño journalist attempted to imitate the aesthetic turn of Gómez Carrillo. Philippine-Mexican and other transpacific links and relations are addressed in the articles by Park, Villaescusa, and García. De la Peña studies the parallelisms between certain literary figures in 20th century Philippine and Latin American novels while Ortuño addresses the meaning of *Hispanidad* among the Spanish-speaking Manila elite and their embrace of *Arielismo* as a form of refusal of the Anglo-Saxon culture.

What this varied array of scholarly works makes evident is the deep bonds Philippine authors kept with their Latin American counterparts and how Philippine Literature developed in contact with other literatures written in Spanish. The fact that they belonged to the same cultural sphere made them develop very similar ideas as it had happened at the end of the 19th century even when certain authors never read each other. Nevertheless, these works also demonstrate the need for more scholarly investigations especially digging through journals and in archives, and for the recovery of largely neglected texts and contrasting them with their sister literatures. It is my hope that this collection of works might encourage new scholars, especially from the Philippines, to get immersed in a precious and largely overlooked literature, unique in so many ways as the reader will now have the opportunity to find out.

Notes

1. Jorge Mojarro Romero, "El estudio de la literatura hispanofilipina durante el siglo XX." *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, vol. 66, no. 2, pp. 651-681.
2. As of this time, three new editions are being prepared for publication: *La carrera de Cándida* by G. Gómez Wyndham; *Mi Óbolo* by María Paz Zamora Mascuñana; and a collection of short stories by Benigno del Río.

A Mexican Princess in the Tagalog Sultan's Court

Floripes of the *Doce Pares* and the Transpacific Efflorescence of Colonial Philippine Romance and Theater

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Abstract

This preliminary study introduces a larger reflection on the emergence of a trans-Pacific culture between Mexico and the Philippines through the study of the figure of the Moor in Philippine colonial romance (popularly called *awit* or *korido*) and theater (*komedya*) during the late colonial period.¹ By analyzing the colonial tradition that was responsible for the appearance and dissemination of this figure as both theatrical performance and literary artifact, this essay attempts to bring the study of the colonial *awit* and *komedya* into the larger sphere of comparative studies of colonial traditions in the trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific reach of Iberian globalization in the early modern period. The focus of my analysis is admittedly narrow: in addition to a discussion about the history and stakes behind the study of colonial Philippine literature, theater, and culture more broadly, my analysis concerns itself primarily with arguably the most important colonial romance in Tagalog: the anonymous versification of the popular story of Charlemagne and the Twelve Peers of France (*Salita at Buhay nang Doce Pares sa Francia campon nang Emperador Carlo Magno hangang sa ipagkanuló ni Galalong mapatay sa Rocesvalles* [*The Life and Saga of the Twelve Peers of France, Knights of Emperor Charlemagne, Up to their Betrayal by Ganelon,*

hereafter referred to as *Doce Pares*].² The analytical evidence suggests the necessity and value of considering the Philippines as a trans-Pacific frontier province of New Spain (contemporary Mexico), which renders it a particularly appropriate place to study Iberian globalization at the threshold of its failures, breakdown, and transformation into a new form of global consciousness.

Keywords

Christianity, Christian-Moor Conflict Colonial Theatre, Doce Pares, Golden Age Spain, Jesuit Theatre

The Moor Un-Moored: Reinventing the Crusade in the Americas and Asia

In *El teatro tagalo*, Vicente Barrantes pursues the colonial history of theater and literature in the Philippines exactly as one would expect a colonial official to do: through an investigation of the events or moments that an originally Spanish cultural practice or art was bastardized and corrupted by putatively indigenous Tagalog speakers: “*casi ninguna de las costumbres filipinas, como hemos dicho, carece del sello español en su fondo o en su forma*” [“in almost no Filipino custom, as we have said, is there lacking the mark of Spanish authenticity as seen in its foundation or form”] (Barrantes, *El teatro tagalo* 25). In the case of colonial Tagalog romances, Barrantes traces their original inspiration to the metrical romances or *corridos* that came to the archipelago through the soldiers and sailors of the Acapulco-Manila galleon trade route: “[romances were] received by the *indios* already disfigured, only to be disfigured by them in their turn, sometimes by ill-done readings in a different [*exótica*] language, sometimes by incomplete or monstrous recitations, this being the origin of *Corridos*, whose name literally signifies nothing more than pamphlets [*hojas volantes*] passed from hand to hand...” (*El teatro tagalo* 20).³ Finally, Barrantes arrives at the putative origin of Tagalog theater in which Spanish *comedias*, promoted and directed by the missionary orders as a way of celebrating religious feast holidays and special occasions, began to mix with the performance of an indigenous war dance that became known as the *moro-moro*.⁴ The putative event in which this mix of cultures was first recorded, Barrantes argues, took place during the baptism of the sultan of Joló, Alimudin [*Az'im ud-D'in*], on April 28, 1750. Alimudin's Muslim entourage, desiring to take part in the celebrations, arranged themselves in a circle, into which each member would enter the circle armed with a spear and sword or *kris*; and pantomime a skirmish (*El teatro tagalo* 34). Fearful of contradicting his own conviction regarding the supposed absence of indigenous invention or originality, Barrantes adds: “*No hay raza de los países intertropicales que no tenga su pantomima ruidosa, bailable y guerrera, cuyos puntos suelen ir en sentido inverso de su virilidad*” [“There is no race among the tropical countries that does not have its own noisy pantomime, at once dance and

warlike, in a show of virility that exists in inverse proportion to its representation”] (35).

Barrantes’s contemporary, the Spanish colonial bibliophile Wenceslao Retana contested the latter’s account: drawing upon an anonymous account of a 1637 festival celebrating the successes of General Hurtado de Corcuera against Muslim pirates in Mindanao, Retana wanted to locate the origins of Philippine theater in the first century of Spanish rule.⁵ The festival in question featured a *comedia* written specifically for the occasion, entitled *Gran comedia de la toma del pueblo de Corralat* [the Muslim Sultan of Mindanao] y la *conquista del Cerro* (Retana, *Noticias historico-bibliográficas del teatro en Filipinas* 17).⁶ Although no record of the *comedia* exists, an anonymous writer relates the following:

[C]ontaré lo que pasó en este puerto de Cavite el mismo día 7 de junio; el sábado en la tarde 6 de junio, habiendo salido temprano de las dos escuelas los muchachos se fueron a jugar al fuerte que esta comenzado al fin de este pueblo. Allí comenzaron a entretenerse haciéndose unos moros y otros cristianos, defendiendo unos el fuerte y otros acometiendo a tornado, quedaron picados y concertados para el día siguiente para hacerlo mas a propósito; previnieron banderas, espadas de palo y de cañas; el que se hizo Cachil Corralat enarboló la suya en el fuerte, ánimo a sus soldados a la defensa y aun afrentó a los cristianos llamándolos vinagres españoles y gallinas. Estos se animaron al asalto y arremetieron con denuedo, pero fueron rebatidos con coraje de los moros, y tanto que quedaron heridos y maltratados algunos, con que entrando en cólera arremetieron al fuerte a manera de furiosos sin desistir hasta entrarlo y echando mano de Cachil Corralat lo precipitaron de la muralla abajo (Noticias historico-bibliográficas 34).

[Here I will relate what happened in the port of Cavite this past June 7; the Saturday afternoon prior, June 6, some boys who had been dismissed early from two different schools went to play in the fort under construction on the outskirts of this town. There they began to amuse themselves, some by playing the role of Moors and others [the role of] Christians, with some defending the fort and others laying siege to it, keeping themselves excited and tense in anticipation of the following day; they made threats with flags, stick swords and spears; the one who played Kachil Kudarat (sultan of Joló) planted his flag in the fort, roused his soldiers to its defense and even insulted the Christians by calling them thin-skinned and cowardly chicken Spaniards. The latter were provoked to assault [the fort] and lay siege to it

with relish, but they were courageously rebuffed by the “Moors,” and some ended up so bruised and ill-treated that they became enraged, besieging the fort without quarter and with such fury that they entered it; and laying their hands on Kachil Kudarat they cast him down from the top of the wall].

What is significant about Retana’s account is that while the children’s reaction to the *comedia* appears to be entirely spontaneous, the *form* of play by the children and perhaps even the *comedia* follows a well-known set of motifs and performance traditions generated between Spain and Mexico in the aftermath of the conquest of the Americas; and which scholars commonly refer to as *morismas* or the festivals of *moros y cristianos*. The underlying import of Retana’s contention, then, is that those very aspects of native theater that we are anxious to identify *as* native (as is the case of the war dance practiced by Alimudin’s retinue, or the spontaneous children’s game in Cavite) were prefigured and partially determined by a history of intersecting cultural practices that spanned the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.⁷ In these “contact zones” of cultural interchange or transculturation, questions of origins and roots tell us less about the past than the historical configurations or constellations that emerge out of the first sustained period of Iberian-Amerindian and transpacific indigenous contact; and the routes, ramifications, and offshoots of translation and interpretation that take place between local communities throughout the world in this period.⁸

The *moros y cristianos* theme is one such example. Cultural anthropologists refer to it variously as a set of dances and courtly practices (Warman; Tiongson), a category of religious festival (Harris), or a form of theater (Ricard; Wachtel), all the while recognizing the practical difficulty of clearly separating any one development from the others. “Stripped of all adventitious elements,” writes Robert Ricard, “the *morismas* [in Spain and Latin America] are tied together by a simple theme.... they consist essentially in a simulated military battle, the duration of which varies, and whose principal task it is to represent a battle between Christians and Moors, separated into two groups of antagonistic dancers. The festival ends with the victory of the Christians and the triumph of the Cross” (*The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico* 53: see also Warman 23; Trexler 189-227). On the one hand, medi-

eval Spanish court traditions commemorating or celebrating the Reconquest had waned by the sixteenth century, and their descent into popular Spanish folk tradition seems to have largely taken place on the Mediterranean side of the Iberian Peninsula (particularly the region of Alicante); on the other, in contrast to Spain, these mock battles became a central feature of religious festivals in New Spain (Mexico and Central America), the Caribbean, and the viceroyalty of Peru.⁹ In fact, their prevalence was so widespread that they indiscriminately mixed with other festival practices, from bullfights and cockfights to the pre-Hispanic ritual dances and songs (called *areitos* in the Caribbean and *mitote* in New Spain), to the recitation or dramatization of popular Spanish ballads and romances.¹⁰

The malleable and schematic character of the drama they portray, not to mention their flexible and open availability to reinterpretation, make the *moros y cristianos* theme difficult to track in terms of its origin and development.¹¹ As Ricard, Warman, and Harris all make clear, the early festivals celebrated in the viceroyalty of New Spain (or Mexico) explicitly dramatized the Christian-Moor conflict as an archetype available for dissemination and elaboration by the conquistadors and friars, during a period when Spanish institutions outside the city of Mexico had yet to be established. Yet the degree and manner in which this archetype took root on the frontiers of colonial missions and industrial and commercial routes varied enormously. This explains why, for example, certain *danzas de moros y cristianos*, such as the *matachines* (also spelled *matlachines*) in the regions around Zacatecas and the US Southwest, bear a resemblance to Andalusian fandangos, while others clearly owe some provenance to Native American war dances from the Chichimecs to the Puebloans, Apache, and Comanche.¹²

In the aforementioned episode related to us by Retana, a similar kind of ambiguity arises: did the children arrive at the central elements of the so-called tradition on their own; did it arise from the spontaneous expression of rivalry between two colonial boarding schools; did they learn about Muslim raids on Christian coastal settlements in the southern archipelago from their teachers; or had the children themselves seen dances and theatrical performances, or read or heard the recitation of a romance, which involved

the occupation of castles and the exchange of religious epithets? The answer may be all of the above; this confusion in fact constitutes the central paradox of the tradition. On the one hand, the courtly and later, religious and even ritual, function(s) of these representations in Spain appear at first glance to be anchored in the commemoration and celebration of a historical series of events *specific* to Spain—the so-called “Reconquest” of the Iberian peninsula by the imperial Christian authority of the Catholic kings. Yet this historical reference obtains only insofar as the Reconquest *itself* remains a nonspecific and open, floating signifier for a variety of historical events—from the medieval Crusades to conquer Jerusalem to the establishment of Manila in 1571, to the “spiritual conquest” of the friars and the attempted “conquest of the sea” [Pacific Ocean] against rival European powers; to the creation of a Holy League of Christian powers dedicated to the defeat of the Ottoman Empire throughout the Mediterranean.

As Rafael Bernal explains in his posthumous work *El gran Océano*, the reconquest of the Iberian peninsula under the Catholic monarchs was understood by Spaniards as not only an historical feat, but a totalizing one: its relationship to the Crusades and the salvation of the world was inevitable.¹³ For this reason, it would be incorrect and shortsighted to say simply that the Reconquest provided the historical and perhaps psychological *context* for the discovery and conquest of the Americas and the Pacific. On a greater level, it preemptively claimed or presumed to represent the *content* of the conquest from the very beginning, endowing it with the same mythical character as the Reconquest itself—a narrative of fulfilled prophecies, centered around the dramatic unfolding of a universal conflict against a Universal Enemy that slowly proceeded from the Old World to the New, and back to the Eastern regions of the Old World under the sway of pagan religions and the Muslim infidel. That we reject such a view as mere ideology and millenarian claptrap obscures the totalizing manner by which it explained, justified, and motivated the protracted colonization of the Americas and Philippines.

The Manichean duality of the Christian-Moor archetype(s) expressed itself in the conquistador’s self-comparisons to knights of the Crusades and their legendary feats; or in the self-characterization of Franciscan missionary

priests as agents of millenarian apocalypse; or Dominican missionaries as prophets of international law [*jus gentium*]; or Jesuit missionaries as spiritual warriors in the service of God [*pro Deo militans*].¹⁴ From early on in the dissemination of the Moor-Christian conflict, the racial or ethnic character of this binarism was applied to other peoples, whether it was Africans or Chichimecs playing the role of Moors in New Spain and the Caribbean (Warman, *Las danzas de moros y cristianos* 86-87 and 99-100; Jáuregui and Bonfiglioli, 14). Other times, the conflict was used to illustrate biblical apocrypha, as witnessed in the *danza de Migueles* in Cuetzalan (as immortalized in Miguel Sabido's 1995 film *Santo Luzbel*; see also Brisset, cited in Jáuregui and Bonfiglioli, *Las danzas de Conquista* 16-17). Perhaps of greatest importance, the interpretation or identification of groups to represent Moors and / vs. Christians did not remain the exclusive privilege of either the conquistadors or the missionaries. Whether one ultimately agrees with Max Harris that the festivals featuring dramatizations or dances of Moors and Christians in the Americas contain "hidden transcripts" of subversive meaning and intent, one must nevertheless admit that the proliferation of traditions incorporating the eternal war between Moors and Christians throughout the Americas owed itself as much to the *lack* of control missionaries had over their Christian subjects as to their promotion of an ideological theme.¹⁵

The motif of *moros y cristianos* serves as a translating or transculturating device, in a manner akin to Foucault's notion of a *dispositif*, or apparatus.¹⁶ To identify a "Moor" is to identify a "Christian"; and in doing so, lay the groundwork for the translation of not only languages but values in juxtaposition (good vs. evil, pure vs. corrupt, north vs. south, city vs. countryside, and so on). On the one hand, through the celebration of dances, theater, poetry, and art, Spanish conquistadors, missionaries, officials, and merchants and laborers reinvented the Crusades and the role of the Reconquest in them; on the other, they also set in motion a process of proleptically determining the meaning of the future's relationship with the present among Amerindian and Filipino peoples, whose understanding of the future did not necessarily or always intersect with that of the colonial power.

Detours and Returns of Trans-Pacific Culture

When we begin to think of the *moros y cristianos* device less in terms of one practice, derived from one origin, and following one path of articulation or development, we arrive at a comprehension of it as a floating signifier and technology specific to the work of the missions. It anticipated and coordinated the transculturations taking place across the Americas and the Pacific. The central channel of these sustained encounters was the Manila Galleon (also called *naō de China*), which sailed between the port of Acapulco and Manila Bay twice a year. Both terminals, however, served in turn as commercial and cultural hubs that radiated throughout the Americas and Asia. On the economic plane, the Manila Galleon brought local and regional economies into a single global economy for the first time in history.¹⁷ But of equal importance is that the exchange of goods and silver from the mines in northern New Spain and Potosí created regional economies that had never before existed—between New Spain and Peru, in the case of the Americas, and between the Philippines, China, and Japan in Asia.¹⁸ And these economies, as Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giraldez remind us, reciprocally influenced and were influenced by the ecological and technological transformations taking place on both sides of the Pacific, whether these concern the demographic expansion in China due to the transplanted American sweet potatoes; or the demographic collapse of the native Indian population forced to work in the silver mines; or the depopulation of the Philippines due to Western diseases like smallpox.¹⁹

Of more immediate interest to our study, however, is the degree to which the early modern globalization of ecologies and economic values through the trans-Pacific trade also provided the context and space of experience of the “spiritual conquest” or evangelization of the Philippines and other islands in the Pacific from the beginning. By the time the evangelization of the Philippines had begun in earnest, the early millenarianism of the Franciscans and messianism of the conquistadors had experienced almost a century of evangelization efforts in the Caribbean and the western hemisphere: a century of experiments, trials, martyrdoms, and atrocities, in which missionaries alternately sided with the expansion of viceregal

authority in the Americas or with native communities against the intrusion or intensification of demands on their lives and labor.²⁰ This means that by the time Spanish culture and institutions had arrived in the Philippines, it came refracted through the prism of experience conditioned by a century of Spanish rule in New Spain and Peru. In this respect, Rainer Buschman, et al., argue that rather than discussing the “Hispanization” of the Philippines as John L. Phelan famously did, it would be more correct to speak of the “Mexicanization” or “archipelagic Hispanization” of the Philippines—meaning of course that the culture transplanted across the archipelago came not from Spain but rather from Spain’s overseas territories.²¹ It is no coincidence, for example, that the bishop who convened the first council or synod of religious leaders in the Philippines in 1582, Dominican priest Domingo de Salazar, O.P., is often called the “Bartólome de Las Casas” of the Philippines: the occasion of the synod concerned the Church’s denunciation of the abuses practiced by *encomendero* or royal grantees upon their native subjects; and Las Casas (also a Dominican) was quoted in the synod’s deliberations.²² Many religious and royal officials traveled to the Philippines only after an extended residence in New Spain: prior to serving as admiral and first governor-general of the Philippines, *Adelantado* [Frontier commander] Miguel López de Legazpi served as the civil governor of Mexico City. Among the consequences of this calibration of colonial occupation and government in the Americas, colonial authority manifested itself outside Manila primarily in the form of the missionary or parish priest rather than the *encomendero* and mayor or *alcalde*.

D. M. V. Irving’s fascinating account of the history of Philippine music in the colonial period illustrates the degree to which missionary methods developed in the New World had become formalized by the time of their transplantation in the late sixteenth century:

Essentially, there was a threefold process of adoption: the missionary adopted or accommodated enough indigenous culture (language, dress, and daily customs) to allow his acceptance or toleration by a community. Then the celibate Father effectively “adopted” the children, who lived in close proximity to him, and began teaching them the catechism and rudiments

of reading, writing, arithmetic, and music. In turn, the children adopted what they learned into their own forms of artistic expression and eventually passed on hispanized cultural practices to their own offspring (Irving 111).

Franciscan missionaries in New Spain became “important disseminators of European music in the early days of the encounter with the New World” which led to their early success and decision to “follow [*sic*] much the same pattern [in the Philippines] as those in Mexico” (*Colonial Counterpoint* 112-113). Jesuits in the Visayas (central Philippines) followed the lead of the Franciscans, and “ensured the incorporation of Visayan song into church music alongside music introduced from Europe . . . Filipino and European styles coexisted and flirted with each other’s form and structure in a type of intercultural courtship” (123). Instruments were brought from Europe, until native artisans began to make them. Jesuits invited singers and musicians from the Tagalog region to other parts of the archipelago, to teach and share their musical skills with Christian neophytes (127). In other words, while the goal remained an idealized vision of Hispanization, the methods and techniques were “New Hispanic,” i.e., American.

As the missionaries did with music, so did they with dance and theater. The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century missionary and chronicler of the Jesuit mission Pedro Chirino, S.J., attested to the incorporation of dances of pre-Hispanic origin in Christian festivals. In his account, an early recorded festival that took place in 1595 (some 25 years after the founding of Manila) included the representation of various dances “*que fuera[n] de las que hicieron nuestros indios, los chinos, y japonés con la variedad*” [that were among those that our Indians, Chinese, and Japanese did with great variety].²³ The festival in question celebrated both the arrival of the Jesuits and their delivery of “various relics,” apparently including one involving Saint Potenciana, patroness of Manila and the first girls’ orphanage and school in Manila (in 1589).²⁴ Another festivity included a “poetic joust,” apparently of a religious nature.²⁵ In 1611, on the occasion of the beatification of Jesuit founder Saint Ignatius de Loyola, a *comedia* dedicated to the patron archangel Michael took place; in fact, a *comedia* is still staged on the occasion of this festival in Iligan

today.²⁶ Several years later (in 1619), Retana notes, the Company [Jesuits] staged a celebration of the inauguration of the Immaculate Conception doctrine with various poetic-literary jousts; and the dramatization of the play *Príncipe de Transilvania*, which concerns the struggle between Christians and Moors on the Ottoman frontier in the Balkans.²⁷ Finally, an interesting anonymous account of a festival featuring “*toros y cañas*” [bullfights and mock battles] in 1623 illustrates in great detail the mock battles or *escaramuzas* that served as the basis for the *moros y cristianos* festivals in Spain and the Americas.²⁸ At the center of the festival was a “burlesque joust” involving Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, written as a derivative episode of Cervantes’s novel for the exequies of Spanish king Philip III.²⁹

In the vernacular transformation of Church doctrine and liturgy to religious festival and *comedia*, the Christian-Moor archetype brought objects and traditions into translation or transculturation—romances, theater props, and cockfights, yes, but also musical counterpoint and polyphony, hand-to-hand combat techniques, ritual sacrifice, and political organization. Obviously, unlike in the Americas, the *moro* was not a complete fabrication.³⁰ But neither were *moros* fixed in the imaginary and symbolic matrix of Spanish Christendom as they had become in the century after the Reconquest. In both material and imaginative ways, then, a veritable palimpsest of meanings around the figure of the Moor entered into sustained engagement in the trans-Pacific world. This explains, for instance, how the production of Philippine masks used in festivals like the St. James the Apostle festival in Paete, Laguna as well as the Moriones festival in Marinduque drew their inspiration from masks and masquerades featured in festivals throughout New Spain (see figures 1-3).³¹



Fig. 1. Moro-moro dancers and arnis practitioners of the Garimot Arnis Training International in Paete, Laguna, Philippines; <https://fmasd.com/garimot/>



Fig. 2. Moriones festival masks in Marinduque; www.alamy.com.



Fig. 3. Puebla masks at the Rafael Coronel Museum, Instituto Zacatecano de Cultura Ramon López Velarde, in Zacatecas, Mexico; www.poblenarias.com

Perhaps not coincidentally, the aforementioned town of Paete is known for not only paper-mâché masks and images, but also for possessing a long tradition of the Philippine martial art *arnis* (from the Spanish *arnés*, harness or military gear), which is practiced with long sticks akin to short wooden swords. This practice was common to both Spanish conquistadors, who engaged in friendly *escaramuzas* (skirmishes) with one another as a form of sport and training in swordsmanship; and many pre-colonial cultures of the South and Southeast Asian regions. Yet while many claim *arnis* to be a pre-Hispanic tradition, it seems conspicuous that this tradition was particularly rooted in the town whose Church features a bas-relief of the apparition of St. James Matamoros, fighting the Moors during the Reconquest of Spain; and in which a *moro-moro* of colonial origin is still held today (see figures 4 and 5).³²



Fig. 4. St. James Church in Paete, Laguna. While the original church was built in 1646, it was destroyed in 1717; a new church was begun that same year but was left incomplete until 1840; copyright by author.



Fig. 5. Detail of bas-relief of the apparition of St. James the Apostle against Moorish soldiers; copyright by author.

Mestizaje amok:

The Drift of the Christian-Moor Archetype in the Colonial Romance

Understanding the translation and transportation of the Christian-Moor archetype or device from America to the Philippines under the tutelage of the friars and Jesuits also helps us trace the parallel dynamics in which cultural intermixing or *mestizaje* ventures out from beyond the control of the religious. As early as 1585, the Mexican Church called for the strict regulation and examination of practices around the celebration of feast days, including the official approval of songs (cited in Irving 312). Throughout the latter half of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Church sought to curtail or control the abuses that, paradoxically, proliferated around religious practices like the nightly masses or processions [*misas de aguinaldo* or *misas de gallo*] that took place before Christmas; or the recitation and chanting of the rosary in private homes; or the playing of instruments outside the church or without church supervision. In 1701, Archbishop Camacho y Ávila attempted an outright ban on *comedias*, *coloquios* (poetic dialogues), and *entremeses* or farces (cited in Irving 210). Abuses included drinking, illicit unions, and otherwise indecent behavior.³³

The inefficacy of the Archbishop's attempt can be seen in a description of *comedias* by Augustinian priest Fr. Joaquín Martínez de Zuñiga, O.S.A., between 1803 and 1805. Among the many observations he makes on his journey throughout the archipelago, he pauses to describe the popularity of vernacular plays performed throughout the Tagalog region:

These *indios* . . . are very much given to *comedias*, and the most elite among them are those who have the privilege of being actors; and since they usually don't know the Castilian tongue, they ask that they be permitted to act in their own language, and no one has the least reservation about allowing these *comedias* in the Tagalog tongue in all the towns of this province [of Tondo], even in Binondo, where *only a river* separates it from the city; and still the [Spanish authorities] debate [whether or not] priests should preach in Castilian!³⁴

Perhaps not surprisingly, the focus of *comedias* Zuñiga had the occasion to watch was the Christian-Moor archetype: but one in which the didactic value of the device as a sign of Divine Providence and the universal struggle against a Universal Enemy has all but disappeared. “The *comedias* of the *indios*,” Zuñiga writes in an oft-quoted passage,

are composed of three or four Spanish tragedies, the passages of which are intertwined with one another, so as to form a seamless web. Christians and Moors always become involved, and the entire affair [*enredo*] consists in the Moors wanting to marry Christian princesses and the Christians wanting to marry Moorish princesses. (*Estadismo de las Islas Filipinas* 2: 73).³⁵

Zuñiga’s description of a typical Philippine *morisma* here seizes on one curious aspect of their dramatization, which is the amorous relationship between Moors and Christians. Zuñiga compares the two most common romances—one between a Moorish prince and a Christian princess, the other with the Moorish princess and the Christian prince, as follows:

One does not usually encounter much difficulty in arranging a marriage: a war is declared at the right time, wherein the Moorish prince achieves extraordinary feats, and his baptism and conversion to the Catholic faith facilitates the marriage . . . [But] the greater difficulty lies in untying the tangled web between the Christian prince and Moorish princess; insofar as he can never disavow the Catholic religion, he finds himself in many a tight spot—they put him in prison with his companions, the smitten princess frees them, which at times costs her her life; [the prince] finds himself as a captain in various wars, with some of his companions, and the affair falls apart, or the Moorish princess becomes Christian and escapes [her country], or the prince dies tragically, but can sometimes be revived (*Estadismo de las Islas Filipinas* 2: 73-74).³⁶

This “greater difficulty,” of course, reflects that of the medieval renditions of Charlemagne’s exploits, and the later prosification of these tales in Nicholas de Piemonte’s 1524 *Historia de Carlomango y de los Doce Pares de Francia*. Irving Leonard’s well-known history of books transported to the Americas from Spain during the colonial period (*Books of the Brave*) notes

that a copy of Piemonte's romance had appeared in Manila as early as 1583, barely twelve years after the founding of the Spanish colonial capital Manila by Admiral Miguel López de Legazpi (in 1571). In the eighteenth century, the versification of various episodes included in Piemonte's *Historia* (ascribed to Juan José López) appeared in cheap and more perishable versions of print, as an example of the popular *pliegos del cordel*—sheets of folded paper bound with a string.³⁷ In the Americas, the *Historia de Carlomango y de los Doce Pares de Francia* became arguably the most popular and widespread parent text of the many *danzas de moros y cristianos* in the Philippines as well as in Mexico, Central and Latin America.³⁸

The story of Charlemagne and the Twelve Peers of France was adapted in verse-form into Tagalog as *Salita at Buhay ng Doce Pares sa Francia na Kampon ng Emperador Carlo Magno Hanggang Ipagkanulo ni Galalon na Nangapatay sa Roncesvalles* [*Words and Deeds of the Twelve Peers of France, Followers of Emperor Charlemagne Until They Were Betrayed by Galalon and Killed at Roncesvalles*, hereafter referred to as *Doce Pares*]. Yet a brief comparison between the Spanish texts and their Tagalog versification (probably in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century) illustrate just how far afield the Christian-Moor archetype had gone. While most of the anonymous Tagalog author's romance follows faithfully much of Piemonte's text, the slight changes to the latter's retelling completely refocus the action and outcome of the story. In the Piemonte version, the Muslim admiral Balán conquers Rome, captures various holy relics, and, accompanied by his son the giant Fierabras, proceeds to France to conquer Charlemagne's kingdom. While one of Charlemagne's knights Oliveros manages to defeat Fierabras in battle leading to the latter's conversion to Christianity, Oliveros along with four of his companions are captured and placed in a tower. The Peers are rescued by Balán's daughter (and Fierabras's sister) Floripes who reveals that she has fallen in love with one of the Twelve Peers, Gui de Borgoña, upon seeing him in a tournament. Juan José López's versification of the moment, which the Tagalog author would have likely read, is as follows:

*Que lo vide en los torneos
 Y en las justas de mi prima
 Hacer valerosos hechos,
 Y desde entonces quede
 Que no duermo ni sosiego
 En pensar en su persona;
 Y si lograra mi intento,
 Y quisiera ser mi esposo
 Reununciara de mis reinos
 Y me volviera cristiana,
 Por tener tan dulce dueño.--*
 (Durán, *Romancero General* 234).

Lest we see Floripes' actions as forecasting a life of Christian virtue, Gisela Beutler's illuminating study of Floripes in the Piemonte text (from which the López versification was probably derived) suggests otherwise: at the end of the cycle, when Charlemagne and the Twelve Peers defeat Balán, the latter still refuses to abjure his religion and become baptized a Christian. Floripes calls for his death, upon which her brother Fierabras berates her:

En esto veo, mi buena hermana, la poca virtud de las mujeres, que por cumplir sus deseos, ninguna cosa dejaron de hacer. Por traer a efecto tus carnales placeres con Guy de Borgoña, vendiste a tu padre y todo tu linaje, y fuiste causa de la muerte de mas de cien hombres, y no contenta con esto, y después de vendido el cuerpo, quieres que se pierda el ánima, rogando que le maten sin recibir el bautismo.³⁹

The aspersion cast upon Floripes by Fierabras, while gendered, also casts doubt on Floripes' capacity to be truly capable of Christian virtue. Her sexual weakness thus stands in as a metonymical substitute for her racial incapacity as a *conversa*, or even *marrana*, which has come to be a colloquial expression for "slut" or "pig."

The Tagalog version overturns this line of thought completely, beginning with a recounting of Balan's trip to Rome accompanied not by Fierabras but rather his daughter Floripes. It is on this journey that Gui de Borgoña first catches sight of the Moorish princess. Noticing the glitter of the diamond ring on her hand which she rests on the edge of the carriage, he proceeds to

lift her ring from her finger by “poking” [sundot] his sword into it, attracting her attention and causing her in turn to fall in love with him:

*Dulo ng espada ay hindi nalihis
ang nasa ng loob nangyaring sinapit,
nang sa maramdaman ng sa ganda’y labis
dumungaw na bigla nagtama ang titig*

The end of his sword did not go astray
and was able to reach right inside,
when she definitely felt it she gazed out
and suddenly [his] stare pierced her.

*Dili nagpamalay sa irog na ama
ginapos ang puso ng malaking sinta,
may simang palaso ang siyang kapara
na di maiwasa’t buhay mapapaka*

She hardly took notice of her father’s love
her heart became chained with a great love,
it was like a feathered arrow
she could not evade it from entering her.⁴⁰

The sexual connotation may have been a common one. Lumbera’s analysis of the poetry of another Tagalog poet of the period, José de la Cruz, highlights the same metaphor and its erotic undertones.⁴¹ In either case, the theme of penetration in these two stanzas transforms a language of violence and subjection into one of desire and seduction.

This theme continues in the Tagalog writer’s development of the narrative: when Gui is later assigned the task of leading an attack on the Turkish occupation of Rome then discovers that the commanding general of the defending army is his beloved Floripes. He instructs his army not to attack and instead goes out to meet her. When Floripes sees Gui, she gives him a “wounded look” [*tamaang titig*] before becoming enraged that he is leading an attack on Rome.⁴² Yet instead of fighting her, Gui throws away his sword, offering her his life:

*...oh bayaning Judit sa rikit mo’t kiyas
libo mang gerero’y pawang mabibihag...*

oh warrior-hero Judith in your beauty
are thousands of soldiers captured...

*...sa rikit mo’t kiyas
ang patay mang puso’y pilit na liliyag
kaya ang buhay ko ay handog sa yapak
laan ang dibdib ko’t tabak mo’y itarak.*

...owing to your great beauty
I will go on deeply loving your murderous heart
So my life is offered up to [your] embrace
My breast, destined for the stab of your cutlass.

(Doce Pares 12-13, stanzas 75 and 78)

The allusion to Judith is significant here: she is also mentioned in the *Pasyon Heneasis*, in comparison with the Virgin Mary; and it is likely that the two works were written around the same time.⁴³ Indeed, it may not be entirely coincidental that we find an extended panegyric of Judith's virtues in the description by the famous Jesuit chronicler Pedro Murillo Velarde, S.J. regarding the celebration of the return of the image of the Virgin Mary of Antipolo from her journey to and from Mexico in 1746 to the highlands of Antipolo.⁴⁴ Comparing the lavish display of gratitude, generosity, happiness, and praise among Philippine residents from every part of the world, in celebration of the image of the Antipolo Virgin's return to her native town, moves the author to compare the festive occasion to the Biblical story of the lifting of the siege of Bethulia by the Assyrians under Holofernes. In the biblical story, the pious Judith enters Holofernes' camp by promising him information on how to defeat the Hebrews; when Holofernes falls under her spell and becomes drunk, she decapitates him. After seeing the head of their leader mounted on a pike the following morning, the Assyrians, dismayed, withdraw their siege of the city. A longer paper would explore the association of Floripes, the Moorish princess, with Judith; and Judith with the Virgin Mary, or an avatar of the Virgin Mary as *mulier fortis*.⁴⁵ In any case, Judith became a permanent fixture in colonial society as well as Orthodox Christianity: even today the May processions of the *Santacruzán* (celebrated in honor of Mary) include her, carrying a sword in one hand and the head of Holofernes in the other.⁴⁶

Back on the battlefield, as Floripes looks into Gui's eyes, a feeling of "mercy and love enters" into her, causing her to spare him.⁴⁷ Once again, the stanza makes use of a sexual innuendo: "*nunuwi sa Roma ang puso'y hilahil / parang sinasaka nang sa sinta'y hinggil*" ["she went home to Rome, her heart full of grief / as if *planted* there, as it is in matters of love"] (stanza 80). Instead of waging the war of *moros* and *cristianos*, Floripes returns to Rome, "her heart made captive by [Gui de] Borgoña" (stanza 81a).

The remainder of the text for the most part comprises "a faithful metrical rendering of...the Spanish *Historia del Emperador Carlo Magno*."⁴⁸ Yet the opening scenes inserted by the narrator at the beginning of the text

effectively initiate a now *underlying* subplot of the Christian-Moor romance (within the larger frame of Charlemagne and the Twelve Peers): a subplot that proceeds by way of metaphors around the theme of both willing and unwilling capture, penetration, and servitude.⁴⁹ With Floripes' insertion into the first part of the Charlemagne cycle, her gendered portrayal as a deceptive and somewhat ruthless schemer for the Christian knight Gui de Borgoña cedes to her representation as a valiant warrior and leader. Her later rescue of those Peers captured by her father Balán, her journey with the Peers to France to be baptized, and her subsequent marriage to her beloved Gui de Borgoña, all follow the Piemonte and López versions of the story cycle; yet their meaning has completely changed. Floripes' new identity as a commanding officer of the Turkish army highlights *her* sacrifice to the Christian Peer, *her* decision to short-circuit the Christian-Moor device, render it inoperative. According to this reading, the role of Floripes parallels the role of the Virgin Mary that one sees in the Tagalog *Pasyon Henesis*, in which love for the other becomes translated into subjection to the law. By her own free will, Floripes sacrifices her warrior's gear—and with it, her identity as the dark half of the Christian-Moor binarism—in order to surrender to Christian desire.

This resignification of the Moorish princess has the paradoxical effect of diminishing to the point of superfluity the stakes behind her conversion to Christianity. For instead of surrendering to Christianity because of the weakness of her will against the force of love, she actively *bargains* for it, promising in exchange the lives of the Twelve Peers and a treasure-chest of holy relics. This active negotiation on the part of the woman to earn the recognition of the king reappears in another famous *awit* of the period, *Salita at Buhay na Kahabag-habag na Pinagdaanan nang Pitong Infantes de Lara at nang Kaabaabang Kanilang Ama sa Reinong España* [*The Pitiful Words and Deeds Told of the Seven Princes of Lara and Their Wretched Father in the Kingdom of Spain*, hereafter referred to as *Siete Infantes*]. In most of the Spanish versions of the epic, the bastard son Mudarra González, son of a Christian knight and a Moorish noblewoman who grows up in the Arab kingdom of southern Spain, at the age of maturity discovers his Christian birthright and travels

to Christian Spain in search of his father and in order to avenge the death of his seven brothers. In the Tagalog version, Morada Gonzalo goes to Spain not only to seek out his birthright as a Christian noble through his father, Busto de Lara, but also to ask his father to marry his mother, so that he will be a legitimate child instead of a bastard son. Busto de Lara agrees on the condition that she is baptized, whereupon Morada returns to the Turkish kingdom and convinces his mother (Hismeña) to become a Christian. Out of a mother's love for her son, she acquiesces. In order to do so, however, she must escape the Turkish kingdom as a fugitive, which forces her to don a knight's armor and leave with Morada disguised as a man.

When Almanzor discovers his daughter Hismeña's escape, he declares war on the Christians. In the course of battle, Busto de Lara is surrounded and about to die, when Hismeña dons her armor and fights "like a fierce lioness" [*leonang mabangis ang siyang kapara*"), saving his life from certain death.⁵⁰ After Almanzor's defeat, the Turkish emperor is baptized, his daughter Hismeña is converted to Christianity and married to Busto de Lara (Morada's father), and the couple inherits Hismeña's father Almanzor's empire. Finally, Morada inherits both a Christian patriarchal lineage and a legitimate noble birth; then he becomes heir to the Turkish Empire.

While the details of the plot cannot be discussed in full detail here, the preceding summary shows that, like the *Doce Pares*, the *Siete Infantes* has woven the Christian noble-Moorish princess romance into the *awit* or metrical romance. This romantic theme, similar to the case of *Doce Pares*, ties together the other plots of conquest, defeat, surrender, captivity, and freedom on the Christian-heathen frontier. Perhaps not surprisingly, these themes come to a head when Hismeña, who has escaped from her father Almanzor's kingdom by disguising herself as a man, confronts her lover Busto de Lara in a scene that both dramatizes a challenge and a surrender to the Christian prince and the law of patriarchy:

*Tugon ng prinsesa marangal na konde
nagpasasalamat sa dikit mo't buti
ako'y siyang bukod sa ibang babai
kaya naparito'y naglako ng puri.*

Replied the princess: "Honorable Count,
I thank you for your radiance and goodness;
of all women I am different
in coming here to hawk my honor like merchandise.

<p><i>Sa lagay tang ito ay nagkapalitan lalaki ang siyang may kapanganiban sa mga babai ako'y bukod lamang tumawid ng bundok at naglakbay bayan.</i></p>	<p>We have exchanged places; the man is the one who should encounter dangers; but of all women I alone am the exception having crossed the mountains to go to another kingdom</p>
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(cited in Eugenio, Awit and Corrido 395, stanzas 394-395).

Hismeña's proud stance—as well as her later rescue of her husband from a Turkish general and his soldiers by fighting at his side—create an important variation of the “woman warrior” motif that we saw in the *Doce Pares*. Whereas the *Doce Pares* employs the narrative of the woman-warrior surrendering herself to a law of desire that becomes tied to the desire for law (through Christian baptism and marriage), *Siete Infantes* forces the Christian prince Busto to recognize Hismeña's sacrifice and dignity before her surrender. The “warrior-princess” motif counterbalances the Moorish princess's sweet surrender to the law; instead, the unbaptized subject first demands recognition as an *equal* participant in the creation and maintenance of relations and representations between the Christian and heathen worlds. That both attitudes toward Hispanization through Christianity could coexist within the same narrative, even the *same word*, can be demonstrated in a passage taken from the *Siete Infantes* in which Busto de Lara and Princess Hismeña both apologize to one another: “*ang hingi ko'y tawad na malaki*,” he says; “*ang hingi ko ako'y patawarin*,” she responds (Awit and Corrido 395-396, stanzas 400-401). The root word is *tawad*, which in this context means “to forgive” but in other contexts can mean “to bargain.” The first Christianized meaning implies the absolution from an abject state; the second, the process of working toward a mutual agreement regarding the value(s) of the object of exchange. The writer of the Tagalog versification of *Siete Infantes* is careful to place the phrase “*ang hingi ko*” [“it is my plea”] both times before “*tawad*”: failure to do this would result in a grave misinterpretation of the forgiveness scene, toward the language of the marketplace.⁵¹ Indeed, this ambivalence of meaning resonates with the cited passage above, in which Hismeña arrives

in Spain “to hawk my honor like merchandise” (“*naparito’y naglako ng puri*”). Does Hismeña come as a supplicant in need of Christian grace or does she come to stake a claim to Christianity on the basis of what she has to offer it in return? Does she dramatize her submission to the king as an act of sacrifice; or does she come to cut a deal with the father of her child, an offer too good for the latter to refuse?

Floripes and the Efflorescence of Tagalog *Awit* and *Komedya*

The Tagalog Floripes in the *Doce Pares* and Hismeña in *Siete Infantes de Lara* portray on the level of colonial romances what was clearly happening in the field of the native *comedia* or *komedya*, as witnessed by Fr. Martínez de Zuñiga and others.⁵² While remaining in a Christian universe, organized around the providential role of the Spanish conquest, the once and future victory over a Universal Enemy (characterized as either the Devil or the Moor), the conversion of pagans and infidels to the one true religion, the Christian neophytes had nevertheless succeeded in introducing and elaborating a field of reflection, investigation, and activity that missionaries were hard put to prohibit or control—illicit forms of courtship, the performance of music and dance outside Church supervision, and the performance of plays whose references and underlying concerns no longer conformed to Church orthodoxy. Perhaps not surprisingly, these new expressions of freedom just outside Church supervision also reflected ceaselessly on the powers and limits of free will and judgment in a world governed by the right of conquest, the obligation of servitude, and the persistence of slavery.⁵³ Christian neophytes did so by employing the same language, rhetoric, techniques, and devices they learned from the missionaries. Once in play, divergent practices threatened to establish themselves as new traditions; and spawn further heterodoxies. Ultimately, in the Philippines as in the Americas, the Church found itself incapable of corralling an imagination it had unleashed.

Further research would pursue many unanswered questions about the transformation of the Moro archetype from Universal Enemy to converted Christian queen—an idea that was certainly latent in the early modern Spanish books of chivalry, but had yet to be fully exploited by the “New

Spanish” kingdoms of Mexico and the Philippines. Was it pure coincidence, for example, that one of the main obstacles to the establishment and maintenance of Christian conversion persisted in the form of the *babaylan* or *catalonan*: female or men who dressed as women shamans who presided over the traditions and rituals of those frontier communities outside or on the margins of the sphere of religious administration?⁵⁴ Or that one of the most significant revolts against the Spanish government in 1762 had been led by the wife of a slain leader in Ilocos, Gabriela Silang?

Finally, do we see in figures like Floripes and Hismeña a “drift” towards the kind of reversals and outright parodies of the *moro-cristiano* theme that populate Francisco Balagtas’ famous *awit*, [Ang] *Pinagdaanang Buhay ni Florante at ni Laura sa Cahariang Albania* (1838) [*The Life Saga of Florante and Laura from the Kingdom of Albania*]? Can it be mere coincidence, for example, that the plot appears to be diametrically opposed in every respect to the tensions that propel the narrative of a romance like that of *Doce Pares*: a Christian prince (Florante), who depends upon a Muslim prince (Aladin) to rescue him; after which both are saved by two princesses? A blossoming friendship between a Christian (Laura) and Muslim (Flerida) princess, after the Muslim princess saves Laura just as Aladin has saved Florante? Balagtas’ transgressions to the conventions of the genre in each case amount to blasphemy: while the poem casually mentions as an afterthought that Aladin and Flerida receive baptism before returning home to the[ir] kingdom of Persia, one suspects that Balagtas included it either to evade the censor, or as a perverse joke. For, having disarmed and dispatched the *moro-cristiano* device or *dispositif*, the component parts of the narrative no longer serve their original function, and frolic in the play of inversions, reversals, repetitions (Florante / Flerida), analogies, apostrophes, parody, and bathos. Are Floripes and Flerida, then, so different?

Notes

1. Much of the research on comparative Mexican and Philippine customs in this essay was spurred by a visit to Zacatecas in 2014, to witness the 3-day celebration of the town's patron saint (actually the patron saint of Bracho, an outlying suburb) St. John the Baptist. There residents host the largest *morisma* in the world, with participation in the dramas featuring the beheading of John the Baptist, the story of Charlemagne and the Twelve Peers of France, and the 1571 Battle of Lepanto, reaching upwards of 13,000 people. Special thanks goes to Jánea Estrada and her husband Juan Carlos for their help and generosity.
2. See Damiana Eugenio, *Awit and Corrido: Philippine Metrical Romances* 16-17. In her landmark study, Eugenio notes that *Doce Pares* "has been retold in six of the major Philippine languages," more than any other romance (xviii).
3. [(*los corridos*) llega(ban) a los indios desfigurados y desfigurándolos ellos a su vez, ya por lecturas mal hechas en lengua exótica, ya por recitos incompletos o monstruosos, fueran el origen de sus Corridos, cuyo nombre no significa en puridad otra cosa que papeles volantes que de mano en mano corren . . .].
4. Barrantes gives primary credit to the Jesuits, although Irving's more recent work has rightfully emphasized the importance of the Franciscans in the transculturation of music and the performing arts overseas: see *Colonial Counterpoint* 110-115.
5. See Wenceslao Retana, *Noticias histórico-bibliográficas de el teatro en Filipinas desde sus orígenes hasta 1898* 17.
6. Also cited in Donoso and Gallo, *Literatura hispanofilipina actual* 106.
7. Rafael Bernal's *México en Filipinas* represents the first book-length study of transplanted cultural traditions or transculturations (language, food, tools, musical instruments, and so on) across the Pacific during the colonial period. More recent evaluations of his thesis appear in Nicanor Tiongson, "Mexican-Philippine Folkloric Traditions"; D. M. V. Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint*; Serge Gruzinski, *Las cuatro partes del mundo*; the aforementioned Bernal's own *El Gran Océano*; and the recent anthology of essays edited by Thomas Calvo and Paulina Machuca (*México y Filipinas*).
8. The idea of "contact zones" was developed by Mikhail Bakhtin to describe the space of representation in the novel: see *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* 345. It was Mary Louise Pratt who recognized the value of Bakhtin's idea to describe colonial arenas of conflict and negotiation, in a manner that foregrounds the frontier character of colonial relations and what Fernando Ortiz called the anthropological process of transculturation. See Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: travel writing and transculturation* 1-12; Ortiz, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* 86-90.

9. In Europe, these dances survive throughout the former Hapsburg empire, although they were known to have existed as a courtly tradition in England, (present-day) Belgium and Germany, Croatia, and France as well as Italy and Spain. For an overview of this tradition in Perú (treated in this essay somewhat less centrally than the case of New Spain), see Milena Cáceres Valderrama, *La fiesta de moros y cristianos en el Perú*.
10. Janea Estrada's editorial on the Morismas de Bracho celebrated in Zacatecas around September 8 every year, mentions the unorthodox custom of the native inhabitants of hosting a "*Corrida de Moros*" along with the more conventional bull-run; and in which characters dressed up as "*Moros*" played the part of the bull being assailed on all sides by the populace. See editorial, *La Gualdra* (La Jornada Zacatecas), no. 163, Sept. 1, 2014, 2.
11. Concerning the parallel and overlapping traditions of the *danzas de conquista*, or dances of the conquest performed in Latin America, Laëtitia Mathis has emphasized the importance of a written manuscript, handed down from generation to generation and re-copied by hand when the manuscript deteriorates, as one of the only ways of preserving a tradition that otherwise depends primarily on oral retellings from memory. See Mathis, "*La danse de la Conquête au Mexique: signification, origine et évolution*," *Escritural*, no. 2. Dec. 2009 (web).
12. For a comprehensive catalog and analysis of these dances, see Jáuregi and Bonfiglioli, *Danzas de Conquista*. See also Sylvia Rodriguez, *The Matachines Dance: Ritual Symbolism and Interethnic Relations in the Upper Rio Grande Valley* 17-42; Warman 156-157; Arthur L. Campa, "*Los Comanches: A New Mexican Folk Drama*."
13. "...A falta de las grands cruzadas en Tierra Santa, España sostiene durante siete siglos lo que pudiéramos llamar su "*cruzada propia*" en contra, no tanto del islam en sí, sino de la ocupación islámica de su territorio...esa obsesión de siete siglos forja el carácter español...al extremo de que cuando vive la nueva epopeya de la conquista de un imperio, sigue con su pensamiento nostálgico repasando todos los episodios de la terminada gesta de la reconquista" (*El Gran Océano* 115).
14. In addition to Irving and Warman, see Jacques Lafaye, *Mesias, cruzadas, utopias*. As Arturo Warman explains, in its original transplantation, the *danza de moros y cristianos* appeared to serve primarily the conquistadors: "*La función primordial de las fiestas [para los conquistadores]...se convierten en una declaración de unidad frente a un ambiente hostil; una reafirmación de la continuidad de las tradiciones originales; una reiteración del papel de los conquistadores como parte del pueblo elegido, depositarios de una santa cruzada sucesora digna de la que realizaron sus antepasados*" (71). For Franciscan millenarianism, see John L. Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*.
15. Max Harris, *Aztecs, Moors, and Christians* 3-17.

16. On the term *dispositif*, device or apparatus, see Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus? and Other Essays* 1-24.
17. See Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, "Born With a Silver Spoon" 220-221.
18. This is the thesis of Mariano Ardash Bonialian's book, *El pacífico hispanoamericano: Política y comercio asiático en el imperio español (1680-1784). La centralidad de lo marginal*. See in particular 259-365. See also Margarita Suárez, *Desafíos transatlánticos. Mercaderes, banqueros y el estado en el Perú virreinal, 1600-1700* 208-219; Bolívar Echeverría, *La modernidad de lo barroco*.
19. Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, "Cycles of Silver: Global Economic Unity Through the Mid-Eighteenth Century." Warman argues that the discovery of silver mines in northern Mexico, which corresponded with and hastened the precipitous decline of the native Amerindian population, was decisive in accounting for the survival and dissemination of the *moros y cristianos* archetype. On the one hand, missionaries like the Franciscans and Jesuits became the primary intermediaries between native peoples and the Spanish population, beginning with the prohibition against the "intervention" of Spaniards in the frontier towns without express approval of the colonial government and religious orders. See Nicholas Rangel, *Historia del toreo en México. Época colonial [1529-1821]* 325.
20. See Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico* 239-295.
21. Rainer Buschmann, et al., *Navigating the Spanish Lake* 13-16.
22. See José Luis Porras, *The Synod of Manila of 1582*. Translated by Corita Barranco et al. 234-245.
23. "[The Augustinians] sponsored many kinds of music and dances; which were from among those [dances] that our Indians, as well as Chinese and Japanese, would do; all in great variety, they went very well, and adorned and enlivened the festival greatly" Chirino, *Relación de las islas Filipinas* (cited in Leonicio Cabrero Fernández, "Orígenes y desarrollo del teatro en Filipinas" 84. Colín's 1663 work *Labor Evangélica* describes a "warlike and passionate" dance executed with such grace and elegance that "the dance is not unworthy of accompanying and solemnizing Christian feasts" (cited in Retana 34).
24. See Cabrero Fernández, "Orígenes y desarrollo" 83.
25. Audiences of the *danzas de moros y cristianos* and the romances of chivalry will recognize the association of these jousts with the *parlamentos*, *embajadas*, or *coloquios* spoken by Christian and Moorish knights prior to and intermittently during the long battles. These *parlamentos* arrived in the Americas and the Philippines through *libros de caballería*, "Books of the Brave," which were in turn derived or inspired by French medieval *chansons de geste*, which featured dialogues between parties concerning diplomatic, amorous, and / or religious negotiation pertaining to Christian conversion. In the Philippines, this tradition built on native versions of riddles exchanged among grieving family members of

- a deceased relative, and were called *dupluhan* (from *duplo*, a Tagalog “loan-word” probably from the Spanish *doble*) in the colonial period.
26. See Steven Patrick Fernandez, *The San Miguel Fiesta. Rituals of Iligan City: a study of form, function, and value*.
 27. Audiences of the colonial *danzas de moros y cristianos* and the romances of chivalry in New Spain and Peru will recognize the association of these jousts with the *parlamentos*, *embajadas*, or *coloquios* spoken Christian and Moorish knights prior to and intermittently during the long battles. These *parlamentos* built on native versions of riddles exchanged among grieving family members of a deceased relative, and were called *dupluhan* (from *duplo*, a Tagalog “loan-word” probably from the Spanish *doble*) in the colonial period.
 28. See *Toros y cañas en Filipinas en 1623*.
 29. See the recent article of Miguel Martínez, “*Don Quijote, Manila, 1623: orden colonial y cultura popular*” 143-159.
 30. “Among the Mexican Indians,” Rafael Bernal writes, “the Moor was an imaginative fiction... But when the dance arrives to the Philippines... the people knew what a Moor was; they were familiar with Mohammed and had suffered from the Islamic invasions, as well as the great corsair and pirate campaigns... When the story [of Christians fighting Moors] is based in reality, as it is in Filipinas, it takes on a new life and becomes transformed with each new generation” (*México en Filipinas. Un estudio de transculturación* 122-123).
 31. These masks were imported at least as early as the 1623 festival studied by Miguel Martínez (“*Don Quixote, Manila*” 144-146).
 32. D. R. M. Irving notes that this colonial martial art was banned by Governor Don Simon de Anda y Salazar in 1764, “allowing its use only in comedias as a performative act by arnis veterans selected by the parish priests” (211-212). Felicidad Mendoza traces the roots of indigenous martial arts not to the Spanish *escaramuzas* but *kali*, a fighting technique akin to “the ‘sword and dagger’ style of fighting in England” (Felicidad Mendoza, *The Comedia [Moro-Moro] Re-Discovered* 58).
 33. On the Santa Cruz festival, or *Santacruzán*, Fr. Agustín María de Castro (OSA) wrote at the end of the eighteenth century: “*los principios comenzaria con buena intencion y con buenos modales de los cristianos antiguos, pero en el dia todo se reduce a bailar los mozos junto con las mozas, y esto de noche, cantándose letras muy profanas en tonadillas poco honestas y poco conformes con la santidad que piden los misterios sacrosantos de la Cruz...todo viene a parar en beber mucho vino de coco y otros peligros y excesos.*” See Castro, in Manuel Merino, “*La provincia filipina de Batangas vista por un misionero a fines de siglo XVIII*” 210.
 34. [*Estos indios...son muy afectos a comedias, y la gente más principal es la que hace de actores; y como éstos no suelen saber la lengua castellana, piden que se les permita representar en su propio idioma, y no se tiene el menor reparo en permitir las comedias*

- en lengua tagala en todos los pueblos de esta provincia, aun en el de Binondo, que sólo está separado de la ciudad por un río; ¡y se trata de que los párorocos prediquen en español!...] (Zuñiga, *Estadismo de las Islas Filipinas* 1: 301).
35. [Las comedias de los indios se componen de tres ó cuatro tragedias españolas, cuyos pasajes están entrelazados unos con otros, y forman al parecer una sola pieza. Siempre entran en ellas moros y cristianos, y todo el enredo consiste en que los moros quieren casarse con las princesas cristianas y los cristianos con las princesas moras]. See also Retana, *Noticias histórico-bibliográficas* 24; Barrantes, *El teatro tagalo* 20ff. While Tiongson asserts that the *komedya* began as the portrayal of stories orally transmitted prior to their publication as metrical romances, it is clear from Damiana Eugenio's study that the writers had some access (however limited) to these romances, at times following the Spanish version to the letter and at other times completely departing from them: see Tiongson, *Kasaysayan ng Komedyang sa Pilipinas 1766-1982* 20; Eugenio, *Awit and Corrido: Philippine Metrical Romances*. As we will see, the most notable departures in which the playwright has recourse only to his own invention are the romances between Christian and Moor.
 36. [No suele haber mucha dificultad en componer los matrimonios de los moros con las cristianas: una guerra que se declara oportunamente, en la cual el príncipe moro hace proezas extraordinarias, y su bautismo y conversión á la fe católica facilita el casamiento, que desata todo el enredo de este pasaje de la comedia]. (Zuñiga, *Estadismo* 73-74).
 37. See Durán, *Romancero General* 229-243 [nos. 1253-1260].
 38. See Yolando Pino Saavedra's history of the diffusion of the Charlemagne cycle in "Historia de Carlomagno y de los Doce Pares de Francia en Chile," *Folklore Americas* vol. XXVI, no. 2, Dec. 1966, pp. 1-29. Warman points out that the most concentrated diffusion of *moros y cristianos* festivals that harken back directly to the the Charlemagne cycle are practiced in or around Puebla, Mexico, although the largest *moros y cristianos* festival in the world takes place in Zacatecas, in northern Mexico.
 39. See Gisela Beutler, "Floripes, la princesa pagana en los bailes de 'Moros y cristianos' de México: algunas observaciones sobre las fuentes literarias" 266 (n. 24). Cf. also the critique of Floripes by L. Gautier, in *ibid.* 265-266.
 40. Eugenio, *Mga Piling Awit at Korido* 10, stanzas 56-57.
 41. See Lumbea, *Tagalog Poetry 1565-1896: Tradition and Influences in its Development* 79. This same poet, known as *Huseng Sisiw* ['Chick' José] by his peers, is widely considered to be the author of the Tagalog *Doce Pares*, although no scholar has established anything but the most circumstantial evidence to prove his authorship.
 42. Eugenio, *Mga Piling Awit at Korido* 12, stanza 70.
 43. "Siya rin ngangin totoo / ang Arca nang testamento, / at Judit na mananalo, na pumugot niyong ulo / ni Olofernes na lilo" (*Casaysayan nang Pasióng Mahal* 2472)

["She is also truly / the Ark of the covenant / and Judith the conqueror / who cut off the head / of the traitorous Holofernes"]. As Margarita Stocker's work on the legend of the biblical heroine Judith shows, Judith's rescue of Israel from destruction at the hands of the Assyrians provides us with a remarkable analogue to Floripes. Both figures take on the qualities of both sides of the gender divide, thus calling into question the order that allegedly sustains them in their dependence on patriarchal law and their condition of negativity within it. Their anomalous position within the structure of patriarchy is reinforced by both their material independence and their capacity to transgress or question the conditions of their violation, captivity, or allegiance to the law (Stocker, *Judith, Sexual Warrior: Women and Power in Western Culture* 3-23). According to Stocker, Judith forms the basis of a counter-culture and alternative to "the Oedipal myth, and to all that it signifies about the ordering of Western culture" (23). One may also add that the story of Judith strongly resonates with the mythical proto-nationalist figure of Gabriela Silang in the Philippines. Gabriela Silang was the wife of Diego Silang who led a revolt in Ilocos in 1762 that called for the abolition of the tribute and forced labor, the replacement of various government positions in Ilocos, and the banishment of the Spanish bishop and all Spanish *mestizos* from the province (Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* 109). Upon his death, Gabriela became the head of the rebel army but was captured and hanged four months later (112). As Jaroslav Pelikan has pointed out in his study of the Virgin Mary, this motif of Mary as *Mulier fortis*, woman of valor or woman-warrior goes back to the medieval period. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries* 90-91.

44. Pedro Murillo Velarde, S.J., *Historia de la Provincia de Philipinas, segunda parte* 220-221.
45. As Jaroslav Pelikan has pointed out in his study of the Virgin Mary, this motif of Mary as *Mulier fortis*, woman of valor or woman-warrior goes back to the medieval period. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries* 90-91.
46. See *Casaysayan nang Pasingong Mahal* 151.
47. Damiana Eugenio, *Mga Piling Awit at Korido* 13, stanza 80.
48. Eugenio, *Awit and Korido* 15.
49. "From these slight allusions," Damiana Eugenio writes in her landmark study of Philippine colonial romances, "the Philippine poet built, in 49 stanzas...one romantic episode in a work primarily concerned with the series of battles fought by Charlemagne and his peers. He rejects as the occasion for the first meeting [between Gui and Floripes], the commonplace tournament mentioned in the *Historia* and substitutes for it more romantic circumstances" (Eugenio *Awit and Korido* 15).
50. Eugenio, *Awit and Korido* 397, stanzas 416-418.

51. See Vicente Rafael's landmark *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule* for a historical reflection on the politics of (mis-)translation in the early colonial period.
52. Eugenio points out that awits and corridos "are generally read, but there is evidence that they were once also sung, chanted, or at least recited" (xxiii).
53. The continuity of slave trading throughout the Philippines and Mexico is the subject of Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico*.
54. Carolyn Brewer's *Shamanism, Catholicism and Gender Relations in Colonial Philippines, 1521-1685* provides the best introduction to the gendered nature of spirit mediumship among Philippine indigenous groups that refused or remained outside the isolated areas of the Spanish presence: see especially 83-142. In his account of the Tapar or Malonor rebellion, which took place on the island of Panay (central Visayas), eighteenth-century missionary priest and chronicler Fr. Gaspar San Agustín, O.S.A., refers to babaylanes as "priestesses of the Devil" [sacerdotes del demonio], who were responsible for abhorrent sacrifices and "abominaciones, que todo cedía en perdición de sus almas" ["abominations, which ceded everything in the perdition of their souls"] (see San Agustín, in Casimiro Díaz, editor, *Conquistas de las islas Filipinas: la temporal, por las armas del señor don Phelipe Segundo el Prudente y la espiritual por los religiosos del orden de nuestro padre San Agustín, y fundación y progresos de la Provincia del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús de la misma Orden. Parte Segunda* 641). The leader of this rebellion, Tapar, "andaba en traje de mujer, por ser más propio de este sexo el oficio de Babaylan y sacerdote del demonio" ["went about dressed as a woman, as was befitting the office of Babaylan or priest of the devil"]. (On Gabriela Silang, see note 43 above.)

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Bad English and Fresh Spaniards

Translation and Authority in Philippine
and Cuban Travel Writing

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Abstract

Cuban José Martí narrated his 1880 travels in New York in “bad English” while Filipino Antonio Luna commented on his 1889 travels in Madrid in “fresh Spanish.” The texts chronicle the shifting and wary gazes of colonial travelers toward Spain’s waning imperial rule and the rise of US expansionism, travelers who employ imperial languages to express anti-imperial messages. Through the mechanisms of translation, Luna and Martí bolster their own authority within a hostile, metropolitan environment. By dictating the terms through which multiple languages engage with each other, Luna and Martí also dictate how different subjects engage with each other. This leads them to make vastly diverging claims about what it means to be a “savage” in the late 19th century.

Keywords

José Martí, Antonio Luna, Travel Chronicles, Anticolonial Writing,
Translation, Authority, Racialization, New York, Madrid, 19th Century



Fig. 1. Antonio Luna with Salas de Armas Students;
https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Antonio_Luna_with_Sala_de_Armas_students.png



Fig. 2. Imágenes de una exposición. Filipinas en el parque del Retiro, en 1887;
<https://madridfree.com/imagenes-de-una-exposicion-filipinas-en-el-parque-del-retiro-en-1887/>



Fig. 3. Martí Monument in New York (© Patricio Orellana 2019)

Travel, Translation, Authority: An Introduction

In October 1880, Cuban José Martí publishes a chronicle in *The Hour*, a New York art weekly, in which he comments on how New Yorkers speak English. Martí argues that unlike its British roots, US English is vague, incomprehensible, and lacks culture. He insists that he need not write well in English to note that northerners of the US speak English poorly.

In December 1889, Filipino Antonio Luna confronts a young Spanish girl in Madrid who is surprised that he can speak Spanish, as registered in his travel chronicle published in a Philippine fortnightly magazine, *La Solidaridad*. He informs her that Spanish is the official language of the Philippines while also correcting her vocabulary in her native tongue; the language they are speaking is not called “Spanish,” but rather “Castilian.”

These two scenes inspire a series of questions: What happens when an intellectual from a colony travels to a metropolis and writes about it? By what authority does such a writer say anything about the customs and cultures of those who dwell in imperial capitals? If the traveler does not appear to have such authority, can authority be constructed through the process of writing? What is the role of language, specifically imperial languages, in this struggle for intellectual and tangible power? The essay that follows takes these scenes and questions as invitations to address the dynamic relationship between translation and authority in Martí’s “badly written” English impressions about New York in dialogue with Luna’s Spanish-language impressions about his travels in Madrid.

Nineteenth-century travelers from Latin America and the Philippines did not commonly write about the capitals they visited. Europeans traveled to and wrote about the Philippines and Latin America in great numbers in the 18th and 19th centuries. André Pierre Ledru of France, Alexander von Humboldt of Germany, and Ramón de la Sagra of Spain wrote extensive naturalist accounts about their travels in the Caribbean and throughout the Americas. Spaniards Antonio Chápuli y Navarro, Vicente Barrantes, Wenceslao Retana, and Pablo Feced y Temprado traveled to the Philippines about which they wrote a series of “costumbrista,” ethnographic, and historiographical texts. These practices were central to the development of natu-

ralism through which European scientists and writers pursued a subtle, yet impactful second wave of European conquest (Pratt 7).¹

Wealthy Latin Americans and Filipinos traveled extensively to the US and Europe in the 19th century. Julio Ramos asserts that Latin American travelers often sought education and other tools they could use to order the supposed chaos back home (Ramos 146 and Rivera Nieves 51). Travelers were reluctant to write about Europe because expressing verbal claims about their experiences in the metropolis would, in Mary Louise Pratt's terms, "imply a reciprocity not in keeping with colonial hierarchies" (190). Very few of these travelers, outside of Argentine Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, dared to break with these hierarchies, until along came two writers from Spain's last remaining overseas colonies: Martí and Luna.

Martí's English chronicles are titled "Impressions of America by a very Fresh Spaniard," rather similar to the title of Luna's Spanish accounts: "Impresiones madrileñas de un filipino." These parallel texts employ imperial languages to articulate anti-imperial messages. The traveling writers stage power struggles within the very language of their chronicles. Instead of seeking tools in New York and Madrid to order the chaos back home, Martí and Luna use discursive tools from back home to order what they perceive to be confused in the cultural capitals of the falling and rising empires, Spain and the US.

In their chronicles, Luna and Martí craftily manipulate language, making it difficult to establish where writing stops and translation begins. Very little has been written about the work of translation as a strategy to bolster authority within a hostile environment in either Martí's or Luna's writings. For Martí, there have been structural analyses of his translations of Latin, French, and English works to Spanish by Leonel Antonio de la Cuesta and Lourdes Arencibia Rodríguez. Most influential for this essay is the work of Esther Allen, who asserts that translation is an epistemological process for Martí; like his translations, Martí's thought is "not abstract or ahistorical, but contextual, relational, derived from a unique conjunction of circumstance addressed in their specific particularity and from a singular and situationally rooted viewpoint" (30). This relational aspect corresponds with

Vicente Rafael's reading of translation in Antonio Luna's writing, Rafael being the only scholar to examine Luna's language as a function of translation. Rafael asserts that Luna uses the Spanish language as a code to deliver insurgent messages to a non-Spanish readership; translation is a process of rendering something foreign. Rafael argues that through translation, Luna communicates covertly while also embodying "an excess of messages beyond his control" (*Promise of the Foreign* 34).

In this article, translation refers to this idea of Rafael's, which dialogues with Walter Benjamin's concept of "translatability." Translation is more than substituting the language of a text with another; it is a mode of expression that points to the interrelation between different languages, while also highlighting any one linguistic utterance's inevitable estrangement from itself over time. Rafael calls this quality "the promise of the foreign;" language is never static, always dynamic, and because of this ever-changing nature, any text's possibility for comprehension in the future is always rooted in translation (*Promise of the Foreign* 15).

Consequently, translation underlines the political nature of linguistic projects to preserve traditional language usage, as well as efforts to innovate with and diverge from traditional language rules. On the one hand, translation represents a reality of language; language constantly becomes foreign to itself, inspiring some to try and arrest that change and others to embrace it.² On the other hand, as examined in the pages that follow, translation represents a mode of assigning meaning to two languages' interactions with each other, as well as a manner of mediating and regulating the interactions between people who speak the different languages. By studying Martí's and Luna's approaches to translation, one can decipher their interpretations of the colonial power dynamics and distributions of authority in the late 19th century, dynamics and distributions which were perpetuated in large part through the language used by colonial authorities, imperial apologists, seekers of reform and autonomy, and proponents of revolution.

This brings us to the concept of authority, framed by Hannah Arendt's essay "What is authority?" and Jacques Rancière's concept of the "distribution of the sensible." On the one hand, Arendt asserts that authority speaks

to a stable and necessarily hierarchical distribution of agency within a certain community, within which persuasion is impossible and coercion is unnecessary (2). Arendt's notion inspires one to ask the following questions, relevant to the study of Luna's and Martí's travel writings: in order to critique authoritarian forms of rule, must anti-colonial writers act in an authoritarian manner? Must they perpetuate some forms of hierarchy to critique other forms of it? Jacques Rancière dialogues with this idea with his concept of the "distribution of the sensible," which asserts that within a given community, the ability to sense, say, and do is finite, and therefore unevenly distributed among those who live in the community. This expounds upon Plato's idea that the peasant cannot participate in politics because he does not have enough time to do so. Rancière asserts that certain events—including technological advances, war, art, and literature—can intervene and in a sense "redistribute" the predetermined shares (from French "*partage*" which Rancière uses in the text's original language) of aesthetic capability and authority to say and do within a specific socio-political order or hierarchy (12). Martí's and Luna's impressions illustrate how translation promotes forms of redistributed authority within the still-colonized island regions and the rising and falling imperial capitals of the late 19th century.

In the following sections, I first touch on the historical context that binds and divides Martí and Luna. Then, I examine what Martí calls his "bad English" alongside Luna's insubordinate use of Spanish. Luna's and Martí's uses of imperial languages represent forms of translation through which they smuggle insurgent messages to friendly and unsympathetic readers alike. Luna and Martí turn to a series of strategies of translation in order to authorize themselves from within the hostile communities in which they find themselves, to diagnose the ills of the empire, to destabilize hierarchies, and to propose and prescribe different forms of sociability. I argue that what appear to be errors in Martí's English language writings are actually instances in which he aims to exert control over both the North American form of English and the North Americans, themselves. This control is framed in the form of a civilizing effort that is at the same time an effort to render North Americans and US English "wild." Martí's and Luna's approaches diverge in

their interpretation of savagery. As explored in this essay's conclusion, these nuanced divergences highlight a decisive way in which race implicates itself in Martí's and Luna's writing, in the anticolonial politics of the moment, and in different cultural struggles that continue until today.

History that Binds and Divides

Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines are the islands that remained under Spanish rule long after nearly all other former Spanish colonies had achieved independence. The rich traditions of Philippine and Caribbean anticolonial writings coincided on several points including their demands for greater representation, less corruption, better education, and less censorship. The demands diverged with regards to the central issues they brought up, the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean and the removal of the friars in the Philippines (Fradera 77; Hagimoto 11; García 9).

For centuries, the Philippines had served Spain as a gateway to the East, a site where Asian spices and silk could be exchanged for Mexican gold. The country was not exploited agriculturally, which led to both its native populations and languages surviving, as opposed to those of the Caribbean. Likewise, the African slave trade did not dominate the Philippines as it had the Caribbean.³ In fact, Spain even sent relatively few administrators to the Philippines, and these remained in Manila. Spanish friars, however, learned local languages and spread throughout the archipelago, gaining an inordinate amount of power (Rafael, *Promise of the Foreign* 7). The intellectuals of the Philippines centrally protested the corruption of the friars who extorted their parishioners and sabotaged the education system (Schumacher 24). The friars limited Filipinos' verbal skills in Spanish; at the end of the 19th century, less than 10% of the country could understand Spanish (Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism* 56). The friars, thus, became the translators between the people and the government, always ensuring the permanence of their own power (Rafael, *Promise of the Foreign* 24-25). While in the Caribbean, rich and poor alike spoke Spanish; in the Philippines only the intellectuals of the late 19th century did. These Filipino "Ilustrados" wrote mostly in Spanish in order to collaborate with intellectuals from other Philippine language groups, to

communicate with European sympathizers, and to undercut friar attempts at limiting their representative power within the colonial government.

Meanwhile, the Latin American wars of independence led Spain to prioritize their economic apparatus in Cuba and Puerto Rico, structured centrally around agriculture and slavery. This led to a dramatic increase in slave importation to the Caribbean. In response, Cuban and Puerto Rican intellectuals in large part pushed for the abolition of slavery, identifying the practice as archaic and economically limiting, but also fearing slave uprisings like those of Haiti (Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery* 4). In Cuba with the “Guerra de diez años” and the “Guerra chiquita” of the 1870’s, this radical racial division embodied by both the institution of slavery and the movement of abolitionism, shifted in a slow and convoluted manner toward the collaboration of white liberals and enslaved and formerly enslaved black people against Spanish military forces (Ferrer 34). Spain responded to such anti-imperial projects by exiling a great number of Cubans. However, the expatriate communities of Key West and New York organized many of the efforts behind the revolutionary movements leading up to 1898 (Mañach 150-152).

Developments in transportation technology and the 1869 opening of the Suez Canal allowed for more and more Filipino, Cuban, and Puerto Rican youths to travel to and study in the US and Spain.⁴ In Spain, the writers sought education and also were subject to theatrical representations of their supposed inferiority. Burlesque representations of Afro-Caribbean and Philippine societies littered Spanish theaters and a Philippines exposition was set up in Madrid’s Parque del Retiro in 1887, complete with imported water buffalos, transplanted khasi pines, freshly erected nipa huts, and loin-cloth-wearing Igorot people transported from the mountainous region of the north of the Philippines to Madrid (Sánchez Gómez 59). These spectacles promoted an orientaling gaze through which imperial apologists could distort and invent the colonized subject, and in the process, the empire could define itself in opposition to this artificial other. Luna and Martí wrote within a cultural context in which imperial apologists constantly doubted the still-colonized peoples’ sophistication and humanity. Menéndez Pelayo said

that Puerto Ricans and Cubans “had no history” (Schmidt-Nowara, *Conquest of History* 120) and Wenceslao Retana said about Filipinos, “Why should it cause offense that I conceive of the Malay race as inferior to the European races? This is a purely scientific opinion...” (Schmidt-Nowara, *Conquest of History* 176). This underlines an important difference between Martí and Luna. Luna was visibly different from his Madrid “hosts;” his Malay appearance distracted interlocutors no matter how well he spoke Spanish. Martí, however, inherited a mostly white-presenting appearance from Cuban and Canary Islander parents who descended from Spaniards; the major marker of his difference in the US was his language.

“Bad” English

In 1868, at the age of 15, Martí joined the Yara rebellion and was imprisoned by the Spaniards. This led to many years of exile in Spain, Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela, and the US where he spent the majority of his 25 years abroad (Kirk 276). He arrived in the US in 1880 and published an extensive series of poems, essays, and chronicles in Latin American newspapers and publishing houses (Rotker 13). Abroad, he also helped organize the Cuban independence movement, eventually returning to fight for his home island in 1895 where he was killed in combat (Schnirmajer 27 and Hagimoto 152).

In the same year that he moved to the US—1880—Martí published 20 articles in English in *The Hour*, a New York arts and social interests magazine. A polemic has arisen about the language in which the texts were written. The traditional narrative asserts that Martí wrote all of the articles in French, having the editors translate them to English.⁵ Corroborating this theory are the testimony of magazine editor Charles Dana (Rodríguez 9) and manuscripts in French for four of the twenty articles held at the Centro de Estudios Martianos in Havana. Martí biographer Jorge Mañach and translator Esther Allen suggest, however, that at least three of the texts that Martí published in *The Hour* were written originally in English. These are the three first-person travel chronicles entitled “Impressions of America by a Very Fresh Spaniard.” No French manuscripts exist for these three chronicles which are rife with grammatical errors, awkward phrasing, and invented

words. Such linguistic idiosyncrasies are not present in Martí's articles for which manuscripts in French exist.⁶

A closer look at these errors suggests both that the text was written originally in English and that the errors were not errors at all but rather purposeful and decisive aesthetic and political gestures. No scholars have pursued such an approach up until now, not even Mañach and Allen who take these errors to be idiosyncratic but not necessarily purposeful. A close reading of these apparent "errors" reveals that Martí's forms of "bad English" are not only indicative of his writing these three articles in English but also represent purposeful, stylistic decisions. The "errors" are distinct manifestations of the work of translation in Martí's English prose, and through them Martí authorizes himself to act as critic of the US's culture and as intervener in the US's language.

The title of Martí's chronicles, "Impressions of America by a Very Fresh Spaniard," is notable on several points. "Impressions," also used in the title of Antonio Luna's chronicles, points to the established school of European painting called "Impressionism" while also being widely used in the titles of *costumbrista* travel writing at the time, like Antonio Chápuli's *Pepin: Impresiones-Viajes-Costumbres Filipinas*. Both the literary and fine arts implications of the term "Impressions" indicate the prevalence of first-person perspective that differentiates "Impressions" from Martí's other writings about the US where impersonal and disembodied bird's eye perspectives prevail. Martí's use of "America" in the title is also notable, given his impactful posterior writings on "Nuestra América."⁷ Calling himself a Spaniard in these English-language chronicles, furthermore, plays into his construction of a link between himself and classical culture via Spain, while also perhaps playfully appropriating the tendency of Anglo-Americans to call anyone who speaks Spanish "Spanish." This also suggests that while Martí opposes both the continuation of Spanish colonial rule and the threat of US imperial expansion into Cuba, he deems the latter to be a greater threat on both a geopolitical and cultural level. Finally, the term "fresh" has been a source of controversy. In subsequent collections, it has been translated as "muy fresco" and "recién llegado," different translators arguing about which connotation

was most important with the term—the impertinence of “fresh” or the fact that Martí had just arrived in the US in 1880.⁸

As suggested by the title, “Impressions” employs first-person narrations that intervene in fascinated and critical descriptions of North Americans:

At a first glance what else can I tell? I have all my impressions vividly awoken. The crowds of Broadway; the quietness of the evenings; the character of men; the most curious and noteworthy character of women; the life in the hotel, that will never be understood for us; that young lady, physically and mentally stronger than the young man who courts her; that old gentleman, full of wisdom and capacity who writes in a sobrious language for a hundred newspapers; this feverish life; this astonishing movement; this splendid sick people, in one side wonderfully extended, in other side—that of intellectual pleasures—childish and poor; this colossal giant, candorous and credulous; these women, too richly dressed to be happy; these men, too devoted to business of pocket, with remarkable neglectness of the spiritual business,—all is, at the same time, coming to my lips, and begging to be prepared in this brief account of my impressions (34-35).

The clipped pace and prevalence of semi-colons graphically echo an anxiety before the rhythm of life and the crises in cultural order and gender roles in North America. These moments of ambivalence before the scenes of industrial progress in the US are seminal in a more general move in Martí’s intellectual writings, in which he equates the technological sophistication of the US with the death of culture. Within this framework, New York is a near perfect foil to the technologically tardy, yet culturally rich cities of Latin America.⁹ Curiously, in “Impressions,” Martí characterizes himself not as Cuban but as a Spaniard among the masses of European immigrants critiqued frequently in local newspapers for being “wild” and “indolent.” Martí exclaims, “I said goodbye for ever to that lazy and poetical inutility of our European countries” (33). Through the phrase “poetical inutility,” Martí assigns a value to a culture that he claims worries little about economic value or utility. This sets up a rivalry of values that his writing dramatically represents: the cult of poetic value and Europe versus the religion of economic value and the US.

In the US, they cannot even speak right, especially in comparison to their culturally rich British counterparts. Martí describes the US form of speaking English as referenced on the opening page of this essay:

It is curious to observe that I can always understand an Englishman when he speaks to me; but among the Americans a word is a whisper; a sentence is an electric commotion. And if somebody asks me how can I know if a language that I so badly write, is badly spoken, I will tell frankly that it is very frequent that critics speak about what they absolutely ignore. . . All conversation is here in a single word: no breathe, no pause; not a distinct sound. We see that we are in the land of railroads.

‘That’s all’—‘didn’t’—‘won’t’—‘ain’t’—‘indeed’—‘Nice weather’—‘Very pleasant’—‘Coney Island’—‘Excursion’ (39-40).

This excerpt represents a self-conscious authorization of badly written English to confront a form of English that Martí considers badly spoken. Translation is at play on two interrelated levels.

First, there is Martí’s “bad English,” these jarring errors that point to the inventions and approximations of novice language learners transitioning from one tongue to another: “for ever” in two words; the awkward prepositional phrase, “in other side”; “candorous;” “sobrious;” “neglectness.” These are words that will not be found in the dictionary. Martí uses the word “breathe” instead of breath, punctuates the conjunction “didn’t” strangely, and uses the verb “tell” in place of “say,” a frequent verbal behavior of new English learners. These moments lead scholars like Mañach and Allen to suggest that “Impressions” was written in English by a “Spaniard” so “Fresh” that he resorts to invented, awkward language to express himself.

Secondly, Martí’s critique of English in the US is rooted in translation as a “promise of the foreign.” Martí considers US English as a language that has lost culture over time. It has become foreign to itself and, specifically, to its culturally rich British roots. Such a consideration reflects by synecdoche Martí’s interpretation of the potential effect of US industrialism on the Western Hemisphere. By disseminating the cult of industriousness and

economic growth, the US destroys the “culture” and “sensuousness” of any and all who follow suit.

Martí’s errors represent, as I will expound upon in the following pages, a form of translation that responds to and attempts to impede this impending crisis of culture, not just in the US, but potentially throughout the Americas, given the US’s imperial potential. Antonio Luna’s “Impresiones madrileñas de un filipino,” which I touch upon in the following section, casts light on Martí’s methods for using translation to muster the authority necessary to impede the spread of the US cult of industriousness. Luna’s language of miseducation, present throughout his “Impresiones,” suggests that translation can function to authorize outsiders to engage in and attempt to transform a group that they are not allowed to join.

The Language of Miseducation

In the Philippines, Antonio Luna was also imprisoned in connection with an armed rebellion, just a year before leaving for Europe in 1886. In Manila, Luna studied chemistry and literature at the Ateneo Municipal and at the Universidad de Santo Tomás. At the Universidad de Barcelona, he acquired his “licenciatura” in pharmacology and then his doctorate at the Universidad Central de Madrid where Martí had studied a decade before. In Spain, Antonio Luna published cultural commentary and travel chronicles under the pseudonym “Taga-Ilog,” while being overshadowed by his brother, the painter Juan Luna, who won several European prizes in the 1880s (Constantino 223). Like Martí, Antonio Luna also returned to his homeland to fight in the revolution. He had great success as a general, and occupies a privileged place in popular memory embodied in the 2015 feature action film, “Heneral Luna.”¹⁰ Luna also died in war, having been assassinated in 1899 by fellow Filipino soldiers as a result of a complex power struggle with rival military leaders (José 377).

Preceding Luna’s bellicose struggles are a series of everyday struggles that the Filipino traveler experienced in day-to-day life in Madrid, registered in his October 31, 1889 chronicle published in *La Solidaridad*, a Philippine magazine out of Barcelona. Luna narrates his struggle and disappointment:

Mi tipo, pronunciadamente malayo, que había llamado extraordinariamente la atención en Barcelona, excita de una manera notoria la curiosidad de los hijos de Madrid. Hay chula, señorita o modista que vuelve dos y tres veces la cara para mirarme y pronunciar con voz suficiente para ser oída:

—Jesús, ¡qué horroroso!

—¡Es un chino!

—¡Es un igorroto!

(Para estos, chinos, igorrotos y filipinos son lo mismo.)

Chicos y grandes, chulos y no chulos, no contentos con esto, se ponen a vociferar como salvajes:

—¡Chino!

—¡¡Chinitoo!!

—¡¡Igorrote!!

...Muchas veces al pensar en estas espontáneas manifestaciones, me pregunto si estoy en Marruecos, en las peligrosas comarcas del Rif, y hasta llego a dudar si vivo en la capital de una nación europea. (444-6)

[My very pronounced Malay figure which had extraordinarily attracted attention in Barcelona, excited in a flagrant way the curiosity of the children of Madrid. There are little girls and young women or *modistes* who turn their heads twice or thrice to look at me and to say, in a voice loud enough to be heard:

—Jesus! How frightening!

—He is Chinese.

—He is an Igorot.

(To these people Chinese, Igorots and Filipinos are one and the same.)

Small boys and big boys, ruffians and not ruffians, not content with this, started to shout like savages:

—Chinese!

—Chi-i-ne-ese!

—Igorot!

...Often in thinking about these spontaneous manifestations, I ask myself if I were in Morocco, in the dangerous borders of the Riffs and not living in the capital of a European nation] (Translation by Fores-Ganzon 445-7)

Luna responds to prejudice by displacing the streets of Madrid to the Rif, the region of Northern Morocco, in which Spain's two "autonomous cities" of Cueta and Melilla are situated, cities occupied by Spain since the 15th and 16th centuries. In this region, frequent battles occurred between the Spanish and Berbers in the 1880s (Chandler 301).

By comparing Spaniards with the Africans they subjugated and looked down on, Luna implies that the Spaniards themselves are the “savages.” Undoubtedly problematic, Luna inscribes himself into a tradition of Northern Europeans who claimed that Africa began at the Pyrenees, critiquing racist Spanish by perpetuating racist equivalences between the categories of “African” and “savage.” Through this complex repurposing of orientalism, Luna authorizes himself to stare back at those who ogled him in the Madrid streets. Likewise, Luna mirrors the ethnographic gaze by which Spaniards had justified their imperial permanence through the 1887 “Exposición filipina de Madrid.”

Language is central both to this discriminatory imperial logic and to Luna’s response to it. Spanish president Emilio Castelar falsely proclaimed that Filipinos of the late 19th century were anachronisms, “human species that reveal to us prehistoric times and examples of monosyllabic languages” (Schmidt-Nowara, *Conquest of History* 169). Not only is no Philippine language monosyllabic, but also Luna shows himself to be a polyglot who uses language dexterity as a tool of authorizing his anticolonial message. Take note of Spanish women’s reactions to his speech, as seen in “Sangre torera” or “Bull-fighters blood,” a chronicle published on December 15, 1889:

Estas niñas a veces nos creen chinos; ellas también ignoran qué es Filipinas y qué son los filipinos... Por eso se inician diálogos como éste:

—Pero qué bien habla usted el español.

—El castellano dirá usted, señorita.

—Sí, señor. Me extraña que usted lo posea tanto como yo.

—Es nuestro idioma oficial en Filipinas, y por eso lo conocemos.

—Pero, ¡por Dios! ¿en su país de usted se habla el español?

—Sí, señorita.

—¡¡¡Ahhh!!!

Y en aquel ¡ahhh! tan largo, dudoso o expresivo, iba envuelta toda la opinión formada por aquella madrileña de catorce o quince años.

Tal vez nos creía poco menos que salvajes o igorrotos; tal vez ignoraba que podíamos comunicarnos en el mismo idioma, que éramos también españoles, que debíamos tener los mismos privilegios y los mismos derechos, ya que teníamos los mismos deberes. (520-2)

[These girls at times also think of us as Chinese; they also do not know what the Philippines is and who the Filipinos are . . .

Thus we hear dialogues like the following:

—But, how well you speak Spanish.

—Castilian, you mean, madam.

—Yes, sir. I am surprised that you speak it as much as I do.

—It is our official language in the Philippines and this is why we know it.

—But, goodness gracious! In your country, is Spanish spoken?

—Yes, madam

—Ahhh!!!

And in that long “Ahhh!!!” suspicious and expressive, would be wrapped all the opinion formed by that Madrid girl of fourteen or fifteen years.

Perhaps we are thought of to be little less than savages or Igorots; perhaps they forget that we can talk in the same language, that we are also Spaniards, that we should have the same privileges and rights inasmuch as we have the same duties.] (Translation by Fores-Ganzon 521-3).

In response to the young woman’s shock at his linguistic ability, Luna corrects and instructs her. He replaces her use of the term “Spanish” with a more precise term, “Castilian,” proceeding to a brief history lesson on Spanish imperialism. Luna’s command of Castilian forms the basis of his claim to be Spanish and to have the same rights as Spaniards. He asserts that his mastery of multiple codes challenges his implicit position on a low rung of the imperial hierarchy. His gesture of translation as correction asserts that he is more familiar with codes of conduct and propriety than the young Spanish woman.

The fact that she is a young woman points to another issue of his intervention in structures of authority; he challenges racial and national hierarchies, while remaining notably uncritical of disparities in the distribution of agency between different genders. In fact, his authority over this young Spanish woman is not just an invitation to pedantically explicate colonial dynamics and linguistics to his juvenile interlocutor.¹¹ Furthermore, it allows him to understand her entire essence, enough to translate even her inscrutable interjections like “ahhh,” for his readers. Through such translations, Luna situates himself above both his female interlocutor and his readers, who otherwise could not have interpreted her interjections with such

perspicacity. In order to undermine one form of authority, the racial hierarchy of empire, Luna acts in an authoritarian way by reinforcing gendered hierarchies.¹²

This recourse to divisive education recalls the central complaint of Filipino “*ilustrados*” that friars miseducated Filipinos and thus preserved for themselves a privileged position within the circulation of power in the colony. In his October 31, 1889 chronicle “*Impresiones madrileñas de un filipino*,” Luna returns the gesture of miseducation to its source in a dramatized interaction with a Spanish ordained minister:

—*¿De dónde son Vds?, preguntaba un presbítero.*

—*De Filipinas, cerca de China, provincia de Japón, al Norte de la Siberia.*

—*¡Ajá! Yo tengo un hermano allá por... Mindanajao o Mindanajo. ¿Está eso por Luzón?*

—*Ya lo creo— continuamos seriamente; —de Manila, en dos horas en coche, y por el río Pasig, en seis horas en banca, llega usted a Mindanaw.* (446)

[—From where are you?, asked a priest.

—From the Philippines, near China, province of Japan, north of Siberia.

—Aha! I have a brother there in... Mandanajao or Mindanajo. Is that in Luzón?

—Sure— and we would continue seriously, —two hours from Manila and six hours by *banca* on the Pasig River and you will be in Mindanao.] (Translation by Fores-Ganzon 447)¹³

He purposefully disorients the priest, twice rearranging the map of East Asia. Luna’s discursive dexterity lies not only in manipulating the Philippines’ geography and in disorienting one priest about the location of another priest in the Philippines, but also in the concrete language lesson he provides the minister. Luna corrects his pronunciation of Mindanao using “recast,” a second language acquisition strategy of error correction, and provides him with particular Tagalog vocabulary, “*banca*,” which has since been incorporated into Spanish, defined by the *Real Academia* as a “small embarkation used in the Philippines.”

By not translating “*banca*” to Spanish “*bote*” or “*lancha*,” Luna doesn’t teach vocabulary as much as he underlines its inaccessibility. Even his pseud-

onym, under which Luna publishes these articles, “Taga-Ilog,” is a bilingual joke left untranslated. It suggests the language “Tagalog,” while meaning “from the river” in Tagalog. This reference to being from the river, points to two not mutually exclusive interpretations. First, Luna was from the Manila neighborhood of Binondo which is situated across the Pasig River from Intramuros, the sector of the city in which most of the Spanish in the Philippines resided. Binondo was founded in the early colony as a residence for Chinese Catholics, away from the center, but close enough to keep under their watch. The residents of Binondo were allies of the Spanish who were nonetheless objects of the Spaniards’ suspicion. The other interpretation is that Luna christens himself using the figure of the river, an archetype of time and change, identifying himself, his writing, and his people, the Tagalog people, as harbingers of progress and change.

These jokes and insinuations, just like the word “banca” and the recast of the pronunciation of “Mindanao,” were lost on his Spanish readers.¹⁴ They are residues of a language that Luna dominates and that Spaniards do not, marking what Doris Sommer would call a “slap of refused intimacy... slowing readers down, detaining them at the boundary between contact and conquest” (ix). Luna shows that not only does he fully know the language, history, and identity of his Spanish counterparts but also that they could never fully know him. He uses the Spaniards’ language to authorize himself and exclude them. And with “banca,” by maintaining a Tagalog word in his text, Luna inverts a process Vicente Rafael categorizes as the “missionary logic of translation based on untranslatability” (105). The missionaries converted Filipinos to Catholicism using the local tongues, keeping key words in Spanish and Latin and thus infusing them with primacy, sanctity, and power. Luna appropriates this strategy, assigning primacy to Tagalog by maintaining vestiges of it in his Spanish text.

Luna’s contentious engagement with Spanish grants us a new framework with which to think about Martí’s writings in English. Luna’s text shows that translation can be a mode through which travelers, immigrants, and other groups of outsiders authorize themselves to engage in and attempt to transform or correct a hegemonic group that they are not allowed to join.

Both Luna and Martí are rejected from the communities they interact with.¹⁵ In turn, Luna and Martí engage in those communities in the communities' tongue, infusing their codes with dangerous difference. Through this form of translation they exert control over the interrelation of two languages, authorizing themselves to similarly prescribe correct means for the speakers of those two languages to interact. By exerting control over the hegemonic group's language, they transform a code of exclusion into a method for authorization to correct the supposed cultural superior, thus recalibrating the terms through which it is determined who can sense, speak, and do within such a community.

Wild and Cultured

In the above section on Martí's "bad" English, it becomes clear that the linguistic idiosyncrasies in "Impressions" noted by scholars such as Mañach and Allen were not errors but purposeful markers of two forms of translation. These two forms are, on the one hand, poetically devoid language as a marker of lost culture in the US and, on the other, Martí's linguistically and culturally rich response to such a crisis. Luna's tense interactions with residents of Madrid helped to illustrate that, with Martí too, translation of this latter kind allows outsiders to engage in and transform, on both the linguistic and interpersonal levels, certain hegemonic communities that exclude them. The following section goes more in depth about how Martí's linguistic games underline his poetic and political projects of intervening in the US English language, as well as asserting his authority to critique North American culture and politics and to forge a new "American" community through poetry and cultural resistance.

The key to Martí's intervention in US English is encrypted in his comment in "Impressions" on how the US breaks immigrants in through integrating them into its economic apparatus. He exclaims with a hint of irony, "How great a nation must be, to conduct in a quiet way, these bands of wolves, hungry and thirsty, these excrescences of old poor countries, ferocious and useless there—and here, under the influence of work, good, kind and tame!" (35). This phrase portrays a forced transformation of wild and

threatening European subjects, with whom Martí identifies, into productive and docile citizens. The language politics of this chronicle extrapolates upon the threat of European cultural intervention in the US, redirecting the logic of transformation of the quote. Martí associates Europe's "wildness" with its "poetical inutility" and its "culture." Through his linguistic idiosyncrasies which critics take as errors, Martí experiments with forms of authorizing himself and immigrants in the US in general through translation; translation, as in speaking English foreignly, allows the foreigner the ability to transform the country he or she arrives in, as opposed to being transformed by it. Therefore, while the US attempts to transform wild European immigrants into useful and tame citizens, Martí attempts to render "wild" and "cultured" the US version of the English language, which is tame, functional, and lacking in poetical value.

This "wilding" of a previously tame tongue occurs throughout the chronicles, even in the two previously included passages—Martí's "first glance" of New York and his critique of how North Americans speak English.¹⁶ In these passages and throughout "Impressions," unlike his other English-language writings in *The Hour* which appear to be translated by someone else, Martí plays with the English language with creativity and irreverence, wielding homophones, neologisms, and oxymorons with great savvy. See the phrase, ". . . these women, too richly dressed to be happy; these men, too devoted to business of pocket." With homophones ("too" and "to"), he creates internal rhythm. He coins new adjectives like "sobrious" and "candorous" to plant internal rhyme into a culturally devoid landscape. Through the clause, "with remarkable neglectness of the spiritual business," Martí explores paradoxes like "spiritual business" and experiments with cultured neologisms, such as "neglectness." In this way, he injects poetic energy into spaces, like "business," where it previously was not.

With a sentence from his first paragraph— "Material power, as that of Carthage, if it rapidly increases, rapidly falls down" (33)—Martí illustrates the rise and fall of material power through parallel, metered verses. Such a tendency to versify prose appears throughout the three chronicles, signaled often through an excessive use of commas to create rhythmic breaks in

the narration, breaks that make room for culture to infiltrate what Martí represents as a city that lacks culture. However, with Martí's reflection on Carthage, he appears to take this cultural infiltration by versification to a new level. In fact, if each comma indicated a versified pause, traditional Spanish scansion, including the rules of "sinalefa" and "diéresis" considered alongside US English pronunciation, would reveal a series of metered verses.

Ma (1) — te (2) — ri (3) — al (4) — pow (5) — er (6),
 As (1) — that (2) — of (3) — Car (4) — thage (5),
 If (1) — it (2) — ra (3) — pid (4) — ly-in (5) — crea (6) — ses (7),
 Ra (1) — pid (2) — ly (3) — falls (4) — down (5+1) (6)

First a hexasyllabic verse, followed by a pentasyllable, a heptasyllable and another hexasyllable. This parallel bilingual poetics provides a certain solemnity to the aphorismic judgment, which compares the US to a once great, now fallen civilization. Martí contrasts the scenes of low culture with a verse that is almost alexandrian in form. An alexandrian verse consists of two heptasyllabic hemistichs, as with Rubén Darío's famous verse "La princesa está triste, ¿qué tendrá la princesa?" The alexandrian verse represents a style of high culture, "verso mayor," that poets like Martí and Darío adapt from the Parnassian school of French poetry, one of the key meters they introduce through the movement of Latin American modernismo (Onís 165).¹⁷

The fact that the versified prose is almost alexandrian represents a breach that could be interpreted as a fatal lack of culture or as the potential to acculturate. This brings up a tension in Martí's English-language writing. Martí confronts scenes of compromised humanity through the language he uses to describe them.¹⁸ But, through his infusion of culture in the US English language, is Martí humanizing the US with the tool of poetry, or is he subjecting the US to his discursive will? Is this an opening for reconciliation or a marker of decisive break? The resolution to this question only becomes clearer in subsequent writings of Martí like "Coney Island," "El puente de Brooklyn," and "Nuestra América," which reveal one of the most intriguing details about these "Impressions": they conjure an image of a Martí who has

not yet made up his mind. His projects of poetic and political constructions appear to be taking form in these three brief chronicles but remain nebulous and undefined.

What is clear, however, is that whether he embellishes English to save it or to destroy it, he certainly undermines US notions of progress and modernity, doing so by marrying the concepts of the “wild” and “cultural sophistication” always against the forces of an encroaching US modernity. By embellishing and/or combatting the American English language with “European culture,” Martí begins to sketch proximity between high culture and destructive nature, a proximity he continues to develop in nearly all of his later writings.¹⁹ “Wildness” is destructive in that it disrupts US notions of progress, preserving a space for culture. Culture is the measure of modernity, Martí insists, as opposed to the technological and economic drive that he witnesses, both fascinated and wary, in the US.

Although culture is destructive in that it undermines the US cult of industriousness, it also demands the restoration of previous social orders, chiefly underlined in Martí’s “Impressions” as a rigorously gendered social order which is anything but chaotic. Martí repeatedly notes that in New York, men have forgotten that they should be manly and women, sensuous, a claim of deep resonance with the explicit and implicit gender constructions of Antonio Luna’s chronicles. This even leads him to proclaim that, while in all countries of the world that he has visited, Martí has immediately fallen in love with at least one young woman; in the US he finds no one to love. They are simply not womanly like the women of his poetically inutile and culturally rich homeland. While reestablishing the prominence of culture within language, Martí also aims to fortify certain gender norms that he finds essential to these notions of culture, gender norms upheld in Latin America and in the South of the US, but at constant crisis in the North.

While Martí appears to articulate these embryonic reflections on an alternative modernity—rooted in culture, poetry, sensuous women, and manly men—in radical opposition to the US, his use of English tells a slightly different story. He says that despite the fact that he “badly writes” in English, he can still identify when it is “badly spoken,” but his versified prose reveals

that it is specifically because he badly writes that he has the authority to identify bad speech, and the corrupted culture it reveals. These are different notions of “bad” at play, however, revealing diverging notions of modernity. Martí’s “bad” writing is fresh, irreverent, poetic, and wild, while the North Americans’ “bad” speech is barren, efficient, indistinct, and lifeless.

His use of English is a form of contentious translation that, on the one hand, represents a resistance to being corrected and, on the other, leaves open the possibility of Martí paradoxically correcting his North American interlocutors through his “errors.” He threatens to contaminate them with culture. These English-language chronicles diverge from Martí’s writings in Spanish in large part because they do not fully call for a break from the US. They do not prescribe radical opposition to the US forms of culture but rather represent an attempt to infuse the US with culture; Martí is an immigrant who refuses to be transformed, attempting rather to transform the language and country that fascinate and disturb him. The interplay between different languages of these brief travel impressions reveals them to be less a direct battle cry and more a threat of combative cohabitation. This form of constant translation is analogous in some ways to the tactics of guerrilla aggression; however, the combatant takes not to the hills, but hides his hostility within the language of his opponent.

Conclusion

In conclusion, through translation, Martí and Luna bolster their own authority within a hostile environment. A key takeaway from this study is that not all translations are the same. While all language is inherently translatable, that is, its comprehension in the future is dependent on the mechanisms of translation since language is constantly changing, different instances of translation can have dramatically different repercussions. Take for example Martí’s writings in *The Hour* that were translated from the initial drafts he wrote in French, like “The Nude in the Salon,” which diverge from the affect fostered through the reading of “Impressions.” “The Nude in the Salon” enlightens and pleases, while “Impressions” agitates while it entertains. Likewise, a native speaker’s translation of a foreign text to his or her

native tongue functions in a radically different way to the type of translation that occurs when a foreigner or immigrant decides to write in a foreign tongue.

Differences remain even between the outwardly similar projects of translation put forth by Martí and Luna. Most notably, they both call themselves “Spanish” in these chronicles, but for dramatically different reasons. Martí’s identification with Spain is rooted in his claim of difference from the United States, his claim for having deeper cultural roots. Luna, however, is still sincerely attracted to the idea of citizenship within a reformed Spain, an attraction rooted in his desire to transform what it means to be Spanish. Luna’s proposal is paradoxical according to the logic of the time. He wants to make Spain less “savage” by making room within it for Filipinos, a desire he soon abandons when taking up arms against Spain and then against the US.

Luna’s project to make Spain less “savage” points to another divergence in Luna’s and Martí’s projects of translation, namely in the effect race has in their interpretations of the category of the “savage.” In two key essays of the 1890’s, Martí pushes for a “Cuban race,” not a black or white race, which is instrumental in consolidating the revolutionary movement in his home island (318). However, his refashioning of the “savage” in “Impressions,” when analyzed alongside Luna’s reticence to appropriate such a term, point to an important difference in their approaches to translation that is rooted in a persistent reminder of diverging implications of race in these authors’ lives. Luna sees representations of his own supposed savagery on a day-to-day basis in Madrid. Therefore, he is reluctant to fuel the fire of these prejudices, even ironically. He would never dare to use “bad Spanish” or to call himself savage. He feels the need to constantly perform his intellectual capacity, in opposition to this supposed savagery. He claims the Spanish are the real savages, but does not directly problematize the logic behind that label. Martí, on the other hand, feels no such reluctance as he blends in with the crowds of New York. Martí is more willing to ironically appropriate the supposed wildness of immigrants and their language, especially when they are European immigrants. This is the root of his deconstruction of the category of the “savage” in which he aligns “savagery” with “culture.” Savagery is not a category that

directly or corporeally manifests itself in his life. But his willingness alongside Luna's reticence is an important reminder of the limitations of post-racial discourses that aim to reconcile racial differences and have the side effect of implicitly negating concrete disparities in the lived experiences of people of different races, both in the late 19th century and today.

Another key takeaway from this study is that what appear to be errors are not always errors, especially in the case of bilingual writers and activists. In light of this, Martí's and Luna's exercises in translation and authority not only offer an insightful framework to think about travel writing, anti-colonial thought, and polemical linguistics in the late 19th century; they also engage in many of the same terms through which we have come to discuss Latino culture and linguistics, as well as Fil-am studies and other disciplines that examine diaspora. Luna's and Martí's experiments in translation invite us to recognize how code-switching is not new and should not be identified as a deformation or a weakness, but as a recurrent historical process through which travelers, exiles, migrants, and refugees negotiate established hierarchies and rehearse new forms of sociability through the languages they speak and the grammatical or syntactical errors that they make. In sum, these impressions form a preemptive response to the people who might tell an immigrant in the US to "speak English," or any immigrant to speak the hegemonic language of the country where they reside. These chronicles "candourously" and "sobriously" invite the locals to be careful what they wish for.

Notes

1. As Mary Louise Pratt argues, these scientific travelers and writers used their supposedly inoffensive gaze to affirm their non-engagement with imperialist violence while still aiming to possess what they gazed at and to assert and preserve European hegemony, even as the Spanish imperial power waned in the late 18th and 19th centuries (7).
2. For example, consider Antonio de Nebrija's *Gramática de la lengua Castellana* of 1492 (the first work to systematically lay out the grammatical rules of Spanish and in fact any modern European language) and Gloria Anzaldúa's seminal work of bilingual, autobiographical cultural criticism, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (which celebrates the creative dissolution of the limit between English and Spanish). Both of these texts, whether they preserve traditional language usage or diverge from it, represent political responses to language as a constantly changing entity.
3. A fascinating exploration of Spanish foreign policy and economic practices in the Philippines before 1868 can be found in Josep Fradera's *Filipinas, la colonia más peculiar: la hacienda pública en la definición de la política colonial, 1762-1868* (1999). For information on slavery in the Philippines and Philippine slavery in Mexico, see Tatiana Seijas's *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians* (2014).
4. Before the Latin American wars of independence, Spain's center of colonial government over the Philippines was in Mexico. The difficulty and length of the journey between Spain and the Philippines, in a boat either around Cape Horn or the Cape of Good Hope, made this displacement of imperial administration necessary. The 1869 opening of the Suez Canal allowed for much faster communication and travel between the Philippines and Spain, a crucial change given that Spain could not run its Philippine operation through Mexico after the war for independence broke out in Mexico in 1810 (Rafael, *Promise of the Foreign* 21).
5. Leonel-Antonio de la Cuesta calls this procedure of translation a "strange linguistic exercise" (51), and Pedro Pablo Rodríguez adds that Martí "still did not feel sure of his handle on English" and that *The Hour* did not yet employ a Spanish-to-English translator (9).
6. Mañach says that these were "published without correction, in Martí's own English, loaded and strange, these impressions 'of a Fresh Spaniard' must have seemed to *The Hour's* readers shockingly lacking of the usual timidity and flattery of the recently arrived foreigners" (152). Esther Allen adds, "Several months into his work for Dana, Martí seems to have decided to try his hand at writing in English for a three-part series titled, "Impressions of America by a Very Fresh Spaniard." Its markedly eccentric prose includes a number of grammatical and spelling mistakes that make it rather unlike the polished translations from the

French previously published in *The Hour*. These errors alone indicate, to my mind, that this cannot simply be a poor translation (as Carlos Ripoll has maintained), but must be Martí's own often flawed but nevertheless spirited and forceful English which the editors and typesetters of *The Hour* decided to reproduce verbatim" (Allen 34).

7. As seen in his use of the term "America" without the accent mark over the "e," Martí has yet to find or establish an América that he can call his own. The term here refers to a cultural group to which Martí does not belong and that he deems is in need of correction. This correction occurs both in his prescriptions about the culture and social structures of "Nuestra América," and in the graphical transformation of the term represented by the accent above the "e."
8. The 1963 version of Martí's collected works emphasizes the ambiguity between impertinence and having recently arrived in the US using "fresco," while the 2003 version of Martí's "Obras Completas" opts for less ambiguity, translating "very fresh" to "recién llegado."
9. This is especially evident in Martí's 1881 article published in *La Pluma* of Bogotá, "Coney Island." In this chronicle, Martí expresses a great deal of anxiety toward the technological prowess and cultural crises of life in New York, repeatedly comparing what "they" do to what "we do." For example, there is "Aquellas gentes comen cantidad; nosotros clase," or "These people eat quantity; we, class" (Escenas norteamericanas 88, translation by Allen *Selected Writings* 93).
10. This "H" of "Heneral" is not an error, either. In 1890, José Rizal and other Filipino "Ilustrados" thought of and developed an insurgent orthography for writing Spanish in a particularly Filipino way. This included switching "G's" for "H's" and "C's" for "K's," among other adjustments. This can be inscribed in a transoceanic movement of polemical linguistics including debates in the Caribbean about substratum of Taíno languages in Caribbean Spanish and investigations into the supposedly Sanskrit roots of Tagalog, realized by nationalist linguists who looked to establish older and richer cultural patrimonies for the Philippines that sidestepped the classical traditions. Megan Thomas writes about this phenomenon at length in the fourth chapter of her book, *Orientalists, Propagandists, and Ilustrados Filipino Scholarship and the End of Spanish Colonialism* (2012), called 'Is 'K' a Foreign Agent? Philology as Anti-Colonial Politics.'
11. The contemporary term of feminist discourse for this interaction would be "mansplaining."
12. In fact, Luna systematically structures his reflections on the future of his country within a male-centric, sentimental framework, embodied most clearly in his autobiographical short story "Un beso en Filipinas" and in his performative fencing challenges of Spanish critics and fellow Filipino *Ilustrados* in Spain.

13. In order to maintain the clarity of my analysis of the word “banca,” I kept the word in Tagalog as Luna had in his text in Spanish. Fores-Ganzon translated it to “boat.”
14. This can be seen when Barcelona journalist Mir Deas writes a scathing review of Antonio Luna’s “Impresiones madrileñas,” in which he confuses Antonio for his brother, the painter, Juan Luna, before proceeding to misspell Antonio’s *nom de plume*, writing “Taga Iloc” which makes no sense in Tagalog, as opposed to the multiple senses that the penname contains.
15. One instance of Luna’s rejection occurs with the young Madrileña’s “Ahh...” One instance of Martí’s rejection occurs when he tries to help an elderly lady who has fallen on the train. She initially acts as though she will accept his help, but when she recognizes him as a foreigner (it is not indicated whether this is a visual or audio form of recognition) she rejects his help and yells, “By the hand, no!”
16. While a chapter of Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* which explores the in-between linguistic condition of border dwellers, is titled “How to tame a wild tongue,” Martí’s gesture here could be described through an inversion of such a title: How to wild a tame tongue.
17. One of the chief literary critics of modernismo is Federico de Onís. Reflecting on Onís’s writings, Alfonso García Morales says that “in Spanish America, modernism was the beginning of a truly independent literature” (494). Onís insists that modernismo isn’t a strictly defined “school,” nor is it a simple case of “afrancesamiento” or Frenchifying. Modernismo is a Hispanic response to a universal crisis of spirit and letters, in which writers such as Rubén Darío and José Martí dismantled traditions of romanticism in the Americas, seeking new forms of poetic symbols and meters. Modernismo sought to connect Latin American poetry with classical traditions of Rome and Greece, in large part as a rejection of North American forms of economic domination (495-496).
18. This reading of versified prose in “Impressions of America by a Very Fresh Spaniard” dialogues with the interpretive strategies of Julio Ramos’s critique of Martí’s “El puente de Brooklyn” (1883). Martí’s prose assumes a rhythm and energy that does not mirror the content of the phrases. Ramos asserts that Martí’s versification is a complex form of engagement with modernity. Martí aims not only to represent the terms, tones, and measurements of modernity through an exposition of the Brooklyn Bridge’s structural specifications and construction. He also struggles with these forms of modernity by stylizing them, using the form of the writing to engage not passively with the content. Ramos deems Martí’s writing purposefully difficult—its referential imperative is almost “illegible”—but that this difficulty registers a clash between codes and languages, between epochs and cultures, between the “strong” signs of modernity and Martí’s defiant stylized response to them (Ramos 213).

19. Through this complex proximity between culture and destructive nature, Martí begins to sketch a poetic and political framework that comes to fruition in later writings. In "Impressions," there are hints of the energy and versification behind his modernist poetics of *Ismaelillo* and *Versos sencillos* as well as his critiques of US modernity in chronicles such as "Coney Island" and "El puente de Brooklyn." There are indications of his exploration of the democratizing force of destructive nature as made explicit in his 1886 chronicle, "El terremoto de Charleston." Additionally, translation has been explored in Martí as a key to accessing world literature, especially in his 1882 chronicle on Oscar Wilde. In "Impressions," however, Martí uses translation to engage with the US but also to distance himself from the United States' expanding cult of industrialism. Martí affirms his cultural authority and plants the seed of radical separation between their America and "la nuestra." While in "Oscar Wilde," Martí demands that his readers use translation to get to know the literatures of all traditions and thus not to be oppressed by the tyranny of any one tradition, in "Nuestra América," Martí uses translation as a tool for America to get to know itself better, asserting that "Our own Greece is preferable to the Greece that is not ours" (291). Translation is a strategy for fighting back against imperialism and focusing inward, forging a uniquely American continental identity. Through translation, "Greece" becomes a concept that is abstractable from the historical and geographical situation of the country Greece. This potentially liberates the Americas from the need to justify their authority via European genealogies and patrimonies. And paradoxically, this gesture takes root in Martí's work through his assertion that he is none other than a "Fresh Spaniard."

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Recuperating Rebellion

Rewriting Revolting Women
in(to) Nineteenth-Century Cuba
and the Philippines

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Abstract

Using the late nineteenth-century independence movements as points of departure, this article uses a transoceanic approach to explore women's revolutionary history in Cuba and the Philippines. Using María Lugones' model of the modern/colonial gender system as a frame, I trace how women's revolutionary contributions became co-opted by male revolutionary figures in service to their own aims, rewriting the "revolting women" (in the rebellious sense) so that they were less "revolting" (viz. causing disgust) to nationalizing discourses. I argue that these national heroes, such as José Martí in Cuba and José Rizal in the Philippines, contributed to the minimization and even erasure of women's revolutionary participation and knowledge production through these rewritings. This allowed the coloniality of power to endure well into the new world order via reframing of a woman's place—or lack thereof—in the nationalizing project. To unearth the complexities of this minimized history, I dig deeper into these canonical literatures to find women's voices in letters, speeches, and oral histories to show how women sympathetic to the revolution actively conceptualized nation and citizenship through writing, protest, and action. As the field of Philippine-Hispanic Studies expands, this article aims to begin a conversation where we may confront and re-evaluate the privilege assigned to male national heroes' discourses in both Hispanic regions and the Philippines,

especially when thinking nation. By doing so, women's rebellion may be recuperated and rewritten back into national narratives with the hope of triggering the decolonization of our own ways of thinking—nation and otherwise.

Keywords

Cuba, Philippines, revolution, women, *mambisas*, Malolos, nation, anti-colonialism, citizenship, coloniality of power, gender



Fig. 1. *Mambisas con bandera: Two Mambisas with a rebel flag* (from *Mambisas*, Teresa Prados-Torreira, pg. 108)

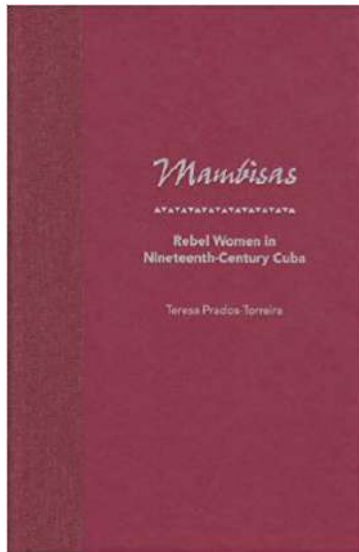


Fig. 2. Cover of *Mambisas: Rebel Women of Nineteenth-Century Cuba*. Teresa Prados-Torreira (2005)



Fig. 3. Photo of Gregoria de Jesús, president of the women's chapter of the Katipunan



Fig. 4. Varleriano Weyler meeting with the Women of Malolos, painting by Rafael del Casal, used on the cover of Nicanor Tiongson's book of the same name

In 1869, at the beginning of the Ten Years' War in Cuba, rebels gathered in Guáimaro for the First Constitutional Assembly of the Cuban Republic. At this assembly, patriot Ana Betancourt de Mora requested that the leaders of the rebellion recognize women's contributions to independence efforts in their vision for independence. She argued that, while the insurrection aimed to break the chains of colonization brought upon Cuba, women had made the same sacrifices as men and should also be full citizens. Betancourt was not only referencing women's participation at home or in the plaza—alongside the men, *mambisas*, or the women of the revolutionary *mambí* army, worked as messengers and undercover agents, organized fund-raising activities to buy weapons, and rose through military ranks as they fought for a free Cuba.

Across the world in the Philippines of 1888, a group of twenty young women of Malolos, Bulacán wrote, signed, and personally delivered a letter to Governor-General Valeriano Weyler to open a night school where they could learn the Spanish language. They had already been secretly learning the language but wanted their education to be legal. This plan was deliberately concealed from the friar curate of the town who had opposed these women's efforts, claiming that it would pose a threat to the government. After months of lobbying, the school was approved in February of 1889. Some of the women in this group later became connected to or directly involved with the Katipunan,¹ the Filipino revolutionary organization that led the attack against Spanish forces in 1896, sparking the Philippine Revolution. Like the *mambisas*, the *katipuneras* sustained the revolution as fundraisers, strategists, nurses, soldiers, and spies.

In both Cuba and the Philippines, the concurrent independence movements of 1896 were the culmination of revolts and resistance against three centuries of Spanish colonization and oppression. Women in both archipelagos took an active stand in the home, the plaza, the courts, and on the battlefield alongside men as part of the anti-colonial movements against Spain and as part of the project of nation-building. In 1898, Spain lost its final colonies to the United States, triggering a new imperial presence on the island nations—and women have not stopped fighting.

Drawing on the historical contexts of the late nineteenth-century independence movements, this article explores why women's revolutionary and literary histories in Cuba and the Philippines remain obscured. National formation in both archipelagos is inextricably linked to the legacies of both Spanish and American imperialism and provides a meaningful ground for this comparison. Using María Lugones' model of the modern/colonial gender system as a frame, I show how conventional views of women's revolutionary participation resulted from male nationalist literary production. In their creation of nationalizing discourses, male revolutionary writers intentionally recast women's work in service to (male) nationalists' own aims; in other words, they rewrote the "revolting women" (in the rebellious sense) so that they were less "revolting" (viz. causing disgust). I contend that national heroes—such as José Martí in Cuba and José Rizal in the Philippines—contributed to the minimization and even erasure of women's revolutionary participation and knowledge production through these rewritings.

Accordingly, these canonic versions show an incomplete picture of women's agency. To be clear, men's participation in civic and militant spheres undoubtedly outweighed women's participation due to the socio-cultural constraints of the time; I do not claim otherwise. However, I do dispute her participation as only subordinate, minimal, or non-present. Women sympathetic to the revolution conceptualized nation and citizenship through writing, protest, and action. They established both anticolonialism and anticoloniality as their causes, expressing a comprehensive version of independence that included their own liberation from patriarchal gender restraints. In contrast, male revolutionaries' colonial mindset, underpinning their own understanding and assumptions underlying binary gender roles, aimed to preserve the patriarchal gender hierarchy. I claim that, once national heroes began to rewrite women, they softened the edges of the female claim to nation and independence by intercepting and refashioning women's discourse into one that maintained men's superiority. In my view, this played a role in allowing the coloniality of power to endure well into the new world order—precisely via their reframing of a woman's place, or lack thereof—in the nationalizing project.

Recuperating rebellion

Scholars who analyze the relationships between women, nationalism, and revolution have consistently lamented mainstream history's overemphasis on women's revolutionary participation as either non-existent or limited to support roles. Correspondingly, in the construction of national mythologies, female representation tends to fall into three main archetypes: mother, traitor, or sex object (either as a sexual conquest or as a victim of rape). Often, these roles only serve to maintain a patriarchal vision of revolution, elevating men as the protagonists and relegating women as sidekicks, victims, or simply not present. While support roles certainly should not be minimized, women's civic and military contributions unmistakably attest to women's agency across *all* facets of revolution and merit attention. By recognizing how women have indeed been significant participants in nationalist movements and revolutions, we can then examine how and why their contributions to political and combat arenas have been grossly downplayed in masculine national sagas and rewrite them back into these narratives.

To this end, I look to scholars who have studied women's participation in the public arena. Because there are substantially more records from and about revolutionary women of Cuba, I begin here to better frame a comparative understanding of women's contributions in the Philippines. Notably, Lynn Stoner's article, "Militant Heroines and the Consecration of the Patriarchal Nation State" (2003),² analyzes the nature of female combatant iconography that followed the Cuban wars of independence, the Early Republic, and the Cuban Revolution to see the role it plays for nation-building purposes in each era. I find useful her claim that women's heroism has been used to exalt male leaders of the revolution to maintain the power of a patriarchal state. Expanding upon Stoner's work, Teresa Prados-Torreira's *Mambisas: Rebel Women in Nineteenth-Century Cuba* (2005) provides a solid historico-cultural background and a comprehensive analysis of how women shaped the Wars of Independence and established the foundations for Cuban feminist activism in the twentieth century. Supporting my contention that women were, in fact, involved in nation-building projects, both scholars provide an inclusive

look at the varied types of women's participation in Cuba's domestic, legal, and military spheres.

Likewise, in studying the Philippines, Christine Doran's "Literary Representations of Filipino Women in Revolution" (1998) analyzes how, despite women's important contributions to the Philippine Revolution, their literary representation has been marginal, symbolic, and passive, consistent with patriarchal stereotypes that then constitute women's subordination (205). This article corroborates my argument that national narratives have contributed to their minimization and continue to do so. Her related research that summarizes major conclusions across feminist studies connecting women, nationalism, and revolution also aids in showing how women's contributions are downplayed in national narratives.³ Complementing Doran's work, Nicanor Tiongson's extensive book *The Women of Malolos* (2004) explores the titular figures' active role in pursuing educational, social, and political reform in the time preceding the revolution. Because of the women's ties to the Katipunan, the founding of the Red Cross in Malolos, and their creation of the club *Asociación Feminista de Filipinas*, I use his text to bolster my claim that their action was rewritten for aims outside of their own. Read together, these texts provide a broad understanding of women's activity in revolutionary Philippines.

In my view, these works clearly attest to women's revolutionary involvement in both nations. When these images are juxtaposed with the literary production of male national heroes, the task of confronting and re-evaluating the privilege assigned to their discourses becomes stark—especially in Hispanic and Philippine Studies and especially when thinking nation. To be clear, the objective is not to create a new "archetypal national hero" by simply replacing historical male figures with their "exceptional female" version (nor should it be implied that women are the only group whose history has been suppressed). Rather, we must start giving credit where it is due *alongside* those who have already been recognized, while also pointing out how women's subjugation and disempowerment have been obscured by their male contemporaries and by history. By doing so, women's rebellion—and

the rebellions of others likewise stifled—may be recuperated and rewritten back into national narratives.

The Modern/Colonial Gender System and Nationalist Projects

To more deeply analyze women's rebellion—and to more comprehensively examine the “revolting” nature of the women who broke with nineteenth-century notions of femininity—María Lugones' framework of the modern/colonial gender system provides valuable insight into analyzing colonial gendered contexts. Her concept draws on important work done on the coloniality of power, specifically as used by Anibal Quijano, and provides a crucial expansion of it by linking it to the concept of intersectionality, specifically as examined by Julie Greenberg, Oyéronké Oyewùmí, Paula Gunn Allen, and others. Lugones is interested in the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality in a way that allows her “to understand the indifference that men, but, more importantly to our struggles, men who have been racialized as inferior, exhibit to the systematic violences inflicted upon women of color” (188). For her, this indifference is insidious because of the immense barriers that it places in the path of these women as they struggle for freedom, integrity, and well-being. I am likewise interested in these intersections as I question why these men, particularly José Martí and José Rizal, minimized women's participation in the nation-building project and their contemporary appeal as “national heroes,” despite their stifling of women's agency.

To begin, Anibal Quijano shows how the global capitalist system of power relies on the two axes that he calls the “coloniality of power” and “modernity.”⁴ In studying the relationship between colonialism, Eurocentrism, and social classification in creating hierarchies, he contends that two historical processes have shaped the coloniality of power: (1) the codification of differences between the colonizer and the colonized and (2) the constitution of new structures of control over labor, resources, and its products (182). So, for Quijano, coloniality establishes the classification of the planet's population in terms of the idea of race. Moreover, societies—and, in this case, nation-states—are power structures articulated by “(1) the

disputes over the control of labor and its resources and products; (2) sex and its resources and products; (3) authority and its specific violence; (4) intersubjectivity and knowledge” (205). He understands modernity as the melding of the experiences of coloniality with the necessities of capitalism. Europe’s strength, according to Quijano, was its ability to spread and establish its power through the colonization of the culture of the colonized. The coloniality of power, in other words, is the project of creating the colonized in the image of the (European) colonizer.

María Lugones complicates his framework and argues that, in addition to race, gender itself was “a violent [colonial] introduction consistently and contemporarily used to destroy peoples, cosmologies, and communities as the building ground of the ‘civilized’ West” (186). Put differently, colonialism imposed a new gender system on the colonized that erased pre-existing conceptualizations of gender, thereby significantly redefining different arrangements for colonized males and females than for white, usually bourgeois colonizers. For Lugones, Julie Greenberg’s work discusses the ways in which legal institutions have had the power to assign individual to specific racial or sexual categories. These institutions have tended to presume sex as binary via the normalization of sexual dimorphism, that binary sex is “determinable by an analysis of biological factors” (which fails to recognize biological intersexuals), and by revealing that biological sex is socially constructed (qtd. in Lugones 194).

Related to this, Oyérónké Oyewùmí’s study of gender in pre-colonial Yoruba society, for Lugones, shows that gender was not an organizing principle prior to colonization by the West and that gender became important because Yoruba life “has been translated into English to fit the Western pattern of body-reasoning” (qtd. in Lugones 196). Oyewùmí’s work shows an understanding of gender as a “tool of domination that designates two binarily opposed and hierarchical social categories,” shedding light on the economic, political, and cognitive subordination of women (Lugones 197). Meanwhile, Paula Gunn Allen characterizes many Native American tribes as gynocratic, emphasizing the centrality of the spiritual in Native life and thus a different form of intersubjectivity: “Replacing this gynocratic spiritual

plurality with one supreme male being as Christianity did, was crucial in subduing the tribes” (Lugones 199). Therefore, the subjugation of Native females was tied to the domination and transformation of tribal life. For Lugones’ framework, Allen illustrates how the production of knowledge is gendered and that the heterosexuality characteristic of the modern/colonial gender system is mythically constructed. Allen also discusses how the European colonizer “constructed an inside force as colonized men were co-opted into patriarchal roles” (Lugones 200).

It is vital, then, to understand the place of gender in precolonial societies to recognize the scope and nature of the changes in the social structure imposed by this system, as well as its role in disintegrating societies. In Cuba, for instance, the pre-colonial *Táino* society was based on a matrilineal system. Historical evidence suggests that the *Táinos* had nonspecialized gender roles in most activities, participating nonexclusively in political leadership, war, and the production of food and craft, among other activities (Deagan 600). *Táino* women, then, were able to wield political power at all levels, as well as accumulate wealth. However, shortly after Christopher Columbus’ arrival in Hispaniola, the Spanish subjugated the island and formally imposed the *encomienda* system in 1503, under which the *Táinos* were required to exchange their labor for instruction in Catholicism and “civilization.” By the middle of the sixteenth century, the *Táino* population was decimated to the point of being unidentifiable as a social entity (Deagan 602).

Similar to Cuba, Filipino writers have directly attributed women’s inferior status to the arrival of the Spaniards, pointing out that women in pre-Hispanic Philippines enjoyed an equal or elevated status as men in society, conducted their own businesses, owned property, and had the right to divorce.⁵ As in Cuba, societal changes were due in no small part to the powerful, pervasive position and influence of the Catholic Church. When the Legazpi expedition arrived on the islands in 1565, missionaries began to establish their presence. Their primary objective was to spread Christianity among the natives. Wielding the tenets of the Catholic Church, the frailocracy, or the government rule by the friars, amassed substantial power. In conjunction with the imperial colonizing project, the frailocracy imple-

mented a patriarchy-based gender system that violently changed and diminished the status of colonized women. Women were no longer allowed to hold high offices, own their own property, or engage in business without their husband's consent; divorce became definitively forbidden and continues to be so today.

Recalling Greenberg's study: the institution of the Catholic Church was instrumental in assigning racial and gender categories in both archipelagos. By the nineteenth century, the gender system established "proper" Cuban women as uneducated, submissive, and dependent upon men, per social customs prescribed by the Catholic Church. If a woman received any education at all, it was in Catholicism which enhanced their purity and virtues as mothers. Their place in society was to bear children and do domestic work. For women outside of the privileged classes—namely, poor and/or black or *mulatta*—the subordination was amplified. Social customs viewed poor women of any race as inferior, destined to be unwed mothers and workers outside of the home. Similarly, in the Philippines after the sixteenth century, convents and their associated boarding schools played a substantial role in molding Filipino girls and women into this same ideal, so instruction generally consisted of the Christian doctrine, reading, writing, needlework, and occasionally arithmetic. Teachers also took care to emphasize and enforce rules of courtesy and piety, particularly in relation to the classroom, the presence of one's elders, and in the church. Evoking Oyewùmí and Allen, the implemented gender system was used as a tool for domination; we also perceive the massive scope of how it changed each society. We can also see how this gender system was comprehensively informed through the coloniality of power.

This dual framework joining intersectionality with the coloniality of power more deeply contemplates gender and its tangled relationship with race. Quijano's understanding of sex and gender, according to Lugones, is defined by patriarchal and heterosexual understandings of "sexual access" as he

appears to take for granted that the dispute over control of sex is a dispute among men, about men's control of resources which are thought to be female. Men do not seem understood as the resources in sexual encoun-

ters. Women are not thought to be disputing for control over sexual access (Lugones 194).

Therefore, she believes, his reliance on a paradoxically European understanding of gender is restrictive (194). Where Quijano introduces the idea of race as an organizing principle of colonialism, Greenberg, Oyewùmí, Allen, and others remind us how coloniality pervades all aspects of social existence, including and especially gender, giving rise to new social and geo-cultural identities. From here, Lugones issues a critique of white feminism within the modern/colonial gender system framework. In so doing, she not only calls attention to the intricacies of racial formation, but also to the need to historicize gender formation because, “without this history, we keep on centering our analysis on the patriarchy” (187).

Martí and the *Modernista* Female Ideal

By the early nineteenth century, revolutions against Spain in the Americas resulted in the creation of several independent countries. With these changes came considerable political instability as these young nations navigated their new, independent standings. Amidst this turbulence emerged the Latin American *modernista* movement, which sought to renew a poetic language, filled with elegant, exotic, luxurious, and mythological imagery. It aimed to achieve an ideal of beauty, creating *arte por el arte*, or art for art’s sake, in its pursuit of perfection. Within this context, *modernista* authors—specifically, male ones—constructed and represented the “ideal” woman for mid-to late-nineteenth century society. The literary production of José Martí, widely considered the Cuban national hero, makes sense as a point of departure. Throughout his career, he wrote extensively for a variety of newspapers, composed poetry, and published essays, often reflecting his views on social and political matters, including the subject of Cuban independence. To this day, the image of women’s heroism, dedication, sacrifice, and allegiance to *la patria* permeates Cuban nationalist folklore; we can trace his chronicles to see how Cuban ideals of women’s roles evolved with nationalist goals and sentiments.

It is no surprise, then, that attitudes reflecting colonial gender arrangements regarding “proper” behavior during the nineteenth-century, in tandem with the literary context of the *modernista* movement, surface in José Martí’s work. In a book review evaluating a collection of American female poetry published on August 28, 1875,⁶ José Martí critiques the text for its heavy inclusion of Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda’s poems due to “*la grandeza y la severidad*” [“greatness and severity”] in what should be “*poesía femenil*” [“feminine poetry”] (310). Avellaneda, perhaps the most well-known female poet of the early nineteenth-century, wrote broadly on slavery, independence, and women’s intellectual capacities. Many of her works expressed rebellion against a male-dominated society and questioned women’s inferior standing, often comparing women’s social position to slavery. Her most famous work, the antislavery novel *Sab* (1841) which tells the story of an enslaved *mulatto* who is in love with the white daughter of his master, critiques the institution of marriage by drawing on these parallels.

As the daughter of a Spanish father and a *criolla* mother, Avellaneda’s social status as a white, Cuban woman of privilege provided access to intellectual circles in Spain and allowed her to boldly express herself with fewer repercussions. Yet, despite her love for Cuba and championing causes that Martí would likewise later espouse, she did not embody the characteristics of the “proper” Cuban woman. In Martí’s book review, he laments the focus on Avellaneda’s work and the corresponding lack of emphasis on the poetry of Luisa Pérez, a contemporary who wrote about her grief after the loss of her husband. He describes Pérez as a

pura criatura, a toda pena sensible y habituada a toda delicadeza y generosidad. Cubre el pelo negro en ondas sus abiertas sienes; hay en sus ojos grandes una inagotable fuerza de pasión delicada y de ternura; pudor perpetuo vela sus facciones puras y gallardas, y para sí hubiera querido Rafael el óvalo que encierra aquella cara noble, serena y distinguida.

[pure child, sensitive to all pain and accustomed to all delicacy and generosity. Her black hair falls in waves around her temples; in her profound eyes is a limitless force of delicate passion and tenderness; perpetual modesty veils her pure and elegant features, and for himself, Rafael would have

wanted the oval that encloses that noble, serene and distinguished face.] (*Tres libros* 310, translation mine)

When considering that the *modernista* movement strove for perfection vis-à-vis the pursuit of a beautiful ideal, Martí's description of Pérez speaks volumes. He highlights her corporeal attributes and how they convey innocence, fragility, and virtuous propensities, equating her poetry—and her physical beauty—to this exquisite ideal. Likewise, these characteristics also exemplify the qualities of the “ideal woman” of the time, illuminating Martí's adherence to this colonial gender system. On the other hand, in evaluating Avellaneda's poetry, Martí emphasizes its masculine qualities: “*Hay un hombre altivo, a las veces fiero, en la poesía de la Avellaneda*” [“There is an arrogant man, fierce at times, in the poetry of Avellaneda”] (*Tres libros* 311, translation mine). Therefore, in his evaluation of who is “*la mejor poetisa americana*” (“the best American poetess”), Martí concludes without hesitation that it is Pérez, citing that

No hay mujer en Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda: todo anunciaba en ella un ánimo potente y varonil; era su cuerpo alto y robusto, como su poesía ruda y enérgica; no tuvieron las ternuras miradas para sus ojos, llenos siempre de extraño fulgor y de dominio: era algo así como una nube amenazante.

[There is no woman in Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda: everything in her revealed a potent and manly spirit; her body tall and robust, as her poetry was rough and energetic; tender glances her eyes did not have, always filled with a strange brilliance and power: it was something like a threatening cloud.] (*Tres libros* 311, translation mine)

Evidently, Martí finds Avellaneda's rebellion against socially prescribed femininity revolting and, in fact, threatening to the white bourgeois patriarchal system. She does not embody the ideals of feminine beauty of the time; rather, she actively revolts against it. In contrast, Pérez embodies purity, delicateness, and subordination to her husband.

According to Lugones' framework, these traits are crucial for characterizing white bourgeois females who are meant to reproduce the class,

colonial, and racial standing of white bourgeois men (206). In pitting Pérez and Avellaneda against one another through poetry, Martí puts forward two views. First, he confirms his adherence to a heterosexualist hierarchy, not only in his unquestioned acceptance of biological dimorphism, but also in his support of defined gender roles that reproduce patriarchal control. Second, he asserts knowledge production as belonging to the masculine sphere and, conversely, women's exclusion from this domain, evidenced by her supposed physical and intellectual weakness. It is worth noting that he begins his description of Pérez with her physical attributes; her poetry is secondary. Meanwhile, Avellaneda's lack of conveyed weakness revolts against this worldview.

As Cuba began to near the 1896 War of Independence from Spain, women became more involved in anti-colonial movements; therefore, Martí needed to revise his literary portrayals of women. The rise of women's clubs in Cuba and in the United States' Cuban émigré community and newspapers reporting on the female *mambisa* presence among the insurgent fighters, evidently and effectively contributed to the Cuban cause. As Martí's commitment to Cuba's liberation grew, women's involvement became an asset. Lynn Stoner points out that in the years leading up to and during independence campaigns, Cuban leaders and intellectuals tried to unify rebels around symbols of patriotism to establish a nationalist spirit. The *mambisa*, according to Stoner, represented a perfect citizen to instruct the nation in new values, such as loyalty and sacrifice: "Woman warriors *a la cubana* could fight as men, nurture as women, and stand beside their men in refusing to surrender to the Spanish Crown, all while asking little for themselves" ("Militant heroines" 73). Note that this continues to reflect the societal expectations that women—despite their ability to fight—were to remain subordinate to the "men's war."

Almost twenty years after his writings on Avellaneda, Martí's chronicles leading up to the War of Independence co-opt the image of the *mambisa* warrior to serve nationalist ends. In two chronicles written for the paper *Patria*—"Mariana Maceo" in 1893 and "La madre de los Maceo" in 1894—Martí memorializes Mariana Grajales Coello as the legendary model of the

patriotic mother, due to her willingness to sacrifice not only her husband, but her ten sons for Cuba. One of these sons was the famed General Antonio Maceo, earning her the epithet “Mother of the Cuban Independence.” In these chronicles, Martí relates two legends surrounding Grajales to emphasize her Spartan-esque aura; these are the images of women’s patriotic heroism that remain today. In the first, he tells of how she taught her sons how to use the machete as a weapon and, as a dedicated, patriotic mother, instilled in them dreams of an independent Cuba. Reporting on her death in the paper *Patria*, Martí depicts her

Con su pañuelo de anciana a la cabeza, con los ojos de madre amorosa para el cubano desconocido, con fuego inextinguible, en la mirada y en el rostro todo, cuando se hablaba de las glorias de ayer, y de las esperanzas de hoy, vio Patria, hace poco tiempo, a la mujer de ochenta y cinco años que su pueblo entero, de ricos y de pobres, de arrogantes y de humildes, de hijos de amo y de hijos de siervo, ha seguido a la tumba, a la tumba de tierra extraña. Murió en Jamaica el 27 de noviembre, Mariana Maceo.

[With her old handkerchief on her head, with a loving mother’s eyes for the unknown Cuban, with inextinguishable fire, in her gaze and on her face, when talking about yesterday’s glories, and the hopes of today, *Patria* saw, a short time ago, a woman of eighty-five that her entire town, rich and poor, arrogant and humble, children of masters and children of servants, has followed to the grave, to the grave of a strange land. In Jamaica on November 27 died Mariana Maceo.] (“Mariana Maceo” 25, translation mine)

As a mixed-race woman—Spanish and African—Grajales symbolized Martí’s ideal of Cuba as a nation of racial harmony. She was a woman willing to sacrifice everything, including her family, for her nation. However, he highlights her role as a loving *mother* for all Cubans—the stranger, the rich, poor, arrogant, humble, and children of both masters and slaves.

Martí then details Grajales’ patriotic virtues and sacrifice for Cuba, focusing on her ability to inspire the troops on the battlefield and on her selflessness in sending her own (male) family members to fight. In the second chronicle, he recounts a well-known story about the time when

Grajales sent her youngest son into battle. Upon receiving news of the death of her eldest—and with all her other sons on the battlefield—she turned to the youngest and said, “¡Y tú, empínate, porque ya es hora de que te vayas al campamento!” [“And you, rise up, for now is the time for you to go to the battlefield!”] (“*La madre*” 27). While Martí allows her more of a “masculine” role than for Avellaneda in sanctioning her patriotic fervor, he highlights Grajales’ ability to *produce* Cuban fighters and limits her knowledge production—her patriotism—to the domestic sphere. According to the gender system constructed via the Catholic Church, this is the space where a woman may have authority. Echoing his descriptions of Luisa Pérez, Martí focuses on her virtue and purity by employing religious imagery that depicts her as a sort of Virgin Mary—simple, humble, and anointed. He writes:

¿Qué había en esa mujer, qué epopeya y misterio había en esa humilde mujer, qué santidad y unción hubo en su seno de madre, qué decoro y grandes hubo en su sencilla vida, que cuando se escribe de ella es como de la raíz del alma, con suavidad de hijo, y como de entrañable afecto? Así queda en la historia, sonriendo al acabar la vida, rodeada de los varones que pelearon por su país, criando a sus nietos para que pelearan.

[What was in that woman, what epic and mystery was in that humble woman, what sanctity and anointment in her mother’s bosom, what decorum and greatness in her simple life, that when one writes of her it is like the soul’s origin, with a child’s gentleness, and as endearing affection? As is the story, smiling at the end of her life, surrounded by the men who fought for their country, raising their grandchildren to fight.] (“*La madre*” 26, translation mine)

Surrounded by the *men* who fought for the country and raised *grandsons* who would fight, her death reflects Martí’s sustained assumption that fighting for one’s country is men’s work.

Finally, when Martí mentions her presence on the battlefield, he does not depict her fighting even though there has been evidence of her military action (Stoner 26). Instead, in his account, she is limited to inspiring the fighters, tending to wounds, and providing moral support to the wounded. Even this form of participation on the battlefield in the Ten Years’ War is

secondary to her role as mother. This role punctuates Martí's last line of the piece, stating "Patria en la corona que deja en la tumba de Mariana Maceo, pone una palabra: - ¡Madre!" [*Patria* on the wreath it leaves on Mariana Maceo's tomb, places one word – Mother!"] (26). By limiting her participation as primarily supportive and as a mother who sacrifices, Martí genders war and citizenship as spheres assigned to men and restricts women's participation in constructing national discourse.

Militant Mambisas

In light of Lugones' model, we infer from Martí's stance that it is not a woman's place to think about the nation, let alone politics; rather, that their minds should instead be focused on nature, beauty, and emotions. In accordance with the gender system, he takes for granted that national sentiments and political messages are reserved for men's expression, whereas women's expression should simply support men's messages, focus on family and motherhood, and/or be nonexistent. Listening beneath the flow of male national literary canon reveals that Cuban women did, in fact, conceptualize citizenship and nation, contrary to history's attempted minimization of their efforts. Furthermore, it uncovers the fact that women believed in an inclusive independence that looked beyond their nationalist, discursive roles as mother.

Looking beyond Martí's critiques, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's poetry evidences the emergence of a distinctly female Cuban identity and, perhaps, a proto-nationalist sentiment. Her well-known poems "*Al partir*," written in 1836 as she left for Spain, and "*La vuelta a la Patria*," written in 1860 after her return to Cuba the year prior, exemplify her love of the island. However, a distinctly Cuban identity emerges in her poem "*A las cubanas*" (1860). Published in the women's journal *Album Cubano de lo Bueno y lo Bello* (1859-64) that she edited, she begins:

Respiro entre vosotras ¡oh hermanas mías! Breathe among yourselves, o my sisters!

*Pasados de la ausencia los largos días, The long days of absence past,
Y al blando aliento And on the soft breath*

De vuestro amor el alma revivir siento. Of your love I feel my soul rekindle.

(1-4, translation mine)

In these lines, Avellaneda refers to her “*hermanas*,” situating herself within a *female* Cuban community that is mutually supportive and uplifting of one another. Her specificity in speaking directly to women—“*vosotras*,” “*hermanas mías*”—pointedly excludes the men who are the “default” in the modern/colonial gender system and who are indifferent to the women’s plight. About halfway through the poem, Avellaneda encourages the use of poetry and the arts to empower Cuban women to become united, express their love of country, and lift up their voices:

<i>Quizás en este ambiente de poesía</i>	Perhaps for you in this poetic sphere
<i>Para cantaros sobre nueva armonía,</i>	Singing takes on a new harmony,
<i>Y al sol de Cuba</i>	And to Cuba’s sun
<i>–Vuestro amor bendiciendo – su canto suba.</i>	–Your love blessing it – your song rises.

(29-32, translation mine)

By encouraging women to express themselves through poetry, she begins to break women out of the restrictions of only reading and reciting Catholic catechism. Instead, their song might rise up to the Cuban sun, blessed by their love. She also implies that women do, indeed, have the voice to express themselves in a different sphere than had previously been open to them. In the penultimate verse, Avellaneda proclaims:

<i>Si; porque en esta patria de la hermosa</i>	Yes, because in this country of beauty
<i>Se aspiran en los vientos gloria y ventura,</i>	one inhales glory and fortune in winds,
<i>Y hay en sus sonos</i>	And in its sounds
<i>De amor y de entusiasmo palpitaciones.</i>	Of love and dedication are palpitations.

(41-44)

Avellaneda inserts her voice into the male-dominated, nationalist, poetic corpus, making a point to draw attention to women’s patriotism. Because this is a journal devoted to women, these stanzas specifically show how

Avellaneda not only saw herself as part of a distinctly *Cuban* sisterhood, but also that women were already viewing themselves as outside of the assumed colonialist sexual dimorphism. Furthermore, they were Cubans, dedicated to a Cuban nation.

Women continued to develop this civic identity in the decades leading up to the War of Independence. When the Ten Years' War began nearly a decade later, it is true that women generally did not enter the struggle as individuals fighting for women's rights; rather, most began as wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers who joined the efforts with the men. Still, as noted in the beginning of this article, Ana Betancourt de Mora raised awareness of women's contributions to independence and began to draw attention not only to fighting colonialism, but also to coloniality (read: patriarchy). The rebels at this Congress were in the process of writing the *Bases de la revolución* to outline their governing body and its principles. Attending in place of her ailing husband, Betancourt urged the group to consider the problem of women's subjugation:

The Cuban woman, from the dark and tranquil corner of her home, has waited patiently and with resignation for this sublime hour in which a just revolution will break her yoke, will untie her wings. Everyone has been enslaved in Cuba: families, people of color, and women. You will fight to the death if necessary to destroy racial slavery. Racial slavery no longer exists. You have emancipated men of servitude. When the moment arrives to liberate women, Cuban men, who were subjugated in familial and racial slavery, will also dedicate their generous souls to women's rights. For women, who today and in wartime are their sisters of charity even while they are denied their rights, will tomorrow be men's exemplary companions. (qtd. in Stoner, *From the House* 22)

Like Avellaneda in her book *Sab*, Betancourt draws parallels between racial slavery and women's inferior status in society, linking them to the colonial condition. Her speech, rote with images of enslaved bodies, seeks to dismantle colonialism's legacies of both racial and gendered systems of oppression. Because women were active participants in working toward a free Cuba—in contrast to women's "supportive role" put forth by Martí—Betancourt sees

women as essential partners in the process of nation-building. Nevertheless, despite her passionate speech, and despite the representatives' recognition and praise for women's heroism, the assembly did not consider granting women's rights: "From the representatives' perspective," observes Stoner, "women were adequately represented through the legal power of men" (*From the House* 23).

By 1895, at the start of the War of Independence, *mambisas* had not only fought as patriotic mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters who supported their families' causes, but also assumed new roles as protagonists independently leading the fight. Women of all classes and races enlisted in patriotic clubs, both on the island and in expatriate communities. Teresa Prados-Torreira notes that women's participation in the War of Independence was "more than embroidering flags and dreaming of revenge. It involved a wide array of clandestine activities that placed them at the political epicenter of the insurgency" (103). Accordingly, *mambisas* were not shy in demanding the full incorporation of women as citizens in their visions of a free Cuba. For example, in 1891, Edelmira Guerra demanded access to public education, women's right to vote, the right to divorce, and the right to work—all roles outside of motherhood (Prado-Torreira 131-132). In 1895, Aurelia Castillo likewise imagined the new Cuban woman as citizen:

A great revolution, among various others, is coming about. Women are demanding their rights. They have been the last slaves of this civilized world. No, something even worse than that: they have been, until now, the laughable sovereigns of a society that is gallant and brutal at the same time. (qtd. in Prados-Torreira 132-133)

Again, images of slavery emerge in Castillo's writing. Her reference to a "gallant and brutal" society suggests her recognition of the inherent coloniality that co-opted men into a heterosexualist system that violently maintained women as inferior. During and after revolution, women fought in part because they understood that independence could simply mean a reorganization of the colonial hierarchy that continued to subjugate women. In

the revolution's attempt to destabilize the use of race as the default mode of classification, they saw the danger of simply changing the focus onto gender.

Rizal's Recommendations

The entrenchment of these oppressive colonial gender arrangements in Cuba and the ways that women attempted to break out of these arrangements provide a unique lens with which we might evaluate nineteenth century Philippine society. In 1863, the Spanish monarchy enacted an Education Decree that mandated free primary education in the colonies along with compulsory education in the Spanish language. However, this was not the first decree of its kind; several had been issued in the centuries prior but had been disregarded. Encarnación Alzona in *The Filipino Woman* (1934) remarks that, in women's education, "the Spanish language was also taught indifferently, for the aim of these institutions was not to turn out learned women, but devout, chaste, modest, and diligent women who would become good mothers" (28). Thinking back to the modern/colonial gender system framework, these legal institutions—especially the frailocracy in the Philippines—used gender categories as a tool to reproduce coloniality. We remember that these characteristics—sexual purity and passivity—are crucial in females who reproduce the standing of bourgeois, white men (Lugones 206). Lugones elaborates that

equally important is the banning of white bourgeois women from the sphere of collective authority, from the production of knowledge, from most control over the means of production. Weakness of mind and body are important in the reduction and seclusion of white bourgeois women from most domains of life, most areas of human existence. (206)

When we consider the collusion of colonized men in consenting to this patriarchal hierarchy, it is no surprise that, by the nineteenth century, José Rizal's figure of María Clara embodied the "ideal woman" in the Philippines—that is, overly pious, submissive, and obedient, and whose virginity and virtue must be protected. Evoking Quijano, the coloniality of power draws its strength

from the colonization of the culture of the colonized; this is no different in the enactment of the coloniality of gender.

Without a doubt, Rizal is the Philippines' national hero. A polymath, intellectual, ophthalmologist, and prolific writer, he is the best known of the *ilustrados*, a group of young Filipino intellectuals who worked for reform and representation in the Spanish courts during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Yet, despite his liberal education in Europe, Rizal's description of a weak, submissive, and delicate María Clara as the ideal love interest in the *Noli*—echoing Martí's description of Luisa Pérez—shows that even he could not escape the Catholic Church's ability to naturalize heterosexual beliefs about gender in the Philippines. Interestingly, in stark contrast to the *mambisa* warrior of Cuba, María Clara represents the Philippine ideal woman that remains the model to this day. The historical treatment of the young women of Malolos, referenced at the beginning of this article, speaks to colonialist fidelity. The women's defiant act of petitioning for a night school in 1888 canonized them in Filipino history when women's education was minimal and anti-clerical sentiment in the archipelago ran high.

Nicanor Tiongson, in his extensive book about these women, admits that much of the *malolensas'* historical value—and why they *do* have a place in the historical memory of the Philippines – has come from male exaltation of their rebellion: Graciano Lopez-Jaena, for example, wrote about the *malolensas* [the women of Malolos] for the first issue of *La Solidaridad*, the *ilustrados'* newspaper; Fernando Canon, a lesser-known *propagandista*, composed a sonnet in their honor (also for *La Solidaridad*); and of course, Rizal, the most famous Filipino of them all, penned a letter in Tagalog to them, lavishing praises for their act. As one of the few documented acts of women's rebellion of the time, a closer study will illuminate how Rizal rewrote the women's call for education to simultaneously serve the needs for fomenting nationalist fervor, maintain the ideal María Clara narrative, and minimize women's participation in the nation-building discourse. Analyzing the discourse put forth by the *ilustrados* surrounding the *malolensas'* letter lets us see how they co-opted the women's act to further entrench the colonialist gender system.

To provide some context: Marcelo H. del Pilar had written a message to Rizal letting him know about the women's petition to Governor General Weyler. Del Pilar tells Rizal that they are "de la clase escogida del pueblo, respetadas por la honrosa reputación e hijas de *maginoos*"⁷ ["of the chosen class of the town, respected for their honorable reputation and daughters of *manginoos*"] (120, translation mine). He requests that Rizal write a letter in Tagalog to the women because it would promote the *ilustrados'* campaigns for reform:

Si pudiese V. dirigirles una carta en tagalo, sería un auxilio más para nuestros campeones de allí y de Manila. Debido a la propaganda de esas muchachas que predicán con la palabra y con el ejemplo, ya se va popularizando en provincias la idea de ser deshonrosa para el hombre y para la mujer la adhesión al fraile y esto está produciendo grandísimos efectos.

[If you could write them a letter in Tagalog, it would be more support for our champions there and in Manila. Due to the propaganda of these women that preach by word and by example, the idea of supporting the friar as disgraceful is becoming popular in the provinces for both men and women and this is producing great effects.] (Del Pilar 120, translation mine)

Del Pilar highlights the women's social status and respectability to give authority to their action, suggesting that, had they been of a different class or of ill repute, their work would not have been acceptable. Furthermore, he spotlights their demands mainly to draw attention to the anti-friar movement. One might infer that he likely did not see a role for women in the movement other than promoting the *ilustrados'* goals.

Rizal's letter to the young women of Malolos reflects del Pilar's attitude, and the greater part of the message is dedicated to expounding on a woman's role in society. In Christine Doran's analysis of women's involvement in nationalist movements and revolutions, she traces common themes in their historical representation. Among them is the depiction of women in (usually male-generated) nationalist myths within four main archetypal roles: "as mother, as traitor, as sex object, and as rape victim" ("Women" 245). Interestingly, Rizal's letter directed to the women references all four of

these archetypes – here, I’ll focus on his extensive description of the mother. The letter begins with Rizal (a bit patronizingly) admitting that his initial impressions about women were rather bleak, stating that few had met his “ideal” until he heard the news of what happened in Malolos. He admits his error and praises the women:

Now that you have responded to our first appeal in the interest of the welfare of the people; now that you have set an example to those who, like you, long to have their eyes opened and be delivered from servitude, new hopes are awakened in us and we now even dare to face adversity, because we have you for our allies and are confident of victory (“To My Countrywomen” 4).

Similar to Martí, Rizal highlights the women’s ability to awaken hope and inspire the men. Meanwhile, his assumption that women previously had not thought about fighting for the country’s welfare—and that only now, they have “responded” to the men’s appeal—suggests that he had not considered women to be possible participants in their national project.

In the next part of the letter, Rizal develops a defense for one’s ability to think for oneself, especially when it comes to religiosity. He praises the women for discerning that the “will of God is different from that of the priest” and that religiousness comes from “a spotless conduct, firm intention, and upright judgment” (“To My Countrywomen” 4). Women who blindly follow the church without thought, Rizal reasons, only produce children who are slaves; therefore, he advocates for greater education for girls and women. Like Martí, Rizal rationalizes women’s participation in the educational sphere—one controlled by men—by emphasizing that they would then raise a generation of educated, independent *sons* who would work to advance Filipino society: “Let us be reasonable and open our eyes, especially you women, because you are the first to influence the consciousness of man” (“To My Countrywomen” 10).

In contrast to Martí, however, Rizal seems to struggle more with looking to Europe and the United States as a model to emulate while simultaneously desiring to lift up the nation. On the one hand, he compliments the Filipina for her power and astuteness, harkening back to women’s pre-colonial

status. This, in my view, shows his awareness of the scope of how gender had changed over the centuries. But in the same breath, he paints her in the image of Eve, the woman blamed for the fall of humankind in Christianity, the traitor and the victim:

The power and good judgment of the woman of the Philippines are well known, and it is because of this that she has been hoodwinked, and tied, and rendered pusillanimous; and now her enslavers rest at ease, because so long as they can keep the Filipina mother a slave, so long will they be able to make slaves of her children. (“To My Countrywomen” 11)

Thinking back to Greenberg and Allen, Rizal recognizes that the Filipina was robbed of her pre-colonial power and rights as part of the colonizing project *precisely* to create a patriarchal society that converted natives into subjects of colonization. Yet, as he casts blame on the colonizers, he looks to them as a model, citing that Asia’s backwardness is because “there the women are ignorant, are slaves; while Europe and America are powerful because there the women are free and well educated and endowed with lucid intellect and a strong will” (“To My Countrywomen” 11). Evidently, he has internalized the colonialist view of European superiority.

History has traditionally seen Rizal as one who sought equal representation for Filipinos in the Spanish courts to fight the abuses of the *frailocracy*; he did not generally advocate independence from Spain until, arguably, near the end of his life.⁸ We might thus infer that he accepted the idea of Spain as superior to the Philippines. We might also view this as evidence of his adherence to a colonialist hierarchy. It would make sense, then, that he wished for the Philippines to emulate the West as a way to elevate its status. In the same lines, the Christian image of Eve, subordinate to her husband, Adam, likely influenced his propagation of the modern/colonial gender system. Notably, the majority of what follows in his letter focuses on the qualities that Filipino mothers should possess, as well as their duties and responsibilities to their husbands and to their children:

When she is married, she must aid her husband, inspire him with courage, share his perils, refrain from causing him worry and sweeten his moments of affliction, always remembering that there is no grief that a brave heart cannot bear and there is no bitter inheritance than that of infamy and slavery. Open your children's eyes so that they may jealously guard their honor, love their fellow men and their native land, and do their duty. Always impress upon them they must prefer dying with honor to living in dishonor. ("To My Countrywomen" 15).

Again, we see an emphasis on the ways that women must support men's work. Rizal, like his Cuban counterpart, references the image of the Spartan woman as an example to follow. He recounts the myth of the Spartan mother who sends her son to battle with a shield, telling him to return either victorious or dead ("To My Countrywomen" 16). But whereas Martí imbues Grajales' image with the ability to teach practical knowledge (wielding a machete) and patriotic values (sacrifice for one's nation), Rizal focuses solely on the latter. He advises the *malolensas* to serve as mothers who raise their sons to give their lives for their native lands. Not once does Rizal address alternative ways for women to participate as citizens outside of motherhood. Instead, his evolved version of the patriotic woman is simply an anti-friar María Clara.

Disobedient *Dalaga*

It is within this context that we reflect on the impact of the Women of Malolos on Philippine concepts of nation and citizenship. In contrast to the *mambisas* of Cuba, there is very little as far as a written record of women's perspectives in the time leading up to and during the revolutionary period in the Philippines. As previously mentioned, it was generally known that the friars were opposed to teaching the Spanish language, citing its capacity to endanger Spain's rule over the islands: "To teach the Filipinos Spanish," comments Alzona, "would furnish them with a common language which would in turn facilitate communication, and the spread of subversive ideas and Protestantism" (*The Filipino Woman* 29). As we know, in reality the friocracy sabotaged the teaching of Spanish to maintain their own power. This

power and wealth came from the friars' function as a bridge between the Spanish government, who did not speak the local languages, and the colonized people.

With this in mind, I would like to focus on reading the significance of the women's *action*. Similar to the *mambisas* during the Ten Years' War, the *malolensas'* political involvement was largely facilitated by the commitment of their male relatives to the anti-friar movement during this time period; many of these relatives were working directly with Marcelo H. del Pilar (Tiongson 150). These twenty women were descended from four major mestizo-sangley⁹ clans of Malolos; therefore, they were all relatives by blood or by affinity and belonged to the upper-class which afforded them the opportunity to be politically aware. Most likely, this is also why del Pilar knew about their petition. As previously noted, women's written history in this period is scarce. In fact, Nicanor Tiongson acknowledges that even the very letter that the twenty young women of Malolos wrote, signed, and personally delivered to the Governor-General to open a night school was not actually written by the women themselves nor conceived by them! The credit actually goes to their teacher, Teodoro Sandico, who most likely wanted to protect himself from any potential consequences (Tiongson 171, 184).

In light of these points, it is tempting to think that the women had no agency of their own and only participated in the revolution because Sandico and other reformists had put them up to it. Crucially, Tiongson states that some of the women were not even necessarily supportive of the revolution, nor were anti-friar in their sentiments (although some certainly were). However, support for a friar would have been seen as "revolting"—that is, repulsive—to the *ilustrados*. This is critical to our understanding of how the modern/colonial gender system was in play. As demonstrated earlier, Rizal and the *ilustrados* read and used the women's letter as an example of anti-friar attitudes; hence, Rizal wrote his letter based on this assumption that the letter was a form of revolt. Historical accounts, therefore, memorialize the women as anti-friar mainly because Rizal himself painted them that way.

This is not to argue for a reading of their lack of agency. I argue that dismissing the women's action simply because they did not personally write

the letter would be a reductionist view of complex circumstances. Tiongson recognizes that the Women of Malolos who tend to be referenced together as a group (I acknowledge that I do so here for purposes of space) were twenty individuals with individual motivations. To further illustrate these complexities, let us turn to the letter itself, as reproduced in Graciano López-Jaena's article titled "Amor a España" in *La Solidaridad*.¹⁰ The letter, followed with the women's names, reads:

His Excellency, the Governor-General of the Philippines,

Your Excellency: We, the undersigned young women and others, do hereby present and petition with due respect to Your Excellency the following: Desirous of knowing the rich Spanish language, stimulated and grateful for your generous spirit in spreading in the country knowledge of the Castilian language and unable to learn it in the schools of Manila—some because of the pressing circumstances in which they find themselves and others because their domestic duties prevent them from studying during the day, we humbly request Your Excellency that we be granted a nights school in the home of an old relative of ours where we shall attend classes accompanied by our mothers to receive lessons in Spanish grammar under a Latin professor who will be paid by us. This professor has given proof of his ability to teach Spanish in a short time. Progress has been observed among his private pupils while on the other hand, without any desire to offend them in their work, we must say that the other teachers of the town have not obtained until now positive results.

It is a favor that we are sure we shall obtain from your well-known generosity. May God keep your precious life many years.

Malolos, December 12, 1888. (*La Solidaridad* 17)

With the understanding that the letter was written by Sandico, a man informed by the modern/colonial gender system, the format of the petition draws attention to what he imagines is the proper woman's place in society. The excessive expressions of courtesy and humility illustrate the standards for showing appropriate respect to a male, high-ranking Spanish official by mestizo-sanglely women, representative of the colonial hier-

archy. Additionally, the request is for a night school, due to their expected domestic duties. But, ever-watchful in maintaining their virtue, the women will be accompanied by their mothers. However, the letter also notes that the women would like the “professor of Latin” to teach them, as he has achieved “positive results.” I read a few insinuations with this request: first, Sandico is doing some self-promotion; second, Sandico/the women allude to the friars’ role in impeding the teaching of the language; third, Sandico implicitly offers a first-hand account of the women’s own dedication to their learning.

Perhaps this line of reasoning seems tenuous—could we really see women’s dedication to their own learning and their own contributions to nationalist efforts in a way that’s distinct from Rizal’s (and the other *ilustrados*) interpretation? Here, women’s agency and involvement might be best documented in letters exchanged between José Rizal and his (nine!) sisters – many of which, fortunately, have been preserved. The letters primarily reflect daily correspondence and familial updates and thus provide an intimate glimpse into the thoughts and emotions of Rizal and his family. It is also clear that Rizal’s fondness for giving advice to women is not limited to his letter to the *malolensas*. In a particularly gossipy set of exchanges in 1890, his aunt Concha and his sisters Narcisa and Trinidad all inform him that their youngest sister, Soledad (“Choleng”), had married without their parents’ consent (*Cartas* 326, 338, 342). In a letter directed to Soledad, Rizal first praises her for becoming a teacher (*Cartas* 344).¹¹ Yet, the rest of his lengthy letter chastises her for upsetting and potentially dishonoring their family and reminds her of her role: “ser un modelo de virtudes y buenas cualidades,” reminding her to think of the family’s honor [“be a model of virtue and good qualities”] (*Carta* 344). Soledad’s revolt against the gender system rarely—if ever it would—makes it into the historical narrative.

In any case, the fact that these letters are written in Tagalog, Spanish, and English show his sisters’ varying facilities with these languages: one letter from his sister Saturnina dated after February 23, 1892 makes references to speaking a little bit of French; another from his sister Josefa, dated November 21, 1892, playfully chastises him in English for not including her as a recipient in the last batch of letters (*Cartas* 381, 408). From this corre-

spondence, we can likewise glean evidence of their civic awareness and their involvement in the national cause. His sister Lucia, for example, in a letter dated May 30, 1890, writes about the abuses of the lay people and the corruption in their town:

Mag babalita acó sa iyo ñg tuncol dito sa ating bayan, segurong mag daramdam ang puso mo, dahil sa cabulagan ñg ating cababayan; ñgayon ay purong abuso, caululan at ang despotismo ang nag hahari. Acalain mo nalaang, cung papaano ang mangyayari. [...] ano pa't buloc na buloc ñgayon ang ating bayan. Ang C. (Capitán) ay dalaua ang mucha at segurong prolongado.

[With respect to our town, perhaps your heart grieves in the face of our countryfolk's blindness; now reign abuse, madness, and despotism. You can already imagine what would happen . . . In a word, our town is corrupt. The Captain is two-faced and is certain his position will be extended.] (*Cartas* 333-334; translation mine)

Another letter from his sister Narcisa, dated October 17, 1890, similarly references her attention to political occurrences—and includes four-hundred pesos toward Rizal's cause. In outlining where the money came from, Narcisa writes that the last hundred are a

contribución de las paisanas, entre solteras, casadas y viejas, las cuales desean mandarte más si tuvieran ellas más dinero ahora, pero desgraciadamente en este tiempo anda muy escaso el dinero: veremos en los meses de Enero o Febrero, tal vez podrán mandarte más.

[contribution from the countrywomen, among them single, married, and elderly women, who want to send you more if they had more money now, but unfortunately at this time, money is scarce: we'll see in the months of January and February, perhaps they can send you more.] (*Cartas* 358; translation mine)

Again, women are contributing to the work of the *ilustrados*. In the same letter, she warns him that “*según nuestra opinión, no conviene que regreses en estos tiempos, porque corres gran peligro, y además de esto, aquí no harás nada, pero allí haces mucho*” [“in our opinión, it is not advisable for you to return at this time because you

run a great risk, and in addition, here you will do nothing, but there, you do a lot”] (*Cartas* 358, translation mine). Because his sisters are eyewitnesses to the corruption, they are able to provide him with both resources and knowledge for his work. While his sisters were not directly involved with the petition to Governor-General Weyler, their letters shed light on how women did, indeed, think about their ability to contribute to nationalist causes, even if they could only accomplish work through their brother.

Considering that the women faced the two-pronged coloniality of the Spanish empire vis-a-vis the Catholic Church and the patriarchy, we must remember that the women of Malolos likewise took the initiative by demanding education and actively seeking out a teacher. Aside from painting more individualized portraits of the women beyond official, historical accounts in his book, Tiongson also aims to underscore the significance of their gesture by pointing out that the women did not simply exit to the sidelines of history after their controversial petition (184). In fact, he shows how some supported the 1896 revolution against Spain and the war against the United States; how others were involved in the Red Cross and the *Asociación Feminista de Filipinas* in the early twentieth century; still others concerned themselves with domestic or personal affairs (he carefully notes that this should not be seen as an “easy” or “selfish” decision). I agree with Tiongson that their involvement in fomenting social and political change *during and after* the revolution indicates their continued desire to become civically involved and to express their desire for a nation and citizenship that included their contributions. The women, as with Rizal’s sisters, broke with the narrative that they simply be passive supporters or mothers. So, even if the women of Malolos did not write the letter themselves—and even if they did not conceive of the idea—their actions of secretly pursuing their studies, signing the petition, personally delivering it, and lobbying for the school after its rejection all speak for the women’s volition outside the male discourse.

Conclusion: Rewriting Revolting Women

When the War of 1895 began in Cuba, *mambisas* of all races fought side-by-side with the men and distinguished themselves—and their nation—through

their efforts. The three-year war, ended by the defeat of Spain by united Cuban and U.S. forces, shaped Cuban ideals and inaugurated a pantheon of heroes as well as martyrs. Yet in the years that followed, lawmakers rarely understood and considered women's rights in reforming laws to conform to patriotic ideals; other dramatic reforms, such as free public education, property rights, and no-fault divorce were passed (Stoner, *From the House* 34).

In 1896, eight years after the famed petition was presented to Governor-General Weyler, the Philippine Revolution broke out with the revolutionary *Katipunan* leading the charge. Some of the Women of Malolos went on to join the *Katipunan* in the fight against oppression, participating actively in the revolution as cooks, couriers, and medical support (Tiongson 191). *Katipuneras* also served as soldiers, spies, strategists, fundraisers, and guards (Doran, "Literary" 189). Yet, little continues to be known about these women, as most studies are collections of short biographies of "outstanding Filipina women" that simply list major events in their lives.¹² Even the autobiography of Gregoria de Jesús, the president of the women's section of the *Katipunan* (and wife of Andres Bonifacio, its founder), is found as an appendix in a book about her second husband, Julio Nakpil.¹³

It is undeniable that women thought, wrote, and fought for the revolution in both island nations. This fight comprehensively included independence from both the colonial empire *and* from patriarchal systems of oppression. When their action is compared to male heroes' literary representation of their involvement as passive mothers—namely, Martí's and Rizal's—the contrast between their revolt and their reframed revolt is glaring. Because of the continued significance of these heroes' discourses in national myths, we must confront and re-evaluate the normalization of these rewritings that limited women's participation to roles as pure, virtuous cheerleaders or mothers (both in reproducing citizens and in reproducing patriotic values); to this day, these narratives continue to confine women. By understanding more about the sources of women's subordination and disempowerment, I hope to help trigger the decolonization of our own ways of thinking, nation and otherwise.

Notes

1. “Katipunan” abbreviated the full name *Kataas-taasan, Kagalang-galang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan*, or the Highest and Most Honorable Society of the Children of the Nation.
2. See also her book *From the House to the Streets: The Cuban Women’s Movement for Legal Reform, 1898-1940* (1991).
3. See Doran’s “Women, nationalism, and the Philippine Revolution” (1999).
4. Quijano has written extensively and significantly on this topic. Here, my interpretations primarily reference his chapter, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Social Classification” (2008).
5. Here, I have in mind Isabelo de los Reyes’ *El folk-lore filipino* (1889) and Encarnación Alzona’s *The Filipino Woman* (1934).
6. Here, the term “American” refers to the American continents in their entirety, not just to the United States.
7. The *maginoos* were a nobility social class in pre-Hispanic Philippines.
8. Rizal’s *El Filibusterismo*, the sequel to *Noli Me Tangere*, is often cited as evidence of him beginning to consider resorting to violence to bring change to the Philippines’ status. Interestingly, Rizal also pays homage to the women of Malolos in the book by including a scene of students establishing a Spanish language academy in opposition to the friars.
9. The term “mestizo sangley” refers to the official name applied to a mestizo, or a mixed-race person, who was the offspring of a native mother and a Chinese father, or “sangley.”
10. For purposes of space, I put the original Spanish here (the names of the Women of Malolos follow the letter):

Excmo. Sr. Gobernador general de Filipinas. Excmo. Sr.

Nosotros las jóvenes que suscriben y algunas mas ante V. E. con el debido respeto nos presentamos y exponemos: que deseosas de saber el rico idioma español, estimadas y agradecidas por vuestro generosos espíritu de generalizar en el país la lengua de Castilla; y no pudiendo aprenderla en los colegios de Manila, unas por su escasa fortuna, otras por las apremiantes circunstancias en que se encuentran en sus casas, al hacerlo de día por estar ocupadas en quehaceres domésticos más perentorios: Con tal propósito—A. V. E. humildemente suplicamos se nos conceda una Escuela nocturna en casa de una vieja pariente nuestra, done acudiremos en compañía de nuestras madres á recibir lecciones de gramática castellana bajo la enseñanza del profesor de latin retribuido por cuenta nuestra, quien en poco tiempo ha dado pruebas de aptitud para la enseñanza del castellano por el adelanto que manifiestan sus discipulos, al paso que los maestros del pueblo, sin tratar por esta de ofenderles en su profesión no han conseguido hasta el presente positivos resultados.

Es gracia que no dudamos merecer de la reconocida bondad de V. E. cuya importante vida, guarde Dios muchos años.

Malolos, 12 de Diciembre de 1888. (*La Solidaridad* 16)

11. She had just established a school for at least 25 young girls (*Cartas*, Notes 62).
12. Guzman, Jovita, et al. *Women of Distinction (Biographical Essays on Outstanding Filipino Women of the Past and the Present)*. Philippines, Bukang Liwayway, 1967.
13. Alzona, Encarnación, editor and translator. *Julio Nakpil and the Philippine Revolution With the Autobiography of Gregoria de Jesus*. Heirs of Julio Nakpil, 1964.

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La hispanidad periférica en las antípodas

el filipino T. H. Pardo de Tavera en la Argentina del Centenario

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Resumen

Trinidad Hermenegildo Pardo de Tavera (1857-1925) es uno de los más destacados intelectuales de la primera generación de independentistas filipinos, aquella de José Rizal. Visita la Argentina hacia 1914, poco después de los festejos del Centenario de la independencia (1910). El motivo de este viaje fue familiar: su hermano menor, el escultor Félix Pardo de Tavera (1859-1935), habíase afincado en Buenos Aires en 1885. Entre la numerosa obra publicada por Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera se halla la extensa crónica “Recuerdo de Argentina”, editado por *The Philippine Review* en 1916. El análisis de este testimonio es excepcional, pues los textos de viaje de intelectuales filipinos por Hispanoamérica son muy ocasionales y raros.

El estudio de estas ‘memorias argentinas’ nos permitirá observar el modelo hispánico de modernidad y civilización ejemplar que el viajero encuentra en Buenos Aires y la Argentina, y, a su vez, la emergencia en su discurso de una comparación y proyección evidente con la situación filipina. La identificación con el modelo de nación triunfante de la Argentina, cosmopolita y abierta a la inmigración europea y mundial, es uno de los puntos mayores que el viajero señala como falencia en el caso filipino. Pardo de Tavera se identifica con el visionario accionar de la élite patricia argentina, cuyo rol director propone, en forma subyacente, imitar por la élite hispano-filipina en tiempos en que su país

se hallaba bajo administración estadounidense. Sin embargo, su observación de la situación argentina se basa en numerosas lagunas históricas, sociales y políticas, que detallaremos en la conclusión.

Abstract

Trinidad Hermenegildo Pardo de Tavera (1857-1925) is one of the most relevant intellectuals of the first generation of fighters for Filipino independence. From a prominent Spanish-Filipino family, he lived in Paris for many years before returning to Manila and becoming a public figure. He visited Argentina around 1914 shortly after the Centennial celebrations of independence (1910). In addition to his intellectual curiosity, the reason for this trip was familiar: his younger brother, the sculptor Félix Pardo de Tavera (1859-1935), had settled in Buenos Aires in 1885.

Among the numerous works published by Trinidad Pardo de Tavera is the extensive chronicle *Recuerdo de Argentina*, published by *The Philippine Review* in 1916. The analysis of this testimony is exceptional since the travel writings of Filipino intellectuals in Spanish America are very occasional and rare. When Pardo de Tavera visited Argentina, he was already a recognized intellectual in his country, having published numerous original studies on Philippine culture, linguistics, ethnography and history (Santos Cristóbal 7-10). In the last years of his life, between 1922 and 1925, Trinidad Pardo de Tavera will become director of the National Library and the National Museum.

Pardo de Tavera's perception of Centennial Argentina is nuanced with respect to other well-known testimonies of the official celebrations of the Centenary, in which French President Georges Clemenceau and Infanta Isabel de Borbón (aunt of King Alfonso XIII) had participated together with leaders and distinguished delegations of South American republics and the world.¹

In this context of exaltation and celebratory solemnity, the testimonies made by Pardo de Tavera are more contrasted than those of other personalities because, at the same time, he did not hide his admiration for the young nation that knew how to get ahead on the path of modern civilization (Argentina projected a triumphant image of national emancipation). The Filipino doctor and intellectual also made some critical observations about the prevailing social

and political conditions—which the traveler often compares with those of his own country. Positive and negative aspects are assembled equally in their exposure with the predominance of the former. In short, the gaze of Pardo de Tavera is not always condescending with the official discourses of the material, social, educational, institutional and moral progress of the South American republic. Even when it exacerbates the authentic achievements of Argentina, it does so by neglecting those aspects that turn out to be, for him, an ideal “estimable” for the Philippines (immigration, cosmopolitanism, resolute integration to the world economy).

A double question guides our exposition: In what proportion is Pardo de Tavera convinced by the official account of a triumphant Argentine modernity spread by the ruling elite that had run the country for fifty years? To what extent was the Filipino intellectual able to observe the political and social reality of the country outside of the official accounts? Along with the institutional achievements, the integration of the masses of immigrants and material progress, the Argentine State started an ideological self-invention discourse in 1862 designated by Nicolas Shumway as ‘guiding fictions’. Adapting the concept to the Argentine case, the historian defines the national fictions in these terms: “The guiding fictions of nations cannot be proven, and indeed are often fabrications as artificial as literary fictions. Yet they are necessary to give individuals a sense of nation, peoplehood, collective identity, and national purpose” (xi). Assuming this, there is one final question: to what extent Pardo de Tavera is eager to extrapolate the material achievements and the Argentine ‘guiding fictions’ for his own country in search of a modernity capable of satisfying the project of national emancipation?

Written after his visit, his memories do not have a structured internal organization and they break down some of the topics that the author judges “may interest the Filipino reader, of what is seen in Buenos Aires and that touches the economic and political life of the Argentine Republic”, notes in which “I have pointed out only those things and facts that without looking have seen and known” (42).

We imagine, although there is never an explicit mention of this, that these impressions are to a certain extent assessed by the experience of almost thirty

years of life in the country of his brother Felix which coincide with the years in which the country consolidates as a nation modern and dynamic liberal. Despite Trinidad's reservations, it is evident that in order to write his essay, the author also had some important documents on the country, pertaining to economic aspects and international politics.

We will articulate our analytical exposition in three fundamental aspects that regroup the totality of the 46 points approached by the Filipino traveler: a) the miscellaneous personal impressions on the social life; b) the observations on the political, social and economic structure of the country, and c) the future perspectives (or predictions) based on these same observations. In the conclusion we will point out the substantial inadequacies of the testimony carried out by Pardo de Tavera focusing on his historical, social and political shortcomings. For if the overall balance of his impressions is positive, it is extremely uncritical and superficial in other aspects. In effect, Pardo de Tavera does not have a complex and dialectical vision about the current modernity in Argentina. Although it emphasizes contradictory aspects, it was unable to observe that the process of inclusion of the masses of immigrants—otherwise contrasted and conflictive (Bertoni 121-159)—has its counterpart in the social and political exclusion of the native peoples. In short, Argentina's national wealth results from the direct and violent appropriation of indigenous lands by the national State -to the great benefit of the landed oligarchy, that is, the liberal political elite in power (Gaignard 205-218, 223-282) and the exclusion of the same indigenous peoples from citizenship (Hernández; Sabato 11-29; Viñas).

Keywords

Argentine State, Centennial Argentina, Guiding Fictions, Modernity in Argentina, Trinidad Hermenegildo Pardo de Tavera



Fig. 1. T. H. Pardo de Tavera, escritor, historiador y político filipino (Taken from Wikimedia Commons).

Trinidad Hermenegildo Pardo de Tavera (1857-1925) es uno de los más destacados intelectuales de la primera generación de independentistas filipinos, aquella de José Rizal. De encumbrada familia hispano-filipina, vive muchos años en París antes de regresar a Manila y convertirse en una figura pública. Visita la Argentina hacia 1914², poco después de los festejos del Centenario de la independencia (1910)³. Amén de su curiosidad, el motivo de este viaje fue familiar: su hermano menor, el escultor Félix Pardo de Tavera (1859-1935), habíase afincado en Buenos Aires en 1885 y forma familia.

Entre la numerosa obra publicada por Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera se halla la extensa crónica “Recuerdo de Argentina”, editado por *The Philippine Review* en 1916⁴. El análisis de este testimonio es excepcional, pues los textos de viaje de intelectuales filipinos por Hispanoamérica son muy ocasionales y raros. Cuando Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera visita la Argentina ya era un intelectual reconocido en su país, habiendo publicado numerosos eruditos estudios originales sobre la cultura, la lingüística, la etnografía y la historia filipinas (Santos Cristóbal 7-10)⁵. En los últimos años de su vida, entre 1922 y 1925, Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera será sucesivamente director de la Biblioteca Nacional y del Museo Nacional.

La percepción de Pardo de Tavera sobre la Argentina del Centenario es matizada respecto a otros conocidos testimonios de los festejos oficiales del Centenario, en los que habían participado el presidente francés Georges Clemenceau y la Infanta Isabel de Borbón (tía del rey Alfonso XIII), junto a mandatarios y distinguidas delegaciones de repúblicas sudamericanas y del mundo. Numerosos artistas y científicos extranjeros también habían estado presentes en las celebraciones y dejaron sus impresiones⁶.

Las celebraciones oficiales estuvieron sin embargo empañadas por los sabotajes y ataques anarquistas, que motivaron el estado de sitio durante varias semanas. El Estado federal argentino y el ayuntamiento de Buenos Aires multiplicaron en aquellos años destacadas inauguraciones urbanísticas, edilicias y paisajísticas monumentales: la flamante escena lírica del Teatro Colón, el Palacio del Congreso, el Parque Centenario, el Palacio de Tribunales, el Parque Tres de Febrero (Palermo), la Avenida de Mayo, además de numerosas tiendas de lujo y edificaciones espectaculares como

hoteles, fuentes, esculturas y baños, estadios y exposiciones de agricultura e industria, etc.

En dicho contexto de exaltación y solemnidad celebratoria, los testimonios realizados por Pardo de Tavera son más contrastados que los de otras personalidades pues, al mismo tiempo que no oculta su admiración hacia la joven nación que supo adelantarse en el camino de la civilización moderna (la Argentina proyectaba una imagen triunfante de la emancipación nacional), el médico e intelectual filipino también formula algunas observaciones críticas sobre las condiciones sociales y políticas imperantes —que el viajero coteja a menudo con las de su propio país—. Aspectos positivos y negativos se ensamblan por igual en su exposición, con predominio de los primeros. En síntesis, la mirada de Pardo de Tavera no es siempre condescendiente con el discurso oficial del progreso material, social, educativo, institucional y moral de la república sudamericana. Incluso cuando exagera los logros fehacientes de la Argentina, lo hace soslayando aquellos aspectos que resultan ser, para él, un ideal “estimable” para las Filipinas (inmigración, cosmopolitismo, resuelta integración a la economía mundial).

Un doble interrogante guía nuestra exposición: ¿en qué proporción Pardo de Tavera se muestra convencido por el relato oficial de una modernidad argentina triunfante difundido por la élite gobernante que dirigía el país desde hacía cincuenta años? ¿En qué medida el intelectual filipino estaba en medida de observar la realidad política y social del país por fuera del relato oficial? Junto a las realizaciones institucionales, la integración de las masas de inmigrantes y los progresos materiales, el Estado argentino puso en marcha desde 1862 un discurso ideológico de auto-invenición, designado por Nicolas Shumway como *guiding fictions*. Adaptando el concepto al caso argentino, el historiador define las ficciones nacionales en estos términos: “The guiding fictions of nations cannot be proven, and indeed are often fabrications as artificial as literary fictions. Yet they are necessary to give individuals a sense of nation, peoplehood, collective identity, and national purpose” (xi). Asumiendo esto, cabe un último interrogante: ¿en qué medida Pardo de Tavera ansía extrapolar las realizaciones materiales y las “guiding

“fictions” argentinas para su propio país en busca de una modernidad capaz de satisfacer el proyecto de emancipación nacional?

El viaje de Trinidad Pardo de Tavera se vio interrumpido de forma abrupta por asuntos que reclamaban su presencia en París. Le escribe al director de *The Philippine Review*:

Yo quería haberme quedado algún tiempo más, pero un suceso inesperado me hizo volver a Europa antes de lo que yo me proponía, y no sólo me vine cuando no lo calculé, sino que dejé, por un lado y por otro, libros y papeles que, si los tuviera ahora, me servirían para dar a Vd. datos más circunstanciados y más preciosos. (42)⁷

Redactados con posterioridad a su visita, sus recuerdos no tienen una organización interna estructurada y desgranados en 46 puntos algunos de los temas que el autor juzga “puede(n) interesar al lector filipino, de aquello que se ve en Buenos Aires y que toca a la vida económica y política de la República Argentina”, notas en las que “he apuntado sólo aquellas cosas y hechos que sin buscar he visto y sabido” (42). Imaginamos, aunque nunca se haga mención explícita a esto, que estas impresiones están en cierta medida aquilatadas por la experiencia de casi treinta años de vida en el país de su hermano Félix, que coinciden con los años en que el país se consolida como una nación liberal moderna y dinámica. Pese a los reparos de Trinidad, es evidente que para redactar su ensayo el autor dispuso también de algunos documentos destacados sobre el país, en aspectos económicos y de política internacional.

Articularemos nuestra exposición analítica en tres aspectos fundamentales que reagrupan la totalidad de los 46 puntos abordados por el viajero filipino: a) las misceláneas impresiones personales sobre la vida social, b) las observaciones sobre la estructura política, social y económica del país, y c) las perspectivas futuras (o vaticinios) sustentadas en estas mismas observaciones. En la conclusión señalaremos las insuficiencias sustanciales del testimonio realizado por Pardo de Tavera, centrándonos en sus falencias históricas, sociales y políticas. Pues si el balance global de sus impresiones es positivo, resulta sumamente acrítico y superficial en otros aspectos. En

efecto, Pardo de Tavera no tiene una visión compleja y dialéctica sobre la modernidad en curso en la Argentina; aunque subraya aspectos contradictorios, es incapaz de observar que el proceso de inclusión de las masas de inmigrantes—por demás contrastado y conflictivo (Bertoni 121-159)— tiene su contracara en la exclusión social y política de los pueblos nativos. En fin, de que la riqueza nacional argentina resulta de la apropiación directa y violenta de las tierras indígenas por parte del Estado nacional —para gran beneficio de la oligarquía terrateniente, esto es, la élite política liberal en el poder (Gaignard 205-218, 223-282)—y la exclusión de los pueblos indígenas de la ciudadanía⁸ (Hernández; Sábató 11-29; Viñas).

Improntas de la vida social y la urbanidad

Buenos Aires es descrita en términos positivos como una ciudad dinámica y moderna, no sólo por su composición social y elevado cosmopolitismo, sino por sus infraestructuras: portuaria y aduana, de transporte, higiénicas (salud, agua corriente), urbanismo, edilicias, vida cultural, vestimenta y moda, etc. Habiendo hecho escalas en Brasil y Uruguay, “al llegar a Buenos Aires parece que hemos vuelto a Europa” en el hemisferio sur; una urbe europea de ultramar esencialmente blanca:

En Río de Janeiro se ven bastantes negros; en Buenos Aires sólo de cuando en cuando se vislumbra alguno. La población es puramente europea, y el elemento indio que pueda existir se ha fundido tanto, ahogado por la enorme mezcla producida por la inmigración blanca, que, si existe, no se distingue en Buenos Aires (43).

La lengua castellana, según el viajero, “ha evolucionado allá siguiendo los caracteres que ostenta el moderno pueblo argentino” (43); posee modismos, acentos, vocabulario y sintaxis provenientes de mil horizontes, que se funden en lo que Pardo de Tavera designa como el “*dialecto argentino*”. Muy diferente de la lengua castiza, el filipino queda seducido por esta expresión idiomática típicamente argentina, cuyos modismos, acentos y sintaxis “desde el primer momento me encantaron” (43).

El viajero exulta ante la manifestación de la modernidad porteña, de la que se siente hermanado; este sentimiento constituye su punto de partida y es de alto valor simbólico: “me sentía orgulloso de admirar algo que parecía tocarme” (44). Buenos Aires lo retrotrae a Manila por el vínculo de la lengua: “era la lengua común, que me hacía sentirme envanecido de la hermosa ciudad como si fuera mía, que me hacía participar también del orgullo argentino por su magnífica capital, la que viene en seguida después de París en el mundo latino, que ya es algo” (44).

Queda sorprendido por la pronta capacidad de asimilación que tienen los inmigrantes que llegan masivamente al país. Asimilación social que se hace mediante la rápida adopción de la lengua castellana, y asimilación política mediante el acceso automático a la ciudadanía para los hijos de inmigrantes (política que, entonces, era recusada por las naciones europeas). “Hay que ver con qué orgullo se llaman argentinos los hijos de italianos, españoles, ingleses, etc.: todos los que allí nacen, no solamente son ciudadanos de derecho, sino también patriotas de corazón y de hecho” (44). Pardo de Tavera pensaba que este poder de asimilación social era un fenómeno exclusivo a los Estados Unidos. El poder de asimilación es un correlato de la sociedad moderna, mientras que el fenómeno contrario, el mantenimiento de la identidad originaria o defensa del telurismo, es asociado por el filipino al modelo social tradicional de tipo europeo. Asombra que el ilustre viajero no diga nada en sus recuerdos sobre el sistema educativo que facilita la adopción de la lengua castellana a los hijos de inmigrantes, además de su formación cívica como futuros ciudadanos. La cuestión educativa, pieza clave de la asimilación, es un tema completamente ausente de su crónica de viaje. Esto llama la atención pues la educación era un asunto sobre el cual Pardo de Tavera insistía en sus reflexiones sobre su país natal.

Destaca Trinidad Pardo de Tavera la urbanidad de los modales públicos, tanto de los individuos como de los policías o agentes oficiales. “No se fuma ni escupe en los tranvías, está prohibido, y a nadie se le ocurre desobedecer estas prescripciones” (44). Los policías son serviciales y disciplinados, saben contener sus impulsos y mantienen la sangre fría. Elogia a estos agentes del orden público al punto de considerarlos auténticos modelos: “seguramente

que los agentes de policía de muchas capitales y grandes ciudades europeas podrían aprender mucho de estos vigilantes bonaerenses, y ganarían siguiendo su ejemplo” (45). Buenos Aires se destaca por la ordenada urbanidad de sus costumbres, que juzga civilizadas por la ausencia de gritería en las calles, desmanes y groserías públicas. La cortesía y la moderación, dice, son “todas demostraciones de cultura, de eso que llamamos *buena crianza*. Cualquier extranjero, de cualquier parte, que llegue a Buenos Aires puede tomar en esta ciudad lecciones de urbanidad en la vía pública” (45).

Sin embargo, Trinidad Pardo de Tavera señala un punto desfavorable observable en la gran capital: la enorme mendicidad que se observa en sus calles. Sin proporcionar ninguna explicación social al fenómeno, lo explica mediante un acendrado prejuicio nacional: “Puede decirse que la mendicidad es una plaga hispano-italiana. Allí donde se habla alguna de estas lenguas, florece la mendicidad en todo su esplendor” (42). La mendicidad sólo despierta en el viajero una indignación moral, sin buscar otra explicación que en los meros reflejos culturales ibéricos e itálicos.

Viajero de encumbrada posición social e intelectual, el filipino frecuenta a todas luces personas de su misma condición (aunque no hace ninguna referencia explícita a sus relaciones sociales durante su estancia). Describe los sitios propios de la alta sociedad porteña, en donde desfila la “*High Life*”, como el lujoso y selecto Jockey Club de Buenos Aires, o el hipódromo de la ciudad y su cortejo de vida mundana. En los elegantes salones del primero “se admiran cuadros de Goya, Sorolla, Pradilla, Bouguereau⁹ y otros”, junto con “la naturalidad de maneras y de expresión de la concurrencia [del hipódromo de Palermo], muy distinta de la que se observa en Europa” (46). Para rematar más adelante su explicación de la diferencia entre la altanería de clase (burguesa o aristocrática) del viejo mundo y la civilización de costumbres modernas:

[Europa,] en donde la gente de alta condición social hace alarde de su altanería, usando modales dictados por la más ciega vanidad y por el afán de aparentar cada uno más elevada calidad que los otros. En la sociedad argentina, por más que los franceses la acusen de rastacuerismo, no hay nada que pueda justificar rastacuerismo, sino, al contrario, una facilidad de maneras

distinguidas que seduce al instante, y que puede servir de modelo a otras sociedades que, preciándose de más cultas, son sencillamente víctimas de la vanidad y el orgullo de tiempos pasados (46)

Resulta evidente que este juicio es pronunciado por un observador de encumbrada condición social que, aun viviendo en Europa, definitivamente no pertenece a la sociedad europea; estas palabras expresan el orgullo social de un notable criollo filipino que se identifica con el designio histórico de la clase patricia argentina: construir una nación civilizada moderna a través de la acción directriz de la élite. Y la civilización se verifica en los modales y las costumbres sociales adoptadas por un pueblo educado. Trinidad Pardo de Tavera se identifica con este destino de la aristocrática dirigencia política argentina: aspira a que la élite insular de su propio país logre asumir en el futuro un destino tutelar semejante. La Argentina liberal, abierta y cosmopolita, encarna en aquellos años la posibilidad de la modernidad civilizada dentro de la cultura hispánica; este mismo destino Pardo de Tavera lo desea para su país, aunque las condiciones y los medios para alcanzarlo sean diferentes.

Observaciones sobre el modelo social y económico argentino

El progreso excepcional de la Argentina obedece según el observador filipino a tres factores conjugados. 1) La riqueza social y económica representada por la empresa de inmigración masiva puesta en marcha por la Argentina desde 1862. 2) La disponibilidad que tiene el Estado nacional de territorios fiscales, ofrecidos en venta o arrendamiento a los colonos recién llegados al país, para un cultivo extensivo. 3) La buena gestión política e institucional de la inmigración y de las infraestructuras del país, en constante desarrollo y adaptación a las demandas del mercado mundial. Veamos el detalle de estos elementos esenciales.

Trinidad Pardo de Tavera destaca la política practicada por la élite gobernante de *puerta abierta para con los inmigrantes*, sin discriminación de orígenes, credo, raza y sin condiciones de admisibilidad (esto es, sin practicar una inmigración selectiva). La promoción de la inmigración masiva

está inscrita en la Constitución federal de la Argentina y es promovida mediante una Agencia Nacional de Inmigración con delegaciones activas en toda Europa. Sólo dos países practicaban semejante política de atracción de los inmigrantes: los Estados Unidos y la Argentina. Este último caso era el único entre las jóvenes naciones hispanoamericanas. “Al emigrante se le recibe como a un amigo; más todavía, como un bienhechor”. Y el inmigrante “sabe que su cualidad de extranjero no es un obstáculo, sino una facilidad para su desarrollo en el país” (46). La fuerza de trabajo aportada por los inmigrantes es el factor esencial para el desarrollo de la economía y el engrandecimiento de la nación. Sin este aporte extranjero el país no conocería el rápido progreso material. Por tal motivo los diferentes gobiernos se empleaban desde hacía cincuenta años en promoverla y acogerla debidamente, creando las estructuras adecuadas para recibir a los inmigrantes.

El viajero filipino describe las infraestructuras para recibir a los recién llegados, a través del ‘Hotel de Inmigrantes’ de la Dársena Norte del puerto de Buenos Aires, y asimismo en Rosario y Bahía Blanca, donde los desembarcados podían quedarse durante cinco días con sus gastos cubiertos, antes de ser dirigidos según sus aptitudes al destino inicial asignado siguiendo las necesidades de mano de obra. Las instalaciones eran sumamente modernas. Los enfermos podían permanecer más tiempo, o eran enviados de ser necesario a los recintos de cuarentena. “El departamento de inmigración del gobierno se ocupa de colocar aquellos que llegan sin destino. Si alguno desea residir en provincias, el gobierno le costea el transporte hasta el lugar elegido, donde, hasta diez días después de su llegada, es mantenido todavía a costa del Estado” (47). Trinidad Pardo de Tavera señala una transformación observable en los recién llegados:

El cambio es más profundo todavía, porque la inteligencia se ha despertado [en el inmigrante], y todo el bienestar y el progreso material que les rodea ha influido en las condiciones morales, *argentinizando* y haciendo un hombre moderno del labriego mísero e ignorante de años atrás. (47) *unificar el criterio de la puntuación antes o después del corchete.*

La producción ganadera y agrícola se encuentra en un periodo de profunda transformación, diversificación y expansión. Los grandes propietarios se han enriquecido con la incorporación de tierras productivas (cuya extensión parecía ilimitada), pero sobre todo por el hecho que han comprendido a tiempo que para la modernización productiva de estas tierras requerían del continuo aporte de mano de obra extranjera para su explotación. Han mejorado las razas ganaderas, intensificado la producción, y han construido inmensos frigoríficos para la exportación masiva de carne al mercado mundial. Pardo de Tavera tiene ocasión de visitar dos inmensos frigoríficos en Buenos Aires y en La Plata, acompañando a un veterinario sueco enviado por el reino de Suecia para realizar controles sanitarios. La descripción de los mismos es sumamente detallada, así como las estadísticas de la evolución vertiginosa del stock ganadero del país (rubro que le interesa particularmente al viajero) (48-49).

La agricultura extensiva avanza sobre tierras antes destinadas al pastoreo ganadero, ahora explotada por los labriegos al servicio de los grandes propietarios, y asimismo la posibilidad de establecerse por su cuenta como colonos o arrendatarios. “Como una tierra no vale nada mientras no haya quien la cultive, por todas partes hay una gran demanda de inmigración, y para atraerla se ponen en venta pública terrenos parcelarios según el sistema de remates” (49), explica Trinidad Pardo de Tavera. Con los conocimientos aportados consigo por los labriegos inmigrantes, y el deseo de progresar, se diversificaron las industrias agrícolas (vitivinícola, fruticultura, aceites, etc.). La perforación de pozos arlesianos y la construcción de nuevos regadíos contribuye a la expansión agrícola en una llanura (la pampa) que parece no tener límites y que puede acoger por igual grandes propiedades como pequeñas colonias o arrendatarios. Afirma que “toda aquella magnífica tierra sufrió una transformación colosal que enriquecía a la vez a quién trabajaba y al dueño sedentario que, al aumentar el valor de su propiedad, tenía la feliz ocurrencia de correr a Europa, sin pérdida de tiempo, en busca de los placeres de sus grandes ciudades” (49).

La carrera productivista de la explotación agrícola y ganadera ha generado una euforia sin duda excesiva. Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, observador

avisado, advierte los riesgos inmediatos de tal desenfreno y escalada inflacionaria del valor (basada en el *laissez faire* de los fisiócratas). Sentencia: “Todo el mundo especula en el valor de las tierras. Ese es el gran peligro en Argentina: *la especulación*, que inquieta a todos, por lo incierto y ficticio de lo que sirve de base para calcular el ‘porvenir’ de una tierra” (50). La disminución abrupta de la inmigración debido al inicio de la guerra europea y mundial, desatada el 28 de julio de 1914, propició una repentina caída de los valores de las tierras, que sin el aporte de mano de obra extranjera no podían ya mantener sus valores especulativos. “El precio de la tierra sube, en la esperanza de que afluirán los inmigrantes, porque sin ellos nada adquiere valor ni consolida el adquirido” (50). Esta especulación está al origen de las crisis que recurrentemente conoce la Argentina, vinculadas a los ciclos de valorización ficticia (y fundada en el continuo aporte de nueva mano de obra).

Pardo de Tavera es perspicaz para comprender el funcionamiento económico del país, captando los mecanismos esenciales de la producción y los precios (elevados), y el modo en que se forman artificialmente estos últimos, mediante el coste en alza de la mano de obra. Comprende en definitiva cómo se forman los precios independientemente de las leyes del mercado; como por ejemplo la producción frutícola abundante, puede llegar al mercado a precios elevados resultado de la “escasez artificial” manipulada por los productores (que acopian y retienen la producción para elevar los precios con menos trabajo). De modo que no sólo la ley de la oferta y la demanda regula los precios, sino que éstos se falsean mediante la restricción programada de la oferta, y por el hecho que, en el contexto argentino de la época, “el precio del trabajo podía fijarlo el mismo que lo producía” (50). Señala Pardo de Tavera que de esta forma los salarios tienden a nivelarse artificialmente por lo alto, pues todos los que trabajan “tienden a nivelar el valor del trabajo” por cualquier medio. “El jornal es muy elevado, lo mismo que todos los salarios; pero también el precio general de la vida es sumamente alto. [...] En consecuencia, la vida es allá carísima” (50).

La balanza comercial de Argentina tiene entonces saldo favorable porque exporta mucho e importa poco, entrando más dinero del que sale. Y la mano de obra extranjera cuenta como uno de los principales rubros de las

importaciones. El flujo de capitales, sobre todo británicos, es de “abundancia ilimitada” e inyecta toda la economía nacional, provincias y municipios, conjuntamente con el crédito privado. El filipino constata un hecho entonces asombroso: “yo no conozco un país donde, para su desarrollo económico, primero haya concurrido el capital y luego... la mano de obra” (51), provocando un ciclo virtuoso que, multiplicado por la afluencia inmigratoria, atrae nuevos capitales de Europa. “La mano de obra y el capital extranjero han sido los factores de la prosperidad de aquel país” (51). El viajero vislumbra que la guerra mundial provocará el incremento de los flujos comerciales y de capitales con los Estados Unidos, en detrimento de Europa. A pesar de las resistencias culturales y la desconfianza política de los gobiernos argentinos, el acercamiento con la economía estadounidense parece ineluctable pues “la pobre Europa cesa su *producción industrial reproductiva* para dedicarse por entero a la *producción destructiva*” (51).

Comparando a la Argentina con Filipinas, Trinidad Pardo de Tavera se interroga sobre el pasado y el presente de ambos países. Sostiene que el sistema económico colonial era semejante en ambos, empleando para calificarlo el término de “economías de secuestro tutelar” (51-52); incluso asevera que éste era más desfavorable para Buenos Aires que para Manila. Los destinos de ambas regiones bifurcan definitivamente durante el siglo XIX, por la “sagacidad política” de los “grandes hombres” que han creado la Argentina a partir de la independencia en 1810, llamando al concurso de la población extranjera desde el inicio. “Aquellos fundadores de la Nación Argentina tuvieron la sagacidad de descubrir toda la importancia y toda la trascendencia de la inmigración para el desarrollo de su patria” (52). Entre los “grandes hombres” figuran dos expresidentes, Domingo F. Sarmiento y Carlos Pellegrini. El primero desarrollará de modo exponencial el sistema educativo nacional, vector esencial del desarrollo humano del país y zócalo fundamental del desarrollo económico y social de la nación. Sarmiento, dice Pardo de Tavera, “creía, como los padres de los Estados Unidos, en la omnipotencia redentora de la educación” (52).

Para el filipino, uno de los secretos de la Argentina moderna es el entendimiento mutuo entre los “hijos del país” y los “extranjeros”. Los argen-

tinios nativos nunca abrigaron recelos ni temores ante los recién llegados. Por el contrario, la buena estrella y mejor fortuna de los locales dependía estrechamente del flujo de inmigrantes para valorizar la tierra y acrecentar la producción. Inversamente, “los inmigrantes no han tenido tampoco que temer la competencia de los hijos del país, cuyas aspiraciones principales, y para la mayoría, única, son gobernar y tener en sus manos la *autoridad política*” (51). De suerte que, en los hechos, existe una división social armoniosa entre inmigrantes y nacionales, a condición de que los primeros no reclamen una representación política en la gestión de los asuntos públicos, y que los segundos mantengan el monopolio de la administración política y social del país.

Lo que el viajero filipino no puede observar en 1914 es que esta ecuación o pacto social tácito entre la plebe extranjera y la élite gobernante del país estaba a punto de desmoronarse por la creciente y acuciante presión de los primeros sobre los segundos. Los inmigrantes, y sobre todos sus hijos, ya ciudadanos argentinos, reclamaban para sí una serie de derechos sociales y una creciente representación política, apertura que no estaba contemplada en el pacto fundador de la Argentina liberal y oligárquica, vigente desde 1862. En efecto, el flujo migratorio en Buenos Aires y otras urbes, forjó una clase obrera con aspiraciones políticas y nueva organización sindical, que desde las últimas décadas del siglo XIX pujaba por una participación política y social con reivindicaciones de clase, cuyos reclamos eran difícilmente audibles en la república oligárquica forjada por la Generación de 1880 y los gobiernos subsiguientes. Las reformas del sistema político estaban produciéndose en el mismo instante en que Trinidad Pardo de Tavera visita el país, pero este fenómeno no era observable para él. En efecto, el presidente Roque Sáenz Peña había hecho votar por el Congreso, en febrero de 1912, la ley que estableció el voto universal, secreto y obligatorio para los ciudadanos mayores de 18 años. Esta ley tenía por objetivo esencial ampliar la base social de la participación ciudadana en la política, proporcionando una mayor legitimidad a los nuevos gobiernos. También, al tiempo que satisfacía los reclamos de la oposición (la Unión Cívica Radical y, en menor medida, los Socialistas), buscaba mediante esta ley de afirmación democrática quitarles apoyo a los

sectores más contestatarios a la extensa hegemonía del Partido Autonomista Nacional. Este cálculo no fue sin embargo favorable a los conservadores: en las primeras elecciones de 1916 realizadas con este sistema, triunfa Hipólito Yrigoyen, candidato de la oposición (la Unión Cívica Radical).

Esta incapacidad por parte del filipino para observar ciertos fenómenos sociales determinantes no sólo se debía a su calidad de visitante temporario, no residente; creemos que esta ceguera social era también atribuible a cierta limitación de clase. Esto significa que, por su condición de miembro distinguido de la élite criolla filipina, se identificaba naturalmente con la clase dirigente argentina (los “hijos del país”, que administraban el país como sus haciendas), como para penetrar en sus observaciones otra realidad social: la realidad de la nueva clase obrera que sin duda escapaba a su mirada escrutadora. Numerosos son los pasajes de su crónica de viaje en donde se opera una identificación apenas disimulada con la “sagacidad política” de los “grandes hombres” argentinos. Dicha identificación recurrente constituye no sólo un reflejo clasista de filipino encumbrado, sino una identificación con un modelo de hispanidad exitoso y moderno, que a sus ojos representaba “el camino” a seguir por su propio país (aunque el viajero se abstiene con mucho de establecer paralelos más profundos en esta dirección). Podemos suponer que el perímetro de sus frecuentaciones sociales se restringía a los miembros de la élite porteña (Jockey Club, el hipódromo, la vida mundana de la Avenida de Mayo, los barrios residenciales, el balneario de Mar del Plata al que asistía la *high society*); en cualquier caso, no hay registro alguno en sus recuerdos de la vida social en los barrios populares. Trinidad Pardo de Tavera es en realidad testigo del fin de la república conservadora y oligárquica, sin avizorar el nuevo rumbo que estaba emprendiendo el país, con su consiguiente carga de incertidumbre.

Observa, sin criticarlas en absoluto, las condiciones en que se ejerce el poder en la república conservadora:

Los hijos del país son muy aficionados a los cargos públicos. Todos los empleados del gobierno son ‘nativos’, como decimos en Filipinas. Los puestos más importantes, incluso la presidencia, están monopolizados por un reducido número de familias, por una oligarquía compuesta de una base

de antiguos argentinos fundida con elementos nuevos traídos por la inmigración redentora (53).

Este retrato se completa poco más adelante con una descripción edénica y benevolente de esta nobleza criolla, caracterizada a su juicio por el desinterés y el altruismo, y aderezada por la gloria personal como rasgo psicológico:

Regularmente, los miembros de esta oligarquía no buscan el poder para enriquecerse, aunque hay excepciones, porque casi todos son ricos, sino por el placer de ejercer el poder, por ser algo y alguien en la vida política de su país. Todos los hijos del país son amantes del progreso y aceptan aquello que, a su juicio, puede mejorar el estado material y moral de sus compatriotas (53).

Completa a continuación el panorama con un rosario de cualidades y atributos positivos: “Son inteligentes, educados, ambiciosos y refinados. Saben distinguir el oro del oropel y la verbosidad del talento” (53). Esta aristocracia patricia se afirma en dos condiciones esenciales: “el dinero, que da *rango social*, y el cargo oficial, que da *rango político*” (53). Tras este lenguaje sobrio y preciso, Trinidad Pardo de Tavera deja fluir toda su admiración por esta clase dirigente argentina, cuyas cualidades (piensa él) eran semejantes a la suya y a la de aquellos filipinos de su condición.

En su descripción de la Argentina moderna Pardo de Tavera señala además otro factor de peso: la existencia de una multitud de autoridades sociales en las provincias y municipios, de responsables locales calificados, capaces “de influir en todas las demás manifestaciones de la vida argentina” (54). Su papel resulta decisivo, según él, en la evolución de la política nacional. Dicho entramado socio-político sustenta la estabilidad del país, distinguiéndolo de “la vida de perturbación política y de gobierno de la fuerza, común a las repúblicas latinoamericanas” (54). Estas autoridades locales son los garantes del orden y la legalidad social. Sin estas autoridades intermedias, que ejercen un importante rol de mediación social, “la Argentina sería otra pequeña república de pronunciamientos y golpes de estado militares, en un estado de guerra civil permanente, en donde los puestos oficiales son

los únicos alicientes de la ambición. Donde no se conocen las autoridades sociales, sólo se lucha por la posesión de la autoridad política” (54). Pardo de Tavera detalla luego extensamente las carencias políticas e institucionales de esas otras repúblicas latinoamericanas “impermeables” a la inmigración extranjera y adictas a un nacionalismo de pacotilla que alienta la desconfianza hacia los extranjeros, y donde las oligarquías ejercen un derecho predador y confiscatorio hacia su propia población: “una oligarquía acapara el gobierno y explota a sus anchas el patriotismo de la masa ignorante y pobre que conquista, por la retórica, el soborno y la fuerza” (55). Indica el viajero que esta opinión es en parte aplicable al caso de Filipinas, hostil a la inmigración y cuyo pueblo está encerrado en su propio tipo (56). Traducido al ámbito social y político filipino, Pardo de Tavera opera (y convoca) una identificación tácita de su país con la administración estadounidense que, a su juicio, desempeña en el archipiélago un papel progresista y modernizador.

El porvenir radiante

Trinidad Pardo de Tavera se detiene extensamente en el análisis de un conflicto internacional de gran trascendencia a comienzos del siglo XX: el bloqueo naval anglo-italo-germano en diciembre de 1902 al puerto de La Guaira en Venezuela. El interés de este episodio le permite sopesar la creciente importancia diplomática de la Argentina en el contexto de la época, en la que la potencia estadounidense todavía estaba afirmándose en Latinoamérica mientras la razón imperialista europea todavía gastaba sus últimos cartuchos en la región. El bloqueo finalmente se resuelve con la firma de un protocolo por ambas partes, rubricado en Washington el 13 de febrero de 1903.

Durante el incidente, la Argentina, a través de su ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, José María Drago, adopta una clara posición contraria al intervencionismo por el cobro de deudas financieras. Líder del grupo conocido por la sigla ABC —que designa a la Argentina, Brasil y Chile—, la diplomacia argentina avanza el criterio de que “ninguna ley civilizada acuerda a un hombre rico o fuerte el derecho de erigirse en sí mismo en juez y ejecutor del culpable pobre o débil” (56). Ante la ambigüedad estadounidense, que no quiso aplicar la Doctrina Monroe ante este caso de intervención beligerante

européa (por juzgar que la misma no se aplicaba a los casos de cobros de empréstitos), la posición firme de José María Drago en los foros internacionales, fundada en la Doctrina Calvo¹⁰, erigió a la Argentina en protectora de las repúblicas latinas. La mayor parte de los países, aún los beligerantes europeos, terminaron por aceptar este principio. Según el filipino, el incidente venezolano “ponía de relieve la capacidad internacional de la diplomacia argentina”. De modo que “el mundo civilizado contemplaba una república latinoamericana que lograba hacer triunfar una doctrina que ponía a salvo no sólo la dignidad de las repúblicas hermanas, sino también los fueros verdaderos de la justicia” (57).

Los sucesos venezolanos motivaron el Corolario Roosevelt de 1904 a la Doctrina Monroe, corolario que inaugura la etapa intervencionista de los Estados Unidos en Hispanoamérica. Frente a las convulsiones provocadas por la revolución mexicana de 1910, Theodore Roosevelt buscará consenso para intervenir en México, hallando un rechazo tajante por parte de la Argentina, que observaba con profunda desconfianza la extensión de la hegemonía paternalista de Estados Unidos en la región. Los acontecimientos mexicanos confirmaban una vez más el liderazgo diplomático de la Argentina en aquellos años y, para Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, este liderazgo era otra de las realizaciones clarividentes de los “grandes hombres” de la Argentina en el plano internacional.

Para el visitante filipino el porvenir de la Argentina es promisorio pues la modernidad del país en todos los rubros la colocaba a la cabeza de las naciones progresistas. Juzga que su economía agroexportadora e incipiente industria la ponía al abrigo de las crisis, pues los cuatro artículos principales de exportación (carne, cereales, cueros, lana) eran productos de consumo universal. El punto débil de su modelo económico era la continua necesidad de incorporar mano de obra extranjera, interrumpida en 1914 por la guerra mundial en Europa. “Las tierras todavía no aprovechadas y la transformación del cultivo en métodos intensivos, ofrece a la agricultura un porvenir inmenso” (59). Pardo de Tavera sostiene que una vez finalizada la contienda mundial la emigración europea hacia los Estados Unidos y la Argentina se

reanudará e intensificará (59) aportando a estos países nuevos brazos y una cuota de templanza moral.

Las características observadas por el filipino en el pueblo argentino y las virtudes de su clase dirigente, conjugado con la educación y la prosperidad material, la han elevado a un rango único entre las naciones hispanas, constituyendo con Francia los únicos países resueltamente cosmopolitas y abiertos del mundo latino. Avanza que el “tipo argentino”, pese a las virtudes heredadas de Europa, ha sabido forjar un tipo de humanidad propio al Nuevo Mundo, fundado en la sencillez y la franqueza.

Tan sólo dos notas destempladas del filipino empañan el horizonte de este retrato idílico. Son dos aspectos que forman parte del mismo fenómeno: la excesiva cercanía cultural de la Argentina con Europa, e inversamente, su distancia cultural y excesiva reticencia política para con los Estados Unidos. Según Pardo de Tavera, si bien Europa ocupa un sitio indiscutido en cuanto a civilización y cultura se refiere, los Estados Unidos encarnan el verdadero ideal del espíritu democrático moderno, instancia en la que ninguna nación del Viejo Mundo le hace sombra. Para el filipino, el derrotero progresista de la Argentina sólo puede engrandecerse yendo al encuentro de los Estados Unidos y, en proporción directa, alejándose de sus orígenes europeos.

Antes de comentar una cita sobre los extranjeros del presidente Roque Sáenz Peña, señala nuestro viajero:

Cuando visité Buenos Aires, el señor Sáenz Peña era presidente de la República. Sus compatriotas le discutían mucho por sus humos aristocráticos, adquiridos en Europa, a donde va tanto argentino a perder las cualidades más apreciables de su carácter: *la sencillez y la franqueza*. En el cuerpo diplomático de Europa se refinan, sin duda alguna, los argentinos, pero, desgraciadamente, no se democratizan. Al contrario, por imitación, aceptan y adquieren humos y actitudes aristocráticas que luego sostienen [reproducen] en su país (53).

El contacto estrecho con Europa forja el carácter arrogante y aristocrático; el contacto estrecho con los Estados Unidos forja en cambio el carácter genuinamente democrático.

Trinidad Pardo de Tavera juzga que las razones para desconfiar del imperialismo ascendente de los Estados Unidos son valederas y atendibles. Pero éstas no justifican sin embargo la tenaz distancia teñida de recelo que la Argentina tiene hacia los Estados Unidos. Más allá de los *slogans* diplomáticos que han fomentado la reticencia y la desconfianza mutuas (“América para los americanos” sostenían Monroe y Roosevelt; “sea América para la humanidad” replicó Sáenz Peña), el acercamiento de Argentina con la gran nación del Norte le parece ineluctable. Residente en Francia, Pardo de Tavera observa los límites de esta inspirada frase de Roque Sáenz Peña que supo cosechar aplausos entre los hispanoamericanos, tanto por lo dicho como por lo que soslayaba o dejaba entrever. Pardo de Tavera señala con las siguientes palabras, de tono incisivo y crítico, que denotan su mirada filipina y asiática:

Como frase, es sin duda bonita: como sentimiento es más poética, más altruista, más amplia que la otra, pero, en el fondo, ¿qué significa? Palabras, palabras, palabras. Ni literal ni legalmente era cierto lo que decía el argentino porque la propia Constitución de su patria, lo mismo que todos los documentos oficiales relativos a la inmigración dicen siempre ‘favorecer la inmigración europea’, y, en verdad, la *humanidad* no reside exclusivamente en Europa. En medio de todas las fórmulas de altruismo, los argentinos rechazan la emigración de raza amarilla, de manera que eso de ‘humanidad’ es algo así como una licencia poética, y nada más (53).

Asimismo, el viajero restituye una verdad indiscutida por encima de la batalla de *slogans* políticos, pues por cierto ‘América para los americanos’ no expresa la idea de “cerrar las puertas a los individuos sino a *las naciones*”, y señala de paso que cuando los argentinos abren sus puertas a la humanidad, “es con la esperanza de que la humanidad que allá penetre *se haga argentina*” (53).

Trinidad Pardo de Tavera observa que, tras esta contienda diplomática y política, la verdadera razón es que los argentinos “quieren la hegemonía del mundo latinoamericano [...]. Actitud diplomática que revelaba claramente el concepto que tenía de su deber nacional e internacional en el Nuevo Mundo” (59). De esta actitud legítima, “puede asegurarse que Argentina comprende

que su papel será organizar la resistencia contra el imperialismo de Estados Unidos en toda la América latina” (59).

Los Estados Unidos representaban un tope absoluto a las aspiraciones hegemónicas argentinas en Hispanoamérica. Confiado en el porvenir auspicioso de la nación sudamericana, Pardo de Tavera adopta una posición realista y sabe que esta disputa por el liderazgo no se dirime en los salones diplomáticos o mediante debates y argucias morales, sino en el plano de la simple supremacía económica. Tal una sentencia, concluye con estas palabras su extenso informe sobre la Argentina: “Yo digo que la hegemonía política, literaria, artística, industrial y comercial, pertenecerá al más poderoso, y el más poderoso será... el más rico, el de mayor desarrollo económico” (59). De seguro que, en el pudor o falsa incertidumbre de los puntos suspensivos, el autor había puesto como ganador a los Estados Unidos.

Conclusión

A la luz de la historia posterior de la Argentina tras la visita de Pardo de Tavera en 1914, sus opiniones entusiastas resultan hoy excesivas. Sin caer en juicios exagerados, la historia argentina del siglo XX parece desmentir en forma sistemática las cualidades y logros otrora atribuidas al país, a su pueblo y a la clase dirigente.

Fácil sería demostrar que las impresiones de Trinidad Pardo de Tavera eran erróneas o superficiales en muchos de sus aspectos esenciales. Pero estos recuerdos de un viajero filipino ilustrado no aspiraban a completar un exhaustivo estudio histórico, económico o sociológico del país. Sus observaciones pretendían apenas bosquejar un retrato lo más fidedigno posible para sus connacionales filipinos. Indicamos al inicio las precauciones tomadas por el autor en su carta de remisión al editor de *The Philippine Review* en Manila. Considerados bajo esta luz, sus recuerdos son bastante ajustados (o lo son parcialmente) con la realidad. Una miríada de juicios positivos semejantes a los de Pardo de Tavera pueden compendiarse en otros testimonios, especialmente entre los viajeros europeos. Su visita corresponde con el punto culminante de la nación liberal y oligárquica en la Argentina, en el cénit de máxima confianza y esplendor. Para dimensionar estas circunstancias

históricas alcanza con cotejar estas opiniones positivas con las que, en la misma época, los observadores internacionales tenían sobre otros países de América, Europa o Asia. Las estadísticas económicas globales indican que la Argentina ocupaba en 1913 la quinta posición en el mundo por su PIB per cápita, delante de Alemania y Francia (Maddison 153).

En el testimonio de Trinidad Pardo de Tavera hallamos tres limitaciones interpretativas fundamentales: históricas, sociales y políticas.

Haciendo excepción de algunas pocas comparaciones con las Filipinas durante el período colonial (51), el viajero no menciona las coordenadas esenciales de la expansión territorial del Estado argentino en el siglo XIX, base del enriquecimiento nacional (Gaignard). Nunca se interroga sobre cómo tanta tierra se halla disponible para la especulación, ni cómo se la conquistó mediante una guerra cruenta contra los indígenas del país que fueron exterminados y acorralados en remotas reservas. Oficialmente, la guerra contra el indio en la Argentina finaliza en 1916, es decir que durante la visita de Trinidad Pardo de Tavera las acciones militares contra la resistencia indígena no habían cesado todavía (sobre todo en el Noreste del país, en la región fronteriza con el Paraguay).

Los comentarios sobre la situación argentina en el plano social constituyen otra laguna estructural de sus testimonios, concentrados exclusivamente al análisis de la inmigración. La aceptación e integración de la población extranjera es descrita en forma edénica y resulta en gran medida ilusoria. Si bien las estadísticas y datos proporcionados por Pardo de Tavera son fehacientes, la realidad de la integración social y política de las masas extranjeras fue mucho más conflictiva de lo que el filipino deja suponer. Ni todos los inmigrantes eran sumisos y obedientes a la ley del país de acogida, ni todos los nativos (al igual que los miembros de la clase gobernante) eran '*inmigracionistas*' convencidos y militantes (Bertoni 166-172). El nacimiento del nacionalismo argentino como expresión política y cultural, es concomitante a los años en que la nación liberal se afirma y expande, es decir, el país de la Generación de 1880, cuya obra es celebrada por Pardo de Tavera en las figuras de Domingo F. Sarmiento y Carlos Pellegrini. Numerosas voces se alzaban contra la inmigración, por considerarla excesiva. Lo hemos indicado antes:

la inmigración masiva tuvo por consecuencias inmediatas el nacimiento de los reclamos sociales, la emergencia de la acción sindical clasista y radical (la federación sindical anarquista, FORA), de los movimientos políticos contestatarios (UCR) y/o revolucionarios (partido Socialista, Anarquistas, etc.). Numerosas investigaciones históricas han analizado en detalle esta cuestión y resulta imposible sintetizar y desarrollar aquí estos aspectos.

Por último, los comentarios políticos de Pardo de Tavera son débiles porque no penetra nunca los meandros de la vida política argentina; se mantiene en la superficie, sin captar su complejidad. La descripción de la clase política argentina —de raigambre patricia y elitista, es retratada como una clase dirigente sin fisuras internas, como un bloque homogéneo dilatado en el tiempo—, resulta ser un fenómeno muy alejado de la realidad histórica. La clase dirigente fue muy contestada en la vida política argentina hasta 1916 (se produjeron al menos tres revoluciones encabezadas por la Unión Cívica Radical, en 1890, 1893 y 1905, y otras muchas huelgas obreras reprimidas por un baño de sangre), sin contar que las crisis posteriores a 1914 serán aún más virulentas. Otro tanto sucede con la economía, tambaleante, que atravesó numerosas crisis financieras nacionales e internacionales, debido al exceso de especulación (esto sí fue señalado por el viajero). Los aspectos positivos atribuidos por Pardo de Tavera al desarrollo argentino aparecen descritos como un mérito unilateral de su clase dirigente (la obra de los “grandes hombres”). En su entusiasta identificación con las medidas y acciones políticas llevadas adelante por la dirigencia liberal argentina trasunta en realidad una identificación clasista evidente por parte de aquel que proyecta su propio deseo —aspirando a que algún día, en Filipinas, los “grandes hombres” se despierten a un destino semejante—. Los emprendimientos de esta clase dirigente son vistos con benevolencia por Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, enunciando escasas críticas y ninguna objeción. Las acciones de esta clase política oligárquica revelan una suerte de teleología milagrosa, como si estos grandes hombres hubiesen sido tocados por una vara mágica. Las realizaciones de la modernidad son el milagro del capitalismo global: “En una palabra: aquella antigua colonia del tipo de sociedad militar y religiosa, es hoy una república moderna del tipo de sociedad científica y productiva que se afana *detrás del*

peso" (54). Entre la época colonial y la nación moderna hay una gran elipsis en los testimonios de Pardo de Tavera; y esta elipsis constituye lo esencial de las disputas políticas argentinas del siglo XIX: las luchas entre federales y unitarios, entre liberales y conservadores, entre partidarios y opositores a la federalización de la ciudad de Buenos Aires y la nacionalización de su aduana, y en fin, entre nacionalistas y cosmopolitas, aparecen silenciadas en su testimonio.

Notas

1. Let us mention the American dancer Isadora Duncan, the French actress Marguerite Moreno, to high-profile intellectuals, writers and journalists such as Rubén Darío, Enrique Gómez Carrillo, Anatole France, Jean Jaurès, Ramón del Valle Inclán, Jacinto Benavente, Rafael Blasco Ibáñez, Enrico Ferri, without forgetting the engineer Guglielmo Marconi or the physicist Albert Einstein.
2. Desconocemos la fecha exacta de su viaje y estancia en la Argentina, pero por algunos indicios del relato deducimos el año indicado. Por ejemplo, dice: “cuando visité Buenos Aires, el señor Sáenz Peña era presidente de la República” (53). Roque Sáenz Peña fue elegido presidente para el mandato 1910-1916, pero, de frágil salud toma licencia por enfermedad y fallece el 9 de agosto de 1914, siendo sustituido por el vicepresidente Victorino de la Plaza. Inferimos que Trinidad Pardo de Tavera permanece en el país hasta antes del fallecimiento de Sáenz Peña.
3. Las “Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata” —futura República Argentina— inician su gesta de emancipación el 25 de mayo de 1810. La particularidad de esta independencia, declarada oficialmente el 9 de julio de 1816, es que no conoce reverses y vuelcos contrarrevolucionarios como en otros sitios de la América hispánica (v. gr. Chile, Perú, Venezuela, México). Los festejos en 1910 del Centenario de la Argentina duraron largos meses y constituyeron una “vitrina oficial” de los progresos realizados por la nación en su primer siglo de existencia. Mediante estos festejos el gobierno enarbola de cara al mundo el triunfo del proyecto liberal, en su cénit institucional y económico. En la historiografía argentina y el imaginario nacional el Centenario es referido a menudo como la “Edad de Oro” del país.
4. Trinidad Hermenegildo Pardo de Tavera, “Recuerdos de Argentina”, *The Philippine Review/Revista Filipina*, Manila, Feb. 1916, v. I, n°2, 42-59.
5. Para una evaluación de su obra hasta el año 1913 y su papel destacado en la cultura filipina, remitimos al estudio: cf. Epifanio de los Santos Cristóbal, *Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera*, Manila, Imprenta Cultura Filipina, 1913. Esta obra reúne una serie miscelánea (50-183) de conferencias, discursos, ensayos y entrevistas publicados por Pardo de Tavera en la prensa manileña entre los años 1906 y 1912, obra dispersa que traduce algunas de las ideas políticas destacadas de Trinidad Pardo de Tavera sobre identidad, cultura, política, economía y educación en Filipinas. El volumen reúne los trabajos siguientes: “El alma filipina” (17 de mayo 1906, 50-66), “Autoridades sociales” (17 de abril 1909, 66-77), “La imprenta en Filipinas” (20 de junio 1911, 77-92), “El Japón moderno” (octubre 1912, 99-111), “Porqué se suicidó el General Nogi” (28 de septiembre 1912, 112-116), “La nueva mentalidad filipina” (14 de noviembre 1912, 116-138),

- “Resultados del desarrollo económico de Filipinas” (noviembre 1912, 138-171), “Desarrollo industrial” (agosto 1911, 171-178), “Por dónde y cómo debemos ir” (febrero 1912, 178-183). Resultaría de gran interés comparar algunos de estos ensayos con el testimonio de su viaje a la Argentina, pues existe una profunda proximidad temática que nos permitiría analizar el alcance de algunas de sus preocupaciones entorno a la modernidad filipina y su proyecto nacional, y los avatares de la modernización institucional, política, social y de desarrollo económico vinculados a este último. Pero semejante esfuerzo excede las dimensiones del presente trabajo, mereciendo sin duda un estudio específico centrado en el pensamiento político de Pardo de Tavera y su concepción de la modernidad.
6. Mencionemos a la bailarina estadounidense Isadora Duncan, la actriz francesa Marguerite Moreno, a encumbrados intelectuales, escritores y periodistas como Rubén Darío, Enrique Gómez Carrillo, Anatole France, Jean Jaurès, Ramón del Valle Inclán, Jacinto Benavente, Rafael Blasco Ibáñez, Enrico Ferri, sin olvidar al ingeniero Guglielmo Marconi ni al físico Albert Einstein.
 7. Para simplificar citamos este ensayo con las referencias directas a la página entre corchetes.
 8. Este aspecto se vincula directamente con el tratamiento de la cuestión racial dentro de la modernidad argentina. La concepción racial del proyecto de civilización nacional argentino, tras el sometimiento violento o exterminación de los indígenas, excluyó toda política de integración de los pueblos nativos del “crisol de razas” publicitada en paralelo por el Estado como elemento constitutivo del “guiding fiction” sobre la identidad nacional y el cosmopolitismo. No podemos estudiar en este ensayo la cuestión racial en Argentina, pero destacamos su importancia fundamental, y señalamos la inobservancia de este problema por Pardo de Tavera.
 9. Rectificamos la errata (“Bouguerao” en el texto). Se refiere a William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905), pintor francés representante del arte académico durante la segunda mitad del siglo XIX. Además del Jockey Club, una obra suya figura en la colección del Museo de Bellas Artes de Buenos Aires.
 10. Es una doctrina del Derecho Internacional elaborada por el jurista argentino Carlos Calvo (1824-1906), que establece que quienes viven en un país extranjero deben establecer sus reclamaciones ante los tribunales locales, absteniéndose a ejercer presiones diplomáticas o intervenciones militares directas de su propio Estado. Varios países latinoamericanos han incluido la doctrina Calvo en sus constituciones. La Doctrina Drago es una aplicación más restrictiva y limitada de la Doctrina Calvo.

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From Self-Orientalization to Revolutionary Patriotism

Paterno's Subversive Discourse
Hidden in Romances

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Abstract

Paterno's writing often exhibits a strange combination of overly melodramatic, hypersensual, and trite language with fierce and patriotic calls to arms, as if the first were mere camouflage for the second. However, the intense contradictions of his political life and his reputation as a turncoat, a sycophant first to the Spanish and then to the American colonial authorities, makes the reader question the authenticity of this nationalistic language, even though it is, in fact, a leitmotiv in his literature. Whether it is part of literary romanticism's penchant for nationalism and love of individual and collective freedom, or the personal reaction of a Filipino subject under subsequent foreign occupations, it is the reader's call to decide. I argue, however, that it is important not to see these calls to insurrection and national liberation as isolated cases, like in his opera *La alianza soñada*, but as a resourceful (sometimes opportunistic) commonplace that appears time and again in all his fiction throughout his literary career.

Keywords

Pedro Paterno, revolution, subversive discourse, patriotism, self-orientalization, exoticization, Romantic *cursilería*, national allegory, national identity, romance, pioneer, *La alianza soñada*, *Aurora Social*, *Boda a la moderna*, *La braveza del Bayani*, *La dalaga virtuosa*, *La fidelidad*, *Maring*, *amor de obrero Filipino*, *Ninay*, *Sampaguitas*, *Los últimos románticos en la erupción del volcán de Taal*.



Fig. 1. The title page of *Ninay*, the first Filipino novel, written by Pedro A. Paterno in 1885



Fig. 2. Book cover of *Los Ultimos Romanticos* written by Pedro A. Paterno in 1911

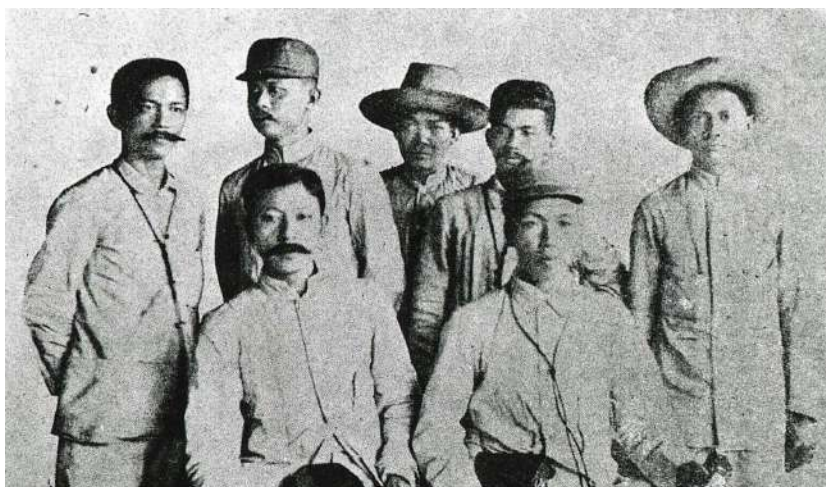


Fig. 3. The Philippine negotiators for the Pact of Biak-na-Bato. Seated from left to right: Pedro Paterno and Emilio Aguinaldo with five companions (left to right: Tomas Mascardo, Celis, Jose Ignacio Pau, Antonio Montenegro and Mariano Llanera); Taken from the U-M Library Digital Collections. Philippine Photographs Digital Archive, Special Collections Research Center, University of Michigan.

When reading Filipino writer and politician Pedro A. Paterno's (1857-1911) works, contemporary readers may be turned off by an outdated *cursilería*, a somewhat tacky sappiness for today's standards, which was, however, at the time common among other Spanish-language Filipino writers, as well as Romantic writers in Spain (where Paterno moved as a teenager and stayed for some twenty-two years working as a lawyer) and sometimes also among *Modernista* writers in Latin America.¹ After all, these transpacific literary influences (or transatlantic, since Paterno lived in Spain for decades) between Latin American Modernistas and Filipino *ilustrados* are possible if we consider the chronology of the publication of key texts by the Modernista forefathers, including José Martí's *Ismaelillo* (1882), *Versos Sencillos* (1891), and "Nuestra América" (1891), as well as Rubén Darío's *Azul...* (1888), *Prosas profanas y otros poemas* (1901), and *Cantos de vida y esperanza. Los cisnes y otros poemas* (1905). Most precede the publication of Paterno's fiction. The fact that in Paterno's case, this *cursilería* is perhaps even more pronounced than in the writings of other Filipino authors may be part of the reason why he is a nearly forgotten figure in Philippine letters. But Filipino historian Resil Mojares proposes another reason for his decline: "That Paterno has sunk to insignificance has to do in part with his politics. Nationalist historiography has cast him as symbol of the class that betrayed the Philippine Revolution" (3).

In any case, the melodramatic and overly romanticized exchanges between idealized lovers (exaggeratedly brave and strong young men; exceedingly delicate and beautiful young women) in these romances hide surprisingly subversive passages, where one reads the word "feminism" and passages encouraging readers to take arms against foreign powers oppressing the Philippines. Thus, even though it is not entirely clear what Paterno means by "feminism," the collection of novellas *Aurora Social* is dedicated "To the angelical single women of the Liceo de Manila, who preserve the Filipino Soul and are flag bearers of feminism in the country."² Yet the purported fervent patriotism of some of these passages does not reflect who Pedro A. Paterno truly was. Jorge Mojarro has described him as "a dexterous social climber" (n.p.) and Adam Lifshay as a "Seditious Sycophant" in the title of the chapter dedicated to him. And to use the Filipino historian Ambeth Ocampo's

words in an article titled “Looking Back: The First Filipino Novel,” included on 4 December 2005 in his bi-weekly editorial page column “Looking Back,” in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*:

Remember, Paterno was one of the greatest “balimbing” (turncoat) in history (perhaps he was the original “balimbing” in Philippine political history). He was first on the Spanish side, then when the declaration of independence was made in 1898, he “wormed his way to power” and became president of the Malolos Congress in 1899, then sensing the change in political winds after the establishment of the American colonial government, he became a member of the First Philippine Assembly.

Indeed, in spite of Paterno’s importance and visibility in several key episodes of the birth of the Filipino nation and as a pioneer in the history of Filipino literature (his *Ninay* was the first novel written by a native Filipino in any language and his *Sampaguitas y otras poesías varias* [Jasmines and Various Other Poems, 1880], the first Filipino Spanish-language poetry collection), his reputation was tainted by this proclivity to political opportunism and to become an obsequious collaborator first of the Spanish and then of the American colonizers.

Subversive discourse, however, must not have been foreign to Pedro Paterno, whose wealthy Chinese-Filipino father, the reformist Máximo Paterno, was exiled in the Mariana Islands for ten years for allegedly participating in the 1872 Cavite Mutiny, often considered the first step of the Filipino nationalism that would lead to the 1896 Philippine Revolution. His younger brother, Maximino, was also arrested for insurrection by Spanish authorities (Mojares 18). And Pedro Paterno himself, was, like José Rizal, accused, during the Trial of Rizal in 1896, of inciting the Katipunan (a secret Filipino revolutionary society founded by patriots in 1892 and aimed at gaining independence from Spain through revolution led by Andrés Bonifacio) by writing about pre-Hispanic Philippine history and exalting Tagalog civilization.³ In particular, Paterno’s strange study *La antigua civilización de Filipinas* [*The Ancient Civilization of the Philippines*] was blamed for promoting rebellion against Spanish rule by celebrating pre-His-

panic Tagalog culture. As Mojares points out, “It must have rankled too that despite his identification with Spain he was still, in Spanish eyes, a ‘native’” (19).

Five years later, Paterno would volunteer to become a mediator between Spanish Governor-General Fernando Primo de Rivera and the Filipino rebels, managing to convince the revolutionary leader, General Emilio Aguinaldo, to sign the Pact of Biak-na-Bato on 14 December 1897 which ended the revolution and sent its leaders into exile in Hong Kong. According to Eugenio Matibag, Paterno’s brokering of the Pact of Biak-na-Bato and his presidency of the Malolos Congress ensured “the *ilustrado* hegemony over the islands in the twentieth century” (37). To the Spanish authorities’ surprise, when Paterno returned to Manila, he requested, in return for his mediation, to be granted a dukedom, a seat in the Spanish Senate, and payment for his services in Mexican pesos; in the end, he only received the Grand Cross of Isabel.

In September 1898, he was elected head of the Malolos Congress (the insurgent Revolutionary Congress of the Revolutionary Government of the Philippines) where Filipino nominal independence was ratified, until he was captured by the Americans in April 1901. Paterno would later be released from prison after swearing loyalty to the United States’ rule. Under US rule, Paterno became vice-president of the Nationalista Party and representative of a district in Laguna in the Philippine Assembly. Eventually, he advocated for US colonial tutelage and continued to support it as editor and owner of the newspaper *La Patria* (1902-1903) and as the collaborationist author of the pro-American libretto for the play *La alianza soñada* [*The Dreamed Alliance*] (1902), the first Filipino opera, and *Pagdating ni Taft* (1905). He even dedicated the 1907 English translation of his 1885 novel *Ninay*, “To Mrs. William H. Taft.”

In light of these contradictory life choices, this essay will analyze the significance of this mixture of romance and revolutionary discourse in Paterno’s understudied works, which are among the first in Spanish-language Filipino literature.

Pioneering Filipino Historical and Ethnographic Studies

In both his literary and his ethnographic works, Paterno exhibits an avid interest in highlighting the richness of native Filipino civilization before the arrival of the Spanish colonizers. Likewise, he celebrates and explores the peculiarities of contemporary Filipino culture. In his 1911 novella *La fidelidad*, for instance, Paterno follows the *costumbrista* tradition, describing the generalized happiness of the population during the “*Fiesta de San Pablo*,” the colorful decorations with Filipino and Japanese lanterns in the shape of fish, stars, or flowers, the bands that play *pasodobles*, stands selling inexpensive toys, people eating *lechón* (suckling pig), fireworks, and many more. He also includes passages where we learn about Filipino superstitions, customs, and traditions, in a *costumbrista* language (he actually uses the word “*costumbres*” in the subtitle of his first novel *Ninay* [*costumbres Filipinas*]), that is reminiscent of *Tradiciones peruanas* [*Peruvian Traditions*] (1863-1910) by Ricardo Palma. Considering that Paterno’s publication of *Aurora Social*, *La fidelidad*, *Los últimos románticos*, *La braveza del Bayani*, and *Ninay* took place between 1910 and 1917, it would not be too far-fetched to contemplate the possibility that he had access to the Peruvian’s writings while he was living in Madrid. As is common in Palma’s *Tradiciones*, Paterno sometimes keeps a dialogue with his readers and includes sociopolitical commentary in his novellas. While Palma situates his *tradiciones* in the colonial (sometimes precolonial) past of Peru, Paterno locates some of his stories in the present or in a recent past of a Hispanized archipelago, but also in a remote or mythological, ancient, indigenous past before the Spanish colonization, which he vindicates as worthy of study.

In any case, Paterno’s nostalgic reconstruction of the precolonial past may have hidden a political agenda. According to Matibag, his use of *costumbrismo* to romanticize and exoticize his native country, particularly in *Ninay*, had the goal of introducing Filipino culture to Spanish readers as “ancient and robust, presenting a mixed or hybrid culture of elements identifiable as Malay, aboriginal, Chinese, Spanish, and Indian” (41). This way, Filipino and Spanish cultures are subtly presented in equal terms for the European reader while simultaneously asserting belonging to the Spanish nation and

beginning the articulation of a discourse of national identity. John Blanco also explains that Filipino authors' liberal use of the *novela de costumbres* is quite different from their Spanish peers' approach, particularly regarding the subject matter chosen. Filipino *ilustrados* focus on precolonial, pre-enlightened people, in contrast with Spanish *costumbristas'* interest in the construction of the idea of nation through the literary representation of the new socioeconomic and political changes experienced by the contemporary, urban middle class in the metropolis (Blanco 210-11).

Paterno's writing is sometimes also reminiscent of a watered-down version of another Peruvian work: the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios reales de los Incas*, where the author describes himself as a person who is familiar with both civilizations, the Inca and the Spanish, and who is trying to correct the errors of historians, thus teaching the reader about a great civilization that has just been destroyed by the Spaniards upon their arrival in 1521. It is difficult to know, however, whether Paterno read the *Comentarios reales*. In any case, as a Filipino version of Garcilaso, and taking advantage of the triple epistemic privilege of first, being Filipino and having been brought up in the Philippines, secondly, having lived and studied in Spain for many years, and thirdly, having travelled the world, Paterno also wants to bring his homeland to the imaginary of Peninsular intellectuals, all the while attempting to insert the antiquity of Tagalog civilization within the march of universal history. Incidentally, this same rhetorical strategy was also attempted in Peru, in another indigenous work, Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala's *El primer nueva crónica y buen gobierno*. And like Poma de Ayala does referring to his own ethnic group, Paterno also claims that indigenous Tagalogs had the equivalent of Christian beliefs even before the Spanish colonization. However, Paterno probably did not have access to this manuscript, since it remained forgotten in Denmark's Royal Library until it was discovered in 1907 by German scholar Richard Pietschmann. It was not published until 1936.

Another literary text by Paterno that is full of ethnographic information is his melodrama *Ninay (costumbres filipinas)*, written when he was only twenty-three years old. In it, the autobiographical protagonist asks a young

man named Taric who is narrating Nínay's story to give all sorts of details about Filipino culture and history as if he were talking only to Europeans. In addition to this narrative excuse, numerous footnotes and several lengthy appendices complete the excessive cultural translations for the non-Filipino reader and comparisons with other world cultures. At one point, one has the impression that the love story is nothing but an excuse to insert all these numerous notes and explanations of Philippine history, traditions, customs, and folklore. Interestingly, as in other works by Paterno, Filipino culture seems to be seen, not by a native Filipino, but through the colonizer's eyes. Thus, we read about women with "slanted eyes;"⁴ cholera is referred to as "the Asiatic illness;"⁵ there is "an amazing, Oriental luxury;"⁶ Asians are essentialized in "the old traditions of the Orient;"⁷ and many others. Yet, Matibag considers *Nínay* a key text to understand how Paterno used costumbrista narrative tools to produce a "textualized codification of a Hispanized Philippine culture" (36) and "a foundational discourse of an emergent national culture" (37) built upon hybrid Spanish and Asiatic cultural characteristics. Paterno, in his search for a unique national identity, becomes a sort of medium of the Philippines' "spectral nationalism" as an overseas possession first of Spain and then of the United States: "a ghostly image of Filipino national identity is embodied in the evocation of *Nínay* but contextualized by the reminder of her death and her survivors' remembrance, such that the disembodied *Nínay* figures forth the spirit of a nation suspended between worlds, and allegorically between the colonial despair and the nationalist hope" (Matibag 45).

Regardless of the evident lack of scientific rigor in his autoethnographic (to use the Victorianist critic James Buzard's term) publications or the debatable aesthetic merit of his literary production, there is no question that Paterno was a pioneer of Filipino literature and ethnography, that he was proud to write as a Filipino, and that he celebrated his ancestors' culture in literary and ethnographic writings such as *La antigua civilización Tagalog* (1887, the same year of the *Exposición de Filipinas* in Madrid), *Los Itas* (1890), *El cristianismo en la antigua civilización tagalog* (1892), *El Barangay* (1892), *La familia tagalog en la historia universal* (1892), *El individuo tagalog y su arte en la*

exposición hispano-americana (1893), and *Los tagalog* (1894). Even the inclusion of the word “*Sampaguitas*” (white flowers used by Filipino women to make necklaces or headbands) in the title of his poetry collection suggests his intention to create an authentic Filipino literature. Mojares astutely speculates, however, that “Paterno’s turn to the homeland may have been occasioned as well by his awareness that it was in speaking *of* and *for* the country that he could be a consequential voice in the metropole” (10).⁸ His questionable motivation or academic failures notwithstanding, it would be fair to consider Paterno one of the initiators of a Filipino proto-nationalism and of an incipient inward look toward national identity in Philippine letters.

Romantic *Cursilería* and Self-Orientalization

Paterno fell into a frequent self-orientalization of his own ethnic group in several of his texts. Tellingly, he was a collector of Filipino and other “Oriental” artifacts and antiques that he exhibited on various occasions in Madrid. However, Mojares—in part basing his opinion on the fact that Paterno was one of the few Filipino intellectuals in Madrid who did not protest the exhibition of non-Hispanicized native Filipinos as “living specimens” in the 1887 *Exposición de Filipinas*—argues that “While he promoted an appreciation for Philippine artistic achievements, he did so out of diletantism, exoticism, and vague sentiments of patriotism” (13). Perhaps his long stay abroad led Paterno to see his people through the eyes of the Western colonizer.

In some of Paterno’s works like *Ninay*, the appearance of Orientalist motives is only sporadic. There is, for example, a description of an Indian harem (or *mahl*) in Appendix C of this novel. By contrast, in other cases the Orientalist outlook is more pervasive. In his novella *La fidelidad*, for instance, we first find an idyllic relationship between a young, humble, Filipino fisherman, Paco, and his beautiful fiancée, Trínig. Then, after Paco suspects that Trínig may have drowned during a storm at sea, he loses his mind and obsessively goes to the beach everyday hoping to find her. In reality, however, his beloved fiancée was saved by a rich and handsome fisherman named Daniel with whom Trínig will live, surrounded by all kinds

of luxury, for several years in his hometown of Lipa, in Batangas. Years later, when Trining returns to Manila and finds Paco in an insane asylum, she decides to leave Daniel and reunite with her first love, even though he is now insane. It is understood in the denouement, however, that her former fiancé eventually recovers his sanity and that they will live happily ever after.

The aforementioned sappy tone in Paterno's fiction (and poetry) begins early in the first paragraph of the romance *La fidelidad*: "And the fisherman and the fisherman's daughter recognized each other in the shadows, under the soft starlight. The waves, in high tide, fell rowdy over the beach; their foam later dissolved, white, vaporous, in a rumor of *tapis* [aprons], of *sinamays* [fabric used to make traditional Filipina blouses], and caresses."⁹ From the beginning, as is evident, the author does not refrain from using words in Tagalog, which are sometimes explained in the text (and therefore subordinated to Spanish), while others are left untranslated, making the non-Tagalog speaker guess the meaning from the context. This Tagalog vocabulary proudly asserts Filipino culture while simultaneously providing the text with a Filipino atmosphere and supposed authenticity, in spite of the fact that Filipino daily life is obviously being romanticized. In particular, Filipino women are often Orientalized, perhaps for the sensual titillation of non-Filipino readers. On the other hand, the vocabulary used by the characters sometimes lacks credibility: Paco, for instance, tells his fiancée that the day's catch has been "admirable" (10), a word not normally expected from a humble fisherman in this situation.

Another novella, *La dalaga virtuosa y el Puente del Diablo* [*The Virtuous Single Woman and the Bridge of the Devil*] (1910), subtitled *Leyenda filipina* [*Filipino Legend*], opens with scientific overtones, explaining how, a million years ago, the Philippines was part of the Asian continent and how there used to be elephants on the archipelago. Incidentally, as Mojares reveals, Paterno's many books "on Philippine culture and history were judged an embarrassment by his contemporaries from the day they saw print" (3) because they lacked scientific rigor and because he allegedly invented sources. In any case, before moving on to narrate the legend mentioned in the subtitle, Paterno delves into native religious beliefs before the Spanish colonization. The

third chapter describes an exoticized and sexualized Tagalog young virgin naked by the shores of a lagoon. In an Orientalist fashion, the woman is objectified through the description of her physical beauty and sensuality, as well as the fetishization of her virginity:

They say that she was white as the moonshine, slender as a *bonga* [betel palm], sweet as the honey in our sugarcane. They say that her eyes were languid, that her full lips were red, her cheekbones wide, her breasts divine, her hair blonde and long, so long that she would drag it, loose, on the surface of the water, and her adorable feet and hands, and her walking, were all poetry and all about her, anyway, was divine and Oriental (11-12).

The description of the young Tagalog woman's whiteness and blondeness, together with the use of the word "Oriental," are again indicative of how ingrained Western standards of beauty imposed by Spanish colonization were in the author's worldview or, perhaps, of the fact that he had a Spanish (instead of a Filipino) reader in mind. Paterno, however, resorts to a benevolent type of Orientalism, which is common in Spain and Latin America, in which "the Orientals" are essentialized and exoticized, but without the repressive and manipulative intention of demonizing or portraying them as lazy, deceitful, or irrational. One of the many definitions provided by Edward Said for Orientalism was the following: "A Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (3). In Paterno's literature, however, the Orientalist discourse that romanticizes Filipino characters into essentializing archetypes is clearly not a strategic tool for colonial domination or for the justification of imperialism.

Both the critic Julia A. Kushigian in her book on Hispanic Orientalism and the author Juan Goytisolo in the preface to the 2002 Spanish translation of the Edward Said's *Orientalism* provide a similar explanation of the reasons Hispanic Orientalism differs from its French and English counterparts: "[it] does not present the Oriental society as static and reactionary" (Kushigian 109); rather, it stems from "a spirit of veneration even when it signifies an implied respect for the 'enemy'" (Kushigian 14). The main traits of Hispanic Orientalism, according to Kushigian, are the following:

(1) its open-endedness that promotes an unstable relationship between East and West, wherein its elements are in a constant state of flux and renovation linking the past to the present, reality to fantasy, and so on, thereby never presenting a complete and closed image, (2) its polyglot nature imbuing itself with a cultural and creative consciousness that actively arises from a history of cultural and military invasions, as much of the Iberian Peninsula as of Hispanic America, and (3) its persistent dialogue with the East and inter-animation of images, reinforced by intertextuality or an exchange among works unfettered by genre boundaries, that seeks not to erase distinctions but to celebrate them, thereby bringing the Other closer (14).

Although these traits certainly apply to the three authors studied in Kushigian's book, in my view, there are plenty of examples of a less "respectful" and "venerating" Orientalism in Hispanic literature. But this is not Paterno's case, whose literary use of Orientalism is indeed intended to translate the virtues of Filipino culture and people for the foreign reader.

Returning to *La dalaga virtuosa y el Puente del Diablo*, when the Devil, disguised as a young man, tries to seduce the naked young woman, she promises to reciprocate his love if he builds a stone bridge in the lagoon for her. To her surprise, the Devil builds it in less than fifteen minutes. She then flees and takes refuge in her temple. Frustrated because he cannot enter the temple, the Devil now disguises himself as a beautiful woman, but once again the woman does not fall into his trap. Then, he brings the waters of the lagoon closer to the temple until its walls collapse. Fortunately for the young woman, this time she is rescued by a Tagalog god. In the end, the devil transforms himself into a caiman and decides to live in the lagoon until present day. This is, according to the narrator, the legend of the Bridge of the Devil. We learn that, at the time of the publication of Paterno's book, visitors could still see the bridge as well as the temple in that area.

In the second novella included in *Aurora Social*, titled *Maring, amor de obrero filipino* [*Maring, Filipino Worker's Love*] (1910) and dedicated to Filipino workers, the beautiful protagonist, Maring, is again Orientalized: "Maring raises her arms to begin the dance. She raises, slightly lifted, her bust, elevating her breasts, which showed their softness, snaking her body into a spiral column and spilling around herself her naïve voluptuousness,

following the rhythm of the music.”¹⁰ As if embarrassed by his own lascivious, quasi-voyeuristic description of the fictional woman, the narrator immediately clarifies (in a rather ridiculous manner) that he is not describing a pornographic scene, since the virginal movements of the Oriental dance were similar to those of Saint Theresa dancing in front of other nuns in the convent. Yet the story proceeds to Orientalize not only the protagonist but, by extension, all Filipino women:

Maring, like all Filipino women, pleases. She pleases more than the really beautiful women of other climates. Because Maring possesses a gift of nature, something special, which is her oriental grace. What does it consist of? We don't know. Perhaps her wet lips, which promise to delight? Perhaps her caressing smile, which attracts the souls? Perhaps her flashing eyes, which make the senses faint? We don't know (83-83).

After comparing the beauty of Filipinas with the movements of animals, the narrator insists, again as if seeing his own people through the eyes of the colonizer, that Filipino female workers are “Oriental grace itself.”¹¹ And several other passages exoticize Maring claiming, for example, that she does not need the tortuous corset to voluptuously mark their trembling breasts (85).

In one last example of a romance in which Filipino women are Orientalized and sexualized, the 1911 novella *Los últimos románticos en la erupción del volcán de Taal* [*The Last Romantics in the Eruption of the Taal Volcano*], we find the passionate and sensual love story of Andong Katig and the beautiful Chilang, who elope, planning to make love at the top of the Taal Volcano. As is typical of unfulfilled Romantic love, right before they can make love, the volcano erupts and they die buried under the lava. In one of the many instances in the plot where the Filipino woman's body is sexualized and objectivized for the Western reader, the protagonist, Chilang, calling herself “Oriental,” thinks to herself:

And wasn't she, then,
a sweet virgin, dying of daydreaming, wounded
of sensuality, a visionary of love, when
during the day, in the sunlight, when waking up

on the white bed full of aroma of *sampaga* and
of her ardent and oriental flesh, hugging
the pillow, would kiss her lace, believing
to feel in them the breath of another
flesh, the heartbeat of another soul? Or when
at night, before the bevelled moon of her
wardrobe, stripped naked, to contemplate herself,
her color of milk and pale rose bushes in the
formidable triumph of sublime lines and slenderness? (28-20)

As will be seen in the next section, this overly sentimental and corny language contrasts with the aggressive, nationalistic, and patriotic tone of Paterno's revolutionary calls to arms, in which he appeals to Filipino men's patriotism and willingness to generously give their life for the Fatherland.

National Allegory and the Discourse of Revolutionary Patriotism

Whereas in *Maring, amor de obrero filipino*, Maring is described as the “very image of the Motherland,”¹² her boyfriend, Berto, represents an archetypal fearless Filipino. Not only is he unafraid of fierce beasts, but he even challenges the factory inspector at the cigarette factory where he and Maring work, when he tries by all means to steal his girlfriend from him. One can certainly read between the lines that Paterno is proposing Berto as the brave man whom every young revolutionary Filipino should emulate. Besides exhibiting supernatural strength while saving several citizens from animal attacks, the hero withstands the attacks of the inspector's henchmen and even dares to strike him in public. Towards the end of the story, when Máximo, the evil factory inspector, tries to rape Maring while the cigarette factory is burning, Berto suddenly appears and strangles him with his own hands. The novella, therefore, is a national allegory where Máximo represents the usurping power (the colonialism of Spain and the United States), Maring is the nation, and Berto, young Filipinos whose historical destiny is to return the homeland to its legitimate owners: Filipino men. However, Berto's physical description implicitly suggests that the process of national liberation will be tortuous: “Contrasting with her, so ideal, was the figure of Berto, her

boyfriend. Berto was handsome, robust, even taller than she, with very big eyes and very red lips; but all tanned, as an Indian, as if over his Herculean back, would *one day destiny put a cross*" (6-7 emphasis mine)¹³

Along the way, *Maring, amor de obrero filipino* celebrates pre-colonization culture, with explanations of Tagalog religious beliefs and of the *duplo*, the traditional Filipino vigil. The novella incorporates, at one point, a more directly subversive language. Thus, when an American officer tries to run over a poor worker by the factory entrance, the narrator describes the pitiful and reprehensible reaction of the Filipino:

The cowed worker, intimidated by the policeman's big body and baton, even though he had done nothing wrong, and even though they were spitting on his rights, surrendered passively, with that damned passivity that seems to be a sign of slavery among us as a result of our ignorance of the rights and civic duties of each individual; because ignorance intimidates (111).¹⁴

Only Berto, who knows his duties but also his rights, defies the American policeman when the latter orders him to be quiet. Time and again, Berto refuses to obey and even threatens to strike the foreigner. Incidentally, in a self-promotional sentence, Paterno argues that Berto knows his rights because "everyday he learned that Filipino Citizen Manual,"¹⁵ a textbook written by the author himself, under the title *Gobierno civil de las Islas Filipinas o Manual del ciudadano filipino*, published also in 1910. This passage, more appropriate for a political rally than for the language of a romance, is soon followed by similar insurrectionary arguments. Thus, when Máximo fires Berto for saying "Long live Bernardo Carpio!"¹⁶ (a legendary strong figure in pre-colonial Philippine mythology who causes earthquakes) and hopes that the worker will become an indigent and his girlfriend Maring, a prostitute, his fearful co-workers step away scared by the inspector's wrath, a scene that spurs the narrator to declare that "those people were more scared of Máximo than of God! It is so true that slavery engender[s] tyrannies, that there are no slaves where oppressors don't exist!"(115).¹⁷

In the third story in the volume *Aurora Social*, the contrived romance *Boda a la moderna* [*Modern Day Wedding*] (1910), a young man named Don

Juan meets a woman named Judit and her mother on a train. Judit begins to tell him stories about the 1896 revolution against the Spaniards, which he missed as he was living in France. In an unconvincing denouement, they end up falling in love and getting married. Although this love story lacks verisimilitude, in reality it seems to be a mere narrative excuse to deliver the author's political ideology. Judit, becoming Paterno's mouthpiece, tells Don Juan about the events that changed the history of their country as well as the reason why Filipinos have gone from being considered mere *tulisanes* (bandits) to becoming free and honorable people: "Because we now know how to kill, we know how to die for our honor and dignity: we know how to defend our rights with bullets, against canons and machine guns" (35).¹⁸ Then, plausibly considering himself one of them, Paterno has his alter-ego Judit remind the reader that the patriots who led this dramatic change should never be forgotten.¹⁹ Judit continues to narrate General Emilio Aguinaldo's uprising, including heroic events such as the national episodes of Kaintu and Taytay, which she deems equivalent to those of Sagunto and Numancia in Spanish history.

Finally, Judit goes on to celebrate feminism (64) and the positive ways in which Filipino women changed. Instead of resigning themselves to submissively lamenting their misfortune, she explains, they now bravely take revenge and kill their enemies. Women travel by themselves because they have learned to defend themselves and to demand respect: "In today's Filipino home, they do not only preach submission, but also dignity, honor. Killing to defend the people's freedom! Killing for the fatherland: what a sweet way to die!"²⁰ Judit herself claims that she would not mind becoming a martyr for the fatherland and for the advancement of her people. More interestingly, the author, through his protagonist's voice, proposes Meiji Japan as a model to imitate. The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) fought over the control of Manchuria and Korea had recently taken place and the Empire of Japan had shocked the world by defeating a European power, the Russian Empire. Now, perhaps implicitly condemning the colonial imposition of the United States soon after the end of Spanish rule, Paterno sees no reason why the Philippines could not follow Japan's footsteps: "Being

wise, artistic, or industrious is not enough for the Japanese people, it is not enough to be taken seriously and respected as one of the big, free nations, but it is enough to know how to kill, killing many white Russians and dying for their fatherland” (66).²¹

Renewed encouragement to young Filipinos to bravely die for their fatherland, like true patriots, abound in Paterno’s writing. Thus, another “novella” (which is, in reality, a brief short story) titled *La braveza del Bayani* [*The Bayani’s Bravery*] (1910) tells the romance between an old native warrior’s beautiful daughter, Bituin-Lupa, and her brave lover, Anak Irog. When the father, named Gat Lawin, returning from a war against the Muslim invaders, finds Anak Irog kissing his beloved daughter, he furiously challenges the young man to a duel. Anak Irog accepts but prefers to die rather than making his beloved Bituin-Lupa suffer with her father’s death. Impressed, the old man agrees to their marriage and even asks them to give him a brave grandson, closing the romance with an exalted celebration of the bravery mentioned in the title:

—May this arrow break
the heart of any grandson who does not know how to die
for our People’s freedom! (23)²²

Paterno, as stated, also wrote plays and operas. According to Lifshey, the plot of his play *La alianza soñada* ironically “called for a united stand by Filipinos to expel foreign invaders” (17), even though it was staged with governor (and future U.S. President) William Taft in the audience. In it, we see a mythical Muslim invasion of Luzon in the sixteenth century. Surrounded by dancing *anitos* (spirits or small gods), Lapu, an indigenous seer, dreams about a comet that turns into a group of stars similar to the US flag. He sees this as a sign of the future fraternal “dreamed alliance” in the title between the United States and the Philippines. We then learn about the outrage of three Tagalog villages, Pasig, Kainta, and Antipolo, after the Muslim invaders—in yet another Orientalist gesture by the author—demand them to surrender local virgins [*dalagas* or unmarried women] for their harems or else, they will burn the villages. After Tagalog leaders request

Lapu's advice, he recommends to secretly unite through a blood pact and to drink a magic potion he has created: "We would be more in number and in weapons, if we had a union. A well united people is always strong, and no one can defeat a united people" (30).²³ And later, "For our union; for our alliance, let's all die. Death to whomever retreats, death to traitors! Let's march, then, either triumph or death" (30).²⁴ One can imagine how Lapu's rhetoric, pronounced at the very moment of the American takeover of the archipelago, may have exalted the Filipino audience's thirst for freedom and independence. However, let us not forget that, as has been seen, Paterno used a similar rhetoric in previous works, even though he remained, all along, a collaborationist of the Spanish authorities. Moreover, even though in April 1901 Paterno was arrested by American authorities for leading the Malolos Congress, by the following year when his play *La alianza soñada* was performed, he was already the editor and owner of the openly pro-US rule newspaper *La Patria*.

In any case, finally united, the Tagalog leaders toast to dying for the fatherland and for the beloved Filipino people (a leitmotiv in Paterno's writing, as previously seen), to the beauty of their (once again exoticized) voluptuous maidens, and to Bathala, their name for God. In the fourth act, the virgins, who are now being held by the "Moors" of Borney, pour poison on the lusty invaders' drinks and then drink the poison themselves in desperation. Then we find Tarik, a defeated Filipino leader also being held captive who asks his beloved *dalaga* to kill him with a dagger; she does so before committing suicide. In the end, however, the united Filipino villagers manage to defeat the Muslim usurpers and to recover their "possession," the young virgins, celebrating it with the chant (perhaps, as Lifshy claims, in anticolonial defiance of Taft and the American audience present at the Zorrilla theater where the play was being performed), "Long live our freedom!" (26).²⁵ The fact that the actors spoke in Tagalog plausibly prevented the American audience from realizing what was being chanted. The drama closes—rather awkwardly—with the combination of the US and Filipino national anthems, Filipino characters hugging the Statue of Liberty, and with the protagonists forming the star-spangled banner on a rainbow.

According to Lifshy, the play allegorically (and, in his view, probably also unconsciously on the part of the author) encourages the audience to read between the lines that the “dreamed alliance” of the title is not really between the United States and the Philippines but among the three Tagalog villages: “It is only through the union advised by Lapu, the coming together as a single people, that Filipinos are able to regain their endangered land and their endangered virgins” (24). Lifshy further adds that the reference to the historical leader Lapu Lapu, who killed Ferdinand Magellan in 1521, celebrates the “iconic inaugural repulsion of invaders in the islands” (25), and therefore indirectly encourages historical resistance and the rebellious union of Filipinos against the American invaders. Paterno would later write a sequel opera to *La alianza soñada* titled *Magdapio [Fidelity Rewarded]*, which critics have also considered a propaganda play.

Conclusion

Overall, Paterno’s writing often exhibits a strange combination of overly melodramatic, hypersensual, and trite language with fierce and patriotic calls to arms, as if the first were mere camouflage for the second. However, the intense contradictions of his political life and his reputation as a turncoat, a sycophant first to the Spanish and then to the American colonial authorities, make the reader question the authenticity of this nationalistic language, even though it is, in fact, a leitmotiv in his literature. Whether it is part of literary romanticism’s penchant for nationalism and love of individual and collective freedom, or the personal reaction of a Filipino subject under subsequent foreign occupations, it is the reader’s call to decide. I argue, however, that it is important not to see these calls to insurrection and national liberation as isolated cases, like, say, in his opera *La alianza soñada*, but as a resourceful (sometimes opportunistic) commonplace that appears time and again in all his fiction throughout his literary career.

Notes

1. His full name was Pedro Alejandro Paterno y de Vera Ignacio, also spelled sometimes Pedro Alejandro Paterno y Debera Ignacio. Some references claim he was born on 27 February 1858.
2. “*A las dalagas angelicales del Liceo de Manila conservadoras del Alma Filipina y adalides del feminismo pátrio.*”
3. The *Kataas-taasan, Kagalang-galangan, Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* [“Supreme and Honorable Society of the Sons of the Nation”] was also known as Katipunan, or KKK.
4. “*Ojos rasgados*” (57).
5. “*El mal asiático*” (8).
6. “*Un lujo asombroso, oriental*” (46).
7. “*Las antiguas costumbres del Oriente*” (99).
8. Paterno’s hunger for glory is suggested in one of the poems included in his collection *Sampaguitas*:

Subiendo una alta montaña
Vi á la Fama encantadora.
Para ser grande, le dije,
¿Qué debo hacer, bella diosa?
—No sigas ningún ejemplo
Si quieres hallar la gloria;
Sé Platón ó sé Alejandro,
Que hallaron sendas ignotas.
No en copia servil te arrojes
Por la senda que otro explora,
Con la pluma de tus hechos
Escribe una nueva historia. (7)

9. “*Y el pescador y la hija del pescador se reconocieron en las sombras, bajo el suave brillar de las estrellas. Las olas, en el pleamar, caían alborotadas sobre la playa; sus espumas se deshacían luego, blancas, vaporosas, en rumor de tapis, de sinamays y caricias*” (9-10).
10. “*Maring levanta los brazos para comenzar el baile. Sube ligeramente erguido su busto, alzando más alto sus senos, que mostraron su morbidez, serpenteando su cuerpo en columna salomónica y derramando en torno voluptuosidad ingenua, al compás de la música*” (80).
11. “*La propia gracia oriental*” (84).

12. "Imagen de la propia Patria" (5).
13. "Contrastaba con ella, tan ideal, la figura de él, Berto, su novio. Era Berto hermoso, recio, aún más alto que ella, con ojos muy grandes y labios muy rojos; pero todo moreno, como indio, como si sobre sus espaldas hercúleas, alguna vez el destino, fuera a poner una cruz" (6-7).
14. "El obrero acobardado, intimidado ante el corpachón y la porra policiacas, aunque en nada había faltado, y sí a él le escupían al Derecho, se rendía pasivo, con esa maldita pasividad que entre nosotros parece ya signo de esclavitud por ignorar los derechos y deberes cívicos de cada individuo; pues, la ignorancia intimida" (111).
15. "Todos los días aprendía el Manual del Ciudadano Filipino" (111).
16. "¡Viva Bernardo Carpio!" (114).
17. "¡Tenía más miedo á Máximo, que a Dios, aquella gente! ¡qué cierto es que la esclavitud engendra tiranías, que donde no hay esclavos no existen opresores!" (115).
18. "Porque ahora sabemos matar, sabemos morir por nuestra honra y dignidad: sabemos defender nuestros derechos con balas, contra cañones y ametralladoras" (35).
19. One of his poems, included in the collection *Sampaguitas y poesías varias* (1917), professes the same idea:

¿Qué se hicieron los ínclitos varones
 Que legaron sus nombres á la historia?
 ¿Dónde encontrarlos regios panteones
 Que guardan sus cenizas y memoria?
 ¿Dónde esta con harapos y girones,
 Cual leve resto de su antigua gloria,
 La clámide á sus hombros suspendida,
 Más en sangre que en púrpura teñida? (25)

20. "En el presente hogar filipino no se predica únicamente la sumisión, sino la dignidad, el honor. ¡Matar por defender la libertad del pueblo! ¡Morir por la patria: qué dulce morir!" (65).
21. "Que no le vale al pueblo japonés el ser sabio, artista ó industrial, para ser considerado y respetado entre las Naciones libres y grandes, sino el saber matar, matar muchos blancos rusos y morir por su patria" (66).
22. "—¡Y sea esta la flecha que parta el / corazón del nieto, que no sepa morir por / la libertad de nuestro Pueblo! (23).
23. "Seríamos mayor en número y en armas, si tuviésemos unión. Un pueblo bien unido siempre es fuerte, y nadie puede con un pueblo unido" (30).
24. "Por nuestra unión; por nuestra alianza, muramos todos. Muerte al que retrocede ¡muera el traidor! Marchemos, pues, ó triunfar ó morir" (30).
25. "¡Viva nuestra libertad!" (26).

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“Un bizarro poema de granito al infinito”¹

Modernismo and Nation-building
in Philippine Poetry in Spanish

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Abstract

This study presents Philippine poetry written in Spanish from 1898 until 1914 in its proper literary and political contexts: *Modernismo* aesthetics from Spanish-American Literature and language politics and the Independence from the American colonization in the Philippines. It focuses on three Philippine poets--Claro Recto, Cecilio Apóstol and Fernando Guerrero--and on some of their most representative poems. It also provides translations into English for some of the poems not translated previously.

The *modernista* use of language and the *modernista* preoccupation for nation and progress were bound together in their poetry. This essay identifies their most significant notions such as: defending the country's heritage against the neocolonialism under the United States; setting the tasks of the intellectuals in confronting their milieu; expressing the distinctive elements of the nation constituents of the project for the nation-building; and the transformation towards a modern culture based upon the roots of that nation in progress. Their use of the Spanish language is still nowadays understood as an epitome of colonial chains and subjugation, underestimating their contributions to the Philippine resistance, their battle for intellectual freedom, and their unrecog-

nized defense of Tagalog language through the medium of Spanish language. This essay aims at highlighting the Philippine embodiment of *Modernismo*, while seeking for a deep understanding of the work of these poets within the history of Philippine literature and culture.

Keywords

Philippine Literature, Fernando M. Guerrero, Claro M. Recto, Cecilio Apostol, *Modernismo*, Language politics in the Philippines

During and after the Revolution, from 1896 to 1898, literary creation in the Philippines experienced a productiveness that extended to a variety of genres and languages. Texts were widely published and spread, mainly thanks to the increasing number of newspapers, journals, and magazines. Many factors contributed to the increasing display of cultural and literary activity and many were also the reasons moving the intellectuals and artists to write. The necessity of self-definition stood as a way of resisting colonization, initially from Spanish powers, but, a few years after, from American occupation, too. The Revolution for Independence brought a short-lived Republic of the Philippines, declared in June of the same year when the US Army defeated the remains of Spanish colonial government in the Philippines that was 1898. The Philippine fight didn't cease so that soon it was declared the Philippine-American War. Although declared over by 1902, it lasted a few years with on-going different levels of violence in the different regions of the country for a decade or so (Agoncillo 247). A Sedition Law (1901) was approved by the American government seeking to forbid expressions for independence and keep social movements under control (Lumbera 87; Cullinane 115).

In such a milieu, Cecilio Apostol (1878-1938), Fernando Maria Guerrero (1870-1932), and Claro Mayo Recto (1890-1960) bound their poetry to the battle for intellectual emancipation by shaping their metaphors in the trend of *Modernismo*. The reception of the Spanish-American *Modernismo* in the Philippines through the widely-read works of authors like Rubén Darío or Santos Chocano was concomitant to the birthing of the movement in the Philippines (Álvarez 135-138).

The overlap between terms may require clarification. *Modernismo* refers to a poetic style, a movement and a period in the literatures in Spanish-America, and in Philippine poetry written in Spanish described here in this article. It expanded from around 1870 until the second decade of the 20th century (Jrade 1996; Quiroga 1996; Álvarez 2013). The historical Avant-Garde [*Vanguardia*] in Spanish American poetry “with a period of radical experimentation from 1922 to 1940” (Quiroga 303) is known in the English language and in American-English literary studies as *Modernism*. There is a further overlaying of terms in the Philippines: Filipino language uses the

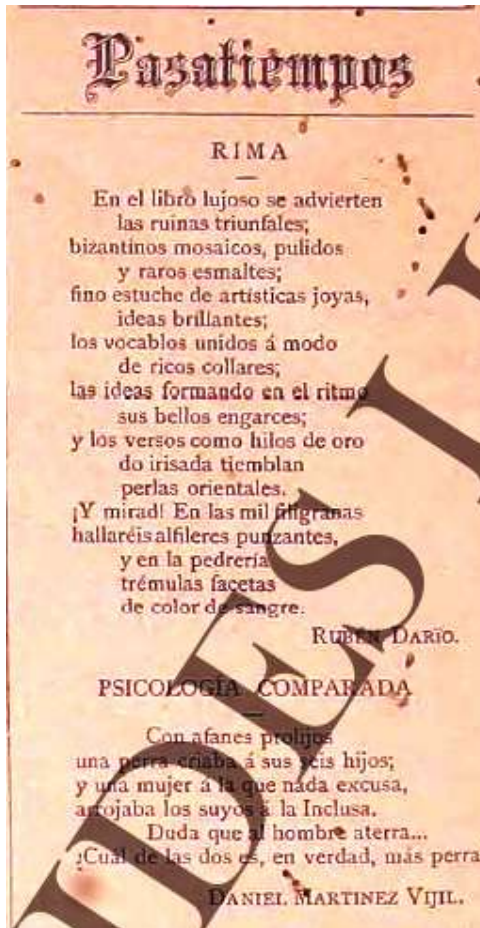


Fig. 1. Poem by Rubén Darío published in 1899 in the journal "Libertad" by UST, July 14, 1899.

terms borrowed from Spanish language to talk about the Avant-Garde, that is *Modernism* in American-English tradition (Almarío 1984; Reyes 2014). This question of terms underscores the need for revising studies on Philippine literatures. Not only the Spanish-American *modernista* trend in Philippine poetry is unjustly omitted in the extensive bibliography on *Modernismo*, with a few exceptions like Pedro Gimferrer's anthology (1969); Philippine literary

criticism has not fully revisited Philippine literature written in Spanish yet. The First Filipino Writers Conference in 1940, which took place under the Commonwealth umbrella and with President Manuel Quezon's support for setting literary objectives, developed an interpretation of this poetry which highlighted how they were drawing upon Hispanic literature and culture, but undermining the struggling force and the nation projected within it (Reyes 2014). Unfortunately, that restrictive reading of Philippine literature written in Spanish has been transmitted without due revision. At the end of the twentieth century, some critical studies were done within the Department of European Languages at the University of the Philippines but remained unpublished or difficult to access (Coronel 1994; Peralta-Imson 1991; Bautista 1999). More recent and accessible articles by Donoso (2015), Ortuño (2014) and Álvarez (2013) have opened new paths.

On the Way to *Modernismo*

The culture and intellectual life of those countries under the dependence of the Spanish crown, Spanish America, and the Philippines did not directly undergo the spirit of Enlightenment nor Romanticism. The latter was a reaction against the former, but in Spain there was neither Enlightenment nor revolutions. The Spanish liberal thought at the beginning of the nineteenth century was crushed and banished. Without both intellectual currents, literature and thought in Spain were in a state of lethargy until the liberal revolution in 1868. Therefore, there was neither Enlightenment nor Romantic literature, as it is understood in Germany and England, in Spain, in Spanish America, or in the Philippines (Langer 1970; Jrade 1996). Therefore, "translation" was the term Octavio Paz used to describe it, borrowing the expression from the Argentinean Sarmiento who, visiting Spain in 1846, wrote "ustedes no tienen hoy autores ni escritores ni cosa que lo valga ... ustedes aquí y nosotros allá *traducimos*" ["You have no authors nowadays, nor writers, nor anything of any value ... you over here and we over there *translate*"] (Paz 118). However, as Paz puts it, *Modernismo* was their authentic metaphor: "the answer to positivism, the criticism of sensibility [...] to empiricism and positivistic scientism. In this sense its historical function was similar to

that of the Romantic reaction in the early days of the nineteenth century” (88). Several Spanish American writers, in different places and sometimes without any communication with each other, began the change (Paz 130). The efforts of the writers and intellectuals were focused on attaining distinguishing features for their works and progress for their ideas and countries (Calinescu 69). In the words of one of the members, Leopoldo Lugones, *Modernismo* meant: *La conquista de la independencia intelectual* [the conquest of the intellectual independence] (Henríquez Ureña 52). Such unity found in *Modernismo*, which also crossed the ocean to the Philippines, was related to that “shared literary, philosophic, and social context” (Jrade 7). Therefore, for the Philippine writers it was their metaphor, too. It became the crucible intellectuals sought in order to establish a connection to a Pan-Hispanic entity (Quiroga 304), from which to get support for their Republic and fight for freedom against the neo-colonial power.

Modernismo in Philippine Poetry in Spanish

For the Philippine writers in Spanish, *Modernismo* meant a particular attitude and thought, a distinctive period in their intellectual history. *Modernista* literary and aesthetic concepts contributed to the formation of these authors’ ideas for the building of the Philippine nation and their transmission through the poetic creation. The poems here discussed expand from 1898 to 1914. Fernando Maria Guerrero’s poem in his book, *Crisálidas*, is a compilation of poems from 1898 to the first edition in 1914, as Guerrero explained in his prologue. 1914 was also the year of the composition of Cecilio Apostol’s poem dedicated to Spanish poet Salvador Rueda for his visit the following year. Apostol’s poetry, written since 1898, was gathered in the book *Pentélicas* (1941).

The political situation and discussions on language had a turning point with the return in 1916 of Quezon from the United States to the country, the Jones Law of 1916 and its promise of Philippine independence, and the famous Bocobo-Osias debate on language in that same year (Tinio 187-190). The years between 1898 and 1914 were marked with turmoil and censorship. The single book of poetry that saw light in 1911 was published by Claro

Claro M. Recto

BAJO LOS COCOTEROS

(ALMAS Y PANORAMAS)

Introito (Prólogo): Fernando M.a Guerrero.

Elogio: Cecilio Apóstol.

Ita Missa est (Epilogo): Teodoro M. Kalaw.

Ilustraciones: . . . Fabián de la Rosa, Jorge Pineda
y F. Amoroso.

Rasgos musicales: Juan Hernández y Antonio Escamilla.



Librería "MANILA FILATÉLICA"
Boler, 453, Sta. Cruz.—Apartado de Correos, 70
MANILA, 1911.



Claro M. Recto

Fig. 2. Claro Mayo Recto book and portrait.

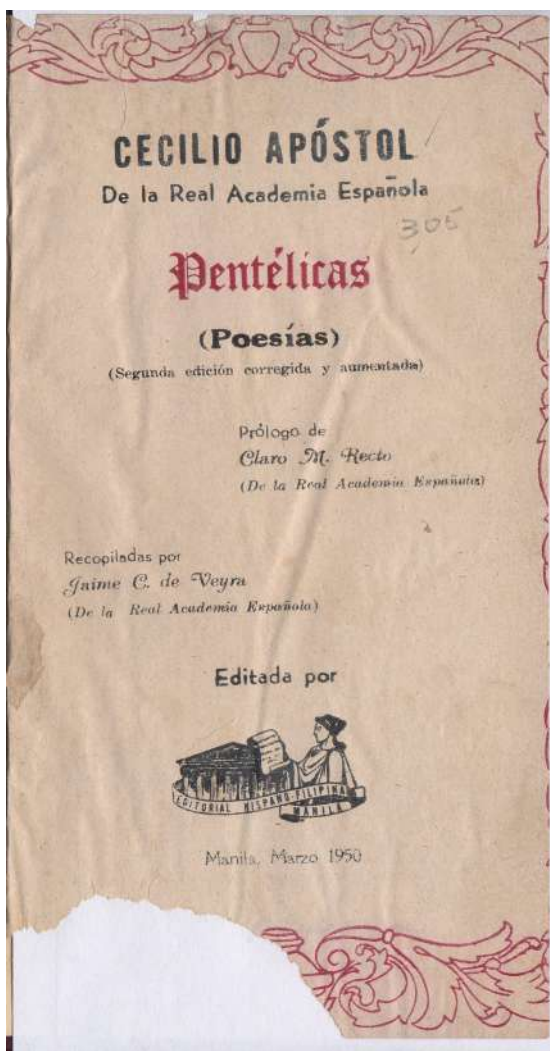


Fig. 3. Cecilio Apóstol book and photo with La Independencia staff, ca. 1898.

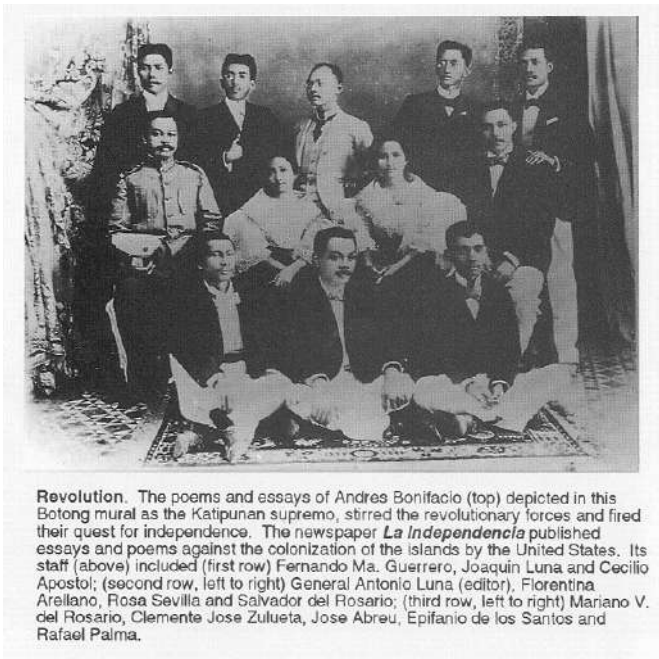


Fig. 4. Fernando María Guerrero in the same photo with *La Independencia* staff, ca. 1898.

Mayo Recto, a young writer who soon after that book decided to put his efforts into essays and law issues. Not all the poems however have an exact known date. Many were written for special occasions and recited in public.

For the Philippine poets, *Modernismo* was the spirit of criticism that nurtured and encouraged their criticism of the positivistic and liberal neocolonialism from U.S. In like manner, “it was not a repetition” (Paz) but the embodiment of their *luchas amargas* [bitter fights] in the poems. The poetic body they produced helped the writers to search for the cognitive metaphors for the nation, that is, metaphors that framed the concept of the Philippines against the American campaign of disdain in the country. The contribution and relevance of this poetry should not be diminished but put in parallel to its milieu, the context of language politics. Poetry and poets were on the stage,

at the center of the social life and debates, expressed in Spanish, in Tagalog, or in the other languages of the Philippines in the regions (Cullinane 2003; Tinio 2009). The political role played on these occasions and social events as part of the people's consciousness of the politics of language has been clearly identified in Tinio's dissertation on language politics (1-3). Protected by the seeming pettiness of banquets, birthdays, and engagement parties, these were gatherings of minds listening to ideas in poetic form. Thus, cognizant of those poetic implications, the American colonial authority was ready to press charges of sedition against a poem by Recto.

Aesthetics and Language

The poets looked for perfection in the form and renovation in the poetic expression and the language. New images and new words carried their preoccupations and ideas, which were also new and different from those of the preceding poetry, and far separated from the poetry in Spain at that time. They practiced different kinds of poetic meter. Although the *alejandrino* of fourteen syllables was the one preferred, lines of twelve and nine, not common before in Spanish poetry, were also abundant. Other innovations in meters, stanzas, and rhythms fell into the trend of *modernista* transformation. The essential was not to limit oneself to the canon since *Modernismo* was also the search for an individual style. In the renovation of the poetic expression, they modeled new images and metaphors using symbols of plastic beauty. The rose was a favorite poetic symbol used as a way of expressing the object of desire and perfection as well as a poetic image of what has been lost. One of the most beautiful examples is the offering of Recto, opening his book *Bajo los cocoteros* (1911),

*Permitid que os ofrende con ambas ma-
nos estas rosas primeras de mi jardín de
ensueños. Son rosas pálidas, demasiado
tristes, porque mi jardín está enfermo;
pero huelen a corazón, a corazón ator-
mentado que tiene estremecimientos de
agua diáfana y sangra como un rosal.*

(Ofertorio V)

Permit me to offer you with my both
hands these initial roses from my
garden of dreams. They are pale roses,
very much in sorrow, for my garden
is ill, although they exhale my heart's
scent, a tormented heart who trembles
like the clear water and bleeds like the
rosebush².

(Offering)

In an earlier poem of Guerrero, “*Más que todo, mi cruz...*” the rose was the
life and all the dreams, which in the course of time became tears and thorns,

*“Más que todo, mi cruz ...”
Hay un amor oculto en cada cosa,
y en cada cosa, una sutil tristeza,
lo mismo en una rosa*

...

*Es justo. En mis jardines ya no hay
rosas,
sino espinas: ¡las lleva mi cabeza!*

“More than anything, My Cross...”
There is a hidden love in everything,
inside each thing, a subtle sadness,
as there is inside a *rose*

...

It is proper. In my gardens there are
no roses any more
but thorns, thorns which my head wears!

The object of plastic beauty was a sacred symbol of poetic perfection,
the aspiration to beauty the writer sought in the poem by shaping the word
and the verse, the messenger of their ideals and hopes. Plastic images related
to brightness, light, and color were also common like jewels, gems, or
pearls. Guerrero's emeralds were the mystic and the unknown; the mystery
Modernismo found in the beautiful, always strange, as in the relation between
life and death,

“Esmeraldas”

*Estas son las maléficas, las piedras
inquietantes
de fulgencias extrañas; piedras aluci-
nantes
que son como pupilas de arañas fasci-
nantes
al acecho de las pobres moscas errantes.*

...

*Verde ... color amado de la fatalidad,
matiz que está tejido de rayos de
maldad.
Piedra verde, esmeralda ¿qué honda
perversidad
emana de tu **glauca** y bruja claridad?*

*Esmeraldas: quizás por un supremo
arcano
esté unido a vosotras todo destino
humano ...
No lo sé, pero os juro que vuestro brillo
insano
es para mí de un muerto como el mirar
lejano ...*

“Emeralds”

These are the cursing, disturbing
stones
strangely fulgent; deluding stones
like eyes of fascinating spiders
stalking the poor errant flies.

...

Green ... the color fatality loves,
shade woven with rays of evil.
Stone of green, *emerald*, what deep
perversion
your **glaucous** and witchy light emits?

Emeralds: perhaps a supreme arcane
binds you to every human fate ...
I don't know, but I swear that insane
brightness of yours
is for me of a death person the distant
look ...

(1908)

Here the poet introduced the word “glauca” which is an example of the *modernista* innovations in the language. “Glaucó”, meaning clear green, was introduced in 1884. At the end of the 19th century, many other terms from Greek (like *glaukós*) were also incorporated into the language by the *modernista* writers (Corominas 1994).

Harmony and beauty were the principles that ruled the *modernista* aesthetic. The poem was a search for sensory impressions. The landscape, the melody, the aroma of a flower, a beautiful object, among others, were the sources of feelings. Plastic effects were produced through colors, from the brighter to the tenuous. One of the best examples of the creation of these sensorial images with all of them present are to be found in the same poem,

“*El alma de la raza*” by Claro Recto (1909); wherein the soul of the race took shape through the senses: sight in the landscape and the colors; hearing in the melody; smell in the aroma; and touch and taste (please see the complete poem in the attachment).

Lyricism and Escapism

The escapism found in *modernista* writers is part of their reaction against society. Art is their support for the construction of different values more human and less materialistic, as explained by Ricardo Gullón,

The artist rejects the unsatisfactory reality (the social reality, not the natural), where he can neither feel integrated nor does want to join, and thus looks for ways of evasion. One of the paths, perhaps the most obvious, is opened by the nostalgia, and leads to the past; the other one, shaped by the dreams, leads towards the transfiguration of the distant (in time and space, or both at once), far from daily vulgarity³. (65)

For the Philippine writer, the cultural past and the Spanish heritage opened the path to a nostalgic way of evading the problems confronting the country at the-turn-of-the-century. The transfiguration of the distant took place in both directions: the past became remote and the presence of Spanish culture in Philippines emerged in their poems as a legend. The escapism towards the past and the Hispanic was not the act of supporting the Spanish colonial government; shaped by *Modernismo*, the far and away Spain was a myth in their words. Such “transfiguration of the distant” served a political purpose. This transmutation was a requisite to rise a bizarre Philippine identity confronting the US colonial intellectual weapons; had those artists regretted their Hispanic nutrients, perhaps American colonial power could have fought an easier and faster battle. The lyricism and escapism were set forth in this Cecilio Apostol’s poem:

“Lirismo”

*Dejemos ya el trabajo del análisis.
¿A qué más, si al hundir el escalpelo,
se apodera del alma la parálisis
y premia su fatiga el desconsuelo?*

...

*Si te parece lo exterior pequeño
y estrecha la callada lejanía,
podemos ir a la isla del Ensueño
llevados por el cisne Fantasía.*

“Lyricism”

Let's forget now the work of analysis.
What for, if at the inserting of the scalpel
paralysis seizes the soul
and the effort is rewarded with sorrow?

...

If the external seems small to you
and the silent distance narrow,
let's go to the Island of Dreams
brought by the Swan Fantasy.

The values and principles they yearned for were represented in archetypes of a legendary way of life, symbols they transformed in their poems, such as Dulcinea, the beautiful lady, the product of Don Quijote's imagination; Don Quijote himself; and the greatest and most universal writers of Spanish literature who appear in their poems. It is to their fictional Spain, not the one existing in real life that they escape. Spain is one of the symbols for their Avalon, but the Hispanic elements are not the exclusive recourse of writers' imagination. With further weight and significance, elements from Malayan, Tagalog, and other native cultures appeared in their poetry. Transformed through poetic experience, the Philippine natural landscape, the rituals, the ancient stories and legendary protagonists became the images and metaphors of the writers' thoughts: Mount Banahaw, the Philippine forest and sunset, flowers like *sampaguita* in the poems of Recto; the ilang-ilang flower, Manila, the Kundiman, in Guerrero's; and the Philippine landscape, the volcano, the sea, in Apostol's. Philippine historical and legendary figures together with leaders of the Revolution were the subjects of many *modernista* poems: Lakandula, Magat-Salamat, Tomas Pinpin, Jose Rizal, Marcelo H. del Pilar, Emilio Jacinto, Apolinario Mabini, Andres Bonifacio, Graciano Lopez Jaena, to name some. The hunger of the spirit was one of the preeminent marks of the *modernista*. Their admiration and love for the great past, whether Malayan, Tagalog, or Hispanic, was actually deep and sincere,

yet they were not singing the deeds of individuals but the pettiness, selfishness, and ingratitude of their own generation. These attitudes, contradictory only outwards, were forced on intellectuals by the very fact that they were powerless to act or to affect the destiny of their country except in the realm of ideas, as expressed by Guerrero in “Las dos hoces”,

“Las dos hoces”

*Ya están en mis manos las dos sacras
hoces
que el herrero anónimo para mí forjó:
la de hierro duro, que es mi fortaleza,
y la de oro fino, que es mi ensoñación.*

“The Two Sickles”

The two sacred sickles are already in my hands
those the anonymous smith forged for me:
one is hard iron, that is my vigor;
the other fine gold, that is my fantasy.

(1914)

*Philippine Modernista Thought and Language Politics:
A Valiant Poem of Granite*

The longing of the Philippine *modernista* poem was to become the stone where past and present were engraved, a cohesive site where the foundations of the coming nation they were creating and building were laid.

During the first years of American occupation, the essays published in the press, particularly in *Muling Pagsilang*, the counterpart newspaper of *El Renacimiento*, fought for Tagalog language and culture, showing a clever conceptualization of the Philippine nation with “confidence in and commitment” (Tinio 132). Such a defense struck Tinio, so she tried to remedy this lacunae by discussing the Tagalog and English essays about the Tagalog language in her dissertation. Reading and analyzing texts written in Spanish during those years can complete that lack of comprehension about the first years of the American occupation (117). This article aims at contributing to this purpose with Spanish poetry about Tagalog language and their conviction on their tasks as writers to help building the concept of the Philippine nation. Artists were searching for elements of cohesion through the creation of nation-building metaphors. Their cultural unity was rooted in Nature which supported the idea of a common sensory experience. This was the

land lived by the community as a nation, as expressed through the lyrical and emotional way of knowing by Guerrero in “La isla hermana”,

“La isla hermana”

*Un vínculo, más fuerte
que el puño de los Césares y que la
misma muerte,
hace de las Tres Islas un solo corazón,
que tendrá, en la ventura, una sonrisa
única
y, en las adversas horas, sabrá rasgar
su túnica
con un definitivo y unánime tirón.*

*¿No son tus noches bellas
las mismas que las nuestras? ¿no es luz
de tus estrellas
la que reciben juntas Bisayas y Luzón?
¿No es el aroma indígena del ilang-ilang
regio
el que a leer nos mueve un solo flori-
legio
y a sentir, alma adentro, una sola
emoción?*

“Three Islands”

A vinculum, stronger
than Caesar’s fist, than death herself,
makes the Three Islands only one
heart,
who will, in happiness, have the same
smile,
and, at time of adversity, will know
how to fling one’s dress clothes
with one resolute, united effort.

Aren’t your beautiful nights
the same as ours? Doesn’t the light of
your stars
shine together over Bisayas and
Luzon?
Doesn’t the aroma of the royal ilang-il-
ang
move us to read a single poem, to feel
deeply inside our soul, a single senti-
ment.

(1909)

Their tone was confident and optimistic, as seen in the above “Three islands” by Guerrero, in “Soul of the Race” and “The Crucible of the Race” by Recto, and “To the Anonymous Martyrs of the Country” by Apostol. Their strength came from a confidence like that of the poet Santos Chocano (Peru 1875-1934) who was admired and read by many of the Philippine writers. Besides the natural elements, other bricks for the nation were their old traditions and legends, as expressed by Guerrero,

*“Adulterada ... ¡No! (A la Patria)”
¡No morirás! ... Tus bravos aborígenes,
cortidos en la lucha y la borrasca,
velan por tus leyendas tan antiguas
como el sol que corona tus montañas ...*

*“Adulterated ... No! (To The Country)”
You will not die! ... Your valiant natives,
forged in the struggle and the storm,
guard your legends as old as the sun
crowning in your mountains ...*

Notwithstanding the status awarded to the Spanish language as a major instrument for opposition to the imposition of English, the native language was equally part of the *patria*. The language of the kundiman and Balagtas, Tagalog, was the language Recto was praising and recognizing as fundamental for the Philippines,

“La lengua del terruño”

*Es la lengua sagrada de rajáhs y
sultanes,
de régulos que alzaban su trono en los
volcanes
y enviaban sus guerreras piraguas a la
mar.
A través de los siglos fue incólume su
gloria;
es la página de oro en la **malaya**
historia
que simboliza el alma del nativo solar.*

...

*Ella encarna la patria, sus glorias ella
encierra,
por eso, ella es eterna, como eterna es
mi tierra,
y eternos son los héroes de nuestra
libertad ...*

“The Native Language”

*‘Tis the sacred language of the rajahs
and sultans,
of chieftains who raised their thrones
on volcanoes
and sent their warring piroques to sea.
Through the centuries their glory was
unharméd;
In **Malayan history** ‘tis the page of
gold
that symbolizes the soul of the native
land.*

...

*It incarnates the country, treasures her
glories,
that’s why it is eternal, as eternal is my
land,
and eternal are the heroes of our
freedom ...*

(1909)

(Alfredo S. Veloso’s translation)

Poetry in Spanish also contributed to the success of Tagalog in the Philippines. In order to understand its relevance, it must be put into the

context of language politics. The significance of the concept of *lahi* in Tagalog, discussed by Tinio (150-154), was the connection between language and nationhood; apparently, it was intrinsically related to its development in Tagalog language. However, it was also developed in Spanish and in poetry, as it is shown here. The concept can be identified in this poem of Recto, although the word itself did not appear. The poem began connecting the Tagalog language to history, to Nature's sounds, then to emotions, to love confidences, to the Arts, and to the spreading of the Revolution. In the last stanza, language embodies the nation and the repository of the glory, so that language, as well as the land, are eternal; therefore, those who fought for the freedom of that land and that language are eternal too. Note that in Veloso's translation the Spanish word *patria* is translated as "country"; nevertheless *patria* is closer to *lahi*, in the sense of motherland or fatherland, that is, the place of "my heritage" and "my people", which is directly related to the poem's title: "*La lengua del terruño*", meaning "the language of my origins".

Another term was also quite relevant: *malaya*. As writers did when discussing in Tagalog language, in Philippine poetry in Spanish, "Malay" was used in many poems, as in the above poem of Recto. Their concern about unifying the islands and the people, already shown in "*La isla hermana*," brought the use of "Malay" in the same way explained by Tinio (158). The poets rescued and reinvented their ancestry. "Malay" was the word for their history and civilization, that is, a word equal to the terms for other civilizations such as "European" or "American." By using the spirit and the tools *Modernismo* equipped them with, Filipino poets created this "Malay" reinvention.

Defending the country's heritage against the neocolonialism from the United States placed the Spanish language in a special status. Spanish had a privileged position against English because of the American discourse about the lack in civilization of Philippine languages; that was the position in which American colonial power placed Spanish (Tinio 100). The US government had its own fight against Spanish in the Philippines as they would deem it worth enemy, and therefore belittled the vernacular languages. The attack on the Spanish language was so strong that Filipinos felt insulted, because it was their language, too. In the outpost, Spanish would lead the fight against

the new colonial power, the famous libel case of *El Renacimiento* being just a symbol of it. In return, the ruin of Spanish helped lead to the success of Tagalog. In the following example from Apóstol, Spanish language was an inspiration for independence against US influence,

“A España imperialista”

*España: nos desune del piélago la
anchura;
también la propia sangre de ti nos
diferencia.
Mas tuyo es nuestro idioma, es tuya la
cultura
que a remontar nos lleva tu nacional
altura,
que nutre el santo anhelo de nuestra
independencia.*

“To the Imperialist Spain”

Spain: the ocean's width separates us;
also blood itself distinguishes us from
you.
Yet yours is our language, yours the
culture
bringing us to reach your level of
nationhood,
to replenish the sacred desire for our
independence.

(1914)

The task of the intellectual was to set a high example, both in the moral and the cultural sphere, and to call not only for the creation of a culture but also for the preservation of the culture of the past. Recto called for action beyond the reality of the present, the actions of the intellectuals had to aim at the future,

“Epopeya de la raza”

*Está ya muerto el presente...
Libertarlo es imposible, porque ha sido
condenado.
Pues, entonces, libertemos el futuro,
custodiando la simiente
que han echado
en el surco de las almas
nuestros heroes que murieron, conquis-
tando eternas palmas.*

“The Crucible of the Race”

The present is already dead ...
‘Tis impossible to liberate it for it has
been condemned.
So let's then liberate the future, guard-
ing the seed
that was sown
in the furrows of the souls
by our heroes who died conquering
eternal palms.

(1910)

(Alfredo S. Veloso's translation)

The task of the intellectual was to bring modernity to the country. Modernity is not used here as a historical period but a quality, a condition, in the spirit of betterment towards the future, although connected to the Enlightenment ideas regarding modern age. In the Philippine context, the debate may be put in the same terms discussed by Sharman (13-15) for Latin America, framed by the formation of the nation-states as an emancipating, democratizing, and renovation project from the elites and the cosmopolitan groups; thus, it enters in conflict with the multiplicity of realities and societies in the country. In Philippine literature in Spanish, an epitome of this tension is the long poem by Fernando Canon, “*A la laguna de Bay,*” for whom *Modernismo* plays a relevant role, too (Alvarez 2013). Among the writers discussed here, it was Apóstol who sang more explicitly to modernity in “*Excelsior,*” (1901) a poem dedicated to the memory of George Washington, who represented all those ideals which contrasted with what the United States had brought to the Philippines. Apostol started with a salutation from a free man,

“*Excelsior*”

*¡Salud al genio! El canto de mi lira
es débil, sí, pero dejad que vibre:
nace del corazón de un hombre libre,
que la virtud por la virtud admira.*

“*Excelsior*”

Hail to the genius! The song of my lyre
is feeble, yes, though let it sound:
it was born in the heart of a free man,
who, for its virtue, virtue admires.

by Apóstol (1901)

Washington is a great figure in the history of America. Law and Human Rights were his ground for the construction of their independence. According to Apostol, no poet had yet been capable of praising his deeds and only a poem as powerful as a mountain that was “a valiant poem of granite to the infinite” could have made justice to the Ideas of Washington:

"Excelsior"

*¡Salud al héroe de alma gigantea,
que halló un punto de apoyo en el
Derecho
para mover un vasto continente
con la inmortal palanca de la Idea!*

*El verbo humano, a las bajezas hecho
de la vida banal, es impotente;
no puede ni ha podido todavía
alzar al infinito
un bizarro poema de granito
en loor del más grande entre los gran-
des.*

"Excelsior"

Hail to the hero of the giant soul,
who found a pivot in justice
to conduct a vast continent
with the immortal fulcrum of the Idea!

The human word,
moulded in the pettiness of ordinary life,
is helpless;
cannot, still has not been able
to raise to the infinite
a valiant poem of granite
in praise of the greatest amongst the
great.

(1901)

Washington's figure and ideas did not belong to one country but were "cosmopolitan." The poet claimed that "sacred Liberty, the goddess of the cult of the modern spirit" should not be denied to the "new possessions," precisely by those who ought to Washington what they were:

*No te nieguen jamás los que han
hallado,
por tus lecciones que conserva escritas
el arca de las viejas tradiciones
venturas mil en su triunfal camino,
hoy que trazan la ruta del destino
que han de regir las "nuevas posesiones".*

...

*¡que el polen inmortal de tus doctrinas
venga muy pronto a fecundar el seno
de mi querida Patria Filipinas!*

You shall never be denied by those who
found
through your lessons preserved in the
records
in the coffer of the old traditions,
thousand adventures in the way to victory,
those who now trace the route of destiny
that should govern the "new possessions"

...

that the immortal pollen of your doctrine
arrive soon to fertilize the bosom
of my dear country Philippines!

Cecilio Apóstol was the first to introduce the theme of the “Idea” in 1898, in the poem “*A los mártires anónimos de la patria*” [“To the Anonymous Martyrs of the Country”] (see Attachment), and in the better known and powerful poem written in honor to Jose Rizal,

“*Al héroe nacional*”

*¡No llores de la tumba en el misterio
del español el triunfo momentáneo,
que si una bala destruyó tu cráneo
tu Idea, en cambio, destruyó un imperio!*

“To the National Hero”

Weep not over the silence of your tomb
over the fleeting Spanish triumph
for if a bullet destroyed your cranium
your idea, in turn, destroyed an empire!

(1898)

The “Idea” was a poetic inspiration for many later poems of the three writers. As a metonymy, it served different purposes: it was the source of energy and change; it provided strength and encouraged people to resist; it was the vehicle of independence, freedom, future; it was the “Idea,” too, of the Philippines, or how they envisioned the nation in the future, how they represented it in the poems, and no less relevant, how they conceptualized a frame powerful enough to resist the American occupation. The Idea was a stone and the stone took shape in the poem. The “Idea” served to join the foundations of the different currents, as expressed by Guerrero,

“*Una fe y un corazón*”

...
*Oid, hombres de mi raza: no progaguéis
semillas
de división; poneos como ayer de
rodillas
ante una misma idea y ante un único
altar.*

“One Faith, One Heart”

Listen, people of my race: do not
disseminate
seeds of disunion; kneel together as
yesterday
before a common idea and before one
altar.

(1906)

The “Idea” embodied the nation-building concepts and the projects for independence, which could not be explicitly expressed. Poems of *modernista*

aesthetics, with dreamlike images and charged with lyricism, described the existence of the “Idea.” The association of the “Idea” of the Philippines with the figure of a woman is worth considering for further research on how women incarnated in literature the nation or the idea of the Philippines, like in the following poem by Guerrero,

“Psyche”

*Va el alma ...
Como buque misterioso
surca el mar del Ensueño.
La ola eterna de la vida la arrulla,
y sobre el férvido océano ideal por
donde viaja,
hay como un rompimiento de crepúsculos,
de soles nuevos entre cuyos rayos
vaga una forma de mujer: la Idea.*

“Psyche”

The soul sails ...
like a mysterious vessel
over the ocean of dreams.
Life's eternal wave lulls it,
bobbing over the effervescent, perfect
sea,
a burst of twilights, of new suns
between whose rays
the figure of a woman wanders: the
Idea.

Modernista Philippine poetry in Spanish was a site of resistance through a process of creating metaphors whose purpose was to fight for and to conceptualize the nation. Claro M. Recto was close to facing charges for sedition in his youth because of a poem, as earlier mentioned. The potential of his text was unrecognized by the city fiscal who did not pursue the charges; thus, poetic aesthetics had saved Recto from imprisonment. Poems were stones thrown to counteract the discourse of the foreign, a form of defense against the American colonial government that underestimated the value, for example, of Philippine history, culture, languages, and social ways.

This article has attempted to describe the most influential notions expressed in their poems: the Philippines formed a nation and a cultural unity with roots in the different civilizations prior to the arrival of Spanish people and in Hispanic civilization, too. The defense of the country's heritage against neocolonialism under the United States included the defense of Tagalog language due to the position of the Spanish language had against American discourse about the lack civilization of Philippine languages.

The poems pointed to the tasks of the intellectuals in their milieu which included: setting a high example, both in the moral and the cultural sphere; creating not only a culture but also preserving the culture of the past; and bringing modernity, in terms of modernness, to the country. The conviction that guiding ideas shaped societies and the “Idea” were the sources of energy and change towards a better future. The colors of *Modernismo* acquired distinctive tones in each of the writers looking for the appropriate and perfect formula for the Philippines, a country to which they saw themselves as members and for which they would struggle. This essay is meant to be a tribute to these three poets,

*Que vuestras ... rimas perfectas
den, como premio a vuestras luchas amargas,
el provocar en las almas selectas
repercusiones profundas y largas.*

That your ... perfect rhymes,
as the reward for your bitter fights,
serve to awaken in fine souls
deep and lasting repercussions.

from Apóstol, *Elogio del poeta*
(A Claro M. Recto)
“In Praise of the Poet”
[To Claro M. Recto]

Appendix

Selected Poems

“*El alma de la raza*” [“The Soul of the Race”] by Claro Recto (1909)
[Translated by Alfredo S. Veloso].

The sight and the landscape:

*Mi raza tiene un alma que es alma de
titanes.*

...

*Es río que serpea bajo cañaverales,
copiando en el encanto de sus claros
cristales
la azul inmensidad.
Pero es también océano que derrumba
montañas,
cuando en el seno oscuro de sus vastas
entrañas
hierve en iras volcánicas su sed de
libertad.*

The sight and the colors:

*Es tricolor su enseña ... Tiene el azul del
Arte,
la blancura del lirio y la rojez de Marte,*

...

*Es sílfide ligera de fantásticos vuelos,
virgen como sus selvas, azul como sus
cielos,*

My race has a soul that is of Titans.

...

‘Tis a river that meanders beneath
bamboo groves,
copying in the enchantment of its clear
crystals
the blue immensity.
But it’s also an ocean that crushes
mountains,
when in the dark bosom of its vast
entrails
boils in volcanic fury its thirst for
freedom.

Its emblem is tri-colored ... It has
the blue of the Arts,
the whiteness of the lily and the red
of Mars,

...

‘Tis a light sylph of fantastic flights,
virginal like its forests, blue like its
skies,

Hearing and the melody:

*Es suave como el ritmo de las flautas
bucólicas
que ensaya dulcemente en notas melan-
cólicas,
entre las verdes cañas, la brisa vespéral.*

It's gentle like the bucolic flutes
the twilight breeze sweetly plays
amongst
the green bamboos in melancholic
notes.

The aroma:

*Es ánfora de encantos, palacio de
grandezas,
castillo de heroísmos, santuario de
bellezas,
refugio de los besos del oloroso
Abril.*

'Tis an amphora of enchantments, palace of
grandeurs,
castle of heroisms, sanctuary of beauties,
refuge of the kisses of fragrant April.

The touch and the taste:

*Sabe pulsar la cítara con melodioso
acento,
lúgubre como un cisne, triste como un
lamento,
si se siente morir.
Sabe pulsar la cítara en arpeggios
bullentes,
como del champagne rubio los topacios
hirvientes,
cuando su pecho embriaga la dicha
del vivir.*

It knows how to pluck the cythara with
melodious accent,
mournful like a swan, and doleful like a
lament,
if it feels like dying.
It knows how to pluck the cythara in
lively arpeggios,
like of the champagne the bubbling
topazes,
when its breast is drunk with the joy of
living.

Literary attack of neo-colonialism:

"Al 'Yankee'"

...

*Cuando al santo Derecho se trucida
en el festín de la ambición humana;
cuando como los yankees,
a cañonazos brindan una patria;*

"To the 'Yankee'"

...

When sacred justice is sacrificed
in the banquet of human ambition;
as when the yankees,
toast a nation to the sound of cannon

by Apóstol (1899)

Against American utilitarianism:

"A Magat-Salamat"

*En este tiempo de los maleficios,
del Rey Dólar que inspira a la Autocracia
y somete al dolor de los suplicios
el alma de la antigua Democracia;*

"To Magat-Salamat"

In these accursed times,
when the omnipotent Dollar tempts
the Autocracy
and subjects to the pain of tortures
the soul of the elder Democracy;

Guerrero (1910)

Describing the new colonialism:

"Epopeya de la raza"

*Ha pasado la hecatombe...Hoy, paz,
mutua tolerancia
fraternidad simulada ... Ya el Águila es
absoluta.
Y la Patria Filipina, la República
impoluta,
marchitada en su infancia
por la extraña fuerza bruta,
a la sombra soberana
de sus alas se guarece,
de pie sobre sus escombros, ante la cruz
del Patriota
que el vencimiento ennoblece,
risueña ante la catástrofe, altanera en
la derrota,
en espera del mañana.*

"The Crucible of the Race"

The hecatomb passed ... Now, peace,
mutual tolerance
feigned fraternity ... The Eagle is
already absolute.
And the Philippine nation, the unpol-
luted republic,
withered in its infancy
by brutal foreign force,
beneath the sovereign shade
of its wings is sheltered,
standing over the rubbish, before the
Patriot's cross
that defeat ennoble,
smiling before the catastrophe, haugh-
ty in defeat,
awaiting the morrow.

Recto, (1910)

[Translated by Alfredo S. Veloso]

In praise of Washington:

"Excelsior"

*Los actos de tu vida de Espartaco
los tienen siempre en la memoria fijos
cuantos en esta vida tormentosa
fueron ungidos por el beso eterno
de la sagrada Libertad, la diosa
del culto del espíritu moderno.*

"Excelsior"

The deeds of your Spartan life
are forever fixed in the memory
of those who in this tormented life
were anointed by the eternal kiss
of sacred Liberty, the goddess
of the cult of the modern spirit.

by Apóstol (1901)

Those are the Americans who live in freedom, but Liberty will be the yearned Dulcinea for the oppressed:

“Excelsior”

*¡Oh Libertad, oh santa Dulcinea
de los hombres y pueblos oprimidos!
Hoy, como ayer, mientras el mundo sea,
vivirás con tu corte de escogidos,*

“Excelsior”

Oh Liberty, oh Saint Dulcinea
of the oppressed people and countries!
Today, as yesterday, as the world is,
you shall live in the court among the
chosen,

by Apóstol (1901)

The “Idea” in Cecilio Apóstol (1898):

“A los mártires anónimos de la patria”

*Sacerdotes del templo de la Idea,
cantores de las glorias de mi Patria,
vosotros que sabéis con vuestras trovas
penetrar en el fondo de las almas;*

“To the Anonymous Martyrs of the Country”

Priests of the temple of the Idea,
singers of the glories of my country,
you, who with your poems know
how to penetrate depths of souls;

by Apóstol (1898)

The “Idea” as a powerful tool for resistance:

“Allons, enfants...”

...

*¡La idea de la fuerza es poderosa,
mas no vence a la fuerza de la idea!*

“Come, children...”

...

The idea of force is powerful,
yet does not defeat the force of the
Idea!

by Apóstol

“Epopeya de la raza”

*Paladines de Idea, portadores del
Progreso
Espartacos y Kokziuskos de la Causa
filipina,
invencibles bajo el peso
de tres siglos de Conquista,*

...

*Es la fecha que registra en los fastos de
la historia
la caída de un Apóstol, con temblor de
cataclismo,
por el triunfo de una Idea, por un ansia
de victoria,
el desplome de un Imperio de Conquista
y Despotismo,*

...

*Con la esteva del obrero y el verbo
parlamentario
florecerá en el Calvario
el Gran Árbol de la Idea.*

“The Crucible of the Race”

Knights of the Idea, bearers of Progress,
Spartacus and Kosciusko of the Philippine Cause,
invincible under the weight
of three centuries of Conquest,

...

‘Tis the date that records in the pageantry of history
the fall of an Apostol, with the tremors
of a cataclism,
for the triumph of an Idea, a longing
for victory,
the toppling of an Empire of Conquest
and Despotism,

...

With the laborer’s plow-handle and
the parliamentary word
the great Tree of the Idea
shall bloom in the Calvary.

by Recto (1910)
[Translated by Alfredo S. Veloso]

Notes

1. “A valiant poem of granite to the infinite” by Cecilio Apóstol (1901).
2. All translations are ours unless otherwise indicated.
3. Our translation of the original: “*El artista rechaza la indeseable realidad (la realidad social: no la natural), en la que ni puede ni quiere integrarse, y busca caminos para la evasión. Uno de ellos, acaso el más obvio, lo abre la nostalgia, y conduce al pasado; otro, trazado por el ensueño, lleva a la transfiguración de lo distante (en tiempo o en espacio, o en ambos); lejos de la vulgaridad cotidiana*” (Gullón 65).

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Razones del Modernismo hispanoamericano en *Bancarrota de almas* de Jesús Balmori

(“Ventura bajo la lámpara eléctrica leía vagamente el Azul de Darío”)

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Abstract

This article explores how the Filipino poet Jesús Balmori wrote his first novel, *Bancarrota de almas* (1911), by taking symbolist motifs from Rubén Darío's works. We propose an intertextual analysis of Balmori's novel centered on the texts from Darío: *Azul...* (1888), *Los raros* (1896), *Prosas Profanas y otros poemas* (1901).

1. The bohemian brotherhood: “Los raros” of Filipinas

Balmori dedicates his first piece of narrative to some friends, which are all relevant men in the Hispanic movement against the United States occupation. We have seen a connection between Balmori's fascination about Darío and his early proposal (in *Los raros*) towards *Arielismo*, an aesthetic theory defending the artistic supremacy of Latin sensibility (Hispanic and catholic, for instance) in a world dominated by materialism and industrial power (Anglo-Saxon protestant, like North America). The novel follows the romantic system in the representation of nationalism (nature, heroes, folklore and art) and also Philippine Independence results to be a “holy cause”; the main character, Valdivia, is a national glory of poetry. But he must be also modern, so he became dandy and bohemian.

2. Damned poets and the “sad flesh”

Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Verlaine and Samain provide quotations opening every part of the text. Idols, sunsets, hymns, spleen and ideal are frequent in Valdivia’s speech and translated into a Filipino way; as well as ekphrasis. But sad flesh (*la carne triste*) referring to Mallarmé’s “la chair est triste” (from the poem “Brise marine”) is the most insistent motive. This is the second item from Darío’s lesson that Balmori is fascinated about: his theory of Eros and erotic.

3. Darío is present

Balmori borrows for his Valdivia some ideas and language from Darío. Both poets sing the same hymn to good love and to a better future. Balmori inspires some scenes of his novel specially in the tale “La muerte de la emperatriz de la China”: the wedding material, for example. He also takes from it a theosophical atmosphere suggesting hypnosis. And the female character, Ángela, performs a version of Suzette’s rococo portrait in Darío’s tale: constant use of diminutives, closed soft ambiance, little charming pets... Ángela laughs like Eulalia, the marquise from “Era un aire suave” only under her beloved poet’s (Valdivia’s) influence. One of the best known poems by Darío is “Sonatina” and Balmori’s text refers to it almost continuously.

Balmori wrote a sentimental *roman*, updating it to modern times and to a Latino- Hispanic aesthetic: *modernismo arielista*. He tried to make a record of those years in Filipinas and to give his friends a proposal of nationalism which include a poetic vision. *Bancarrota de almas* could be considered as a failure as an artwork as time went by. But it remains a very interesting material, necessary for a real and valuable history of literature in Spanish.

Keywords

Jesús Balmori, Philippine novel in Spanish, sentimentalism, nationalism, Ruben Darío, Modernismo



Fig. 1. Fotografía de Jesús Balmori en la revista *Excelsior* (10 junio 1916). J. B., *Los pájaros de fuego*, Manila, Instituto Cervantes, 2010, p. LXIII



Fig. 2. Manila hacia 1905-1908, tiempo en que se desarrolla la novela. A la derecha la conocida Heladería Clarke's.

*Para Pequeña Olivia y Juan,
que acompañaron y permitieron la redacción de este trabajo*

“Con sus novelas ha llegado a las puertas del folletín”, escribía Rubén Darío en *Los Raros* (133) a propósito de Jean Richepin. Podríamos decir de Jesús Balmori otro tanto, o quizás, para qué andar disimulando, ser menos elegantes que Darío y afirmar que, al menos en su primera novela, *Bancarrota de almas* (1911), atraviesa sin pudor esas puertas folletinescas y crea un monstruoso melodrama donde la piel poética, no siempre fallida, se cose impudicamente a otros órganos de diferentes tamaños y sensibilidades. *Bancarrota de almas* se escribe en clave modernista, tratando sobre un asunto que podemos considerar una preocupación del realismo: una historia de pocos personajes principales pero enmarcada en un ámbito social y ofreciendo una interpretación apasionada del momento histórico en que tiene lugar. No obstante, es la obra de un romántico a lo Darío¹ y resulta estar narrada desde una perspectiva de novela sentimental, con recursos propios de ese género².

En su reciente revisión del canon de la literatura hispánica de Filipinas, Jorge Mojarro (2018) elabora unas observaciones que nos sirven para ubicar esta primera novela de un poeta y sus aspiraciones con ella. Repasando la bibliografía más relevante sobre la época que nos ocupa, la de asimilación del modernismo hispanoamericano en Filipinas, estudia Mojarro las aportaciones de Wenceslao Emilio Retana. El crítico lamentaba que los poetas filipinos de fe modernista no hicieran de su producción lírica el vehículo de lo nacional (entendemos que tanto por un necesario cosmopolitismo como por una defensa del arte por el arte), sin haber comprendido que no por ello se desvincularon de unas circunstancias históricas ni del compromiso con Filipinas, ya que prefirieron tratar estos asuntos en la prensa o en la narrativa, en los géneros en prosa³.

Por otra parte, en el prólogo de su edición de otra novela de Balmori (*Los pájaros de fuego. Novela filipina de la guerra*), Isaac Donoso Jiménez precisa que el modernismo filipino consiguió nacionalizarse y crear lugares comunes en gran parte gracias a la obra de Balmori⁴.

Creemos con Mojarro y Donoso Jiménez que Jesús Balmori está entre los poetas que no quisieron que su poesía fuera cívica antes que lírica pero que buscaron el lugar de la política (valga decir la épica) en los géneros en prosa⁵. Venimos a defender que en su primera novela trató de reunir por igual ese afán patrio y el modernismo aprendido de Darío. Para nosotros (y esperamos que también para ustedes después de leer este artículo) el referente fundamental que inspira y justifica este artefacto que es la primera novela de Balmori, con su hibridez, su lucidez y sus dislates, no es otro que la obra de Rubén Darío, principalmente *Azul...*, sostenido en la sombra por *Los raros*, junto con *Prosas profanas y otros poemas*⁶. Defenderemos también que esta obra es interesantísima para comprender el impacto del modernismo hispanoamericano y de Rubén Darío en las Filipinas; este es, de hecho, el objetivo de nuestro esfuerzo.

La cofradía modernista. Bohemia y decadentismo: *Los raros de Filipinas*

“Para aquellos más queridos y respetados amigos que se llaman: D. Rafael del Pan, Don Fernando Guerrero, D. Cecilio Apóstol y D. Teodoro Kalaw”⁷: la novela de Balmori empieza con la dedicatoria a su cofradía modernista, o lo que es lo mismo, dirigiéndose a los que son sus destinatarios primeros, a esos “amigos” en la literatura y en las ideas políticas. “¡Amigo!” comenzaba “El rey burgués” de Rubén Darío (Darío, *Azul...* 45-51), llamando a escuchar a los iguales del poeta, a los comprometidos con el arte puro en tiempos de burgueses sátiros y sordos (a los arieles en tiempo de calibanes, podríamos añadir sin temor a equivocarnos). El “amigo” al que se dirige el narrador es un *passant*: (“hasta la vista”, se despide tras el rato que han compartido escuchando la historia del poeta muerto de frío), como lo era el “pasajero” de Martí que debía detenerse para escuchar sus palabras y la “Oda al Niágara” de Juan Antonio Pérez Bonalde, otro hito del modernismo hispanoamericano. Ambos traen un mensaje de emergencia, comprometido con un momento histórico que cuestiona la función social del artista, y no parece otra la actitud de la dedicatoria de Balmori a los compañeros de palabra.

En *Los raros* (1896), Darío no solamente reúne una semblanza o reseña de sus “ídolos” (Prólogo de 1905), sino que ensaya en un lenguaje que remite al que emplea, alegóricamente, en *Azul...*⁸ Nuestro interés incluye un aspecto sobre el que Pedro Lastra trataba brillantemente en su “Relectura de *Los raros*” (Lastra 1979): el texto de Darío como antecedente del arielismo. Tenemos motivos para pensar que la inclinación apasionada de Jesús Balmori y sus “queridos y respetados amigos” por el modernismo rubendariano, además de con la fascinación por la carne, que veremos en seguida, tiene bastante relación con el discurso en prosa que, con las mismas coordenadas que “Nuestra América” de José Martí, había desarrollado el autor de *Los raros* al identificar a Edgard Allan Poe con el espíritu de la poesía enfrentado a un país de “cíclopes”, de “feroces calibanes”: “¿Tuvo razón el raro Sar al llamar así a estos hombres de la América del Norte? Calibán reina en la isla de Manhattan, en San Francisco, en Washington, en todo el país” (Darío, *Los raros* 53); el mismo discurso que lo lleva a proponer una historia ideal del rey que no fue Villiers de L’Isle-Adam, en la que este echaba “de su reino a todos los ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos de Norte América” (95)⁹.

Bancarrota de almas es rica en detalles ambientales que presentan negativamente la presencia de estadounidenses en las Filipinas: “Noche ya; de La Luneta, ahogando la canción del querido piano, llegaban claros los sonidos que estrepitosamente lanzaba una banda militar yankee” (23). El perrito de Ángela, Lili “tan mono, tan gracioso” (69) muere atropellado por un carro de riego americano: “El cochero actuaba de enterrador; con un sundang hacía saltar la arena, formando el hoyo donde dormiría Lili su sueño eterno, víctima de la Soberanía grande y aplastante hasta en sus carros” (69). Hay más escenas:

El reloj de la caída, sonó entre músicas, la una pasó un coche con dos borrachos yankees, disputando en voz alta por sobre los juramentos del auriga que latigueaba la pareja de pencos reacios a galopar; oyó la voz aguardentosa y recia de uno de ellos que gritaba desaforadamente: -¡Prrrrroonnntooo, jombre! ¡sigui Dagupan! (262);

otro momento, en este caso de exhibición de la potencia, lumínica y moderna, del imperio sobre el poeta y el paisaje filipinos:

Desde la bahía un crucero de los Estados Unidos hacía señales con sus focos eléctricos; penetró un chorro de luz azul por la ventana y se mantuvo iluminando el busto del poeta, como muerto bajo el fulgor; luego iluminó la playa, y luego se alzó de pronto, hacia las nubes y los luceros rayando el aire triunfalmente (269)¹⁰.

Pensamos que también son parte de la defensa de las Filipinas hispánicas frente a la cultura anglosajona las menciones al Quijote, que en época modernista funciona, desde José Martí (el Quijote cubano), como símbolo del idealismo hispánico frente al materialismo de la era industrial¹¹:

La carcajada de Cervantes es hermosísima, tío ¿quién no ha soñado princesas las fregonas? ¿quién no ha tomado las ventas por alcázares?

Don Alejandro clamaba:

-De modo que según tú, porque sea dulce soñar, engañarse, a sí mismos embotándose en sopores, vamos todos a convertirnos en Quijotes y arremeter contra molinos de viento ¿eh? Vaya unas teorías ¡hombre! No me extraña que con esas ideas modernistas estéis crucificando al pobre pueblo que se deja matar como un estúpido delirando con la palma de la independencia (320).

La respuesta de Ventura es un alegato a favor de la independencia como “causa santa”:

Abrigamos la ilusión de una pronta y absoluta libertad [...] Que la soberanía tan soberana que nos rige lo comprenda así, nos encargaremos nosotros, no importa de qué medios, pues todos ellos son legales para llegar al objeto de una causa santa; el poeta Balmori nos dio el grito:

SI ES INÚTIL LA ESPADA DE LA CIENCIA,
¡QUE FULGURE LA CIENCIA DE LA ESPADA! (321)

Es curioso que se cite a sí mismo el autor. Si Valdivia encarna el ideal literario bohemio de Balmori, su discurso político encuentra portavoz fuera de

la torre de marfil: es Ventura quien sostiene un diálogo con el tío Alejandro en que el modelo narrativo se vuelve realismo para documentar un momento histórico¹².

El nacionalismo de Balmori y sus amigos se recrea en detalles diversos salpicados por toda la novela, como la mención a Balagtás (57)¹³ y a otros artistas filipinos, como es el caso del “amigo” del autor Cecilio Apóstol, de quien elige el personaje Valdivia un canto a la naturaleza filipina para prometer un *locus amoenus* a Ángela:

para corte tuya, de tus reinos de amor, y gloria, las siestas de la selva, las bellas siestas cantadas por el divino poeta Apóstol, donde a la sombra del cañaveral murmurador se meza tu hamaka mecida por las auras, incensada por las flores (126);

en que el referente en prensa sea *El Renacimiento* (77, remitimos para este tema a Gloria Cano), que la orquesta Rizal toque en la boda de Margarita, etc. Una alusión al nacionalismo como elemento cotidiano en la percepción de los personajes la tenemos en el comentario de Ángela ante el esqueleto del gabinete de San José después de haberle preguntado de quién es y haberle dado una respuesta nada interesante el médico: “¡Bah! De cualquiera; me lo trajeron hecho, de París”. Entonces responde Ángela: “¿De modo que no es filipino?” (162). Otro detalle es que la flor elegida por Ángela para su traje de novia sea la sampaga, que ha sido vínculo simbólico en la relación con Valdivia¹⁴: “Lo encontraba originalísimo Ventura, lo encontraba precioso; tan pura la flor de los malayos jardines como la flor de los naranjos; y más dulce, más filipina” (334); cuando Margarita se burla de Ventura que se vanagloria de haber defendido la casa de un ataque de los tulisanes, le dice: “Tú el mejor día eclipsas con tus heroicidades a Bernardo Carpio” (84) y la burla sigue “Hola, Bernardo Carpio” lo saluda más adelante (92). La elección de un héroe legendario nacional, tagalo pero con base hispánica y antiamericano para representar irónicamente lo que no es Ventura nos parece muy significativa¹⁵. En cambio, Valdivia, su rival en el amor de Ángela, y el preferido

también por el narrador, sí es un verdadero héroe filipino, un héroe literario aclamado por la gente:

Le presentaron a Margarita; él a su amigo:
—El poeta Valdivia, nuestro gran poeta.
Lo conocían Ángela y Margarita, de oídas,
de leer sus versos, tan bonitos y raros (27).

Margarita se referirá a él como “un gran poeta, tan guapo, tan popular, tan solicitado” (74) y en otra escena el retrato es así:

Mucha gente en la Luneta; Valdivia saludado por todo el mundo.
“-¡Adiós, poeta!
-¡Adiós!
-¡Adiós, Valdivia!
-¡Adiós!
-¡Adiós Augusto!¹⁶
-¡Adiós!
-¡Adiós, chico!...
Y ciento más; a veces eran mujeres sonriéndole desde sus coches, saludándole familiarmente con la mano (87-88).

La prensa publicará una “casi esquela” cuando la tisis esté acabando con él:

Hállase enfermo de mucha gravedad nuestro querido colaborador el joven y brillante poeta Sr. Augusto Valdivia. Desconfiase de poderlo sacar avante en la mortal enfermedad que le aqueja; confiamos en que solo, por un prodigio de la ciencia, no tengan que lamentarla patria y el arte filipino una irreparable pérdida, asociándonos de todo corazón a la pena que al presente debe embargar a la familia... (286).

Queda claro, pues, que es una gloria nacional y que tiene prestigio social. Como también queda claro que es un poeta bohemio con no pocos atributos de dandy, como fumar cigarrillos egipcios (29) que desprenden humo azul (200, 212). El mensaje suyo que descubren Ángela y Margarita en la cartera olvidada de San José es una carta de presentación de su faceta bohemia: “Acudo a ti en plena agonía; de bolsillos; anoche la gran *juerga* y el gran escándalo en

Sampalok; mis últimos dineros se los llevó el sagrado hijo del sol, el *hampán*; ¿podrías prestarme sesenta pesos ahora?” (120). Sigue al descubrimiento de la carta la ruptura de la relación, que el poeta afronta sumiéndose en la noche:

En la plaza de Kiapo oyó voces amigas:

-Eh, eh, Valdivia, señores, que va hablando con los céfiros.

Se acercó a ellos, todos íntimos, en acogida entusiástica y palmoteada; juntos se metieron en un bar. [...] y reía y vociferaba Valdivia entre la algazara de los bohemios, olvidado de todo, de sí mismo, y de Ángela, la adorada doliente llorando ahora en desconuelos sus vergüenzas de él, tan tristes.

Oíd, gritó de pronto, alzando la copa dorada de vino, oíd a Verlaine, mi padre celestial: [...] Arrojó la copa que se hizo polvo, sobre el piso [...] (122).

Valdivia morirá como una especie de mártir de la vida bohemia, que en el contexto de la novela es como decir de la vida auténticamente poética. El diagnóstico lo da Eugenio San José, el amigo médico: “pues él tiene el último grado de la tisis gracias a que dure un mes. Barbaridad de muchacho. Descuidado, descuidado; así van a acabar todos los poetas con tanta noche en claro y tanto vino y tanta mujer” (279)¹⁷. Insistirá la voz de la ciencia: “Barbaridad de poetas ¡de suicidas!...” (290).

Podemos entender que el Valdivia de Balmori es un poeta maldito, un raro, pero que está representando a los otros raros de Filipinas que, según nuestra lectura, son principalmente el autor de la novela y los “amigos” que reciben su dedicatoria. Y lo que los une es la causa de una Filipinas hispánica y tagala, independiente, en lo que tal vez podríamos llamar un arielismo asiático¹⁸.

Los poetas malditos y la carne triste

La novela está dividida en cuatro partes y cada una de esas partes se abre con una cita de un simbolista francés. Unos versos de Mallarmé anteceden a la primera; Baudelaire introduce la segunda; la tercera es para *Pauvre Lelian*,

el anagrama de Verlaine en *Los poetas malditos*. Y precede a la cuarta parte un verso de Albert Samain.

Se remite a Baudelaire en dos ocasiones más en el cuerpo de la novela: “sus nervios abiertos al deseo como *flores del mal*” (17); y en el calco “inebriado de pasión” (207); “enivrez vous sans cesse, de vin, de poésie ou de vertu”, cantaba el poeta en “Enivrez-vous”, *Le spleen de Paris* (Baudelaire 173). Pero la relevancia de Baudelaire en el discurso de Balmori va mucho más lejos aunque no sea explícita. Haya sido la lectura directa del poeta francófono o la asimilación a través de la obra de Darío, el lenguaje del personaje de Valdivia está hecho de ídolos, crepúsculos, de himnos, de *spleen* y de ideal:

Te escribo monorrítmico y exótico, en una de esas horas plásticas de mi *espíritu raro* que diría *Simoun*: la monotonía del paisaje, un cielo gris lleno de estrellas tísicas, el suspiro de una guitarra kundimera, la charla y las risas incoloras de mis primas, toda esta atmósfera, este crudo ambiente provinciano y ralo que pesa sobre mis nervios en una presión amabilosa y larga, me llena de laxitud, me enferman de quietismo (189).

Es un *spleen* filipino. Sigue en la carta el relato de la situación en que el poeta pasa por todo el pueblo en bata japonesa (190), justificando la excentricidad: “estoy loco de tristeza: tengo esa *murria* española, ese *spleen* de los ingleses, esa *morriña* de los gallegos. Parece que me falta aire para respirar: parece que me falta tierra para poner los pies; espacio para alzar la cabeza” (191).

También el tándem Baudelaire-Darío pensamos que puede funcionar como autoridad que sostiene la mirada pictórica que enriquece la novela de Balmori¹⁹. El tratamiento efrástico, por ejemplo, de un cuadro del pintor filipino Fabián de la Rosa que adorna la habitación de Ventura²⁰:

Rió Angela; la mujer del cuadro, reía también; era una preciosidad de hembra acariciando un cisne que llegaba hasta ella, sobre el azul del lago; el fondo formábanlo unos árboles de estío muy altos y sin hojas; al pie del paisaje en letra dibujada y roja resaltaba la firma del autor; Fabián de la Rosa (25).

Y también el modo de mirar pictóricamente los paisajes sugiere una adhesión a la sensibilidad plástica que Darío expone en *Azul...* al proponer una lectura de sus textos como si fueran cuadros (“En busca de cuadros”, “Acuarela”, “Paisaje”, “Aguafuerte”, “Al carbón” ...). Esta marina crepuscular parece una imitación de la paleta de Darío:

El mar franjeado, teñido por los fulgores del crepúsculo que encendía sus bengalas chisporroteantes de lumbre; verde aquí, oro allá, y rosa y lila y mil colores combinándose como en una gran paleta bajo un pincel de rayos solares; las olas que cantaban, las velas de pescadoras barcas recortándose en el aire cual alas de monstruosas aves marinas; y por sobre el altar de aguas y espumas trémulas, el sol, hostia de resplandores sobre un copón de cumbres purpúreas. Incendiado el espacio con llamas de nubes en el gran ocaso oriental bajo el temblor del viento y el trueno del agua; enorme la magnificencia del paisaje de la marina malásica, esbozada por *Bathala*, el gran artista (310)²¹.

La fascinación por Mallarmé se plasma en el motivo de “la carne triste”²², que a fuerza de repetirse, con alguna variación, asienta una idea clave en la novela: “carne perfumosa y pálida” (194); “es mi alma de poeta que despierta estremecida sobre *el montón de carnes* pecadoras, insaciables y *tristes*” (236); “las exigencias de *tu carne triste*” (241); “¡qué triste, qué *triste la carne!*” (265); “los hombres son un montón y otro montón, y algunos montones de huesos y miserable carne, *carne triste*” (278); otro “montón de carne triste” (332); “temblaban de miedo *sus carnes tristes*, sus carnes de amor” (307).

La presencia de la carne en las cartas de Valdivia es constante y quisiéramos señalar una ocasión en que la tristeza de la carne se explica conforme a la sensibilidad posmodernista que recurre a representaciones embellecidas y trascendentes de la lógica naturalista:

Doblan las campanas, plañideras, orantes; las estoy oyendo implorar rezos para los muertos. ¡Qué farsa! ¿La religión católica es un ruido de campanas? ¿Crees tú en un *más allá*, reina mía? La carne muerta se hace gusanos, los gusanos se hacen mariposas, y el alma humana es mariposa, mariposa como mi alma que este día de los muertos, va volando a tus labios, a tus rosas (240).

La carne triste reaparecerá en el discurso de Angelina al despedirse de la vieja *yaya* Petra, encomendándole que visite al amante muerto en el cementerio: “dile que vendo mi carne, esta mi carne triste para con el producto de la venta comprar la felicidad de lo que me dejó al morirse” (353), aceptando así el contrato social que la lleva a ser la esposa de Ventura.

Y, por último, la carne triste es el motivo con que concluye la novela: “Dice, Ventura, dice [mi corazón] que arrastras a tu vida y a tu amor, sin alma ¿sabes? Porque su alma se la llevó Valdivia a las estrellas, un montón de carne desflorada, de carne triste... ¡a mí!” (360).

Como conclusión, vamos a recordar que lo aprendido de Mallarmé lo había expresado así Darío:

Tu sexo fundiste con mi sexo fuerte
Yo triste, tú triste...
¿No has de ser entonces
mía hasta la muerte? (“Mía”, *Prosas profanas*)

Los ecos de Darío

Y he sonreído, Mía, y no puedo menos de sonreír aún al pensar en que tú, toda alma, toda flor, sueños y románticos como una Duquesita de Darío, persiguiendo libélulas de vagas ilusiones, o bien como un poeta enamorado, bajo el rosa perla de un claro de luna (223).

La presencia de Darío es imposible no sentirla durante la lectura de *Bancarrota de almas*, no solo porque se le mencione en algún momento (“estoy *pálido y enclenque*, como diría de sus cristos el excelso Darío”, 186) sino porque hay ecos de su expresión y motivos por toda la novela, tanto en el discurso del narrador como en el de los personajes.

Azul... “El rey burgués”, “El sátiro sordo”, y “El velo de la reina Mab”. “La muerte de la emperatriz de la China”

“El rey burgués”; “el sátiro sordo”

Valdivia, el Rubén filipino, declara su (po)ética de esta forma:

Yo amo todo lo que ella [la Vida] ama; el ruido de los truenos, la copa de las flores, los pies de las mujeres, lo mismo el olor de un bote de esencia que el perfume colosal y acre de las selvas, lo mismo el beso de los labios, que el grito de dolor de las entrañas; amo las noches de luna y el estrépito de los clarines; el fuego del volcán y la luz de las estrellas; el rugido del viento, las hojas que caen al polvo como lágrimas [...] (139).

Y como clímax amoroso promete a Ángela un himno; que no placeres ni emociones, sino un “himno triunfal”: “dime que sí y mañana tu poeta te besará en los labios, tus párpados, tu frente y acariciará tu espíritu y tus carnes cantando a tus oídos *el gran himno triunfal del bello amor, del buen amor*” (216).

La necesidad de amor físico, de un alma encarnada, de “un larguísimo abrazo de pasión que unifique nuestras almas, que pegue nuestros cuerpos y confunda nuestras sangres, nuestras vidas” (216) vuelve una y otra vez en el discurso de Valdivia pero nos quedamos ahora con el “gran himno triunfal del bello amor, del buen amor”, porque tiene las mismas notas que cantan los poetas de los cuentos de *Azul...*; pensamos especialmente en el poeta hambriento de “El rey burgués” y en Orfeo en “El sátiro sordo”:

Señor, ha tiempo que yo canto el verbo del porvenir. He tendido mis alas al huracán; he nacido en el tiempo de la aurora; busco la raza escogida que debe esperar con el *himno* en la boca y la lira en la mano, la salida del gran sol. [...] Porque viene el tiempo de las grandes revoluciones, con un Mesías todo luz, todo agitación y potencia, y es preciso recibir su espíritu con el poema que sea *arco triunfal*, de estrofas de acero, de estrofas de oro, de estrofas de amor (“El rey burgués”, *Azul...* 48-49)²³.

Subrayemos que el himno que reciba el triunfo del ideal debe estar hecho, en última instancia, “de estrofas de amor”. En “El sátiro sordo” se desdibuja el ideal y el sentido erótico es más acusado, pero reconocemos el mismo himno:

Por aquellos días, Orfeo, poeta, espantado de la miseria de los hombres, pensó huir a los bosques, donde los troncos y las piedras le comprenderían y escucharían con éxtasis, y donde él pondría temblor de armonía y fuego de amor y de vida al sonar de su instrumento.

Cuando Orfeo tañía su lira había sonrisa en el rostro apolíneo. Deméter sentía gozo. Las palmeras derramaban su polen, las semillas reventaban, los leones movían blandamente su crin. Una vez voló un clavel de su tallo hecho mariposa roja, y una estrella descendió fascinada y se tornó en flor de lis.

¿Qué selva mejor que la del sátiro a quien él encantaría, donde sería tenido como un semidiós; selva toda alegría y danza, belleza y lujuria; donde ninfas y bacantes eran siempre acariciadas y siempre vírgenes; donde había uvas y rosas y ruido de sistros, y donde el rey caprípede bailaba delante de sus faunos, beodo y haciendo gestos como Sileno? (“El sátiro sordo”, *Azul...* 54)

La enumeración de los regalos de boda de Margarita que se da inmediatamente después de la descripción del magnífico y exquisito regalo de Valdivia recuerda las posesiones del rey burgués de Darío: está elaborada con la misma intención: mostrar la acumulación de objetos suntuarios característica de la clase burguesa: “De poncheras y bibelots una barbaridad; había también varios estuches de joyas, cajas de perfumes, pañuelitos y mil baratijas [... Balmori añade:] “andaba todo revuelto sobre el mármol, descuidado, llenándose de polvo” (158), dando a entender que los recién casados tenían cosas mejores que hacer que ocuparse de los regalos. Este detalle acerca el texto a otro cuento de *Azul...*, “La muerte de la emperatriz de la China”, evocando la boda de Recaredo y Suzette, una pareja que no presta atención a los aspectos superfluos de su enlace y deja ver que el amor es la verdadera fiesta.

Así se deja ver en las páginas siguientes de la novela de Balmori, en las que, aun teniendo la visita de Ángela, los recién casados no dejan de aparearse: “Y como la felicidad es egoísta, la dejaron sola, cerca de un cuarto de hora, luego de comer; después salió Margarita, despeinada, hipando, como de una larga carrera que hubiera hecho bajo el sol en plena siesta!” (159). No obstante, el tema del matrimonio de las almas y los cuerpos al margen de la

iglesia y la sociedad lo recrea plenamente Balmori en la pareja de Ángela y Valdivia:

¡Casarse! Casados ya estaban. Lo que tenían que hacer era vivir juntos, no separarse nunca, dar él un nombre al niño que viniera y darle ella a él su vida toda.

¡Casarse! ¡Qué historia aquella del vestido y las blancas flores! ¡Que historia de latín y arras y bendiciones! Ella había ido al amado vestida de sus carnes de amor, bajo el velo de sus cabellos, con las flores de sus senos. Y la epístola la cantaron las olas, las arras se las pusieron ellos, en besos, y bendijo las nupcias, riendo luz, la luna (273)²⁴.

“La muerte de la emperatriz de la China”

También se reconoce la misma fuente en la ensoñación de boda que Ventura propone a Ángela:

nada de fiestas ni jaleos como en esta de Margarita; nuestra boda, se hará en silencio, quietamente; una madrugada a la Iglesia; luego el tren, a la hacienda, y en la hacienda tú y yo entre tierras y cielos y flores y aires. Amigos, las estrellas; amigos, los surcos por donde va el arado temblando a compás del *karabaw* brillante al sol; y para corte tuya, de tus reinos de amor y gloria, las siestas de la selva, las bellas siestas cantadas por el divino poeta Apóstol, donde a la sombra del cañaveral murmurador se mezca tu *hamaka* mecida por las auras, incensada por las flores (126).

Queda patente que Balmori suscribe el ideal de relación amorosa planteado por este relato y también los modos de representarla:

Cuando los dos amados estaban juntos, se arreglaban uno al otro el cabello. “Canta”, decía él. Y ella cantaba lentamente; [...] Porque el Amor ¡oh jóvenes llenos de sangre y de sueños! pone un azul cristal ante los ojos y da infinitas alegrías.

¡Cómo se amaban! Él la contemplaba sobre las estrellas de Dios; *su amor recorría toda la escala de la pasión*²⁵, y era ya contenido, ya tempestuoso en su querer, a veces casi *místico*.²⁶ En ocasiones *dijérase*²⁷ aquel artista un teósofo

que veía en la amada mujer algo supremo y extrahumano como la Ayesha, de Rider Hagdard” (Darío, *Azul...*130).

Balmori aprovecha muy bien este cuento, en nuestra opinión el mejor de Darío, como inspiración para su novela. El asunto de la teosofía, por ejemplo. En el cuento, Recaredo es presentado como amante de las fuerzas extrañas: “dijérase aquel artista un teósofo” (Darío, *Azul...*130) que colecciona “creaciones góticas, quizás inspiradas por el ocultismo” (Darío, *Azul...*131) y “máscaras feas y misteriosas, como las caras de los sueños hípnicos” (Darío, *Azul...*131). Suzette aborrece su “casa de brujo” (Darío, *Azul...*131), es decir, el taller lleno de chinerías y japonerías. El regalo de Robert también viene de Oriente y cargado con poderes mágicos. Sabemos que la carta que acompaña a la Emperatriz de la China viene dirigida a Recaredo, pero su destinataria es Suzette. Es una venganza en forma de broma por haberse casado con el escultor, por haber roto un probable trío, y es una despedida. La Emperatriz de la China es un amuleto encantado que fascina a Recaredo no solo por su perfección artística; además lo hipnotiza: “Era cosa de risa, cuando el artista soñador, después de dejar la pipa y los cinceles, llegaba frente a la emperatriz, con las manos cruzadas, a hacer zalemas. Una, dos, diez, veinte veces la visitaba” (Darío, *Azul...* 134). De modo que Suzette tendrá que destruir a la emperatriz para recuperar a su marido, ese era el reto oculto de Robert²⁸.

En la novela de Balmori, el personaje de Valdivia tiene atributos paranormales, véase la escena en que Ángela lo recibe y se comporta como si estuviera bajo hipnosis: “luego se sentó ante el piano, de espaldas al teclado, sin mirar a Valdivia. / -Toca, dijo él desde su asiento. / Le obedeció callada, pasiva [...] Fue hacia él; le obedecía, le obedecía supeditada a su voluntad, como una hipnotizada a la voz del mago” (146). Por si no hubiéramos considerado la posibilidad de un Valdivia maestro de las fuerzas ocultas, tenemos este deseo de Ángela: “¡Oh, si ella fuera theosofista! Si ella poseyera la ciencia de la voluntad dominadora, como el cruel de sus amores se le postraría, adorándola, como a Ídolo” (103). Justamente Valdivia se muestra así: una voluntad dominadora, idolatrado por la muchacha.

Otro rasgo que nos ha parecido destacable para este análisis intertextual es la proyección del personaje de Suzette en Ángela. Suzette se presenta en el cuento de Darío como un “delicioso pájaro alegre de ojos negros y boca roja” (Darío, *Azul...* 128). Le dice Valdivia a Ángela: “Me gusta, más aún, me embriaga oírte hablar, escuchar tu boquita cantadora como un pájaro” (214). La pareja dariana se complementa artísticamente: “Suzette, Recaredo, la boca que emergía el cántico, y el golpe del cincel” (Darío, *Azul...* 129); la pareja filipina también: “Leía ella, mientras él iba rimando” (171).

El tratamiento de las respectivas protagonistas femeninas, Suzette y Ángela, se hace a través de una estética rococó, presentando a la mujer como un objeto delicado y pequeño: “Delicada y fina como una joya humana, vivía aquella muchachita de carne rosada en la pequeña casa que tenía un saloncito con los tapices de color azul desfalleciente. Era su estuche” (Darío, *Azul...* 128); “¿Qué tendrá mi mujercita?” (Darío, *Azul...*135), se pregunta Recaredo y “¿Qué estará pensando mi linda mujercita?” (214), “mi preciosa mujercita” (244) se pregunta Valdivia.

En la evocación de Ángela encontramos diminutivos aludiendo a partes del cuerpo consideradas eróticas como “taloncitos” remitiendo a pies desnudos (16) y “dientecitos” (28) significando la boca entreabierta, “manita/s” (185, 189), “carita” (202, 241), incluso “almita” (245); el diminutivo del nombre de la protagonista es frecuente: Angeling es una muñeca (212, 204) o juguete (“te quiero como una niña a su muñeca” 216; 219, etc.). La infantilización del personaje es continua: “mi pequeña y dulcísima esposa” (203); “mi chiquilla idolatrada” (204); “mi chiquilla” (205, 210, 215); “no estoy enfadado con la chiquilla de mi vida; no estoy enfadado porque sé que lo que a mí me disgusta lo haces por inocencia, por demasiado niña” (230); “una niña muy guapa que me quiere mucho [...], Angelita” (232), etc. “Mira, chiquilla, dime la verdad”, le diría Recaredo a Suzette en el cuento de Darío (*Azul...* 136).

La presencia de este texto en el de Balmori va más allá del diminutivo y el tratamiento rococó de las mujeres: “¡Adiós, emperatriz!” se despide de Ángela Valdivia en una de sus cartas (219) y en otra vuelve a remitir al cuento de Darío con “tus ojos de princesa china” (222). En la visita al gabinete del doctor San José, Ángela y Margarita, pasan “la yema del dedo sobre los

bruñidos aceros” (162) en un gesto que recuerda al de Suzette cuando “pasaba sus dedos de rosa sobre los ojos de aquella graciosa soberana”²⁹. Comparten la misma actitud de atreverse a tocar el misterio en un espacio dominado por fuerzas que no son las cotidianas.

“El velo de la reina Mab”

Cuando leemos en la novela de Balmori “coronemos de flores nuestras frentes, bebamos el buen vino de la vida en *la copa azul de la ilusión*” (204) es imposible no pensar en el velo azul de la reina Mab que envuelve a los cuatro bohemios, “el velo de los sueños, de los dulces sueños que hacen ver la vida de color de rosa” (*Azul...75-76*) ; a la reina Mab remite también Valdivia hablando del cumplimiento de sus deseos: “Aquella promesa que te hice de soñar largamente contigo, parece que la escuchó *el hada de los sueños*” (213). Por si no quedaba clara la referencia, Ángela la retoma correspondiendo a Valdivia:

Soñó con él un sueño azul de venturanza; y sonreía soñando, soñando...

¡Ah, las flores que caen sobre los párpados de una novia dormida! ¡Ah, los poetas que saben poner un amor en el alma y un sueño azul en los ojos de una mujer! (263)

Prosas profanas y otros poemas.

“Era un aire suave” y la “Sonatina”

Nos ha parecido muy obvio el parentesco de la risa de Ángela (28-29) con la de “la divina Eulalia” (“Era un aire suave”, *Prosas profanas*) de Darío; con más evidencia desde la mirada de Ventura celoso, que parece estar recitando el poema: “-Ríe, ríe, ríe, murmuró” (94)³⁰. Y lleva razón Ventura porque la Ángela que se relaciona con Valdivia es la que ríe y la que toca al piano “con toda el alma, como en suspiros el vals de la *Bohème*” excitada por unas flores que le evocan a Valdivia; y nada tiene que ver con la que le recomienda al primer novio: “Come y duerme bien; y sobre todo estudia; ¿para qué tantas novelas? No me gustan los hombres sin carrera” (52). Ángela se transforma en la divina Eulalia solo bajo el efecto modernista de su amado poeta.

El poema que Valdivia publica en el periódico (“Lira filipina.- Pasión.- Para Ángela Limo”) aplica al ritmo endecasílabo de un texto mediocrementemente romántico una serie de guiños darianos, moviendo a complicidad a los lectores la rima consonante entre pupilas e hipsipilas (eco de la “Sonatina”, *Prosas Profanas*, 1896)³¹; encantadas y hadas; o nocturno y taciturno (“Ama tu ritmo”, Las ánforas de Epicuro, *Prosas profanas y otros poemas*, 1901)³².

Cuando Valdivia le dice a Ángela: “De mis labios vuela a ti un beso de amor” (51) está citando el final de la “Sonatina”, apropiándose del lugar del “feliz caballero que te adora sin verte / y que llega [en caballo con alas] de lejos vencedor de la muerte / a encenderte los labios con su beso de amor”); y en otro momento la pone a ella en el lugar de la princesa: “oye tú, princesa; yo; quisiera volar de nuevo volar a ti esta noche, volar a ti con las alas y los brazos abiertos [...] ¡Las alas del amor!” (218). Que llame a Ángela “su visión adoradísima” (245) evoca otro verso de la “Sonatina”: “oh visión adorada de oro, rosa y marfil”; y su despedida así: “hasta mañana, princesa de mis sueños de rosa” (217) encuentra esta concordancia en el poema de Darío: “¡ay! la pobre princesa de la boca de rosa”. No hemos terminado. La escena en que

la vieja Petra se sentó a los pies del lecho, sobre la alfombra roja que cubría el suelo. Miraba a Ángela, su niña tan bonita, tan dalaga; y pensaba en sus bodas con un príncipe, haciéndose la ilusión de que ella serviría también de *yaya* a los niños de su niña y los dormiría, como a ella, cantando *kundimans* del tiempo de sus amores (96)

evoca la “Sonatina” también, puesta en abismo, cantada en versión tagala y desde la segunda persona (“¿Qué tendrá la princesa?” se vuelve “¿qué tienes?” y lo que tiene es tristeza):

“Pero sus labios se amorataban, se extinguía la dulzura de sus ojazos soñadores, y sus mejillas se anemiaban como rosas de tisis.

¿Qué tienes, gloria de mis cabellos de plata?” preguntaba la abuela parlanchina y mimosa. “¿Qué tienes, novia de las flores?” le decían sus amigas, las otras zagalas.

¿Qué tienes, rayo de sol?” murmuraban los mancebos de la playa.

“Pero ella estaba enferma y a todas las preguntas de su pecho respondía con un suspiro muy hondo, muy triste” (97).

Más adelante, el relato del ama se hace más explícitamente dariano; después de un recuerdo a los nocturnos de José Asunción Silva³³, vuelve a calcar de la “Sonatina”, ahora el “ya no quiere”³⁴:

“Ya no quería los mimos de la abuela, ni las matas de flores, ni las mariposas de rosa y las mariposas de oro.

“Ya no tenía encanto el jardín de enramadas y perfumes amigos. [...] “¿Qué tendría la novia de las flores?” (97).

Este relato, sin embargo, se permite extender el asunto de la “Sonatina” introduciendo la visita de un médico, “un viejo doctor, que era un doctor muy bueno” para mostrar el fracaso de la ciencia en los males del alma. “Él reconoció a la virgen; con sus manos velludas palpó el cuerpecito estremecido y tembloroso de carnes de ámbar y carnes de cera” (98)³⁵. Pero el doctor se convierte inmediatamente en el poeta que en el poema “La anciana” de Darío recibe de una bruja/hada una enseñanza fundamental (“En esos secos pétalos hay más sabiduría / que la que darte pueda tu sabia biblioteca Darío, Las ánforas de Epicuro, *Prosas profanas y otros poemas*): “¿No sabe Vd. qué tiene? ¿No puede usted sanar a la niña, cuando sabe Vd, tanto y ha llenado de nieve su cabeza sobre los libros que lo enseñan todo?” (98); y aclara: “La niña no está enferma ni del corazón, ni del pecho, ni del pulso ni de los ojos; la niña está enferma de fantasías” (99). El relato regresa a la sonatina: la vieja lleva a la niña al mar, donde “cancionaban las aguas su canción azul” (99) y allí se produce la ensoñación wagneriana: “Sobre un cisne muy blanco y muy bello venía el príncipe del País de las Rosas” que da su beso de amor a la joven (100). La moraleja cierra el cuento de Petra a Ángela: “todas las niñas os enfermáis hasta que viene el príncipe del sueño que os dice que os ama y os besa en la boca” (101). Un príncipe que, como dice la vieja Petra, “vendrá feliz de poder gozar de tu hermosura, y yo adormiré al nene de tus entrañas, al hijo de tu sangre, cantándole como a ti, los bellos kundimans de mis días

de amores” (101). Escuchemos un último eco de la sonatina: “Hablaban por los ojos [...] donde princesas las almas se asomaban perfumándose en mutua floración” (137).

Despedida

Jesús Balmori escribió su primera novela bajo la fascinación juvenil de un fenómeno todavía vigente en su tiempo que conocemos como modernismo hispanoamericano; y su absorción de la poética de Darío fue más allá de los préstamos léxicos, los galicismos y un estilo expresivo.

Balmori escuchó la noticia que el profeta nicaragüense traía en su obra (*Azul...*, *Los raros*, *Prosas Profanas* y *otros poemas*) y la puso en filipino: el arielismo era también asiático, entonces la libertad, el arte, la poesía y el eros pertenecían al modernismo y su carácter ante todo era hispánico, por lo que quiso cifrar en un personaje el espíritu decadente y pintar un cuadro de la causa hispánica en Filipinas. Tenemos motivos para pensar que inicialmente ese personaje iba a ser Ventura, que “bajo la lámpara eléctrica leía vagamente el *Azul...* de Darío” (20), pero sus lecturas naturalistas lo desviaron y apareció el héroe d’annunziano que es Valdivia, dandy y bohemio a la vez, filipino y cosmopolita, refinado y gorrón, trovador y putero, donjuanesco y religioso, repentinamente tísico, necesariamente suicida, y padre póstumo pero al final no.

Balmori, en su aspiración a adherirse a un modernismo total, educado en el romanticismo sentimental, conquistado a su pesar por la narración realista y naturalista, construye un personaje grandilocuente y obsoleto en un relato que el paso de la historia ha vuelto insufrible. Como obra de arte, hay que reconocer que *Bancarrota de almas* es una novela poco valiosa; el canon en que podría inscribirse su estética es de los que caducan. Como testimonio de una época, en cambio, creemos que es un documento imprescindible para el estudio de la historia de la literatura en español y un registro fascinante de la presencia de Rubén Darío en las letras asiáticas.

Notas

1. Recordemos que Darío se declaraba romántico todavía en 1907 (en “La canción de los pinos”, *El canto errante*), un año antes de escribirse *Bancarrota de almas*:

Románticos somos... ¿Quién que Es, no es romántico?

Aquel que no sienta ni amor ni dolor,
aquel que no sepa de beso y de cántico,
que se ahorque de un pino: será lo mejor...

Yo. no. Yo persisto. Pretéritas normas
confirman mi anhelo, mi ser. mi existir.
¡Yo soy el amante de ensueños y formas
que viene de lejos y va al porvenir!

2. Queda pendiente de publicación, por falta de lugar ahora, un estudio preliminar sobre cómo Balmori trabaja el género de la novela sentimental romántica para llevarlo al tiempo del modernismo. Ese estudio podría en un futuro servir para enmarcar y complementar nuestro planteamiento.
3. “[Retana] advierte la eclosión de una poesía de tintes patrióticos durante la década de ocupación estadounidense representada por José Palma (1876- 1903), autor del himno nacional filipino, y Cecilio Apóstol (1877- 1938). Sin embargo, tanto de este último como de Fernando María Guerrero (1873-1929), Jesús Balmori (1887-1948), Manuel Bernabé (1890-1960), Vicente Peláez y Pacífico Victoriano reprueba su viraje hacia el Modernismo, traído por “esos calamitosos hispanoamericanos degenerados en París que, exentos de corazón, componen con el cerebro” (1909, p. 9). [...] Incapaz de apreciar los valores de la nueva poesía, lamenta que “lo que triunfa es lo indeciso, lo fantástico, lo falsamente tristón, lo bohemio... Lo que triunfa es la deslocalización de la poesía filipina” (p. 35). [...] Retana, en fin, temía que la falta de compromiso de la poesía acabaría contribuyendo a la deshispanización del archipiélago. No entendió que los autores filipinos preferían no realizar reivindicaciones políticas por medio del género lírico, sino mediante artículos de opinión y protesta en la prensa” (Mojarro 653-654).
4. “El Modernismo en Filipinas adquirirá una personalidad propia que se traducirá en la idealización de la filipinidad. A través de la creación de una tópica (TOJTOL) filipina, se dará respuesta a la estética modernista a la vez que al compromiso nacionalista. Este será el principal logro artístico de la obra de Jesús Balmori (1886-1948): transformar elementos modernistas para crear una cosmovisión filipina capaz de servir como alegato nacionalista” (Donoso Jiménez en Balmori, *Los pájaros*, XIII).

5. Teniendo en cuenta que Balmori fue autor también de poesía satírica, en la que el humor orientaba las críticas a la forma norteamericana de gobernar y a la actitud de los filipinos, sobre todo de los filipinos americanizados. Balmori firmaba estos poemas satíricos bajo el pseudónimo “Batikuling”. Quizá en este hecho podríamos ver su deseo de diferenciar su poesía lírica (firmada como Balmori) de aquella con contenido político y de opinión (firmada como Batikuling). Los poemas se publicaban en periódicos, particularmente en *La Vanguardia*, y fueron recogidos luego en *El Libro de Mis Vidas Manileñas* (1928).
6. Por comodidad de los lectores de este artículo, las citas de *Bancarrota de almas* se indicarán solamente con el número de página y se indicarán siempre las otras fuentes bibliográficas para evitar confusión en las concordancias. El texto de la novela está lleno de erratas. Las hemos corregido y la ortografía la presentamos actualizada.
7. Son todos escritores filipinos en lengua española admirados por el joven Balmori (nacido en 1887, firma esta su primera novela con 21 años y la publica con 24): Rafael del Pan (1863-1915) fue editor de *La Oceanía española*, sus escritos y su trayectoria política destacaron por su militancia nacionalista; Fernando María Guerrero (1873-1929), además de director de *El Renacimiento*, publicación con resonancia en la novela de Balmori, es uno de los poetas en lengua hispánica más apreciados junto con Cecilio Apóstol (1877-1938); Teodoro Kalaw (1884-1940) también dirigió el periódico *El Renacimiento* y sus escritos están en la misma onda nacional que los de los demás autores mencionados. Podríamos preguntarnos si estos amigos en letras y política, marcados por el modernismo dariano y de ideología nacionalista en sus respectivas obras literarias, no habrían servido de fuente de inspiración para los personajes masculinos de la novela: el estudiante de derecho Ventura y el poeta nacional, ambos defensores de una Filipinas hispánica independiente.
8. En la semblanza de Jean Richepin tenemos varios ejemplos: Darío lo retrata como “gran cazador cuyo cuerno asorda el bosque” (*Los raros*, 126) en una recreación de la escena muy próxima a la que leemos en “El rey burgués”: “iba de caza atronando el bosque con sus tropeles” (*Azul...*); dice un poco más adelante “Los jaques de Quevedo no vestían los harapos de púrpura de estos jaques” (*Los raros*, 127) y en “El rey burgués” canta el poeta: “he vestido de modo salvaje y espléndido: mi harapo es de púrpura” (48); “los pobres cantan la canción del oro” en *Los raros* (127) y en *Azul...* tenemos la canción del oro entera (77-82). En Jean Moréas (Darío, *Los raros*, 139-159) tenemos una intertextualidad muy obvia también con otro relato de *Azul...*, “El sátiro sordo” (52-58).
9. Villiers sería el rey poeta que no era el rey burgués del cuento de *Azul...* “Había en una ciudad inmensa y brillante un rey muy poderoso que tenía trajes caprichosos y ricos, esclavas desnudas, blancas y negras; caballos de largas crines, armas flamantísimas, galgos rápidos y monteros con cuernos de bronce, que

llenaban el viento con sus fanfarrias. ¿Era un rey poeta? No, amigo mío: era el Rey Burgués” (Darío, *Azul...* 45)

10. La luz eléctrica representa una modernidad inmediata para Balmori, funciona como indicativo de riqueza y de civilización (20, 24, 35, 71), por ejemplo, en la descripción del cuarto de casada de Margarita: “Preciosa, preciosa la cama y el marco de los espejos y el dibujo de las alfombras y hasta las bombas esmeriladas de las lámparas eléctricas...” (158), mientras que el pueblo visto desde el coche de caballos, “a la luz de sus faroles de gas era tristón” (62). Remitimos a Lili Litvak con “La noche iluminada: de la luz de gas a la electricidad” (Litvak 51-102) para una lectura contextualizada del aspecto pictórico de la luz artificial que tiene *Bancarrota de almas*. La presencia de la luz eléctrica se hace llamativa en la novela y es difícil no atribuirle ya un carácter vanguardista en la escena, a priori sentimental y romántica, en que Ángela sustituye la ausencia de Valdivia por la lectura y besado de sus cartas: “Leía. La bombilla eléctrica bañábele en su luz vagamente azul, como de luna” (182); “La bombilla eléctrica bañábala en su luz vagamente azul como de luna” (247). La luna sustituida por luz eléctrica, vencida por ella, guiñando un ojo a Leopoldo Lugones y su *Lunario sentimental* (1909). En la imagen que acabamos de ver del busto del poeta iluminado por chorros de luz se aprecia ya una sensibilidad futurista (para la relación con Darío sugerimos una relectura de su “Marinetti y el futurismo”, texto, como el *Lunario* de Lugones, de 1909), en Müller-Bergh y Mendonça Teles (153-156).
11. Remitimos para este tema al trabajo de Beatriz Barrera (2015).
12. Es especialmente llamativo el discurso antiamericano sobre el feminismo (324-328) y el lugar que ocupan las mujeres en el imaginario filipino tradicional: “De aquí a algunos años tendremos que buscar esposas en Filadelfia; nuestras mujeres no querrán casarse ni a tiros, soñando con ser presidentas de la República”, dice el tío Alejandro (325); y el lugar que les concede el independentismo:

“No todas, tío: las hay que estudian por aumentar a los encantos físicos el nuevo de una carrera académica, y se emplean algunas para ganarse honradamente la vida, para tener qué comer las pobres y mantener a sus padres las que no tienen hombres en la familia; [...] ellas pueden ser excelentes esposas y madres de familia, siendo también fieles mantenedoras del Estado.”

Es decir: el mismo discurso, el del ángel del hogar filipino. La modernidad no alcanza para todos.

13. Francisco Baltazar, conocido como Francisco Balagtas (1788-1862) es aquí emblema de la escritura poética en tagalo.

14. Las sampagas remiten a la obra *Sampaguitas* (1880) de Pedro Paterno (1857-1911). Actualmente el diminutivo ha arraigado hasta el punto de usarse solo “sampaguita”.
15. El personaje es muy importante en la literatura tagala, del género awit, como el *Florante at Laura*, de Balagtas. La burla de Margarita alude a la *Historia famosa ni Bernardo Carpio sa reinong española na anac ni don Sancho Diaz at ni doña Jimena*.
16. Tiene un pseudónimo tagalo: Bayani (“campeón” en español, 74), y un nombre de pila dariano: Augusto es un adjetivo que Darío pone al arte verdadero (“El arte no viste pantalones ni habla en burgués, ni pone los puntos en todas las íes. Él es agosto, tiene mantos de oro, o de llamas, o anda desnudo”, “El rey burgués”, *Azul...* 49).
17. El personaje de San José representa en última instancia al médico moderno tipo de la literatura modernista: sin dejar de ser amable y buen profesional, es incapaz de salvar a los personajes de los males del alma ni de la muerte y aquí tampoco consigue salvar a su amigo Valdivia a pesar de la promesa que le hace a Ángela: “¡No! [...] yo le respondo a V. que no se muere, ¡ca!... se lo aseguro lo salvo yo” [...] Cayó en los brazos de Margarita, convulsa, ahogándose en hipo, de amargura, en tanto el auto volvía a trepidar ruidosamente y se alejaba luego rápido, soplando la bocina” (292). Obsérvese que mientras la dama actualiza la puesta en escena de su desmayo romántico a un cuadro neurótico, más conforme con el nuevo siglo, el médico lucha contra la tisis (contra el suicidio de los bohemios, podemos decir) con la velocidad del auto moderno.
18. Si el genio de la nación lo encarna un poeta, encontramos en *Bancarrota de almas* que el personaje femenino funciona como alegoría de la patria, lo mismo que sucedía en *Noli me tangere*, de José Rizal. Así encontramos en la novela la canción para María Clara (35), la mujer ángel filipina por antonomasia, como espejo en que se mira Angeling: juntos son el mejor emblema de una nación filipina conforme al romanticismo que renuevan los modernistas.
19. Nos referimos no solo a los salones baudelairianos (*Avant la révolution de 48. Le dandy*, Baudelaire 200-261) sino al uso habitual de la écfrasis en los poemas.
20. Subrayemos que Fabián de la Rosa (1869-1937) es un pintor filipino hispano-hablante, contemporáneo de Balmori, aportando la referencia un nuevo gesto tanto de nacionalismo como de modernidad.
21. El crepúsculo también acompaña simbólicamente la despedida de Ángela cuando se marcha casada con Ventura, de modo que la visión del cuadro de una marina crepuscular que deriva en el cuadro intimista del interior de la casa aparece como representación del estado del alma de Ángela, de su crepúsculo personal: “adiós cielo azul rayado de oro y púrpura en el temblor de sus crepúsculos; adiós, mar que acarició en sus aguas su cuerpo virgen [...] adiós, piano que nunca volvería a sentir sobre sus marfiles los dedos de ella dispersando armonías; adiós, cosas

- amigas, almas amigas; ella les abandonaba, se iba de ellas para siempre por un amor que no amaba y una vida que era una muerte” (354).
22. “La chair est triste, hélas ! et j’ai lu tous les livres” es el primer verso del poema “Brise marine”, recogido en *Le parnasse contemporain*, 1866 (Mallarmé, 168).
 23. El eros, o el amor como poesía o música que rige el universo es un concepto heredado de José Martí “¡Arpa soy, salterio soy, / donde vibra el Universo: / Vengo del sol y al sol voy: / Soy el amor: soy el verso!” (*Versos sencillos* XVII, 195). Lástima no podernos extender ahora en el tema. No nos pasa desapercibida la alusión al “buen amor”; sí, vemos que también hay un himno a la carne, ¿cómo no? Pero el eros la incluye. Otra cosa: esa “raza escogida” de que habla Darío la tenemos que relacionar con dos conceptos que nos ayudan con Balmori. Por una parte, la raza de los artistas y por otra la raza “latina”, hispánica y católica frente a los anglosajones protestantes. Que en este discurso vienen a coincidir. Darío buscaba a los hombres de esa raza como destinatarios de su poesía; Balmori también.
 24. El texto de Darío: “-¿Me amas? / -Te amo. ¿Y tú?/ -Con toda el alma. / Hermoso el día dorado, después de lo del cura. Habían ido luego al campo nuevo, a gozar libres del gozo del amor. Murmuraban, allá en sus ventanas de hojas verdes, las campanillas y las violetas silvestres que olían cerca del riachuelo, cuando pasaban los dos amantes, el brazo de él en la cintura de ella, el brazo de ella en la cintura de él, los rojos labios en flor dejando escapar los besos. Después, fue la vuelta a la gran ciudad, al nido lleno de perfume, de juventud y de calor dichoso” (Darío, *Azul...*128-129).
 25. Las correspondencias (de nuevo el Simbolismo) entre música y pintura, entre sonido y color permiten el paralelismo entre la “escala” de Darío y esta frase de Valdivia: “Yo que me precio de artista, no encuentro en el Arte *notas para cantarte, colores para esbozar* tu alma, ni rosas con que aromar tus piesecitos blancos” (216).
 26. Valdivia: “Así te adoro yo; amalgama de misticismo y pecado; a ratos Sta. Teresa y a veces voluptuosa, a golpes de erotismo, como una flor de Verlaine” (222); “Esta pasión sagrada y voluptuosa” (233).
 27. El “dijérase” de Darío también lo adopta Balmori como rasgo de estilo: “dijérase de ella larga flor llena de luciérnagas” (133); “diríanse flores de fulgor, abiertas, volando en el ambiente de un mago jardín primaveral (135-136).
 28. De otro modo no tendría sentido la recomendación: “conserva el obsequio en memoria de tu Robert” (Darío, *Azul...* 133) con que despide la carta.
 29. San José, como Recaredo, duerme largas siestas y aparece “envuelto en colorida bata japonesa” (160) recordando al escultor de Darío con su atuendo orientalista, “su fez rojo de labor” (Darío, *Azul...* 132).
 30. Para una lectura más rica del significado modernista de este “ríe, ríe, ríe” de Balmori, remitimos a la interpretación de Álvaro Salvador del verso original de Darío en su trabajo *Prosas profanas: el misterio de las rosas artificiales* (Salvador

Jofré en García Morales 115- 128; concretamente lo que nos interesa está en 121-123).

31. "Oh quien fuera hipsipila que dejó la crisálida"
32. Escucha la retórica divina
Del pájaro del aire y la nocturna
Irradiación geométrica adivina;
mata la indiferencia taciturna [...]
33. Oímos también la voz de José Asunción Silva aquí. El texto de Silva: "A mi lado lentamente, contra mí ceñida, toda, *muda y pálida* / Como si un presentimiento de amarguras infinitas / hasta el fondo más secreto de tus fibras te agitara / Por la senda florecida que atraviesa la llanura / Caminabas." ("Nocturno", primera versión de 1892, en Silva 34-35); "Un crucifijo pálido, los brazos extendía / y estaba helada y cárdena la boca que fue mía" ("Ronda", 1889, en Silva 30-31). Las concordancias de Balmori: "la pobre niña tenue y *pálida*, de ojazos de ensueños y *labios cárdenos*" (97); cuando Ángela se ofrece a los brazos de Valdivia "*muda y pálida*" (137); y en "las *sendas* por donde vienes *pálida*, sumisa a decirte mía" (246). Esta última cita coincide además con un verso de "Dice Mía", de Rubén, de *Prosas profanas*: "Mi pobre alma pálida era una crisálida/ una mariposa de color de rosa".
34. "Ya no quiere el palacio, ni la rueda de plata" en Darío.
35. Tenemos que identificar en esta imagen a las venus anatómicas de cera, adornadas de pelo natural, enjoyadas y erotizadas, que amenizaban el aprendizaje de la anatomía desde el siglo XVIII a los académicos de la medicina. Las manos velludas del viejo médico (fauno, sátiro o centauro) nos perturban.

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Teodoro Kalaw lee a Gómez Carrillo

Hacia la Tierra del Zar (1908),
un ejemplo de crónica modernista filipina

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Resumen

Uno de los más destacados libros de viajes escrito de autor filipino fue *Hacia la Tierra del Zar* (1908), de un joven periodista de Lipa llamado Teodoro Kalaw. La presente investigación traza la afiliación literaria de Kalaw, reseña su trabajo político y cultural en *El Renacimiento*, criticando los abusos del gobierno estadounidense y promoviendo el Modernismo, y demuestra su deseo de imitar la prosa modernista del guatemalteco Gómez Carrillo, cuyos libros de viajes eran muy populares en aquellas fechas. El producto final de Kalaw será, sin embargo, a pesar de sus esfuerzos, muy diferente del propuesto, pues sus preocupaciones políticas acabarán imponiéndose a sus inquietudes estéticas.

Palabras clave

Teodoro M. Kalaw, Modernismo, literatura de viajes, Gómez Carrillo, Rusia, ocupación estadounidense, temprano periodismo filipino.

Abstract

One of the most outstanding travel books ever written by a Filipino was *Hacia la Tierra del Zar* [Towards the land of the Czar] (1908), by a young journalist from Lipa named Teodoro Kalaw. The present research explores the literary ancestry of Kalaw, his political and cultural work in *El Renacimiento*, criticizing the abuses of the U. S. government and promoting Modernismo, and his strong desire to emulate the Modernista prose from Gómez Carrillo, a popular travel writer during those years in the Spanish speaking literary world. The final product, however, will be, despite his efforts, a very different one, where the political tones turned out to overpass his aesthetic affiliation.

Teodoro M. Kalaw started his career as a journalist writing in a short-lived revolutionary publication from his native Lipa: *Columnas Volantes de la Federación Malaya* [Flying Columns from the Malayan Federaton] (1900). As soon as he moved to Manila to study, he begun working in the most important Philippine newspaper during the period of the American occupation, *El Renacimiento* (1901-1910), where he was the director during its last two years of life. Kalaw harshly criticized the government of the US in the Philippines –especially in the anonymous editorials- and also promoted the newest literary trends by giving space to Modernista writers, like Jesús Balmori, and animating literary controversies. At the beginning of 1908, however, he was chosen by Manuel Quezón to accompany him as secretary of the Philippine delegation for an international conference on navigation that was going to take place in St. Petersburg (Russia). This trip allowed him to visit different colonies (Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan) and study the organization of sovereign nations, like Japan and, especially, the pre-revolutionary Russia.

During the whole book, it is quite evident the influence of Gómez Carrillo, a travel writer from Guatemala but well-established in Paris, who was the inspiration of many Modernista writers like Kalaw. Kalaw himself, under the pseudonym Simoun, published an early review of his own book where the similarities between the two authors were highlighted. His admiration for Gómez Carrillo is explicit in his correspondence with his mentor, the poet Fernando María Guerrero, and the very structure of the book resembles that of two travel books: *La Rusia Actual* and *De Marsella a Tokyo*, both published in 1906.

A detailed analysis of Kalaw's book shows, however, that the final result was very different from what he intended in the first place:

1. Kalaw relies more in his own experiences than his wide range of previous readings, making his book more personal and convincing.
2. The prose of Kalaw is an early attempt by a Filipino to imitate the precious and detailed prose of Modernista writers. However, Kalaw never fails in shallow aestheticism. The urge for providing his thoughts and reflections about the lands he was visiting is stronger than his care for an affected writing style.
3. Gómez Carrillo is an assimilated Latin American writer and his will is to be perceived as a European writer. Moreover, he writes for an European audience, supplying in his travel chronicles the exotic stereotypes their readers were expecting. Kalaw, on the contrary, is a Filipino writer from a colonized land: he writes as such and, more importantly, for a Filipino audience. It is his primary aim to let his readers know what is the state of the countries he is visiting, what are the lessons Filipinos can learn from different governments, and what are the measures can be taken in order to improve the political and administrative situation of the Philippines.

The criticism of Russia, where misery was rampant and economic inequality was obscene, is in fact a veiled criticism of the U.S. administration in the Philippines. Therefore, despite his desire to show a travel chronicle resembling those of his literary idol, Kalaw came to offer a more original and authentic literary work, where his affiliation with Modernismo is inadvertently overpassed by his political concerns and his aspiration to improve his motherland.

Keywords

Teodoro M. Kalaw, Modernismo, Travel Literature, Gómez Carrillo, Russia, U. S. occupation, early Philippine journalism

En septiembre de 1908 vio la luz en Manila una novedosa publicación en el precario sistema literario hispanofilipino: un libro de viajes titulado *Hacia la Tierra del Zar*. Su autor, el joven abogado y periodista Teodoro M. Kalaw, tenía entonces 24 años, y su carrera profesional e intelectual, que oscilaba entre lo puramente literario y su pasión por la política –ganaría lo segundo sin abandonar lo primero–, estaba aún por definirse. El libro fue publicitado repetidamente a partir del 29 de septiembre en el diario *El Renacimiento* y fue generosamente reseñado por varios de sus colegas y contemporáneos.¹ La publicación supuso sin duda la culminación de una trayectoria meteórica. Aún en la adolescencia, Teodoro Kalaw se había iniciado en las labores periodísticas con un semanario provincial llamado *Columnas Volantes de la Federación Malaya* (1900).² En 1903 publicó un breve ensayo titulado *El Ideario Político de Mabini*, figura a la que dedicará a lo largo de su vida varios estudios.³ Para entonces, ya trabajaba en *El Renacimiento* (1901-1909), publicación que llegó a dirigir durante sus últimos dos años de vida.⁴ Fue éste con toda seguridad el periódico en español más importante en Filipinas durante los primeros años de ocupación estadounidense hasta su repentino cierre, ocasionado por el conocido caso judicial que se abrió contra un editorial titulado “Aves de Rapiña” (Cano 2011; Kalaw 1947).⁵ La mayoría de los editoriales anónimos, críticas implacables y directas al gobierno estadounidense,⁶ podrían atribuirse, al menos durante sus últimos años, a la pluma de Kalaw.⁷

El Modernismo en *El Renacimiento*

A pesar de su juventud, Teodoro Kalaw fue considerado un referente intelectual del Modernismo filipino por la selecta élite literaria hispanoparlante de Manila. El Modernismo como movimiento literario se inauguró tardíamente en Filipinas con el poemario *Rimas Malayas* (1904), de Jesús Balmori (1887-1948)⁸, cuyo prólogo, firmado por Pepe Musa –pseudónimo de un desconocido autor modernista–, propone implícitamente una adhesión estética y léxica a los presupuestos poéticos rubendarianos:

En tiempo de prosaico positivismo; en un lugar en donde un cúmulo de circunstancias parecía haber esterilizado los gérmenes de un idealismo puro; y en medio de una sociedad que en virtud de esas mismas circunstancias,

se abstiene de contemplar las maravillas de la creación, para escuchar los exigentes gritos del cuerpo; la aparición de un libro de poesías, siquiera sea de volumen reducida, tal vez cause asombro y estrañesa (sic), tal vez produzca una sonrisa desdeñosa.⁹

El propio Kalaw demostró ser durante la primera década del siglo XX un entusiasta defensor de la renovación literaria que proponía el Modernismo y animó decididamente las polémicas literarias desde las páginas de *El Renacimiento*. Así, dio cabida en el número del 3 de octubre de 1908 a un incisivo artículo del abogado conservador Macario Adriático (1869-1918)¹⁰ donde se desgranaban una serie de ideas comunes entre los críticos del Modernismo en España e Hispanoamérica: esto es, que la nueva moda literaria constituía una degeneración del gusto, que de poco podía vanagloriarse una juventud que hacía alarde de pesimismo y melancolía, y que la nueva patria necesitaba hombres fuertes.¹¹ Aunque no hemos hallado una respuesta directa a Adriático, Kalaw dio el visto bueno a un artículo del pintor Fabián de la Rosa (1869-1937) publicado pocos días después, en el que, sin mencionar el Modernismo, acusaba a sus críticos de “eternos ignorantes”, y consideraba el arte contemporáneo un nuevo Renacimiento:

Peregrinos en el templo de la Belleza, los artistas deben, pues, llegar hasta el templo de la Verdad; penetren en él y rindan el más completo tributo a su eterno poder. Así, y sólo así, conseguirán que la poesteridad, y aun la generación presente, en su espontánea admiración y gratitud, depositen en su tumba o en su frente la simbólica corona de laurel.¹²

Que *El Renacimiento* fue un lugar de libre disputa entre los modernistas (Kalaw, Balmori, Bernabé) y los antimodernistas (Adriático, Palma) es un tema que merece estudio aparte. Con no poco frecuencia los involucrados en las polémicas se ocultaban tras pseudónimos, aunque con toda probabilidad fuera conocida la identidad del autor dentro de la selecta sociedad manileña de habla hispana. Un ejemplo bastante significativo de la vitalidad de la poesía modernista en Filipinas fue precisamente la agria polémica en la que se enzarzaron Jesús Balmori y Cecilio Apóstol -quien firmaba como Aristarco- en el que el segundo trató de ridiculizar la poesía del primero.¹³

¡AVE IMPERATOR!

¡Salud, hijo de Creusa, conductor de caballos!
(De caballos con alas, oh querido Rubén)
Yo no puedo contarme entre vuestros vasallos
Pero me futro en vuestro ridículo desdén.

Si no hirieron mis flechas, imperial caballero,
Vuestras carnes de noble, de aristócrata áuriga,
La razón va conmigo; nadie culpe al arquero,
Si tenéis en el alma una triple loriga.

No me quitan el sueño vuestros nobles pegasos;
Nadie tasca sus frenos; nadie corta sus pasos.
Vuestros lauros de gloria no hacen falta a mi frente.

Recorred el espacio con vuestra poesía,
Saturada de un humo de megalomanía;
Pero hablad en cristiano; sed ¡por Dios! más consciente.

ARISTARCO

Jesús Balmori contestó entonces con otro soneto más ofensivo, en el que no faltó el ataque a la virilidad de Cecilio Apóstol:

VAE VICTIS

Yo no creo en vuestra megalanteopogenesia
Pues que sois un eunuco de mis lechos de rey,
Y vuestro canto es de esos misereres de iglesia
Que parecen surgidos de la panza de un buey.

Si nos os quitan el sueño mis alados corceles
Es que estáis opinando o seréis un lirón
Pero en ambos extremos yo sé que mis laureles
Si en nada os hacen falta, os turban la razón.

No diréis que son míseras mis regias recompensas,
(Os ofrendo el topacio mejor de mi tesoro)
pero debo advertiros tristemente a la vez,

que cuando se me antoje vengar vuestras ofensas
silbará por los aires mis látigos de oro
y vuestras excelsa musa caerá bajo mis pies.

El aperturismo de Kalaw como director del periódico al incluir notas de crítica adversa al Modernismo no logró ocultar, sin embargo, las preferencias estéticas del periodista limeño: el diario, sobre todo en su sección literaria de los sábados, tuvo clara predilección por la poesía modernista: el limeño se había prestado ese mismo año a redactar una generosa presentación para el número inaugural de la revista literaria *Domus Aurea* (1908);¹⁴ escribió poco después un epílogo elogioso al primer poemario modernista de Claro M. Recto: *Bajo los Cocoteros* (1911); y pidió a su amigo, el poeta modernista Fernando María Guerrero, las “Líneas Prefaciales” con que abre su libro de viajes. Sin embargo, la prueba más irrefutable de su filiación modernista la constituye precisamente su original crónica de viajes.

La influencia de Gómez Carrillo

Hacia las Tierras del Zar es, superficialmente, el relato de un itinerario pintoresco e inusual. Kalaw emprende, acompañado de Manuel Quezón,¹⁵ un viaje de ida y vuelta a Europa siguiendo una ruta que le llevó por mar de Manila a la Hong Kong británica, y de allí a la isla de Formosa (Keelung y Taipei), colonia entonces de Japón. Continúa hacia Shangai, Japón (Kobe, Osaka y Kyoto) y Vladivostok, desde donde tomará la recién inaugurada ruta del tren transiberiano a Moscú y San Petersburgo. Berlín y París son sus otras paradas europeas. Desde el puerto de Marsella volverá por la ruta usual desde la apertura del Canal de Suez: Port Said, Adén, Colombo, Singapur, Hong Kong y Manila. El propósito del viaje, nunca explicitado en el libro, era asistir, en calidad de secretario de la delegación filipina, al congreso mundial de navegación que iba a tener lugar en San Petersburgo en 1908, congreso al que no llegaron a asistir: llegaron una semana tarde.¹⁶ Sin embargo, bajo la pátina del libro de viajes, cabe señalar, como se argüirá más adelante, una doble intención: por un lado, la elaboración de un libro de arte siguiendo un modelo concreto de éxito: las crónicas modernistas del guatemalteco Enrique Gómez

Carrillo; por otro, criticar la dominación estadounidense del archipiélago y reivindicar –en concordancia con la línea editorial de *El Renacimiento*- la capacidad de los filipinos para el autogobierno.

Si había un autor hispanoamericano cuyas obras podían llegar, merced a su fama y a su apabullante éxito de ventas, a Manila, ése era indudablemente Gómez Carrillo.¹⁷ Instalado en París desde 1891 gracias a una pensión del gobierno de su país, el cronista guatemalteco fue uno de los primeros autores hispanoamericanos en poder satisfacer sus ansias de cosmopolitismo y modernidad. Visitar París se estiló hasta bien entrado el siglo XX como una parada obligatoria en la carrera de cualquier joven artista en busca de reconocimiento: la urbe era un centro cosmopolita e irradiador de nuevas modas y constituía un polo de atracción para quienes iban en busca de la fama. Desde allí desarrolló una prolífica carrera como periodista cultural y dio a conocer al mundo hispano las últimas novedades artísticas y literarias a través de reseñas y colecciones de ensayos como *Sensaciones de Arte* (1893) y *Literatura Extranjera. Estudio Cosmopolita* (1895), que le convirtieron en una figura prominente del modernismo. Gómez Carrillo, que exponía deliberadamente su bohemia vital y sus privilegiadas amistades francesas en los cafés parisinos, llegó a convertirse en menos de una década en el autor de referencia para quien quisiera estar al día en cuestiones de arte, ideas estéticas y literatura. Aunque su fama decayera paulatinamente tras su muerte, “para 1899, Gómez Carrillo era ya en España y en Hispanoamérica el más reputado prosista del modernismo, tanto por sus crónicas como por sus novelas y cuentos” (Feria 2017, 94).

Su fama no hizo más que crecer cuando a partir de 1906 empezó a publicar sus crónicas de viajes. Escritas con suma celeridad –a veces varias en un año-, llenas de clichés y siguiendo la moda del viaje a Oriente tan en boga a lo largo del siglo diecinueve en Francia, Gómez Carrillo satisfacía las demandas de un lector burgués y urbanita, ávido de leer consabidos tópicos sobre tierras exóticas que permitieran confirmar ciertas ideas prevalentes por aquel entonces; explicitaba en estas obras su voluntad de seguir los pasos de reconocidos escritores de viajes como Théophile Gautier, Gérard de Nerval, Gustave Flaubert y, sobre todo, Pierre Loti; en efecto, el cronista

guatemalteco, desde una óptica modernista, se propone en estos textos como observador privilegiado de realidades exóticas, como un vividor con cultura libresca, ávido de novedades y cosmopolitismo, pero, sobre todo, como el epígono literario en español de una larga tradición de ilustres orientalistas respecto a los cuales pretende integrarse plenamente. Gómez Carrillo ilustra, pues, como ningún otro autor hispanoamericano, “el deseo cosmopolita por participar en una literatura mundial” (Ehrlicher, 42).¹⁸

Sus dos primeras obras dentro de este género fueron *La Rusia Actual* (1906) y *De Marsella a Tokio* (1906), obras que Kalaw citará en su propia crónica. La primera de ellas es una sucesión de estampas y observaciones acerca de diferentes aspectos de Rusia: el zar, los aristócratas, las devociones religiosas, algunos personajes relevantes –como el consejero del zar, el conservador Pobedonóstsev, o el revolucionario G. Gapon-, los estudiantes, los obreros, los campesinos, la censura periodística y el Partido Socialista. Gómez Carrillo describe una nación en decadencia, con un zar aislado, a merced de los deseos de la aristocracia y mal aconsejado, con una población fanatizada, ignorante, hambrienta y oprimida por métodos violentos. Rusia es víctima de una élite despiadada e injusta que empuja a las clases bajas a una vida de miseria extrema y desesperanza. Sin embargo, el libro carece de descripciones –tanto de lugares y edificios, como de tipos humanos-, experiencias y anécdotas: en esta obra, el autor está presente en sus juicios y en sus digresiones, pero su saber es puramente libresco y las referencias a los novelistas rusos, en un deliberado despliegue de erudición, son numerosas. En el libro hay, en efecto, muy poco de viaje y casi nada de experiencia personal, y hubiera podido prácticamente ser escrito sin necesidad de haber visitado el país.¹⁹

De Marsella a Tokio, por el contrario, sigue en todo punto una estructura más tradicional: los capítulos se van sucediendo según el trayecto del viaje hasta que llega a Japón, región a la que dedica la mitad del libro. Gómez Carrillo asume en todo momento la voz de un turista burgués en busca de lo diferente, de lo exótico, de la esperada sensualidad oriental (Gaster, 2014) y de la confirmación, en definitiva, de las informaciones proporcionadas por viajeros europeos anteriores como Pièrre Loti o Lafcadio Hearn, aunque se

tome la libertad de disentir en alguna que otra ocasión. El cronista guatemalteco hace ejercicio de francofilia en su visita a Vietnam –elogia Hanoi como un nuevo París- y, en contra de lo argumentado por alguna comentarista (Colombi 1996), no sólo no toma partido por los pueblos subyugados por el colonialismo, sino que elogia constantemente la industriiosidad, el buen hacer y la capacidad civilizadora de las potencias colonizadoras, sobre todo Inglaterra. No se trataba sólo expresar estas ideas con la intención de satisfacer las creencias de sus lectores burgueses (Ehrlicher 2015); Gómez Carrillo manifiesta –por ejemplo, en boca de un vendedor egipcio- la superioridad de las naciones colonizadoras y la necesidad de este proceso para que en el futuro estos pueblos puedan alcanzar el autogobierno.

Los dos primeros libros de crónicas de Gómez Carrillo son, pues, radicalmente diferentes. *La Rusia Actual* es un libro de valor documental, un ejercicio de reporterismo con informaciones novedosas en un momento crítico en la historia de Rusia. La prosa alambicada y preciosista que caracteriza muchas de sus obras está casi ausente; los clichés no se basan en los prejuicios y las expectativas de viajeros orientalistas europeos²⁰ –de hecho, Rusia no había llamado demasiado la atención de estos escritores²¹-, sino que se derivan de la lectura de autores realistas rusos, como Tolstoi o Gogol, que describían la dura existencia de los campesinos, la explotación de los trabajadores industriales y las miserias de la clase funcionarial. Su visión de Rusia está totalmente atravesada por la literatura y deliberadamente ficcionalizada. Escrita para atender una necesidad informativa coyuntural –el mismo título es suficientemente meridiano-, el libro se entiende mejor no tanto como un libro de viajes, sino como un intento de ofrecer unas visiones concretas y fidedignas, aunque deliberadamente trágicas y grotescas, de un país en un momento determinado de su historia. Vicenti lo llama “cinematógrafo de vívidas impresiones” en el prólogo (Gómez Carrillo 1906a: x). Es por ello, quizás, una obra paradójicamente moderna y que ha superado mejor el paso del tiempo, pese a su contenido circunstancial, que *De Marsella a Tokio*, obra de mayor envergadura, pero que apenas puede ser leída hoy como las reflexiones de un turista burgués en busca de consabidos tópicos.

Estas dos obras de Gómez Carrillo -y especialmente *La Rusia Actual*- fueron sin duda las obras que tuvo como referencia Kalaw a la hora de redactar *Hacia la Tierra del Zar*, aunque el resultado final fue, a pesar de sus esfuerzos imitativos, inadvertidamente diferente. Existen numerosas pruebas de la admiración del periodista filipino por el prosista guatemalteco. Confiesa Kalaw en su autobiografía póstuma que Gómez Carrillo, llamado entonces “Príncipe de los Cronistas”, era su autor favorito, y recuerda con placer cómo algunos críticos reseñaron que su obra poseía mucho de su idealismo (Kalaw, 1965: 40). En la primera reseña publicada, escrita en términos excesivamente elogiosos por él mismo bajo el pseudónimo Simouín, se lee:

Porque no hay duda: Kalaw es un lírico vidente. Es un hermano de Gómez Carrillo, el elegante y exquisito elitista, el cosmopolita entusiasta, el psicólogo perspicaz que goza y que llora cuando esculpe. La misma sutileza y sencillez en la factura de la prosa, el mismo deseo de aparecer sincero, el mismo desdén de la simetría armónica en el orden de las frases, la misma profundidad aparentemente superficial. Todo idéntico. ¿Tendrán los dos maestros las mismas almas y los mismos sueños, tendrán el mismo intelecto y la misma concepción sobre la vida y la belleza y el arte? ¿Y por qué no?²²

Pocas cosas podían complacer más al joven Kalaw que se le comparara con el ídolo de su juventud. En carta a su mentor Fernando María Guerrero, fechada el 15 de febrero de 1907, poco antes de iniciar su viaje, Kalaw le informaba de que donde quiera que estuviera, echaba de menos el espíritu encantado del budismo nipón que describe Gómez Carrillo en su última crónica de viajes (Kalaw 1965: 53). En otra carta datada seis días después afirma a su maestro, en un tono deliberadamente afectado, que recuerda la lectura del último libro de su autor favorito, Carrillo, sobre la tierra maravillosa de Yamato (Kalaw 1965, 55). No cabe duda de que se está refiriendo a *De Marsella a Tokio*, obra que mencionará hasta en tres ocasiones en su propia crónica.²³ Esta insistencia en emular a Gómez Carrillo se justifica también por la ausencia de autores filipinos que hubieran podido servirle de referente. En el género de la crónica de viajes, antes que su propia obra, tan sólo había visto la luz los libros del cura tagalo Faustino José Villafranca y del pintor Antonio Luna,²⁴ mientras que *De Filipinas a América: impresiones*

de viaje (1907), de Esteban de la Rama, se publicó mientras Kalaw estaba en Europa.

Peculiaridades de una crónica modernista filipina

La estructura externa de *Hacia la Tierra del Zar* está inspirada claramente en las obras de Gómez Carrillo. *La Rusia Actual* está dedicada a un amigo de París –Geo D. Coen–, *De Marsella a Tokio* la ofrece a Delfina Mitre de Drago,²⁵ mientras que la obra de Kalaw está inevitablemente dedicada a Manuel Quezón, compañero de periplo a quien se vio obligado a abandonar en París, ya que ambos se habían quedado sin dinero. Kalaw, sin embargo, disponía de una pequeña reserva y pudo volver vía Marsella con un billete de segunda clase. Esta dedicatoria no fue bien recibida por algunos colegas del batangueno, pues Quezón era un personaje controvertido y con ambiciones políticas que no caía bien a muchos (Kalaw 1965, 66-67). Sin embargo, fue gracias a él que pudo llevar a cabo la travesía, pues fue Quezón quien lo había seleccionado para acompañarle a pesar de que, como el mismo Kalaw confesó, apenas hablaba inglés. Más importante aún, al menos desde la perspectiva de la legitimidad literaria, era la elección del prologuista, que venía a hacer las funciones de padrino literario. *La Rusia Actual* llevaba un prólogo de Alfredo Vicenti (1850-1916), redactor jefe de *El Liberal*, quien le había acompañado; *De Marsella a Tokio* estaba prologada por Ruben Darío; Kalaw no tuvo demasiadas dudas a la hora de requerir las “Líneas Prologales” a su mentor y amigo Fernando María Guerrero. Lo más llamativo de estas presentaciones de compromiso es que sus tres autores elogian una doble faceta: la difícil síntesis entre el periodismo cultural y la prosa de arte. Así, Vicente declara esta doble mérito de manera visual:

Filigranas de oro, pero también de acero, eran las páginas ligeras, sagradas y aladas que en cualquier parte, en el hotel, en el museo, en el teatro, destilaba su inseparable lápiz-pluma. El observador se ocultaba deliberadamente bajo la capa del artista; mas no por eso dejaba de llenar con vino rancio o con intenso jugo su cincelada copa (Gómez Carrillo 1906a, x).

Ruben Darío, que centra su elogio en la sección del libro dedicada a Japón, afirma por su parte: “Gómez Carrillo [...] cumple con su deber de periodista y con su obligación de artista. [...] Haga ambas cosas –su labor de diarista para el día, y su labor de artista para siempre” (Gómez Carrillo 1906b, xi-xii). Guerrero se refiere precisamente a este prólogo de Ruben Darío para compararlo con Gómez Carrillo (Kalaw 2014, 34), pero sin embargo prefiere enfatizar el aspecto artístico del libro:

Este es el mayor encanto del libro. Tiene la armonía deseada entre la vibración del cerebro y el temblor sentimental del alma, y aún la percepción pura, lo que de suyo sería árido, surge de las hojas del libro como encendida en no sé qué llama de oro y empapada en no sé qué ondas de maravillosa fragancia (Kalaw 2014, 33)

El prólogo de Guerrero, repleto de apelaciones a las emociones y al arte, obvia el despliegue de curiosidad intelectual y, elogiando el arte de su prosa, trata cabalmente de insertar la obra del joven Kalaw dentro de una línea modernista con ilustres precedentes. En efecto, la filiación modernista de su prosa es innegable y supone una renovación literaria frente la prosa decimonónica aún vigente en la primera década del siglo XX, pero sin llegar al colorismo ni a la verbosidad adjetival (Mojarro 16). Aunque a veces se arriesgue con un algún neologismo –“somos las aves santoschocanescas que emigran a lejanos países” (Kalaw 2014, 42)-, y abunde en los tópicos aprendidos de Gómez Carrillo –“por el ambiente perfumado parece oírse un batir de alas de quimera, de ensueños de lotos y de cristantemas” (72), la prosa de Kalaw está caracterizada por cierta tendencia al efectismo: “¿Hay razas destinadas a morir?” (103); “no hay fanatismo sin ignorancia, y ya se sabe que la masa del pueblo ruso duerme en la más negra noche de los tiempos” (181).

Varias similitudes, de carácter más bien superficial, son identificables en las obras de Gómez Carrillo y Kalaw. Los dos salpican sus respectivas crónicas con referencias a sus lecturas, e incluso incluyen largos fragmentos de otros libros para corroborar sus aseveraciones: un rasgo de época muy común. El guatemalteco incluye en *La Rusia Actual* una entrevista a Ilya Rubanovich,²⁶

mientras que el filipino incluye un encuentro con un líder político con ideas afines: el constitucionalista Pavel Milyukov (1859-1943).

Existe, sin embargo, una diferencia fundamental entre los libros de Gómez Carrillo y la crónica, aparentemente modesta, de Teodoro Kalaw. El primero es un escritor reconocido que escribe para satisfacer la curiosidad de un lector burgués. No hay ningún rasgo ni ninguna información a lo largo de sus libros que nos permita colegir que estamos leyendo a un autor centroamericano. Es más, su objetivo es que se le considere como un autor completamente asimilado a Europa: su referente es Francia, nunca América. En Kalaw, por el contrario, estamos ante un autor que escribe como filipino para un público lector filipino sobre temas que debieran interesar a personas preocupadas por el destino de su país. A pesar del encendido elogio de Guerrero, el observador curioso y el analista político prevalecen sobre el artista. El logro de independencia y la crítica de las arbitrariedades del gobierno colonial estadounidense constituyeron el eje ideológico de *El Renacimiento*. El compromiso político de Kalaw con su nación es esencial para entender *Hacia la Tierra del Zar*. De hecho, la labor patriótica del libro ya aparece explicitada someramente en el prólogo cuando menciona “el honor de la Patria y la enseñanza de los conciudadanos” (Kalaw 2014, 37) y en la emocionante dedicatoria de la sección rusa: “Dedicado a los que trabajan por la libertad de Filipinas. Para que sepan que en un gobierno de despotismo y corrupción, las palabras de combate, de censura y de odio, son palabras de verdad y de justicia” (86). Kalaw cree en la función social de literatura y en la importancia de dejar testimonio de los momentos cruciales de la historia de un país para contribuir a su construcción. Es su propia voz la que declara esta idea durante su conversación con Mariano Ponce, ya de vuelta en Hong Kong, cuando se refiere al protagonismo de su compatriota durante la revolución:

-Pero es preciso trabajar mucho, D. Mariano, escribir, escribir... Usted posee los secretos de nuestro Pasado, la historia de nuestros grandes hombres. La generación nueva no los conoce, y crecerá, y progresará, y vivirá, y morirá, ignorando la obra emprendida por los que ya se han ido. La juventud necesita guías, enseñanzas. Y no los encuentra ni en los hombres, que se mueren

pronto, ni en las obras escritas, que no existen. ¡Pobre país! (Kalaw 2014, 233).

La trayectoria de Kalaw en los años sucesivos, con obras como *La masonería en Filipinas* (1920), *La revolución filipina* (1924)²⁷ y los artículos recopilados en *Dietario Espiritual* (1930), prueban que fue un autor consecuente con la idea de escritura como servicio a la nación.

Kalaw y la política colonial

En el caso de *Hacia la Tierra del Zar*, Kalaw estudiará la organización social y administrativa de las tierras que visite con el objetivo de extraer lecciones políticas que puedan aplicarse a su archipiélago. Así, al pasar por Formosa, explica con detalle el subdepartamento de azúcar que el gobierno colonial japonés creó con el fin de hacer de este producto el motor de la economía de la isla. Al pasar por Hong Kong, elogia el liberalismo económico de los ingleses. Y en ambos casos hace, como el francófilo Gómez Carrillo, una defensa del colonialismo. Lo que pudiera parecer en principio contradictorio, no lo es si tenemos en cuenta dos cuestiones de capital importancia: en primer lugar, Kalaw se considera –y considera a los filipinos– como un enclave de la cultura occidental en Oriente. Habla como occidental. Sus simpatías no se dirigen hacia lo asiático, por quienes no muestra un atisbo de identificación, sino a lo europeo. En segundo lugar, su ferviente defensa del derecho al autogobierno del pueblo filipino no se deriva de una crítica frontal al colonialismo, sino de la convicción, expresada explícitamente, de que existen pueblos inferiores y superiores, y de que los segundos deben civilizar a los primeros, condición que no se cumple en Filipinas. Kalaw, pues, entiende que los estadounidenses cometen una injusticia flagrante con los filipinos, pues no han demostrado en ningún momento que su cultura sea superior. En este sentido, son ejemplares las cartas que el corresponsal de *El Renacimiento* Rafael Corpus envió desde Estados Unidos, después recopiladas bajo el título *Fuera de Filipinas* (1908),²⁸ donde, en un ejercicio de tardío arielismo, se critican inmisericordemente las costumbres de los norteamericanos y se ríe de su estilo de vida –en su opinión– pragmático y poco espi-

ritual. El mismo periódico sostuvo durante varios años una sección titulada “Política Colonial”, siempre firmada por el abogado y profesor Mariano P. Leuterio, donde se afirmaba que existían colonos embrutecedores –poniendo de ejemplo a los holandeses en Java-, y colonos civilizadores, como Inglaterra en India o Francia en Indochina.²⁹ Tanto en Formosa como en Hong Kong, son los chinos quienes padecen el colonialismo japonés e inglés, dominación que queda justificada por su calidad de raza inferior. La sinofobia de Kalaw –recordemos que en Manila vivía, desde tiempos de Legazpi, una próspera y extensa comunidad de mercaderes chinos- es uno de los aspectos más llamativos de su crónica. Los denomina “manchas, negras, sucias, ululantes” (45); alerta de que “esos que gritan con grito sonoro” y “gesticulan grotescamente” constituyen “el peligro amarillo” (50); afirma que “los chinos de Formosa son todavía más atrasados que los Pekín” (59), y lamenta que, a pesar de los grandes esfuerzos de los japoneses, el progreso en Formosa apenas se nota porque “los chinos no se muestran con aptitud suficiente para la asimilación” (60). Y, aunque llegue a lamentarse de la miseria material en la que viven, para Kalaw la dominación extranjera queda en ambos casos completamente justificada. Sin embargo, páginas más adelante criticará el “exclusivismo racial” ruso y las pretensiones de unidad en un extenso territorio habitado por pueblos diversos (Mojarro 2014, 23), dando a entender que los pueblos dominados por los rusos –polacos, judíos, armenios- eran merecedores de autogobierno.

Cuando el libro se adentra en Rusia, parte que constituye más de la mitad del libro, Kalaw demuestra unas dotes de observador que superan en mucho a las del libresco Gómez Carrillo. Descubrimos aquí que el propósito último de Kalaw, bajo el maquillaje del libro de viajes, es comparar el gobierno despiadado del zar para con sus súbditos con el -gobierno de despotismo y corrupción- estadounidense. Todo el periplo por Rusia constituye un documento histórico y literario de primer nivel. Que fuera una de las primeras personas en relatar un viaje de este a oeste en el tren Transiberiano, inaugurado apenas dos años antes, no deja de ser una anécdota con mero valor cronológico. Lo verdaderamente llamativo es la lucidez con la que Kalaw parece antever la revolución rusa.³⁰ En el tren, tras pasar por Manchuria,

pone por boca de un informante ruso el preludio de la revolución y la caída inmediata del zar, quien vive ajeno a la decadencia moral y la corrupción de la clase política.³¹

Los acontecimientos políticos de Rusia constituyen enseñanzas para una nación –la suya– por ser. En este sentido, la crónica del filipino se aleja completamente del reporterismo literario de su ídolo modernista. Kalaw, en el capítulo titulado “Las cuatro fases de la Rusia actual”, analiza las causas de la miseria del pueblo ruso, estudia su sistema político y acaba por concluir que, aunque el zar deba ser derrocado inevitablemente a través de una revolución sangrienta, un país sólo puede erigirse sobre las bases de una constitución y una ley electoral. Su pasión política le hace creer en cierto determinismo, según el cual “el Dios pueblo” acaba por imponerse a las injusticias a las que es sometido. No es difícil hallar entre los editoriales anónimos de *El Renacimiento* afirmaciones de este calibre, y aún más explícitas. Los filipinos, unidos, terminarán por imponerse al corrupto gobierno estadounidense. De ahí su profunda admiración por los polacos, quienes subyugados por rusos, prusos y austríacos, resisten los intentos por ser germanizados y rusificados, y mantienen con firmeza su identidad cultural, asunto de máxima importancia para la élite hispanoparlante de Manila y que fue objeto de encendido debate en las páginas de *El Renacimiento*, pues veían cómo las costumbres filipinas, contra su voluntad, se corrompían irremisiblemente mediante una imparable americanización.

Conclusiones

Llegados a este punto, es posible concluir que, pese al afán imitativo, reverentemente juvenil, de Kalaw con respecto a Gómez Carrillo, y la indudable influencia de sus dos primeros libros de crónicas, *Hacia la Tierra del Zar* fue, quizás inadvertidamente, un libro de naturaleza completamente distinta y más original de lo que planeó. Aunque las similitudes son notables en lo que se refiere al estilo, de indudable sabor modernista, debe advertirse que el autor guatemalteco es un autor asimiliado a Francia y que escribe prosas donde el arte se sobrepone a un contenido estereopitado y más previsible en sus exotismos, en el sentido de que se integraba en una larga relación

de orientalistas europeos. A Kalaw, por el contrario, le anima una curiosidad intelectual auténtica, sin pose, que se manifiesta con mayor intensidad cuanto más se aleja de su modelo. Aun siendo fiel a una estética modernista, *Hacia la Tierra del Zar* quiere mostrar a un público lector filipino cómo son las naciones y los pueblos que visita, pero desde un punto de vista netamente filipino, atendiendo en primer lugar a aquellas informaciones que pudieran ser de utilidad para la formación de su país. Kalaw otorga especial valor a su propia experiencia, por limitada que sea, por encima de sus lecturas previas.³² Es precisamente esta hibridez integral de la crónica, esta pugna entre la prosa de arte y el compromiso, el rasgo definitorio que permea toda la narración y que la convierte en una obra de actualidad y una de las más originales de toda la prosa modernista hispánica.³³

Notes

1. Una recopilación de citas elogiosas de estas reseñas se halla en las páginas finales de su siguiente obra: *Teorías Constitucionales* (1912). Entre los reseñistas, se encontraban nombres como Wenceslao Retana, Vicente Sotto, Manuel Artigas, Manuel Briones, Sixto Roces o Mariano Ponce. Especialmente curiosa es la reseña de Ellong (probablemente Esteban de la Rama, autor del libro de viajes *De Filipinas a América*), quién en el periódico de Ilo-Ilo *El Tiempo* (diciembre de 1908), plasmó una lectura conformista del libro: “los que se quejan de injustas persecuciones, de que son tratados con crueldad, verán que otros pueblos, otras razas más infortunadas que ellos, pese a su civilización que dice ser más avanzada que la nuestra, sufren los efectos de una vida más afrentosa aún” (Kalaw 1912, 157).
2. Contribuyeron en esta publicación con poemas, cuentos y ensayos, Baldomero Roxas, Pedro Laygo, Fidel A. Reyes –que colaboró después en *El Renacimiento*–, Petronio Katigbak, Gregorio Aguilera Solís y Luis Luna Kison. Véase Kalaw 1965: 17; y Bernard 1928, donde se menciona a Teodoro Kalaw en el prólogo como agradecimiento por suministrar el material de su libro, pero no como uno de los integrantes importantes del redacción de este periódico.
3. El folleto volvió a reimprimirse en 1915. Editó sus *Cartas Políticas* en 1930. La edición y estudio de los intelectuales filipinos de la revolución fue un trabajo que desempeñó hasta sus últimos días. Gracias a sus esfuerzos se editaron por primera vez el epistolario de José Rizal (1930) y las *Cartas de la Revolución* de Mariano Ponce (1932).
4. Exceptuando lógicamente, los meses de su viaje.
5. El artículo, obra del batangueño Fidel Reyes, es una crítica feroz a las actuaciones del funcionario colonial Dean Worcester –aunque no se le llega a nombrar-. Fue probablemente la gota que colmó el vaso de la paciencia del gobierno estadounidense. Aparte de los señalados editoriales, desde hacía varios meses existía una sección titulada “Pueblo e Independencia”, donde se publicaban actas simbólicas de independencia que eran votadas en asambleas populares. La del pueblo de Santa Rita (Pampanga), por ejemplo, salió el 27 de junio de 1908.
6. “We fought against caciquism in the provinces, abuses by the Constabulary, rampant banditry everywhere, exploitation by corrupt officials of the ignorance and illiteracy of the people, the slow disappearance of the ‘Filipino Soul’ under the seductive wiles of Anglo-Saxonism, etc. Whenever we found them, we gave publicity to all forms of injustice” (Kalaw 1965, 43).
7. Algunos de los pseudónimos bajo los cuales Teodoro Kalaw publicó artículos fueron Villa, Azur, Nazarín, Silvestre y Simoun. Véase Kalaw 1965: 40-41.

8. Los poemas de Pedro Paterno, José Rizal y José Palma son aún plenamente románticos. Un ejemplo de la persistencia romántica hasta finales del siglo XIX se encuentra en el poemario *Vibraciones* (1899), de Miguel Romero Cabrera, o *Saudades* (1902), de Manuel María Rincón. La recepción del Modernismo en Filipinas es un tema que aún está por ser investigado en profundidad.
9. Cfr.: Pepe Musa. “A quien leyere”, en Jesús Balmori. *Rimas Malayas*. Tip. Lit. “Germania”, 1903, p. 3.
10. A partir de octubre de 1908 empezó a publicar una serie de artículos con el título “¡Masculinismo!” en el que denunciaba cómo uno de los aspectos más dañinos de la americanización cultural de los filipinos fue la llegada del feminismo que, en su opinión, no era más que una aspiración absurda de las mujeres a igualarse en todo a los hombres. En esta línea también estaba Rafael Palma (1874-1939), biógrafo de Rizal, quien publicó el 8 de octubre de 1908 el discurso “¿Se americaniza la mujer filipina?”. Por supuesto, el talante liberal de Kalaw permitió la publicación de las respuestas de alguna feminista. La americanización de Filipinas fue un asunto que preocupó a la élite hispanohablante manileña y fue tratado en las obras dramáticas de Claro M. Recto y las novelas de Jesús Balmori.
11. Tras citar unos versos de Santos Chocano como ejemplo de una actitud vital optimista a imitar, “Mi culto no es el culto de la pasada gente, / ni me es bastante el vuelo solemne del Pegaso: / los trópicos avivan la flama en que me abraso; / y en mis oídos suena la voz de un Continente”, concluye: “Estáis en la flor de la juventud, muy fatigados. Mi desconsuelo no tiene remedio. Creía que la juventud era fuente inagotable de energías. Sin embargo, cultiváis el jardín de Epicuro. [...] Sois incomprensibles, nadie sabe a dónde levantáis vuestro vuelo. ¿Será, porque es verdad, que a vuestra Psiquis le habéis dado dos alas desiguales...! Lo que hay de cierto es que os sentís morir en la plenitud de la vida: vais al “nihilismo literario”. Cfr. Macario Adriático. “Literatos Filipinos. Nihilismo Literario”. *El Renacimiento*, 3 de octubre de 1908, 6. Reproches del mismo calibre se hallan en Retana, 1908.
12. F. de la Rosa. “Divagaciones artísticas. Un pintor filipino en Europa”. *El Renacimiento*, 24 de octubre de 1908. El pintor debía estar respondiendo a otro crítico, pues el artículo está firmado en París el 7 de septiembre.
13. Al parecer, el joven Balmori ganó un concurso de poesía en honor a Rizal al veterano Cecilio Apóstol, y éste reaccionó remedando la poesía de Balmori con “Dardos en Verso”, publicado en el semanario satírico *Limang Kalabaw*. Las respuestas de uno y otro se fueron sucediendo después en *El Renacimiento* durante varias semanas. Véase Unson 1969: 287-288.
14. Reproducido en Mojarro 2014: 11-12.
15. También le acompañan Salvador Roxas, Narciso Alegre y Theo Rogers, fundador en 1907 del periódico *The Philippine Free Press*.

16. Este y otros detalles deliberadamente omitidos de su viaje pueden leerse en su autobiografía póstuma: Kalaw 1965.
17. Los anuncios de la Librería de V. Castillo (sita en calle Escolta 132-134) insertos en *El Renacimiento* informaban de la venta de algunas obras de Gómez Carrillo; entre ellas, *Entre Encajes* (Barcelona, 1905), y *El Alma Encantadora de París* (Barcelona, 1902). Otras obras que se vendían –también en la Librería Manila Filatélica–, imprescindibles para saber los gustos lectores de la época, eran las novelas de Eugène Sue, Victor Hugo, Pérez Escrich, Blasco Ibáñez y Eduardo Zamacois. Entre los autores locales sólo hemos hallado obras de Pedro Paterno y Gregorio Sancianco. También estaban a la venta, a elevados precios, varias obras de Retana; entre ellas: *Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino* (5 vols., 1896-1905), y *Vida y Escritos de José Rizal* (1907), anunciada a bombo platillo como un acontecimiento editorial de importancia para la nación.
18. La mutua envidia que se sentían Ruben Darío y Gómez Carrillo ha sido estudiada pormenorizadamente por López-Calvo, 2000.
19. González Ruano lanza la sospecha de que no pudo haber visitado tantos países y que gran parte de sus crónicas de viajes son en realidad producto de sus lecturas (123-124). También Torres-Pou 2013, 144, nota 2.
20. Como bien explica Tiutyna 2009: 1-2, Rusia era, para los europeos, Oriente, y no sólo desde el punto de vista geográfico.
21. En lengua española, durante todo el siglo 19, la única obra original es *La Rusia Contemporánea* (Madrid, 1881), de Emilio Castelar, obra que Gómez Carrillo debió tomar muy en consideración, pues copia la estructura de capítulos temáticos, aunque la obra del español contiene análisis de geopolítica muy meritorios. En francés se publicaron muchas más, pero entre las que potencialmente pudieron modelar la visión de Rusia del guatemalteco estaban *Voyage en Russie* (1867), de T. Gautier; *Impressions de Voyage en Russie...*, de Alexandre Dumas; *L'Empire des Tsars et les Russes* (1875), de Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, e *Histoire de la Russie* (1849), de A. de Lamartine.
22. Simoún. “Nota Bibliográfica”, *El Renacimiento*, 3 de octubre de 1908, p. 2. Una finalidad indudablemente publicitaria también se percibe en la reseña que desde Hong Kong le envió su buen amigo Mariano Ponce, aunque señaló oportunamente la que quizás sea la mayor debilidad del libro, especialmente en su tercera parte: “Produce verdadera lástima la velocidad vertiginosa con que nos arrastra Kalaw en su viaje, obligándonos a dejar detrás sin ver muchas preciosidades en el camino. Las cintas cinematográficas se suceden con mucha rapidez, dejándonos con ganas”. Cfr. M. Ponce. “Bibliografía”, *El Renacimiento*, 31 de octubre de 1908, p. 5.
23. Este interesante intercambio epistolar es muy útil para conocer las lecturas de los modernistas filipinos y prueba que estaban muy al tanto de todo lo que se publicaba en español. Citan, entre otros, a Charles Baudelaire, Max Nordau,

- Friedrich Nietzsche, Amado Nervo, Francisco Villaespesa, Eduardo Marquina, José María Salaverría, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Santiago Rusiñol, Alphonse Daudet y José María Pereda.
24. Nos estamos refiriendo a *Correspondencias de un viaje desde Filipinas a Europa por Sicilia, Napoles, Roma, Italia, París, Londres y España* (Manila, 1870), y las ácidas *Impresiones* (1891) sobre España, respectivamente.
 25. Mujer de aficiones literarias y traductora. Era la hija del presidente argentino Bartolomé Mitre, fundador del periódico *La Nación*, donde vieron la luz muchos de los artículos de Gómez Carrillo.
 26. Gómez Carrillo no informa de que la entrevista tuvo lugar en París, pues Ilya Rubanovich (1859-1920) estuvo involucrado en el asesinato al zar Alejandro II (1881) y había escapado a Francia poco después.
 27. En el prefacio a esta obra Kalaw manifiesta su preocupación por dejar impresos para las generaciones venideras los testimonios de los momentos históricos cruciales del país: “aún tratándose de un compendio histórico, es natural que en esta obrita existan lagunas por defectos inevitables de información que espero se irán corrigiendo en posteriores ediciones. A este efecto sería de desear que cada provincia o cada general escribiese su monografía respectiva –como ya lo hicieron los generales Ricarte y Concepción, los coroneles, Villamor y Villa, y el doctor Santiago Barcelona-, y todos se publicasen o reuniesen para formar luego nuestra HISTORIA DE LA REVOLUCIÓN con todas sus características y detalles” (Kalaw, 1924: s. p.)
 28. Tanto las cartas como el libro iban firmadas por el pseudónimo Partridge.
 29. M. P. Leuterio. “Página Colonial”, *El Renacimiento*, 10 de octubre de 1908, p. 6.
 30. El propio Kalaw celebrará el acierto de su predicción seis meses antes de que ocurriera en su autobiografía (Kalaw 1965, 72)
 31. Esta caricaturización del zar como personaje aislado e ignorante con respecto a las miserias del pueblo y las revueltas que se traman a sus espaldas está directamente tomada de Gómez Carrillo, quien, en *La Rusia Actual*, llega a decir: “En aquel inmenso imperio del terror, el que más miedo tiene es el monarca” (3).
 32. Kalaw confiesa en su autobiografía (66) que apenas tenía dinero para bajar a los puertos del Índico en los que el barco hacía parada. La falta de experiencias relevantes podría en esta parte de su periplo explicar lo apresurado de la narración que le criticara su amigo Mariano Ponce (vid. nota 22).
 33. Quien mejor supo apreciar las calidades de la obra fue tal vez Wenceslao Retana, quien llegó a afirmar entusiásticamente en su reseña: “De cuanto se ha producido en Manila de unos años acá, la obra de Vd. es lo mejor. [...] Si su libro se hubiera publicado en España, presentado lindamente, se habría vendido y habría tenido ‘buena prensa’. [...] El título es impropio: no da idea del libro. El lector no sabe, por el título, de dónde arranca el autor. [...] Si Vd. no se hubiera precipitado, creo que habría hallado editor en España para su obra, y el éxito de Vd. hubiera

sido resonante en Oriente y Occidente” (Kalaw 1912, 160-161). No hemos dado con el original de esta bella reseña, pero se halla completa en inglés en Kalaw 1965, 67-68.

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Quijote-Sancho y Ariel-Calibán

La introducción de Filipinas en la corriente hispanoamericanista por oposición al ocupador yankee

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Resumen

A partir de 1898 muchos escritores latinoamericanos que anteriormente habían criticado las ambiciones imperialistas de España, cambian su visión y pasan a apreciar la herencia cultural española y vilipendiar al nuevo agente colonizador: los Estados Unidos de América. El antagonismo entre una pretendida alma hispana y el espíritu mercantilista anglosajón de Estados Unidos se representará en Hispanoamérica en la dicotomía shakespeariana Ariel-Calibán. En Filipinas, aprovechando los fastos internacionales en honor del III Centenario de la publicación del Quijote, *El mercantil* organizó una fiesta en la que se intentaba mostrar el poderío cultural hispano en el archipiélago. A raíz de esta celebración aparece por primera vez la oposición Sancho-Quijote en un poema de Pacífico Victoriano para representar el antagonismo entre la comunidad internacional hispanohablante y los sajones. Este artículo plantea por un lado la problemática de que las repúblicas hispanoamericanas se identifiquen con Ariel y los hispanofilipinos con Don Quijote, al defender de este modo prácticas elitistas y antidemócratas y, por otro lado, la aspiración por parte de algunos escritores filipinos de unirse a una comunidad internacional de países hispanohablantes como forma de salvar su propia filipinidad ante la aculturación que se estaba dando en Filipinas bajo el dominio estadounidense.

Palabras clave

Arielismo, Hispanoamericanismo, Literatura Filipina, Quijotismo, Modernismo, Sajonismo

Abstract

Two facts differentiated the celebrations around Cervantes and his work *Don Quixote* in 1905 with reference to former similar events. First, it was the time when the ephemerid was commemorated in a country which had been politically detached from Spain for a few years. Hence, poets in the Philippines started using the character of Don Quixote as a metaphor of the Filipino soul, reflective of a Hispanic heritage linking it symbolically to the Spanish speaking nations in America, whereas Spanish writers were using it as a personification of their country itself. Second, Filipino newspapers followed enthusiastically the celebrations of the same anniversary around the world, with *El mercantil*, the main promotor of the festivity in Manila, publishing daily news about events taking place in Latin America.

In America, the objective of the celebration was also related to the exaltation of a common identity. This festivity constituted, according to Isidro Sepúlveda, one of several “symbolic aspects” with the aim of running to “socialise a nationalist agenda” of the Hispanic American cultural community, projected continentally by “Hispanoamericanist movement from Spain, and Americanist unionism” (Sepúlveda Muñoz 201). The memorial was, therefore, connected to “Arielism”. This movement had been boosted by the events in 1898, and promoted by Hispanic American elites, who had recently moved from criticising Spain’s imperialistic ambitions to an idealization of the Hispanic heritage, and to a rejection of the new imperialistic agent: The United States of America.

Likewise, a similar attitude was largely prevalent among the Spanish-speaking intellectual elite in the Philippines, as seen in the poem that won the literary contest organised during the celebrations in 1905, “Excelsior” by Pacífico Victoriano. It talks about the polarization of society metaphorized by the opposition Quixote-Sancho. Sancho, in this poem, would be characterised

by his concern with money, his ignobility and his corruption, whilst Quixote would represent idealism. Given the Filipino context of the time, the poem can be read as a condemnation of the US occupation. Essentially, the depiction of Sancho is very similar to Rubén Darío's characterization of Caliban (standing for United States nationals) in his discourse of 1898 "El triunfo de Calibán".

This article claims that, the dichotomies Ariel-Caliban in Latin America and Quijote-Sancho in the Philippines were actually very similar, and that both acted for a postcolonial elitism that refused democratic values. The idea builds up on Fernández de Retamar's writings on *Ariel* (José Augusto Rodó, 1900), and especially on its opposed character, Caliban. Caliban's character in Shakespeare's *The tempest* epitomised the mimetic image of the colonised, the indomitable "other". In Ernest Renan's book, Caliban embodied the working people "at its worst light". In *Ariel* by Rodó, Caliban represented the United States of America as a brutal, unsophisticated and always hungry "monster", the same as "Sancho" in some Filipino Poems (ie. "Buen Quijote... ¡Salud!" by Fernando María Guerrero, or "Hubo en tiempo lontano" by Jesús Balmori).

The reason for this representation would be, therefore, that if the United States of America denoted a new imperial threat, they also implied a democratic one: in the Philippines, they were bringing access to public entertainments and public education in English, jeopardising the exclusivity of elitist culture in an elitist language (Spanish in the case of the Philippines). Thus, paradoxically, the condemnation of Sancho Panza, obviously connected to common people, as the embodiment of the United States, was the reaction of the local elites who feared losing their privileges. Manuel Bernabé understood such implications and faced his colleagues of generation with some poems in which he disapproved of Don Quixote as he sided with common people (ie. "La muerte de Don Quijote", "A Andrés Bonifacio" and "Cruzadas" in *Cantos del Trópico*).

Keywords

Arielism, hispanoamericanism, Philippine literature, quixotism, modernism, saxonism

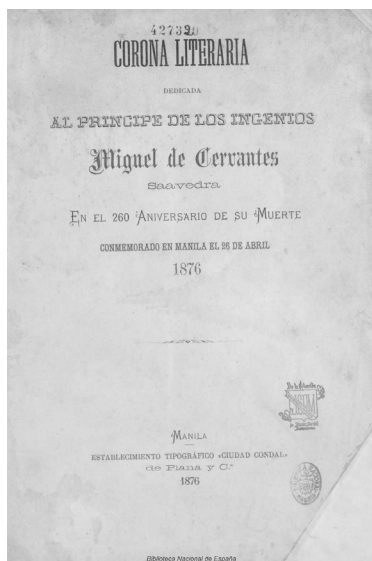


Fig. 1. Corona literaria dedicada al príncipe de los ingenios Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, en el 260 aniversario de su muerte, conmemorado en Manila el 26 de abril, 1876.

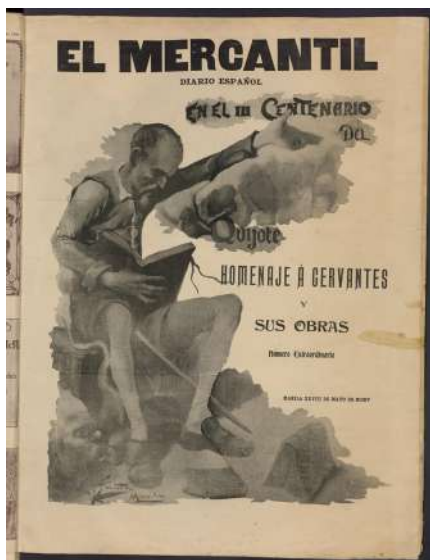
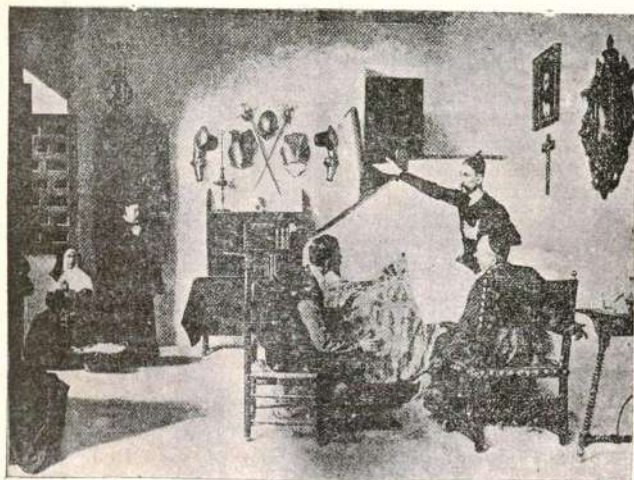


Fig. 2. *El mercantil*. Diario Español en el III centenario del Quijote



Fig. 3. *El mercantil*
(Por Cervantes y su
Quijote), mayo 1905



DON QUIJOTE

(Cap. I.—2.a parte.) Reproducción del cuadro de M. Jadraque existente en el Museo del Prado, de Madrid.

Fig. 4. *El mercantil*. Diario Español en el III centenario del Quijote

En 2005 el Instituto Cervantes de Manila organizó unas para conmemorar el cuarto centenario de la publicación del Quijote. Las charlas fueron encargadas a una serie de escritores filipinos contemporáneos: Sionil José, Vicente García Groyon y Alfred Yuson, y fueron publicadas en un libro, *If A Filipino Writer Reads Don Quijote*. De los tres novelistas, Alfred Yuson afirmaba que no había podido encontrar ni un solo escritor filipino que mencionara a don Quijote. García Groyon y Sionil José, mencionaban a Rizal, quien en 1880 escribió *El consejo de los dioses*, una alegoría dramatizada en la que los dioses debían decidir quién era el mejor escritor del mundo y los candidatos eran Homero, Virgilio y Cervantes. En el debate que se desencadena, Minerva aboga por Cervantes y su Quijote recurriendo a dos tópicos románticos que serían retomados en la Generación del 98: Cervantes como modelo amargo de virtud y corrección moral y el Quijote como reflejo del alma española. Así lo escribe Rizal:

¿Por qué le hemos de negar la superioridad y no darle la victoria cuál á ingenio el más grande que los mundos vieron? Su QUIJOTE es el libro predilecto de las MUSAS, y mientras festivo consuela á tristes y melancólicos, é ilustra al ignorante, es al mismo tiempo una historia, la historia más fiel de las costumbres españolas (Rizal 12).

A partir de la invasión norteamericana los escritores no hispanohablantes toman la nostalgia hacia España representada por don Quijote por una actitud conservadora y procolonial¹, con lo que se distanciarán del tópico. Por tanto, no es de extrañar que más de cien años después, cuando la lengua “cervantina” en Filipinas no la hablaba ya nadie, se hubieran olvidado las 57 menciones a don Quijote/ Alonso Quijano y las 11 a Sancho Panza que aparecen al menos en 21 obras poéticas de autores filipinos escritas entre 1880 y 1940 y alojadas en el portal de literatura filipina de la Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes².

Como adelantó Irving Leonard en 1950 (Leonard) y recuerda Miguel Martínez en dos artículos recientes (Martínez, «Don Quijote, Manila, 1623»; Martínez, «La Cuarta Salida. Un Testimonio Inédito Sobre El Quijote En Las Filipinas (1623)» 110), la llegada de *Las aventuras del Ingenioso Hidalgo*

don Quijote de La Mancha a Filipinas fue muy temprana, probablemente poco después de 1605, que fue cuando llegaron 182 ejemplares de la obra a Nueva España³. Poco después, en 1625, un soldado de Illescas apostado en las Islas Filipinas narró una cuarta salida del hidalgo manchego en 1623, que ubicó en Manila (Martínez, «Don Quijote, Manila, 1623»). Desde entonces hasta el siglo XIX, y a juzgar por lo dicho en el volumen especial conmemorativo publicado por el periódico *El mercantil* en 1905, el Ingenioso Hidalgo quedó probablemente en el olvido. Así lo justifica el panfleto del centenario: “es dudoso, dada la lentitud de la difusión del castellano en el país y no habiéndose traducido á los idiomas indígenas las hermosas producciones del Príncipe de los ingenios españoles, que fueran éstas en Filipinas alguna vez verdaderamente populares.” (“Recuerdos de Cervantes en Filipinas” 4). El mismo volumen anunciaba una traducción al tagalo de la primera parte del libro de Cervantes realizada por Nazario E. de León que sin embargo no parece que se llegara a publicar, siendo hoy en día considerada la primera traducción la realizada por Adrian Got y subvencionada por tabacalera en 1940, *Ang Palaisip Na Maharlikang si Don Quijote de la Mancha* (Cervantes Saavedra).

Pero volvamos a 2005, porque en el IV centenario del Quijote también hubo un recuerdo desde España a la figura del hidalgo en Filipinas. Ese año, la revista literaria española *Barcarola* lanzaba un número especial en el que participaba Antonio Caulín con un artículo breve llamado precisamente “El Quijote en Filipinas” (Martínez Caulín). En él, el albaceteño recordaba la mención de Retana a una celebración cervantina en Manila en 1876. El episodio le servía a Caulín de arranque para lamentar la desaparición de la lengua española en el archipiélago y recordar algunas otras menciones a Cervantes y a El Quijote en la literatura filipina en español clasificadas en dos tipos: las que hacen referencia a la “lengua cervantina”, y las que hacen referencia al altruismo de don Quijote, con el que se identifican los hispanofilipinos. Además de ofrecer algunas pistas sobre la alegorización de don Quijote en el archipiélago, Caulín las contextualiza en el nuevo impulso hispanista que surge en Filipinas a partir de la celebración del III centenario del Quijote en 1905. La fecha en principio vincula el impulso filipino a otros

surgidos en la propia España y en varios países de América Latina en más o menos el mismo sentido.

Empezando con España, Iris M. Zavala analiza la concepción que se tuvo de don Quijote a partir de finales del siglo XIX, a través de la revista satírica madrileña *Don Quijote*, fuertemente crítica con el gobierno, nacida en 1887 (Zavala 8-12). De esta revista, surgió una idea de don Quijote rebelde e idealista, de la que bebieron más tarde los noventayochistas, que también participarían a partir de 1898 en la publicación (Zavala 8, 12, 16-17). Los miembros de la llamada generación del 98, y en especial Unamuno, dieron en torno a 1905 una nueva vida a don Quijote, en cuyo carácter vieron las causas del desastre español, pero también las causas de su grandeza (*Don Quijote y el modernismo*). Don Quijote se enarbola pues, como prosopopeya de España.

Más allá de la Península, el III centenario del Quijote fue ampliamente celebrado en todos los territorios hispanohablantes, y dio lugar a numerosas reinterpretaciones del personaje y valores del hidalgo castellano. Como afirma Fernando Moreno

Cervantes y el Quijote han sido considerados y retomados, por ejemplo, para interpretar la realidad y, en especial, el carácter americanos. Se han destacado los rasgos atribuibles al Quijote para asociarlos a personajes históricos y héroes. Estos participan del ideario cervantino/quijotesco: defensa de los débiles, proyectos de justicia y de libertad, equidad, búsqueda incesante de ideales y de valores en un mundo degradado -fracasado (según palabras de Carlos Rangel) en el caso de América Latina- y, pese a las evidencias que acentúan lo contrario, un mundo siempre por rescatar (Correa-Díaz 6).

Desde Filipinas se dará un fenómeno que entronca con este, pero a la vez está dotado de cierta singularidad dado el contexto histórico que se está viviendo en la celebración del III Centenario en 1905, en que la sociedad se está dividiendo entre anglófonos e hispanófonos (no siempre hispanófilos). Este artículo estudia cómo, dado el contexto particular en que se ubican las celebraciones del III Centenario y los años posteriores a este, la polarización social verá su reflejo literario en la oposición entre don Quijote y Sancho Panza, de manera paralela y contemporánea a la metaforización de América Latina frente a la influencia anglosajona de Estados Unidos que se da en *Ariel* de

José Enrique Rodó, quien oponen su ensayo a los personajes shakesperianos Ariel y Calibán.

Por supuesto, otros autores ya habían detectado el paralelismo de las dicotomías Ariel/Calibán Quijote/Sancho en América Latina y España: María de los Ángeles González afirma que la caracterización de Quijote y Sancho en España era similar a la de Ariel en América Latina en torno a 1905 (González); Rocío Oviedo por su parte, también plantea la similitud entre ambas dicotomías, pero sigue circunscribiendo los territorios de cada metáfora: Quijote-Sancho en España y Ariel-Calibán en las antiguas colonias (Oviedo Pérez de Tudela 48). Ilan Stavans, finalmente, considera el arielismo un epígono del quijotismo, por su esfuerzo por ver el Nuevo Mundo desde un prisma idealista (Stavans). La originalidad del caso filipino es que, a pesar de la fuerte vinculación de don Quijote con España, lo adoptan como símbolo del “alma filipina” en oposición a lo anglosajón. Dicha alma filipina tenderá puentes con América Latina, aunque eligen no identificarse con el personaje de Ariel, anglosajón, por otro lado.

Manuel Santos Redondo es un pionero en estudiar la dicotomía Quijote/Sancho en la literatura filipina, relacionándola con la economía. En su artículo afirma que “la contraposición entre lo quijotesco como ‘español y lo ‘sanchesco’ y práctico como foráneo y más concretamente anglosajón, es típica de Unamuno y de la Generación del 98, y también llega a la literatura en español de Hispanoamérica y Filipinas” (Galindo Martín 18), sin embargo lo que siguen son solo ejemplos, muy interesantes, de la dicotomía Quijote-ideal-español/Sancho-práctico-anglosajón en la literatura filipina, sin entroncar con América Latina ni recordar a Ariel.

Esta relación, sin embargo, y a pesar de las particularidades del caso filipino, vinculará la literatura filipina en español, algo que tantas veces se ha tachado de “rara avis” (Esquitino), a la literatura latinoamericana y sobre todo al movimiento nacionalista hispanoamericanista, que pugna por la identificación de una comunidad imaginada hispanohablante con un pasado colonial y unos problemas poscoloniales compartidos.

Anglófonos vs hispanófonos en Filipinas

Si bien entre los intelectuales y políticos filipinos de finales del siglo XIX parecía existir un amplio consenso respecto a la necesidad de reformas en la administración española, dicho descontento se transformó a partir de la firma del tratado de París en 1898, y la subsecuente guerra y ocupación estadounidense del archipiélago asiático.

Por un lado, el recién inaugurado expansionismo estadounidense tomó entre sus primeras medidas la enseñanza generalizada de la lengua inglesa y la proscripción del español en la educación y la administración. El impulso a la educación que ofrecieron los americanos (la tasa de alfabetismo se dobló de 1903 a 1918, Mojares 171), y la “asimilación benevolente” con la que según su retórica “tutelaron” a los filipinos hasta que fueran capaces de auto-gobernarse, fueron acompañados de una rápida modernización de Manila, que en ocasiones se ha asociado a la necesidad de crear una ciudad que fuera cómoda para sus nuevos inquilinos estadounidenses (Torres 56). Por otro lado, la nueva administración dirigida por Taft, gracias a la promulgación del *Pensionado Act* de 1903 concedió becas a estudiantes filipinos cualificados para estudiar en los Estados Unidos. Todas estas medidas contribuyeron a expandir, con mucha más rapidez y efectividad que los españoles, la lengua de la nueva colonia en el territorio asiático. Dicha expansión fue acompañada de cierto ‘sajonismo’ o identificación y admiración hacia lo estadounidense, es decir, se crearon muchos adeptos con sus reformas, que llevaron al popular eslogan que describe la historia colonial filipina: 300 años de convento, -refiriéndose a la ocupación española- y 50 en Hollywood.

Pero, por otro lado, no todos quedaron conformes: gran parte de la élite económica, política y cultural del país era hispanohablante y muchos, en su oposición a la nueva ocupación volvieron los ojos hacia lo hispano. Para Nicanor Tiongson, hispanidad y filipinidad se aliaron en una misma expresión identitaria contra la americanización, tomando por bandera “The defence, conservation, and promotion of the nation’s Hispanic heritage, especially the Spanish language and the Catholic religion” (Tiongson 3). La idea se plasmó en múltiples poemas y cánticos a la lengua española. Si Jesús Balmori se encarga en el famoso poema “Blasón” de ensalzar la identidad mixta de los filipinos, en los que se mezcla “la sangre de Legaspi, el Capitán

hispano,/ Con la sangre tagala de la hija del Rajá” (Balmori, *Mi casa de Nipa* 27), muchos otros poetas de la época dedicarán loas a la lengua Española y a la herencia hispánica del país. Es el caso de Claro M. Recto, que gana en 1917 el premio de poesía del Casino español de Manila con “Elogio del castellano” (Martin de la Cámara 241-45), o el de Cecilio Apóstol, quien en 1915 escribió “A España imperialista”, y que contrariamente a lo que se pudiera pensar, no es una crítica del imperialismo español, sino un elogio, exaltando el orgullo de que Filipinas se vinculara con esta nación por la cruz y la lengua (Apóstol 169-71).

Sobre esta polarización se publicaron artículos en los periódicos, ensayos y en discursos, con constantes comparaciones entre ambas culturas, como denunciaba en un discurso de 1916 Tirso de Irureta Goyena (Irureta Goyena 51). La pugna dura hasta avanzados los años 30. Hasta entonces, los aliados de lo hispano se agrupaban en torno a periódicos como *El Mercantil*, *La vanguardia*, *La opinión* y revistas como *Excelsior*. Uno de los famosos rifirrafes aireados en el periódico *La vanguardia*, enfrentaba al escritor Jesús Balmori y al profesor Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, como recuerda Isaac Donoso (Donoso 332). En el poema satírico “Pardo está gris”, Jesús Balmori responde a unas declaraciones de de Tavera en las que afirmaba que atacar a los que apoyaban la americanización de Manila era abogar “por la continuación de las cosas reinantes durante el régimen español” y oponerse a la formación de los jóvenes (Balmori, *El libro de mis vidas manileñas* 23). Por su parte, Tirso de Irureta Goyena, hijo de español nacionalizado filipino, en su intento de mediar, dice no comprender los ataques a los norteamericanos y por extensión a los sajones:

¿Y ese factor propio, distintivo del sajonismo, que lo separa del hispanismo y de los demás ismos, en dónde está y en qué consiste? ¿Será en el orden político con su democracia, su régimen parlamentario o constitucional y su supremacía jurídica? ¿Será en el orden sociológico mediante una organización sui-generis de la familia o de las clases? ¿Será en el orden legal mediante su cuerpo de leyes consuetudinarias y el juicio por jurados? ¿Será en el orden científico mediante sus progresos mecánicos? ¿Será la pureza administrativa? ¿La llamada ausencia de prejuicios? ¿La actividad mercantil? ¿La laboriosidad y constancia en el trabajo? ¿Lo será en el orden artístico, musical ó

literario? ¿Habremos de encontrarlo en la educación física y deportiva de las juventudes anglo-sajonas? (Irueta Goyena 55)

La descripción de Irueta Goyena, no exenta de ironía, de lo que era el “sajonismo” a través de preguntas retóricas, coincide en gran medida con la descripción internacional del fenómeno que se daba dentro del marco histórico y geográfico más amplio de lo que Lily Litvak llama la pugna entre “Latinos y anglosajones”, comenzada hacia fines del siglo XIX y que argumenta sobre qué raza o civilización, entre la latina y la anglosajona o germánica, era superior (Litvak y Allegra 155). Si bien el “panlatinismo” en un principio se limitaba a “una conciencia de poseer un patrimonio cultural común que se debía salvaguardar”, con el tiempo se cargó de otros significados que caracterizaban las culturas latinas por su “avanzada civilización, su antigua herencia y sus valores humanos” (Litvak y Allegra 156). El enfrentamiento surge en un intento de justificar las diferencias tecnológicas, intelectuales y económicas que se daban entre los países del sur y los del norte de Europa. El sur reaccionó a ciertas teorías racistas que se fraguaron en el norte, en aquel momento más desarrollado industrialmente y con mayor poderío científico, “a través de la reafirmación de sus valores o mediante el estudio de su propia historia” (Litvak y Allegra 157).

La oposición de sajones y latinos, que llevaba años candente en Europa, se reaviva en territorios ajenos al viejo continente a partir de 1898: a partir del “desastre español”, la percepción de España y Estados Unidos cambia totalmente en las naciones de América Latina, concretando la polarización de latinos y anglosajones, en naciones hispanohablantes frente a Estados Unidos. Las razones las resume acertadamente Isidro Sepúlveda en *El sueño de la Madre Patria*:

Hasta ese momento se había tenido a España como un peligro latente, como consecuencia de los proyectos peninsulares de reconquista; al mismo tiempo se tenía la imagen de una España anquilosada, consumida en su atraso. Todo lo contrario, los Estados Unidos se veían como ideal del desarrollo político y económico. A partir de 1898 España perdió ante los ojos americanos su potencial peligrosidad y la respuesta autocrítica dada desde la Península al desastre hizo percibir al intelectual americano una identificación con

sus propios problemas. Pero aún más importante, para amplios sectores intelectuales americanos [...] Estados Unidos dejó de ser considerado ejemplar de modelo sociopolítico y comenzó a percibirse la potencial peligrosidad de su política exterior para la independencia efectiva de los países americanos (Sepúlveda Muñoz 77).

En resumidas cuentas, América pasó de la admiración hacia lo anglosajón, al desprecio por su excesivo mercantilismo y falta de idealismo, tal y como se plasmó en el discurso del francoargentino Paul Groussac en Montevideo el 6 de mayo de 1898, probablemente el primero que propone la identificación Calibán – Estados Unidos con el ánimo de ridiculizar el nuevo imperialismo yankee, que carecía, al parecer, de la autoridad espiritual e histórica de la vieja Europa. La idea corre como la pólvora y el 20 de mayo de 1898 apareció en *El tiempo* de Buenos Aires el artículo de Rubén Darío “El triunfo de Calibán”, execrando de la siguiente manera a los estadounidenses:

Colorados, pesados, groseros, van por sus calles empujándose y rozándose animalmente, a la caza del *dollar*. El ideal de esos calibanes está circunscrito a la bolsa y a la fábrica. Comen, comen, calculan, beben whisky y hacen millones. Cantan ¡Home, sweet home! Y su hogar es una cuenta corriente, un banjo, un negro y una pipa. Enemigos de toda idealidad, son en su progreso apoplético, perpetuos espejos de aumento (Darío 451).

En algo tan físico como su pesadez, podría haber comenzado la identificación del estadounidense – Calibán – Sancho Panza, tal y como lo describe Cervantes con su sobrenombre, sugiriendo, como desarrollará a lo largo de la obra, que el comer y el beber son prioridades para el buen escudero.

Celebraciones Cervantinas: 1876, 1905, 1916

Al analizar la celebración del III centenario de la escritura de *Don Quijote de la Mancha* en España, alentada por el periódico *El Imparcial*, lo primero que se plantea Eric Storm es “¿Por qué era necesario celebrar el aniversario de la publicación del *Quijote*, cuando antes nunca se había hecho?” (Storm 2). Tras el desastre del 98 parece que la figura de don Quijote, “afirmación de la espiritualidad de nuestro pueblo” según el *imparcial*, sería capaz de aunar

a un pueblo entero y restituir algo de la autoestima nacional (Storm 8). La situación en Filipinas era algo diferente. En primer lugar, sí que había habido celebraciones anteriores. *El mercantil* reseña que “en la prensa de Filipinas ha sido constante el culto tributado a Cervantes. Tanto el *Diario de Manila* como *La Oceanía española* y los demás periódicos se impusieron el patriótico deber de evocar con frecuencia la memoria de Cervantes, aprovechando el 23 de abril el aniversario de su fallecimiento y el 9 de octubre el de su natalicio” (Recuerdos de Cervantes en Filipinas).

La primera de estas celebraciones de la que tenemos noticia fue el 26 de abril de 1876, cuando se celebró el 260 aniversario de la muerte de Miguel de Cervantes con una “corona literaria” que se publicó ese mismo año en forma de librito en el que se incluyeron varios comentarios y poemas dedicados a Cervantes y sobre todo a don Quijote. Algunos de los nombres destacados del elenco de autores eran el catalán Antonio Opisso y Viñas, el dominico asturiano Ramón Martínez Vigil, el diputado español nacido en Manila Pedro de Govantes, el dramaturgo español Darío de Céspedes, el sacerdote cántabro Fray José Cueto, Manuel Clemente, que era otro sacerdote español y vicario de la catedral de Manila y en fin, principalmente fue una celebración de la colonia española en Filipinas, como afirma Retana (Martínez Caulín 247).

En el especial del periódico *El Mercantil* dedicado al centenario del Quijote de 1905 se recuerdan las actividades de aquella primera celebración: responso en la iglesia de Santo Domingo por el alma de Cervantes, en los salones del Círculo Hispano “velada literaria y musical con asistencia de las más distinguidas personalidades de la colonia, y amenizando la fiesta la banda de artillería”, “leyose el capítulo X de la Segunda parte del *Quijote*”, y la consabida lectura de textos y poesías por parte de la flor y nata de la sociedad española. La celebración contó con los poderes fácticos: político, militar y religioso, pero con poca o ninguna intención más allá de una celebración de lo español, sin traspasar aún a lo filipino o a lo panhispanoamericano. Merece especial mención un verso premonitorio de Antonio Opisso que anunciaba ya en 1876 un cambio de signo en la época (quizás por ciertos cambios en la política española que criticaron la conquista espiritual para volver los ojos

hacia el modelo colonial británico), y que utilizaba a Sancho como metáfora de lo mercantilista: “Perdióse para siempre la esperanza/ De que vuelva a imperar el idealismo:/ ¿tiene el cetro del mundo Sancho Panza!” (*Corona literaria dedicada al príncipe de los ingenios Miguel de Cervantes* 83).

El 23 de abril de 1880 también hubo un homenaje en el Teatro de Variedades en el que se leyeron discursos y poesías de loa a Cervantes. En esta ocasión hasta se entonó un himno a Cervantes compuesto por Regino Escalera y Oscar Camps y Soler, españoles los dos, y se entregaron premios de poesía a Manuel Madrigal y Camilo Martínez Parra, y de prosa a Don Jose Rizal, que presentó *El consejo de los dioses*. Los trabajos premiados se publicaron en la *Revista del Liceo* ese mismo día (*Recuerdos de Cervantes en Filipinas* 4).

El 23 de mayo de 1887, el casino militar celebró una velada en el Teatro de Tondo también para conmemorar la muerte de Cervantes. Fue presidida por el gobernador general, el Sr. Terrero, y una vez más se leyeron las obras literarias premiadas en el certamen que por esas fechas solía celebrarse. Ese año fueron Eduardo M. de la Cámara y Gregorio Viana los premiados en prosa y verso respectivamente. Otra vez se finalizó con un himno a Cervantes con letra de Atayde y música de Mazeneque. Finalmente, el 9 de octubre de 1889 la milicia angélica conmemoró con una velada literaria y musical el aniversario del nacimiento de Cervantes en la Universidad de Santo Tomás. Si a lo largo de esta trayectoria celebratoria ciertamente se habían ido incorporando filipinos hispanohablantes como Rizal y Martín de la Cámara, incluso como ganadores de los concursos literarios propuestos, las celebraciones seguían siendo un “deber patriótico” de un territorio ocupado por España, festejando un libro o un escritor que habían sido secularmente símbolos identitarios de dicho país.

En 1905 hubo dos hechos que diferenciaron el carácter de las celebraciones respecto a las que se habían realizado anteriormente. Por un lado, el centenario del Quijote se celebraba en un país desvinculado políticamente de España desde hacía algunos años. Por otro lado, se siguió desde los periódicos con auténtico fervor la celebración del mismo aniversario en otras partes del mundo, publicándose en *El mercantil*, que se había erigido como

movilizador de la festividad en Manila, artículos casi diarios desde febrero de 1905 sobre las distintas ciudades y países, especialmente en América Latina, que dedicaban eventos a don Quijote.

Si desde España las celebraciones del centenario tuvieron como objetivo consolidar un país roto tras las pérdidas del 98 (Pascual 142-43, 147), desde América las celebraciones estuvieron relacionadas con la exaltación de una identidad común ya iniciada en 1892 con la celebración del centenario de la llegada a América de Cristóbal Colón. La celebración del aniversario del Quijote en América, encaja por tanto en una serie de “aspectos simbólicos” que se pusieron en marcha según Isidro Sepúlveda “para la socialización del ideario nacionalista” de la comunidad cultural hispanoamericana, proyectados a escala continental por “el hispanoamericanismo desde España y el unionismo americano” (Sepúlveda Muñoz 201).

La celebración estaba pues en realidad conectada con ese “ariélismo” que idealizó desde las élites la herencia hispana, y en especial la lengua y la religión como elemento aglutinador de las identidades latinoamericanas en contra del sajonismo estadounidense. Desde Filipinas el enfrentamiento se plasmó en una sola de las poesías que se dedicaron a Cervantes durante esas celebraciones. Pensemos que en 1905 aún existía una prevalencia cultural del español ante el inglés, que, aunque en proceso de expansión, todavía no ha llegado a cotas mayoritarias, con lo que la lengua inglesa no suponía para los hispanohablantes y para las élites culturales la amenaza que supuso después. No tenía, por tanto, la celebración, un cariz tan defensivo contra Estados Unidos como el que tuvo más adelante. Los intelectuales y periodistas hispanohablantes que se agrupaban en torno a *El mercantil* incluían grandes personalidades de la cultura hispanófono en Filipinas y algunos españoles todavía residentes allí, y organizaron los festejos en principio sin ambición de oponerse a ninguna ideología, según el propio periódico:

Prohombres del país tan eminentes y distinguidos como D. Cayetano Arellano, Don León M. Guerrero, D. Pedro A. Paterno, D. Dominador Gómez, D. Rafael del Pan, y tantos otros, se han adherido con entusiasmo, en una u otra forma, al hermoso pensamiento de festejar debidamente la buena memoria del ingenioso hidalgo manchego, afirmando nueva y

vigorosamente la existencia de la personalidad filipina. Toda la prensa de Manila y provincias, sin distinción de razas, nacionalidades, ni matices políticos, ha prestado su generosa ayuda y leal concurso a la Junta organizadora de los festejos. *Nuevo Heraldo* en Iloilo y *El Mercantil* en Manila, han publicado con ocasión del centenario sendos números extraordinarios los días 7 y 28 de mayo respectivamente, y a los certámenes abiertos para conmemorar la magna fecha han acudido poetas, literatos, periodistas, músicos, escultores y pintores, con el ritmo de sus estrofas, la galanura de su dicción y el meollo de sus ideas, la actualidad de sus crónicas, la armonía de sus notas, los rasgos de sus cinceles y de sus buriles, y los colores de sus paletas. (*Recuerdos de Cervantes en Filipinas*)

Sí que parecería, sin embargo, que pretendían ganar terreno en la benevolencia popular hacia la lengua castellana ensalzando sus glorias, pero sin añorar una vinculación política a España. Así aparece en la introducción al volumen especial de *El mercantil*, que se maravilla de que la lengua perviva sin la imposición de España y reivindica la filipinidad de la misma:

Hay un algo de divino en esos sonos que encarnan el alma de una civilización que con ella caminan, que al par de ella se eclipsan, llegando a refugiarse en las fugitivas ondas de un eco. Y así únicamente se explica el persistir del habla española en Filipinas, sin pueblo ni civilización que la sostengan, sin idea que la ocupe, pasión que la avive o fantasía que la emplee. Repatrióse todo, menos ella. El *quid divinum* que lleva en sus entrañas, buscó refugio en la apartada umbría, como un errante murmullo, como un eco... Y es que el habla española es el ver o del alma filipina: con ella se ha modelado, ha vivido y es con su existencia, y a una y otra esperan igual tiempo de vida. (*Nuestra ofrenda*)

En cuanto a los poemas, como decía, la mayoría se centran en elogiar el genio de Cervantes sin entrar en polémicas ni metaforizar posiciones nacionales con las figuras de Quijote y Sancho, excepto “Excelsior”, el poema ganador del concurso celebrado por la comisión de festejos, escrito por Pacífico Victoriano. En él, Victoriano habla de la polarización de “todas las humanas sociedades” y ve en el sanchismo un mal universal, que opone al idealismo quijotesco:

Goza vida inmortal en las edades
El libro bello que tu fama afianza.
En todas las humanas sociedades
Sueña Quijote y ríe Sancho Panza...
[...]
Vive aún Sancho con vida depravada
Y el pundonor con su ambición se junta;
¡no está la sociedad regenerada,
Y la aurora social aún no despunta!
(*El Mercantil a Cervantes* 8)

Pese a evitar en general la mención directa a las partes de esa polarización en el contexto específico de Filipinas, Victoriano se identifica con don Quijote y habla de “la raza de los sanchos”, caracterizada por la “innobleza” preocupada por “el cálculo y el oro”, como los calibanes de Rubén Darío (Darío, «El Triunfo de Calibán»), exigiendo, incluso, la muerte de “esa raza mísera y raquítica” en la última estrofa:

¿Quién no se dignifica en ser Quijote
Ante la corrupción y la innobleza,
Para vivir sin denigrante mote
Coronado con nimbo de grandeza?
[...]
¡No! No esa humanidad tan corrompida
Que pisotea la honra y el decoro;
¡que hipoteca el amor y hasta la vida
Por la ruindad, el cálculo y el oro!
(*El Mercantil a Cervantes* 8)

Es este pues, uno de los primeros poemas filipinos que, reflejando cinco años después del *Ariel* de José Enrique Rodó una dicotomía muy similar, adopta como personajes centrales las figuras de Quijote y Sancho en lugar de los shakesperianos Ariel y Calibán para reflejar una misma postura ante el sajonismo, vinculada a la de Latinoamérica.

En los diez años que transcurren entre el aniversario del primer libro del Quijote y el del segundo, las cosas han cambiado. En 1915 el poeta Salvador Rueda llega a Filipinas, donde es recibido con honores de héroe y se publica

un libro en el que destacados escritores plasman sus loas a la lengua española. Para Isidro Sepúlveda la lengua es uno de los componentes principales del hispanoamericanismo que se exalta para crear comunidad y que se afianza por medio de las embajadas culturales de intelectuales españoles a las antiguas colonias (Sepúlveda Muñoz 337). En el caso de Filipinas, la relación entre las élites hispanohablantes y la antigua metrópoli tiende a ser muy similar a la que hubiera entre España e Hispanoamérica, y los filipinos se sienten parte de esta unión. Así, Cecilio Apóstol le dedica a Salvador Rueda el poema “A España Imperialista” en el que canta a la “Madre de veinte pueblos que hablan tu hermoso idioma” (*Salvador Rueda en Filipinas* 216); Joaquín Pellicena Camacho alaba que “El imperialismo panhispano de que es portavoz el ilustre SALVADOR RUEDA se ha desceñido la cota de malla para que, al abrazarse los pueblos, no impida el hierro percibir el latido de los corazones hermanos” refiriéndose a las repúblicas hispanohablantes (*Salvador Rueda en Filipinas* 20); incluso Trinidad Pardo de Tavera recapitula las razones para la amistad con España después de la independencia y para la oposición a Estados Unidos y concluye proclamando el hermanamiento con las repúblicas hispanoamericanas: “con tantas razas mezcladas en tantas naciones, diseminadas por tan diversos climas, tierras y latitudes, con tantos tipos físicos diferentes, todos llevan una cosa común que les hace y les hará siempre hermanos: ¡el alma española!” (*Salvador Rueda en Filipinas* 125). La idea, por tanto, es la vinculación espiritual a lo hispanoamericano como oposición a los Estados Unidos anglosajones, en Filipinas en un intento de resistencia cultural frente al arrollador invasor.

Entre 1913 y 1920, se escriben varios poemas con referencias a don Quijote como nexo de unión entre los hispanohablantes y oposición a lo estadounidense. Así pues, en el mismo volumen a Salvador Rueda, Dalmacio Balagtas introduce la figura de don Quijote como nexo entre los hispanohablantes en su poema “Homenaje” (201), y Apóstol acaba “A España Imperialista” inventando un nuevo nombre para los territorios hispanohablantes cuando pide que “reine en Coloniberia Quijote Emperador” (217). Fernando María Guerrero hace la oposición mucho más patente en su poema

“¡A Hispania!” escrito por el día español de 1913, en el que declama su amor a la lengua española, ya en franco declive:

mi raza adoró la gloria
del bello idioma español,
que parlan aún los Quijotes
de esta malaya región,
donde quieren nuevos Sanchos
que parlemos en sajón. (Guerrero 74)

Así, como decíamos, los Quijotes en este caso, son los filipinos decididos a mantener la lengua española, y no los españoles, mientras que los “Sanchos” son los estadounidenses. En el mismo volumen de Fernando María Guerrero, *Crisálidas*, aparece el poema “Buen Quijote... ¡salud!” que amplía la identificación de don Quijote a la “entusiasta humanidad que sueña” (92) mientras que “Sancho es la media humanidad que ríe/[...]/ la ruda concepción positivista” (93), volviendo al pragmatismo que se le reprochaba a los anglosajones. También para un día español escribió Hernández Gavira el poema “¡Está triste Don Quijote!” (Hernández Gavira 131). Finalmente, la hermana de Lorenzo Pérez Tuells compiló sus poemas escritos entre 1917 y 1937 en un volumen con el título de uno de ellos: *La vuelta de don Quijote*, con el que en 1920 ganó el premio del Casino español de Manila. En la metáfora que Pérez Tuells plantea, Dulcinea es España y don Quijote es el elemento aglutinador de “todo espíritu hispano” (Pérez Tuells 8-9).

Es en estos momentos, entre 1913 y 1920, en que el inglés ha avanzado terreno y realmente supone una amenaza para la herencia española, cuando ya hay adultos que se han educado enteramente bajo el sistema anglosajón y que proponen ideas diferentes a los popes culturales anteriores, cuando gran parte de la Filipinas hispanohablante se subió al carro del hispanoamericanismo y presentó batalla contra el mercantilismo norteamericano. Por eso se extienden en los poemas filipinos en español las dicotomías hispanismo-sajonismo, Quijote-Sancho, y sin mencionarla pero con ideas intrínsecas muy similares, la dicotomía hispanoamericana Ariel-Calibán, que había

contribuido a la construcción de una identidad regional, y a dar forma en América a la oposición contra los Estados Unidos.

Quijote/ Ariel y Sancho/ Calibán

El *Ariel* de José Enrique Rodó (1900) nació con la intención de crear una alegoría representativa de la situación de las Américas independizadas ante la nueva influencia de los Estados Unidos, que representaba otra suerte de amenaza colonizadora. Toma los personajes de la obra de Shakespeare *La tempestad*: Ariel, espíritu del aire, y Calibán, que sintetiza la torpeza, lo sensorial, lo corporal, pero también lo mercantil, para oponer como mensaje pedagógico lo ideal, estético y sublime a la brutalidad y lo zafio vinculado a la democracia.

Como afirmaba Roberto Fernández Retamar en su famoso ensayo de 1971 *Calibán*, Rodó se inspira en el *Calibán* de Ernest Renan, que representaba al pueblo “presentado a la peor luz”. Retamar recuerda que Renan “estuvo entre los escritores de la burguesía francesa que tomaron partido feroz contra el prodigioso ‘asalto al cielo’ [de la *comune* de París]” (Fernández Retamar 27). Por esto y porque el Calibán de Shakespeare viene del “caníbal” de Colón, procedente de las islas Caribe, constituyendo una “versión degradada que ofrece el colonizador del hombre que coloniza”, a Fernández Retamar le parece que en realidad Rodó se equivoca en su asimilación: Calibán debiera ser América Latina (Fernández Retamar 30). Uno de los oponentes ideológicos y dialécticos de Retamar en los años 70, Emir Rodríguez Monegal, está curiosamente de acuerdo con él en este punto, y afirma que Rodó al final de su vida, en ensayos posteriores a *Ariel* ya se dio cuenta de que Calibán quizás encarnaba a los hispanoamericanos mejor que Ariel (Monegal 47).

Es posible, sin embargo, que José Enrique Rodó no fuera víctima de una equivocación -si lo fuera él, también lo habría sido Darío en “El triunfo de Calibán”-, sino de un eurocentrismo y un elitismo burgués extendidos en la época. El “ideal” de Darío es un ideal de refinamiento que le permite desde su atalaya mirar con desprecio la simplicidad -pero también la voracidad- de los estadounidenses. Dicha “voracidad” se relaciona con el origen mismo de la palabra “Calibán”: Caníbal, lo barbárico que ha de ser civilizado vinculado

al apetito, que pasará semánticamente a Sancho Panza por su sobrenombre y por sus urgencias más físicas que espirituales, también en la versión que de él hacen los poetas filipinos: pensemos que Balmori llama a Sancho “zafio glotón hurraño” (Balmori Balagtasán 125) y que Fernando María Guerrero en “Buen Quijote... ¡Salud!” de 1914, le critica que “Mientras Quijote a Dulcinea adora,/Sancho piensa del pan en la conquista...” (Guerrero).

La imagen de Calibán es, efectivamente, la imagen mimética del colonizado, el “almost the same but not quite” de Homi Bhabha, aplicada a los Estados Unidos, un país que fue colonia hasta apenas cien años antes de convertirse en colonizador, visto desde una perspectiva eurocéntrica. Tiene los vicios mercantilistas sajones, pero no tiene el halo histórico y cultural europeo. Como recuerda Carlos Jáuregui, siguiendo a Raymond Williams y a Luis Alberto Sánchez, “El arielismo se perfila como una serie de posicionamientos discursivos frente a las ‘muchedumbres democráticas’ o masas” (Jáuregui 157). El arielismo vincula el progreso tecnológico y económico de los sajones a una decadencia espiritual ligada a su mercantilismo. Calibán, como Estados Unidos, es para los arielistas pobre de espíritu y se guía por “instintos” básicos, necesidades económicas, consideradas cuestiones “poco elegantes”. En Filipinas, al separarse de la historia sheakespeareana, metafórica del colonialismo, se toman los atributos exentos de su vinculación colonial: ya no hay Próspero que enseñe su lengua y contra el que se rebele Calibán, queda solo la concepción clasista: el escudero iletrado, procedente del pueblo llano representando al invasor.

Si Emir Rodríguez Monegal afirma que “los arielistas usaron a Rodó pero lo hicieron para mantener sus miserables privilegios dentro de élites más o menos bienpensantes” (Monegal 47), podemos decir que desde Filipinas, la dicotomía Quijote-Sancho se utilizó en ocasiones con fines similares. Renato Constantino afirma que “even those among the *ilustrados* who were in favor of independence viewed that independence as the continuation of the regime of the enlightened class and the continued acceptance by the masses of the special position of the *ilustrados*” (Constantino 20). Los escritores tratados en este artículo, incluyendo a Fernando María Guerrero, Cecilio Apóstol, Jesús Balmori, Lorenzo Pérez Tuells, José Hernández Gavira, Pacífico Victoriano

y Flavio Zaragoza Cano, forman parte de una “segunda generación de ilustrados” posterior a los propagandistas, que constituían la élite cultural burguesa del país. Este “grupo de privilegiados” se distinguía del pueblo también precisamente por el uso del español al que tanto loaban, y que nunca había llegado a ser lengua mayoritaria en Filipinas.

Aunque Renato Constantino habla de que algunos ilustrados como Trinidad Pardo de Tavera estaban en connivencia con el régimen americano por miedo a perder sus privilegios si llegaba la independencia, en un primer momento, dicho miedo es justamente el que lleva a estos escritores al rechazo de los Estados Unidos, cuya política (enseñanza de la lengua inglesa a toda la población, generalización de la enseñanza primaria, popularización de divertimentos culturales accesibles a una mayoría como el cine y el jazz... en fin, su política de americanización del país) podía ser vista como un detonante para la plebeyización de la cultura y del poder que iba en detrimento -inicialmente- de los privilegios y la exclusividad que habían diferenciado del resto a las élites locales y tradicionales. Por esto no es un sinsentido que, en América Latina, ante una situación paralela, José Enrique Rodó y Rubén Darío identifiquen a Estados Unidos con Calibán, que en la obra de Renán había encarnado al pueblo: de hecho, la metáfora cobra todo su sentido cuando Calibán es sustituido por Sancho Panza en Filipinas, que es propiamente el representante del pueblo en la obra de Cervantes.

Por su parte, Ariel en el caso americano y don Quijote, en el caso filipino, se identifican con la herencia española -es decir, europea- de los territorios que fueron colonias, pero en ninguno de los dos casos con el antiguo colonizador: mientras que en el relato alegórico de Rodó queda más claro que el papel de España es equivalente al de Próspero, en el caso de don Quijote la cuestión podría ser más confusa, al haber sido erigido por los escritores españoles de la generación del 98 como símbolo de España. Don Quijote representa a los hispanohablantes en Filipinas, pero con una clara identidad filipina, como veíamos en “A Hispania” de Fernando María Guerrero. El poema, ya puestos, incide en la dicotomía Quijote/hispanohablante, Sancho/Estados Unidos, destacando su caracterización como perseguidores de un ideal lejano, difícil, como es el continuar hablando español en una Filipinas

que llevaba ya más de 10 años de colonización americana. Balmori vuelve a la idea del idealismo en don Quijote (opuesto al positivismo pragmático de Sancho que también denuncia Guerrero), y defiende la figura de Quijote como encarnación de “la ilusión” en un Balagtasán contra Manuel Bernabé:

Caballero aventurero,
Todo lanza y corazón,
Con un yelmo por sombrero,
Un zafio por escudero,
Y por dama una ilusión.
(Balmori y Bernabé 123)

La caracterización se asemeja mucho a la que hiciera Rubén Darío del caballero andante en “Letanía a nuestro señor Don Quijote” (1905), donde habla de que Quijano llevaba un “yelmo de ilusión” y una “lanza en ristre, toda corazón” (Darío, *Obras completas* 211). Quijote es en este caso la encarnación no solo de la ilusión, sino también de la nostalgia por unos valores idealizados que supuestamente proceden de España, pero ya son parte del “alma filipina”, que Severino de los Reyes caracterizaba de la siguiente manera en su obra titulada precisamente *Alma filipina* de 1911: “El alma de un filipino no se sajoniza jamás; las que se sajonizan son las costumbres. Mi alma, a pesar de mis años en América, no ha cambiado, es la misma, sigue siendo filipina, y, como tal, es muy noble y generosa.” (Reyes 31). Nobleza y generosidad, lanza y corazón, con las características del filipino y del Quijote que allá se representa, y también la “ilusión”, que en el contexto filipino de la época sería la independencia.

Ya había adelantado que no todos los escritores hispanohablantes de Filipinas coincidían en la defensa del quijotismo/arielismo. Manuel Bernabé, que continúa identificando a don Quijote con el alma hispana, se distancia de esta e intenta persuadir de la futilidad de perseguir el pasado oponiéndose al presente, en versos como los siguientes:

Sancho es el porvenir, bien que nos llama,
Quijote es la ilusión que el alma hiere;
Es mariposa que, al tocar la llama,
Se ahoga y muere.

[...]

No se puede vivir cazando estrellas,
Porque el vivir de antaño y el de hogaño
Está tejido con las cosas bellas
Del desengaño.

(Balmori y Bernabé 128-29)

Manuel Bernabé ya había dado muestras de considerar, en realidad, a don Quijote/Ariel la encarnación de algo ajeno y negativo para Filipinas, por lo cual es reprendido por Claro M. Recto en el “Pórtico” a su obra *Cantos del trópico*, en el que Recto, otro ilustrado, poeta y político, lamenta que Bernabé haya hecho “renuncia de ellos [sus títulos] a trueque de ventajas transitorias, pactando con las multitudes” y continúa lamentando su deriva hacia el compromiso político dejando de lado el arte puro: “¡Por qué no añorar, en este ambiente tan propicio a los triunfos de Calibán, los egregios pensamientos que hicieron vibrar, con las cuerdas e oro de su lira, las fibras de nuestro corazón [...]!” (Bernabé vii). El reproche acaba con la aceptación de cierta culpa que termina señalando hacia Estados Unidos: “Hemos preparado, con guano de Norteamérica, el suelo de nuestra patria, y lo hemos dejado imposible para las germinaciones y florescencias del espíritu.” (Bernabé viii). En el pórtico de Recto se unen todas las sospechas hacia los ilustrados: Bernabé, según Recto, se ha dejado llevar por “las multitudes”, vinculadas a Calibán y a Estados Unidos, equivalentes a las masas, equivalentes al pueblo. Sin embargo, él en su poemario no menciona a Calibán ni una sola vez. Mencionará a Sancho.

Así como Fernández Retamar afirmaba que sería más adecuado que el colonizado se identificara con Calibán, a pesar de la visión grotesca de él que daba el eurocentrismo, y tanto él como Ramírez Monegal Consideraban a Ariel y los arielistas miembros de un grupo que luchaba por mantener sus privilegios y su distancia con el pueblo, Manuel Bernabé considerará a don Quijote miembro de una aristocracia explotadora. Así aparece en “Cruzadas”

de 1910, en que en un manifiesto sorprendentemente social, habla de cómo el Evangelio habrá de parar o “ser dique” para “fazañas quijotescas de patronos y caciques”(Bernabé 118). De hecho, opone don Quijote al líder independentista revolucionario filipino Andrés Bonifacio, llamado “el gran plebeyo” por ser de los pocos líderes independentistas no ilustrado, pero ampliamente admirado como cabeza del Katipunan, llamándolo “Antítesis marcado del Quijote” (Bernabé 152) en un poema dirigido al “pueblo que participas desde abajo” y al “pueblo demócrata”.

La animadversión hacia el caballero de la triste figura se confirma en su poema “A Cervantes” de 1916, en la que, remedando de alguna manera la famosa cita de Joaquín Costa que demandaba “siete candados a la tumba del Cid”, denuncia los males produce el idealizar un pasado heroico:

La locura divina del Quijote,
La lanza en ristre y cabalgando al trote
Del Rocinante, es mal antiguo y nuevo
Y a modo de la hiedra trepadora,
Afinca su raíz en la conciencia
(Bernabé 24)

Así pues, Bernabé difiere de sus compañeros de generación al denunciar en el quijotismo los vicios que Rodríguez Monegal denunciaba en el arielismo: esnobismo, idealización de un pasado que atenaza al presente, y falta de practicidad. La sensatez para Bernabé es algo positivo, como en realidad también lo es la “falta de nobleza” que le achacaban Fernando María Guerrero, Pacífico Victoriano y Jesús Balmori a Sancho.

Conclusiones

En 1998 la Asociación Internacional de Cervantistas celebró su congreso anual conmemorando los ecos de don Quijote en la generación del 98 en muchas de sus ponencias (Fernández de Cano y Martín). La de Pedro Pascual se llamaba “El 98 de Don Quijote” y comenzaba reivindicando que la generación del 98 debió haberse llamado “La generación del Quijote” por haber “entrañado la quijotización de España”, según lo publicado por sus miembros

en numerosos textos (Pascual 143-44). De haberse llamado “La generación del Quijote”, quizás la dicotomía clásica “modernismo vs 98”, que supuestamente enfrentaba los distintos intereses de escritores en diferentes orillas del Atlántico, no hubiera sido tal: la dicotomía Quijote-Sancho enfrentó a los verdaderos opositores de la época, Estados Unidos y lo hispano en Unamuno, como Ariel y Calibán la representaron en América Latina. Extrañamente, y dada la fuerte vinculación de don Quijote con España, los escritores latinoamericanos prefirieron unos personajes anglosajones para representar la oposición, personajes que por otro lado eran francamente adecuados para presentar diferentes opciones de colonialismo y reacción ante este.

Filipinas, sin embargo, desde su lejanía e hibridez, desde su estética modernista latinoamericana, retoma el símbolo español de don Quijote convirtiéndolo en la representación de un “alma española” infundida a todos los hispanos, no solo a los españoles. Con esta reivindicación de la hispanidad de Filipinas, muchos de los escritores hispanohablantes ansían introducirse en una corriente cultural que geográficamente les era adversa: la historia compartida con América Latina. En la oposición al sajonismo y la reivindicación de la lengua española, Filipinas entra en el hispanoamericanismo pero sin mencionar a Ariel: prefieren el símbolo hispano que a partir de 1905 celebran pro-hispanos de todo el mundo: don Quijote, y criticando cruelmente, injustamente según Manuel Bernabé, a Sancho. Por lo general, se trata de un Quijote elitista, más latinoamericanista que españolista: la “hispanofilia” hunde sus raíces en la herencia española común, pero tiende puentes con América Latina.

Las elecciones de autorrepresentación de la identidad nacional en diferentes personajes de ficción en América Latina y Filipinas nos habla de dinámicas internacionales que en la época determinaban vinculaciones afectivas e ideológicas que a veces se oponían a los devenires comerciales de los países: aunque las relaciones efectivas internacionales entre Filipinas y América Latina se habían estancado desde la interrupción de la ruta del Galeón de Manila, los afectos y admiraciones nacionales estaban presentes, de manera que cuando desde Filipinas se mira a España, no es como madre propia, sino como origen de la vinculación con América Latina y oposición

al imperialismo estadounidense y el mercantilismo británico, lo cual, según Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, está en la misma base de la idea y construcción de Latinoamérica, y es el origen de la vinculación entre José Rizal y José Martí (Tenorio-Trillo 171).

Notas

1. Isaac Donoso explica en su “Sociolingüística histórica del español en Filipinas” cómo “a lo largo del siglo XX la lengua española ha sido heredera y objeto de traumas coloniales a lo cual se le suma la leyenda negra promovida por Estados Unidos. Como resultado, el español será epitomizado o reducido a lengua de las élites y de la alta burguesía, de los ilustrados y mestizos, lengua rancia del pasado hablada (para completar el cuadro de la aprensión) por mestizos que habían matado a Rizal” (Donoso 335).
2. http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/literatura_filipina_en_espanol/ La cuenta está hecha con los libros de poemas contenidos en la sección “textos literarios” escritos por autores filipinos y publicados entre 1880 y 1940.
3. Amado Nervo, citando el trabajo de Francisco Rodríguez Marín, afirmaba en 1905 que debieron llegar a México al menos 346 ejemplares del Quijote en 1605, y a tierras americanas cerca de 1500 ejemplares. (Nervo).

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Transcultural Orientalism

Re-writing the Orient from
Latin America and The Philippines

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Abstract

This article investigates an alternative interpretation of Edward Said's concept of *Orientalism* both as theoretical approach and as a style of writing in three poems by Hispano-Filipino author Jesús Balmori (1887-1948). It argues that given the geopolitical location of the Philippines and its history of colonisation, the type of orientalism that Balmori's poems reveal can be understood as a form of transcultural writing that goes beyond the rigid binaries of East and West by simultaneously being located within both paradigms.

Filipino orientalism can be defined as transcultural (rather than peripheral, or transpacific, as Latin American orientalism(s) have been called) because it sees the orient *through* various other cultures while being *in* the Orient. Often the *self* and *other* that are created through orientalism are simultaneously the orientalising subject and the orientalised object. Transcultural orientalism serves to understand both the Eastern and Western elements of the Filipino cultural landscape through the optic of the various cultures that constitute it.

This article begins with a revision of the key ideas of Said's *Orientalism* followed by an analysis of the reaction towards those ideas by scholars and writers from Latin America. Specifically it focuses on Araceli Tinajero's study of the influence of orientalism in Latin American modern travel writing (2004) using examples by Guatemalan and Mexican authors Enrique Gómez Carrillo

(1873-1927) and Juan José Tablada (1871-1945). As a counterpoint to the type of 'peripheral' or transpacific orientalism produced by these Latin American authors in their own (re)writings of the Orient, the analysis of Balmori's poems illustrates a transcultural perspective of orientalism achieved through three literary techniques which are often applied simultaneously: self-orientalization, *mestizaje* or mixing of oriental and occidental literary motives and consequently re-writing the idea the Orient and the Philippines in it.

Keywords

Orientalism, transculturation, travel writing, modernism, Hispano-Filipino literature



Fig. 1. Jesús Balmori in *Mi casa de nipa*, 5. Manila Gráfica edition, 1941

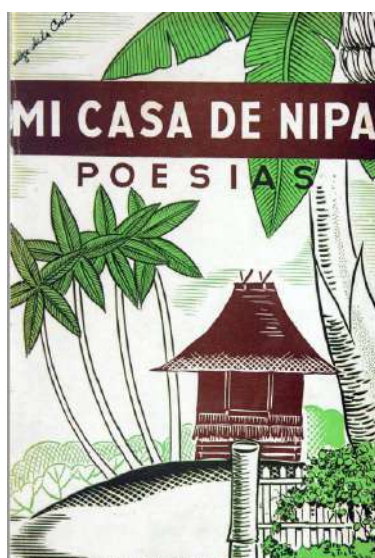


Fig. 2. Cover of the Manila Gráfica edition, 1941. Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City



Fig. 3. *La Gueisha's* poem title and illustration, 127, *Mi casa de nipa*, 1941.

Introduction

Since Edward Said wrote *Orientalism* in 1978 his concept—explaining how Western knowledge about the East has been produced as an academic and popular discourse—continues to be discussed. New ideas have been added by Said himself (“Orientalism Reconsidered”, 1985) as well as by other critics in various disciplines, helping to expand his theory towards new contexts. Araceli Tinajero’s *Orientalismo en el Modernismo Hispánico* (2004) draws on Said’s theory of orientalism in order to examine the vision and relationship with the Orient that prevails among Latin American modernists focusing on travel writers. With her study, Tinajero has revealed another route of cultural approximation between two “peripheral” contexts: Latin America and the Far East (*el lejano oriente*). She argues that the type of orientalism expressed in the travel diaries of modernist authors such as Juan José Tablada (Mexico, 1871-1945) and Enrique Gómez Carrillo (Guatemala, 1873-1927) seeks an encounter with *the other* in the spirit of cultural exchange and recognition rather than constructing the Orient as mythical place (populated by powerful Sultans, exotic dancers and barbaric peoples) to ultimately justify its subjugation in the form that Said points out in European and North American orientalism(s). Drawing from these two conceptualisations, Said’s and Tinajero’s, this article explores how *Orientalism*, a tool of knowledge production and as a style of writing takes shape in three poems of Hispano-Filipino author, Jesús Balmori (1887-1948). This study argues that given the geopolitical location of the Philippines (in the Far East) and its history of colonisation, the type of orientalism that it reveals can be understood as a form of transculturation. In other words, Filipino orientalism can be defined as transcultural (rather than peripheral, or transpacific, as Latin American orientalism(s) have been called) because it sees the orient *through* various other cultures while being in the orient. Often the *self* and *other* that are created through orientalism are simultaneously the orientalising subject and the orientalised object. Transcultural orientalism serves to understand both the Eastern and Western elements of the Filipino cultural landscape through the optic of the various cultures that constitute it.

My analysis of Balmori's poems "Rima Malaya" (1904), "Blasón" and "La Gueisha" (both published in 1941) shows that Filipino transcultural orientalism combines elements of other orientalism(s) in three ways: first, depicting an hegemonic discourse promoting assimilation to Western/Spanish colonization; second, showing how literary modernism in the Philippines braids the orientalist styles from various Latin American and European traditions; and third, affirming its national identity based on the oriental and occidental aspects of Filipino transculturation.

Orientalism and Cultural Encounters

Said's *Orientalism* (1978) seeks to "understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (3). To Said, orientalism explains the process through which the Western world forged an image of the East—mostly the Middle East—as inferior, with the aim of domination. Said explains how the image of the *other* was constructed upon a discursive system establishing (still) prevailing binary oppositions such as Orient/Occident, Catholic/Muslim, science/religion, progress/underdevelopment, knowledge/labour and law/superstition. These oppositions defined what belongs to Eastern and the Western cultures, captured by the West with the consent of Oriental (and other) colonised peoples. The Gramscian idea of consent translates into the acceptance of the West as unquestionably superior and advanced—as something to look up to and forward to—both among the West and its others.

Said identifies orientalism in the fields of history, literature, art and politics, disclosing the elements that helped construct the image of the East as exotic, mythical, barbaric and anchored in the past. By elucidating Orientalism as a form of Foucauldian discourse, Said insists on the complexity of the phenomenon and offers a way to acknowledge its viral-like spread, affecting popular culture as well as academia. Providing an historical overview of how accounts of the Orient came into being, Said draws on exam-

ples of the earliest colonial and imperial enterprises carried out by the West, which go back to the eighteenth-century Napoleonic invasion of Egypt.

Joan Torres-Pou's book *Asia en la España del siglo XIX* (2013) [Asia in Nineteenth-Century Spain] is one of the few works that focuses on cultural exchanges between Spain and Asia. Torres-Pou analyses the Spanish colonial discourse about the Philippines and the representation of the Orient by Spaniards in diplomatic reports, letters, journal articles, examples of travel writing and also literature, including *Morsamor* (1899), a travel novel by Juan Valera. Torres-Pou's research confirms the existence of an orientalist colonial discourse in accounts by Spanish intellectuals that justified Spanish imperialism based on a notion of racial inequality. Sinibaldo de Mas (1809-1869), who was the ambassador of Spain in Beijing in 1844 and consul general in Hong Kong in 1848, wrote a report entitled "Informe sobre el Estado de las Islas Filipinas" (1842) [Report on the State of the Philippine Islands] in which, in addition to presenting a scientific classification of what he had observed in the Philippines (populations, topography, agriculture, language, climate, flora and fauna), he repeatedly attempts to prove his conviction of "pertenecer a una raza superior" [belonging to a superior race] (qtd. In Torres-Pou 2013: 15). These testimonies from within Spanish colonialism/orientalism are symptomatic of the colonial institutionalisation of power over the Orient that Said denounces in *Orientalism*, and that was transmitted, as in the case of French and English imperialism, through the channels of intellectual, political, and travel writing.

Said's study identifies a generation of French and British pilgrim writers such Chateaubriand (1768-1849), Edward William Lane (1801-1876), who translated the *1001 Nights* into English, and Thomas Edward Lawrence (1888-1935), better known as Lawrence of Arabia, as orientalists. However, he explains that their way of doing orientalism was different from Napoleon's, as they were driven by a philological and aesthetic aim rather than a political and colonial one:

French pilgrims did not seek a scientific so much as an exotic yet attractive reality. This is obviously true of the literary pilgrims, beginning with Chateaubriand, who found in the Orient a locale sympathetic to their

private myths, obsessions, and requirements. Here we notice how all the pilgrims, but especially the French ones, exploit the Orient in their work so as in some urgent way to justify their existential vocation (Said 170).

Imperial travel writing, not only helped producing Western *science* (in opposition to Eastern *tradition*) but also, created an idea of the Orient that would become for European writers a source of inspiration that propelled their imagination and justified their writings (their “vocation”). It consequently led to the creation of an orientalist discourse that was uncontested by reality, but presented as objective, and constricted by the western cultural lens of travel writing and literary inspiration.

Pratt, in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1997), finds illustrative examples of Said’s orientalist discourse in the travel accounts of British colonisers in Africa and Alexander Humboldt in Latin America. The most important points that she makes about orientalism and travel writing relevant here are two: first, that travel writing is at the origin of orientalist discourse because the voyage generates a series of “contact zones” where cultures meet and attempt to explain and understand each other; second, that travel responds to an desire to experience, directly, the otherwise abstract ideas about other peoples and other places. Pratt also develops an understanding of transculturation based on how the subjugated cultures of the contact zone engage with received epistemologies (that often orientalise them), which are often the only or dominant archives from which other knowledge may be created. This is what she calls transculturation, borrowing the term from Cuban scholar Fernando Ortiz. Ortiz’s original definition of transculturation (1940) explains it as a three-way process that implies leaving things behind (*deculturation*), adopting new things (*acculturation*) and producing new meaning (*neoculturation*). The transculturation of literary forms, as thoroughly analysed by Ángel Rama in his canonical work *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina* (1982), helps to understand the way modernist poetry travelled from France, Nicaragua and Spain to the Philippines, and how it was transformed by each local writer that appropriated it.

Thinking about orientalism from the East, or from other ‘peripheries’, raises questions about the terms in which people in these locations see, explain, create and imagine other cultures and themselves, and, consequently, about the productive role of orientalism as a tool of transculturation.

Latin American Orientalism

There are many studies that focus on how the Orient and Orientals are represented in Latin American literature focusing on the transpacific relationship between these two geographical locations.¹ Araceli Tinajero’s *Orientalismo en el Modernismo Hispánico* (2005) defines Latin American modernist writing as a type of *peripheral orientalism* because it emerges from what is considered, from a European perspective, a periphery. Tinajero explains this south to south relationship using the concepts of centre and periphery. In doing so she affirms that Latin American orientalism goes beyond the centrality of European orientalism establishing a dialectic relationship between two geographical and epistemological peripheries:

Para el modernista [latinoamericano] el acto de *orientalizar* no significaba encontrar una respuesta opuesta a los conceptos éticos, morales o estéticos de la sociedad europea. Tampoco se trataba de dar una respuesta al orientalismo europeo finisecular ni mucho menos de imitar a ciegas su producción literaria. Esto lo enfatizó Aníbal González al proponer que los modernistas sabían exactamente lo que hacían cuando en un mismo texto combinaban referencias al Lejano Oriente con aquéllas de las culturas indígenas y al mismo tiempo citaban autores europeos (54). En ese sentido los miembros del movimiento “dialogan” con orientalistas europeos, pero eso no quiere decir que la razón por la cual los primeros se aproximan al Oriente esté basada en ofrecer exclusivamente antagonismos a la visión europea sobre esa parte del mundo (Tinajero 19, emphasis in text).²

As this quote suggests, Latin American modernist orientalists knew of European orientalism but did not approach the Orient solely to refute this European discourse. Instead, they incorporated both the European and ‘their own’ view of the Orient in the form of a transcultural style based on pastiche, cultural exchange and historical recognition. The dialogue between oriental-

ism(s) is therefore not only peripheral, it does not skip the European centre, but re-writes it making orientalism in Hispanic modernism global, or as I suggest, transcultural.

Latin American orientalist writers such as Ruben Darío, Juan José Tablada and Enrique Gómez Carrillo found in the *el lejano oriente*, an appealing space which they could use to re-signify European orientalism, including the particular type of Spanish orientalism derived from the turbulent history between Christianity and Islam – embedded in the figure of the moor, ‘el moro’—that Latin Americans (and Filipinos) received as part of a cultural and linguistic imaginary. Latin American orientalist writers saw in Asian peoples, a community with which they could forge a connection outside colonialism, at times, through the foundational myth that Amerindians had come from the East (Camayd-Freixas 1). Orientalism as practiced by Latin American modernist writers is therefore first defined by the distance of both Latin America and Asia from the European centre, and second by a desire to connect with an ‘other’ perceived as equal. Latin American modernist travel writers declare themselves different from the French and English modernists in writing in a “spirit of veneration and respect for the Orient” (Gómez Carrillo 3). Tablada kept a diary during his trips to Japan in the 1900s. In the following excerpt, he comments on the way he perceives texts from the French tradition:

Concluyo de leer por segunda vez la *Madame Chrysanthème* de Loti y a la vez que me encanta los prestigios del delicioso escritor me exaspera la frivolidad de sus juicios, la perfecta incompreensión del verdadero tipo japonés. (qtd. in Tinajero 10)³

Tablada is enchanted with Loti’s s delightful writing while at the same time critical of him for remaining superficial, frivolous and uncomprehending of the “true Japanese.” The following fragment, published in the Mexican newspaper *La Patria* in 1900, illustrates the mentality and role of these Latin American travel writers as orientalist:

José Juan Tablada parte mañana para el Japón. El poeta realiza su sueño de toda una juventud... ¡Ve, artista! ¡Ve, escogido!... Estudia y fructifica, y que

tu labor acrisolada en la palpación de la más sugestiva de las artes plásticas, porque es soberanamente original, sea simiente fecunda en nuestra tierra... Cuando contemples arrobado flotar en un mar de oro el témpano de nieve del Fusi-yama, sueña en el lejano y augusto Citlaltépetl (qtd. in Tinajero 32).⁴

The comparison made here between a Japanese and a Mexican volcano establishes a new route from the Far West to the Far East that will serve as fertile soil for a new form of cultural expression. But the directionality of this new form of cultural expression is clear from the newspaper fragment: it is not so much about *them* (the Japanese), as it is about what *we* (Mexicans) can learn from them. In doing so, Tablada, the traveller/writer is the subject that sees Japan as the object of knowledge assuming thus the position of the seer, the orientalist. This type of orientalist perspective does not establish a cultural hierarchy or aims at dominating the other perceived as inferior but find on that other a source of self-knowledge.

In Gómez Carrillo's commentaries on his trip to Asia, published as *De Marsella a Tokyo: Sensaciones de Egipto, la India, la China y el Japón* (1906), there is an illustrative example of self-knowledge and cultural identification between the Guatemalan with a Chinese traveller occur. The traveller/writer is on board to Egypt when he encounters a Chinese man whom he describes as "no vulgar, un mercader, un banquero, no, ni siquiera un diplomático, sino un sabio chino, un chino doctoral" [not vulgar, not a banker, not even a diplomat, but a wise Chinese man, a doctoral Chinese!] (Gómez Carrillo 25). This man spoke various European languages, including Spanish, and was writing a book demonstrating that America had not been 'discovered' by Christopher Columbus but by a Chinese admiral. Interested by this new version of history, Gómez Carrillo continues conversing with him and eventually informs his interlocutor that : he has discovered that the Chinese and the Mexican calendars are identical, and so are most of the religious and philosophical beliefs in ancient China and pre-Columbian Mexico:

la transmigración de las almas, las atribuciones de las divinidades domésticas, los amuletos, la creencia en que el dragón devora al sol en sus eclipses, las

reglas monásticas, que son idénticas en la China antigua y en el antiguo Méjico (Gómez Carrillo 27).⁵

Once in Egypt, Gómez Carrillo talks to an Egyptian judge and writes the following:

[El Viejo Egipto] no estaba muerto. Los musulmanes y los ingleses han podido dominarlo pero no transformarlo. Un soplo nacional fuerte, bastaría para hacer desaparecer los turbantes y los cascos coloniales (Gómez Carrillo 36).⁶

Gómez Carrillo chooses to incorporate in his travelogue the voices of Asian people, especially the well-educated, whose voices subvert the master narratives of colonialism. In the quote above, identification with “the old Egypt” (pre-colonial)⁷ occurs through a perceived shared history with another orientalisised/colonised people to whom Carrillo projects the possibilities of action of (post-colonial) nationalisms that he has observed in the discourses for independence in Latin America.

These two fragments from Gómez Carrillo’s travelogue give two examples of cultural identification: understanding Mexican pre-Columbian cosmology facilitates comprehending the teleology behind the Chinese horoscope, Mexico and China share cultural and religious artifacts, and Latin America and Egypt can survive their specific histories of colonisation in similar if not identical ways. It is possible to conclude that Mexican and Guatemalan orientalism as depicted by Tablada and Gómez Carrillo dismisses the cultural hegemony that Said’s identifies in European orientalism as a colonial discourse. Even though these travel accounts continue to be based on a search for identity and self-definition *through* the other, they seek for an evaluation of self and other on rather equal terms: Japan and China are perceived not as an ‘inferior’ (lagging behind modernity) to Mexico and Guatemala (or the whole of Latin America) but as a cultural counterparts.

Transcultural Orientalism in Balmori's Poems

Jesús Balmori was born in 1886 in Ermita, Manila, he worked as a lawyer for a while but dedicated most of his working life to journalism and writing, at a time when Spanish was at its peak as the medium of the Filipino press. Balmori was one of the most active contributors to Spanish newspapers such as *La Vanguardia*, *El Debate* and *Voz de Manila*, as well as the weekly *Revista Filipina*, in which most of the Spanish literary production of the Philippines—poems, stories, essays and novels—was published. Under the pseudonym “Batikuling” Balmori published numerous pieces of satirical poetry criticising the government and fast-changing Manilean society. Many of the columns he wrote were compiled in a book entitled *El libro de mis vidas manileñas*, published in 1928, which Donoso describes as a “truly delicious book about the socio-political life of his time” (2012: XVI).

Besides his work as a journalist, Balmori was also known as a much-lauded poet; he was a competitor and admirer of Manuel Bernabé (1890-1960), another key author in Hispanic Philippine literature. Together, they wrote *Balagtasán*, a type of poetry duel for which they won the Zóbel Prize in 1926. Balmori's early novels, *Bancarrota de almas* (1910) [Bankrupt souls] and *Se deshojó la flor* (1915) [Leafless flower], criticize the influence of American culture on Filipino society, specifically on women. His last novel, *Los pájaros de fuego. Novela filipina de la guerra* [Birds of Fire, A Filipino War Novel], written in 1945, is considered his best work in prose.

Balmori visited Mexico in 1931 with the aim of promoting Filipino literature in Spanish. He organized various cultural events among which were readings of his own poems (Park, 2018). He was certainly familiar with the works of Tablada but was most influenced by Ruben Darío (1867-1916)⁸ and crucially, as my analysis of Balmori's “Blasón” demonstrates, by Peruvian author José Santos Chocano (1875-1934). In fact, Darío, Santos-Chocano and Balmori have a poem entitled “Blasón” dating respectively from 1896 (in *Prosas profanas*), 1906 (in *Alma América*) and 1941 (in *Mi casa de nipa*). I will compare the late two a few lines below. The modern rhetoric that exoticizes the orient travelled globally from France to Latin America and on a transpacific route to the Philippines, with orientalism undergoing a *glocal* process

of transculturation. Balmori's orientalism does not originate in narratives of travel but draws from the particular orient in which the Philippines are located.

To delineate the characteristics of Filipino transcultural orientalism, I focus on three of Balmori's poems: "Rima Malaya" [Malayan Rhyme], from a collection of poetry Balmori wrote when he was 17 years old entitled *Rimas Malayas* [Malayan Rhymes] (1904), and "Blasón" [Code of arms] and "La Gueisha" [The Geisha], both from *Mi casa de Nipa* [My house of Nipa], published in 1941. My analysis does not follow the chronological order of the publication of the poems but my argument of how transcultural orientalism adopts various orientalist discourses and shows different literary techniques from the more 'imitative' (showing what Ortiz would have called acculturation, assimilation to *other* literary forms) to the more experimental (creating new literary forms). By considering "Blasón" an imitation of something else I am specifically referring to Santos Chocano's "Blasón" published in 1906. Donoso (2012) affirms that Santos Chocano inspired Jesús Balmori's own re-writing of Filipino *mestizaje* to be used as an affirmation of national identity and indeed the similarities are remarkable.

In (his) "Blasón" Balmori attaches Filipino identity to historical, racial and religious elements in a way that reiterates an orientalist colonial discourse:

Soy un bardo indohispano. En mi pecho cristiano
mi corazón es vaso donde mezclada está
la sangre de Legazpi, el capitán hispano,
con la sangre tagala de la hija del Rajah

Con el talón hundido en olas y en espumas
esperé sobre el mar el galeón español
y España, al encontrarme, besó las áureas plumas
que en mi frente temblaban como rayos de sol.

Era hermosa, era buena, era plena de amores;
puse a sus pies mis lanzas, mis espigas, mis flores;
le di mi corazón salvaje y oriental;

Y desde entonces va en mi pecho desnudo
sirviéndome de férreo y de glorioso escudo
con su idioma divino y su sangre inmortal⁹ (27-28)

“Blason” mobilises several identity attachments. The narrator describes himself as an Indo-Hispanic poet,¹⁰ a mix between the Spanish coloniser Legazpi (the leader of the first Spaniards to arrive in Manila) and the Tagalog daughter of a ‘Rajah.’¹¹ The poem includes Filipino cultural and racial heritage by recognising elements of pre-Hispanic cultures (Islamic and Tagalog), but privileges the Hispanic elements, as indicated by the contrast between the reference to a named historical Spaniard (Legazpi) and to a nameless Tagala, daughter of an unidentified Muslim king (“rajah”). A feminised Spain described as “hermosa,” “buena” and “plena de amores” [beautiful, good and loving] arrives to the coast of the Philippines, where an expectant ‘native’ surrenders to her, putting down his weapons (spears, thorns) and, most remarkably, offering the newcomer his “salvaje corazón oriental” [wild Oriental heart]. The wild heart may refer to a heart wild with love or to the wildness of the ‘native’ heart, thus orientalisising him through a colonial discourse that justified the arrival of the foreigner to fulfil its ‘mission’ of civilizing the ‘wild.’ Either way, the voluntary act of surrendering the narrator’s weapons and heart to (a mother?) Spain dismisses the violence of the first colonial encounter and suggests that the speaker’s attachment to Spanish colonialism is a positive one. This suggestion is reinforced by the reference to the way the narrator now carries Spain, its “divine language” and “immortal blood” like a shield.

Santos Chocano’s poem opens with the following sentence: “Soy el cantor de América / autóctono y salvaje”, reiterating the idea of the American side of the hybrid identity carried by the poem’s narrator being (also) wild. Both poems talk about racial mixing of Spanish blood and respectively a Tagalog or an Incan heart: “la sangre es española/ e incaico es el latido”. However, Santos Chocano’s poem speaks of identity as *identification* meanwhile Balmori expresses the poet’s identity as *being*, a permanent condition, rather than an alternating temporary feeling:

cuando me siento inca/le rindo vasallaje al sol
que me da el cetro de su poder real;
cuando me siento hispano y evoco el coloniaje
parecen mis estrofas/trompetas de cristal

Returning to Balmori's verses, the retelling of Filipino history proposed in his poem contrasts greatly with how official history relates the arrival of early colonisers from Spain: Ferdinand Magellans (1480-1521) in Cebu and Manuel Lopez de Legazpi (1503-1572) in Manila. Having survived the majority of men that participated in the first expedition to circumnavigate the globe under the command of Sebastian El Cano, Magellan arrived on the island of Cebu in 1521. Shortly after, he was killed in the battle of Mactan against the Malayan chief Lapu-Lapu, who had refused to be converted to Christianity. Later expeditions arrived to Manila, where Rajah Sulayman (1558-1575) ruled. Suleyman resisted subjugation to Legazpi and waged a war against the Spanish. In the Philippines, both Lapu-Lapu and Sulayman are iconic figures of resistance against the Spanish.

The description of the first colonial encounter in Balmori's poem dismisses its violence, praising instead what it has produced: a new-born Filipino who has inherited Spanish "immortal blood" and the "divine language" in which this poem is written. The opening line of "Blasón" recognises the hybrid identity of the Filipino poet as Indo-Hispanic but what follows sees the Indo surrendering to Spain and glorifying only the Spanish part of his heritage. The indigenous man is reduced to the recipient of an 'Oriental heart' that is willingly offered to the coloniser. Another explanation for the glorification of Spain and Spanish in this poem could be that, at the time it was published, in 1941, over forty years had passed since the US became the new coloniser. Most Hispano-Filipino writers resisted the Americanisation of the Philippines as another form of colonialism and attached themselves to their Hispanic heritage, especially the language, as a form of resistance. This turn to privileging one coloniser over the other simply adds one more argument to understand "Blasón" as an example of transcultural orientalism

repeating Said's idea of cultural hegemony in which the colonised Tagalog (via the poetic voice) become (tenderly) Hispanised by the figure of Spain.

“Rima Malaya”, a poem contained in one of Balmori's earliest poetry collections entitled *Rimas Malayas* (1904), describes a romantic scene; the male speaker of the poem tells how he secretly enters the chamber of his beloved and persuades her to run away with him:

Era la noche tropical de oriente
Alumbrada por una luna soñolienta
Brillaban fugaces mil relámpagos
Y el trueno retumbaba con violencia

Mudo el jardín, las aves dormitaban
En sus nidos de plumas y hojas
Y las auras calladas susurraban
Girando entre los lirios y las rosas

Con pie dudoso y vacilantes manos
Trepé la verja de dorados hilos
El céfiro traíame en sus alas
El trémulo rumor de sus suspiros. ¹² (37)

The opening stanza locates the action of this poem in an abstract Oriental space referred to as “la noche tropical de oriente” [the tropical night of the orient]. Although it is possible to infer that the narrator is referring to the Philippines from the poem's title, it is not until its last stanzas (11 and 12) that local Filipino elements appear:

Es decir, sí, me iré pero contigo
Allá al bosque oriental de verdes ramas
Donde las mayas rimen nuestro idilio
Donde te aguarda un lecho de sampagas. (38)
[...]
¡ Oh! vente, Vente Carmencita mía,
Si no sabes amar, yo allí á tus plantas
Cantándote el vals de los Kundimans
Coronaré tu frente de champakas. ¹³ (39)

In the eleventh stanza, the narrator suggests running away to an 'Oriental forest' populated by "mayas," a general term for small birds such as sparrows original from the Philippines, where the lovers may rest on a bed of "sampagas," the Filipino national flower. The narrator says that he will entertain his lover by singing the vals of the Kundiman, a traditional Filipino love song, and crowning her with "champakas," a type of magnolia from South East Asia. Significantly, the tropical forest to which the lovers want to run away (although certainly idealized) is a landscape of the Philippines. In opposition, the image of the garden that opens the poem is constructed with non-indigenous elements and metaphors: lilies, roses, and the metaphor of the Zephyr, the God of the West wind in Greek mythology.

The central part of the poem describes how the narrator/lover climbs up to a balcony from which he walks towards the room of his beloved. The poem does not identify her home as a palace, a castle, a tower or a Nipa house, but the narrator does explain that to get to the room where his ("white") beloved *Carmencita* was peacefully sleeping he had to cross "one thousand rooms", surrounded by "tinieblas" and "sombras," darkness and shadows (38). This section invokes elements of the western romantic tradition, such as the garden, the white, princess-like character in her secluded bedroom and the gothic-like description of the dark dwelling. The combination of themes (lovers eloping), settings (the garden versus the tropical forest), characters (a white princess-like figure, flowers, songs and dense nature) and the lyrical use of the Spanish language make this poem an example of a transcultural modernist/romantic poetry where the Filipino landscape is orientalist but the indigenous elements are not subsumed to the European ones, as in "Blasón," but presented at the same level: they are all part of an idealised fantasy world. More importantly, the indigenous forest is preferred over the western garden, where the lovers flee to. The poem ends with a distinctly transcultural image: the "white" princess and the presumably indigenous narrator united in the forest. She, the foreigner/coloniser is brought into the world of the indigenous/colonised. In contrast with "Blasón," in which the Indo-Hispanic poet/narrator begins by bringing up his transcultural heritage only to dissolve it into the glorification of Spain, "Rima Malaya" shows

the two cultures coming together while remaining distinct. This emphasises dynamic transculturation leading to neoculturation—over cultural erasure (deculturation) and cultural appropriation (acculturation).

This poem is a clear example of Filipino modernism, written in the first decade of the twentieth century, thus showing its contemporaneity to the Latin American orientalist modernism. The practice of modernism in the Philippines was criticised, as it was in Latin America, by contemporary critics who considered the dwelling on romantic words an imitation of foreign (French) poetry and therefore an anti-nationalist gesture. For some, this type of baroque poetry betrayed the local in favour of the foreign, demonstrating assimilationist colonial practices. The practice of *indigenismo* in Latin America (by key authors such as the peruvian José María Arguedas 1911-1969) appeared as a reaction to this. W. E. Retana, one of the few Spanish literary critics who wrote about the Philippines in the early twentieth century, points out that the abuse of lilies and violets by some Filipino poets was regrettable since these flowers are not native to the Philippines: “it is as if the Filipinos find the Flora of their country unworthy” (Retana qtd. in Donoso 6). Retana’s critique does not, however, apply to this poem, where the indigenous Filipino landscape is chosen over the western garden, but also transculturated through the coming together of the lovers in it. Moreover, Balmori’s literary *indigenismo*, displayed in the incorporation of vernacular Malay words (*sampaguitas*, *champakas*, *mayas*, *kundiman*) into a poem written in Spanish, produces a very specific transcultural Filipino identity. In “Blason”, it is the native who becomes Spanish; here, it is the princess-like figure that is, to an extent, indigenised by the narrator.

Retana, however, insists on highlighting the foreign aspects instead of the local ones in Hispano-Filipino works. In the following acerbic quote, he explicitly attacks the superficial and “excessive modernism” of the young Balmori:

Á Jesús Balmori, uno de los poetas más jóvenes, le incluyo entre los que más llegarían á valer; pero el ataque de *modernismo fulminante* que padece no sé si le dejará seguir viviendo. Balmori no ha salido de su patria, y, sin embargo, vive mentalmente en París, en el París misterioso, trágicamente bohemio,

del Barrio Latino... Balmori quiere a toda costa ser un parisino enfermo, y enfermo se ha puesto, por pura espiritualidad, porque no concibe ser poeta si no es muriéndose de tristeza, de tristeza parisina. [...] He cargado la mano de la censura en Balmori, porque Balmori tiene el alma de poeta, vale, y se está tirando a matar á consecuencia de haberse creado a sí mismo un ambiente falso y antifilipino; y la crítica justa debe pedirle cuentas de tan sensible aberración. En Balmori luchan en espíritu, que es el de un buen patriota, y el cerebro, que es el de un parisense de doublé: y como pone su voluntad al servicio del cerebro, resulta que muchas de sus composiciones son... un verdadero dolor. ¹⁴ (qtd. in Donoso 17-18)

Retana's critique derives from his conviction that literature in the Filipino Hispanic tradition should be conceived of not only as an aesthetic practice but also as a political tool to be used in the imagination of a new independent nation. Modernist writing in Spanish in the Philippines should move, according to Retana, towards the configuration of *filipinidad*: the idealisation of the Philippines based on a discourse that served political and national assertion as well as cultural expression.

In my reading, Balmori's poetry does not fully subsume the "spirit of a good patriot" to the "brain of a doubled Parisian," but rather creates its own form of *filipinidad* by combining the two and having them inflect each other in a process of transculturation. The cultural syncretism of indigenous and foreign motifs, and of literary styles (Hispanic and French modernism), exemplifies Filipino orientalist transculturation. I thus contend that Filipino modernism produces a form of orientalism that is both aesthetic *and* political; the exoticisation of the Philippines responds *not only* to an attitude of literary escapism *but also* to a desire of national affirmation. Balmori, like Darío, is expropriating cultural capital as Casanova (2005) puts it, to create something new. If Darío's modernism was a form of resistance by a Central American author against both European modernism and the Spanish lack of a comparable literary form, Balmori's transcultural orientalism can be considered as the Filipino expropriation of European and Latin American literary modernism in the service of an emergent Filipino nationalism.

The last poem by Balmori I discuss shows another aspect of transcultural orientalism by abandoning self-orientalisation and drawing on Japanese and

European elements to make visible the Orient as a dramatised representation. Balmori, like some of the Latin American and European travellers mentioned earlier (Loti, Tablada, Gómez Carrillo), found in Japan a source of inspiration for their literature, yet their motivations are different. As noted earlier, in contrast to the writings about Japan produced by French authors, which were designed to stimulate the imagination, Tablada and Gómez Carrillo were driven by a desire to ‘truly’ understand the Japanese (and other orientals), although, as Clark (2013) notes, they were also heavily influenced by their preconceived images of them and had to negotiate between their expectations and experiences. Balmori’s position with regards to the orientalisation of Japan in “La Gueisha” and in the novel *Los Pájaros de Fuego* is different again. On the one hand, as a writer, he also uses idealised stereotypes (national symbols such as golden temples, geishas, cherry blossoms) to develop a positive image of Japan; on the other hand, like many Filipinos in the period leading up to WWII, he admires the perceived strength and consistency of the Japanese sense of nationhood, which he feels is lacking in the Philippines.

The twenty-ninth poem in Balmori’s collection *Mi Casa de Nipa* (1941), “La Gueisha” presents another example of transcultural orientalism, this time by appropriating the figure of the Japanese performer:

Es de noche, es un salón, y son las once.
Suena un gong como un violón de viejo bronce.
Se descorre la cortina de oro y grana,
Y en la escena que simula un nuevo Oriente
Se adelanta quedamente, lentamente,
La muñeca de esmaltada porcelana.

Se dijera un gran aroma de resedas
Toda envuelta entre sus oros y sus sedas
Bajo un ritmo musical que sube y sube.
¿Es un ave? ¿Es una flor? No es flor ni es ave,
Es la Gueisha langorosa, dulce y suave,
Como el paso tembloroso de una nube

Va a bailar. Es una danza misteriosa.

Es un vuelo, es el capullo de una rosa
Que a la luz de los faroles se hace flor.
No se pueden ver sus pies bajo sus galas
Solo mueve sus dos manos blancas alas,
Blancos remos de un ensueño bogador.

Bajo el triunfo de la música que rima
Todo el baile es una grave pantomima.
Y la Gueisha soberana y tornasol.
A los sonos de las flautas, sonriente.
Se levanta en espirales de serpiente.
O se dobla como un loto bajo el sol.¹⁵ (126-27)

The poem talks about an evening performance in a theatre. The main character of the “pantomime” is a Geisha, who, through a dance, tells the audience about her (fatal) love story. The Geisha’s fiancé—her *prometido*—has departed in search of “fame” and “fortune” while she, like Penelope, waits for his return. However, when he does not return, the Geisha sees no other ending to her sorrow than to die. The poem concludes with the vanishing of the flute, the sound of the gong and the gold and red curtains being closed again.

In the opening stanza, we are told by the narrator that the stage “simula un nuevo oriente” [simulates a new orient]. The drama, therefore, does not take place in Japan, in the Philippines or in Mexico, but in a simulated or staged orient in which the Geisha performs (or is performed) accompanied by music. The Geisha is compared in her movements to a porcelain doll, a snake and a lotus. In the third stanza, it is announced that she is going to dance “una danza misteriosa” [a mysterious dance] in which she twists like a snake or bends with the flexibility of a lotus in the sun. It is remarkable that both female characters in “Rima Malaya” and in “La Gueisha” are being orientalised by the (presumably) male poetic voice. In the case of Carmencita as an object of love and desire, and in the case of the geisha as an spectacle of visual enjoyment. “The Gueisha” is also a poem about intrigue involving the reader/spectator expressed by the narrator’s demands to interpret the geisha’s movements in order to find out what her story is:

¿Qué nos dice en sus solemnes movimientos?
¿Qué nos cuentan sus menudos pasos lentos?
¿Qué oriental historia es esta de la danza,
Que al abrir la media luna de sus ojos
Se dijera traspasada en los abrojos
Como pobre mariposa su esperanza?

¿Es tristeza? ¿Es alegría lo que siente?
¿Qué misterio perfumado del Oriente,
¿Qué divino mago rito religioso
Desenvuelve como en ondas de un aroma
Esta flor, esta mujer, esta paloma,
Con el ritmo de su cuerpo cadensioso? ¹⁶ (127-8)

The rhetorical questions written in the present tense suggest that the narrator perhaps knows the story and is building the reader's expectations while asking him/her to interpret it. The poem explicitly includes the reader by using the first-person pronoun "nos": "¿Qué *nos dice* en sus solemnes movimientos?" [what is *she telling us* in her solemn movements?] (my emphasis). It continues: "¿Qué oriental historia es esta de la danza? [...] ¿Es tristeza? ¿Es alegría lo que siente? [...] ¿Qué misterio perfumado del Oriente?" [What oriental story is behind the dance? Is it sadness? Is it happiness what she feels? What fragrant mystery of the Orient?]. In referring to her as a mystery of the Orient, the narrator reveals his own doubts about interpreting her movements and also evokes a familiar orientalist motif, that of the Asian as inscrutable and mysterious, which in the case of (orientalised) women it is also a game of seduction. The mystery, however, is in the end not very enigmatic, as the Geisha is the protagonist of an archetypal narrative (not specific to the Orient, neither to a Geisha) of waiting in vain for the return of one's great love. In this way, the reader of the poem is prompted to reflect on his or her own investment in orientalist motifs.

The elements that Balmori juxtaposes in this simulated orient are oriental and occidental—the gong, the porcelain doll, the snake, the lotus, the Geisha and the mysterious dance versus the double bass, the rose and the Penelope-like story. At the same time, the framing narrative of the poem's

speaker viewing the performance brings to the fore the artificiality of the oriental pantomime and reveals the ability of the author to braid together the cultural elements that constitute the “new orient” into a scene that does not aspire to be authentically Japanese but only playfully so.

Here, unlike in the other two poems, Balmori’s transcultural orientalism does not refer to the history of colonisation affecting the Filipino self. Instead, the poet looks to *another orient* as a source of inspiration, while also thematising orientalism and playing with the expectations it fosters in the reader. In the end, “La Gueisha” does not orientalise Japan in a hegemonic way, as “Blasón” does with Spain, or show aspects of the Philippines (*sampagas*, *mayas*, *Kundiman* songs) and the West (the white princes and the castle) coming together as a way of achieving national affirmation, as it occurs in “Rima Malaya.” Instead, “La Gueisha” is an example of a transcultural orientalism that works through playfully combining elements from Japanese and Western cultures showing a creative and unique literary imagination. Images of the East are animated by Western fantasies and images of the West by Eastern fantasies.

Conclusion

Drawing on and going beyond Said’s idea of orientalism as a form of othering that visualizes the power dynamics of European colonialism and Tinajero’s comments on Latin American modes of orientalist literature via travel writing I have described transcultural orientalism as a framework from which to understand elements at play in representations of the Orient in Hispano-Filipino literature. Specifically, I see Filipino orientalism in these three poems by Jesús Balmori as a transcultural mood, as the articulation of a double consciousness (Tagalog and Hispanic) that offers a unexplored vision of the history of colonialism in the Philippines that shows the investment of Balmori in its Hispanic elements, meanwhile neglecting the American influence and looking outwards towards Japan, especially in the poem “La Gueisha”. The theme of Filipino *japonism* is further developed in his novel *Los pájaros de fuego* [1945] (2012).

The three of Balmori's poems I have analysed here incorporate the 'native' and 'the foreign' (whether Spanish, Malay or Japanese), and engage with the received ideologies of East and West in order to imagine a new Philippines, a place where Eastern and Western fantasies meet (at the sea shores, at palace gardens, in tropical forests or in theatre performances). Elements of orientalism are indeed perceptible in Balmori's poems through the exoticisation of local elements, for example nature (in "Rima Malaya"), the new-born Filipino man (in "Blasón") and the Oriental woman (in "La Gueisha"). The female characters in these poems, Carmencita and La Gueisha are objectivized: they are spoken for and looked at. Spain is also casted as a woman, however, her role as a mother eschews any seductive orientalism, and it is, instead, idealised as a colonial power. Notwithstanding, Balmori does not merely reiterate orientalism to represent a despotic, stagnant and libidized orient but a place of national affirmation that opens a wider vision of the Philippines.

Unlike Tablada and Carrillo who attempted to 'truly' understand another Orient through travel and travel writing, Balmori's approach to Japanese culture for example does not respond to a necessity of knowing or a desire to establish an intercultural dialogue, but constitutes an act of expropriating its symbols and figures for his own literary experimentation.

Tablada and Gómez Carrillo re-signify European orientalism establishing a transpacific link with China and Japan through travel writing, Balmori does so but statically, through a process of literary transculturation that does not require *going to* the orient but *being in* the Philippines and see the Philippines through and in parallel to other cultures. For example drawing an analogous vision of Filipino and Peruvian *mestizaje* in his own (re)writing of "Blasón".

In "Orientalism Reconsidered" Said explains that orientalism takes the point of departure of "formerly un- or mis-represented human groups to speak for and represent themselves" in a history that has overwritten them and now they write. He claims that the position of the orientalised is empowered by what he calls an alternative vision of things, a "libertarian optic" that "entails nothing less than the creation of new objects for a new

kind of knowledge” (“Reconsidered” 91). Looking at Hispano-Filipino literature from a transcultural perspective may be an exercise of seeing through such libertarian optic. Rather than solely promoting liberation from the occidental gaze on the Orient(s), and consequently, writing back at Occident from the Orient, it opens a field of vision in which Filipino literature written in Spanish can offer a global views of the Philippines and its constitutive Others.

Notes

1. One of the most complete recent works on Orientalism in Latin American literature is the volume edited by Erik Caymad-Freixas entitled *Orientalism and Identity in Latin America: Fashioning the Self and Other from the (Post) Colonial Margin* (2013). Another interesting work is Torres-Rodríguez's "Orientalising Mexico: *Estudios indostánicos* and the Place of India in José Vasconcelos' *Raza Cósmica*" (2015), which connects with Caymad-Freixas's discussion of the construction of a cultural link between Asia (mostly China and Japan) and Latin America by Latin American intellectuals, including Octavio Paz.
2. For the [Latin American] modernist the act of orientalizing did not mean finding an opposite answer to the ethical, moral and aesthetic principles of European society. Neither did it aim at responding to the European orientalism of the fin-de-siècle or at blindly imitating its literary production. This was emphasized by Aníbal Gonzalez's suggestion that modernists knew exactly what they were doing when, in the same text, they combined references to the Far East with ones to indigenous cultures, while at the same time citing European authors. This, does not mean however that the reason why the members of the movement engaged in a dialogue with the European orientalists was based on an attempt to exclusively antagonize the European vision of that part of the world.
3. I have finished reading Loti's *Madame Chrysanthème* for the second time and as much as I love the praise of the delightful writer, the frivolity of his judgments, the perfect incomprehension of the true Japanese exasperate me.
4. José Juan Tablada departs tomorrow to Japan. The poet will accomplish his youthful dream... Go artist! Go, you, the chosen one! Study and be fruitful, and may your noble work on touching the most suggestive of plastic arts, because it is profoundly original, may be fertile in our land... When enchanted you behold a snowflake from Fusi-yama floating on a golden sea, dream of the distant and peaceful Citlaltepētēl.
5. The transmigration of souls, the attributions of domestic divinities, the use of luck charms, the belief by which the dragon eats the sun in its eclipses, monastic rules.
6. [the old Egypt] was not dead. The Muslims and the English might have been able to dominate it but not to transform it. A strong national exhalation would be enough to make all turbans and colonial helmets disappear.
7. One of the arguments put forward by the Indian scholar Partha Chatterjee (1993) on postcolonial nationalism is that colonial administrations may have dominated the 'material realm,' but never fully penetrated the 'spiritual realm'; this sentiment is echoed in the judge's insistence that "the old Egypt" has survived.

8. Rubén Darío's poem "La Sonatina," included in *Prosas Profanas* (1895), is one of the best examples of modernism. Balmori wrote a short play entitled *La Princesa está Triste* (1919), taking the second verse from Darío's "Sonatina" as a departure point.
9. I am an Indo-Hispanic poet. In my Christian chest / My heart is a vase where the blood of Legazpi, the Hispanic captain/mixes with the Tagalog blood of the daughter of the Rahá / With my heel sunken in the foam of the waves, / I awaited on the sea for the Spanish galleon / And Spain, when she found me, kissed the golden feathers / That trembled on my forehead like rays of sun / She was beautiful, she was good, she was loving / I laid my spears, my thorns and my flowers at her feet / I gave her my wild oriental heart / Since then I carry her on my naked chest/Serving me as glorious iron shield / With its divine language and immortal blood.
10. Filipinos identify themselves as belonging to the Malay peoples, which also populated Indonesia and Malaysia; they often use the short form 'indo.'
11. In the pre-Hispanic Philippines, most of the chieftains were called Rajah, the Arab term for 'king.' Islam was the most widespread religion and its terminology was used for many elements of government. See Isaac Donoso's "El islam en las letras Filipinas" (2007).
12. It was the tropical night of the orient / Illuminated by a somnolent moon / A thousand lightning bolts were shining in the sky / thunder resounded violently / Mute was the garden, the birds were asleep / In their nests of leaves and feathers / And quietly the wind whispered / Twirling around the lilies and the roses. / With hesitant feet and hands / I climbed the fence of golden threads / The zephyr brought me in his wings / The tremulous murmur of her sighs.
13. Say yes, I will go but with you / Back to the oriental forest of green branches / Where the *mayas* sing our love / Where a bed of *sampagas* awaits you.][...] Oh! Come, come with me my beloved Carmencita, / If you do not know how to love, I'll be there at your feet/ Singing the waltz of the *Kundimans* / I will crown your forehead with *champakas*.
14. To Jesús Balmori, one of the youngest poets whom I would add to my list of most promising; however, the attack of fulminant modernism that he suffers from may not let him live long. Balmori has never left his country, but mentally he lives in Paris, in the mysterious, tragically bohemian Paris of the Quartier Latin... Balmori wants, above all things, to be a sick Parisian and thus he has become sick by virtue of pure spirituality, because he cannot conceive the idea of being a poet without dying of sadness, of Parisian sadness. [...] I have censured Balmori because he has the soul of a poet, and yet, he is throwing all his talent away as a consequence of having created himself in a false environment, one that is anti-Filipino, and a fair critique must demand payment for such a profound aberration. In Balmori fight the spirit of a good patriot and the brain

of a doubled Parisian; since he puts his will at the service of his brain, many of his compositions are... a true pain.

15. The night has fallen, inside the room, the clock strikes eleven / The sound the gong is heard resonating like a double bass old bronze / The gold and red curtain are drawn / And on the scene that simulates a new Orient / Comes forward quietly and slowly/ The doll of varnished porcelain.

She smells like the great aroma of mignonettes / All wrapped in gold and silk / The music rises in crescendo/ Is it a bird? It is a flower? It is not a flower, not a bird, / It is the geisha, languid, sweet, soft, / Like the flickering walk of a cloud.

She is going to dance. It is a mysterious dance. / She can fly, she is like the rose bud / That blooms when illuminated by some lantern / Her feet cannot be seen under her clothes / She only moves her hands like white wings / like the white paddles of a sailing dream.

Under the triumph of rhyming music, / The whole dance is a serious pantomime / And the Geisha, sovereign sunflower / Smiling at the sounds of flutes / Rises like spirals of a snake / Or bends her body like a lotus in the sun.

16. What does she tell us in her solemn movements? / What do her slow steps tell us? / What oriental story is there in this dance? / When she opens the crescent moon of her eyes / her hope was pierced in the thistles/ like a little butterfly/

Is it sadness? Is joy what she feels? / What scented mystery of the East / What divine magician, religious rite / Develops in fragrant waves / This flower, this woman, this dove, / With the permanent rhythm of her body?

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Reframing “Nuestra lengua”

Transpacific Perspectives on the Teaching of Spanish in the Philippines

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Abstract

Throughout the twentieth century, Spanish was increasingly marginalized in the Philippines, often characterized as the language of the colonizer, the language of the elites, or a backward language. While pro-Hispanists insisted that Spanish had great historical and symbolic value, this article examines the alternative ways in which Claro M. Recto (1890-1960) and Antonio M. Abad (1894-1970) defended its instruction in the Philippines. As a politician, Recto was well known for having supported the promotion of a common national language based on Tagalog. However, throughout his life, he maintained an intimate tie to the Spanish language, as evident in his recurrent return to his 1917 poem “*Elogio del castellano*,” in which he elaborated on the global trajectory of the language. Even more so than Recto, Abad was a devoted defender of the dissemination of Spanish in the Philippines. This is apparent through his manuals and lectures on Spanish language pedagogy as well as his attendance at the Third Annual Congress of the Academies of the Spanish Language, which was held in Bogotá, Colombia, in 1960. By first examining Recto’s poems and speeches, and then Abad’s lectures and reports on the state of the Spanish language in the Philippines, this article argues that these two Hispanophone

Filipino intellectuals, beyond merely highlighting the language's patriotic significance, sought to reframe the language as one that already belonged to Filipinos as well as to millions of people on the other side of the Pacific.

Keywords

Compulsory Teaching of Spanish, Pro-Hispanism, Common Language, Multilingualism, Cultural Diplomacy, Academies of the Spanish Language

ELOGIO AL CASTELLANO

Consecuentes con el propósito de prestigiar a nuestra sangre y a nuestra raza, siempre hemos enaltecido el genio de España. Todo lo que exalte a la Madre Patria, tiene que reflejarse sobre las naciones americanas a las cuales dio vida.

Por eso tenemos mucho gusto en reproducir la siguiente poesía, que mereció un premio extraordinario en los suntuosos Juegos Florales de Manila, y que le

valió a su autor, el Señor Claro M. Recto, una ovación estruendosa.

Las Islas Filipinas se encuentran desde hace veinte años, sometidas al gobierno de los Estados Unidos; y es extraordinariamente consolador, ver que el espíritu español, en lugar de desaparecer en la patria de Aguinaldo, adquiere frescura y vigor y se impone con la fuerza de las cosas incontrastables.

“Ya no hay nobles hidalgos, ni bravos caballeros?
¿Callaremos ahora para llorar después?”

RUBEN DARIO.—“Los Cisnes”

Arca Santa inviolable de la Raza,
Arca Santa de próceres leyendas,
que a tu prestigio espiritual vinculas
la gloria de las magnas epopeyas;
Arca egregia y divina,
que en las ingentes luchas ya pretéritas
sobreviviste al colonial desastre,
cual sobrevive el alma a la materia;
Arca ebúrnea, copón de maravillas,
donde se guarda secular herencia;
Arca de lo inmortal que veneramos
en la vetusta casa solariega;
Arca de oro que ofrece el Libro Santo
y el perfumado Pan de la Belleza,
por quien juramos proscribir la casta
de osados malandrines que te afrentan;
la musa tropical, la musa autóctona,
de tus clásicos lauros heredera,
torna a pulsar el clavicordio hispano,
clavicordio romántico que sueña,
clavicordio que sufre como una alma,
clavicordio polifono que encierra
en sus notas lo grande, clavicordio
donde llora sus cuitas Filomela,
donde estallan los gritos del combate,
donde retumba la canción de gesta.
Y canta en tu loor, ¡oh lengua hispana!
del pensamiento alada mensajera,
que fulguras, cual límpida custodia
de la Eterna Verdad, en las conciencias,
como el Sol en las cúspides altivas
donde la tromba y el ciclón fermentan,
como el anhelo indígena que fulge
en el blasón astral de mi bandera.

¡Oh lengua sacrosanta
de Fray Luis y Miguel, Lope de Vega
del Arcipreste, Calderón y Góngora,
los Argensola, Hurtado y Espronceda,
¡oh lengua que enfloró de madrigales
las pristinas edades romancescas,
toda hecha de vorágines y truenos,
toda hecha de suspiros y cadencias,
coro inmenso de tímpanos, concierto
de las panidas flautas en la sierra,
sinfonía fantástica que irrumpe
del arpa gigantesca de las selvas.

Es tu ritmo la ronda bulliciosa
de crótalos y locas panderetas,

de guitarras que dicen el elogio
de unos ojos reidores que asentan;
es la risa que en notas se desata
cual cristalino desgranar de perlas,
el madrigal sonoro que desfié
sus estrofas de amor en las verbenas,
y el chocar de las copas musicales
donde hierve la sangre de las cepas.

Es tu acento el susurro que adormece
del aura al retozar en la floresta,
y el blando caramillo que solloza
bajo el beso lunar, en primavera.
Te remeda el gorjeo de la alondra,
la imperativa voz de las trompetas,
el quejido que emerge de la cuna
y el doliente “kundiman” de mi tierra;
el rauda vendaval que avanza indómito
por cima de las altas cordilleras,
y brama en los barrancos y hondonadas
y en las rocas que hendieron las centellas.

Y tuviste en la lira de Quintana
ecos triunfales, resonancias bélicas
de estoques y corazas y armaduras
que son el timbre perennal de Iberia;
en los versos bronceados de Chocano
fragar de sordas cataratas épicas,
algarazas de pompas coloniales,
rumor de besos y temblor de quenás.
De Solís, en la prosa cincelada
impetus de corcel, dianas homéricas,
estrépito de lanzas y tizonas,
de broqueles y cascos y rodelas.
En Fray Luis de León fuiste cigarra
que endulzaba el reposo de la siesta,
y tonada de amor de la tierra
en los cuadros agrestes de Pereda.
Caballero gentil de la Armonía
en el rugiente “Niágara” de Heredia,
batir de alas de ingrátidos querubens
en las trovos ardientes de Teresa.
Y en el arpa divina de Darío
ruido de encajes y frufús de seda,
música de cínceles sobre el mármol
y murmurio de risas y de gemas;
canción de cisnes sobre el quieto estanque
al paso de las “púberas canéforas,”
arpeggios de los violines cortesanos
y vibración de cítaras helenas.....

Fig. 1. Recto's poem appeared in *Revista Mexicana: Semanario Ilustrado* on April 22, 1917. Image digitized by Hemeroteca Nacional de México.

Y cerraste la eclipse de tu gloria,
con un estruendo de imperial proeza,
en las perennes páginas altísimas
del libro de Cervantes Saavedra.

No en vano fueron por ignotas mares
de Hispania las veloces carabelas
en comunión ferviente con la Audacia
y los altos designios de la Idea;
no en vano los Cortés y los Balboa
desafiaron el hambre y las tormentas,
y sus bridones épicos midieron
las pampas infinitas de la América;
no en vano sobre el pico de los Andes,
dueña del mundo, flameó tu enseña,
tan amplia que cubrió los continentes,
tan gloriosa, tan noble y tan excelsa;
no en vano por tres siglos tus ejércitos
han levantado en mi solar sus tiendas,
y vieron el prodigio de mis lagos
y de mis bellas noches el poema;
no en vano en nuestras almas imprimiste
de tus virtudes la radiosa estela,
y galardos enjayan tus rosales
píenos de aroma las nativas sendas:
tu imperio espiritual vive y perdura,
y extiende su simbólica cadena
del Pirene a los Andes y al Carballo,
y en un abrazo inmenso los estrecha.
Por los mares Atlántico y Pacífico
tus fuertes galeones aun navegan,

y van en ellos, bajo un sol de gloria,
almas grandes que luchan y que anhelan,
Andantes Caballeros del Ensueño,
guardianes de la fe de Dulcinea
locos sublimes que descubren mundos
y mueren por su reina, la Quimera.
Aun nos ofrecen tus antiguos códices
la fórmula inmortal de la Belleza,
y tus filtros y alquimias prodigiosos
del humano dolor la panacea.
No morirás jamás en este suelo
que ilumina tu luz. Quién lo pretenda
ignora que el Castillo de mi Raza
es de bloques que dieron tus canteras.

ENVÍO :

Casa de España, Olimpo de las Artes,
Templo del Porvenir, ¡bendita seas!
Las musas danzarán sobre tu césped
y gustarán la miel de tus colmenas.
Sé el manantial donde las almas nobles
el agua pura del Ensueño beban,
la Torre de marfil donde se guarde
el tesoro ideal de nuestra lengua.
Hispanos: si algún día la escarnecen,
nuestras aljabas vaciarán sus flechas,
y nos verán, triunfantes o vencidos,
al pie de esta sagrada ciudadela.

CLARO M. RECTO.

21 de Enero de 1917.



Fig. 1. (cont'd.) Recto's poem appeared in *Revista Mexicana: Semanario Ilustrado* on April 22, 1917. Image digitized by Hemeroteca Nacional de México.

CONFERENCIA

Ateneo
ej. 1

DICTADA POR EL PROFESOR ANTONIO M. ABAD, EX-JEFE DEL DEPARTAMENTO DE ESPAÑOL DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE FILIPINAS, EN LA TARDE DEL 27 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 1962, EN LA SALA DE LECTURA DE LA BIBLIOTECA DE LA SOLIDARIDAD FILIPINO-HISPANA

En la tarde del 27 de noviembre de 1962, y ante un público selecto y distinguido, don Antonio M. Abad, antiguo jefe (hoy jubilado) del Departamento de Español de la Universidad de Filipinas, dictó la siguiente conferencia:

LA ENSEÑANZA DEL ESPAÑOL EN FILIPINAS
-- SUS MALES Y SUS REMEDIOS --

Después de oír en esta sala la exposición de interesantes asuntos que afectan al hombre en general, es hora de volver los ojos hacia nuestros propios y más directos problemas para tratarlos y encararlos con la máxima objetividad. Analizados y estudiados sin pasión, es justo que señalemos los medios con los cuales queremos llegar a una solución, marcando en tal caso los pasos que debemos dar para orientar nuestra actividad hacia la consecución de nuestros objetivos.

No estamos opuestos a la cultura indígena

Por menos sólito que parezca, trataremos de nuestros fines como de un ante todo para que ellos nos digan si nuestra actividad es proporcional a ellos. Digamos en seguida que el objetivo primordial del hispanismo Filipino es la conservación del español en Filipinas, porque entendemos que sólo por ella puede pervivir la cultura hispánica en nuestro país, cultura que se sirve precisamente del lenguaje como de su vehículo principal de propagación.

Fig. 2. Abad's 1962 lecture on the teaching of Spanish in the Philippines. Copy housed at the Library of Instituto Caro y Cuervo, Colombia

*¿Seremos entregados a los bárbaros fieros?
¿Tanto millones de hombres hablaremos inglés?*
-Rubén Darío, *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905)

In a series of lectures held at the University of the Philippines in 1979, award-winning prolific author Federico Espino Licsi called upon Filipinos to read more Latin American literature.¹ Filipinos, he argued, needed to become more acquainted with the revolutionary or “anti-gringo” works of Cuban José Martí, Chilean Pablo Neruda, Argentine Ernesto “Che” Guevara as well as “*otras voces líricas de la parte del Tercer Mundo en donde se habla el idioma iberoamericano*” (18). Interestingly enough, Espino Licsi referred to these writers’ medium of expression as an “Ibero-American”—instead of a European, Western, and colonial—language. However, he was far from advocating that their works be read in their original Spanish. That is, he did not articulate a defense of Spanish; rather he opted for more translations of these writings into “our cradle tongue” (19).² In regard to the teaching of Spanish in the Philippines, Espino Licsi observed:

Many Hispanista friends of mine will disown me when they hear my speech this morning. They will probably say I do not deserve the Premio Zobel or the Fernando Ma. Guerrero Award for Literature or even the prize I won in Spain. But there are times when friendship should be set aside. *Gaya ng marahil ay alam na ninyo, ako’y makatang sumusulat sa Pilipino, sa Ilokano, sa Inglés, at sa Kastila nguni’t hindi ako sang-ayon sa sapilitang pagtuturo ng Kastila sa mga pamantasan dito. Es una especie de neocolonialismo.* (18-19)

To be clear, the poet was not exactly making an attack on the dissemination (or perhaps survival) of Spanish in the Philippines. His was an insistent call for more translations into the vernacular languages of the Philippines, hence greater appreciation for linguistic diversity as well as a claim against the *compulsory* teaching of Spanish.³ Nevertheless, Espino Licsi proceeded to refer to Spanish as “*idioma del colonialista*,” “*lengguwahe ng kolonisador*” (21). Moreover, clarifying his support of multilingualism, he declared at the end: “*Bago unawain ang Babel ng iba, / Sariling Babel ay unawain muna. (Antes de aprender el Babel extranjero, / Hay que aprender el Babel nuestro)*” (21), thereby

implicitly excluding Spanish as a language that belonged to Filipinos. The characterization of Spanish as the colonizer's language may seem passé but in this context it makes us wonder: why did Espino Licsi leave Spanish, a language he dominated fairly well and often employed as a poet, out of his definition of "*el Babel nuestro*"?⁴ To answer this question, it is worthwhile to go back in time and consider how Spanish was taught in the Philippines throughout the twentieth century.

Historians agree that after 333 years of Spanish rule, only a minuscule percentage of Filipinos were fluent in Spanish.⁵ Exact statistics from the end of this period vary widely, but they generally confirm that Spanish did not reach the masses, at least not as mandated by the Education Decree of 1863, which had sought to provide free and compulsory education in Spanish to all children from age seven to twelve.⁶ In *Noli me tangere* (1887), José Rizal fictionalizes some of the possible reasons for the dire results of this decree as his protagonist Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra, back from his sojourn in Europe, visits a parochial school in Central Luzon and strikes up a conversation with a teacher. The latter tells Ibarra that students are forced to memorize passages or even entire books in Spanish, "*sin entender de ellos una palabra*" (98). Rejecting this method, the teacher tries out a new approach: one based on interaction and transmission of meaning, rather than memorization. While this practice proves to be quite effective (the teacher tells Ibarra that slowly, but surely, students were able to understand him and eventually articulate phrases of their own in the language), the Spanish friars who run the school force him to stop, arguing that Spanish is not for Filipinos.⁷ This scene illustrates how the dissemination of Spanish, beyond the memorization of Christian doctrines, was a threat to the friars, "a challenge to their authority and a veritable theft of their privileges" (Rafael 26), as knowledge of the language could potentially give Filipinos access to liberal anticlerical writings. Spanish, as a living language, did not belong to Filipinos.

Shortly before and after becoming independent from the Spanish Empire, publications in Spanish flourished, giving rise to what critics often refer to as the Golden Age of Philippine literature in Spanish. However, this literary outburst was interrupted when the United States government

quickly imposed English as the lingua franca of the Philippines. Already in 1901, English was established as the sole language of instruction in public schools and to enforce this rule, hundreds and eventually thousands of teachers from the United States were sent to the Philippines (Fernández 373). In this respect, the United States was able to assume the role of the responsible and caring provider, the educator of the Filipino people, while conveniently promoting the centuries-old black legend of Spain as a cruel and selfish tyrant. Despite its historical and foundational value in the Philippines, Spanish was set to become a language mastered by fewer and fewer Filipinos.

During the first phase of the American colonial period (1898-1935), Spanish and English were the co-official languages for civil service. As conversations on adopting a national common language based on a vernacular language emerged in the 1930s, Spanish began to lose even more ground. In 1934, the Tydings-McDuffie Act excluded Spanish entirely from the curriculum of public schools (Recto, vol. 7, 114-15). In preparation for the Commonwealth government, the Constitutional Convention met that same year and recommended that Spanish continue as one of the official languages of the legislature and of the courts, but only up to 1940 (Gonzalez 50). The expiry date for Spanish was set. Accordingly, in 1940, Commonwealth President Manuel L. Quezon claimed: “I believe we should have this national language rather than English or Spanish, and because I know that we can never make English or Spanish—*certainly not Spanish*—the national language of the Philippines” (my emphasis, 25). And “*certainly not Spanish*” was the general inclination of Filipino intellectuals and politicians in debates for the lingua franca of the Philippines after the Commonwealth period. Nevertheless, in 1947, Spanish was re-introduced under the Sotto Law (Republic Act No. 343). Although the original bill had intended to render it compulsory, it reentered the curriculum as an optional course. In 1952, the Magalona Law (Republic Act No. 709) made Spanish compulsory for two consecutive years in all universities and private schools. The Cuenco Law (Republic Act No. 1881), approved in 1957, required twenty-four credits in Spanish for Education, Law, Trade, Liberal Arts, and Foreign Service.

All of these bills generated heated public debates and Spanish became an unpopular requirement for Filipino students. As a result of student protests, in 1967, under Republic Act No. 5182, the number of required credits in these university concentrations was reduced by half.⁸ Meanwhile, Spanish remained in usage in various official contexts even though it was virtually left out of debates on what the national language should be in the future.

By the seventies, Spanish continued to be taught in schools, but as if it were a foreign—or rather, a dead—language, following a methodology largely based on the memorization of rules and conjugations (Donoso and Macahilig-Barceló 421). Students knew Rizal and his poem “*El último adiós*,” but they knew it, ironically, mirroring how school children in *Noli me tangere* studied Christian doctrines: regurgitating lines they barely understood. After a trajectory of marginalization, in 1987, Spanish ceased being an official language of the Philippines. Isaac Donoso summarizes the stigmatization of Spanish throughout the twentieth century like this: “*de lengua nacional en 1898 a lengua elitista en 1945, o, peor, lengua de la leyenda negra y del aburrimiento en 1987*” (432).

In what follows, I want to explore alternative ways in which two Hispanophone intellectuals, poet-turned-politician Claro M. Recto (1890-1960) and novelist and educator Antonio M. Abad (1894-1970), sought to refashion the teaching of Spanish in the Philippines. Instead of lingering on ovations to the language, which often morphed into unapologetic longings for the bygone Spanish Empire, they tried to disentangle Spanish-language instruction from a colonial impetus ruled by imposition and turned their focus to the language’s vitality across the Pacific in Spanish America.

“Por los mares Atlántico y Pacífico”: Recto’s Unending Affair with the Spanish Language

In the first decades of the twentieth century, various Hispanophone Filipino writers were generally alarmed by the overwhelmingly rapid rate at which Filipinos were being Americanized. As a result, they took refuge in the Spanish language and evoked the past Spanish Empire. For instance, in a poem written in honor of Spanish writer Salvador Rueda who visited

Manila in 1915, a young Claro M. Recto exalted the “spiritual,” “generous,” and “immaculate” Spain. Several lines of this poem, titled “*Mi homenaje a la matrona*,” are devoted to the “divine” Spanish language. He hails from the former colony:

*Yo te saludo en tu natal idioma
[...]
Yo te saludo en ese idioma armónico
que volcó en nuestros pechos la fragancia,
idioma musical, divino idioma
que exploró el mundo en ideal cruzada;
aquel mismo del Cid y las Partidas,
del fazañoso hidalgo de la Mancha,
de Herrera, Calderón, Garcilaso,
Teresa de Jesús, Lope y Quintana. (vol. 1, 283)*

The Spanish language here is not presented as one that belongs to Filipinos, but rather to a long list of Spanish writers, including his interlocutor, Salvador Rueda. Later in the poem, Recto dares to appropriate the Spanish language, but only indirectly, by claiming that it is also indeed the same language employed by Rizal and in the first constitution of the Philippines.

In “*Elogio del castellano*,” a poem from 1917, Recto offers a more elaborate praise for the Spanish language. Written for the inauguration of “*Casa de España*,” the poem is on the surface virtually indistinguishable from “*Mi homenaje a la matrona*” or other poetic homages to Spain or the Spanish language.⁹ “*Arca Santa*,” “*Arca egregia y divina*,” and “*Arca de oro*” are some of the pompous epithets for the language of Fray Luis de León, Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Calderón, Góngora, and other writers of the Spanish Golden Age (vol. 1, 287-88). Yet what calls our attention even before the opening litany is the poem’s epigraph, two lines by Nicaraguan writer Rubén Darío: “¿*Ya no hay nobles hidalgos, ni bravos caballeros? / ¿Callaremos ahora para llorar después?*” (vol. 1, 287). These lines come from *Cantos de vida y esperanza* (1905), a collection in which Darío summons Spanish Americans—or “the mil cachorros sueltos del León español” (104), as put in his emblematic poem “A Roosevelt”—to unite against the looming expansion of the United States

in Latin America.¹⁰ Darío was not really inclusive of Filipinos in his call, yet the lines immediately preceding those quoted in “*Elogio del castellano*” unveil a preoccupation that would be much more pressing in the Philippines than in Latin America: “¿Seremos entregados a los bárbaros fieros? ¿Tanto millones de hombres hablaremos inglés?” (109). Framed like this, Recto’s deep concern about the Americanization of the Philippines has a lot in common with the fear of Latin American intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century. The epigraph also signals that Recto might have read Spanish Golden Age writers alongside Spanish American literature. And indeed, throughout the rest of his poem, Recto evokes the lyres of Spanish author Manuel José Quintana and Cuban Romantic writer Juan María Heredia; before invoking Fray Luis again, he summons the “bronze verses” of Peruvian José Santos Chocano; Cervantes and Santa Teresa de Jesús resound in conjunction with Darío’s “divine harp” (vol. 1, 289). Put differently, Recto interweaves literary references from both sides of the Atlantic, revealing an affinity not only to Spanish writers, as in the case of his earlier “Mi homenaje a la matrona,” but also to Spanish American poets.

The last sections of “*Elogio del castellano*” feature the spread of the language across the Atlantic and foremost throughout Latin America: in the “*vírgenes pampas de la América*” and “*lo alto de los Andes*” (vol. 1, 289). Thus, Recto reassures that the global trajectory of the Spanish language will not come to an end in the Philippines. Invoking the transatlantic and the legendary Manila-Acapulco galleon trades, he asserts:

*Por los mares Atlántico y Pacífico
tus fuertes galeones aún navegan
y van en ellos, bajo un sol de gloria,
almas grandes que luchan y que anhelan,
Andantes Caballeros del Ensueño,
Guardianes de la fe de Dulcinea,
Locos sublimes que descubren mundos
Y mueren por su reina, la Quimera.* (vol. 1, 290)

Recto neither thanks nor praises Spain for giving him or lending him the Spanish language. Rather, he historicizes it and then appropriates it. After

all, Spanish is, in his own words, “*nuestra lengua*” (vol. 1, 290). The implied “*nosotros*” in the poem, considering the occasion for which it was written, refers, without a doubt, to Spaniards and Filipinos. However, when taking into account the entirety of the poem, the “*nosotros*” is also inclusive of Spanish Americans.

According to critic Wýstan de la Peña, “by the 1930s, to speak Spanish, to be ‘Fil-Hispanic’ meant being old-fashioned; to speak English, to be ‘Americanized,’ meant being modern” (105). By then, even Recto had bid farewell to the Spanish language and to his career as a poet and playwright, devoting himself to his political career.¹¹ His fight for the independence of the Philippines from the United States intensified and he became, in his own words, an “enthusiastic advocate of the use of Tagalog as the most practical medium of national expression” (qtd. in Gonzalez 80). In 1942, as Commissioner of Education, Health and Public Welfare, Recto encouraged Filipinos to support the cause of employing Tagalog as a common language and to even be open to learning Japanese, which was momentarily declared an official language.¹² After the independence of the Philippines, Recto continued supporting efforts to make Tagalog the basis of the national language. Nevertheless, he was still intimately tied to Spanish. Recto kept his membership in the Philippine Academy of the Spanish Language and as observed by historian Augusto Espiritu, even as a politician, he remained “involved with the promotion of Spanish in the Philippines, either as a judge of literary contests, or through acquaintance with the Spanish government in the Philippines” (169). For example, in 1953, he gave a speech at a banquet in honor of the Minister of Foreign Relations of Spain, during which he took the opportunity to declare the need to maintain the Spanish language, which he characterized as the greatest benefit within Spain’s “spiritual legacy.” Recto foresaw that Spanish would never become a popular language among Filipinos, yet he also declared it an irreplaceable vehicle to understand the nation’s history in the future. At this point, Recto disassociated the Spanish language and the Philippines’ sense of Hispanism from Spain:

nuestro hispanismo, en punto a finalidad, y como aspiración y propósito, nada tiene que ver con España, sino con nosotros mismos, porque el español, por cuya conservación y difusión luchamos, que a todo se reduce a fin de cuentas nuestro hispanismo, es algo que ha llegado a ser nuestro, propio, consustancial, por fuero de historia y de espiritualidad, por razones de presente y por exigencias del futuro, y sin él quedaría grandemente menguado el inventario del [sic] valores de nuestro patrimonio cultural, y descoyuntada, como un cuadro cubista, toda prefiguración del futuro de nuestra nacionalidad. (vol. 7, 490)

According to Recto, the burden of conserving the Spanish language in the Philippines must rely on Filipinos alone. Nevertheless, he also identified yet another reason to keep ties with the language: to strengthen diplomatic bonds with Spanish American nations, which occupy more than one third of the entire United Nations (vol. 7, 491). Spanish, following Recto, could thus link the Philippines to the rest of the world. Along those lines, it is worthwhile mentioning that to conclude his lecture, Recto read the last sections of his poem “*Elogio del castellano*,” emphasizing in this manner the global trajectory of the language.

In retrospect, it is easy, or perhaps tempting, to see Recto as a strong proponent of the preservation of Spanish in the Philippines, especially if we consider that until 1960, the year he suddenly died, he insisted that Filipinos would benefit from learning the language. Indifference toward the language, Recto laments in “*La cruzada por el español en Filipinas*,” one of his last undelivered speeches, had evolved into a desertion of the language (vol. 9, 722). Echoing his 1953 speech, he adds here that Latin Americans in the United Nations rejoice when they hear Filipinos speaking “*en su propio idioma*” (vol. 9, 724). In another undelivered speech, titled “*Por los fueros de una herencia*,” Recto includes yet another similar comment regarding the possibility of striking an intimate chord with Latin American diplomats in the United Nations (vol. 9, 756). This speech also contains a poem titled “*Elogio del idioma*,” which like his earlier “*Elogio del castellano*,” traces the Spanish language’s arrival to the Philippines by way of the Pacific: from Spain “*al corazón de América / y hasta a mis bravas tórridas campiñas*” (vol. 9, 759). Recto seemingly wanted to connect with Latin Americans, but the

opportunities to do so, for him, were limited. In 1960, Recto was scheduled to tour Spain and Latin America; however, he died in October of that year.¹³ We can only imagine how these trips would have modified or further rekindled the pro-Hispanist cause of Hispanophone Filipino intellectuals through Recto. Yet instead of imagining what could have been, we can turn to Recto's colleague in the Philippine Academy of the Spanish Language, Antonio M. Abad, who only a few months earlier, in July 1960, did travel across the Pacific, established contacts with Spanish American intellectuals, and with their support, managed to revitalize the teaching of Spanish in the Philippines.

"Formar parte del grupo hispanoamericano":

Abad on Teaching Spanish as a Foreign and a Filipino Language

From early on in his career as a writer and educator, Abad perceived the Spanish language not only as a means to access the nation's past and origins, but also as the Philippines' link to the world by way of Spanish America.¹⁴ Critic Salvador García rightly observes: "*No sólo se trataba de luchar por impedir la muerte de un idioma, sino de fomentar además la lengua que haría a los filipinos reconocerse como tales, hallar su esencia, hermanarse con sus semejantes, con aquellos pueblos que sueñan y viven y aman en español*" (xxix). When Abad joined the Philippine Academy of the Spanish Language in 1938, he gave a speech in which he claimed that the destiny of Spanish in the Philippines had been "truncated," but had to be fulfilled as it did in Spanish America (qtd. in García xv). Put like this, it seems as if Abad saw in Spanish America a sort of model for the Philippines. However, Filipinos and Spanish Americans knew too little about each other. When asked about Filipinos' knowledge or ideas about Latin America during an interview held in 1960, Abad answered "*casi nulas*" (9). Elaborating on his answer, he added that it was very unlikely that Filipinos could point out Colombia on a world map. But instead of holding Filipinos responsible for this lack of knowledge, Abad suggested that the Philippines' isolation from Latin America could very well be attributed to United States' long domination of the Philippines. Although the interview, published in Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo*, was presumptuously titled

“El español obtuvo en Filipinas clara victoria sobre el inglés,” Abad’s reports on student opposition against the required university credits in Spanish and the decreasing number of speakers of Spanish shed light on the language’s imminent death and the clear victory of English in the Philippines. Even the interviewer, Colombian poet and journalist Dolly Mejía, remarks that despite *“su correctísimo castellano,”* Abad could not help but reveal what she describes as *“su innegable acento del inglés predominante”* (9).

Instead of spending time and energy praising Spanish or celebrating its survival in the Philippines, throughout the 1950s Abad sought to change teaching methodologies for the language by working on manuals and lecturing on more effective ways to teach it. Moreover, he created the National Federation of Spanish Teachers, and in 1957, he travelled to the United States to learn about modern methodologies for the teaching of foreign languages (García xvii). By the time he was interviewed by Dolly Mejía, Abad had high hopes for the “formidable” campaign in favor of teaching Spanish. According to him, *“La batalla está ganada, gracias a la firmeza de la Academia y a los sentimientos hispanófilos del presidente Carlos P. García”* (9). Following Abad, pedagogies for Spanish language teaching had to catch up with laws that already paved the way for its dissemination or at least its preservation in the Philippines.

In 1960, Abad travelled to Bogotá, Colombia, to attend the Third Annual Congress of Academies of the Spanish Language and tellingly, he delivered a lecture titled *“La enseñanza del español a extranjeros que no lo hablan.”* The gist of this paper was to communicate to his peers in corresponding Academies that Spanish in the Philippines was nearly dead and that it needed to be taught as a foreign language. Instead of expressing the Philippines’ pride as the only Hispanophone nation in Asia, he emphasized that Filipino students barely knew Spanish: *“Entre estos estudiantes ‘que no hablan el español’ hay que contar a los filipinos”* (521). Rather than making Filipinos feel alienated, the result of continuing to teach Spanish would be, according to Abad, quite the contrary: it would attract more foreigners to the Philippines’ rich culture. He affirmed:

debemos —y está dentro de nuestras atribuciones— contribuir a que el conocimiento de nuestro idioma común sea más fácil para el extranjero que quiera acercarse a nosotros y participar en el caudal de ideas que atesora la cultura hispánica, y esto solo puede lograrse mediante una más efectiva didáctica de nuestra lengua [...] no bastan ya, para las urgencias del momento, las gramáticas al uso. Lo urgente en estos momentos no es saber las reglas a que se sujeta el habla sino el habla misma. (522, emphasis mine)

Reminiscent of the school teacher in *Noli me tangere*, Abad assures that the most effective methodology for teaching Spanish as a foreign language is focusing on conversation, not on memorization of grammar rules. Moreover, it is worthwhile to point out that in the above passage Abad refers to Spanish as “*nuestro idioma común*” and “*nuestra lengua*.” In this view, Filipinos would be learning Spanish as a foreign language, but in doing so, they would nevertheless be recovering it as a lost heritage that always already belonged to them.

As a representative of the Philippines, Abad felt the need to alert his peers in the Academies of the Spanish Language about two ideas that had been proposed in 1959 by Hispanophone diplomats at a meeting held in Paris. Firstly, to create an “*Alianza de la Lengua Española*,” which Spanish American nations would support. Through this alliance, various centers would be established throughout the Philippines for the teaching of Spanish and the promotion of cultural events. Secondly, a suggestion was made to create schools in the Philippines that would symbolically be named after Spanish American nations (Abad, “Doc E-5” 194-95). Although these ambitious proposals were not being implemented and did not apparently come to fruition, by mentioning them at the Third Congress of the Academies of the Spanish Language, Abad was uttering an urgent call for members of Spanish American Academies to support the teaching of Spanish in the Philippines. He was trying to turn the pro-Hispanist cause in the Philippines into a truly transpacific endeavor.

Surely enough, after the conference, Abad did keep in touch with various Spanish American attendees. Among them, his most significant contact was Félix Restrepo, S. J., President of the Colombian Academy of Language

(the first Academy to be established in Spanish America) and founder of Instituto Caro y Cuervo (an important cultural center for the promotion of Spanish linguistics and Spanish-language literatures). In February 1961, Abad wrote a letter to Restrepo, proposing the creation of an international network of Hispanophone scholars. Echoing his own view regarding the Philippines' unfortunate isolation from Latin America, he added: "*Estoy tropezando con que no conozco casi a nadie en Hispanoamérica, y nuestros colegas académicos no parecen tener idea de cómo se traduciría el plan*" (Abad Papers). Fortunately, while Abad hoped to establish closer ties with Spanish America, the Instituto Caro y Cuervo happened to be considering ways to extend its presence and influence internationally. Just a few years prior, in 1957, the Instituto had created the still operating Andrés Bello Seminar, with the support of the Organization of the American States, for the advancement of literary and linguistic research as well as Spanish language pedagogy. Thus, in 1962, Abad was again in contact with members of the Instituto to make the necessary arrangements for the first Filipino candidate for the Andrés Bello Seminar.¹⁵

For his part, Abad continued to publicly rethink how Spanish was taught in the Philippines. In 1962, he gave a lecture at the library of Manila-based organization Solidaridad Hispanofilipina, titled "*La enseñanza del español en Filipinas: sus males y sus remedios,*" in which he explained that the failure of Spanish was not the result of a lacking pro-Hispanist cause, but of the rather outdated teaching methodologies. He addressed anti-Hispanist attacks, but did not recur to a predictable defense of the language's historical and patriotic value. Abad insisted that instead of enforcing the memorization of poems by Rizal or explaining grammar rules, students needed to be taught how to respond in simple phrases. Put differently, they had to be taught how to communicate in the language and not use it as a shortcut for cultivating patriotic sentiment.

Moreover, beyond offering practical advice for teaching Spanish, Abad articulated his opposition to what he called "*las doctrinas monolingüistas norteamericanas*" (10). Monolingualism, he claimed, was in direct opposition to the Philippines' cultural and historical progress. To contrast the divi-

sive language policies promoted during and after the United States colonial rule, he referred to the inherent diversity in “Hispanidad,” among which the former colonizer, Spain, was not the essence: “*En la Hispanidad, España es sólo una parte, importantísima si queréis, pero la mayor es toda Hispanoamérica, desde Cuba, Puerto Rico, México y las Repúblicas del Centro hasta la América del Sur; o sea, un conjunto de 20 países independientes con cerca de 200 millones de habitantes*” (11). In a contemporaneous report, titled “*El problema de la lengua nacional en Filipinas,*” Abad more clearly reframed Spanish as a language that allowed the Philippines to reconnect with Spanish America.¹⁶ Abad observes:

la experiencia señala un camino indudablemente matizado de conveniencia, pero esta conveniencia tiene una significación nacional: formar parte del grupo hispanoamericano, el cual, mientras nos ayuda a realizar nuestras ambiciones en el campo internacional, también contribuye a destacar una personalidad cuyos contornos deseamos dibujar frente a los demás pueblos de la tierra. Esta es la verdadera posición del hispanismo y los hispanistas filipinos. (22, emphasis mine)

Abad’s plan was to further the dissemination of Spanish in the Philippines, but not as a prestigious or divine language that inspired nostalgia for a past empire. Taking Recto’s dictum on the diplomatic advantage of retaining Spanish a step further, Abad sought to convince his peers that teaching the language as one that already belonged to them would help the Philippines to reconnect with a living and growing Hispanophone community, especially the vast Spanish American group across the Pacific.

Conclusion: Revisiting “*el Babel nuestro*”

Some defenders of the Spanish language in the Philippines, including Recto in his youth, looked *back*, quite literally, at “Mother” Spain. Others often affirmed, and still do, that the very idea of the Philippines was molded in Spanish: Rizal wrote in Spanish; the first Filipino Constitution, ratified in Malolos in 1899, was published in Spanish; and José Palma’s quintessentially patriotic poem of 1899, which then served as the lyrics to the national anthem, was also composed in Spanish. Nevertheless, in this article, I have examined two alternative frameworks for further dissemination of the language. For

Recto, the decline of Spanish in the national context was lamentable as it resulted in a huge loss for future Filipinos who desired to have access to their nation's origins, but also because it signified an impediment to the language's transpacific trajectory. Abad insisted on keeping Spanish in the curriculum, but neither by employing methodologies for the instruction of an extinct language (as in the case of Latin) nor framing it as a language that is part of a colonial heritage. Rather, he envisioned teaching it as a living and breathing language of day-to-day life despite it being spoken by a numerical minority in the Philippines. His visit to Colombia in 1960 only made him more aware of how much insight Filipinos could gain by communicating and identifying with Spanish Americans.¹⁷

At present, the Spanish language in the Philippines not only remains a point of access to the nation's history, but it has also been linked, according to Mauro Fernández and José del Valle, to at least two immediate economic advantages: on the one hand, it potentially enables Filipinos to work at call-centers and other international business operations outsourced to the Philippines, and on the other hand, it renders Filipinos who choose to migrate to the United States more competitive vis-à-vis the Latino population there. Following Fernández and del Valle, these incentives are “deeply pragmatic and in no way linked to identity” (332). However, the latter incentive interestingly projects Filipinos alongside Latinos, who also tend to possess varying degrees of fluency of and intimacy with the Spanish language. Perhaps, as in the case of Latinos in the United States, it may be relevant, more precise even, to refer to Spanish in the Philippines as a kind of heritage language. Or perhaps, following critic Andrea Gallo, who specializes in contemporary Hispanophone Filipino writers, Spanish should be characterized more often as a “familiar” language (530). After all, it is seldom a fully foreign language in the Philippines.

If multilingual poet Federico Espino Licsi declared, around forty years ago, that Filipinos should not be forced to learn Spanish, that they should first study “*el Babel nuestro*” before learning “*el Babel extranjero*,” then it seems appropriate to revisit the definitions of “*nuestro*” and “*extranjero*.” In the end, to admit that Spanish is, or rather has become, a foreign language in the

Philippines does not mean that it cannot also be taught as a language that still belongs to Filipinos, the same way it certainly belongs to many millions of people across the Pacific and the Atlantic.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Ulrich E. Bach, Sean Manning, and the two anonymous reviewers for their suggestions in earlier drafts of this article. I also thank Elizabeth Medina for sharing her profound insights after reading Espino Licsi's 1979 lecture. Last but not least, I thank Wesleyan University and the National Endowment for the Humanities for funding my research travels to the Philippines and Colombia in the summers of 2017 and 2018, respectively.
2. Translating poetry from the so-called "Third World" was part of Espino Licsi's ongoing projects. In 1975, he edited the volume *Mga tulang Afro-Asyatico*. In 1981, he co-edited, with Paula Espino, the volume *Ang Panulaan ng Afrika at Timog Silangang Asya*. These are listed in the bibliography with the order of his last names interchanged. As Rocío Ortuño Casanova notes, in Spanish the Filipino poet published as Espino Licsi and in English and Filipino languages as Licsi Espino or Licsi Espino Jr. ("Espino Licsi" 63).
3. According to Espino Licsi, learning Spanish should only be mandatory for students of Philippine history, diplomacy, or Philippine Studies (19).
4. Some of Espino Licsi's poetry publications at the time, which were entirely or partially in Spanish, include *In Three Tongues: A Folio of Poems in Tagalog, English and Spanish* (1963), *Caras y caretas del amor* (1967), *Burnt Alphabets: Poems in English, Tagalog and Spanish* (1969), *Ave en jaula lírica / Bird in the Lyric Cage* (1970), and *Latigazos de luz* (1977). For a close reading of poems from these and later collections by Espino Licsi, focusing on the evolution of his attitude toward Spain and Spanish literature, consult Ortuño Casanova's 2016 article.
5. A report from 1872 states that out of 125,000 students enrolled in public primary schools in Luzon and Visayas, only thirty percent could read Spanish and less than one percent could actually speak it (qtd. in Hardacker 19). According to the 1903 United States Census, out of a population of around six million people, only about one percent of the population had received "superior education" and was deemed to be "undoubtedly" fluent in Spanish (Rafael 197, n. 9). Reminding us of the historical background that also contributed to the reduced number of speakers in the Philippines at the end of the Spanish colonial period, Jorge Mojarro points out: "The reason Spanish instruction was not that forthcoming from the friars was partly practical: it was easier that a foreign person learn the indigenous language rather than oblige his adopted community of thousands to learn his language. This was also quite logical. Moreover, the missionaries carried out a thorough documentation of the Filipino languages, relying on grammars, dictionaries, and translations. If later on they used this knowledge to appropriate power, this was something more circumstantial all told."

6. For a summary and commentary on the royal decrees prior to 1863 which repeatedly stipulated Spanish as the language of instruction in the Philippines and yet failed, see Hardacker 10-13 and Fernández 364-66.
7. After the teacher greets the Spanish friar who has summoned him in Spanish, he is reprimanded: “*No me uses prendas prestadas; conténtate con hablar tu idioma y no me echas a perder el español, que no es para vosotros*” (99). Miguel A. Bernad observes that this scene from the novel demonstrates, “first, the opposition of the friars (or at least of many of them) to the teaching of Spanish; and second, the contempt that many of the friars openly showed towards the native Filipino” (223).
8. I gather a summary of these laws and the public responses they generated from Rodao 105 and Fernández 373.
9. For a comprehensive analysis of poems dedicated to Spain during the US rule of the Philippines, see Ortuño Casanova’s 2014 article.
10. Darío’s promotion of an “*América nuestra*,” with which he foremost meant an “*América española*” (102-03), has its limitations, yet it should be interpreted primarily as a strategic response to the rise of the United States as the new empire.
11. As a literary writer Recto is mostly remembered for his “Elogio del castellano,” his poetry collection *Bajo los cocoteros* (1911) as well as his plays “*La ruta de Damasco*” (1914) and “*Solo entre las sombras*” (1917).
12. Recto said the following in a 1942 radio speech: “As you doubtless are aware, Japanese and Tagalog have been declared the two official languages in the Philippines. It is only logical that the study of Japanese should be enjoined upon us” (vol. 5, 306).
13. Not without trouble, this voyage was supported by the Franco dictatorship, which sought to promote Hispanism within its former colonies (Espíritu 169).
14. Abad’s literary works include the novels *El último romántico* (1927), *La oveja de Nathan* (written in 1929 and published in a bilingual Spanish and English edition in 2013), *El campeón* (written in 1940 and published by Instituto Cervantes in Manila in 2013), and *La vida secreta de Daniel Espeña* (1960).
15. In July 1962, Abad wrote a letter to Rafael Torres Quintero, Secretary of the Third Congress of Academies of the Spanish Language, introducing Antonio María Cavanna, the first Filipino candidate for the seminar, as “*uno de los más decididos campeones del hispanismo en Filipinas*” (Abad Papers).
16. This report can be found at the Library of Instituto Caro y Cuervo. While the file does not contain paratextual information regarding when Abad wrote it, some references mentioned in the text itself indicate that it was either in 1962 or 1963.
17. For an intimate account of the cultural and historical ties between the Philippines and Spanish America, see Elizabeth Medina’s *Sampaguitas en la cordillera: reen-*

cuentro con Filipinas en Chile (2005). The book narrates how Medina embarked on a journey to find out the circumstances that led to the execution of her paternal grandfather, Emilio Medina Lazo, in 1945, in Ilocos Norte, as well as her experience discovering “el verdadero sentido de ser filipina” (8) by reading Spanish American literature and history, and living in Chile, where she still resides and works as translator and writer.

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Reading Military Masculinity In Fil-Hispanic And Spanish American Novels

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Abstract

The Fil-hispanic novel and its Spanish American counterpart share the preference of mining history for narratives. For Spanish American novelists, there is a sub-genre called the *novela de la dictadura*, where the figure of a military leader called *el Caudillo* becomes the center of the narration. This development is a function of their region's political history and the series of elite leadership upheavals where the military sector is an active participant, if not the principal instigator. There is no equivalent in the Fil-hispanic novel, but the figure of a military man is present in two novels, Jesus Balmori's posthumously-published *Los pájaros de fuego* (2011) and Antonio Abad's prize-winning *La oveja de Nathán*. This paper looks at the treatment which Fil-hispanic and Spanish American novels — specifically, Gabriel García Márquez's *El general en su laberinto* (1989) and *El otoño del patriarca* (1975) — give to the figure of the military man, his corporeality and the expressions of his military masculinity, and looks at how the representations echo or critique their historical realities.

Keywords

Fil-hispanic novel, Spanish American *Caudillo novel*, military masculinity

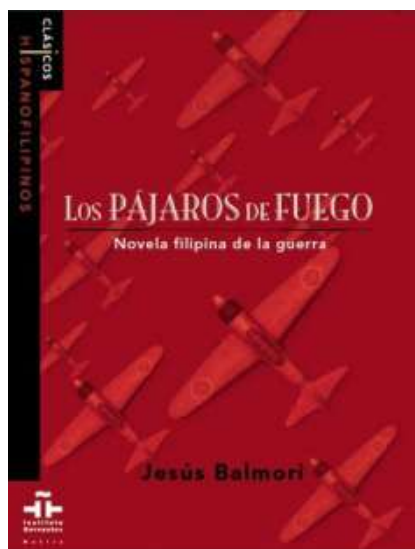


Fig. 1. *Los Pájaros de Fuego* (2011) by Jesus Balmori

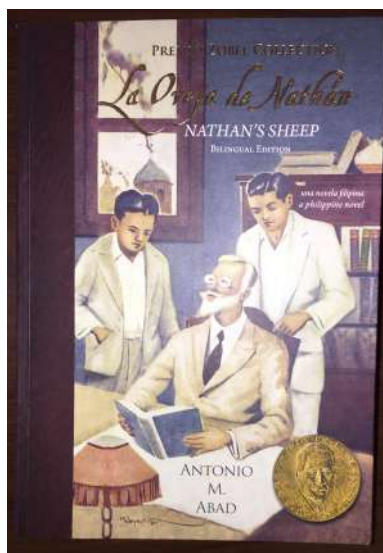


Fig. 2. *La oveja de Nathán* (1928) by Antonio Abad

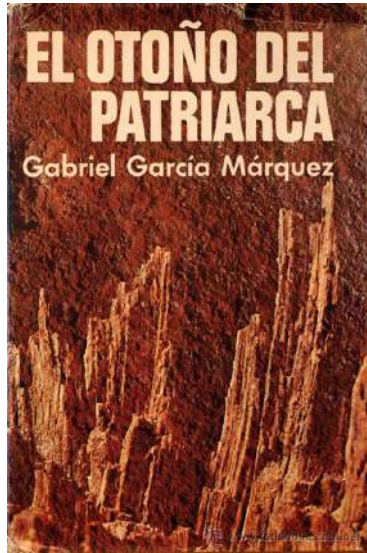


Fig. 3. *El otoño del patriarca* (1975) by Gabriel García Márquez

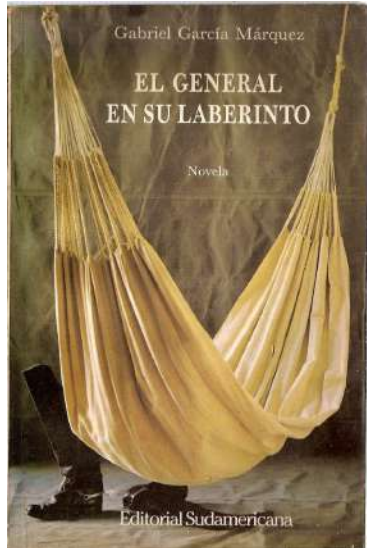


Fig. 4. *El general en su laberinto* (1989) by Gabriel García Márquez

Military masculinity as an embodied and performative attribute of the male soldier and an important component of the characterization of the nation. Traditional gender binaries have assigned the figures of the land and the country to the feminine principle (seen in women deity figures of fertility and agricultural harvests) and the concept of culture and government to men (evidenced in the figure of the lawgiver as a man). *Motherland* as an abstract notion of a piece of geography, the place of one's birth, is always linked to *heroism*, the totality of actions that entail courage to accomplish a difficult task or face a foe in defense of principles, persons or properties. *Motherland* is always accompanied by the sense of belonging, thus requiring emotional attachment and loyalty.

This paper reads the male soldier's body and military masculinity in two Fil-hispanic novels, Jesus Balmori's *Los Pájaros de Fuego* (2011) and Antonio Abad's *La oveja de Nathán* (1928), and two Latin American works, both by Nobel laureate Gabriel García Márquez, *El otoño del patriarca* (1975) and *El general en su laberinto* (1989). The reading of the novels is premised on the idea that the military body is deployed as a metaphor for the body politic, or a representation of the nation, thereby positing a commentary on the political situations at the time of the novels' production.¹ There will, however, be no attempt made to cross-reference the readings of the our novels, only a separate dissection of the representation of the male soldier's body, the embodiment of his military manhood, to reflect on the novels' echoing of their contemporary historical realities.

The soldier as a traditionally masculine role is an offshoot of the public-private division of the world—the woman runs the private domain defined by the household, while the man rules the spaces beyond the home, the public sphere; the woman takes care of the domestic chores of child-bearing and childrearing, while the man handles the bigger responsibility of nation-building. The woman-as-geography/*Motherland* is represented as needing protection to be provided by the man-soldier, whose protective actions on behalf of the former constitute "heroism."

Motherland and the *nation*, despite the apparent linkage between geography and the imagined community, however, become two different

concepts: the *Motherland* as female is relegated to the image of the territory's physical space, or the natural environment; the *nation*, as a product of social evolution, with its accompanying ideas of state structures and government, is envisioned as a male attribute. The latter is seen ruling, cultivating, and managing (even "defending") the former.

This woman-nation-space/man-soldier-defender model fits the mold Philippine society was being engendered into during the American colonial period (McCoy 44). The army—the collective of male defenders of the woman-nation—thus constitutes the "schools of the nation," an institution responsible for the education (or defense, if one will) of the country, and participation in the military becomes a rite of passage from boyhood to manhood. This is especially true in the post-Westphalian European era, when participation in the military becomes an important part of cultural life (Mansbach and Rhodes 63), and, one can add, socialization. In pre-1870 Prussia, the profession of preference for men was that of a military officer's, and membership in the officer corps was earned either by studies in military academies or by engaging in professions affiliated with auxiliary army services (engineering and medicine, for example). Jewish men in Europe, long marginalized because of their religion—which envisioned masculinity in the practice of Torah scholarship, rather than in the display of martial arts expertise (Salkin 57)—sought assimilation into mainstream "gentile" society through conscription into the army. Religion as an issue would, however, show its ugly face in the controversial sacking of Alfred Dreyfus, the French Jewish artillery officer whose rise within the military echelons got checked only by his polemical trial for treason in 1894.²

This European ideal of military manhood gets transplanted not only in postcolonial Spanish American republics, but also in the Philippines, courtesy of their elites who studied and lived in the old continent; in the case of the latter, the colonizing Americans. As historian Alfred McCoy notes, screenings of cadets for the Philippine Military Academy in the late 1930s required that successful candidates be archetypes of masculine beauty and strength (McCoy 47). In Latin America, the first decades after the acquisition of independence saw a period of political instability marked by rivalry

between the old elites and new forces for control of the state. The emergence of the *Caudillo*, the man-on-horseback figure, was a response to the need to impose military intervention to impose order. But rarely was this Caudillo a man with a military background; rather, most Caudillos were leaders of regional forces representing particular economic and social interests (Cammack et al 45, 150).

As any discussion of military masculinity will inevitably touch on issues of gender, it is important to note here is that the study of this aspect of manhood aims to focus on what is called the *warrior discourse*. Hinojosa (2007) defines the warrior discourse as a set of beliefs which constitute not only the institutional narrative of the military, but also a general set of ideas regarding the meaning of masculinity (though in his specific case, Hinojosa refers to “American masculinity”). Military masculinity, Hinojosa continues, is a key symbol of manhood and a form of hegemonic masculinity (72).

The scrutiny of military masculinity as depicted in the novels discussed here focuses on the representations of select male characters in soldier roles—the ordinary foot soldier’s in the Fil-hispanic novels, and of the *Caudillo*, the politico-military strongman in the Latin American oeuvres—and what these images may mean for the works’ literary habitus and milieu. This study posits the idea that the characterization of military masculinity—the term *guerrero* masculinity will be used hereon to mean the same thing—as seen embodied in the protagonists under study reveals a reading of such a manhood that echoes popular imaging or critique of military manhood (or of the military institution) at the time of production of the novels. The soldier’s body, whether of the ordinary soldier’s or of the military commander’s, is thus deployed as a site of social critique. No less than García Márquez himself pointed out in a 1989 interview that a reading of his entire literary output situated on a specific historico-geographic context of Spanish America was possible (Vargas Vargas 31). The particular case of *El general* as historical metafiction is an interesting one, as the work

presenta un personaje no definido, problemático, ambiguo. Esto se contrapone con la imagen homogénea que muchos biógrafos habían hecho de él [Bolívar], porque según García Márquez...únicamente consideraron

un aspecto de su vida. Entonces Bolívar ha sido tratado por la historia tradicional como prócer y no como hombre (Vargas Vargas 38).

[presents a non-defined, problematic, ambiguous character. This is in contrast with the homogeneous image that many biographers have made of him (Bolívar), because according to García Márquez they just took in consideration one aspect of his life alone. Thus, Bolívar has been treated by the traditional history as a hero, and as a man]

Pulido Herráez agrees, saying that while other important historical figures have been presented with controversial aspects of their persons, historiography has always treated Bolívar as *El Libertador* and García Márquez's *El general* rendering him as a flesh-and-blood character is an exceptional case (560). With this in mind, the dissection of the representations of the military body in the four novels examined here and the intertextual connections such images have with historical time becomes a reasonable project.

The Filipino Soldier as Defender of Freedom and Democracy for *Patria, Madre, y Amor*

The man as defender of female figures in the narratives is a common theme in Fil-hispanic writing and Spanish American literature. Reyes (1991) has pointed out the love story as a framework in Philippine narration. Sommer (1991) does the same for Spanish American letters calling such narratives as the region's "foundational fiction." In both schemes, the male patriot-lover expresses his love for the *patria*, the *Madre Patria*, the Motherland, or, in concrete terms, the nation's territoriality, by showing readiness to die while defending her. He holds a woman close to his heart, the woman object of his affections, his *mujer amada*, the dreamed-of mother of his children, a partner in a family unit which would give meaning to his willingness to sacrifice himself for the *Madre Patria*. While the *Madre Patria* is an abstract concept made concrete by the nation's territory, the *mujer amada* invests emotional meaning into that territory—the presence of the beloved in a specific geographical space which the *amante* vows to defend is what makes that particular place his *patria*.

From this male patriot-lover comes the figure of the *soldado*. He calls as *patria* (the phrase “hijo de la patria” comes to mind) the land of his birth. It is *Madre Patria* to him. But the process of *discursively reproducing* [read: protecting, thus allowing to continue to exist], the *madre* requires the identification of a love object, the *amada*. With this *amada*, he starts a family; his children thus acquire a *madre* and a *madre patria*, and the land of his birth acquires richer meaning.³

The soldier’s willingness to fight and die for the *Madre Patria* is also an expression of love for the *amada*. In this light one must look at Fernando Robles in *Los pájaros de fuego*, when he responds to a call to arms and dons a military uniform. One should note that the *uniforme militar* with all its trappings invests the wearer with a different kind of masculinity. This happens to Fernando:

Se veía otro hombre ante el espejo, otro Fernando más alto, más arrogante, más distinguido. ¡Lo que podía el traje! ¡Lo que transformaba una funda desbordante de llamativas franjas y dorados emblemas! (79)

[He found another man in front of the mirror, another Fernando, taller, more arrogant, more distinguished. What a suit can do! What a transformation a boundless case of flashy stripes and golden badges can do!]

To better understand the social psychology behind Fernando’s transformation, one has to go back to the Westphalian creation of nation-states and their need to establish a professional army for their own defense, a move away from the medieval practice of kings of summoning feudal lords under his rule to provide citizen troops, or of contracting mercenaries to raise an army. The army institution required the adoption of a dress uniform system as an identification marker, thereby superseding the use of banners, traditionally employed to lead and identify soldiers during battlefield charges.

Donning a uniform becomes, for the soldier in a professional army, not mean means acquiring an identity marker to signal belongingness. A soldier’s body is no different from any ordinary citizen’s, but acquisition of the military dress, which becomes an extension of the body (note the Pfanner

quote below explaining the use of the uniform to enhance physical appearance), invests the soldier's body with a status inaccessible to non-military members of society. The uniform initiates the private-citizen-turned-soldier into a hierarchical brotherhood of warriors in a world administered by a rigid chain of command and governed by rules different from the society it exists in and ordered to protect.

Pfanner explains the symbolism of the military uniform:

It also calls for respect and fear and symbolizes strength and power: it includes features designed to make its wearer appear broader or taller, and thus to enhance the soldiers' stature in the eyes of comrades, civilians, and the enemy. Finally, it helps to create an identity of appearance and an *esprit de corps* and is therefor conducive to the bonding process (94)

The colors of the uniforms have also become a means to identify the soldiers, whether from regular armies or from guerilla or paramilitary forces, wearing them—"Redcoats" to refer to British colonial troops during the American War of Independence; *Braunhemden* ("Brown Shirts"), Adolf Hitler's paramilitary forces that played an important part in his rise to prominence after World War I; *Camicie Nere* ("Blackshirts"), the paramilitary wing of Benito Mussolini's National Fascist Party; "Blue Berets" the popular label for U.N. peacekeeping forces; and "Green Berets," for the elite U.S. Special Forces, among others.

The military uniform, has, through the centuries, evolved to adapt to different functions and rituals, like parades and non-combat duties, and the requirements of warfare, like camouflage.⁴ Moreover, a soldier's rank in the hierarchy in the chain of command is shown in his uniform through the use of insignias, medals or ribbons, shoulder marks, and patches.

Political attention to non-military clothing came with the emergence of the political power of the lower classes in the wake of the French Revolution. Language played an important part in redefining/reimagining hitherto-marginalized people through semantic reversals of terms referring to sartorial appearances: the *sans-cullotes* in France during the late 18th century or the *descamisados* of Juan and Eva Peron of 1940s Argentina were two cases. The

two labels, used to refer derogatorily to the *hoi polloi*, were redefined as lexicons of power.

When Marta sees Fernando for the first time wearing his uniform, she says he looks like a prince, like a Hollywood star with a role as general. With just the uniform, Fernando feels a transformation into

Otro hombre, sí completamente nuevo y diferente al Fernando de los juegos de corbatas modernistas y la rosa amarilla y el clavel escondido en el ojal de la chaqueta. Otro en cuerpo y sobre todo en espíritu desde que se sintió ceñido por la coraza kaki que parecía aprisionarle en una nueva dignidad y un nuevo honor. Ahora podía llamarse filipino plenamente. Ahora podía sentirse verdadero patriota. Y hasta cuadrarse marcial ante el Héroe de la raza, ante todos los héroes nacionales, para decirles reverentemente:

—Nosotros, los que saludamos a la aurora, no os olvidamos a los que caisteis en la noche! (80)⁵

[Another man, completely new and different to the Fernando who had sets of fin-de-siècle ties, and the yellow rose and the carnation hidden in the bottomhole of the jacket. Another person in body but especially in spirit since he felt clinged by the khaki shell that seemed to have him imprisoned in a new dignity and a new honor. Now he could call himself Filipino, fully. Now he could feel like a true patriot. And even marcially face the heroe of the race and all the national heroes to tell them respectfully: We, the ones who greet the sunrise, we don't forget the ones who felt during the night!]

With the military uniform, Fernando transforms from a civilian, scion of a wealthy family, into an *hijo de la patria*, a son of his *Madre Patria*, or the *amante* of his *mujer amada*; he becomes a *guerrero*, a defender of both. The correct motive is important here—the idea of willing self-sacrifice should be present. Note how the same military uniform does not give the same sense of prestige to Sandoval, Fernando's doctor brother-in-law, who, like him, does not survive the war. In Sandoval, there is only personal greed—for the Robles' wealth (“en realidad le importaba más el dinero de Don Lino que la fidelidad amorosa de Natalia” [46])

Mariano Bontulan is Fernando's counterpart in *La oveja de Nathán*, and his characterization goes beyond the wearing of a soldier's uniform. In Bontulan,

the novel explores the meanings behind a soldier's battlefield heroics. The novel opens with him aboard a ship on a trans-Pacific crossing enroute to his grand adventure—to fight in the trenches of France during World War I. He is unlike Fernando, who dons the uniform to defend *Filipinas* from imminent danger. In Bontulan's world, the danger is half a planet away, in the fields of Flanders; from there, no threat to the *Madre Patria* is forthcoming. But Bontulan's decision is related to defending the *Madre Patria*, nevertheless; or at least he makes it so in his mind. As an American colonial subject, a bearer of an American passport, colonial discourse has compelled him to accept two *Madre Patrias*: Filipinas and Estados Unidos. This is where Bontulan's case becomes interesting, as it lends itself to commentary on the co-optation of the colonial subject. Bontulan's co-optation is seen in how he defends his I-will-fight-in-Europe decision before Don Benito Claudio, his benefactor and mentor:

— *Voy a hacer la guerra a la guerra—contestó limpidamente el linotipista—. Voy a a hacer la guerra para que el mundo sea un sitio seguro para la democracia, y porque esta guerra sea la última....Voy a hacer la guerra para salvar a la civilización, amenazada por Alemania y sus aliados.* (220)

[I am gonna make war against the war –replied cleanly the lynotipist-. I am gonna make the war so the world might be a safe place for democracy, and so that this war might be the last one... I am gonna make the war in order to save the civilization, threatened by Germany and ois allies.]

As a soldier in the American Expeditionary Force under General John Pershing, he is not defending *Filipinas*—he has offered himself to be the proverbial sacrificial lamb in defense of the so-called democratic values of Filipinas' second colonizer ("Yo seré soldado...yo seré soldado. Soldado de la Libertad," he even tells a friend [232]). He would be Fil-hispanic fiction's answer to the real-life Tomas Claudio (1882-1918), the first Filipino who died in the Battle of the Marne, in France. Claudio died in the defense of freedom and democracy; his fictional counterpart has been brainwashed, or has brainwashed himself, to do the same sacrifice—to defend not just America, the colonial mother, but also Filipinas, the real *madre patria*.

How does fighting for American ideals of freedom and democracy translate into fighting for Filipinas, the *madre patria*? In Bontulan, one sees the Christ sacrifice archetype (even the Greek hero figure) so common in Filipino texts, where the male character acts as a savior of women, his beloved and his Motherland. To act out his destiny as a human/Filipino “Christ,” he has to go through a series of tests to prove his *guerrero* manhood and his embodiment of values associated with a hero, like bravery and self-abnegation in the face of danger. Bontulan’s heroics in the trenches do not go unnoticed. Unlike Fernando, he survives the war, becomes a living witness to the horrors of the “No Man’s Land,” located between the barbed wire on both trenches; he even leads a group of soldiers in neutralizing a machine gun nest. He eventually gets wounded—but he earns his spurs; he becomes a bemedalled war hero, decorated three times.

The war hero image is a game-changer in Bontulan’s life. He gains prestige in upper class urban society which would have ignored him had he remained his pre-war self—a *pinaampon*, a son left by his mother to a rich benefactor, who voluntarily assumes responsibility for his education, to transform him into a man, to have him learn the ways of successful manhood, to make him an *hombre*. Bontulan easily leverages this post-war prestige into economic advantages—the hero image becomes so valuable that he has to have a tailor make him new sets of uniforms for his public appearances to adulating crowds; he acquires a well-paying job which allows him to enjoy the American version of material success—two mortgages: a house and a car. Note that in his mind, these acquisitions are for the women in his life, material expressions of his love for them—the house for his wife, and, by extension, his children; the car for his mother. Note also that his rise in social status does not translate into a different relationship dynamic with the American colonizer; he remains a colonial subject. He remains a typesetter, albeit a better-paying one. This time, he works for an American. Unlike his American commander in the trenches who recommended him for a medal, his American boss opens up a dilemma in his mind.

Unlike Fernando in *Los pájaros* who dies—and his death may be read as a metaphor for the death of a Filipino Hispanic culture that he and his class

represented (de la Peña, *Ang Nabigong Japanofilia*) ⁶—Bontulan lives to fight another war. This time, it is not a war fought with guns and bayonets as he did in the trenches; this time, it is a war in defense of his *Madre Patria*, against the racist attacks of a champion of Americanism, his employer, his economic lifeline, his colonial handler.

From *Soldado de armas* to *Soldado intelectual*

Unlike Fernando, whose actions hardly grab the limelight in Balmori's novel, Abad's *La oveja de Nathán* allows us to look into Bontulan's mind as he ponders his quandary. Unbeknownst to him, his post-war situation is another war; this time, it is a war for Filipinas, the *Madre Patria*. Seen from a larger perspective, his second *guerra* coincides with the sending of Philippine independence missions to the United States to argue for political self-determination for Filipinos. The politicians led by Manuel Quezon (1878-1944) bear the burden of proving political readiness of the Filipinos; ordinary Filipinos like Bontulan carry the weight of proving their intellectual capacities for independence. ⁷

This is where Bontulan's *guerrero* masculinity evolves, a transformation not experienced by Fernando. From a *soldado de armas*, he becomes a *soldado intelectual*, an intellectual who fights not with bullets but with ideas. He leaves to Quezon and his entourage the job of talking politics and campaigning for independence in the halls of the American Congress. In the fields of France, he has proved his worthiness—in his mind he insists that America should not fail to see that—to enjoy liberty, as he has fought for the very abstract ideals America represents. In doing so, he argues in his mind that he has defended *Filipinas*, by providing a discourse articulated by his willingness to sacrifice himself and thus prove that his *Madre Patria* merited independence.

This is where the anti-Filipino sentiments of his employer (note that this man was a soldier who fought against Filipinos in the Philippine-American War) confound him. At the start, he lives a lie: the be-medalled example of Filipino heroism in the battlefield silently justifies his continued employment by a rabid “enemy” of his people. It would have been bearable if his employer only verbally expresses antagonism towards Filipinos. But

he does more: he makes Bontulan an accomplice by making him translate his sentiments into actions—Mr. Edwin Moore writes hostile editorials and makes Bontulan compose them in the press room. Bontulan’s work as a type-setter—putting together blocks of letters to form the text of Mr. Moore’s editorials—is an act of writing (re-writing to be exact, or the reproduction of discourse) —in itself; worse, he does not [re]write his original thoughts—he is composing for the printing press someone else’s intellectual output. His job will eventually lead to Moore’s ideas getting disseminated; each reader of his editorials becomes a site for discursive reproduction of anti-Filipinohood.

It comes as no surprise that his mother, Ta-Titay, dies towards the end of the novel, just when Bontulan’s moral compass is being heavily tested. His mother’s death—what may be seen as the signalling of an impending demise of the *Madre Patria*—becomes the turning point in Bontulan’s decision-making process. He decides to quit his job. He cannot be the co-opted colonial subject anymore; his mind has been freed—“purified,” if one will—by his willingness to offer his body as a sacrifice to defend abstract American ideas.

This is the moment when Bontulan finally comes out of his ideological cocoon and spreads his wings as an intellectual warrior, a *guerrero intelectual*. His manhood is no more defined by brawns; now it is guided by his mind. All those years of living with Don Benito Claudio and imbibing his teachings have culminated in this moment: Bontulan has become, hopefully in his mind, the Don Benito of his social class, if not his generation.

From soldier to intellectual is a transformation denied to Fernando. Fernando is just depicted as the rich scion of a wealthy family which would eventually lose its greatest wealth, its children, instruments for the reproduction of the bloodline. Fernando is no intellectual—he could hardly fend the arguments of a Japanophile uncle. What is highlighted in Fernando’s persona is his *amante* character: he loves Marta, and he loves his *Madre Patria*.

The economically-challenged Bontulan, however, is of a different streak. Before his decision to go to war, he roots for Germany; he even defends his pro-German and anti-British ideas before his mentor. He shows signs of being a thinker; moneyed Fernando does not. The decision to fight with the

Allies is an intellectual decision on Botulan's part, a decisive stand he makes, notwithstanding the doubts boggling him.. That he agonizes over telling his loved ones —his mother and his fiancée—indicates the intellectual debate raging inside his head.

There is more that meets the eye in the change from Bontulan *el guerrero* to Bontulan *el intelectual*. Seen from the larger context of Fil-hispanic literary production, the intellectual is another kind of Filipino soldier or warrior. One may even say that he represents the logical evolution of *guerrero* masculinity in the discourse of Philippine letters in Spanish.

The Filipino fight against Spanish colonial rule—until the push for secularization of the parishes in the late 1700s (which was more an ideological conflict between Spanish ecclesiastics and colonial officials) and the Propaganda Movements in the 1880s—was a struggle waged with weapons. Only with the coming together in Spain of progressive-minded expatriate Filipino students and other intellectuals (some were foreigners like Blumentritt; others, from the group of political exiles expelled from the country in the wake of the 1872 Cavite Mutiny) did a coherent Propaganda Movement—a war of minds—could be waged. Instead of bolos and makeshift arrows and spears, these intellectuals fought with their Spanish—the language of oppression turned into a language of resistance—and their pens: the newspaper *La Solidaridad* was born; it lived from 1889 to 1895, long enough for the world, the Madrid government especially, see that the *indios* in the far-flung Asian colony had an arsenal of intellectual gifts that allowed them to write histories, churn out novels, compose poetry, annotate texts, whip out satires, and critique every single declaration the colonial system would throw at them

The Spanish American *Caudillo*

García Márquez's novelistic highlighting of the military leader, the *patriarca*—an aged, physically and mentally sick, and cruel leader in *El otoño* and a fictional Simon Bolivarín political and physical decline in *El general*—follows a long tradition in Spanish American long fiction known as the

Caudillo novels. Morales Padrón (1983) classifies the *Caudillo* novels under the sub-genre *novela de la dictadura*.

To better differentiate the two labels, it will be helpful to look at Rebollo Torío's (1999) etymological dissection of *caudillo* and *dictador*: after tracing the Latin ancestry of *caudillo* and its semantic proximity to the *cacique* (a local chieftain), a lexicon native to Spanish America, he says that *caudillo* does not connote anything negative the way *dictador* does. A *caudillo*, he says, can mean a military commander who leads troops in defense of his territory; a *dictador*, on the other hand, does not have such positive connotations. He cites the case of Francisco Franco, ruler of Spain from 1939 to 1975, who appropriated the title *Caudillo*, but refused the label *Dictador*, which his critics used to call him. While Franco was a true-to-life general, Rebollo Torío points out that a *dictador* need not be an individual with a military background; he only needs to be seen as someone acting with impunity, not subject to the laws of the land, which he rules absolutely (331-332). Noguero Jimenez lists other terms used to refer to historical and fictional Spanish American strongmen, all of which suggest characteristics of a despot are *Patriarca*, *General*, *Patrón*, *Jefe* or *Padre de la Patria*. She even makes an inventory of attributes of the Caudillo personality: messianism, a redeemer sense of patriotism (the only-I-can-save-this-country mindset), megalomania, thanatophilia and misanthropy (92).

El otoño narrates the miserable existence of an infirmity-beseiged and superstition-controlled dictator. His name, Zacarías, is mentioned only once—a narrative suggestion of the insignificance of his identity marker.⁸One important facet of the *patriarca's* characterization is his egocentrism. This I-am-God mindset governs his actions, the more noteworthy ones being lunatic in nature, like his efforts to canonize his mother and proclaim her as “patroness of the nation” and “healer of the sick,” among others. This lunatic behavior—reminiscent of the ancient Roman emperor Caligula's, who named his horse as a senator—brings to mind Amate Blanco's point: the *patriarca's* egocentrism becomes the source of the ridicule he is subjected to (102).

A key characteristic of the *Caudillo's* characterization is the strongman's isolation and solitude. This is a double-edged sword: it seems to show his weakness and at the same time provides the key to understanding the process of mythification of the *Caudillo* in the novels. Morales Padrón claims the *Caudillo's* solitude is unavoidably needed to create an aura of omnipotence, whether it be in Asturias' *El señor presidente* or Roa Bastos' *Yo, el Supremo* (254-255). With omnipotence comes power: the *Supremo/Dictador/Caudillo* is a person of absolute power, and in real-world politics, he is "señor de todo...y se ha convertido su régimen en una dictadura, el país es una finca particular y la hacienda pública constituye sus propios fondos" (Morales Padrón 236). Yet this power brings isolation, which gives Spanish American narratives the chance to explore the idea of mythification of the *Caudillo* figure.

The *Caudillo's* body suffering from marginalization and isolation is scrutinized in *El general*. The fictional *Libertador* is pictured as an indecisive general, his life options limited and he experiences helplessness in his life. He is trapped by his circumstances, much like a laboratory mouse in a maze. Moreover, while used to a hard life, to the daily life of a soldier on campaign, *el general* is troubled by pain which his lover Manuela Saenz knew was coming from a "certidumbre melancólica de que había de morir en su cama, pobre y desnudo, y sin el consuelo de la gratitud pública." (14). This possibility of dying alone, helpless, and unacknowledged by a public that used to adore him heightens the sorrowful sensation coming from his pitiable physical condition: his doctors find him a diagnostic dilemma and can only offer him pain relief, not a cure. Even those surrounding him and apparently responsible for his care are unalarmed, prompted by the doctors' failure to identify his illness: "pues hacía más de cuatro años que las padecía, sin que ningún médico se hubiera arriesgado a intentar alguna explicación científica" (16).

A similar case of isolation and marginalization is seen in another García Márquez work, *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* (1961). The image is further aggravated by the idea of the retired colonel relegated to oblivion...by the very government he once served. This officer, who had been comrades-in-

arms with Macondo's Col. Aureliano Buendía of *Cien años de soledad* fame, spends 15 years waiting for some notice for his pension. He fails to realize for a decade and a half that the end of the war also means the end of his service as a military leader, a position from which he gets his sense of importance. He is thus reduced to a life of poverty and misery. The work ends with a word in Spanish, an expletive, which best captures the emotional storm raging inside the mind of a 75-year-old former military man faced with hunger.

The sense of being forgotten is also felt by *el general*—he is abandoned by friends, whose loyalty he thought he would always have. His prestige has evaporated; the country turns into a *laberinto*, a metaphorical prison, for him, as he cannot leave it for not possessing a passport. Meanwhile, his undiagnosed illness results in his physical deterioration and decline, making it difficult to recognize him. In fact, stopped by police at some point of his journey, they fail to recognize the general. His illness is at such a stage that he fails to attend to a banquet prepared for him at a port town because he feels weak and has no appetite.

Isolation is also accompanied by the loss of commonality with the rest of humanity. The *patriarca's* body is robbed of ordinary human traits: his digits do not leave fingerprints, nor are there marks on the palms of his hands. Neither does he have any recognizable facial features. These corporeal anomalies make the *patriarca* a freak, and his appearance apparently forces him to stay away from the public eye.

Meanwhile, talk about *el general's* death has been going on for the past six years. He has been found once lying on the floor of the hut which served as his general headquarters, trembling and feeling cold in the middle of day, surrounded by hens he could not shoo away. He was thought to have an abdominal illness whose most serious manifestation was an indifference to the world and an absolute inner calm.

García Márquez's strongmen are no pictures of raw masculine strength. The general's weak body is presented early in the novel, and this weakness inevitably opens the door to the possibility of his dying soon:

...tenía el cuerpo pálido y la cabeza y las manos como achicarradas por el abuso de la intemperie. Había cumplido cuarenta y seis años el pasado mes

de julio, ya sus ásperos rizos cáribes se habían vuelto de ceniza y tenía los huesos desordenados por la decrepitud prematura, y todo él se veía tan desmerecido que no parecía capaz de perdurar hasta el julio siguiente. (10) –

[... had a pale body, and the head and the hands were extremely burnt by too much exposure to the outdoors. He just had 46 y.o. last July, and his rough Caribbean curls had become ashes and his bones were disorganized by a premature decrepitude, and the whole person looked so deteriorated that he didn't seem able to last until next July.]

The *patriarca* has no strength to offer himself. Even his military might is an illusion: he assumes power following a coup, but he remains in power due to the support of the British and American navies.

Manhood and Sexuality

No discussion of manhood can happen without touching on on sexuality; or in the particular case of the *Caudillo*, his sexual prowess. The affirmation of his sexual conquests complements the description of his military successes. His triumphs in the private world of the bedroom complete his sense of *guerrero* masculinity seen in the public world of the battlefield. The bedroom and the battlefield are binary points in the construction of his *guerrero* masculinity: the latter he controls while in uniform, the other he conquers while in a state of undress.

Such, in fact, is the sexual magnetism of the Bolivar figure in *El general en su laberinto*⁹ that women reportedly easily offer themselves to be bedded, but he is too weak to even perform. Nuns in one town he and his troops triumphantly enter have to lock convent doors and order the windows closed so that the novices will not succumb to any pulls of the flesh upon seeing him.

But the *patriarca*'s body, despite its avowed masculine sexual prowess, is said to be feminine, with taciturn eyes, pale lips and the hand of a sensitive bride. The figure of the *Caudillo* evokes the image of commanding individual, a dominant—even domineering—male figure. Yet *El Otoño*'s patriarch, in Arteaga Quintero's view, is a male ruler whose actions, beliefs, and lifestyle are influenced, even dictated upon, by the women figures that surround him, effectively rendering him an effeminate character. Although said to

have been born with a large testicle, the *patriarca* nevertheless, is weak and controlled by the women surrounding him (Arteaga 58-60), contradicting the suggested notions of increased strength due to a larger-than-average testosterone factory.¹⁰

Demystifying the *Caudillo*

The so-called “Hitler myth” (Kershaw 1987) is a good take-off point in looking at the phenomenon of the creation and demystification of the *Caudillo*. In his political biography of the Führer, Ian Kershaw defines the “Hitler myth” as a “heroic image and popular conception of Hitler imputing to him characteristics and motives for the most part at crass variance with reality” (2). Partly a creation of propaganda, partly a creation of the German masses’ imagination, the “heroic Hitler image” and the “Führer cult,” Kershaw says, established “a mass phenomenon, providing the Nazi regime with the legitimation of an adored leader enjoying an unprecedented degree of adulation and subservience from the people” (5).

What is interesting in Hitler’s cult image is how its dynamics intersect with the hero status of Simon Bolivar (1783-1830) accorded to him by his contemporary Latin Americans. Hitler offered post-World War 1 German society with a charismatic leadership that responded to the need for recovery of the prosperous pre-1914 German economic life and the restoration of German national pride. Hitler envisioned as solution the *Lebensraum*, operationalized as the wresting back of control of lost German territory in then-Eastern Europe as a result of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Bolivar’s version of *Lebensraum* is the liberation of Spanish America from colonial rule, and his feats as *El Libertador* no doubt helped bolster belief in the Great-Man Theory that took currency in a century that witnessed the rise of leaders like Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) and Otto von Bismark (1815-1898), both military conquerors like him.

Defeat in war demolished Hitler’s hero image; for Bolivar, it was his political decline resulting from the rejection of his republican ideas by the urban elite. García Marquez’s *El general en su laberinto* (1989) is a fictionalized account of Bolivar during his last months of life, when he was suffering the

consequences of the reversal of his political fortune. The novel provides a platform from which to discuss the demystification of soldier heroes.

The hagiographical treatment given of Bolívar in Spanish American narratives presents a problem *El general* tries to resolve. In creating what Angulo Noguera calls “una versión descalzada de la ‘verdad’ histórica impuesta,” the novel tries to bring to the surface what has been omitted in the Bolívar biographies (46).

García Marquez’s Bolívar in *El general* is like his historical alter-ego: like the real-life Bolívar who died of tuberculosis, the former exhibits physical and mental illness; he is left with a few followers, and he no longer enjoys the pleasure of seeing jubilant welcoming crowds as he enters the cities in his itinerary. What this fictional Bolívar leaves readers is a *Libertador* in human form, with flaws and weaknesses, much unlike the larger-than-life Bolívar his biographies and historical accounts narrate.

El otoño on the other hand presents a satire on Spanish America’s military governments and their leaders especially those from the 20th century, as not a few of them—from Nicaragua’s Anastasio Somoza (1925-1980) to Chile’s Augusto Pinochet (1915-2006)—grabbed power with the blessings and support of other important states, notably the United States (Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “he’s our son of a bitch” comment comes to mind here). In the mid-1970s when *El otoño* came out, two particular Caudillos may be said to be targetted by the novel Cuba’s Fidel Castro and Pinochet).

Conclusion

Given the common identification of the *Caudillo* as the “padre del país,” one can easily read into the conflation of the figures of head of state and father of the national polity in the *Caudillo* novels a deconstructive critique of Spanish American military dictatorships during the Boom years. The military man’s proclivity to show itself as strong is contradicted by the weakness and illness of the *patriarca* and the fictional *Libertador*. The usual illusion of *Caudillos* that they are loved by their constituents is contradicted by the marginalization and isolation their character suffers in the novels.

There is an abundant repertoire of *novelas de la dictadura* in Spanish America; the historical connection is very clear: the countries of the region, once called in a derogatory manner as *banana republics*—one can recall the fictional United Fruit Company and the massacre of banana plantation workers in *Cien años de soledad*, and the real-life American corporation United Fruit Company—have, throughout the 20th century, ushered in military leaders who would evolve from seemingly-patriotic men in uniform to degenerate dictators.

The male principle also operates in the Fil-hispanic novel. The *guerrero* is a hero figure and defends the nation. During the American period when Abad's novel was published— that era when discovery of native mythological roots was the fashion, Filipinas was seen as the consolidation of the male and female principles. It is an idea embodied in the legend of Malakas and Maganda—the Philippines' mythological parents said to have sprang out of a common bamboo. Their names are just that, appellations; they are not attributes. One can be Malakas and still be Maganda; Maganda .can still be strong while being beautiful.

So in a dichotomized imaging of the country, where both Malakas and Maganda principles are present, the military man, the soldier, the *guerrero*, Fernando Robles in *Los pájaros de fuego*, and Mariano Bontulan in *La oveja de Nathán* only form half of Filipinas; the other half is borne by the Martas and the Natalias of *Los pájaros* and the Emilias and Ta-Titays of *La oveja*.

The Philippines has a different experience as compared with dictator phenomenon in Spanish America. Ferdinand Marcos (1917-1989), as the *dictador/Caudillo* figure in Philippine history, did not assume the presidential office as a man in uniform, although he was once one. He was allegedly a man of the law; but his imposition of martial rule in Philippine society changed the political dynamics and the operation of the law in the land. The novels that have been written since—unfortunately, only in English and Filipino—talk about a *dictadura* much different from the dictatorships Spanish America underwent through its messianic *Caudillos*.

Notes

1. Such a reading is possible. Efraín Kristal cites critic William Raymonds' reading of García Márquez novels in *The Colombian Novel, 1844-1987* "in the context of the historical and regional peculiarities of a nation" and analyzes the novelist's "take on historical events addressed by other Colombian authors" (2).
2. Bredin's Dreyfus biography (1986) provides an excellent discussion of the dynamics of military and civilian life of French fin-de-siècle society.
3. The play on the concepts of *madre* and *madre patria*, and *amada* can be seen in the *Noli*, where Maria Clara, the *amada* of the lead character, sings in Chapter 23 that moments spent in the *patria* are sweet; on the other hand, "dead is the breeze for him who does not / [have] a country, a mother, and a love." (*Noli*, trans. Lacson-Locsin, 186).
4. The case for a camouflage uniform came in the wake of the large number of French casualties in World War I, principally due to the insistence of the French High Command on national pride, that France's soldiers should wear the blue-and-red uniforms representing the nation's colors, thereby easily exposing them to German gunshots.
5. Rizal's influence in Balmori is clearly seen in this do-not-forget-us-those-who-fell-in-the-night passage, the last words by Elías to the young Basilio towards the end of *Noli Me Tángere* (1887).
6. The decline of Hispanic culture in the Philippines—symbolized by the deaths of the Robles children and uncle—is a motif that resonates in not a few post-1945 English language titles. A foremost example is seen in Nick Joaquin's play, *Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* (1966); the most recent case is Anna Maria "Bambi" Harper's novel *Agueda: A Ballad of Stone and Wind* (2012).
7. This uncannily recalls the exhortation in Rizal's other novel, *El Filibusterismo* (1991), to acquire education as proof of worthiness to acquire freedom, and the aversion for armed hostilities as a means to acquire it.
8. Interestingly, the *Caudillo* in Miguel Angel Asturias' *El presidente* (1946) is also unnamed.
9. Castañón (78) notes that some sectors consider *El general en su laberinto* as either a tribute or an act of treason against Fidel Castro (1926-2016) or Che Guevarra (1928-1967), pillars both of the 1959 Cuban revolution.
10. It is interesting to note that while novelists like García Márquez invest the *Caudillo* figure with sexual prowess as a function of his masculinity, a woman writing about Spanish American male sexuality avers that it is not the sexual conquest of a women that affirms manhood in their culture, but penetrative

sexual intercourse with a fellow male. She refers to it as “the hidden bisexuality of Latin men and even says that Vargas Llosa’s *La ciudad y los perros* has many references on the matter (Paternostro 28-29).

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Rafael Bernal, un Escritor Mexicano Escribiendo Desde Filipinas

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Resumen

El presente ensayo ofrece un acercamiento a la obra y pensamiento que el escritor Rafael Bernal desarrolló sobre Filipinas y más precisamente sobre la historia del Océano Pacífico en su conjunto. El trabajo hecho por el también narrador y dramaturgo es el primero de este calibre que se lleva a cabo desde México. Su importancia radica en que Bernal buscaba dar a conocer una historia que, hasta la fecha, es casi desconocida por la mayoría de sus connacionales. Se trata de la historia de conquista con la que nace el pueblo moderno mexicano y que hizo que sus navegantes, soldados y capitanes lograran la conquista de Oriente en el siglo XVI.

Las crónicas del momento describen la gesta de esta manera: fueron los “mexicanos” quienes lograron asentarse en Filipinas y, desde ahí, establecer una ruta comercial que tenía a Manila y Acapulco como los dos ejes de la ecuación marítima. El flujo constante de mercancía hizo que la cultura mexicana se nutriera de las costumbres llegadas de Asia, principalmente del Archipiélago de San Lázaro, logrando una hermandad entre los pueblos que se vio rota y olvidada a partir de que la capitania de Filipinas pasa a manos de España, cuando México logra su independencia en 1821.

Para alcanzar este grado de reflexión Bernal gozó con la oportunidad de fungir como diplomático en Filipinas en la década de los sesenta. Durante los cuatro años de su labor en Asia pudo entrar en contacto con diversos intelectuales de Manila, entre ellos Antonio M. Abad, en quien encontró un alma siamesa. En el presente trabajo se demuestra cómo los discursos literarios de ambos escritores explotaron las mismas vetas e incluso se lleva a cabo un ejercicio de literatura comprada donde se concluye que dos narraciones de Bernal están basadas en la novela *El Campeón* de Abad.

El ensayo se encuentra dividido en dos partes. En la primera se muestra una pequeña biografía de Bernal antes de emprender su viaje a Oriente e igualmente se enumeran sus obras más significativas de la época. En la segunda, el texto presenta el abrevadero intelectual que Bernal halló en Filipinas en donde pudo gestar su gran obra, titulada *El gran océano*.

Palabras clave

Biografía, El Campeon, El Gran Océano, Mexico, Rafael Bernal

Abstract

This paper offers an approach to the historic and literary work developed by the Mexican writer Rafael Bernal about the history of the Philippines, and more precisely about the Pacific Ocean. Bernal, who was also an accomplished narrator and a playwright, made most of the research on this topic in Mexico. The importance of his work lies in the fact that he was seeking to make public a part Mexican national history, which remains unknown to most of his countrymen even today.

Th chronicles written during those days presented the facts in such an order. First, it was the people from New Spain who were able to settle in the Philippines. After the inaugural trip, the newcomers established a fresh commercial route from America to the archipelago. The cities of Manila and Acapulco were the cores of that maritime way. As it is well known, the

constant flow of merchandise influenced the Mexican culture, inheriting Asian traditions, mainly the costumes that came from the San Lázaro Archipelago. This relationship was broken and forgotten in 1821 when Mexico achieved its independence and Spain reclaimed its control over the Philippines.

Bernal was part of the diplomatic Embassy of Mexico in the Philippines during the 1960s. This undertaking enabled him to reconsider the historical connections of the two countries. In his four years of working in Asia, he was able to get in touch with various intellectuals living in Manila. It was not clear if he was able to meet the Filipino writer Antonio M. Abad. However, it is the goal of this paper to demonstrate how the literary discourses of both writers used similar strategies. Grounded on a close reading exercise, it is possible to conclude that two Bernal's short stories could be based on the novel *El Campeón* by Abad.

"De gallos y gallinas" and "Un día patrio" are the titles of the two short stories by Bernal that I analyze in this article. In "De gallos y gallinas", the author represents the same scenario used by Abad in his novel, *El Campeón*. Bernal defends the coop as the place where the Philippines can recognize themselves as Philippines. Social classes, good people, bad people do not exist in the coop. There, everyone is just a Filipino, and Bernal presented that idea in the same way that Abad did. In "Un día patrio", the Mexican writer uses another topic that greatly interests Abad: the historic national confrontation about the existence of a unique Philippine identity. The plot of the short story takes place during the Philippine's Independence Day. It tells the contradictions among the members of a family who live in Intramuros after World War II, and because of the destruction of their country, they have doubts if it is appropriate to celebrate or not. However, those who want to celebrate Independence Day and those who do not want to do it made an agreement: the coop is a place that serves as a great equalizing element. Thanks to this stories and others not mentioned here, it is possible to affirm that in Bernal's poetic, the coop is the place where Latin America and the Philippines embrace their historic bond.

The paper is divided into two sections. The first one shows a literary biography of Bernal, with special focus on his life before he ventured to Asia. The second part of the article presents the intellectual influence that Bernal found in the Philippines and how it enabled him to write his masterpiece, *El gran océano*.

Keywords

Biography, El Campeón, El Gran Océano, Mexico, Rafael Bernal



Fig. 1. Edición moderna de *El Campeón*, en Clásicos Hispanofilipinos (2013)

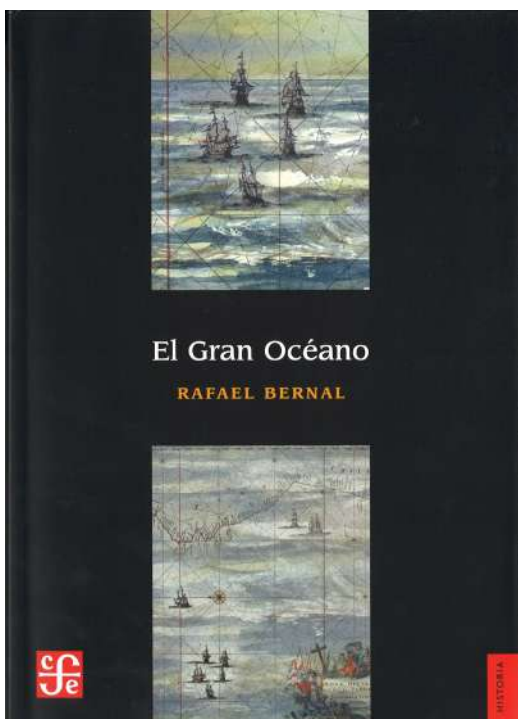


Fig. 2. *El Gran Océano* (1992), por Rafael Bernal

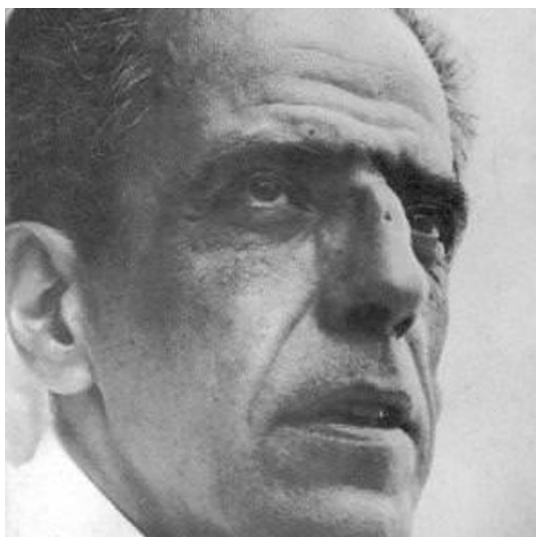


Fig. 3. Rafael Bernal, escritor mexicano

El complot mongol es la pieza clave de la literatura negra en México. Pese a la tradición del género en el país que, sustentada en diversos proyectos, narraciones y revistas, puede rastrearse décadas atrás de la publicación de la novela en 1969, la historia escrita por Rafael Bernal estableció los mecanismos para apropiarse, desde la cultura nacional, de los paradigmas que exigen los relatos de crimen. A la necesidad de resolver un misterio, la figura del anti-héroe convertido en investigador y los avatares del o los protagonistas en su búsqueda por la verdad, el mexicano agregó la atmósfera decadente de un régimen político putrefacto (en ese momento el del Partido Revolucionario Institucional, emanado de la Revolución de 1910), el acoso imperialista de Estados Unidos y Rusia hacia Latinoamérica, y el desencanto por una existencia en la que ni resolviendo el caso, ni con la misericordia de Dios, puede alcanzarse la paz entre los hombres. Como muestra de lo anterior pueden citarse las reflexiones de Filiberto García, viejo revolucionario protagonista de la obra: “La Revolución no se ha convertido en nada. La Revolución se ha acabado y ahora no hay más que pinches leyes. Y así, por todos lados, nos andamos haciendo pendejos. Todos, de una manera o de otra. Con mucho primor, como dicen los corridos” (67). *El complot mongol* es una pieza magistral en la que, a la par de seductora narración, el autor experimenta con las voces narrativas, crea atmósferas únicas y presenta a la Ciudad de México como ese Aleph donde el universo entero puede, no sólo experimentarse, sino también sufrirse hasta el hartazgo.

Desde su aparición la novela sedujo a los más jóvenes y, pese a su valía, se volvió una obra de culto. El grupo selecto de lectores que conocían su existencia no comprendían el poco impacto masivo de tan extraordinaria obra. Sólo a partir de las últimas décadas el nombre de Rafael Bernal ha empezado a dimensionarse en todos los aspectos que exploró como creador. Poeta, ensayista, investigador, narrador, guionista de Hollywood, dramaturgo, político y explorador, en su discurso literario muestra las pasiones que marcaron su vida. Una de las principales fue la investigación de los acontecimientos que pusieron en “el corazón del mundo” a México, entendido por el autor como esa nación gestada a partir de la mezcla de indios, españoles y africanos, y cuyo eje de acción se da por medio de la exploración del Océano Pacífico, con

Filipinas como núcleo de contacto con Asia. Aún con la popularidad que ha logrado *El Complot Mongol*, las pesquisas de Bernal sobre los mexicanos y sus nexos con el Mundo carecen del eco del que tendrían que gozar tanto en el plano nacional, como en el internacional.

Dos aspectos fueron provocando el silenciamiento de una escritura tan importante como la de Rafael Bernal. El primero de ellos fue su deceso, ocurrido el 17 de septiembre de 1972 en Berna, Suiza. Luego de una carrera diplomática que lo había llevado, en la segunda mitad del siglo XX, a Honduras, Filipinas, Japón y Perú, en Europa encontró la muerte. Tantos años alejado de los circuitos literarios en México, hicieron que sus libros, publicados antes de su partida, fueran excluidos poco a poco de la tradición. La segunda de las razones, y acaso la más importante para su omisión del canon mexicano, fue su inclinación política hacia el conservadurismo. Cronológicamente Bernal es hijo de la Revolución Mexicana y de la Primera Guerra Mundial. La generación de autores que vio la luz alrededor de 1914 en el país cuenta con nombres tan sobresalientes como Octavio Paz, José Revueltas, Efraín Huertas, Rafael Solana, José Luis Martínez y Alberto Quintero Álvarez. En los años treinta, cuando empiezan su adolescencia y juventud, las figuras más sobresalientes de la promoción se inclinan por las luchas de izquierda. Varios de ellos ingresarán en el Partido Comunista Mexicano, apoyarán al gobierno del General Lázaro Cárdenas en la ayuda y en el refugio a los republicanos españoles que huían tras la Guerra Civil, y fundarán proyectos donde muestran claramente su ideología. Muestras de ellos son las revistas *Barandal*, *Cuadernos del Valle de México* y *Taller*. En la llamada “década roja”, que se extenderá hasta la finalización de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, cuando naciones capitalistas y comunistas se unen para combatir al amenazante nazismo, Bernal elige el otro lado de la trinchera.

Luego de su aventura a los 18 años en la selva del sureste mexicano, donde buscaba hacer fortuna, y de haber estudiado cinematografía en París e incursionar en el mundo creativo hollywoodense, en los años cuarenta el escritor se unió al Partido Fuerza Popular, brazo político de la Unión Nacional Sinarquista (UNS). Se trataba de una agrupación sociopolítica de carácter católica, conservadora y opositora al régimen, nacida oficialmente el

23 de mayo de 1937 en la emblemática calle de Libertad, en ciudad de León, Guanajuato. En un principio, el organismo fue acusado de recibir financiamiento y entrenamiento de espías nazis en México, y de estar ligado a las huestes cristeras que, una década antes, habían emprendido una sangrienta guerra en contra el Estado Mexicano. Para cuando el escritor entra a sus filas, la UNS no dejaba de subrayar su carácter pacífico y de apoyo a las clases más desfavorecidas del país, como campesinos y obreros. Sin embargo, sus acciones, más simbólicas que combativas, no dejaban de causar molestia entre el gobierno.

Eso mismo sucedió en la Décima Junta Anual de líderes de la Unión, llevada a cabo en diciembre de 1948 en la Ciudad de México. La reunión terminó en la Alameda Central frente a la estatua de Benito Juárez. Luego de los discursos en contra del Benemérito de las Américas Bernal, uno de los dirigentes del mitin, azuzó a los asistentes a encapuchar la estatua de Juárez, “el representante por excelencia del laicismo mexicano y, por ende, el canalla más grande de la historia de México para los sinarquistas, [...] provocando la ira de las autoridades” (Hernández 302). A consecuencia de estos actos, varios jefes, entre ellos el escritor, fueron encarcelados. Además, el Congreso Mexicano proclamó el natalicio de Juárez como fiesta nacional y, el 28 de enero de 1949, la Secretaría de Gobierno, a cargo de Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, canceló el registro de Fuerza Popular quedando fuera de las elecciones de julio de 1949.

Las experiencias en sus luchas sociales, las plasmó en los libros *Federico Reyes el cristero* (1941), *Improperio a Nueva York y otros poemas* (1943), *Memorias de Santiago Oxtotilpan* (1945), *Su nombre era muerte* (1947) y *El fin de la esperanza* (1948). Para la década de los cincuenta, el escritor abandonó sus aspiraciones políticas. Consideró corrompida la UNS por haber abandonado la lucha a favor de los más pobres del país. Se volcó entonces hacia la literatura y publicó *Gente de mar* (1950), un delicioso volumen de ensayos donde da cuenta sobre diversos personajes, desde piratas hasta pilotos del Galeón de Acapulco, que le habían seducido desde sus primeros años como lector. La letra es destino. Bernal pudo comprobarlo cuando ingresó al Servicio Diplomático Mexicano, donde le fue encomendada la secretaría de la

Embajada Nacional en Manila. En el año de 1961 emprendió el viaje rumbo al Pacífico, al igual que lo hicieran los personajes de los que tanto había escrito. En Filipinas encontrará almas siamesas en la literatura, un mundo ya imaginado y un ambiente propicio para gestar una narrativa sobre el archipiélago apenas conocida. Pero sobre todo hallará el afluyente para nutrir su gran obra maestra, imprescindible en cualquier estudio sobre la región: *El gran océano*.

En la literatura de Bernal no existe otra propuesta de tal envergadura como la historia del Pacífico que le llevó varios años de su vida. El libro se inscribe en el mismo canon de la literatura mexicana que, durante el siglo XX, tiene ejemplos tan sobresalientes como *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz o las trampas de la fe*, de Octavio Paz (1983); *Pasado inmediato* y *Última Tule*, de Alfonso Reyes (1997); *La Raza Cósmica*, de José Vasconcelos (2002); *Nueva grandeza mexicana*, bajo la firma de Salvador Novo (1946), y *La invención de América*, de Edmundo O’Gorman (2008). Todos y cada uno de ellos se inscriben en los ensayos postrevolucionarios que buscaron retratar un momento histórico del país, pero al mismo comprender la actuación de México en el plano global. Ya sea enfocados en un personaje, ya sea buscando plasmar una época o diseccionar una ideología, los textos mencionados forman parte de una nómina de altísimo nivel intelectual cuyas huellas han fundado corrientes de pensamiento nacionales. De este calibre es el aporte que hace Bernal con su trabajo sobre el océano que une a América con Asia.

Navegando desde Acapulco hasta Manila

Nueva España, 1565: el deseo de establecer una ruta más rápida hacia Oriente, sin tener que bordear la costa africana, como pretendía originalmente Cristóbal Colón, aún no cesa entre los europeos en América. El comercio y la dominación de nuevas tierras sigue siendo el sueño máspreciado tras la caída del Imperio Mexica. La aventura rumbo al Gran Océano implicaría no sólo la reafirmación del poderío marítimo del Imperio Español, sino también la definición de la nueva patria mexicana que había empezado a componer su fisonomía con la llegada de los españoles al continente.

Debido al conocimiento y la experiencia de Juan Pablo de Carrión respecto al llamado “tornaviaje” —la corriente transpacífico que hacía posible

el regreso de Asia rumbo a América— y su apoyo en la primera expedición de la que finalmente fue excluido por Andrés de Urdaneta, cosmógrafo, marino y religioso agustino encargado del proyecto, los aventureros lograron la conquista del hasta entonces conocido como Archipiélago de San Lázaro (Gil, Hidalgo Nuchera). Las crónicas del momento narran la hazaña: “Ello es cosa grande y de mucha importancia: y los de México están muy ufanos con su descubrimiento, que tienen entendido que ellos serán el corazón del mundo” (Bernal 45). En los textos se habla de los “vasallos del rey de Castilla”, pero también de “los de México”, definición para el conglomerado de novohispanos, criollos y españoles que conformaron la primera exploración exitosa en suelos orientales, y a la que se sumarían indios tlaxcaltecas en las siguientes embarcaciones, tal y como lo habían hecho en otras regiones de América.

Es decir, “los de México”, como se clasificaron en la época, ya eran lo que Bernal señalaba como el origen del mestizaje en el país. Se trataba de individuos que transportaban ideas y formas de vida. Es necesario destacar que, para el escritor, más que una cuestión basada en la biología o en territorio, cuando habla de “mexicanos” se refiere a la nueva cultura, con sus discursos, su imaginario, su gastronomía, su manera de posicionarse el Mundo, que había nacido al otro día de la caída de Tenochtitlán en 1521. Los de México eran españoles que habían adoptado costumbres indígenas, criollos que asimilaban sus tradiciones mestizas, indios que hablaban castellano y practicaban el catolicismo, africanos que comían tortillas como dieta diaria. Desde esta perspectiva de intercambio de ideas, conocimientos, acciones cotidianas, es como Bernal va forjando su concepto siempre dinámico de patria que, al darse el intercambio con Asia, vuelve a nutrirse de nuevas perspectivas en todos los niveles de su accionar. Esos mexicanos habían zarpado el 21 de noviembre de 1564 del puerto de Navidad o de Juan Griego, como era conocido en ese entonces, y lograron la ocupación de territorios asiáticos del Pacífico Sur. La proeza estableció la primera ruta de comercio mundial de la historia al unir tres continentes durante 250 años: Asia, América y Europa.

El comandante de la flota se llamaba Miguel López de Legazpi y Gorrochátegui, español que había echado raíces en México por más de 30

años. En la tropa destacó su nieto, Juan de Salcedo, novohispano de nacimiento que a la postre sería el fundador de la amurallada ciudad de Manila. De su exploración se instauró la Capitanía General de las Filipinas. Su administración quedó a cargo del Virreinato de la Nueva España con capital en la Ciudad de México. El Galeón de Acapulco o Galeón de Manila o Nao de China se hacía a la mar, cargado de plata mexicana y oro peruano. En Filipinas comercializaba con los pueblos malayos, chinos, japoneses y cualquiera de la región que quisiera hacer negocios con los llegados del otro lado del mundo. Los productos traídos a América eran múltiples: especias, marfil, porcelana, seda, laca, muebles, canela, algodón, textiles, arte sacro e incluso diamantes. La mayoría se quedaba en México. Otra parte se enviaba a Perú o Veracruz, para ser embarcado hacia España, vía La Habana. El intercambio provocó el sincretismo cultural entre América y Asia que Bernal (2012) describe de esta manera:

Teóricamente toda la mercancía del galeón debía pasar a España, pues estaba prohibido el comercio entre una colonia u otra, pero en la práctica la mayor parte de la mercancía quedaba en la Nueva España y una parte considerable de ella pasaba de contrabando a Perú, de donde llegaban cada año uno o dos barcos a Acapulco a esperar la feria. Así, el impacto económico y social de China y Filipinas, se hace mucho más notable en México que en el resto del imperio. Muchas de las costumbres mexicanas, muchos de los actuales productos, celebraciones, objetos de lujo, tienen su origen en el galeón, como las peleas de gallo con navaja, importada de Filipinas, así como los extraordinarios mangos de Manila que conservan ese nombre en México. El papel de China o papel de seda para hacer picaduras y adornos conserva también, en su nombre mexicano, la huella de su origen. Los fuegos artificiales, llamados castillos en México, fueron importados de China y se sabe que el virrey Enríquez solicitó se le enviaran dos expertos pirotécnicos para que los indios aprendieran a hacerlos. En las fiestas que se celebraron en la Ciudad de México desde principios del siglo XVII encontramos constantemente la mención de terciopelos y sedas de China como parte del vestuario de comparsas y de los caballeros [...]. Los alfareros de la ciudad de Puebla, enseñados a fabricar la “talavera” con sus hábiles manos antiguas, se dejaron llevar por la influencia de los dibujos Ming, también en azul y blanco, y empezaron a hacer tibores con pagodas y dragones; asimismo, los talladores peruanos de piedras de Huamanga empezaron a hacer leones imperiales de Pekín. Así, las costumbres criollas americanas, sobre todo en México,

se vieron modificadas por el comercio de Oriente en forma importante y gran parte de ese lujo mexicano que tanto asombra al barón de Humboldt a principios del siglo XIX era una herencia del comercio de la Nao de China (240-241).

Al centro —en el corazón del mundo, como lo establecen los documentos citados por el escritor— de esa convulsión comercial se encontraba México y su riqueza, pero además una cultura que no era ni española ni indígena ni negra, sino una mezcla de las tres y que, como se lee, empezó a nutrirse de costumbres asiáticas. Ese fue el momento en que nació el mexicano moderno como protagonista en el concierto de la historia. Las referencias a esa nueva cultura, gestada de la unión entre españoles y nativos, pueden leerse en las correspondencias oficiales que se dirigían del Virreinato de la Nueva España a La Corona: “Copia de una carta venida de Sevilla a Miguel Salvador de Valencia. La cual narra el venturoso descubrimiento que los Mexicanos han hecho, navegando con la armada que su Majestad mandó hacer en México. Con otras cosas maravillosas, y de gran provecho para toda la Cristiandad: son dignas de ser vistas y leídas” (Bernal 45).

Los documentos llegan a nosotros por medio de las obras que Rafael Bernal escribió durante su estancia en Oriente. *México en Filipinas. Estudio de una transculturación* es el título en el que recupera sus primeras visiones en el Archipiélago. Su experiencia en Manila duró cuatro años: de 1961 a 1965. Lo que descubrió en su estadía al otro lado del Pacífico no fue un pueblo ajeno, sino que se reencontró con su país. En las sonrisas de los filipinos, en su manera de enfrentar la derrota o las catástrofes, en su organización caótica de la vida donde subyace un sentido religioso con ecos aún más hondos que el evangelio cristiano, pero que en el sincretismo con los ritos católicos hallan su mejor expresión popular, Bernal fue reconociendo una tradición que inevitablemente compartía el alma con los de tierra americana. Fue tanto su asombro que lo volcó en conocimiento. Sobre territorio asiático escribió el artículo “The Chinese Colony in the Philippines, 1570-1770”, incluido en el volumen *The chinese in Philippines* (1966), y el prólogo a *Philippine's History* (1967). De la misma manera Filipinas nutrió su ficción. En Manila escribió *Tierra de gracia* (1963), ambientada en Venezuela, y *En diferentes mundos*

(1967), cuyos cuentos “El ciclista tuerto” y “El mexicano” tienen como espacio narrativo la capital filipina. Por último, en tierras asiáticas dio a luz a la que él consideraba su máxima obra, más que cualquiera de sus novelas, titulada *El gran océano*.

La obra de Bernal se compara con *El Mediterráneo y el mundo mediterráneo en la época de Felipe II*, de Fernand Braudel, como bien lo señala Alfonso de María y Campos Castelló, en “Prólogo” a la edición de 2012, el volumen es una deliciosa de pieza que navega sin mancha y sin peros por los recursos literarios e históricos. Bernal expone su erudición de una geografía, el Pacífico, donde se dieron algunos de los pasajes más importantes de la humanidad, sin distinción entre clasificaciones como Oriente y Occidente. Es en *El gran océano*, editado como una obra póstuma por primera vez por el Banco de México en 1992, donde el autor se regodea en uno de los temas que más estudió en su vida. En el volumen ofrece una cronología desde el principio de los tiempos hasta el siglo XIX de ese fragmento del mundo en el que los sueños de riqueza y fama nacieron junto a las aventuras de piratas, batallas navales y gestas poco conocidas o acontecimientos perversos.

Sus más de 500 páginas en formato medio oficio muestran no sólo el compendio de gran cantidad de datos, tan ricos como extraordinarios, de una región donde múltiples culturas, imperios y personajes se imbricaron, sino también la reflexión de toda una vida pensando en el mar, como fue la de Bernal. Para el mexicano había dos clases de pueblos: los que veían en el mar una barrera y aquellos que pudieron conceptualizarlo como una vía más rápida de comunicación. La historia demuestra cómo la segunda clase de pueblos son los que lograron las grandes hazañas, pero a diferencia de los discursos oficiales, el mexicano creía que esas grandes hazañas sólo pudieron lograrse a partir de los individuos que rodeaban a los nombres destacados en los registros oficiales. Hacia esos hombres volcó su visión, lo que hace de *El Gran Océano* una mirada múltiple de los hechos narrados, alejada de cualquier rasgo imperialista, ya sea desde Europa o Estados Unidos, como la que padece gran parte de los estudios que se han hecho al respecto. En su momento, José Luis Martínez señaló:

pero antes que limitarse a reunir las experiencias de los grandes viajeros, Bernal se propuso estudiar el pensamiento, siempre cambiante, de los hombres que llevaron a cabo esas empresas, según las diferentes maneras de pensar de los pueblos expansionistas, que modificaron las formas de contacto con los pueblos (1-2).

El matiz sobrio del libro está hermanado al carácter sobrio del autor. En su ficha del expediente del Servicio Exterior, el diplomático Rafael Bernal es descrito como un hombre “casado, de 1.89 de estatura, tez morena, pelo negro, frente grande, cejas espesas y juntas, ojos castaños, nariz convexa y boca mediana” (De María 17). Al llegar a Filipinas trabajó a cargo del embajador Muñoz Zapata y debido a su extraordinaria labor el escritor es ascendido a primer secretario. De 1961 a 1965 desempeña sus labores diplomáticas en Manila. Durante este lapso el mexicano fue responsable de los trabajos culturales de la visita oficial del presidente Adolfo López Mateos al Archipiélago, como parte de los festejos del 400 aniversario del viaje de Legazpi. Gracias a las gestiones de Bernal visitaron el país otros intelectuales mexicanos, como Jaime Torres Bodet, Miguel León-Portilla, Ignacio Chávez y Luis Villoro, quienes ofrecieron charlas, conferencias y talleres. De la misma manera estableció, junto con académicos de la Universidad de Santo Tomás, una corriente intelectual transpacífica en la que al parecer participaron diversos pensadores de ambos continentes. En todos los sentidos, el trabajo de Bernal en Filipinas fue destacado:

La gira de López Mateos fue un éxito en lo diplomático; su propósito más ambicioso era la búsqueda de una defensa conjunta de los precios de las materias primas producidas “por los países en desarrollo, y abrir nuevos mercados especialmente para los manufactureros mexicanos, y las fuentes de diversificación de la inversión extranjera”. El recorrido que tuvo lugar en el otoño de 1962 incluyó la India, Filipinas, Indonesia y Japón; llevó también un mensaje de paz y la propuesta de una política para el control del armamentismo y los ensayos nucleares (De María 38).

Es interesante pensar en el panorama que encontró Rafael Bernal a su llegada al Archipiélago en los años sesenta. El español moría en Filipinas

y había un puñado de intelectuales, entre los que destacaba Antonio M. Abad, que se negaban a la catástrofe que les arrancaría el espíritu hispánico. Durante la primera mitad del siglo XX, cuando se llevan a cabo las políticas más férreas para imponer el inglés como idioma oficial en el país, diversos escritores desarrollaron obras fundamentales de la literatura en español de Oriente, dando a luz a lo que se denomina la Época de Oro de las Letras Hispanofilipinas. Una gran variedad de tonos y textos se agrupan desde 1896 a 1967. Poesía clásica, relatos de tradición oral, ensayo literario, novelas río, de crecimiento e históricas, son apenas algunas coordenadas por las que deambula la literatura en castellano en Las Filipinas (García, *El campeón*).

Manifestaciones tan interesantes como el Modernismo, con Latinoamérica como núcleo de gestación, encuentran eco en el Archipiélago. El máximo representante del movimiento en Filipinas fue Jesús Balmori (1886-1945), quien a la edad de 17 años publicó un libro revolucionario en la lírica filipina: *Liras malayas* (1904). A la par del modernismo, otra de las líneas donde se utilizó a la literatura como herramienta de cohesión cultural ante la embestida del inglés fue la narrativa. Unas de las novelas más importantes de las letras hispanofilipinas es *La oveja de Nathán* (1929), del escritor Antonio M. Abad, la cual fue publicada por entregas a partir de 1928 en el periódico *La Opinión* y se hizo merecedora del Premio Zóbel. La narración hace guiños a la palabra de Galdós, Tolstoi y Dostoievski. Trata de abarcarlo todo, de exponer sin límites las características que marcaron el rumbo de la humanidad a principios del siglo XX. El refugio y paternalismo literario que haya en las figuras de estos autores no implica que Abad fuera ajeno a lo acontecido en la literatura en español de su tiempo; sin embargo, la lejanía geográfica con España y Latinoamérica le fue un impedimento para seguir puntualmente la evolución de las letras en castellano. Lo mismo sucede con otras de las obras hispanofilipinas, sobre todo en la narrativa: parecen anacrónicas, demasiado distantes a las experimentaciones literarias que se dieron a principios del siglo XX en la literaria en castellano.

Este desfase no es casual. No existe otro ejemplo en la historia del español donde el idioma esté condenado a morir. Estos literatos fueron conscientes del significado de escribir en castellano en un momento donde la oscuridad

del mutismo les rondaba cada vez más de cerca. La literatura hispanofilipina trascendió así sus objetivos meramente estéticos a fin de situarse en un lugar privilegiado a camino entre el panfleto y el ideario político. Los escritores filipinos en castellano carecían de tiempo para detenerse y pensar sobre las diversas aristas, corrientes, discursos, que podrían explorar por medio de sus letras con el propósito de alejarse del discurso literario europeo, como sucedió durante la misma época en Latinoamérica. Sin ningún horizonte adonde su palabra pudiera trascender y con la asfixia anglosajona acrecentándose un día tras otro, la literatura fue su arma, su espíritu, finalmente su vida. A los anterior se suma el antiyanquismo de la generación que padecía la asfixia estadounidense en su propia tierra, lo que provocó que el idioma fuera igualmente un arma de resistencia.

Con el panorama que urgía acciones desde la literatura, Rafael Bernal coincidió con Antonio M. Abad. La relación entre los escritores es desconocida hasta la fecha, pero puede comprobarse fácilmente. En el archivo del filipino se conservan documentos e invitaciones oficiales para participar en los actos culturales que llevó a cabo el presidente mexicano López Mateos en Manila. El vínculo también se demuestra con el acercamiento que Bernal hizo a los ensayos de Abad: los dos escritores compartieron inquietudes que marcaron profundamente su obra. Les preocupaba, en primer término, la recuperación del nexo, roto desde 1821, entre México y Filipinas. Bernal volcó el tema en los libros históricos mencionados líneas atrás. De su lado, en el ensayo “Méjico [sic] y Filipinas: la historia se repite”, Antonio M. Abad escribe expresiones como “en realidad Méjico fue el evangelizador de Filipinas” y “de México venían los mejores gobernantes de Filipinas”, para finalmente señalar la necesidad de que estos países rescaten el pasado que los une:

La madurez nos ha desligado de España. Mucho antes de esa separación, México buscó y encontró la libertad. Era la más compatible con su propia madurez. Mientras la buscaba cuidó sólo de sí misma, olvidando por un momento que tenía en el Pacífico una hermana menor a quien en la infancia rodeó de halagos. De su lento crecimiento fue testigo; y ahora, en la comodidad de su propia casa, Méjico recuerda ‘aquellos tiempos’. La mayor y la

menor son libres. ¿No es hora de que, juntas otra vez, se cuenten sus alegrías y sus tristezas? (Archivo Abad, cajas 70 y 86).

Las afirmaciones de Abad estaban basadas en la historia, es decir, en ese pasado que tenían que recorrer los filipinos para proyectar su futuro. En ese pasado estaba como foco primordial México. Los dos países guardaban alma indígena y, al mismo tiempo, eran pueblos con una herencia hispánica, tanto en la religión como en el idioma, que los identificaba. En el ámbito cultural y comercial, México y Filipinas habían estado ligados por casi tres siglos a través del Galeón de Acapulco. Sin embargo, hasta el día de hoy tanto en México, como en Filipinas (posiblemente más en América) la relación entre estos dos países suena exótico, raro, fantástico, ilusorio, por decir lo menos. La historia mexicana, como lo decía Octavio Paz, está construida a partir de la negación. Una de las zonas oscuras de nuestro pasado es El Virreinato, un lapso que se percibe anquilosado, donde lo más destacado es que las desigualdades y las ideas de la Ilustración provocaron el movimiento independentista de 1810. Pero justo de ese momento es del que hablaba Abad en sus ensayos, cuando el Pacífico hermanó a los dos pueblos.

El segundo de los problemas que ambos escritores abordaron fue la identidad de los filipinos lacerada por el alejamiento con América y España debido a la pérdida del idioma, y asimismo avivada por las invasiones norteamericanas, a finales del siglo XIX, y japonesa durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial. En sus textos Abad realizó una férrea defensa del español en el Archipiélago. Se valió del lenguaje para combatir, denunciar, exigir. Negó el silencio, pensaba sobre la hoja en blanco, escribió en voz alta. Con el castellano como base pretendió hallar una identidad filipina propia, lejos de las amenazas extranjeras y con guiños al pasado mexicano en Oriente.

El porvenir del Archipiélago, ese momento que sólo sería palpable cuando sus coterráneos se hicieran conscientes del horizonte, se tenía que empezar a labrar en el día a día sin olvidar su pasado en América. En su texto titulado “¿Cuál es nuestro destino?”, expresa:

Y esto, que se llama inmodestamente ‘escuelas del pensamiento filipino moderno’, no es más que síntoma de desorientación. Ha habido siempre

en la historia de los pueblos y de las razas este momento pasajero de vacilación. Atravesamos ahora por él. Pero de pronto en los que vacilan significa incomprensión del destino histórico de nuestro pueblo. Quien es incapaz de comprenderlo no debe aspirar a dirigirlo (220).

Comprensión del “destino histórico” es lo que exigía a los gobernantes de su país, pero también a los propios filipinos. Y esa comprensión iba de la mano del idioma. Si Filipinas había perdido el rumbo, como lo señalaría en sus ensayos posteriores, sólo por medio del castellano podría recuperar ese pasado donde reconocería su origen. Para Abad el español era la palabra llave. El castellano significaba herramienta, misterio y comunión. Herramienta para descifrar el mundo, misterio del cristianismo que llegó en español al Archipiélago y comunión con los pueblos hispanohablantes, desde España hasta Argentina.

Esas obsesiones también las expusieron en sus obras de ficción. Abad escribió *El Campeón*. La novela se basa en la pelea de gallos para ofrecer un atisbo de la vida filipina. En el texto no se olvida de su herencia mexicana:

Aludiendo a sus experiencias en Manila, Pulá le decía que [el gallo] el mejicano era notable no sólo por su habilidad, como por su heroica valentía. Un adversario superior puede motear de heridas su cuerpo pero jamás lo vería echarse a correr: preferirá morir con el pico clavado en el suelo a dar la espalda al rival (184).

Abad no trata sólo de defender esta práctica como un deporte enraizado en lo más profundo del espíritu filipino, sino que las peleas de gallos le ofrecieron el espacio y la acción idóneos para retratar su entorno y plantear las preguntas necesarias sobre el sentir del Archipiélago. La génesis de novela puede rastrearse en los recuerdos más lejanos del autor:

Hace años, allá en mi mocedad, presencié esta escena:

Sobre la tibia humedad del polvo callejero, suavemente apisonado por la llovizna de la noche anterior, una media docena de hombres se afanaban en el adiestramiento [de] unos doce o quince gallos de pelea. Todos estaban en cuclillas y, mientras, comentaban en voz alta las habilidades de cada

gallináceo gladiador, que sujeto sobre el suelo por la pata derecha con fuerte cuerda de abacá terminada en clavo de hueso hincado en la tierra, lanzaba su clarín de reto bajo el ocioso silencio pueblerino.

Dos de los amaestradores careaban entre sí, sujetándolos por la cola, dos gallos de pelea. Dábanles fuertes palmadas por las cobijas, obligándolos a inclinarse ora a la derecha, ora a la izquierda, acostumbrándoles así a resistir las embestidas del enemigo en los choques de cuerpo a cuerpo. De pronto, entre los contertulios surgió una disputa. Las voces, reposadas al principio, subieron gradualmente de diapasón. Uno de ellos, más fuerte y, como casi siempre, más falto de razones también, se alzó de improviso y dio un fuerte empujón a su adversario que, dada su posición, rodó por el suelo dando dos o tres volteretas. De la voltereta se levantó el ultrajado, los ojos llameantes, el semblante contraído y reflejando una decisión homicida: la mano derecha blandía un cuchillo...

A pesar de la violencia que puede brotar durante el evento con resultados mortales, la gallera filipina es un centro de aprendizaje y convivencia. Es una de las formas más destacadas que tienen los pobres de crecer en comunidad. Para entenderse como un todo sirve la comunión que se da en la victoria, pero sobre todo en la derrota. En el ruedo se demuestra el honor, la caballeridad, el ingenio. Se grita y se calla, se vive al máximo porque se ve de cerca a la muerte. Es ahí donde el filipino alcanza a mirarse a los ojos y reconocerse en el otro. Sólo en el ruedo, se explica en *El campeón*, se vuelve al origen del archipiélago. La euforia le sirve al filipino como catalizador. El pueblo es uno porque es muchos: realidades diversas, sueños multiplicados en un espejo, la sonrisa del delirio, la miseria frente al cielo, matices de necesidad y bonanza hilvanados en dos o tres minutos según dure la pelea. Cuando la sangre llega, se rompe el encanto: el tiempo deja de ser eterno.

El mismo espacio, la gallera y su simbología, es abordado por Rafael Bernal en dos narraciones que permanecieron inéditas hasta 2006. La primera de ellas es “De gallos y gallinas”, donde se narra la discusión entre dos hermanos filipinos de origen campesino sobre el género sexual de uno de sus gallos. Lo llevan a pelear para salir de dudas, como si el ruedo fuera el lugar privilegiado para demostrar la hombría. El mexicano conoce el código de la gallera: la palabra como sustento del mundo, la religiosidad permeada

por la sangre, el historial de los gallos mexicanos (él le llama tejanos), la violencia desbordante. Pero Bernal incluye otro elemento al ruedo: el deseo amoroso:

Mi hermano no me quiso oír. Se formalizó la pelea y le amarraron las navajas en las patas a los gallos. Dije una oración silenciosa a Santa Rita de Casia, abogada de imposibles. Soltaron los animales en el centro del palenque. El tejano empezó a escarbar la arena como si estuviera preparando la tumba de su adversario y, momentos más tarde, los dos campeones se enfrentaron. Pensé que nuestro animal se moriría de miedo, pero sucedió una cosa extraordinaria. Una expresión amorosa llenó los ojos del gallo colorado que empezó a hacer la ronda. Naturalmente esto llamó mucho la atención de la gente, sobre todo, a los que apostaron al colorado, porque saltaba a la vista que el gallo estaba profundamente enamorado de nuestro animal y que sus intenciones, por el momento, eran estrictamente amatorias. Pero antes de que alguien pudiera protestar, nuestro pájaro se lanzó contra el colorado, la golilla levantada y, de un solo salto, clavó la navaja en el pecho de su adversario.

Es así que Bernal también presenta la gallera como el lugar privilegiado de la comunión y el reconocimiento de los individuos por medio de la violencia. Característica muy filipina, característica muy mexicana, característica muy latina.

El mexicano volvió a tocar el tema de la violencia y la desalación en el cuento "Un día patrio". El texto aborda el sentimiento de orfandad del pueblo filipino representado por una pareja de habitantes de Intramuros tras la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Durante el conflicto se destruyó gran parte de Manila, debido a los bombardeos, tanto de japoneses como de norteamericanos. Es necesario recordar que la zona del cuento es el espacio al que llegaron los primeros mexicanos y donde desembarcaba el Galeón de Acapulco. La referencia es imprescindible porque Intramuros será una metáfora del pasado que fue olvidado en el Archipiélago. Un olvido que no se dio por elección del pueblo, sino que se trató del resultado de las invasiones que tanto han padecido Las Filipinas. El discurso de los personajes del cuento bordea el desencanto. Para qué celebrar la independencia del país cuando ni siquiera existe un país como tal. Son pocos los que se reconocen como

filipinos. En el cuento los sobrevivientes de la guerra son pobres, viejos y excluidos que tienen que cuidar de niños que han quedado mutilados y huérfanos tras la guerra. La muerte y el desamparo, sembrados a partir del conflicto, minan la posibilidad de reconocerse como compatriotas. Tal vez en las peleas de gallos habrá una esperanza, se rumora en la narración del mexicano con claros ecos a la novela *El campeón*.

El asunto en jaque es nuevamente la identidad, un asunto que sigue vivo en los intelectuales filipinos contemporáneos, como lo subraya Fernando Nakpil Zialcita (2005):

Preoccupations with a national identity have intensified among us, educated Filipinos, since Independence in 1946. We believe that diverse people of the islands should have a common vision and a sense of pride in their heritage. At the same time we have to define our role vis-à-vis Asia, Southeast Asia, the World Powers, and other nations. Moreover, we are obligated to articulate our uniqueness when planning tourism campaigns, attracting investors, selling finished products on the world market, or even when just entertaining foreign visitors (5-6).

La respuesta a esta cuestión de la identidad —tan actual como se ve— que ofrece Bernal en su cuento es la misma que ya había ensayado Abad: los filipinos tienen que volver los ojos a su pasado mexicano y latinoamericano y español, con el castellano como piedra de toque, para reencontrarse. Sólo hasta que logren realizar ese viaje de regreso a la semilla, este “tornaviaje”, podrán saber sus necesidades, exigencias y contrariedades, pero también podrán labrar su futuro. Las mismas observaciones para los filipinos las proponía Bernal para los mexicanos. Dotar de una mirada crítica al pueblo para aplicar auditoría a su propia historia. Sólo conociendo el pasado podremos hacer factible un futuro. Un futuro, en el que tal vez mexicanos y filipinos, filipinos y mexicanos, se reconozcan como hermanos, tal y como lo escribieron tanto Antonio M. Abad como Rafael Bernal.

Notes

1. Bernal 1969. Desde hace décadas la novela se ha considerado canónica y se establece la obra fundacional de la literatura negra en México.
2. Para abundar sobre la historia de la generación y sus proyectos editoriales, ver mi investigación (2016): *La promoción de la revista Taller, entre la tradición mexicana y el llamado del mundo*.
3. Respecto al momento histórico que enmarca a la generación Eric Hobsbawn escribe: “Sólo la alianza —insólita y temporal— del capitalismo liberal y el comunismo para hacer frente a ese desafío permitió salvar la democracia, pues la victoria sobre la Alemania de Hitler fue esencialmente obra (no podría haber sido de otro modo) del ejército rojo. Desde una multiplicidad de puntos de vista, este periodo de alianza entre el capitalismo y el comunismo contra el fascismo —fundamentalmente las décadas de 1930 y 1940— es el momento decisivo de la historia del siglo XX. En muchos sentidos es un proceso paradójico, pues durante la mayor parte del siglo —excepto en el breve periodo de antifascismo— las relaciones entre el capitalismo y el comunismo se caracterizaron por su antagonismo irreconciliable” (2014, p. 17).
4. Para abundar sobre la presencia alemana en México es imprescindible la investigación de Cedillo 2010.
5. Sobre la Literatura Sinarquista, consultar mi investigación (2012): *Voto de silencio: un acercamiento a la literatura Sinarquista*.
6. Sobre las alianzas y posteriores colaboraciones de españoles e indios tlaxcaltecas para la expansión de la conquista en suelo americano, se pueden consultar Ramos 2015.
7. Actualmente las construcciones de históricas de Intramuros funcionan como campo de Golf, gracias a la visión pragmática de los estadounidenses. La zona en la que desembarcaba El Galeón es el moderno Barrio Chino. Agradezco al Dr. Fernando Nakpil Zialcita por la invitación que me hizo para conocer la zona, donde me explicó la visión del pueblo filipino cuya historia se forja a partir de los abusos imperialistas.

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