



GINHAWA AND THE INTERPRETATION OF COLONIALISM

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*The majority of historians and teachers of history tend to believe that it was the Propaganda of the educated elite that led to the Philippine Revolution of 1896. Reynaldo Ileto already made a powerful critique on such perspective by analyzing the mentalité of the **pobres y ignorantes**, and showed that they indeed possessed a certain worldview that was far different from that of the Ilustrados of the Propaganda Movement. Ileto, however, remained within the limits of the Catholic ideology and its appropriation by the masses in the 19th century. This paper aims to study ginhawa, a Filipino concept, as both a concept and an ideology. The paper argues that ginhawa was used by the natives in interpreting the workings of colonialism.*

Keywords: ginhawa, kaginhawaan, colonialism, tripartite view, historiography

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NOSTALGIC DISSENT: THE TRIPARTITE VIEW IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY

In the eyes of the Spanish colonizers during the 16th century, at least, colonialism in the Philippines was more than subjugating the territory and its people. It was to them a 'civilizing mission'. This opinion, often upheld by the majority of Spaniards in the Philippines even as late as the turn of the 20th century, lent legitimacy to colonialism.¹

This is made clearer when one looks closely at the Spanish historical consciousness of the Philippines. Zeus Salazar describes this view as bipartite, that is, a view on the history of the Philippines being divided into two different epochs – the “barbarian and pagan condition of the Indios in the pre-Hispanic past” and “the advent of Spain and the spread of its civilizing influences in terms of polity and religion”.² Such a historical view was convenient to Spain's colonial project at the time, becoming the reference through which the “new direction” of living imposed upon the natives could be “understood and explained”.³

The second epoch can be regarded as twofold. On the one hand, the Philippines was usually seen in this phase as simply a stage in which Spain fulfilled its task to defend Catholicism and introduce it to the *terra incognita*. Indios were taken as a backdrop against which Spanish benevolence and greatness ought to be showcased. On the other hand, this epoch, which was characterized by the spread of Spain's

'civilizing influences' also emphasized a sudden jolt in the lives of Indios – their suddenly becoming subjects of the Spanish crown, thus their vassalage. Altogether, they comprise a single historical theme – Philippine history, especially in consideration of the second epoch, is more of Spanish history *in* the Philippines.⁴ It was through this fashion that new aspects of Indios' colonial life were substantiated or supported. Juan Solórzano Pereira's justification of tribute collection echoes the point:

If the Spanish kings are the true and absolute rulers and lords of the Indies, as they are, or even if they are only protectors or administrators of the Indians who dwell there, one must affirm that the Indians themselves should contribute something as recognition of the effort of Christianization and to aid in the cost of maintaining Christianity, civil administration and the protection given them during peace and war.⁵

Pereira's statement made colonialism apparently a contract between the colonizer and the colonized. Spain would provide the pagan Indios with the needed ingredients to having an 'enlightened life': Catholicism and government were the prerequisites to civilization. To reciprocate this 'welfare work', the Indios had to submit to the Spanish crown and pay their dues as vassals. In the eyes of the colonizers, Spain and the Indios were having a fair deal in the first place, they thought of their colonial project to be producing 'well-being' for the inhabitants.

The bipartite view on history had gone almost unchallenged until the 19th century.

Better economic opportunities for the *principalia*, brought by the opening of the Philippines to world commerce, were accompanied inevitably by rapid acculturation. Nouveau riche had

¹ For example, in a book entitled *Las Corporaciones Religiosas en Filipinas*, which was published in 1901, the Augustinian Eladio Zamora wrote about the supposed innate intellectual incapacity of Indios. The Augustinian friar only reverberated the opinion of the likes of Miguel Lucio y Bustamante, Pablo Feced, and Wenceslao Retana, among others who, in their works, regarded Indios as belonging to the 'inferior races'.

² Zeus A. Salazar, "A Legacy of the Propaganda: The Tripartite View of Philippine History", in Zeus Salazar (ed.), *The Ethnic Dimension: Papers on Philippine Culture, History and Psychology*. Cologne: Caritas Association, 1983. 109-110.

³ Salazar.

⁴ Salazar.

⁵ Quoted in Nicholas P. Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 1971. 101.





emerged to which most of the *Ilustrados* in the 19th century belonged.

Among the privileges they could afford, colonial education brought the *Ilustrados* much trouble. By immersing themselves in the culture of the Other, meaning the Spaniards, they imagined themselves as the latter's compatriots; the acceptance of this idea by the *Peninsulares* was, however, elusive. This phenomenon brought forth cultural schizophrenia⁶ or dilemma which they felt and experienced before the presence of both the *pobres y ignorantes* and, especially, *Peninsulares*.⁷ In a great sense, they, too, experienced the same identity crisis which has been prominently described as being that of "Black Skin, White Mask".⁸

As an effect of the complex stated above, it was the *Ilustrados* who initially challenged the orthodoxy in Philippine historiography (i.e. the bipartite view) which was then dominated by the Spanish scholars and friars/missionaries. A new historical consciousness thus came into being. Zeus Salazar (1983) calls this a tripartite view.

⁶ According to Zeus Salazar, there have been three directions for Filipino consciousness: first, the consciousness of free natives who lived outside the pueblo and, thus, remained loyal to their cultural roots; second, that of acculturated natives or those who became Westernized both in action and thought; and third, the consciousness those natives who, despite being placed under the gaze of the pueblo, received limited influences from the colonizers' culture and, thus, remained within the bounds of their own culture. Those who belonged to the second category are considered to be ones who experienced cultural schizophrenia as a crisis. See Zeus A. Salazar, *Ang Kartilya ni Emilio Jacinto at ang Diwang Pilipino sa Agos ng Kasaysayan*. Lungsod Quezon: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 1999. 3-26; and Zeus A. Salazar, "Wika ng Himagsikan, Lenguwahe ng Rebolusyon: Mga Suliranin ng Pagpapakahulugan sa Pagbubuo ng Bansa", in Atoy Navarro at Raymund Abejo, *Wika, Panitikan, Sining at Himagsikan*. Lungsod Quezon: Limbagang Pangkasaysayan, 1998. pah. 11-92.

⁷ Jose Rizal was the most prominent example of these "cultural schizophrenics". Miguel de Unamuno once described Rizal as a "spirit of contradiction". As Unamuno,

...Rizal himself is the spirit of contradiction, a soul that dreads the revolution, although deep within himself, he consummately desires it: he is a man who at the same time both trusts and distrusts his own countrymen and racial brothers; who believes them to be the most capable and yet the least capable – the most capable when he looks at himself as one of their blood; the most incapable when he looks at others. Rizal is a man who constantly pivots between fear and hope, between faith and despair.

See Miguel de Unamuno, "The Tagalog Hamlet", in Petronilo BN. Daroy and Dolores Feria (eds.), *Rizal: Contrary Essays*. Quezon City: Guro Books, 1968. 8-9.

⁸ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask*. London: Pluto Press, 1952.

Though the Propagandists and revolutionaries of the *Kataastaasan Kagalang-galang na Katipunan nang manga Anak nang Bayan* (or simply *Katipunan*) differed on some points, a tripartite view "would consist of the revision of the two-part Spanish philosophy of history and the addition of a third epoch".⁹

Ilustrados' interest in studying their past, especially the pre-Hispanic past, started in the 19th century. I tend to agree with John N. Schumacher's assessment: "The search for the Filipino past was both a product of and a stimulus to nationalism".¹⁰ Their scholarship was never innocent. It was politically and ideologically motivated, even going beyond history (i.e. documented past). As Megan C. Thomas puts it, the *Ilustrados* used "modern knowledge" such as ethnology, ethnography, and folklore, among others "to recover the undocumented precolonial past of the Philippines but also to critique the colonial present and provide a foundation for the future".¹¹ Jose Rizal himself expressed the necessity of historical consciousness on the "last moments of our ancient nationality" for the study of the future.¹² In reference to his hopes for the publication of his edition of *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* in 1890, he said:

If the book succeeds to awaken your consciousness of our past, already effaced from your memory, and to rectify what has been falsified and slandered, then

⁹ Salazar, "A Legacy of the Propaganda", 111.

¹⁰ John N. Schumacher, *The Making of a Nation: Essays on Nineteenth Century Filipino Nationalism*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991. 105.

¹¹ For *Ilustrados'* efforts toward identity construction through scholarship and knowledge production, see Megan C. Thomas, *Orientalists, Propagandists, and Ilustrados: Filipino Scholarship and the End of Spanish Colonialism*. Mandaluyong City: Anvil Publishing Inc., 2016. Assessing the works of the *Ilustrados*, however, would lead to a realization that they imagined the Filipino history and culture in various and, sometimes, conflicting ways. As Thomas observes,

Not all of them set out to lay the scholarly foundations for a Filipino "nation" as such, and the different texts and their authors did not always speak in unison. They often differed on who the Filipino people comprised and on what basis, what their roots were, what problems and possibilities they faced in the present, and what their future was or should be (Thomas, 203).

¹² See Antonio de Morga, *Historical Events of the Philippine Islands* (annotated by Jose Rizal). Manila: National Historical Institute, 1990.





I have not worked in vain, and with this as a basis, however small it may be, we shall be able to study the future.¹³

The nineteenth century provided the objective condition that served as the cornucopia of experiences that in turn could lead to the formation of the needed epistemic framework through which Indios could interpret and evaluate the workings of colonialism. One of the pressing stimuli that the century brought about was the surge of ideas like liberalism coming from the Enlightenment in Europe.

Among these propagandists, Rizal was deemed to be the most revolutionary in seeking in the “Filipino past the pattern for the future”.¹⁴ The fact of Rizal’s, and even his compatriots’, being revolutionary is still debated, but what I want to underline here is how his tripartite view of Philippine history differs from the rest. Marcelo H. Del Pilar believed that the Philippines had civilization, but was inferior compared to that of Spain, while Graciano Lopez-Jaena appeared to be ambivalent about the issue. Rizal went beyond the two, as evidenced by his edition of Antonio de Morga’s *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* and other historical and ethnographic studies. He affirmed that there was a progressing civilization in the Philippines prior to the coming of the Spaniards.¹⁵ Rizal’s concept of Philippine history’s first epoch annulled the Spanish claim that they brought civilization to the Philippine shores, that Filipinos ought to be thankful for the graces from the Catholic Church and Spanish crown. In a letter dated 14 November 1888, Rizal made explicit his critique of the common Spanish opinion on Filipinos’ ingratitude:

. . . Nobody should enter a neighbor’s house and subordinate his neighbor’s welfare to his interest; that would be an outrage, it would be the rule of force. If

a colonizing nation cannot make its colonies happy, it should abandon or emancipate them. Nobody has a right to make others unhappy!

We did not invite the Spaniards; they came and said to our ancestors, ‘We came to be your friends; we shall help one another; accept our king and pay him a small tribute, and we shall defend you against your enemies.’

In those days, there was no talk of taking our lands. The friars spoke of Heaven and promised us all possible things. To some of the Filipinos, they did not speak of tribute but only aside the welfare of the Philippines for a high-sounding name! No, my friend, that cannot be the way you really think!¹⁶

He furthered this critique in his letter dated 22 of the same month and year by saying that:

. . . I agree with you that the Spaniards did us a lot of good. But we, too, gave them a lot: the most precious things they required: blood, lands, lives, and that freedom which is the first and best of humankind.¹⁷

Rizal, Del Pilar, and Jaena, however, agreed that the second epoch comprised mostly of the periods of cultural and moral degradation of the Indios caused by *frailocracia* or monastic supremacy. Coming from varying perspectives, these three ilustrados opined that the third epoch was a vision of a progressive future. Del Pilar and Jaena held that by eliminating the friars and assimilating the Philippines with Spain, progress would come. But Jaena would later be convinced that freedom could only be won by a revolution.¹⁸ Rizal’s ideas concerning this third epoch underwent a sort of evolution, similar to Jaena’s. At first, he welcomed assimilation, but later on was convinced that Spain would not grant it. Armed struggle was already a choice for him as early as 1888.¹⁹

¹⁶ Quoted in Leon Ma. Guerrero, *The First Filipino: A Biography of Jose Rizal*. Manila: National Historical Institute, 2008. 218.

¹⁷ Quoted in Guerrero.

¹⁸ Salazar, “The Legacy of the Propaganda”, 122-123.

¹⁹ On the question of Rizal’s heroism and project of nation-building, see Floro C. Quibuyen, *A Nation Aborted: Rizal, American Hegemony, and Philippine Nationalism*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999.

¹³ Morga and Rizal.

¹⁴ Schumacher, 104.

¹⁵ Salazar, “The Legacy of the Propaganda”, 122-123.





It is no wonder then that Rizal's tripartite view influenced the Katipunan's conception of history. In *Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog* (What the Tagalogs Should Know), written by Andres Bonifacio under the nom de plume Agapito Bagumbayan, the leading revolutionary described the Katagalugan²⁰ in the early days as one that was,

governed by our compatriots, and enjoyed a life of great abundance, prosperity, and peace. She maintained good relations with her neighbors, especially with the Japanese, and traded with them for goods of all kinds. As a result, everyone had wealth and behaved with honor. Young and old, including women, could read and write using our own Tagalog alphabet.²¹

The Spaniards came and offered the Indios friendship, only to betray the agreement between Sikatuna and Miguel Lopez de Legazpi sealed by the "Blood Compact". Indios' good faith in that agreement was rewarded with suffering. To Bonifacio, the third epoch would be made possible if the major aspects of that lost past – honor, self-respect, and solidarity – were realized; the noble and great teachings were spread to "rend asunder the thick curtain that obfuscates our minds". These all would lead to "*kaguinhawahan ng bayang tinubuan*" (prosperity and peace of our native land).²²

Both Rizal and Bonifacio had written works full of longings for a lost past, for a lost civilization that must be observed against a political background. I mentioned earlier that colonialism worked with historical legitimation. To attack colonialism, therefore, one should nullify, first and foremost, the historical ideology that served as its backbone. To the extent that

the bipartite view legitimized colonialism, so did the tripartite view justify the nationalist struggle. In this sense, any struggle or revolution to be committed by the Indios must be viewed as redeeming their freedom, which was surrendered as a precondition to being civilized by Spain – a promise that, as they perceived it, did not materialize.

It is now made apparent that history can be utilized to evaluate a present condition. But to have a complete picture of it, one must also take a look at the underlying concept/s of this kind of historicizing, which made possible the very historicizing in the first place. Memory has served to be a place for protest where counter-consciousness was created to challenge, if not destroy, the epistemic violence by the Spaniards against the colonized people.

ON THE DIFFERENCE OF PROPAGANDISTS' AND KATIPUNAN'S HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

We take a look at a tradition that dominated historical writing about the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This tradition is characterized by Reynaldo Ileto as 'evolutionary', that is, it tends to place "a premium on the ideas and activities of the Filipino priests and intellectuals who gave form to the inspirations of the masses".²³ This historiographical tradition/framework takes the works of secular priests and *Ilustrados* as the 'catalysts' for change; that it was this aggregate of individuals who first reacted to the excesses and violence of colonialism, and the masses, at least a portion of them, was inspired by the former's activities.

Consistent with this was the view taken by Camilo Polavieja, Spanish governor-general

²⁰ It should be noted that when the Katipunan used the term 'Tagalog' or 'Katagalugan', they were referring not solely to the now Tagalog region but rather to the entire archipelago.

²¹ See the original and translated versions in Jim Richardson, *The Light of Liberty: Documents and Studies on the Katipunan, 1892-1897*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2013. 189-192.

²² Richardson.

²³ Reynaldo C. Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979.





during the Revolution, as reported by a German newspaper. He believed that the opening of the Suez Canal was the cause of the rebellion, for it was due to this that the ideas of liberalism, independence, and nationalism entered the islands.²⁴ Note that this theme has been repeated in many Philippine history textbooks as one of the causes of the 1896 Revolution. Leandro H. Fernandez, for example, notes that the opening of the Suez Canal and the shortening of the route “brought the Philippines into closer touch with the ways, the thoughts, and the institutions of Europe”.²⁵

Due to some historiographical programs that emerged in the past decades and the research done as manifestations of these developments, one can now cast doubt on this evolutionary framework. Portia Liongson Reyes’s assessment of this framework is revealing, and thus deserves to be quoted at length:

Interesante para sa historiograpiyang Pilipino ang analisis ng heneral hinggil sa kadabilanan ng Himagsikan. Ganitong-ganito ang pagkakabasa at pagpapakahulugan ko sa punto-de-bista ni Teodoro Agoncillo sa kanyang akda noong dekada sienta, lalo na sa sitenta, ukol sa pagkakaganap ng Himagsikang Pilipino. Tila bagang ang pagsusuri ng nabanggit ng historyador ay halos inangat niya nang buong-buo mula sa pananaw at pagsasaalang-alang ng mga nasa kapangyarihan at/o elite noong ikalabinsiyam na siglo. Alalaumbaga, ang mga nagsasalitang piling tao sa nabanggit na dantaon ay muli lamang nagsalita sa pamamagitan hindi lamang ng kasaysayan ni Agoncillo, (kilala bilang isa sa tagapagsindi ng emosyon ng taumbayan at ng rebolusyon sa historiograpiyang Pilipino) noong dekada sitenta kundi ng mga nasukat ng mga nauna sa kanya, katulad nina Palma, Fernandez, Zaide at Zafra. Bilang konsekwensya ng teoryang ito, lumalabas na walang kinalaman ang mga karaniwang tao, karaniwang rebolusyonaryo, sa naganap na pagkilos; lumabas na walang sariling pag-iisip ang mga Pilipino, walang sariling pangangatwiran, walang sariling

*pananaw sa kabutihan o kasamaan, na hindi maiiugat ang mga ideya nina Bonifacio sa mga pagbibimagsika ng 1745, sina Dagohoy at Hermano Pule. Lumalabas din na ang mga manghibimagsik na Pilipino ay mga hipong luno na tagatanggap lamang ng agos ng panlabas na pwersa sa kanyang kasaysayan. Sa liwanag ng mga bagong pananaliksik sa kasalukuya’y nakatatawa na lamang ang ganitong pananaw sa ating mga ninunong rebolusyonaryo. Wala itong katotohanan. Hindi maaaring sunod na lamang nang sunod ang Pinoy. Totoo ito sa ngayon; mas lalo pa marahil noon, sa panahon ng digmaan.*²⁶

Reynaldo C. Iletto’s book *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910*, is among the first attempts to disempower the evolutionary framework in Philippine history. In Iletto’s work, the distinction between *Ilustrados*’ (educated) consciousness and *pobres y ignorates*’ consciousness is explicit. It is in this distinction that his thesis on a ‘history from below’ is established. With the use of unorthodox sources like the *pasyon*²⁷, Iletto sets out to “understand how the traditional mind operates, particularly in relation to the questions of change”. Unconvinced of the opinion that all Filipinos who engaged themselves in the Revolution had the same meaning of independence, Iletto forwarded the idea that the peasantry “viewed the nineteenth-century situation differently from that of their relatively more sophisticated and urbanized compatriots” who were in great part influenced by the Enlightenment. The peasantry was able to construct a different worldview, in terms of vocabulary and vision, from that of the *Ilustrados*’.²⁸ *Pasyon* is viewed here as both an expression of and a motivation for such a dissenting worldview. Human life (or ‘everyday time’) under colonial rule was oftentimes interpreted as manifestations of revelations (i.e., ‘biblical time’) in the *pasyon*. Iletto gives the case of Sebastian Caneco as an

²⁴ Portia Liongson Reyes, *Ang Himagsikang Pilipino sa mga Pahayagang Aleman*. Quezon City: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 1999.

²⁵ Leandro H. Fernandez, *A Brief History of the Philippines*. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1929. 223.

²⁶ Liongson Reyes.

²⁷ It has been a tradition in Filipino culture to sing *Pasyon*, a narration of Biblical events from Genesis up to the Return of Christ, every Holy Week.

²⁸ Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 6.





example in which the Katipunan revolt for independence was viewed as “a sign of an approaching cataclysm that would bring about the fulfillment of the faithful’s hopes”.²⁹ The Revolution was interpreted as a prelude to the coming of a Savior/Messiah who would salvage the colonized people from injustices committed by Spain, a theme that is reminiscent of a scene in Rizal’s *El Filibusterismo* where some indios spoke about the return of King Bernardo from his imprisonment in a cave in San Mateo, and that they would be freed by this king from the constabulary (i.e., *guardia civil*).³⁰

Another attempt is Zeus Salazar’s body of works. Sharing with Iletto’s tendency to distinguish *Ilustrados*’ consciousness (i.e., Great Tradition) and the masses’ consciousness (i.e., Little Tradition), Salazar takes off from a more detailed culturalism. According to Salazar, there was a great cultural divide between those Filipinos who were hispanized (i.e., *nacion*) and those who, despite being under the gaze of *pueblo*, were not taken into the fold of hispanized ethos and mode thinking (i.e., *bayan*). Each part of the said divide has operated a distinct set of meanings and imaginations necessary for the fulfillment of a common goal – independence from Spain. But even this goal was expressed by the two sides of the divide in ways different from one another. The *ilustrados* were pointing to the establishment of a *nacion filipina*, while the Katipunan was for the liberation of *Inang Bayan* and the formation of *Haring Bayang Katagalugan*.³¹ While the *ilustrados* were determined just to replace the Spaniards in the political structure, the Katipunan took a different direction by aiming at the destruction of the old system and establishing a new political order.³²

²⁹ Iletto, 76.

³⁰ Iletto, 101.

³¹ Salazar, *Ang Kartilya ni Emilio Jacinto at ang Diwang Pilipino*.

³² See Zeus A. Salazar, *Si Andres Bonifacio at ang Kabayanibang Pilipino*. Mandaluyong City: Palimbagan Kalawakan, 1997.

Salazar also develops an engaging attempt to map the difference in thought between the *nacion* and *bayan*. This was fulfilled through sets of a dichotomy of political concepts used by the Propagandists and Katipunan (e.g. *nacion* vs. *bayan* / *revolucion* vs. *himagsikan* / *proyektong ‘Filipino’* vs. *adhikaing ‘Tagalog’*).³³ Each part of the binary represents a mode of thinking that is dependent to a cultural source. Propagandists’ conceptualization was in great part influenced by the modernity set by Enlightenment, while the Katipunan’s was derived from the persistence of some Tagalog, thus authentically Austronesian, concepts.³⁴ For Salazar’s theorizing to work, he has to assert the seeming exclusivity of the cultural sources involved from each other. He has to deny any possibility of dialectics between and among concepts coming from two or more cultural sources.

Both Iletto and Salazar have championed the tendency to rid the masses of the image of being passive cultural agents and just receptors of ideology coming from the elite Propagandists. The masses, too, were active historical actors.

The discussion above advances the idea that historical writing, as well as memory always serve a political agenda or interest. It was never value-free, especially if historical writing is contextualized in the nineteenth-century Philippines. Following Iletto’s and Salazar’s perspectives, I would argue that Katipunan’s historical consciousness, though it structurally derives its contents from Rizal’s historical scholarship, differs in considerable extent from that of the *ilustrados*. Its uniqueness can be gleaned from a specific concept that floats in Katipunan’s historicizing. This concept is *ginhawa/kaguinhawaan*.

One must take note, however, of the criticisms of Iletto’s and Salazar’s theoretical tendencies. Floro Quibuyen, for example, laments that “in construing the Enlightenment and the Pasyon

³³ Salazar, “Wika ng Himagsikan, Lenggwahe ng Rebolusyon”.

³⁴ Salazar, “Wika ng Himagsikan, Lenggwahe ng Rebolusyon”.





as two separate, no intermingling, and even opposed, currents, Ileta fails to discern the syncretic process by which ideas and narratives, as well as historic blocs . . . are articulated and formed”.³⁵ While the same essentialism can be said about Salazar, Ramon Guillermo points his attack to Salazar’s ‘strong etymologism’. Rather than reinforcing an alleged ‘linguistic or ideological authenticity’ of a concept, Guillermo suggests that the use/s of political concept be studied closely through the help of “textual sources in the flow of time” that “would give a more satisfactory perspective on the history of political concepts”.³⁶

Mindful of these criticisms, this study confines its analysis and interpretation to the context of the time when the sources used were written/produced.

GINHAWA AS VOCABULARY

We get back to Bonifacio’s description of the prehispanic past. According to Bonifacio, it was a period when people lived in abundance (*kasaganaan*) and prosperity (*kaguinhawaan*). Hence, if we make a binary opposite of the precolonial and colonial periods and follow the mode of argumentation by the propagandists and Bonifacio, it can easily be stated that the latter period is the negation of the prior.

What is *kasaganaan*? What is *kaguinhawaan*? In a study conducted by Consuelo J. Paz (2008), she narrates how the concept of well-being is expressed in different linguistic and cultural contexts of certain ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines. The said linguist defines well-being as “ease or the feeling of lightness one

experiences when everything aspired for is in order or easily attainable”. She also suggests that well-being is measurable by means of material things, achievable with the “help from the spirit world and by social interaction within the community”, as it is “guided and maintained by nature or the environment”.³⁷ The concept of well-being then becomes “the common thread that runs through the ethnolinguistic groups’ diversities”.

In connection to the Tagalog term *kaguinhawaan* or *kaginhawaan*, meaning ‘prosperity, peace, comfort and freedom from want or problems’, we often describe well-being by the expression *nakahibinga ng maluwag* (easy breathing), a physical manifestation of a state of relief from pressures or problems. This can be related to, for example, Hiligaynon’s *maginhawa*; and Kapampangan’s *mangisnawa* – all of which mean ‘breathing’. She furthers that the stem word *ginhawa* ‘could have been borrowed, most probably from any of the languages spoken by the ethnolinguistic groups on the Visayan Islands’.³⁸

Zeus Salazar claims that *ginhawa* is situated “somewhere in the intestinal region, often in the liver or atay”. Related to this is an entry in Juan Felix de Encarnacion’s Visayan dictionary. This defines *guinhaoa* as stomach, and the pit of the same stomach”³⁹ (cited in *ibid.*)

As to the term *kasaganaan*, Paz provides a convincing linguistic explanation, which I quote below in its entirety:

Another set of cognates that relate to the topic of well-being, likewise meaning absence of want or free from

³⁵ Quibuyen, *A Nation Aborted*, 3.

³⁶ Ramon Guillermo, “*Pantayong Pananaw ang the History of Philippine Political Concepts*”, in *Kritika Kultura* 13 www.ateneo.edu/kritikakultura, 2009.

³⁷ “Ginhawa: Well-being as Expressed in Philippine Languages”, in Consuelo J. Paz (ed.), *Ginhawa, Kapalaran, Dalambati: Essays on Well-being, Opportunity/Destiny, and Anguish*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2008. 4-5.

³⁸ Paz, 5.

³⁹ Zeus A. Salazar, “Faith Healing in the Philippines: An Historical Perspective”, in *Asian Studies* vol. XVIII. Quezon City: UP Asian Center, 1980.



pressures or problems, is that which includes Tausug and Badjaw, *kasangyangan* (peaceful, order); Naga Bikol and Sorsogon, *kasanggayahan* (prosperity, free from pressure/problems); and Tagalog, *kasaganahan* (prosperity). The initial *ka-* and final *-an/-han* are affixes in these contemporary forms. It is proposed here, albeit tentatively, that these words could have come from **(ka)sangyaga(an)*. The *g* in the earlier form developed into a homorganic velar nasal written as *ng* **sangyanga*; then on the affixation of *-an*, the final *-a* of the stem and that of the affix underwent complete assimilation became one, resulting in Tausug and Badjaw *kasangyangan*. In Bikol and Sorsogon, *y* and *g* underwent metathesis or changed places resulting in *kasanggayahan*. The Tagalog cognate underwent a more complex change: *y* developed into a homorganic *n* on assimilation to the nasal *ng* (**sangnaga*); metathesis of *n* and *g* on the assimilative pull of homorganic *ng* (**sanggana*) then this *ng* underwent complete assimilation to the following *g* (*saggana*), which then simplified into a single *g* since Tagalog does not have geminate or double consonant, hence *kasaganahan*.⁴⁰

Then, *kasaganaan* and *kaguinhawaan* can be used interchangeably for they both refer to one specific condition.⁴¹ But in the literature of the Katipunan, *kaguinhawaan* was used more often compared to *kasaganaan*. I propose that *kasaganaan* be subsumed under the category of *kaguinhawaan*.

In the San Benaventura's *Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala* which was published in Pila, Laguna in 1613, three terms can be seen to be the translation for the term 'abundance' (*abundancia/abundant* in the dictionary) – *hilab*, *pacayan*, and *sagana*.⁴² *Hilab* in the dictionary seems to mean just the abundance of rice or grain as in: '*hungmihilab ang Maynila nang maraming bigas, ay en Manila gran abundancia de arroz limpio*' (Manila is abundant of rice); and '*hinihilaban sila nang maraming palay, tenian abundancia grande de arroz sucio*' (They

have plenty of grains)'. *Sagana* and *pacayan*, on the other hand, seem to mean 'abundance in almost all aspects of life'. See, for example, *sagana's* definition:

*Abundant: Sagana pp: en todo lo necesario a la vida, ut. Saganang tauoang amo't ualang pupulhin sa capua tauo, ganito na, damit man anoman, tu Padre abunda en todo no tiene necesidad del oro, ni otra cosa de nadie (your father is abundant in all, he does not need gold, or other things).*⁴³

About *guinhawa* (spelled in the dictionary as *ginhawa*), we can find two entries as its translations to the Spanish language – *salud* and *mejorar*. And they all refer to one and the same thing, that is, bodily comfort often caused by good health. *Salud: Ginhawa pp: corporal, paginhavahin ca nang Panginoong Dios, Dios tede salud* (May God give you good health); *Mejorar: Ginhawa pp: de la enfermedad, gungmiginhawa. 1. ac. Mejorar, nacagiginhawa. 4. ac. Caufer mehora, ging miginhawana aco, ya estoy major. (Mejorar can be translated to English as 'to improve' but in San Benaventura's dictionary, it is made specific that the Spanish term refers to the 'improvement or getting better from sickness).*⁴⁴

Based on the entries just quoted, one can notice their differences. While *kasaganaan* often refers to the condition of having plenty of material things thought to be needed for living, *kaguinhawaan* means the feeling one experiences when one is away from sickness or suffering. Thus, one can have *kaguinhawaan* if he has *kasaganaan* or abundance, or even just enough, of what he needs.

Kaguinhawaan has a broader societal meaning, that is, beyond bodily comfort. Zeus Salazar holds that the *barangay* (native community), contrary to the common belief, was an economic

⁴⁰ Paz, *Ginhawa, Kapalaran, Dalambati*, 5-6

⁴¹ Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 83-87.

⁴² All entries used in this paper come from the digitized copy of Pedro de San Buenaventura, *Vocabulario de lengua tagala, el romance castellano puesto primero* which was published in Pila, Laguna in 1613. The dictionary can be accessed through <http://sb.tagalogstudies.org/>.

⁴³ San Buenaventura.

⁴⁴ San Buenaventura.



entity. It is a conglomerate of clans whose primary concern was to increase agricultural production within which four civilizational specializations had to go hand-in-hand to secure the good of the community.⁴⁵ Leadership was the *datu's* responsibility. The *bayani*, the defender of the barangay, were often engaged in *pangangayaw* or headhunting, which was believed to be essential for the continuity of generation in the barangay, reproduction of domestic animals like pigs and carabao (water buffalo), and a good harvest of palay (rice grain). The *babaylan*, the community priestess, had a lot to do in the barangay. She was the 'expert' in matters concerning astronomy, religion, medicine, and even psychiatry. She was tasked to manage rituals needed to ask the favor of the gods or spirits. The *panday* class comprised those carpenters, artisans, smiths, potters, and those whose living was based on making tools or materials. As Salazar notes, each specialization's importance to the barangay was based on the sole task of ensuring the *kaguinhawaan* of the entire barangay. Here, as one might notice, *kaguinhawaan* does not only refer to comfort or prosperity. More than those, *ginhawa/kaguinhawaan* now can be defined as life itself.⁴⁶

Reynaldo Ileto, in addition, has this to say on *kaguinhawaan*:

The meaning of 'wholeness' or 'becoming one' implied by the term *Katipunan* is also contained in *kalayaan*. Prior to the rise of the separatist movement, *kalayaan* did not mean 'freedom' or 'independence'. In translating into Tagalog the ideas of 'liberty, fraternity, equality' learned from the West, propagandists like Bonifacio, Jacinto, and perhaps Marcelo H. del Pilar built upon the word *layaw* or *laya*, which means 'satisfaction of one's needs', 'pampering treatment by parents' or 'freedom from strict parental control'. Thus, *kalayaan*, as a political term, is inseparable from its connotation of the parent-child relationship, reflecting social values like the tendency of mothers in the lowland Philippines to pamper their children and

develop strong emotional ties with them. Childhood is fondly remembered as a kind of 'lost Eden', a time of *kaguinhawaan* (contentment) and *kasaganaan* (prosperity), unless one was brought up in abject poverty or by an uncaring (*pabaya*) stepmother.⁴⁷

Ileto, by connecting *kalayaan* to *layaw/o*, emphasizes the character of the first being like that of the loving care of a mother to her child.⁴⁸ Notice that it was through this line of belief that the Katipunan declared its separation from Spain, the '*nag aanquing Yna*' (possessive Mother). Spain was uncaring, and therefore her relationship with the Indios only yielded suffering to them. One thing can be noticed in Ileto's analysis of Katipunan's ideology of *kalayaan*: *pag-ibig* or love surfaced to be the backbone of this entire ideological system. As Emilio Jacinto mentioned in Kartilya, "*Ang tunay na pagibig ay walang ibubunga kung di ang tunay na ligaya at kaguinhawaan*" (True love yields none but true happiness and prosperity).⁴⁹

KILLING GINHAWA: HISTORICIZING AS CRITIQUE

From the discussion on *guinhawa/kaguinhawaan*, I would argue that the concept was utilized by the Filipinos to assess colonialism. Colonizers claimed to be the granter of well-being by means of providing polity and religion to the pagans. Colonialism was understood this way, by the Spanish colonizers at least.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 87.

⁴⁸ This idea echoes in Andres Bonifacio's *Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Bayan*:
Ay! itoy ang Ynang Bayang tinubuan Ah, this is the Mother
 country of one's birth
siya'y inat tangi nakinamulatan she is the mother on whom
ng kawilwiling liwanag ng araw the soft rays of the sun shine
na nagbigay init sa lunong katawan. which gives strength to the
 weak body.
Sa kania'y utang ang unang pagtanggap To her one owes the first
 kiss
ng simuy ng hanging nagbibigay lunas of the wind that is the balm
sa inis na puso na sisingapsingap of the oppressed heart
 drowning
sa balong malalim ng siphayo't birap in the deep well of misfortune
 and suffering.

See Richardson, *The Light of Liberty*, 196-202.

⁴⁹ Jose, P. Santos, *Bubay at mga Sinulat ni Emilio Jacinto*. Manila: Jose P. Bantug, 1935. 34.

⁵⁰ Though some Ilustrados also believed the same just like what one might realize by looking at Juan Luna's *España y Filipinas*.

⁴⁵ Zeus A. Salazar, *Kasaysayan ng Kapilipinuhan: Bagong Balangkas*. Quezon City: Bagong Kasaysayan, 2004. 12.

⁴⁶ Salazar, *Kasaysayan ng Kapilipinuhan*.





Translation was needed of course to transcend the boundaries set by the differing linguistic contexts of the colonizer and the colonized. But as Vicente Rafael notes, translation was not sufficient to express colonial interests, for the Indios made interpretations of them that were outside of what was really intended. Contrary to the plan of the Spaniards, it was through translation that “native listeners managed to find another place to confront colonial authority”.⁵¹ Rafael furthers,

Translation, by making conceivable the transfer of meaning and intention between the 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 origins as such and its rhetorical formulation in the vernacular. For in setting languages in motion, translation tended to cast intentions adrift, now laying, now subverting the ideological ground of colonial hegemony.⁵²

This claim can be substantiated if one takes into consideration Reynaldo Ileto’s thesis. Pasyon, which was originally held to be an apparatus for Indios’ submission, yielded an otherwise result. Pasyon instead provided a language through which Indios interpreted the limits of colonial domination.⁵³

What I want to emphasize here is the interface between the Spanish interpretation of colonialism and Indios’ conception of well-being. I would argue that aside from translation, colonial institutions or policies implemented by the Spaniards created an environment in which colonialist’s claim of well-being could be questioned.

⁵¹ Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998. 1-3.

⁵² Rafael, 21.

⁵³ Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*.

The Catipunan, in an 1892 document, summarized the state of the Philippines amid centuries of subjugation:

Yamang tatlong daang taong majiguit ang linalacaran nitong calunoslunos na baying tagalog sa ilalim nang capangyarijan nang mga Kastila ay nagcacaloob ng malaquing cababaan at bulag na pag sunod, baga man inaalagaan sa boong caalipinan, quinacaladcad at inalulubog sa ilalim nang malauac na hirap, iniinis na di ibig pajingajin, at bagcos dinadangunan ng mabibigad na patio, upanding huag na lumitao mag pacailan pa man.

Whereas for over three hundred years this unfortunate Tagalog people have labored under the dominion of the Spaniards, bearing great humiliation and obeying blindly, even though kept under complete slavery, dragged and submerged in vast hardship, denied loving care, weighed down by heavy burdens, and never allowed to escape.⁵⁴

Contrast this to Bonifacio’s description of prehispanic past in *Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog*. The Hispanic period in Philippine history, in Katipunan’s historicizing, is a negation of *ginhawa/kaginhawaan*. Bonifacio rallied in *Katapusang Hibik ng Pilipinas*, “*Wala nang namana itong Filipinas! Na layaw sa Ina kundi nga ang hirap*”.⁵⁵

Here, I want to make a preliminary observation on *polos y servicios*.

Polos y servicios can be said to be modeled to satisfy the mercantilist longings of the Spanish economy at the time. Aside from paying the tribute, all Filipino males from 16 to 60 years of age rendered forced labor for 40 days a year. These males would then be tasked to build and repair roads, bridges, churches, and other public works; cut timber in the forest and work in artillery foundries

⁵⁴ Richardson, *The Light of Liberty*, 18.

⁵⁵ See Virgilio S. Almario, *Panitikan ng Rebolusyon(g 1896)*. Manila: Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, 2013.





and shipyards. The *polista* could be exempted from the heavy work if he would pay *falla*.⁵⁶

The Spanish king regulated forced labor by just laws. These included provisions of the payment of ¼ real a day and rice to each *polista* and the distance or extent to which a *polista* can be brought and required to work. But most of the time, these regulations were ignored by the colonial officials in the archipelago. Corruption worsened the situation. Colonial officials oftentimes grabbed the money and the rice to be distributed to defray the *polistas*' services. They were also taken to far-away shipyards to build galleons, or to serve as rowers or fighters in Spanish expeditions.⁵⁷ This condition resulted in the decrease of agricultural produce, which also yielded famine among those who were left behind.

Needless to say, *polos y servicios* would be the source of hate by the *Indios*, triggering some early revolts. In Samar, Sumoroy, Juan Ponce, and Pedro Caamug led an uprising against the order requiring them and their people to go to the shipyards of Cavite. The uprising spread to Albay and Camarines, Cebu, Masbate, and as far as Northern Mindanao, but was easily suppressed in 1650 by the combined efforts of the Spaniards and native mercenaries. Another case of uprising occurred in Luzon. Francisco Maniago led his people to revolt against the government practice of requiring them to cut timber and render service in shipyards in Cavite to build galleons.⁵⁸

Polos y servicios continued despite these revolts but were reduced to a 15 day- work. Jose Rizal's opinion on the matter is instructive:

⁵⁶ Gregorio Zaide, *The Pageant of Philippine History: Political, Economic, and Socio-Cultural vol. 1*. Manila: Philippine Education Company, 1979. 289-90. See also Teodoro Agoncillo and Milagros Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*. Quezon City: R.P. Garcia Publishing Co., 1977. 106-09; and Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited*. Quezon City: Tala Publishing Corporation, 1975. 51-52.

⁵⁷ Zaide, 290; Constantino, 51-52.

⁵⁸ Agoncillo, 107.

This has already disappeared from the Laws, though personal services to the State continue, lasting fifteen days. So unfair and arbitrary a measure, the origin of abuses, vexations, and other injustices, hurts agriculture not a little by robbing it of laborers even in seasons when they are very necessary without any benefits accruing to the State except to some petty tyrants and private persons. Even today, when life

has become relatively very much dearer, we have seen the religious pay this moderate wage of eight curators daily without rice to people who have to come from different towns and are compelled to work at the Hospital de Aguas Santas for whose constructions enormous contributions and alms have been collected, charity bazaars had been held, etc. thus with very little money the building was constructed, which, if it had cost so much sweat and injustices, at least it is unoccupied and useless today, like a house occupied by a ghost. We remember that the hapless *polistas* in order to escape this vexation and to be able to till their lands, paid substitutes at the rate of three reales daily; that is, seven and a half more than the wage given by the lay director of the work at the hospital. Notwithstanding, though this building has not housed or has served for any other thing except to enrich certain pockets already rich and to impoverish the poor, we prefer the manipulation of the lay brother to that of certain officials of the civil guard who catch peaceful people to make them clean gratis their dirty lodgings.⁵⁹

From the instances mentioned above, one could simply understand that *polos y servicios* hindered the colonialist project from fully impressing its rhetoric on salvation, well-being, and welfare work. *Polos y servicios* was a negation of attaining *guinhawa*. It served as a conceptual cornucopia through which *Indios* could assess their colonial experiences (as what the Katipunan did mostly in its literature). Sinibaldo de Mas made this observation:

To go and work to put the roads and bridges in order; to carry letters, baggage, and provisions for soldiers and travelers at the prices in the tariff: these are the obligations of the villagers, and are called 'polos' and 'servicios', and these things often

⁵⁹ Morga and Rizal, *Historical Events of the Philippine Islands*.





give the village authorities the opportunity of tyrannizing over the taxpayer. Both justice and humanity demand the abolition of this obligation.⁶⁰

This image of the Hispanic past became the necessary backdrop to underline the necessity to rid the Filipinos of the clout of Spanish colonialism. Ginbawa, in Katipunan's narratives, served as a power concept tool to express the colonized longings for a better future by reinforcing an image of the past that was perceived to be better than the status quo they were in. Nostalgia was indeed used to project a better future.

CONCLUSION

The logic of the phenomenon goes this way, polos y servicios was the innate contradiction of colonialism that brought it into being, while ginbawa provided the necessary framework through which one could interpret the limits of colonial order set by the institutions like polos y servicios. Indeed, all these would come to fruition during the Philippine Revolution.

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⁶⁰ Cited in Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines*, 126.





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