

A LEGACY OF THE PROPAGANDA: THE TRIPARTITE VIEW OF PHILIPPINE HISTORY*

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Magkaiba ang kasaysayan, na binibigyang-diin ang saysay, at historya, na nakatuon naman sa pagsisiyasat. Sa artikulong ito, binibigyang-pansin ang mga anyo ng historya sa pamamagitan ng pagsusuri sa pananaw na tatluhang panahon sa kasaysayang Pilipino ng mga propagandista bilang tugon sa pananaw na dalawahang panahon ng mga Español. Ipinaghahalintulad dito ang pananaw na tatluhang panahon ng mga propagandistang sina Graciano Lopez Jaena, Marcelo del Pilar, at Jose Rizal. Sa kasalukuyang panahon, sinasabing maaaring hindi na napapanahon ang reaktibong pananaw na ito na patuloy pa ring ginagamit sa pagbabalangkas ng kasaysayang Pilipino.

The broad division of most national histories in the Third World into: precolonial, colonial, and post-colonial has its equivalent in Philippine historiography and historical consciousness. The Filipino view, however, was worked out even before the Spaniards were driven out of the country. It was, in fact, a major weapon in the ideological armory of the Filipino struggle against the Spanish colonial regime. Elaborated during the Propaganda Movement, it became the historical worldview of the Revolution which was considered to be the final struggle to bring about the period of freedom from colonial bondage. Imbued by Filipinos of today as part of the revolutionary heritage, it still dominates ordinary Filipino thinking about Philippine history and history as such. By inextricably attaching our people's history to the colonial phenomenon, it in fact still nourishes what has been called "colonial mentality" down to the very depths of the popular (and, to an extent, even professional) historical consciousness.

During the Propaganda and the Revolution, however, this tripartite view of our national history had a positive effect on the burgeoning national psyche. Its power as an *idée-force* came from its being a highly emotive reaction against the Spanish bipartite view of Philippine history which had supplanted an earlier Filipino historical consciousness.

The Indigenous and the Spanish Views

We had, at the arrival of the Spaniards an indigenous sense of history, but scarce regard for the past as history. Unlike the French *histoire* (which derives from the Greek word for "inquiry" whose Indo-European root, *wid*, had given Gothic *witan* (German *wissen*, English *wit*) or "knowledge" and Sanskrit *Veda* or "knowledge par excellence, mystical knowledge"); or unlike even the German *Geschichte* (from *geschehen* "to happen," as in a story of history, which are the meanings of the substantive), our word for "history" in Tagalog does not refer to knowledge, to the search for information or to what happened in the past as such. *Kasaysayan* comes from *saysay* which means both "to relate in detail, to explain," and "value, worth, significance." In one sense, therefore, *kasaysayan* is "story" (like German *Geschichte* or another Tagalog term, *salaysay*, which is probably simply an extended form of *saysay*). But *kasaysayan* is also "explanation," "significance," or "relevance" (*may saysay* "significant, relevant;" *walang saysay* or *walang kasaysayan*, meaning "irrelevant; senseless"). What was then important to us was the story and its significance, in so far as this could be explained and made relevant to a particular group. Now, apart from the lack of reference to inquiry (the methodological aspect which, up to the end of the Spanish regime, was hardly heeded), that is exactly

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what history is all about, knowledge being actually meaning rendered understandable and relevant to a group of people. From their *kasaysayan*, however, our ancestors derived a different sense of history.

For our ancestors had a sense of the eternal recurrence of natural and human phenomena: day and night, the seasons, seed and plant, the cycle of life and death, the passing and coming of generations, youth and age, planting and harvesting, war and peace with neighboring *barangays*. There would therefore be myths and legends about these recurrent "events," for they had *kasaysayan* -- meaning and relevance -- to their lives, to be explained and recounted in detail to everyone. Our ethnic literatures and religions are replete with these explicative stories. Equally relevant to the community were the genealogies which made the elite families, descend from the gods, thus explaining their socio-political primacy. It was a practice common to the entire archipelago, closely connected with the religious ideology of the epics which, because they contained these "vain genealogies," were sung precisely under the auspices of the *datus* and *maharlikas* just as later, in the lowlands, the *pasyon* would be chanted in the epic fashion under the periodic sponsorship of the *principales*, the converted *datus* and *maharlikas*. All this had *kasaysayan*, was meaningful and relevant; but the implicit historical sentiment behind every myth, legend, or ritual in the ancient worldview was "cyclical."

To break away from this cyclical view of time and events, the ancient community needed some sudden jolt from the unexpected. This the Spanish advent provided as it confronted the Filipinos with a sequential view of events, together with an external interpretation of their actions within a non-recurrent time frame. Of course, the Christian philosophy of the friars was also cyclical in the sense that mankind's story started with Paradise where Adam and Eve had to fall from the Heavenly Father's grace before the Son could become Man to save their descendants in this world who, with the second coming of the Lord, would recover, if they merited it, the paradisiac condition of their primeval parents. But, within that broad cosmic framework, the friars thought and reported on the Filipinos in linear terms. The chronicles recorded events in terms of change and movement, not of the timeless returning of form and ceremony. Even the recurrent feasts were considered unique occurrences because they differed from year to year, from celebration to celebration. In any case, the events were taking place no longer in relation to the cyclical preoccupations of the various ethnic communities; they now had *kasaysayan* -- meaning and relevance -- in relation to the entire archipelago as a field for Hispanic colonial endeavor -- and, of course, to Spain as this "national" or Christian monarchic idea was understood by the religious and, occasionally, by more secular minds.

A new direction was thus being imposed upon the lives and acts of Filipinos and that direction was understood and explained in the categories of a foreign historical consciousness.

This historical consciousness, for all its linearity, could have been acceptable to Filipinos, particularly when in the nineteenth century they had begun to understand and to feel the need for the Spanish archipelagic frame of reference. But the archipelago was even then considered simply as the stage for the action of Spain, so that the historical consciousness that viewed and integrated such action was, in the end, one which saw Philippine history as merely that of "Spain in the Philippines." It was a consciousness that could not help but consider the *Indio* as the object of historical action by the Spaniard who, in his own self-conscious view of himself, was the conscient subject exercising his political will (through the colonial state) in pursuit of a religious and civilizing mission.

The historical vision of Spain in the Philippines was thus bipartite, with the barbarian and pagan condition of the *Indios* in the prehispanic past its first epoch and, as its second and continuing one, the advent of Spain and the spread of its civilizing influences in terms of polity and religion. The image that one often gets from the chronicles to illustrate this historical view is that of transition from darkness to light, from infancy to progressive maturity. Such an historical ideology was naturally satisfying to the Spaniards and to hispanized *Indios* who had been fully detached from their cultural matrix. But, with rapid acculturation in the nineteenth century, the increase in the number of hispanized *Indios* and *mestizos* resulted in a consciousness dilemma among them. There are reasons

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enough for this. In the first place, the intensified conversion of the Filipino elite to Western cultural norms did not necessarily identify them with the true Westerners, the really “civilized ones,” for they still felt themselves to be of the native earth. Their early upbringing gave this sentiment some real basis, which their guilt complex *vis-à-vis* the culture of their forbears rendered all the more intensive and fundamental. In the second place, their increasing number excluded their easy acceptance into the “civilizing” Spanish elite, not only because of the socio-economic and political conditions of colonial rule but, perhaps more importantly, because of the weight of the elite mentality that derived from the bipartite historical ideology. Indeed, what would happen if the Filipinos ceased to be the object of Spanish historical molding? Clearly, they would then acquire an historical will of their own, constituting themselves into a different historical unit which possessed its own model of action in the world (a destiny, in fact), an explanation for such an independent historical activity. Finally, still feeling themselves natives while subconsciously wanting to be (and sometimes being) Spaniards, the hispanized youth of the second half of the nineteenth century where the ones who could really react to the racial and cultural calumny behind the bipartite view of Philippine history: the *Indio*’s basically barbarian nature (even when dressed as a Spaniard and speaking Spanish), his incapacity for intellectual and artistic pursuits, his ingratitude to the Spanish “motherland” and the Mother Church, etc. The majority of Filipinos in the rural areas knew no Spanish and met no Spaniard save the priest to understand or care about all that insult to their ethnic honor. The vision of Philippine history as Spanish action in the Philippines could therefore be felt only by the educated *Indio* or *mestizo*. And he could not accept it, if only because he knew his own worth but, in practice, felt its denial as a racial slur on his own person -- and that in the midst of what he quite clearly saw and experienced as tyranny over his own people. A counter-vision had thus to be conjured, a new and native interpretation of history formulated.

The Tripartite View

This was the task of the Filipino thinkers of the Propaganda and the Revolution. What they brought into being was a tripartite view of Philippine history which, essentially, would consist of the revision of the two-part Spanish philosophy of history and the addition of a third epoch. This historical triptych represented a common worldview among the activists of the Propaganda and the Revolution. The propagandists and the revolutionists differed however in some of the finer points, primarily with regards to the role of Spain in the third epoch.

On the whole, the propagandists were quite prepared to concede some positive role of Spain in Philippine history which, however, they now considered different somehow from simply that of “Spain in the Philippines.” For instance, in his “protest” against a disparaging article which dwelt upon the apathy and indolence of the Filipinos, Lopez Jaena faulted “those charged by the Mother Country of implementing colonial laws, of spreading progressive ideas and the teachings of civilization,” for selfishly trying “to keep the inhabitants in the primitive stage in which they were found by our unforgettable discoverers Magellan and Legazpi.” In fact, in his “Brief Review of Philippine Institutions,” Jaena would admit that, “though slow and too late in those Islands,” the march of civilization had introduced “profound and transcendental changes in social and economic life, converting what three centuries ago were simply settlements into towns today with a certain measure of culture and enlightenment.” If for this reason alone, however, the Filipinos should not be denied the innate intellectual and cultural capacity for progress. To be convinced of this capacity, one only had to turn to Negros and Iloilo, somewhat backward still, but nonetheless pulsating with native labor and commercial activity! Furthermore, in his tribute to Luna and Hidalgo, Jaena would trace this capacity back to prehispanic times, observing that in the history of “those islands of Malaysia,” more emphasis and merit were given to “the civilizing mission of Spain” than to “the civilization of the race that inhabited that beautiful but ill-appreciated Archipelago -- the race to which Messrs. Luna and Hidalgo belong.” It was time to correct the historical error of “considering that race as a horde of savages roaming in those forests without any notion of civilization.” For, “before the arrival of the

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Spaniards on her coasts” (a phrase which, in varied versions, still haunts our history textbooks and, through them, the popular historical consciousness), our native land

... had a civilization, a degree of enlightenment influenced by China, India, and Japan with whom she maintained friendly and harmonious relations. If this is not so, what do those precious ancient objects prove which have been found in the excavations around Libmanan and those very valuable jars, artistically shaped, decorated, and exquisitely made, whose origins and age are unknown, found in the excavations in Pampanga, Pangasinan, and Manila -- jars so highly esteemed in Japan and China, a sample of which is now found in the Ethnographic Museum of Berlin? What do they show, those perfectly preserved mummies... excavated in the caves in Samar, some of whose inhabitants still possess the knowledge of the difficult art of embalming with aromatic herbs as done by the ancient Egyptians? What is the significance of the mining industry... (among) the so-called savage Igorots who, for centuries, have been mining copper... in the form of pyrites whose processing is considered in Europe to very complicated?

It was clear that our ancestors had a civilization at the advent of Spain. Jaena was thus not only disproving a major premise of the bipartite view; he was likewise giving depth to our country's prehispanic past and, by this token, opening the horizons of the new historical consciousness to the subsequent researches of Beyer and the Filipino prehistorians and anthropologists who would come in his wake.

If the Filipinos had their own civilization prior to the Spanish conquest and continued in Jaena's time to possess an innate capacity for progress, then whatever they had achieved till then was only peripherally the responsibility of Spain. As a matter of fact, they were prevented from progressing as rapidly as they could have by the circumstances of Spanish dominance. For the backwardness of the Philippines, asserts Jaena in "The Indios of the Philippines," was due not so much to "her resistance to culture" as it was "due -- let us say it very loud -- to the friar... who, by submerging the *Indio* in ignorance and fanaticism, found him to be an inexhaustible vein of exploitation." In his *homenaje* to Luna and Hidalgo, it was more appropriately theocracy, "always despotic and ignorant" and living "amidst shadows and mysteries," that prevented the Philippines from being admitted "to the concert of modern civilization." But that "lugubrious night lasting more than three hundred years" was now about to end, for upon the Philippines was dawning "the splendorous sun of justice."

This new dawn in *Filipinas* was the third epoch in the new tripartite philosophy. Why was it coming and how was one to bring about its advent? Despite the friars, progress was evident in the Philippines. As Jaena remarks in "The Indios of the Philippines," the opening of the Philippines to foreign trade had now made it "a commercial center, if not on the level, almost of the stature of the most important in the world." But all that was simply the result of the normal process of change, "of the progressive movement which impels man to move and decide for himself... and without abandoning altogether the old, to search for a new way of existence" (cf. "A Brief Review of Philippine Institutions"). The obstacle to such relentless change should thus be eliminated; otherwise, it would "in the end... be thrown down headlong by the currents of civilization from foreign shores" (cf. "Tribute"). Consequently, for *Filipinas* to finally "see the sun of progress, liberty, and law shine over her horizons," it was imperative "for us all *in solidum* to pull it [the *manzanillo* or poisonous tree of friar rule] up by the roots and thereby render an immense service to our Motherland the Philippines and to all humanity" (cf. "To the Filipinos").

At first, Jaena thought that the task could be carried out in cooperation with the progressive forces in Spain, which, in its liberal image as Motherland, had always been considered as well disposed to its "daughter" *Filipinas*. But by 1891, *Filipinas* was herself already the Motherland for Jaena. In a letter to Rizal from Barcelona in the same year, he confided that "nothing can be expected from Spain

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nor from its Government, that if the Philippines wishes to enjoy rights and liberties, she herself must work for her redemption.” In fact, barely two months later, on October 2, thinking that *El Filibusterismo* concluded in a atmosphere of “anxiety, gloom, doubt, and incredulity which thinking men can easily comprehend but impossible to be understood by the masses,” Jaena suggested to Rizal that he write “another book that gives a speedy solution to the problem in order to hasten the advent of the beautiful day of our redemption.” Thirteen days later, he would recommend to Rizal his *Asociación Filipina* of Hong Kong, whose members should be pure and genuine *Filipinos*, “so that our purposes may be realized.” Above all, Rizal should prevent “*Kastilas* and foreigners from joining the *Asociación* as members.” Rights and liberties, as well as independence, *Filipinas* “must win with her blood.” For independence she could obtain “only through a revolution.”

Marcelo H. del Pilar’s conception of Philippine history was not too different from that of Jaena. It however accepted the Spanish view of Philippine cultural inferiority at the advent of Spain which, in its civilizing mission, was a “mother” to “daughter” *Filipinas*. In fact, in the Plaridelian myth of the blood compact between Sikatuna and Legazpi, it was the duty of Spain to help *Filipinas* along the way to civilization, an internalized “white man’s burden” so to say. This task, at first entrusted to the *encomenderos*, finally fell upon the laps of the religious who, at the start quite responsible trustees, later worked for their own monastic interests and power against the indivisible bonds forged between *Filipinas* and *España* at the blood compact immortalized as a fundamental social contract in the famous painting by Juan Luna. The monastic orders would thus become obstacles to progress, in the Philippines as well as in Spain. Consequently, they had to disappear or be made to disappear, for the “laws of history are inescapable.” In the same article on “Problemas Filipinos,” del Pilar would explain that

... a social institution is fecund only as long as it responds to the necessities of progress which become evident in a particular evolution of society. From the moment its interest become incompatible with the unfolding of progress, the institution loses its efficacy, dies out, expires, and there is no human power capable of reestablishing its force against the currents of social evolution.

An accelerated development was evident in the Philippines by the middle of the nineteenth century, with the opening of the Suez Canal. In fact, del Pilar would agree with Fray S. Font and the Dominican P. Ruiz in the view that the Philippines in their time had made more progress since the opening of the Suez Canal than during the three preceding centuries of Spanish colonial rule.

A “new phenomenon” had ensued from all this, a “new social movement” resulting from contact with “the other nations of the universe.” This moral revolution was indeed implicit in the very differences in ideology among assimilationists, autonomists, and separatists within the Filipino people which del Pilar then believed could only be composed of all “the sons of *Filipinas*, born in the same land, under the same sun and climate, and stirred by the same environment.” And history taught that, if provoked or disregarded, moral revolutions such as the one which now engulfed the land degenerated generally into “material revolutions.”

This was clearly the last phase of the period that had begun with the blood compact, whose intent to fuse “from that time on the aspirations of Spain and the Philippines into a single ideal” was subverted by the friars in order to establish and perpetuate their supremacy in the Philippines. Clearly, the next great period in Philippine history would be launched with the elimination of friar interference in Philippine affairs, of the intermediary role of monks in the colonial state under the pretext of preserving “national integrity.”

That the friars would soon find themselves in the dustbin of history was, in del Pilar’s view, quite evident from the Filipino people’s disaffection with them since the Cavite Mutiny in 1872 which, in its wake, produced an era of persecutions, an atmosphere of denunciations and calumnies, “the

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impossibility of life in law.” The only question now was how the friars and their view of Philippine history were to be consigned to their proper place of historical retirement. One way was revolution, but it should be availed of “only as a last remedy,” for an uprising “does not establish any aim.” Nonetheless, once the struggle was begun, the Filipinos would fight “for their right, for their reason, and for their justice irrespective of consequences.” Indeed, the revolutionary way, like surgery, was “more expeditious than applying mere bandages to the patient.” Yet, as late as 1894, del Pilar still preferred to ask for redress of grievances from Mother Spain. To the very end, if we are to believe Zapanta, he in fact remained true to the program of assimilation -- *i.e.*, the integration of the Filipino people into the broader Spanish nation. And all that this program required was the expulsion of the friars and the introduction of broad socio-political reforms, which would make the Filipinos true Spaniards, at least in rights and privileges.

Whatever might happen, *Filipinas* was detained to free herself from friar rule. The archipelago, because of its very situation and wealth, could not remain isolated from “the progress other nations and neighboring colonies are awakening to.” The day was not far when *Filipinas* would realize her “great destiny in the Far East” and inevitably find herself “side by side with world civilization.” That was the future that del Pilar saw for his country, “according to the law of history.” And it was hoped that Spain would see that such future was in congruence with “her deserved importance in the history of the far eastern countries.” All that Spain had to do was “to render her justice according to the requirements of the country, grant the reforms demanded, fuse Spanish-Filipino interests” and there would be progress for both colony and metropolis.

The third period in Philippine history would therefore be an era of progress, preferably in a common future with the Mother country. Beyond this, del Pilar did not find it necessary to be more precise. It was Rizal who tried to peer into the future in his *Filipinas dentro de cien años*. His preferred scenario, according to him, was of course the assimilation of the Filipinos into the Spanish nation, where they would enjoy “egalitarian laws and free and liberal reforms.” If this did not happen, however, the *Filipinas* would free herself “at the cost of much bloodshed and crime, after mortal conflicts, murders, conflagrations, military executions, famine, misery, etc.” For history did not record “any lasting domination exercised by a people over another, of different races, of diverse usages and customs, of opposite and divergent ideals.” Either the foreign masters were driven out, or else the natives perished or were absorbed. The Spaniards themselves were able to drive away the Arabs after seven centuries of domination. As for *Filipinas*, it was impossible to exterminate her six millions people, not only because that would cost Spain at least a third of its population but because no colony was useful without its natives.

How then would this liberated third period of Philippine history look like? In the course of the struggle, “bathed in blood and drenched in gall of tears,” the colony would “perfect itself” while the Mother Country of necessity weakened. Conflict would thus have afforded the Filipinos the opportunity “to improve and strengthen their ethical nature.” All the islands would unite to establish “the freest government,” probably a federal republic. If they attained this freedom “after heroic and stubborn conflicts,” the colonial powers like England, Germany, France, and Holland would not dare take up what Spain had been unable to hold. Nonetheless, Rizal recognized the potential dangers to such fledgling republic, which had to be strong to be able to protect itself from the powers which, in his view, included not only the traditional colonialists of the area but likewise Japan, Russia, and the United States of America. Fortunately, he thought, there would not be any real threat from any of them, except probably America, if one were to judge from the geo-political situation in the late 1880’s. Nonetheless, Rizal also knew that the Philippines would very likely “defend with fierce courage the liberty secured at the price of so much blood and sacrifice.” New men would spring from the Filipino soil who “with the recollection of their past” would perhaps “strive to enter freely upon the wide road to progress,” all laboring together to strengthen their fatherland “with the same enthusiasms with which a youth falls again to tilling the soil of his ancestors so long wasted and abandoned through the neglect of those who kept it from him.” And then

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... the mines will be made to give up their gold for relieving distress, iron for weapons, copper, lead, coal, etc. Perhaps the country will revive the maritime and mercantile life for which the islanders are fitted by nature, ability, and instincts, and once more free, like the bird that leaves its cage, like the flower that opens to the air, will recover the old virtues that are gradually dying out and will again become addicted to peace, cheerful, happy, joyous, hospitable, and fearless.

Such, despite all possible dangers, was the future Rizal saw for the third epoch in the history of *Filipinas*. And it was inevitable if Spain did not “give six millions Filipinos their rights so that they may be truly Spaniards.” In fact, shortly before *Filipinas dentro de cien anos* was serialized in *La Solidaridad*, Rizal had confided in a letter to Blumentritt that, in Padro de Tavera’s view, “if conditions do not become better, within ten years, there will be a great revolution.” This was the 8th of May 1889 and Rizal enjoined Blumentritt to keep to himself the information which Rizal was communicating to him “as a good friend.”

Rizal must have therefore felt that the “hundred years” did not necessarily mean a full century. It was, as the French would say, a “*clause de style*.” In this sense, *El Filibusterismo* (1891) should not be taken as a novel against revolution but rather as a treatise on how it should not be carried out, considering the defects that Rizal recognizes only too well in his countrymen. In the first place, a revolution could never be, as Simoun’s prime motivation was, a matter of personal vengeance. It was the awakening or reawakening of a people to civic virtue, to a common consciousness. It could not be the conspiratorial work of a single man with a few hirelings. Secondly, since it could only be the handy work of all Filipinos, there had to be true unity of will among them. But barely a year earlier, in *Sobre la indolencia de los Filipinos*, Rizal had noted that a man in the Philippines was “only an individual; ... not a member of a nation.” There was so little solidarity, even among his fellow propagandists of the *Solidaridad*, whom he reproached in a letter to del Pilar on May 28, 1890 of vices (like gambling) which instead of making Filipinos “worthy of liberty” could render them only “worthy of slavery.” Finally, revolution was a technique which necessitated not only the will to fight tyranny but the capacity -- mainly military, but also moral -- to carry it out to its logical conclusion, which was victory and the assumption of all the consequences of liberty. This was to be the crux of the disagreement between Rizal and Bonifacio. Viewed from the most optimistic but dispassionate assessment of the national and international situation of the time, Rizal was right. And Bonifacio himself would later discover, quite tragically, even among the *anak ng bayan* of the *Katipunan* the same passion for intrigue, the same instability of character that Rizal had seen and experienced among his countrymen in Madrid.

And yet, *El Filibusterismo* deals really with the necessity of revolution, as Jaena recognized, despite its cryptic vagueness. At least one passage in it, in fact, gives the deathblow to all hope for reconciliation with Spain. For Simoun, in this passage, the assimilationist desire of Basilio and his friends for parity of rights and for the hispanization of the Filipinos could only result in

... death, the destruction of your national identity, the disappearance of your homeland, the ratification of tyranny. What is to become of you? A people without a soul, a nation without freedom; everything in you will be borrowed, even your very defects... Now you ask for the teaching of Spanish, an aspiration that would be ridiculous if it did not entail such deplorable consequences. For you would add one more language to the more than forty already spoken in these islands, no doubt so that you may understand one another less and less!

... A gross mistake! ... What will you do with Spanish, the few of you who will get to speak it? You will only kill your individual personality and subject your thoughts to other minds. Instead of making yourselves free, you will only make yourselves truly

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slaves... as long as a people keeps its own language, it keeps a pledge of liberty, just as a man is free as long as he can think for himself. Language is a people's way of thinking...

The Filipinos should not become poor imitations of Spaniards; they "should aim higher." If Spain refused their integration, then so much the better! Basilio and his friends could then take the lead "in forming your own individuality," in having "the foundations of a Filipino nation." Then they could cultivate their own language, "make it more widely known, keep alive our native culture for our people, and instead of aspiring to be a mere province, aspire to be a nation, develop an independent, not a colonial, mentality."

That Simoun's thoughts were those of Rizal is clear enough. On July 27, 1888, Rizal wrote to Ponce that the day that all Filipinos thought like Plaridel and "like us, that day we shall have accomplished our arduous mission, which is the formation of the Filipino nation." On 20 July 1890, Rizal likewise wrote to Blumentritt that

... Your article on the language of the Philippines has given me an important lesson. Your remark that "these nations will be better absorbed by a major Malay nation than by a Spanish, etc." has never occurred to me before; I now realize its correctness; I have never thought of it. It is a law of affinity.

It was clear to him that one Filipino language absorbing the rest would be much better than Spanish being learned by all Filipinos. One Filipino nation resulting from the unification of all the native (Malay) ethnic groups by a major one among them was much better than all of them being absorbed by the Spanish nation. Ethnic and linguistic affinity would take care of both processes. All of Rizal's ethnographic and linguistic studies, including his reform of the Tagalog alphabet and his translations into Tagalog, were in fact already supportive of that conception. A new nation had to be formed which, in the final analysis, would have to be separate and independent from that of Spain. Thus, for Rizal, the third epoch in Philippine history would also be one of incipient nationhood, of nationality evolving out of ethnic diversity.

Rizal's second period between the coming of Spain and the birth of a new Filipino nation was just as well analyzed as the third. It was not, as the Spaniards believed and wanted Filipinos to believe, one in which Spain fulfilled a "civilizing" mission. For *Filipinas*, it was in fact a period of decline, which culminated in the "social cancer," described "faithfully and ruthlessly" in *Noli Me Tangere*.

This decay was the result of the Spanish conquest and subsequent misgovernment. In *La Indolencia de los Filipinos*, Rizal contrasted the backwardness of *Filipinas* in his time with the condition of the islands in the sixteenth century, when the early friar histories abounded

... 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, etc...

Indolence, itself, a tendency common to all men, stemmed at once from misgovernment and its resultant backwardness for *Filipinas*. After the conquest, there were the wars that Filipinos fought for Spain both in *Filipinas* itself (against the Chinese pirates and the Dutch) as well as abroad in the Moluccas, Borneo, and Indochina. Like the Athenian youths sent yearly to be devoured by the Minotaur, the Filipinos who joined these expeditions to maintain "the honor of Spain" or extend the "sway of her flag" had to bid "their country farewell forever." Entire areas were depopulated as a result. Like Panay, for instance, where a population of 50,000 families was reduced to 14,000

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taxpayers in a little over half a century. These wars, together with the forced labor for the building of ships, took the peasantry from the cultivation of their fertile fields.

Spanish rapacity too discouraged Filipino incentive. After reducing many Filipinos to slavery and forced labor, the *encomenderos* "made the rest sell them their products at an insignificant price or for nothing or cheated them with false measures." The "pious and impotent" friars of the time, in order to free their parishioners from *encomendero* tyranny, could only advise them "to stop work in the mines, abandon their industries, ... (and) destroy their looms, pointing to them heaven as their sole hope." In his own time, Rizal noted the great difficulty that entrepreneurs encountered with the administration, which contributed "not a little to kill every commercial or industrial movement." In order to secure a permit from government, for example, one had a count "on the good will of this one, on the influence of that one, on a good bribe to another so that he would not pigeonhole the application, a gift to the one further on so that he may pass it on to his chief." Only that applicant was successful who was armed with "much patience, a great knowledge of how to get along, plenty of money, much politics, many bows, complete resignation."

Rizal was more specific about the decadence of *Filipinas* under Spain in his notes to chapter eight of Morga's *Sucesos*. Commenting on Morga's observation that the Filipinos of the early seventeenth century had "forgotten much of farming and the raising of fowls, cattle, and cotton, and the weaving of cloth, which they used to do in the days of their paganism," Rizal concluded that

... The coming of the Spaniards to the *Filipinas*, and their government, together with the immigration of the Chinese, killed the industry and agriculture of the country... The indolence, then, of the inhabitants of the *Filipinas*, is derived from the lack of foresight of the government...

He likewise cited Colin to show that the Catanduanes had "also retrograded" from the time of Morga. Indeed, the same could be said of Mindoro which, in the nineteenth century, was

... so depopulated that the Minister of Colonies, in order to remedy this result of Spanish colonization, wishes to send there the worst *desperadoes* of the peninsula, to see if great criminals will make good colonists and farmers...

In shipbuilding too, the Filipinos had "far from progressing, ... retrograded," for

... The country that once... built ships of about 2,000 *toneladas*, today has to go to foreign ports, as Hong Kong, to give the gold wrenched from the poor in exchange for unseviceable cruisers. The rivers are blocked up, and navigation in the interior of the islands is perishing, thanks to the obstacles created by a timid and mistrusting system of government...

Even in the moral sense, the Filipinos had regressed, for this people which once "had great horror of theft," a fact which "the most anti-Filipino historian" could not deny, now "have lost horror of that crime."

The Spaniards perfectly understood Rizal's intention in editing Morga. To Retana, for instance, it was an

... arduous labor directed towards demonstrating the indemonstrable -- that the *indios* of yesterday were more worthy than those of today, that the conquerors drowned a rising civilization, and that had that civilization been permitted to develop, the Filipinos of today would have been different from what they are...

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Dedicated to the Filipinos, the book was in fact conceived as complementary to the *Noli*'s description of "the actual condition of our country." For, in annotating the *Sucesos*, Rizal wanted to conjure before his countrymen "the last moments of our former nationality... the shadow of the civilization of our ancestors," in order to awaken in them "the consciousness of our past" by rectifying "*what has been falsified and calumniated.*"

Rizal was thus rehabilitating the first period of Philippine history. For only against the resurrected glory of their pre-contact civilization could the Filipinos really measure the extent of their retrogression under Spanish rule and the viciousness of the Spanish historical thesis that made the Filipinos appear, in the words of Rafael Palma, "little less than savages... (who) would not have been civilized were it not for the timely and providential coming of the Spaniards." For Rizal, Morga and the other early Spanish chroniclers like Colin, whom he used extensively to confirm the former's observations about the early Filipinos and their culture, clearly showed the very high level of Filipino civilization at contact point with Spain as well as the movement and activity in the archipelago, which had extensive commercial and cultural relations with other Asian nations like China and Japan. Rizal even tried to prove that *Filipinas* before Spanish advent was known to Europe through the Greek geographers, including Ptolemy who mentioned "Maniolas" which, with Colin, he believed to be equivalent to Manila. He was pleased with Morga's underlining the basic uniformity of customs in the islands, whose "provinces" differed only "in some respects." Such "fundamental agreement of laws... (and) general uniformity" proved that "that mutual relations... were widespread, and the bonds of friendship more frequent than were wars and quarrels."

Rizal's interest in the maligned epoch of his country's history and culture made him work on the reform of Tagalog orthography, write a Tagalog grammar, and learn Visayan while in Dapitan. Beyond this, he saw the ethnic similarity of his people to the "other Malays" of Kalimantan, Malaya, and Indonesia, writing numerous letters to Blumentritt on the subject. Within the *Indios Bravos*, an organization which he founded in Paris, a secret committee was to occupy itself with the liberation of all the Malayan peoples from colonialism, starting with the Malays of the Philippines (*i.e.*, the Filipinos) and extending later to the racial brothers in Malaya, Indonesia, and Kalimantan.

Compared to del Pilar and Lopez Jaena, Rizal typically had the most comprehensive tripartite view of Philippine history. His was also the most consistent in negating the self-imposed Spanish "civilizing mission" in *Filipinas*. The differences in the three tripartite views may be summarized graphically in Table 7.1.

Mula sa Atoy Navarro at Flordeliza Lagbao-Bolante, eds. *Mga Babasahin sa Agham Panlipunang Pilipino: Sikolohiyang Pilipino, Pilipinolohiya, at Pantayong Pananaw*. Lungsod Quezon: C&E Publishing, 2007, 81-101.

Author	Pre-Colonial	Colonial	Post-Colonial
del Pilar	<i>Filipinas</i> had inferior civilization. <i>Blood compact</i> made in order for "mother" Spain to civilize and christianize "daughter" <i>Filipinas</i> .	<i>Encomenderos</i> first charged with civilizing mission. Then friars, who establish <i>frailocracy</i> and hamper progress, which is inevitable (Suez Canal).	Friars must go. Revolution has advantage of being surgical. But liberal reform better. Integration of autonomous <i>Filipinas</i> with Spain.
Lopez-Jaena	Ambivalent view. One moment, <i>Filipinas</i> thought to be in "primitive state." Then as having "a civilization, a degree of enlightenment."	Filipino capacity for progress impeded by "monastic supremacy." Progress due to Filipinos alone and external forces.	Elimination of friar rule. At first assimilationist, Jaena later favored Revolution, freedom won "with the blood of <i>Filipinas</i> ."
Rizal	<i>Filipinas</i> had a civilization of her own and was progressing, armed with her own capacities and virtues.	Decay and retrogression under Spanish rule. Civic virtues lost. Vices taken over. Social cancer in late 19 th century.	Release of creative forces of the race with attainment of freedom. Probably through Revolution. Tactically, through reforms.

Table 7.1
Three Tripartite Views of Philippine History

One sees that Rizal's conception of the tripartite historical ideology of the Propaganda was the most extreme. In contrast to Jaena and del Pilar, Rizal saw the problem more holistically, from the perspective of the entire cultural development of the Filipino people and not simple from that of the actual possession of political power by any social group, foreign or local. Thus, for him, it was not just "frailocracy" or "monastic supremacy" which was at cause: the entire Spanish regime from its very inception was at the root of the social cancer which had declared itself by the late nineteenth century. With Jaena and del Pilar, Rizal quite naturally believes in the innate capacity of the Filipino for progress; but, to him, it was the colonial system as such -- the very existence of Spanish domination -- which was the cause of the disease that afflicted *Filipinas*. Monkish predominance, as it were, was in this case just a symptom of the cancer that gnawed at the vital parts of the nation. For this reason, the third period is likewise conceived in medical terms as some kind of recovery which released the creative forces of the patient, giving *Filipinas* new life, new strength: a future. The kind of therapy used actually mattered very little. Rizal was willing to try even the most benign remedies, for which in *Noli* he would even implore passers-by in front of the temple, as in biblical times. But his diagnosis -- as well as the analyses of both del Pilar and Jaena -- pointed clinically to swift surgery as the appropriate therapy.

Conclusion

The Filipinos at Spanish advent had an indigenous sense of history which, basically cyclical, was concerned with history as story relevant (*may kasaysayan*) to a particular group. The Spaniards brought in a two-part historical consciousness and the broader archipelagic frame of reference. Relevant to the colonial enterprise was the declared "mission" of Spain in the Philippines, which was to Christianize and civilize the "natives" of the island which got the name of the Spanish King, Felipe Segundo. *Kasaysayan* came thus to be conceived as "the history of Spain in the Philippines," with the entire previous period considered as the prelude to the Spanish task of bringing light to the "Felipinas." As objects of the civilizing mission, the Filipinos would have to be not only pagans but savages. This the hispanized intellectuals (*ilustrados*) of the late nineteenth century could not accept. For del Pilar, the Filipinos were actually being hampered from progressing by the monastic orders, although it had indeed become

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the duty of the Spanish motherland to lead daughter *Filipinas* on the road to enlightenment. For Lopez Jaena, whatever progress *Filipinas* had attained was due to the Filipinos themselves, and to foreigners and in spite of the monks. Finally, for Rizal, *Filipinas* in fact experienced decline under Spanish rule. For all, the second period of Philippine history was thus intolerable and, because it was a product of tyranny, would have to be superseded by a third one of freedom and creative endeavor.

This tripartite historical view worked out by the Propaganda, particularly in Rizal's version of it, became part of the ideology of the Katipunan and, consequently, of the Revolution. In the rites of entry into the Katipunan, the new member had to know the correct answer to the three questions derived from the tripartite view -- *i.e.*, concerning the condition of *Filipinas* before the Spaniards came, her condition since then, and her condition after liberation from Spanish rule. The answers were to be found in detail in Bonifacio's *Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog* (What the Tagalogs Should Know). "Of old, prior to the arrival of the Spaniard," according to Bonifacio, "these Islands were governed by our own compatriots who were then living in the greatest abundance and prosperity." Furthermore, they maintained good relations with the neighboring countries like Japan, trading with them in "commodities of all sorts." Wealth and good customs were then "a common patrimony" and everyone knew how to read and write in the ancient Filipino script. Then came the Spaniards and "with the pretense of peace... deceived (us) by their offers to guide us on the paths of wisdom and increased prosperity." This Plaridelian social contract was then broken by the Spaniards, rewarding Filipinos in "munificence... with treachery," blinding the Filipinos instead of guiding them "on the path of knowledge." Then mixing the Plaridelian blood compact with Rizal's thesis of Filipino decadence under Spanish rule, Bonifacio adds that the Spaniards "have endeavored to make us abandon our good customs," initiating the people in "a false belief" and dragging its honor "into the mire." It was therefore necessary, as Reason dictated, that

... we must rely upon ourselves alone and never entrust our life to anyone else... (and) be united in sentiment and purpose, so that we may acquire the strength necessary to crush the evil that is affecting our people;

... consecrate all our strength to the good cause, with unshakeable and absolute faith in its success, and in the ultimate prosperity, so anxiously desired by us, of the land of our birth.

This was the third epoch which was to see the freedom of *Filipinas* after the elimination of Spanish rule by force of arms. Later Mabini would add to this *external* revolution the *internal* one of perfecting the Filipino, of taking him back to the old virtues of the race. In part, Jacinto had earlier already begun to do just this through his *Mga Aral ng Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (Teachings of the Katipunan) which, when put to practice by the Katipuneros, would "bring to our people, one in blood and brotherhood, happiness without end... to make up for the lives sacrificed, the labors undergone, the sufferings endured to obtain it."

To this day, our historical consciousness as a people is drenched in the tripartite view of the Propaganda and the Revolution. Our continuing vices, including Rizal's pet peeve in Europe -- gambling, we still tend to attribute to some moral decadence brought about by Spanish colonialism (or even by the more recent American imperialism). We are still sensitive to slurs on our states of civilization before the Spanish advent, although the average Filipino still knows relatively little about our "falsified and calumniated" past. Our professional historians have likewise not ceased to work within the tripartite frame. At least one makes it a point of honor to reject the Spanish colonial period until the Cavite Mutiny as "lost history" (an avatar of Rizal's decadence thesis), while treating the "prehispanic period" with the necessary if desultory respect. Others simply add to the "colonial" and "post-colonial" (taken either with or without the "American" and "Japanese" interludes) periods a more extensive discussion of "pre-Spanish" or "pre-colonial" Philippines, with particular predication for "influences" from our own Asian neighbors. These "prehispanic influences" from all parts were

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dramatized some years back in mammoth parade to exteriorize the national historical psyche. What was then revealed of this psyche pointed clearly to a thesis of Lopez Jaena and del Pilar -- *i.e.*, that the forces of change have always come to our shores from abroad with the corollary that it is to foreigners that we owe the rhythm and pace or our national history. Paradoxically, both the psychological predisposition to development aid and the constant attribution of the country's economic, cultural, and moral ills to imperialism seem to spring from the same mentality.

All this deserves another study. For the moment, however, it would appear that the tripartite historical ideology has outlived its revolutionary purpose. For, by attaching the unfolding of our people's history to the colonial phenomenon and other exogenous factors, our historians and Filipinos in general fail to see that we are responsible for our own history, that there is (or there must be) an internal mechanism for our becoming one people, a particular thrust to our national history. In any case, there is an urgent need for rethinking the periodization of Philippine history. Towards this end, one should perhaps first comprehend what the Propagandists really wanted to accomplish. Despite the different vantage points from which they viewed the challenge of the Spanish historical thesis, Rizal, Lopez Jaena, and del Pilar all desired to show that the Filipino was playing the active part in making his own history. Jaena believed in the Filipino's "innate capacity for civilization," although he seems to have identified "civilization" with its Western form and in the Western direction. Despite his acceptance of the Spanish thesis of the Filipino prehispanic "savagery," del Pilar was nonetheless also convinced that his countrymen were made for "progress" and could respond creatively to the challenge of change. Finally, Rizal felt the inner strength of Filipino civilization which, vigorous at the arrival of the Spaniards, was really only suffering under Spain from some cultural contamination from which it was bound to recover and once again give free rein to its creativity.

It is in relation to this creativity, to the inner resources and directions of the Filipino historical experience that one can perhaps begin -- once again and in the spirit more probably of Rizal than of del Pilar -- to understand and reformulate our national history.