



ARCHAEOLOGY AND GENEALOGY IN THE DISCOURSES ON FAITH AND COLONIZATION

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This article provides a philosophical analysis using Foucault's concepts of archaeology and genealogy to the Spanish colonization of the Filipinos. As a philosophical treatise, this article focused its discussion on the plurality of discourses that emerged and prevailed during the colonization. It illustrated the techniques and strategies used to propagate the discourses of the colonizers and to transform the Filipino natives into colonial subjects and in particular, the techniques and strategies utilized by Spanish missionaries. Lastly, it also presented the discourses of Filipino propagandists to enlighten the Filipinos about their colonial situation as well as to deconstruct the discourses inculcated by the colonizers in the Filipino consciousness.

In dit artikel wordt een filosofische analyse gegeven van de begrippen archeologie en genealogie van Foucault ten opzichte van de Spaanse kolonisatie van de Filippijnen. Als filosofische verhandeling richtte dit artikel zijn discussie op de pluraliteit van de verleidingen die tijdens de kolonisatie naar voren kwamen en voorkwamen. In het verslag wordt een overzicht gegeven van de technieken en strategieën die worden gebruikt om de verkleuring van de kolonistoren te verspreiden en de Filipijnse onderdanen om te vormen tot koloniale proefpersonen, met name de technieken en strategieën die door de Spaanse missionarissen worden gebruikt. Tot slot heeft zij ook de onverschilligheid van Filipijnse propagandisten gepresenteerd om de Filippijnen te informeren over hun koloniale situatie en om de misstanden die de kolonisten in het Filipijnse bewustzijn hebben veroorzaakt, te deconstrueren.

Dieser Artikel enthält eine philosophische Analyse unter Verwendung von Foucaults Konzepten der Archäologie und Genealogie zur spanischen Kolonisierung der Philippinen. Als philosophische Abhandlung konzentrierte sich dieser Artikel auf die Pluralität der Diskurse, die während der Kolonialisierung entstanden und vorherrschten. Er veranschaulichte die Techniken und Strategien zur Verbreitung der Diskurse der Kolonistoren und zur Umwandlung der philippinischen Eingeborenen in koloniale Subjekte, insbesondere die Techniken und Strategien, die von den spanischen Missionaren angewandt wurden. Schließlich wurden auch die Diskurse philippinischer Propagandisten vorgestellt, um die Filipinos über ihre Kolonialsituation aufzuklären und die von den Kolonistoren im philippinischen Bewusstsein verkündeten Diskurse zu dekonstruieren.





Philosophy and history go together. This philosophical essay is based on historical discourses. History is essential in philosophy because the latter's quest for understanding the truth can be aided by the former's recorded discourses and facts. In the philosophical analysis of truth, the inclusion of the discourses, facts, and processes related to truth are significant to fully understand not only the meaning but also its evolution. This paper provides a philosophical perspective of historical truth about the colonization of the Filipinos by focusing on discourses in selected documents that give us glimpse and cracks on the colonial construction of Filipinos by the Spaniards. This paper's topic is as old as history, repeatedly discussed and analyzed in different books and articles. However, it is its intention to provide the old topic a different philosophical flavor using Michel Foucault's archeological and genealogical frameworks.

I. FOUCAULT'S ARCHAEOLOGY AND GENEALOGY

Archaeology is a method designed by Foucault that deals mainly with multiplicity and plurality of discourses. Archaeology does not define the "thoughts, representations, images, themes, preoccupations that are concealed or revealed in discourse; but those discourse themselves, those discourses as practices obeying certain rules."¹ In archaeology, discourses are not documents and signs; but rather it is a monument. It sees discourse as discourse; and since it sees discourse as such, it is not an interpretative discipline and allegorical. Archaeology is concerned with discourse itself and describes it as such; it is not an historical hermeneutic of discourse.

Archaeology's main task is to define discourses in their specificity; and to show in "what way the set

¹ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourses on Language*, trans. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 138.

of rules that they put into operation is irreducible to any other; to follow them the whole length of their exterior ridges, in order to underline them the better."² Archaeology analyses discourses in different modes "from the confused field of opinion to the uniqueness of the system or the definitive stability of science." Archaeology does not provide a psychological or sociological or anthropological perspectives of the creation of discourse. Rather, it is interested in defining the types of rules for discursive practices that govern such discursive formation entirely or partly; but dominate them to such an extent that nothing eludes them.³ Furthermore, it is a systematic description of discourses, because it analyses the relationship of discourse to other elements such as institutions, existing knowledges, laws and norms; it describes discourses as they are and as they operate and function. It explains discourse as regular statement and regularity in this context is not an opposition to irregularity. All statements are regular.⁴ Hence, archaeology is not in the business of systematic classification of discourse. It looks at the formation of discourse and the rules that govern its formation.

Discursive formation and the rules of formation are the main focus in archaeological analysis. This means that discourses are formed and this formation is governed by rules. These rules are the "conditions of existence" of discourse that caused its maintenance, modification, and disappearance.⁵ The formation of discourses takes place in a "space of multiple dissensions," and "set of different oppositions."⁶ "Multiple dissensions" and "different oppositions" are the key terms in archaeology which signify that analysis of discursive formation describes the

² Foucault, 139.

³ Foucault.

⁴ Regularity in archeology means that all forms of discourses are taken into account and treats them equally whether they are original or not, scientific or simply an opinion.

⁵ Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, 38.

⁶ Foucault, 155-156.





formation of discourses which is characterized by varying, contradicting, and opposing discourses. In other words, there is no one common set of discourses because discourses are pronounced by different speakers coming from different institutional sites and occupying different positions and spaces. Discourse in archaeology is seen as related to different modes of enunciation: speakers,⁷ institutional sites, and space. The analysis of discursive formation must include the speaker's right, qualification, special qualities, prestige, and status. Secondly, the institutional site which is the speaker's origin and source of discourse. Lastly, the space occupied by the speaker is also essential in discursive analysis because it has relationship to the formation of discourse. The analysis of discursive formation, however, should not only be limited on these three modes but it should also be seen on the greater and wider scale and that is, discourse exists under the "positive condition of complex relations;" and these complex relations are "established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, system of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterization."⁸

Based on the foregoing discussion about discursive formation and rules of formation,

⁷ In his essay, "What is an author?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), he explains the author function in four points: "(1) the author function is linked to the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates, the universe of discourse; (2) it does not affect all discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilization; (3) it does not define by the spontaneous attribution of a discourse to its producer, but rather by a series of specific and complex operations; (4) it does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise to simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects – positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals" (please see page 113). Foucault further explains that there are two kinds of authors: (1) The "transdiscursive" – these are the authors of ancient and classic works that are as old as civilization; authors and books would always refer back to the works of these authors. Foucault mentions Homer, Aristotle, and Augustine as examples of these "transdiscursive" authors (please see page 113); (2) the second kind of author is named by Foucault as "founders of discursivity" (please see page 114). These authors, such as Marx and Freud, are not just unique but they also produced "the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts." These possibilities and rules are also the foundations use for the formation of new discourses based on the original discourses of Marx and Freud.

⁸ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourses of Language*, 45.

discourse can be construed as multiple, plural, complex, and complicated. Discourses originated from speakers and institutional sites and these are the reasons why there are plurality and multiplicity of discourses. Institutions, together with other processes, patterns, techniques, norms and modes, are provide the spaces and conditions where discourses emerged, thrived and disappeared. Institutions, then, play a crucial role in the formation of discourses and is critical in the understanding of discursive formation. Discourses must be analysed in its institutional sites which makes the analysis micro and local.

Archaeology views truths as products of discourses. Burrell explains that it "sees truth as the production of sets of statements and their regulation within discrete systems of discourse independent of the conscious speaker."⁹ Truth is a product of number games in history. It is not an objective and universal truth; rather, it is a political and perspectival truth. It is a product of discourses of different institutions. Truth changes, transforms and modifies because of the changes in the discourses of knowledge and the changes in the rules of formation of discourse. There is no single and universal truth. There are different truths produced by institutions based on the rules of formation of discourse.

In his later work, Foucault developed his method of genealogy which he described as a "meticulous and patiently documentary."¹⁰ Genealogy is meticulous because it records the "singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality."¹¹ This means that genealogy isolates different events and discourses as well as the rules that governed them. In this context, historical events

⁹ Gibson Burrell, "Modernism, Postmodernism and Organizational Analysis: The Contribution of Michel Foucault" in *Foucault, Management and Organization Theory*, eds. Alan McKinlay and Ken Starkey (London: SAGE Publications, 1998), 16.

¹⁰ Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 76.

¹¹ Foucault, 76.





and discourses are seen as discontinuous. They are not related to one another. They are isolated and different to one another because they were governed by different rules. Genealogy also seeks events and discourses in the “most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history – in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts; it must be sensible to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different rules.”¹² In other words, genealogy records events and look for events in documents that are not considered historical. On the other hand, genealogy requires patience because it entails knowledge of details and a vast accumulation of historical materials and demands relentless erudition.¹³ It painstakingly studies and learns about various historical materials and documents in details in order to understand the origin of things. It recognizes the “events of history, its jolts, its surprises, its unsteady victories and unpalatable defeats – the basis of all beginnings, atavisms, and heredities.”¹⁴ Furthermore, it is tasked to identify the “accidents, the minutes deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us.”¹⁵

Genealogical method requires the understanding of details to discover the origin of truth. In the process of discover the origin of truth, genealogy searches and analyses for the descent. Descent “recognizes that unity derives from a dispersion of singular events.”¹⁶ Descent implies that the origin of truth is multiple. There is no singular and linear event and discourse that led to the

emergence of truth. There are multiple, complex and unrelated events and discourses in history that must be unearthed in order to analyse and understand truth. Descent is not the foundation of truth; rather, it provides a perspective that truth is caused by fragmented and heterogenous discourses and events.¹⁷ In this context, genealogy traces and searches the origin of truth in the multiplicity of things. It fragmentizes the emergence of things that society values and glorifies as truth. It disturbs because it postulates that truth is a product of marginalization and subjugation in the years that passed.

Foucault’s genealogy is a method that records the singularity of events and looking at the meaning of small details, minor shifts and subtle contours. In genealogical perspective, there are no fixed essences or underlying laws but there is discontinuity and arbitrariness. Genealogy is a recorder of accidents, chance and lies.¹⁸ The main difference of genealogy to archaeology is the inclusion of power in its historical analysis.¹⁹ It uncovers a “positive and productive form of power underlying every movement of institutional or discursive delimitation of statement.”²⁰ This means that in the genealogical analysis of discourses and events, rules are not only involved in the formation of discourses. It also includes power relations; power is one of the main reasons for the rise of new discourses and for the descent of historical events. This also means that the present day society’s truths and sacred values are products of power. Genealogy is a method in search for the origin has two epistemological roles: the empirical role and

¹² Foucault, 76.

¹³ Foucault, 77.

¹⁴ Foucault, 80.

¹⁵ Foucault, 80-81.

¹⁶ Todd May, *Between Genealogy and Epistemology: Psychology, Politics and Knowledge in the Thought of Michel Foucault* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 74-75.

¹⁷ Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 82.

¹⁸ Burrell, “Modernism, Postmodernism and Organizational Analysis: The Contribution of Michel Foucault,” 22.

¹⁹ In his essay, “The Discourse on Language,” Foucault explains that the genealogical side of discourse “deals with series of effective formation of discourse: it attempts to grasp it in its power of affirmation... the power of constituting domains of objects, in relation to which one can affirm or deny as true or false propositions” (please see page 234).

²⁰ Michell Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault’s Methods and Historical Sociology* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 33.





the transcendental role.²¹ In its empirical role, genealogy analyses the technologies of power that explain the functional social context of truth. This refers to the analysis of power relations as one of the conditions for the rise of truth and the social effects of this truth are implemented because of power. Hence, knowledge, scientific or non-scientific, is a product of power relations of different institutions as well as of discourses. In its transcendental role, genealogy analyses how scientific discourse and truth is made possible because of power as an essential that constitutes the condition for rise of scientific discourse and truth. Power relations is the force that led to the emergence of discourse and truth. Power relations postulates the relationship between power and knowledge. This means that knowledge is a product of power and power plays an essential and critical role in the creation and propagation of knowledge. Power also plays an important role in the rise and fall of events as well as in the shifts and transformations of discourses, knowledges and truths. On the other hand, power cannot be deployed without knowledge and truth. Foucault's essay, "The Discourse on Language", illustrates the relationship between power and knowledge.

Foucault explained that the exercise of power over knowledges and discourses is manifested in the rules of exclusion; and exclusion is obviously manifested in what is prohibited.²² Individuals are prohibited when they cannot just say anything or what they want to say; and they are not simply free to speak what they want to speak of.²³

²¹ Jurgen Habermas, "Some Questions Concerning the Theory of Power: Foucault Again" in *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, ed. Michael Kelly (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1994), 86.

²² Foucault, "The Discourse on Language" in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 216.

²³ The example provided by Foucault in explicating the idea of prohibition is Mendels' biological discourses. He says, "Mendel spoke the truth, but he was not *dans le vrai* (within the true) of contemporary biological discourses: it simply was not along such lines that objects and biological concepts were formed. A whole change in scale, the deployment of a totally new range of objects in biology was required before Mendel could enter into the true and his propositions appear, for the most part, exact" (please see page 224 of the Foucault's "The

There are three interrelated types of prohibition: covering objects, ritual (with its surrounding circumstances),²⁴ and the privileged or the exclusive right to speak.²⁵ They form a web that entangles an individual to speak. Foucault explains the interrelationship of these types of prohibition in sexuality. In the family, "covering objects" can be observed when any member of the family is not allowed to talk about sexual activities. Unless, they follow a ritual of confession to the medical doctor who has the exclusive right to talk about sexual activities of the child from the point of view of normality or abnormality.

Exclusion is manifested also in division and rejection. Foucault cites the opposition between reason and folly as an example of division and rejection. He explains:

...a man was mad if his speech could not be said to form part of the common discourse of men. His words were considered as null and void, without truth or significance, worthless as evidence, inadmissible in the authentication of acts and contracts...And yet, in contrast to all others, his words were credited with strange powers, of revealing some hidden truth, of predicting the future, of revealing, in all their naivete, what the wise were unable to perceive...It was through his words that one recognised the madness of the madman; but they were certainly the medium within which this division became active; they were neither heard nor remembered. Whatever a madman said, it was taken as a mere noise; he was credited with words only in a symbolic sense, in the theatre, in which he stepped forward, unarmed and reconciled, playing his role: that of masked truth.²⁶

The division between reason and madness led to the rejection of the mad. The madman's

Discourse on Language").

²⁴ Ritual is a form of prohibition because it defines the "qualifications required of the speaker...it lays down gestures to be made, behaviour, circumstances and the whole range of signs that must accompany discourse; finally, it lays down the supposed, or imposed significance of the words used, their effect upon those to whom they are addressed, the limitation of their constraining validity" (please see page 225 of Foucault's "The Discourse on Language").

²⁵ Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," 225.

²⁶ Foucault, 217.





discourse is considered to belong to the realm of the unreason and because of that, what he says or speaks of is considered as worthless, insignificant, inadmissible and it was simple a noise. But in the other side of the division, the reasonable and the normal, their discourses are considered as truthful and admissible; and they are truth and admissible simply because the one saying or speaking is normal and reasonable. The will to truth is a concrete manifestation of exclusion because there is a link between discourse and power. The link between discourse and power shifted and transformed the “what discourse was” to “what was said” and the “ritualised act” to the “enunciated itself.” To state it differently, the will to truth or the link between discourse and power is the dynamics behind the shifts and transformations of the appearance and disappearance of truths in history. Even the great mutation of science may be viewed as the appearance (and disappearance of the new forms of will to truth.²⁷ Will to truth, like other systems of exclusion, needs institutional supports,²⁸ because it needs to be reinforced and accompanied by the whole strata of practices such as the book-system, publishing, libraries and laboratories; and to exercise a power of constraint upon other forms of discourses.²⁹ In the other words, the link between discourse and power occurred in institutions. The practices of prohibition, division, or rejection are initiated, sustained, and could be eliminated by institutions. Institutions are also responsible for prohibition, division and rejection of knowledges and discourses. Based on the foregoing discussion about the methods of genealogy and archaeology,

it can be summarized that institutions play an essential role in the construction of discourses and knowledge. In analysing the origin of discourses and knowledges, one cannot avoid looking at the their institutional sites. On the other hand, the exercise of power over knowledge and discourses are made possible because of institutions. Institutions are responsible for the exclusion, probation, division, rejection of knowledges and discourses. They form an intricate web of network that prohibit, divide, and reject discourse and knowledge. They are responsible for the rise and fall, or ascent and descent, of knowledge and discourses.

Colonization involved discursive formation and power relations. The colonial situation is characterized by the destruction and death of the original culture of the natives because of the use of discourses and power relations. In this situation, the colonized were convinced by the colonizer’s discourse that they were people of “no culture, no civilization, no long historical past.” The former regarded the latter’s discourse as true that led to the submission of the former to the latter. As a result, the colonized accepted the colonizer’s culture, and eventually would lead to the destruction of the latter’s original culture.³⁰ The destruction and death of the original culture are also essential in the formation of the colonial social character. The formation of the colonial social character facilitates transformation because it gradually changed individual’s behavior, attitude, values, beliefs, and worldview.

This paper is based on those philosophical ideas. It is its primary objective to provide an archaeological and genealogical analysis of the discourses in the selected historical documents during the Spanish colonization. The first part of this paper is a discussion on de Salazar’s and

²⁷ Foucault, 218.

²⁸ Foucault cites educational system as one of the institutions that provide reinforcement and support to the will to truth. According to Foucault “educational system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and the power it carries with it.” Educational system supports the will to knowledge because it is involve in the ritualisation of the word; the qualification of some fixing of roles for speakers; the constitution of the original group; and the distribution and appropriation of discourse” (please see page 227 of Foucault’s “The Discourse on Language”).

²⁹ Foucault, “The Discourse on Language,” 219.

³⁰ Franz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* (Great Britain: MacGibbon and Kee Ltd., 1968), 14, 25.





Dasmarinas' exchange of ideas on the payment of tributes as well as on the conversion of the natives. This exchanges of ideas demonstrate the conflict and division in the discourses of the Spanish authorities on the colonization of the natives. De Salazar was speaking as a friar and bishop governed and guided by ecclesiastical rules. He was looking at colonization from the point of conversion. On the other hand, Dasmarinas was talking from the perspective of a civil authority and administrator of the colonial government. He was thinking about the success of colonization from administrative and practical perspectives. In the end, the discourse of Dasmarinas prevailed for the collection of tributes was important for the success of Spanish colonization. The discourses of de Salazar and Dasmarinas also provided insights on how the Spaniards used the discourses of faith and salvation as a power technique for the natives to submit themselves to the authority of the King. The second part is a discussion of conflicting discourses by two Spanish missionaries. Both are missionaries but with different discourses about the natives. De San Agustin was critical of the negative behavior of the natives. Speaking as a missionary and scholar, he lamented about the lack of ethics, morality and decency on the behavior of the natives. On the other hand, Delgado disagreed with de San Agustin. He accused de San Agustin's of committing a fallacy by coming with a universal conclusion based on isolated situations. In his own account, Delgado wrote about the positive and productive traits of the natives. However, the discourses of de San Agustin prevailed over Delgado's. His account about the negative and barbaric behavior of the natives were given credibility by his fellow Spaniards and European. That is why the discourse that the Filipinos were indolent, ignorant, and lack morality and intelligence prevailed and were accepted by other scholars as true. The last part of the paper is a discussion

on Rizal's and del Pilar's response to the negative perception about the Filipinos. They were critical of the colonization as the cause of the malady suffered by the Filipinos. They also did not spare the friars by blaming them for the underdevelopment of the Filipinos and of the Philippine society. Rizal and del Pilar were deconstructing the discourses of the Spaniards by articulating in their discourses the glory of the Philippine past that was destroyed and buried by the Spanish colonization.

II. DE SALAZAR'S AND DASMARINAS' DISCOURSES ON THE COLONIZATION OF THE NATIVES

Fray Domingo de Salazar was the first bishop of Manila while Dasmarinas was the Governor-General of the Philippine colony. In the documents, the two Spanish authorities exchanged ideas in the manner of colonization of the natives. De Salazar was citing the abuses committed by the civil authorities that casted doubt on the noble intention of the presence of the Spaniards in the Philippines and that was the conversion of souls. Speaking as an ecclesiastical authority, he lamented the excessive collection of tributes that caused the natives to suffer and that also harmed the missionary works of the church of evangelization and conversion. De Salazar reminded the Governor-General that the real reason of Spain's presence in the Philippines was to evangelize and convert the natives. The payment of tributes harmed this noble reason because the natives hated the Spanish authorities and would elude them. Dasmarinas, as a civil authority, agreed with the bishop about the noble intention of Spain; however, he disagreed that it was the payment of tributes that harm evangelization and conversion. For Dasmarinas, the church should have send many missionaries in the *pueblos* and *encomiendas* to evangelize





and convert many natives. He also justified the collection of tributes by saying that it the natives' payment for the services that they received from the King. These services include evangelization and conversion. In other words, tributes were also needed to finance the missionary works of the church. The criticism of De Salazar did not prevail. Tributes were collected for it was the blood that provided life to Spanish colonization.

In a document entitled, "Affairs in the Philipinas Island, Manila, 1583," Fray Domingo de Salazar claimed that the arrival of the Spaniards resulted to the scarcity of products in the Philippines. He explained that when the Spaniards first set foot in the Philippine islands, "there was a great abundance of provisions, such as are produced in the country; namely, rice, beans, fowls, swine, deer, buffaloes, fish, cocoanuts, bananas, and some other fruits, wine, and honey."³¹ The natives also traded and trafficked gold, and barter gold for rice. These activities, however, stopped when the Spaniards introduced the use of money. Because of the introduction of money, the rates of products increased and these products began to be scarce in the country.³²

Aside from the introduction of money, Fray Domingo enumerated the other reasons for the scarcity of product. The first was the death of the farmers. The bishop cited as example what happened in *La Pampanga* when Don Roncalo Ronquillo sent a great number of Indians to the mines of *Ylocos*.³³ Many of them died there and those who were able to return were so fatigued that they needed rest more than work.³⁴ Such resulted to great scarcity of rice, and for lack of it a great number of Indians in the said *Pampanga*

died from hunger."³⁵ The second reason was forced labor. The natives were employed by the Spaniards as rowers in the galleys and *fragatas*. They "go so far away that they are absent four or six months; and many of those who go die there. Others run away and hide in the mountains, to escape from the toils imposed upon them."³⁶ Others were employed as wood cutters in the forests and they were not permitted to rest or to attend to their fields.³⁷ The bishop pointed out that since the Indians were obliged to cut woods, they could not attend religious instructions and religious activities.³⁸ The third reason was that the *alcaldes-mayor* became merchants. Because of their small salaries, they engaged themselves in trading and sell products at high prices to gain income. The *alcaldes-mayor* "have forbidden the Indians to trade and traffic, they sell at whatever price they wish."³⁹

Fray Domingo lamented that those incidents did not only caused the scarcity of product but also caused injury to the families of the natives as well as to the local economy. The long expeditions injured the families of the natives. He cited concrete and specific situation to prove his point:

When a long expedition is to be made, the wrongs which they suffer are many. One is to dispatch for the Indians who are to row in a galley or frigate of a sailor who has neither piety nor Christian feeling. Moreover, it is notorious that, without inquiring whether an Indian is married or single, or whether his wife is sick or his children without clothing, he takes them all away. It has happened that when a husband has led this deputy to his wife, who was great with child, and has asked with tears that he might be left behind as she had no one to care for her, the sailor has beaten her with cudgels in order to make her go, and the poor husband, also despite his resistance. In other cases, their wives are abandoned when dying,

³¹ Fray Domingo de Salazar, "Affairs in the Philipinas Island, Manila, 1583" in *The Philippine Islands 1493-1803*, volume V 1582-1583, Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, eds., 210.

³² De Salazar, 211.

³³ De Salazar, 212.

³⁴ De Salazar.

³⁵ De Salazar.

³⁶ De Salazar.

³⁷ De Salazar.

³⁸ De Salazar.

³⁹ De Salazar, 217.





the husband being compelled to go away to row. The Indians are put into irons on the galleys, and flogged as if they were galley-slaves or prisonets. Moreover, the pay that is given them is very small; for they give each man only four reals a month – and this is so irregularly paid that most of them never see it.⁴⁰

Secondly, they injured the economic well-being of the natives because of hoarding and overpricing of agricultural products. He stated that the *alcaldes-mayor* would require the natives to sell the agricultural products they harvested for small price and would sell it to the natives in higher price.⁴¹ Such resulted to hunger.

Aside from the scarcity of products as well as the acts of abuses committed by Spanish authorities, Fray Domingo also raised his concern on the payment of tributes. He argued that the payment of tributes caused doubt on the real reason of the presence of the Spaniards in the Philippines. The natives made believed that the Spaniard conquered them in order to be subjugated and be compelled to pay tributes.⁴² Because of this, the natives resisted the Spanish rule and resorted to war.⁴³ He further explained to the King that Spanish authorities demanded the payment of tributes every year, but “without telling them more of God and of the benefits which it was intended to confer upon them.”⁴⁴ They only collected tributes without giving them instruction about the “most holy faith.”

Fray Domingo expressed his frustration over the abuses of the Spanish authorities and the harm that such abuses inflict on the natives. More than the harm that it inflicts on the natives, he also expressed the injury that it caused to the missionary works of the Church which is the primary reason of the presence of Spanish

government in the Philippines and one of the reasons why they collected tributes. The abuses of the Spanish authorities based on the narrative of Fray Domingo distorted the real intention of Spanish presence in the Philippines which was the conversion of the natives to the Catholic faith and destroyed the trust and confidence of the natives to the Spaniards including the missionaries. Based to the report of the Bishop, the natives would already equate Christianity to the payment of tributes because of the excesses and abuses.⁴⁵

Fray Domingo’s long list of complains and lamentations about the situation of the natives in the hands of the Spaniards give us a picture about the evil and harm of colonization. It transformed their lives to the worst by making them unproductive and poor because of the abuses of Spanish authorities. Domingo’s description of the lives of the natives was an exact opposite of Sande’s account. After three decades of Spanish presence in the Philippines, it seems that their agricultural and economic achievements and activities were gone.

Fray Domingo was very concern of the situation because of its consequence to the missionary work of the Church. He reminded the King of the primary reason and justification of the Spanish presence in the Philippines – the conversion of souls. The abuses, particularly the excessive payment of tributes, could hamper the missionary activities of the Church, because of the negatives perception that it created in the minds of the natives about the Spaniards who are Christians.

More than anything else, Fray Domingo’s primary concern on the excesses and abuses of the Spanish authorities with regard to the

⁴⁰ De Salazar, “Defense of the Filipinos (1583)” in *Documentary Sources of Philippines History*, Gregorio F. Zaide, ed., volume 3 (Metro Manila: National Book Store, Inc., 1990), p. 21.

⁴¹ De Salazar, 21-22.

⁴² De Salazar, 24.

⁴³ De Salazar.

⁴⁴ De Salazar.

⁴⁵ De Salazar.





collection of tributes was the harm that it caused to the missionary work and to the conversion of the natives. This is clearly expressed in his letter to the Governor Dasmaringas:

Inasmuch as your Lordship wrote to me at San Francisco del Monte that the encomenderos were urgently seeking from your permission to make collections from their encomiendas, I dispatched to you from that place an answer to the letter which your Lordship wrote to me after having received my statement and that of the other theologians of the Bishopric who think carefully about this matter. I had therein represented to your Lordship some of the difficulties which might result from carrying into execution some of the plans proposed in the aforesaid statement. In the reply, I solved these difficulties; and have since been waiting to learn what your Lordship has communicated to the encomenderos regarding collections in the encomiendas regarding collections in the encomiendas which are without religious instruction.⁴⁶

In his reply to Fray Domingo, Governor Dasmaringas expressed his agreement to the bishop that the conversion of the natives was the primary reason of the presence of Spanish sovereignty in the Philippines. He explained that “preaching of the gospel” was the “first intention of his Holiness and of his Majesty, and it is the principal care which Lordship and all of us who have come here must have.”⁴⁷ However, he clarified that the reason for the non-compliance to this edict was the lack of clergy or religious in the *encomiendas*. That is why he asked the bishop to ask Spain to send more clergy and missionaries to the Philippines to be assigned to different *encomiendas*.⁴⁸

In the bishop’s reply to Governor Dasmaringas, he explained why priests cannot be sent easily to the *encomiendas*:

What I have said about the religious, that it is not fitting for them to go out alone, does not extend to the priests; because these, by their profession and habit, are not obliged to be together, but each one goes by himself. This has been the usage of the church, and, so far, we have not seen that any bad results have followed; but many indeed have followed from the religious dwelling alone.⁴⁹

Fray Domingo was explaining to the governor the difference between religious and priest, the former lives in a religious community while the former can live alone. Hence, the religious cannot be sent to a particular area unless the congregation has established a community. Unlike the priests, or secular priests, their training is to live alone in places where they are needed to administer the sacraments. That is why the bishop expressed his disappointment to the governor’s suggestion of sending religious to different *encomiendas*, for living alone, or living apart from their community, is not their orientation. He stated that it is “another great evil in what your Lordship wishes, and it is that, to station so many religious who are scattered about, each one by himself, is not to establish religious instruction but to permit it to go to ruin.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, he scolds the governor for his suggestion of sending priests in *encomiendas* in the provinces. He wrote: “it would be right for your Lordship to leave it to me to govern my priests, as I leave it to you to look after your captains and soldiers; for I know what each one of my priests is for, as your Lordship knows of your men.”⁵¹ In the latter part of the letter, the bishop reminded the governor of the separation of their duties, asking the governor to stop offering advises to the bishop on what to do in matters of religious instruction. He expressed anger and frustration:

⁴⁶ De Salazar, “Letter from the Bishop to the Governor” in *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, volume VIII 1591-1593, Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, eds, 25.

⁴⁷ De Salazar, 42.

⁴⁸ De Salazar.

⁴⁹ De Salazar, “Letter from Salazar to Dasmaringas” in *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, volume VIII 1591-1593, Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, eds, p. 58.

⁵⁰ De Salazar.

⁵¹ De Salazar, 59.





In truth I do not understand what could be your Lordship's thought in discussing a matter so foreign to your profession; and it did not seem at all well to me, unless your Lordship regards me as so contemptible a person that I am not equal to this. Although humility is well in all, and particularly in bishops, it is not humility for the sheep to teach the shepherd; nor would it be considered well in me, and still less so in your Lordship, if it were known that I allowed you, who should take rules of right living from me, to give them to me.⁵²

The exchange of letters and opinions between the bishop and the governor expressed not only their differences but also their concern on how to carry out their missions in the Philippines. For the bishop, the presence of the priests and religious in the Philippines was for the conversion of souls. Spain colonized the Philippines to be converted to Christianity. The collection of tributes for the coffer of the King was only secondary and should not be done at the expense of Christian teachings. On the other hand, the governor agreed but suggested the sending of more priests and religious to provinces and far flung areas as they continue their work of subjugation and pacification as well as collection of tributes. The two authorities, though disagreed with each other and were coming from different perspectives, represented the strategies used by the Spaniards in colonizing the natives – religious instruction and subjugation. They used the cross and the sword for the natives to submit to the sovereignty of the King of Spain. These were the powerful technologies employed to colonized the natives and transform them to be colonial subjects of the Spanish masters.

Governor Dasmaringas recognized the importance of missionary activity in the Philippines. In his letter to the King, he invoked him to send additional missionaries and informs him of the willingness of the *encomenderos* to financially support the missionary work.⁵³ He further explained:

⁵² De Salazar, 61.

⁵³ Gomez Perez Dasmaringas, "Letter from Governor Dasmaringas to Felipe II (Manila, June 20)" in *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, volume VIII 1591-1593, Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander

Therefore I send herewith to your majesty an exact account of the districts in this country where ministers are needed. And I beseech your Majesty kindly to provide ministers, to give instruction as this is the principal royal purpose...the lack of instruction is one of the greatest troubles; for it is important to the service of God and of your majesty that there be religious present when said entrances are made and possession is taken by your Majesty. They should be there to attend to the instruction, as the principal object, so that everything may be carried on according to the intention and obligation of your Majesty – that is, that the conversion of these souls may be brought to pass.⁵⁴

Governor Dasmaringas knew the significance of missionaries and religious in the colonization of the Philippines. He described the conversion of the natives as the "principal royal purpose" and "intention and obligation" of the Spanish presence in the Philippines. For his part, few were converted not because they resisted the payment of tributes but because of lack of religious and missionaries who would spread the Gospel. That is why he reiterated to the King the importance of sending missionaries and religious to the Philippines. In the latter part of the letter, he further explained that collecting tributes is important in order for the natives to be converted into Christianity.⁵⁵ This means that part of the tributes goes to the missionary works of the clergy and religious; hence, it is just and reasonable. The collection of tributes, the Governor explained, must be done "with all possible gentleness, avoiding violence and wrongs to the Indians."⁵⁶ Governor Dasmaringas clarified that they were collecting only three-quarters of the tributes for the lack of religious instruction.⁵⁷ The natives paid tributes in exchange for the following services from Spain: "instruction in the faith, teaching them to live decently, and attracting them by kind treatment to receive instruction."⁵⁸ If they failed to deliver the instruction in the faith, they

Robertson, eds, 148.

⁵⁴ Dasmaringas.

⁵⁵ Dasmaringas, 151.

⁵⁶ Dasmaringas.

⁵⁷ Dasmaringas.

⁵⁸ Dasmaringas.





did not collect tribute for it.⁵⁹ They collect only for other services.

The collection of tributes persisted and it was one of the causes of the successful campaigns by the Spaniards to conquer and convert the natives. In the City of Manila, Spaniards earned a lot of profit in traffic, and trade was regulated.⁶⁰ Natives became happy and content of the services that they received from Spain.⁶¹ The tributes provided funding for the construction of a Cathedral, establishment of schools, erection of forts, and launching of expeditions. It is assumed that because of the progress seen in the City of Manila, profit earned by the Spaniards in trading, and increased in military expeditions to conquer more natives, the issues on the collection of tributes and on the sufferings of the natives raised by Fray Domingo were laid to rest. Slavery,⁶² or forced labor, and war or violence became justifiable.

The documents provided us information about the strategies used by the Spaniards in the colonization of the natives. First, they constructed *pueblos* and established the *encomienda* system. The *pueblo* and the *encomienda* were spaces of power where the natives were constructed in accordance with the colonial social character. Inside these two spaces of power the natives were regulated and disciplined based on the

teachings and norms of the Catholic church. The attendance to daily mass, recitation of the rosary and angelus, praying of novena, confession and penance molded the social character of the natives. That is why living inside the *pueblo* means being civilized while those who are outside the *pueblos* were considered as outlaws and uncivilized. They were considered different because they did not embody the colonial social character. Inside the *pueblo* and *encomienda*, the natives were subjugated because there were turned into colonial subjects whose one main responsibility is to pay tributes to the King. Secondly, the documents mentioned about the augmentation of military force as well as missionaries. In other words, they exercised power by the use of the sword and cross or military might and moral persuasion. They used their military might as well as the discourses of salvation and eternal life to demonstrate their superiority to the natives. That superiority had a psychological impact to the natives that convinced them to submit themselves to their colonial master. Lastly, the documents demonstrated the significant role of the Catholic church in the exercise of power as well as construction of the social character of the natives that facilitated the successful colonization. The Catholic church together with her missionaries' religious instruction and teaching was the force beyond the discipline and regulation of the natives inside the *pueblo* and *encomienda* because these instructions and teachings were accepted by the natives as truth. This truth gave way for the exercise of power by the colonial master to the colonized. It gave way to submission and subjugation as well as inclusion and exclusion.

⁵⁹ J.S. Arcilla explains that "where there were no priests to teach the Christian religion, one-fourth of the tribute was set aside in a *caja de cuartas* (cashbox of fourths), which was used to build hospitals. Later when priests were available, this fund was used for the missions" (please J.S. Arcilla, "Chapter Three: Organizing A Colony" in *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People*, vol. 3, Philippines: Asia Publishing Company Limited, 69).

⁶⁰ Dasmariñas, "Letter from Gomez Perez Dasmariñas to the King" in *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, volume VIII 1591-1593, Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, eds, 236.

⁶¹ Dasmariñas.

⁶² According to J.S. Arcilla, there were "three kinds of slaves in the Philippine colony: (1) those who had sold themselves or were sold by their parents; (2) captives of war; (3) those condemned by judicial sentence." On June 12, 1679, the King signed a Royal Order abolishing slavery in the Philippines. However, it was met with protest from Churchmen, Chinese mestizos, and Spanish residents. They argued that the "slaves were not Filipinos but Bengalis, Malabars, Macassarese, and Timorese." They further argued that some slaves were Muslims who were captured in "just wars" (please see J.S. Arcilla, "Chapter Four: The Missionary Enterprise" in *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People*, vol. 3, Philippines: Asia Publishing Company Limited, 94).





III. EXCURSUS ON THE DISCOURSES OF FAITH AND COLONIZATION

Santa Ines' account provided a picture on how the missionaries transformed the natives. The Augustinian missionaries replaced the sacred objects of the natives by sacred images. For example, "in the river in Manila, there was a rock which a long time ago was the idol of these miserable people, and the scandal lasted causing great evils until the priests of St. Augustine... with holy zeal, broke the rock to pieces and in its place and in its place erected a cross, later constructing a chapel there of St. Nicolas de Tolentino."⁶³ The missionaries also united the polarized natives who settled in different *barangays*. Santa Ines recounted that "small conflicts happened in all the rest of the island and archipelago until the faith was introduced causing friendships, and giving them peace which they value more now than when small wars and their damages arose."⁶⁴ Based on this account, missionaries made themselves politically relevant by using the discourse of faith to unite the warring natives. To put it differently, the warring natives were united not by political ideology but by the Catholic faith.

The contemporary works of Phelan, Rafael and Schreurs provided us a detailed analysis of Santa Ines' account on how the Catholic church used discourse and power relations in the colonial construction of the natives.

Phelan explained that the Spaniards who were influenced by Greco-Roman culture believed that people can only be civilized if they live in the *polis* – where they can receive grace and be

in communion with their fellowmen.⁶⁵ Hence, the missionaries congregated the natives into large villages, to facilitate indoctrination to the Christian faith and to impose Spanish laws such as the collection of tributes and free and forced labor. In order to entice the natives to resettle in the *polis*, or *pueblo*, the missionaries used the colorful ritual of the Catholic church. They flocked to the church, the center of the *pueblo*, or the *cabecera*, to witness ceremonial occasions as Holy Week, the feast of Corpus Christi or the patronal fiesta of the locality. They also established *visita*, or small chapel, outside the *pueblo* for those who could not visit the church or the *cabecera* due to distance and lack of means of transportation. The missionaries went to the *visita* to perform religious rituals and indoctrinate the natives.

In the *pueblos*, the natives were indoctrinated systematically by giving special attention to the children.⁶⁶ The pattern of indoctrination started with the baptism of children of the chieftains who later persuaded the chieftains to be accept the Catholic faith. After the chieftains, the followers were converted next. Indoctrination was also facilitated through religious pomp such as the fiesta system which was instituted to add more color to religious rituals and gatherings. The splendid and colorful rituals were the strongest appeals of Catholicism to the natives.⁶⁷ More than systematic indoctrination and colorful religious pomp, the Spanish missionaries conducted oral and written catechesis to penetrate the consciousness of the natives by creating a "Catholic community consciousness in which the teachings and the spirit of the Church would penetrate into the daily lives of the converts."⁶⁸ In order to achieve such aim,

⁶³ Santa Ines, "Father Santa Ines' Account of the Filipinos and Their Pre-Spanish Civilization (1676)" in *Documentary Sources of Philippines History*, Gregorio F. Zaide, ed., vol. 5 (Metro Manila: National Book Store, Inc., 1990), 76.

⁶⁴ Santa Ines, 82.

⁶⁵ John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses 1565-1700* (Philippines: Cacho Hermanos, Inc., 1985), p. 44.

⁶⁶ Phelan, 55.

⁶⁷ Phelan, 75.

⁶⁸ Phelan, 72.





daily and routinely religious activities were established:

The women and the children, for example, were gathered every day at the foot of the large wooden cross erected in the main plaza of each village to chant the Rosary, and in many parishes the children walked through the streets at sunset chanting the Rosary. In other parishes one of the altar boys rang a bell as he walked through the street at sunset, to remind the faithful to say one Our Father and one Hail Mary for the souls in Purgatory.⁶⁹

Rafael emphasized the essential role played by translation in the conversion of the natives inside the *pueblo*. Translation was crucial to the establishment of colonial power and government in the Philippines. In other words, translation and conversion were essentially related to each other. Rafael explained: “Translation, by making conceivable the transfer of meaning and intention between colonizer and colonized, laid the basis for articulating the general outlines of subjugation prescribed by conversion; but it also resulted in the ineluctable separation between the original message of Christianity (which was itself about the proper nature of origin as such) and its rhetorical formulation in the vernacular.”⁷⁰ Quoting the 15th century Spanish humanist Antonio de Nebrija, Rafael explained that “language is the perfect instrument of empire;” empires “begin, grow, flourish and fall”⁷¹ because of language. This means that language and politics were naturally connected with each other. As he explained, “the assertion of one is accompanied by the spread of the other.”⁷² Such is the case in the Philippines during the Spanish colonization. Spanish missionaries spent time understanding the native language, so that they will be able to relay the Christian message in words and voice

that the natives will clearly understand. They have to understand the native tongue in order to use it in bringing the good news. As what Rafael stated, “Language as nourishing milk enables the faithful son to express the truth of the Father.”⁷³

Translation and conversion were made possible through the sacrament of confession. Inside the *pueblos*, the regular lives of the natives revolved around religious activities and the parish priest exercised religious and political authorities over the inhabitants; the sacraments, particularly the sacrament of confession, played an important role in conversion, submission, and in capturing the vernacular. In explicating this thesis, Rafael examined the discourse of confession. First, confession requires examination of conscience, for it to be a good confession. This means that the penitent needs to account and recount the past events since last confession. Recounting and accounting the past events must be done in narration; and while the penitent is narrating, he/she is being interrogated by the confessor to extract and convey the message of success and failure. This act of interrogation, according to Rafael, reproduced discourse.⁷⁴ In the reproduction of discourse, the confessor was able to codify the native culture. He identified part of the culture that is “legitimate” and “illegitimate” practices, and was able to extract native signs that can be used to further spread the Word of God. Rafael further explained that because of the reproduction of discourse, the confessor was also able to identify the superstitious practices, understand its roots and cut it at once.⁷⁵ In this context, the act of penance, according to Rafael, became the most effective means of “ferreting out Tagalog ‘superstition,’” for it allowed the “priest to subsume the myriad native beliefs in a set of fixed names and definitions and to locate their practitioners and followers.”⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Phelan, 73.

⁷⁰ Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1988), p. 21.

⁷¹ Rafael, 23.

⁷² Rafael.

⁷³ Rafael, 25.

⁷⁴ Rafael, 103.

⁷⁵ Rafael, 107.

⁷⁶ Rafael, 108.





Based on the discussion and explanation of Rafael, the missionaries used confession to fish out terms that they can use to translate and explain important Christian doctrines. The missionaries were able to use some native terms in their homilies or catechesis that shocked the natives. They used two important terms to explain our dependence on God's will and mercy. These are *utang na loob* and *hiya*. The former translated one's dependence on God and our debt of gratitude to Him while the latter translated our repentance and sorrow for our sins. According to Rafael, these two terms "were made to occupy a conceptual space in the framework of evangelization analogous to that assigned to the native language: as the passages for the signs of God and the establishment of a Spanish monopoly on their circulation."⁷⁷ It means that the Filipinos did not have only a debt of gratitude, or *utang na loob*, to God, but also to the Spaniards who introduced to them the one and true God and who provided them means to be saved. The Filipinos had no shame, or *hiya*, if they would defy the Spanish rule. *Utang na loob* and *hiya*, therefore, also played a critical role in the submission of the natives to the Spanish colonial rule. It is because of the discourses of *utang na loob* and *hiya* that the natives submitted themselves to the Spanish rule by embracing a new administrative and bureaucratic structure inside the *pueblos*, by rendering forty days of free labour, or by paying tributes or taxes, and by selling their goods or products to the Spaniards. The language of *utang na loob* and *hiya* did not only have religious value, but it also had political significance.

The conversion of the natives was also facilitated by the notion of the absolutely other realm – the paradise.⁷⁸ Paradise became the source of unity of the natives regardless of their social status.

⁷⁷ Rafael, 122.

⁷⁸ Rafael, 169.

Because of the promise of reward, the notion of paradise became very attractive to the natives, and eventually embraced the Catholic faith. However, gaining the reward of paradise means conversion and submission to the Catholic faith and to the colonial rule. The colonial masters were seen as representatives of the Absolute. They were sent in the Philippines to bring salvation to the natives, for the natives to become citizens of the paradise. In this context, the notion of paradise, and even hell, was a means used for the natives to submit to the colonial rule. It was a potent tool of conversion that led to submission and colonization.

Schreurs explained that the success of conversion and evangelization can be attributed to the process of "reduction," or "resettlement of scattered jungle residents," which is one of the principal instruments of Christianization, and second only to moral attraction by preaching.⁷⁹ Reduction was an effective instrument of Christianization, because the goals of evangelization could be achieved not only by teaching the doctrine, worship and the administration of the sacraments, but by the presence of the missionary among the locals and the eventual formation of Christian community. The latter could be achieved through the process of reduction, because the acts of devotion and worship can only be promoted in a resettlement or community. The process of resettlement was not smooth as it was. It also involved the use of force and coercion. The author described how the Spaniards convinced the Mandayas, one of the tribes in Mindanao, to be resettled:

It contains also the additional information that the *alcalde* went personally to the mountains to tell the Mandayas there that unless they came down and settled in the village, he "would do to them what he had done to the Moros." Only then did they begin to come to the shore with their families and started to put up their houses in the village and preparing their

⁷⁹ Rafael, 207, 208.





own ricefields. There was a no-holds-barred public meeting wherein the *alcalde* told them that already for five years they had been promising him to come down and reside in the village, but that now his patience had come to an end...⁸⁰

The Spanish missionaries had noble reasons for the resettlement of the natives though they used various means, such as diplomacy and coercion, to convince the natives to resettle. Such intentions included the desire to put an end “to the practice of murder and slavery prevailing among the tribes.”⁸¹ The resettlement was not done without a procedure and a justification. The standard operating procedure in resettlement included the following: 1) written petition signed by the local village authorities and the leading inhabitants explaining the reason for the intended transfer; 2) the petition was forwarded to the governor of Mindanao in Zamboanga, who in turn brought it to the attention of the governor-general in Manila; 3) local parish priests and even higher prelates took part in the procedure, and their findings and opinions counted heavily on the tables where the decisions were going to be made.⁸² The author further discussed the next steps in the process of resettlement: “selecting a site for a village, putting up houses, election of local officials, handing over the *baston de mando* or staff of authority to the local chief and entrusting the other with various tasks.”⁸³ The missionaries played an essential role in the process of reduction. They were tasked to obtain information about the natives, their way of life, social behaviour, the names of their leaders, and their dialect. Furthermore, through their friendliness and meekness and through the discourses of love, grace and salvation, they convinced the natives to accept and participate in the process of reduction.⁸⁴

The strategy of *reduccion* inside the *pueblo* was a potent force of power used by the Spaniards in the colonial construction of the natives. Inside the *pueblo* they were subjected to discourses and power relations using techniques such as indoctrination, catechesis, confession, translation as well as the discourses of mercy and paradise. In these techniques, the discourse and knowledge played a critical role in exercising power over the life of the natives. The doctrines and teachings of the Catholic church particularly on salvation and eternal life were used to discipline and regulate the body as well as the mind and consciousness of the natives. These doctrines and teachings became a potent force for the discipline and regulation of the natives because such were accepted by the natives as true. Religious activities were also effective techniques of discipline and regulation. Daily, weekly, monthly, and annually, the natives’ life revolved around the religious activities of the parish inside the *pueblo*. Such activities molded their constructed in them to become loyal colonial subjects.

These discourses and techniques of power relations resulted to changes in the culture and economic activities⁸⁵ of the natives. The work of de Morga provided an account of these changes. First, the natives ceased wearing their traditional clothes. The male started to wear “balloon trousers made out of the same blankets and cloths, also hats on their heads.”⁸⁶ The native chieftains “wear dresses decorated with pounded gold-braid of various

⁸⁰ Peter Schreurs, MSC, *Caraga Antigua: The Hispanization and Christianization of Agusan, Surigao and East Davao 1521-1910*, Second Edition (Manila: National Historical Institute 2000), 278-279.

⁸¹ Schreurs, 314.

⁸² Schreurs 315.

⁸³ Schreurs, 357.

⁸⁴ Schreurs 356.

⁸⁵ According to Diokno and Villegas, there was a “shift to an agricultural export economy” during the Spanish period. Because of that, the rural landscape has changed due to “population growth and the transformation of the old frontiers into cultivable land.” Furthermore, farmers were forced to raise salable crops as the different towns were integrated into the agricultural export economy. Lastly, new terms and conditions inland tenure emerged because of the demand of the new economic order. The *hacenderos*, the land owners, imposed new terms and conditions in land tenure to the *inquilinos*, the natives who rented land from the *hacenderos* (please see M. S. Diokno and R.N. Villegas, “Chapter Two: The Economy Transformed” in *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People*, vol. 4, Philippines: Asia Publishing Company Limited, 27).

⁸⁶ Antonio de Morga, *Events in the Philippine Islands*, annotated by Jose Rizal, Manila: National Historical Commission of the Philippines, 2011, 245.





workmanship, and many of them wear shoes.”⁸⁷ Likewise, many of the wives of native chieftains and women of elite class “wear velvet shoes with gold trimmings, also white sheets as undershirts.”⁸⁸ Secondly, they “became more lax in mining gold, contenting themselves with what they already had in the form of jewelry and ancient ingots of gold, inherited from their forebears, which were abundant.”⁸⁹ It was observed that those who did not “possess gold chains, bracelets and earrings was indeed so poor and indigent.”⁹⁰

De Morga presented an account about the complexity of the inhabitants in the Philippine islands and the grandeur of the culture and civilization that they have developed years prior to the arrival of the Spanish colonizers. In describing the agricultural and fishing activities of the natives; their hygienic practices and manner of dressing; the intricacy of their language and religious belief and practices; and their social hierarchy and political structure, de Morga made us understand about the extent of transformation that took place when the Spaniards *hispanized* the natives. The social structure and culture described by de Morga disappeared because of the arrival of the Spaniards. Changes in the beliefs, traditions, and social and political structures were results of pacification and conversion of the natives. It was a result of conversion and religious instruction by the missionaries.

The colonial construction of the natives were not that perfect. Some natives still behaved differently and such deviant behavior were perceived negatively by their colonial master. The negative perception of the behavior of the natives that are not consistent with the colonial

social character was recorded by an Augustinian friar, Fray Gaspar de San Agustin.

IV. SAN AGUSTIN’S SLANDER OF THE FILIPINOS AND DELGADO’S DEFENSE: TWO OPPOSING DISCOURSES ON THE FILIPINO NATIVES

He started his discourse against the natives by stating that it would be easier to “define the formal object of logic; to give the square of a circle, to find the mathematical (side) of the double of the cube and sphere, or to find a fixed rule for the measurement of the degrees of longitude of the terrestrial sphere; than to define the nature of the Indians, and their customs and vices.”⁹¹ San Agustin experienced difficulty in defining the nature of the Indians, their customs and vices, because none of them can be found in the Spanish or European race, customs, and traditions. Not because these were unique and distinct to the natives, but because these were vices and evil from the point of view of San Agustin. When he was referring to the Indians, he was not referring to a particular group, but to all, to the whole race. He says that the difficulty in understanding the natives was not in the individuals, but in the whole race; if one be known, all are known, without distinction, he concludes.⁹² According to San Agustin the Greek word *monopantos* fits all the natives, because they were all homogenous and uniform among themselves.⁹³

He described the natives as “exceedingly barbarous, living without a ruler and in a confused monarchy, have the vices of the islanders, fickle, false, and mendacious.”⁹⁴ They were also “fickle, malicious,

⁸⁷ De Morga.
⁸⁸ De Morga.
⁸⁹ De Morga, 260.
⁹⁰ De Morga.

⁹¹ San Agustin, “Father San Augustin Slanders the Filipino People (1720)” in *Documentary Sources of Philippine History*, Gregorio F. Zaide, Ed. Vol. 5 (Metro Manila: National Book Store, Inc., 1990), p. 209.

⁹² San Agustin.

⁹³ San Agustin.

⁹⁴ San Agustin, 212-213.





untrustworthy, dull, and lazy; they have little courage, and are not disposed to work.”⁹⁵ The Augustinian friar enumerated the vices of the natives in order to prove his point. First, the natives were “remarkable for their ingratitude.” He explained that they did not have gratitude because of their lack of understanding and nobility.⁹⁶ Secondly, they did not pay their debt. The friar narrated that “if one lends them money, they do not pay it; but instead they run away from the father;” and “if they borrow anything that is not money, they will never return it until it is requested;” and, as an excuse for not having returned it, they say that they have not been asked for it.⁹⁷ Thirdly, they were lazy. He described their laziness in this manner:

...if they open a door they never close it; and if they take an implement for any use, such as knife, pair of scissors, hammer, etc., they never return it whence they took it, but drop it there at the foot of the work. If they are paid anything in advance, they leave work and keep the pay.⁹⁸

Fourthly, the natives were “naturally rude.” San Agustin enumerated specific examples to show the rudeness of the natives.⁹⁹ When they were talking to the friars, the male scratched themselves on the temples or in case of a woman, on the thigh; or sometimes, they scratched themselves on the head. They would always side with the wrong argument. When men walked, they walked ahead of their wives. They read letters of other people and listen to the conversation of others even if it is in the language that they did not understand. They entered the convents and houses of Spaniards without permission and even if it is locked by forcing themselves in. They sat on their heels or sat on the chair with outstretched legs. They

cared more for their uncombed hair than their souls. They would always stay in the kitchen of the convents or houses of the Spaniards, finding their happiness in it. They used blazing torch when they went out at night and threw it down anywhere they wanted, and it would usually cause great fires. They only cared for their fighting cocks, but not to other domestic animals like, dog, cat, horse, or cow. Their care for their fighting cocks was manifested in their habit of going to the roosting-place of their cock where they squatted down on their heels and stayed very quietly for at least a half-hour in contemplation of their cock.

Aside from ingratitude, laziness, and rudeness, San Agustin further described the natives as “insolent and free in begging for unjust and foolish things without considering time or reason.”¹⁰⁰ They begged for anything from the friars and if their requested has been granted, they would beg for more. That sometimes begging was translated into demand, and demand into right. They also wanted the friars to give them what they had given to other natives even if it was not warranted by the situation. The natives were also fond of playing or gambling, because they thought that in playing they earn money while resting.¹⁰¹ It is, therefore, a sign of laziness. That is why the friar concluded that the natives were poor because of their laziness and lack of energy to work.¹⁰² Instead, they spent

¹⁰⁰ San Agustin, 218.

¹⁰¹ San Agustin, 219.

¹⁰² San Agustin may be correct in saying that the natives were lazy and had no energy to work. But this may be true only to some natives whom he knew. But laziness was not only a trait exclusive to the natives. There were also Spanish residents at Manila that were exceedingly indolent. Robert MacMicking gives us a glimpse about the laziness of the Spaniards: “As persons in the government service form the great portion of the white population, a sketch of the habits of one of them may not be uninteresting. . . He usually gets out of bed about six, or a little after, to enjoy the cool air of the morning, and sip his chocolate with the aid of *broas* without which he could scarcely manage to get through the day; he then dresses, and drives to his office, where he remains till twelve o’clock, which hour finishes his official duties for the day.” He further states, “While in office the nature of his work is not very arduous, and does not appear to call into play any powers of the mind, as it appears to consist only in his remaining for about four hours in a cool and large room, generally seated at a table or desk, overlooking a number of native writers occupied in making out and filling up forms which are required

⁹⁵ San Agustin, 213.

⁹⁶ San Agustin, 213-214.

⁹⁷ San Agustin.

⁹⁸ San Agustin, 214-215.

⁹⁹ The following narrative about the “rudeness of the natives” can be found on pages 215-217 of “Father San Agustin Slanders the Filipino People (1720).”





their time playing or gambling. The natives were also ignorant and barbarous. Their ignorance could be seen in believing the teachings of the Spaniards if such were profitable to them.¹⁰³ If it was against them, they ignored it. It could also be seen in their fondness of imitating the bad traits of the Spaniards such as, their clothes, cursing, gambling, and siesta.¹⁰⁴ Combining these bad traits with the vices that they inherited from their ancestors such as revelry and drinking. They were also ignorant, because they did not have knowledge about the origin of their ancestors, and they lack understanding and reflection.¹⁰⁵ They would always go for extremes without thinking of any means. Their barbarity could be seen in their arrogance by not obeying their parents or elders or leaders; and they would only obey them because of fear.¹⁰⁶ It could also be seen in their cruelty to each other by abusing the power that was given to them by the Spaniards.

The rattling against the natives by San Agustin did not stop there. He had too much information and observation about the traits of the natives. The natives were also distrustful; and because of being distrustful, they became foolish and dull.¹⁰⁷ They were also curious and fond of knowing anything that does not concern them. That is why in confession, they confessed not only the sins of others, but they also kept on gazing on the one who was confessing.¹⁰⁸ They found amusement in seeing the faces of people confessing.

Speaking of sins and confession, one of the sins common to the natives was blasphemy. The

cause of such sin was the natural vileness, pride, and presumption of the natives.¹⁰⁹ They kept on complaining of God and up to the extent of cursing Him, because they did not get what they wanted in life such as health, wealth and power; or others are better off than them. It was also the result of their lack of understanding and their disability to conform themselves with the divine will.¹¹⁰ Vanity without honor was the second kind of sin committed mostly by the natives. Because they considered themselves highly and with high esteem even without doing anything worthy of esteem, they spent their money never more willingly than in functions of vanity.¹¹¹ They gave banquets very frequently, for very slight causes; and everything resolved itself into eating, drinking to the fourth degree, and great noise. Their vanity was the only thing that caused them to lessen their laziness, in order to get the wherewithal to keep up this esteem, and applause from their compatriots.¹¹² The natives were also revengeful to an excessive degree.¹¹³ They were horrifying and frightful in venting their anger, both against one another and against the friars.¹¹⁴ Because of this, they were inclined to litigation, and “to going before the *audencias* and courts with their quarrels, in which they willingly spend their possessions for the sole purpose of making other spend theirs and of causing them harm and trouble.”¹¹⁵ They were lustful because of their illicit love affairs. In this illicit intercourse “the men have no other purpose than bodily appetite, and to deprive (of virginity) as many women as they have done, in order to sport with it.”¹¹⁶ Lastly, they were fond of concealing faults and wrongdoings of another person.¹¹⁷ They would not tell the authorities

by the existing regulations for the government service” (R. MacMicking, *Recollections of Manila and the Philippines: During 1848, 1849, and 1850*, ed. Morton J. Netzorg, Manila: Filipinana Book Guild, 1967, 47.)
103 San Agustin, “Father San Augustin Slanders the Filipino People (1720),” 220.

¹⁰⁴ San Agustin, 222.

¹⁰⁵ San Agustin, 223.

¹⁰⁶ San Agustin, 222.

¹⁰⁷ San Agustin, 225.

¹⁰⁸ San Agustin.

¹⁰⁹ San Agustin, 225-226.

¹¹⁰ San Agustin.

¹¹¹ San Agustin, 226.

¹¹² San Agustin.

¹¹³ San Agustin, 226.

¹¹⁴ San Agustin, 229.

¹¹⁵ San Agustin.

¹¹⁶ San Agustin, 226-227.

¹¹⁷ San Agustin, 227.





about the crime committed and they would despise those who would inform the authorities about it.

After enumerating the negative traits and moral defects of the natives, San Agustin concluded that the Filipino natives were “wretched beings” that are “dictated by nature through the animal, intent solely on its preservation and convenience, without any corrective being applied by reason, respect, and esteem for reputation.”¹¹⁸ Based on this, he further concluded that the natives were not capable of becoming priests¹¹⁹ because of the reasons he has mentioned and also because, they “lack the ecclesiastical and priestly mental ability and the prudence necessary.”¹²⁰

Fr. Juan Jose Delgado, a Jesuit priest, criticized the discourses of San Agustin describing it as hyperbolic and full of contradictions and opposing expressions. Delgado attacked San Agustin’s limited experience with the natives.¹²¹ He further explained that “during most of the time while he lived in these islands he did not leave the professor’s chair, except for a short time: all that he tells of his journey to and travels among the Visayas was learned in passing and hastily, in company with the provincial who visited those missions.”¹²² Delgado argued that “one cannot judge of a whole nation – and much less of all the nations of the islands, who are diverse and distinct in genius and customs by the cases of those Indians who speak Spanish.”¹²³ San Agustin’s account was full of contradictions

and opposing expressions, because he himself admitted that it was difficult to know the natives and there was no fixed rules that can define them.¹²⁴ How were they able to come up with their general and universal definition and descriptions of the native Filipinos if they themselves admitted that they could not define and understand them for lack of rules and syntax? The discourses of San Agustin were not only logical impossible, such were also racially prejudicial.

Delgado reminded them about Velarde’s positive descriptions of the native Filipinos, but which he failed to put into writing. The natives were “cleaver in handiwork, beautiful writers, excellent embroiderers, painters, goldsmiths, and engravers.”¹²⁵ They were “good sculptors, gilders, and carpenters.”¹²⁶ Furthermore, they were sailors, artillerymen, and divers; remarkable mechanics and puppet-showmen, complicated mechanics, jewelers; and powder and cast swivel-guns, cannons and bells makers.¹²⁷ They were also excellent musicians for the services of the Church, for they have excellent voices – sopranos, contraltos, tenors and basses.¹²⁸ Most of them play the harp, violin, rebeck, oboe, and flute.¹²⁹ In addition to that, Delgado also narrates that the natives were the ones who “plow the lands, who sow the rice, who keep it clear, who tend it, who thresh it out with their feet.”¹³⁰ They also cared for, manage, and tend the sheep and the cattle; cultivated the fruits – the bananas, cacao, and all the other fruits on the earth; provided oil to the Spaniards in Manila; guided and conveyed the missionaries in villages; and served as guides, sailors and pilots for different missions and expeditions.¹³¹

¹¹⁸ San Agustin, 237.

¹¹⁹ According to Miguel A. Bernard, the letter of San Agustin dated June 8, 1720, which was widely circulated and read was probably motivated by the “impending calamity” of the creation of a native clergy (please see M.A. Bernard, S.J., *The Christianization of the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives*, Manila: The Filipiana Book Guild, 1972, 170).

¹²⁰ San Agustin, 248.

¹²¹ Father Delgado, “Father Delgado’s Commentaries on the Letter of San Agustin” in *Documentary Sources of Philippine History*, Gregorio F. Zaide, Ed. Vol. 5 (Metro Manila: National Book Store, Inc., 1990), p. 255.

¹²² Delgado.

¹²³ Delgado.

¹²⁴ Delgado, 254.

¹²⁵ Delgado, 257-258.

¹²⁶ Delgado, 258.

¹²⁷ Delgado.

¹²⁸ Delgado.

¹²⁹ Delgado.

¹³⁰ Delgado, 259.

¹³¹ Delgado.





Delgado also exposed that the natives were victims of the cruelty, wickedness, and tyranny of the Spanish officials such as the *alcalde-mayor* and others who, “having been elevated from low beginnings, try to become gods and kings in the provinces, tyrannizing over the Indians and their possessions.”¹³² He described the authority and arrogance of the Spaniards as incredible from the time they set foot in the Philippine islands.¹³³

The contradicting accounts of de San Agustin and Delgado about the character and traits of the natives implied that the exercise of power relations was not perfect. The colonial construction of natives based on discourses of culture and faith had cracks and limitations. Not all behaved consistently with the colonial social character. Furthermore, these accounts also provided insight on the formation of discourses, knowledge and truth about the natives during the Spanish colonization. Negative discourses about the natives which later on accepted as knowledge and truth were not solidly supported by facts. They were products of prejudices by some intelligent Spaniards who wrote and published about the natives. Because of their academic credentials, their discourses were given credibility and authority by the readers or by fellow scholars. Their inaccurate discourses, as a result, were accepted as knowledge and truth. That was what happened to the discourses of de San Agustin. Because of the trust and confidence given by the scholars and institutions of Spain, his statements and discourses about the natives became true. And he himself became an authority and expert. Thanks to the initiative of Delgado by coming up with his own discourses about the positive traits of the natives that contradicted the discourses of de San Agustin. However, the discourses of de San Agustin were celebrated and accepted more than Delgado’s by their fellow

Spaniards.¹³⁴ De San Agustin’s manuscript was widely circulated and influential authorities and scholars in Spain took it seriously.¹³⁵ They accepted it as an “authoritative judgment” on the Filipino character, and they created San Agustin an “expert on the traits of the Filipinos.”¹³⁶

V. JOSE RIZAL’S AND MARCELO H. DEL PILAR: DISCOURSES ON RECLAIMING WHAT WAS LOST

Rizal and del Pilar demonstrated the defects and harmful effects of Spanish colonization in their propaganda materials. They provided discourses to counter attack those that were claimed by the Spaniards about the natives and colonization. They resurrected the glorious past of the Filipinos to expose the illnesses and uncovering the evils Spanish colonization. They consistently and persistently criticized the church and the friars because they knew that it was the faith that provided foundation for Spanish colonization. As they provided counter discourses, they were also influencing the minds of the Filipinos and European readers that the Spaniards did not bring and give all that was good, beautiful, and desirable to the Filipinos. They had their own share of the evils that can be found in the Philippine society. As the Spanish writers destroyed the goodness that was left to the natives, they were also trying to preserve the beauty and goodness of the Filipinos by turning the barrel to the Spaniards. Rizal and del Pilar tried to win the consciousness of their fellow Filipinos by exposing in their writings the evils of Spanish colonization and the goodness of the Filipino culture.

¹³² Delgado, 260.

¹³³ Delgado.

¹³⁴ Miguel A. Bernad, SJ, *The Christianization of the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives* (Manila: The Filipiniana Book Guild, 1972), 162.

¹³⁵ Bernard, 163.

¹³⁶ Bernard.





In his essay, “The Philippines a Century Hence,” he claimed that the Filipinos entered a new era when they were incorporated in the crown of Spain – the era of depopulation, impoverishment, and retardation.¹³⁷ It was also an era marked by their transformation to people with no more confidence on their past, without faith on their present, and without hope on their future.¹³⁸ This dark transformation experienced by the Filipinos was a result of colonization or *hispanization*. Colonization disconnected the Filipinos to their glorious past and to their own history and tradition; and such disconnect was the cause of their retrogressive transformation and their fallen into abyss of meaningless existence.¹³⁹ Rizal explained that they were disconnected to their past, because “they gave up their writing, their songs, their poems, their laws in order to learn by rote other doctrines which they did not understand.”¹⁴⁰ They embraced another morality and aesthetics which were “different from those inspired by their climate and their manner of thinking.”¹⁴¹ Because of this experience of disconnection to their past and embracing a foreign culture and perspective, the Filipinos have declined, degraded, and “became ashamed of what was their own;” they started to “admire and praise whatever was foreign and incomprehensible; their spirit was dismayed and it surrendered.”¹⁴²

Rizal cited the role played by religion in the retrogressive transformation of the Filipinos. They were entertained by the religious pomp, rituals, songs, lights, and images dressed in gold; hypnotized by the mysterious language, the stories, the miracles, and the sermons.¹⁴³ Religion took an essential role in the colonization of the Filipinos. It transformed not only the faith or beliefs of the Filipinos, but also their worldviews and their perception of themselves.¹⁴⁴ With the help of religion, Rizal argued colonization destroyed totally the will-power of the Filipinos and created their dormant minds; and “converted them into brutes and beasts of burden, humankind without brains and without hearts.”¹⁴⁵ They were also insulted, because the colonial masters denied that they possess any virtue, any human quality, and any capacity as human beings.¹⁴⁶

Rizal argued that one of the reasons for the retrogression of the Filipinos under the Spanish colonization was the three centuries of brutalization and obscurantism that influenced the psyche of the Filipino natives.¹⁴⁷ He was referring to the “insult and injure in print, in newspapers, in books with *superior permission* or *ecclesiastical licence*,” and in particular, he was thinking of the offensive works of Fr. Gaspar de San Agustin and Fr. Murillo Velarde, which were published and “honored with mitres or promoted to high posts.”¹⁴⁸ These two priests

¹³⁷ Jose Rizal, “The Philippines A Century Hence” in *Jose Rizal's Political and Historical Writings*, vol. VII, trans. Encarnacion Alzona (Manila: National Historical Institute, 2000), p. 130.

¹³⁸ Rizal.

¹³⁹ Based on M.A. Bernad's explanation, Spanish colonization disconnected the Filipino natives to their glorious past, history, and tradition by destroying their native towns and villages, imposing and collecting tributes, seizing lands for public use, confiscating private and personal properties, and slaving the chiefs (*datu*) and freemen (*timawa*). He further explains that the Spaniards destroyed the social fabric of the pre-colonial Philippine society, and such greatly contributed to the “death” of their indigenous culture and structure. The colonial government has broken up the civilization of the Filipinos, for them to embrace Hispanic culture and Christianity (please see Miguel A. Bernad, SJ, *The Christianization of the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives*, Manila: The Filipiniana Book Guild, 1972, 173, 189, 196).

¹⁴⁰ Rizal, “The Philippines A Century Hence,” 130.

¹⁴¹ Rizal, 130-131.

¹⁴² Rizal, 131.

¹⁴³ Rizal.

¹⁴⁴ J.L. Phelan explains that “one of the aims of the Spanish religious was to create a Catholic community consciousness in which the teachings and the spirit of the Church would penetrate into the daily lives of the converts.” In other to achieve their aim, one of the religious activities that they inculcated in the natives was the praying of the Rosary. They gathered women and children every day at the foot of the large cross erected in the plaza of each village to pray the rosary. In other parishes, they gathered children at sunset and they walked through the streets reciting the Rosary while one of the altar boys was ringing the bell as they walked through the streets. The fiesta system and the splendid ritual and colorful pageantry of Catholic observance of Holy Week were ingrained into the cultural consciousness of the Filipinos (please see John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1959, 74, 75).

¹⁴⁵ Rizal, “The Philippines A Century Hence,” 131.

¹⁴⁶ Rizal.

¹⁴⁷ Rizal, 136.

¹⁴⁸ Rizal.





had forgotten that during the early years of colonization, the Filipinos occupied higher ranks in the army, fought beside the heroes of Spain, and shared laurels with them.¹⁴⁹ They had forgotten that their predecessors sided with the Filipinos and helped them fought against the oppressive *encomenderos*.¹⁵⁰ Their predecessors defended the rights of the native Filipinos and made their complaints reach the throne of Spain. They had also forgotten that because of the high regard the Filipinos had given to friars, they followed their advice and listened to them. They replaced the kindness and generosity of the early friars with mocking laughter and insults.

In his essay, “The Indolence of the Filipinos,” he defined the indolence of the natives as a “chronic malady, but not hereditary.”¹⁵¹ It was the effect of Spanish misgovernment of the Philippine colony and backwardness of the Philippine society.¹⁵² Indolence in the Philippines was an evil, because it was magnified, snow-balled, and increased in direct proportion to mismanagement of the government and underdevelopment of the society. To prove his claim that it is indeed a result of Spanish colonization, Rizal cited the work of Pigafetta, Morga, and Colin where they recorded the productive and active economic activities of the natives during the early years of Spanish colonization. They were busy in farming, fishing, trading, manufacturing, and mining. Based on these recorded accounts by early Spanish missionary and officials, he concluded:

All the histories of those first years, in short, abound in long accounts of the industry and agriculture of the people – mines, gold placers, looms, cultivated farms, barter, shipbuilding, poultry and stock-raising, silk and cotton-weaving, distilleries, manufacture of arms,

pearl-fisheries, the civet industry, horn and leather industry...All these could be found at every step and considering the time and conditions of the Islands, they prove that there was life, there was activity, there was movement.¹⁵³

After three hundred years of colonization, the natives were described by writers such as San Agustin, Velarde, Bowring, Mallat, and de Man as naturally lazy. It was in contradiction with the early accounts of Spanish officials. That is why Rizal raised the question, “How then and in what way was the active and enterprising heathen *Indio* of ancient times converted into a lazy and indolent Christian, as our contemporary writers say of him?”¹⁵⁴

Rizal explained that the causes of the indolence of the natives were a fatal combination of circumstances beyond the control of the natives, lack of will and passion, stupidity and ignorance, and false principles.¹⁵⁵ Rizal was thinking of the wars, internal disturbances and disorders that impeded the productive economic activities of the natives. The invasion of Limahong; the continuous wars of Spain in Borneo, Moluccas, Indochina that dragged the native inhabitants of the Philippine islands; the terrible pirates of the South and the bandits in farms; and the depopulation of the Islands because of the continuous wars and useless expeditions contributed to the neglect of industry, agriculture, and commerce.¹⁵⁶

Aside from that, he also had in mind “the lessening encouragement to labor” by the Spanish government.¹⁵⁷ Government policies such as permit to work in farms and banning or restricting trading discouraged the natives to labor and to be productive. Because of their

¹⁴⁹ Rizal.

¹⁵⁰ Rizal, 137.

¹⁵¹ Rizal, “The Indolence of the Filipinos,” *Jose Rizal’s Political and Historical Writings*, vol. VII, trans. Encarnacion Alzona (Manila: National Historical Institute, 2000), 233.

¹⁵² Rizal, 232.

¹⁵³ Rizal, 237.

¹⁵⁴ Rizal, 238.

¹⁵⁵ Rizal, 239.

¹⁵⁶ Rizal, 239-240.

¹⁵⁷ Rizal, 245.





fear that, the natives might be influenced by the Borneans, Siamese, Cambodians, and Japanese to fight for their independence and freedom, the Spanish authorities banned the trading of all natives with these peoples. They looked at them with suspicion and great mistrust. They also restricted the constant communication of the natives living in different islands of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao by limiting internal trading. This was motivated by their fear and malice that they might be united and might revolt against Spain if they would constantly communicate with each other. These government policies resulted to the disappearance of coastwise trading that flourished before the arrival of the Spaniards and to the almost disappearance of internal trading because of restrictions, passports, and other administrative requirements.¹⁵⁸ It was also the same fear and malice that motivated them to impose the policy of seeking permit from the government authorities to work in farms. The natives were discouraged to work in the farms because of the costly and slow releasing of permit due to bureaucracy and red tape.¹⁵⁹ In addition to that, the presence of bandits or outlaws in the mountains who were waiting to kidnap farmers for ransom was also a hindrance to the natives to work.¹⁶⁰

The *encomienda* system and the monopolization of business by Spanish *alcalde mayor* contributed to the destruction of the will and passion of the natives to work. In the *encomienda*, the natives were enslaved and forced to work for free¹⁶¹ and for the benefit of the *encomenderos*;

forced to pay excessive taxes or tribute;¹⁶² and compelled to sell their products at insignificant price or for nothing.¹⁶³ The *alcalde mayor* was also busy not in administering the government, but in engaging in business to enrich himself. Instead of “stimulating around him love of work, instead of curbing the very natural indolence of the natives,” he was busy abusing his power and authority to protect his business interests by monopolizing all business and destroying competition.¹⁶⁴

The teaching of the friars and the belief on miracles were not spared by Rizal. He believed that such had its own share to the indolence of the natives. He asked: “what is strange when we see the pious but impotent friars of that time advise their poor parishioners, in order to free them from the tyranny of the *encomenderos*, to stop work in the mines, to abandon their industries, to destroy their looms, pointing to them heaven as their sole hope, preparing them for death as their only consolation?”¹⁶⁵ He further stated that the poor natives were discouraged to work because of the teaching that “rich man will not go to heaven.”¹⁶⁶ Lastly, the religious functions – the large number of fiestas, the lengthy Masses of which women spent their whole mornings, the novena, and the processions and rosaries,¹⁶⁷ according to Rizal, contributed to the laziness of the natives. Instead of using their money in a productive and entrepreneurial way, they

people shared in the affairs of the community as well as in the defense against enemies” (please see Samuel K. Tan, *A History of the Philippines*, Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 2009, 55).

¹⁶² The collection of taxes did not only result to the indolence of the natives but also to the breakdown of the moral foundation of the society. S.K. Tan explains that the “unjust imposition by the system of collecting taxes on the *gobernadorcillos* or *cabezas de barangay* to collect the dues as expected of them led to the breakdown of morality. Thus, through corruption, which the colonial system encouraged, the local leadership lost the moral base of their authority which they had been enjoying before the Spanish advent” (please see Samuel K. Tan, *A History of the Philippines*, Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 2009, 55).

¹⁶³ Rizal, “The Indolence of the Filipinos,” 247-248.

¹⁶⁴ Rizal, 248.

¹⁶⁵ Rizal, 243.

¹⁶⁶ Rizal, 250.

¹⁶⁷ Rizal, 252.

¹⁵⁸ Rizal, 246.

¹⁵⁹ Rizal, 246.

¹⁶⁰ Rizal, 247.

¹⁶¹ According to S.K. Tan, “colonial laws and ordinances required the natives to provide either free labor or labor with nominal compensation for all sorts of Spanish needs, from domestic services at home to military services in Spanish expeditions.” The free labor or labor with nominal compensation was economically harmful to the natives. It also destroyed the balance between the obligation of the people to the State and the State’s responsibility to the people. Tan argues that, the “just sharing of responsibilities was absent in the *polo y servicios* which literally forced the natives to work against their will and interest.” The effect of that was the destruction of the precolonial communal ideal where leaders and





spent it for the “bulls, scapulars, candles, and novena.” They spent their money for Masses and prayers, because the friars taught them that it was through prayers that their fields will be irrigated and their animals that aided them in farming will be protected from illnesses.¹⁶⁸ The friars taught them about miracles performed by saints, and the natives believed and relied on these miracles, for the irrigation of their fields, bountiful harvest, and salvation from poverty. Rizal argues that those who believe most in miracles are the laziest: “Whether they believe in miracles to lull their laziness or they are lazy because they believe in miracles, we cannot say; but the fact is that the Filipinos were much lazy before the word *miracle* was introduced into their language.”¹⁶⁹

The friars also owned the best tracts of land and the more profitable ones in some provinces. Religious corporations have chosen the “best towns, the beautiful plains, the well-watered fields to make them very rich estates.”¹⁷⁰ Like the *encomienderos* of early years of Spanish colonization, they used their power and might in grabbing the lands from the natives and turning the natives into slaves and tenants in the land that they once owned. They earned money by collecting rental fee to the natives who live within their estates and those who could not pay were enslaved or thrown out of the estates.

Gambling was also blamed by Rizal for the indolence of the natives. He admitted that gambling was already part of the culture of the natives prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. This was based on the account of Pigafetta that cockfighting already existed in Luzon and all the islands.¹⁷¹ Rizal explained that the “passion for gambling is innate in adventurous and excitable races and

the Malayan race is one them.”¹⁷² However, the Spanish government exploited it by allowing its promotion and perfection,¹⁷³ and the natives who were mired in poverty and unemployment saw it as an opportunity to earn money. Working would entail requirements, such as payment of fee for permit to go to farm and to trade and payment of taxes, and risks like being held up in the high seas by the pirates or kidnap by bandits in the mountains. Working would also mean no income at all because of free or force labor imposed by the government to the natives who cannot pay taxes or tributes. The natives did not bother to work because of the money that they have to spend and the risks that they have to face. Gambling was the best option to earn; no sweat, no risk, no payment of fees. But the downside of it, the natives started to rely on luck or chance. They started to rely on prayer and miracle, for them to win in gambling and hoping to get out from the pit of poverty.

The defective educational system was the last factor that contributed to the indolence of the natives. Rizal described the educational system as “brutalizing, depressing, and anti-human.”¹⁷⁴ It was an education that did not encourage the students to learn and to grow.¹⁷⁵ It was the desire of the Spanish teachers that the natives should not learn the Spanish language, should not be separated from their carabaos, and should not have further ambition.¹⁷⁶ Instead of teaching them to explore the wide possibilities in life, they taught them to be humble and to

¹⁶⁸ Rizal, 253.

¹⁶⁹ Rizal.

¹⁷⁰ Rizal, 254-255.

¹⁷¹ Rizal, 251.

¹⁷² Rizal.

¹⁷³ Rizal.

¹⁷⁴ Rizal, 256.

¹⁷⁵ Education during the Spanish period was a “privileged denied to the natives” and enjoyed by those who have Spanish blood and money to pay the private and exclusive Catholic schools. The subjects taught were “catechism, reading and writing, music, the rudiments of arithmetic, and trades and industries.” Instruction was also placed entirely at the hands of the Spanish priests whose intention in teaching was to learn the dialects rather than teaching the students. Lastly, the “chief characteristics of Spanish pedagogy” was “memorization, discipline by fear, and corporal punishment” (please see M. S. Diokno and R.N. Villegas, “Chapter Six: The Making of the Filipino” in *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People*, vol. 4, Philippines: Asia Publishing Company Limited, 116, 120).

¹⁷⁶ Rizal, “The Indolence of the Filipinos,” 256.





accept the yoke.¹⁷⁷ Instead of teaching them about human dignity and lifting their hopes in life, they succumb to the “daily preaching that lowers human dignity, gradually or brutally killing their self-respect.”¹⁷⁸ Instead of teaching them to think critically and analytically, they were subjected to the method of memorization, memorizing what they did not understand. That is why what the natives need was an education that would provide them the freedom to expand their adventurous spirit and awaken their revolutionary spirit for them to cry for change and search for new ideas, for the progress and development of their nation.

Rizal exposed the harmful effects of colonization to the Filipinos and to the Philippine society. He was pointing out that the defects observed by the friars about the natives were part of the harmful effects of colonization. From the point of view of Rizal, colonization did not bring the Filipinos to the promised land of progress and development; but to the land of backwardness and underdevelopment by destructing their own culture and disconnecting them to their glorious past. It destroyed the will-to-power and self-esteem of the natives and the pride and hope of the nation.

Marcelo H. del Pilar, Rizal’s fellow reformist and propagandist,¹⁷⁹ joined the battle field of discourses by writing *Frailocracy in the Philippines*. It was written by del Pilar as a

response to the pamphlet, *The Friars in the Philippines*, published in Madrid. The pamphlet criticized the filibusterism in the Philippines whose primary intention was “to break off ties with Spain.”¹⁸⁰ It also justified the “monastic domination in the Philippines” and cursed those who “believe that friars and monasteries were transitory influences.”¹⁸¹ The author of the pamphlet also denounced the Filipino secular clergy by claiming that they “lack abnegation in the strenuous mission of preaching the Gospel in communities with small pecuniary remuneration.”¹⁸² They also did not possess the “aptitude to fascinate their parishioners” and they would not “be concerned with the spiritual care of the souls once assigned to curacies with large income,” because their primary desire was “to climb the ecclesiastical ladder to satisfy their personal ambitions.”¹⁸³

In the *Frailocracy in the Philippines*, Del Pilar provided his arguments against the claims that the “monarchical institution has transformed the Philippine archipelago from a ‘filthy chrysalis to a butterfly with brilliant and very vivid colors’ and the Philippine islands were conquered and civilized peacefully.”¹⁸⁴ The claim that peaceful conquest and civilization of the Philippine archipelago were distinct achievements of the friars was unfounded, because it was the “policy of powerful attraction” and the promise of liberty of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi that paved the way for the conquest of the Philippine islands.¹⁸⁵ Del Pilar explained that, “the natives joined the Spaniards in their fight against any banner of oppression,”¹⁸⁶ because of the promise of liberty. In the name of liberty, Legazpi was accepted as friend by Sikatuna and had a blood compact

¹⁷⁷ Rizal, 257.

¹⁷⁸ Rizal.

¹⁷⁹ Del Pilar and Rizal were pillars of the propaganda movement. They established the *La Solidaridad*, the mouthpiece of the movement that “served as the vehicle of expression of the said aspirations” of the Filipino people. The *La Solidaridad* was asking for reforms to pacify the anxiety of the Filipino people. The reforms that they asked Spain were: that the government in the Philippines “cease to be military and be transformed into a civil government;” the powers of the Governor-General be limited and determined by law; that the Filipinos be granted individual civil liberties; that the Filipinos be represented in the Spanish *Cortes*; that the friars be expelled in the Philippines and the parishes be secularized; and that the Filipinos be given the chance to occupy government positions after passing public examination (please see Apolonario Mabini, *The Philippine Revolution*, Manila: The National Historical Institute, 246, 247).

¹⁸⁰ Marcelo H. del Pilar, *Frailocracy in the Philippines*, trans. Leonor Agrava (Manila: National Historical Institute, 2009), 1.

¹⁸¹ Del Pilar.

¹⁸² Del Pilar.

¹⁸³ Del Pilar.

¹⁸⁴ Del Pilar, 23.

¹⁸⁵ Del Pilar, 25.

¹⁸⁶ Del Pilar.





with the natives. In return for the blood compact, Sikatuna and his men agreed to receive the sacrament of baptism without knowing and understanding the “theoretical or practical notion of its religious importance.”¹⁸⁷ Del Pilar concluded that it was the persuasive strategy of Legazpi that carved the path for the successful preaching of the Gospel, and not the friars.¹⁸⁸ Attributing to friars the success of conversion and colonization is a wrong interpretation of Philippine history.¹⁸⁹

The claim that the friars were successful in transforming the natives of the Philippine islands was also assailed by del Pilar. After three hundred years of Spanish colonization, Catholicism was “professed only in the well established localities in the Philippines.”¹⁹⁰ The great majority of the regions outside the established localities were occupied by Godless souls and uncivilized tribes. This showed that the missionary works were ineffective, for the friars were preoccupied with searching for gold and wealth. According to del Pilar, the “friars have become multimillionaires while religion has been maintained, and still is, in the diaper stage.”¹⁹¹

The “diaper stage” of Catholicism in the Philippines was manifested in the lack of social relevance of religion. Del Pilar admitted that the natives were deeply religious; however, their piety has no social value.¹⁹² The friars has taught the Filipinos “what to pray for and what to expect as a reward for prayers,” but they did not explain to them the “clear notions of what to believe in and what to work for.”¹⁹³ The “diaper stage” can also be seen in the cases of fanaticism in the

predominantly Catholic nation.¹⁹⁴ What was alarming was the fact that the fanatics were not the impious *indios*,¹⁹⁵ but those who led devout lives, frequently attended church rites, went to mass daily, received the sacraments regularly, and belonged to brotherhoods or confraternities affiliated with religious congregations.¹⁹⁶ The cases of fanaticism showed the lack of maturity and deeper understanding of the Catholic faith and the religiousness inculcated by the friars to the natives that affected not the intellect but the emotion. Del Pilar explained, “when the intellect is obscured...powerfully incites the imagination to dreaming which is the source of all kinds of religious deviations...when the priests from the pulpit deliver a morose sermon about an angry and revengeful God...they easily induce the weak minds to earnestly desire for the remission of sins by material offerings.”¹⁹⁷

The evangelization during the period of colonization did not progress because of the defective Catholic education. Del Pilar argued that in the Catholic University of Santo Tomas,¹⁹⁸ there was so much to be desired in

¹⁹⁴ Del Pilar.

¹⁹⁵ An example of this was Hermano Pule. Apolinario de la Cruz, popularly known as Hermano Pule, was educated in the *convent* in Lucban, Tayabas. His ambition to become a Franciscan priest was hampered by being an *indio*. Instead, he dedicated himself as lay brother at the San Juan de Dios Hospital and joined the Confradia de San Juan de Dios in Manila. While working the hospital and as active member of the Confradia, he “pursued his study of mystical Christian theology, picking up scraps of knowledge by reading or listening to church sermons.” Later on, he became active in organizing another confraternity, the Confradia de San Jose, which was an “offshoot of a medieval Spanish institution whose religious function was the practice of piety and the performance of works of charity.” The Confradia de San Jose expanded rapidly and they developed religious activities exclusive to the members. These activities “aroused the suspicion of Fr. Manuel Sancho, the curate of Lucban.” The Confradia de San Jose was not given recognition by local authorities, Hermano Pule was dismissed from the hospital, and the members and leaders of the Confradia fled to the mountains to elude arrest. Hermano Pule was later on called “King of the Tagalogs” and “made new predictions and promises” such as, the coming of “invisible soldiers or angels” to help the members of the Confradia won in the battle against the civil and ecclesiastical authorities and the opening of lake to “swallow the advancing enemy troops” (please see R.C. Iletto, “Hermano Pule” in *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People*, vol. 4, Philippines: Asia Publishing Company Limited, 34-35).

¹⁹⁶ Del Pilar, 30.

¹⁹⁷ Del Pilar.

¹⁹⁸ The University of Santos Tomas began as seminary teaching theology to those who were aspiring to become priests. It was established in 1611 by Miguel de Benavides as Colegio de Nuestra Senora del Santisimo Rosario, and later on renamed as Colegio de Santo Tomas in the memory of Thomas Aquinas, the great Dominican philosopher and theologian. It

¹⁸⁷ Del Pilar.

¹⁸⁸ Del Pilar.

¹⁸⁹ Del Pilar, 26.

¹⁹⁰ Del Pilar.

¹⁹¹ Del Pilar, 28.

¹⁹² Del Pilar.

¹⁹³ Del Pilar, 29.





teaching and learning process. Student did not learn what they ought to learn. Their cognition and skills were not fully developed for them to become productive members of the society. The friar-professors in the Catholic University of Santo Tomas were partly guilty for this defective pedagogical organization, for the reasons that they did not have proper training and did not possess the complete knowledge that they have to teach in class. They were qualified to teach because of their “vow of holy obedience,” and they prepared to handle the course two hours before the class.

Del Pilar repudiated the claim that the friars were influential in the Philippine society. The friars were undoubtedly responsible for the “fascination of religion over the Filipinos” and for the “mania on religious rites;” but their positive moral influence over the people was doubtful.¹⁹⁹ They attracted through material means the Filipinos to Catholicism, but not morally and spiritually. This explained the shallow and immature understanding and practice of faith by the Filipinos.²⁰⁰ Del Pilar also argued that the friars were not influential; instead they were obstructers of progress.²⁰¹ They got into the way of progress brought about by modern ideas, because their medievalist ideas were obsolete. Impeding progressive ideas was a natural reaction of those who lost their former power and influence. Del Pilar concluded that the influence of the friars to

the Filipinos was “purely artificial in nature.”²⁰² Their strength and power did not emanate from their own structure and organization but from the support of the government. The government issued policies compelling all provincial governors and the people “to help restore the prestige of the monastic orders.” It instructed “all available and convenient means to help the friars regain their power and influence” which was in the state of decay.²⁰³

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the discourses discussed pertaining to Spanish colonization of the Philippines, it can be inferred that one of the discourses that facilitated the submission and subjugation of the Filipino natives was the discourse of faith. The Spanish friars and missionaries played an important role in the colonization process, and in the subjectivation of the Filipino people. This is evident in the discourse about the *pueblo*. The Spaniards transformed the pre-colonial social and political structure, the *balangay*, into *pueblos* or towns. This process is called *reduccion* which comes from the Spanish word *reducir* which means to place into order. The *pueblos* served as an importance space for colonization, because inside the *pueblos*, the Spaniards used different techniques and apparatus “to civilize” or to *hispanize* the Filipinos. The most powerful apparatus of transformation in the *pueblo* was the Catholic church. The Catholic church did not only serve as the center and source of religious teachings. It also served as the center of power because of the social and political influence the parish priest had over the local government authorities, the *gobernadorcillo* and the *cabeza de barangay*. The local elites, the *principalia class*, maintained stronger and closer ties with the

offered academic degrees in arts, philosophy, theology, canon law, and medicine and pharmacy. In the middle of the 19th century, “UST had been given almost total control of education by the government, and the rector was chief inspector of private schools” (please see Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo, “The Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas” in *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People*, vol. 3, Philippines: Asia Publishing Company Limited, 270-271).

¹⁹⁹ Del Pilar, 34.

²⁰⁰ The lack of moral influence of the friars and shallow understanding of the Catholic can be attributed to on the one hand to the poor education and vague, incorrect, and superstitious religious ideas of the mestizo and native priests and, on the other hand, to the immorality of the priests who were openly living in the *convent* with their mistresses and natural children (please see R. MacMicking, *Recollections of Manila and the Philippines: During 1848, 1849, and 1850*, ed. Morton J. Netzorg, Manila: Filipinana Book Guild, 1967, 67).

²⁰¹ Del Pilar, 35.

²⁰² Del Pilar.

²⁰³ Del Pilar, 36.





parish priest to protect their political interests and ambitions. The church also used the discourse of faith as a very powerful discourse in order for the Filipinos to submit to the process of colonization and to allow transformation. The discourse of faith particularly on salvation gave the missionaries not only spiritual power, but also political power over the people. The discourse of salvation, therefore, justified and fortified the colonial presence and activities of the Spaniards in the Philippines. Such very powerful discourse was the force behind a successful colonization and subjectivation. It was because of this discourse that the Filipinos accepted everything that was hispanic and Catholic. It was also the tie that bound the Filipinos with the Spaniards. It was exploited by the Spaniards to develop a sense of gratitude, or *utang na loob*, from the Filipinos; for without the Spaniards, there would be no salvation.

For three hundred years, the Spanish colonizers and missionaries transformed successfully the Philippine society.²⁰⁴ The *balangays* were transformed into *pueblos*; and this also changed the political structure in the Philippines – from decentralized governance headed by the *datu* to centralized governance headed by the *gobernadorcillo*, head of the *pueblo*; *alcalde mayor*, head of the province; and the Governor-General, the head of the colonial government in the Philippines and the representative of the King of Spain. The former leaders, the *datu*, occupied the lowest position in the political structure – the *cabeza de barangay*. The religious life of the Filipinos was also transformed by the introduction of the Catholic Faith which replaced the pre-colonial religion, *bathalaysimo*. In the pre-colonial religion, the leader was a woman, the *babaylans*, who were transformed by

the missionaries into witches and sorcerers. This shows how the missionaries demonized the pre-colonial and indigenous beliefs of the Filipinos. Such act was intended to delegitimize whatever is indigenous, so that they can easily *hispanized* the Filipinos. Aside from the political structure and religion, the economic life and activities of the Filipinos were also transformed. The Spanish civil authorities established a centralized trading activity, the Galleon Trade. This trading took place in Manila and eventually killed the local trading activities in different parts of the archipelago. These transformations were realized because of the discourse on salvation; and related to that discourse is another discourse which states that the Filipinos did not have a culture and civilization until the Spaniards arrived in the country. The culture, custom, and tradition that were developed prior to their arrival cannot be considered as culture and civilization; for such were not western and Christian.

Another discourse that paved the way for the colonization of the Filipinos was the discourse of no culture. This discourse prevailed and dominated other discourses, because of one person whose work of slandering the Filipinos was given importance and credibility by the Spaniards. The Spaniards widely circulated the work of de San Agustin that is why his allegations about the Filipinos were taken with credibility by influential Spaniards. His negative comments about the Filipinos became the classic source of scholars and historians.²⁰⁵ He was highly regarded because of his scholarly background, for authoring several books in history and in grammar. It is interesting to take note that his letter to his friend which contains “biased, malicious, mischievous,

²⁰⁴ The book, *Kasaysayan ng Bayan: Sampung Aralin sa Kasaysayang Pilipino* (Philippines: National Historical Institute and ADHIKA ng Pilipinas, Inc., 2001), provides a comprehensive analysis on the political, economic, and religious transformations during the Spanish colonization.

²⁰⁵ They were Bowring, Mallat and de Man. Scholars who visited the Philippines and wrote about the Filipinos during the 19th century using the work of San Agustin as one of their primary sources.





non-sensical, and slanderous”²⁰⁶ statements against the Filipinos surpassed the accounts of Chirino, de Morga, and Colin. The works of Chirino, Morga and Colin provided positive descriptions of the traits, customs, traditions, language, religion, social and political structures, and economic activities of the Filipinos prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. Their earlier accounts contradicted the claim of San Agustin that the Filipinos were “fickle, malicious, untrustworthy, dull, and lazy;” people who had “little courage, on account of their cold nature, and are not disposed to work.” Such oppose the later claims of San Agustin that the Filipinos were extremely arrogant, fond of imitating the Spaniards’ bad habits, and people who were ignorant, for they did not have knowledge of their historical past. The kind of civilization recorded in their historical accounts indicated that the Filipinos were industrious or economically active. They were also knowledgeable because they created their own language and alphabet and established their own social and political structures. San Agustin could be telling the truth or half truth; and if that is the case, it means that the Filipinos were transformed from the time of Morga, Chirino and Colin to San Agustin. Morga, Chirino and Colin have written their accounts during the early and later part of the 16th century. San Augustin’s work was written in 1720, one hundred and sixteen years after Chirino’s account, one hundred and eleven years after de Morga’s work, and fifty seven years after the work of Colin. Based on these dates, after one hundred years of Spanish colonization, the Filipinos were transformed into lazy, arrogant, ignorant individuals. Such description and discourse, which was full of biases, prevailed until the time of Jose Rizal. This means that for more than hundred years (from 1700s to 1800s) the Filipinos’s traits, attitude and values changed. This was evident in the pessimistic perception and description of the Spaniards and

other foreigners who visited the country and wrote about the Filipino people.

Discourse and power relations, indeed, played a critical role in the process of colonization and subjectivation. Providing the Filipino natives new truths to accept and to believe was the first crucial step in the process of transforming them to the kind of subjects the Spanish colonial masters wanted them to be. During the Spanish colonization, two discourses paved the way for colonization and subjectivation: the discourses of faith and no culture.²⁰⁷ The first discourse prevailed throughout the Spanish regime. It was the reason behind the success of colonization and transformation. It justified and legitimized the presence as well as the various activities and policies of Spanish authorities in the Philippines. The Filipinos submitted themselves to collection of tributes and forced labor because of the discourse of salvation. The discourse of salvation was also the reason behind the death of the Filipino pre-colonial culture and civilization. The discourse of no culture was a sign that the Filipinos were subjugated by the Spaniards. The no culture discourse was accepted by the Filipinos as true. That is why they wanted to be like their colonial masters: to think, talk, dress and look like them. They embraced whatever Hispanic because of the belief that it would help them to improve and develop themselves and their status in the society. Colonization would not have been successful without discourses like the salvation and no culture discourses. These discourses were behind the structures, systems, and culture established during the colonization to

²⁰⁶ Gregorio F. Zaide, ed. *Documentary Sources of Philippine History*, vol. 5 (Manila: National Book Store, Inc., 1990), 209.

²⁰⁷ Apolonario Mabini in his book, *The Philippine Revolution* (Manila: The National Historical Institute), argued that the Philippine society was already beginning to learn the art of living prior to the arrival of the Spaniards returned to infancy and live without self-awareness under the Spanish colonial rule. He said: “If the Spaniards wanted to perpetuate their rule, they must perpetuate the *Indio*’s ignorance and weakness. Knowledge and wealth mean strength; only the poor and ignorant are weak. It was therefore necessary to give the *Indio* some form of religious instruction so that he would not go back to his old superstitions. Such form of education should make him get used to having his eyes fixed on heaven so that he would no longer bother about his possession on earth” (please see page 240). These passages from Mabini’s work are testaments to the idea that salvation and ignorance were used by the Spaniards as effective tools of colonization. These are the very foundation of the Spanish political power and control over the Filipinos. Because of the discourses of salvation and ignorance, the Filipinos were dependent on the Spaniards. They have lost their will to power to realize themselves.





repress the Filipinos. Because of these discourses, a new Filipino character was constructed for colonial reasons and consumption. The Filipinos after three hundred years of colonization were awakened to the different techniques and strategies of repression and construction.²⁰⁸ As such, they revolted and cried for independence.

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²⁰⁸ Apolonario Mabini cited the execution of three Filipino priests, Gomez, Burgos, and Zamora, as the event that awakened the Filipinos in their sufferings and miseries in the hands of the Spaniards. He wrote: "The latter planned to punish Burgos and his companions to set an example so that the Filipinos would henceforth be afraid to go against them. However, that clear injustice, that official crime did not sow fear, but rather hatred against the friars and the government which supported them. It aroused profound sympathy and grief for the victims. This grief proved to be a miracle, making the Filipinos realize their situation for the first time. By feeling pain, they felt that they were alive and living, and thus they asked themselves how they were living. The awakening was painful, and to work in order to live was even more painful, but it was necessary to live. How? They ignored it, and the desire to know, the urge to study got hold of the Filipino youth. The veil of ignorance so carefully woven over the centuries was torn away at last. The *fiat lux* would not be long. The dawn of the new day was approaching" (please see page 242 of Mabini's *The Philippine Revolution*).

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