

Translation and Revenge: Castilian and the Origins of Nationalism in the Philippines

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In the spring of 1889, the editors of the Filipino nationalist newspaper, *La Solidaridad*, then based in Barcelona, wrote in celebration of the ninth anniversary of the inauguration of a telegraph cable system in the Philippine colony. Running between Manila and Hong Kong, and from there to Europe, the system furnished an “electric language” (*lenguaje electrico*) with which to transmit “patriotic thoughts” directly to the motherland, Spain. Thanks to telegraphy, the Philippines was put in contact with the world in new ways.

This “brave instrument” (*valioso instrumento*) engaged the interest of the editors involved in a campaign for reforms that sought to extend the rights of Spanish citizenship to all those living in the colony. Telegraphy made it seem possible to speak directly and intimately with the metropole and beyond. Its promise of rapid communications at great distances meant bypassing the mediation of the colony’s more “retrograde elements” and “enemies of progress,” an allusion to the Spanish clerical orders and their bureaucratic allies. Hence, it did not seem to matter that the first transmission, reprinted by the editors, was a profession of fealty and devotion to the Crown sent by the governor-general on behalf of the colony’s subjects. It seemed less important that modern technology was used to convey a traditional message of feudal subservience. The editors were drawn instead to the sheer fact of this “sublime discovery” capable of speedy transmissions: a “language of lightning” (*lenguaje del rayo*) that triggered fantasies of immediate communication. Side-stepping the content of the message, they celebrated the capacity of a technology to overcome existing barriers to speech.¹

The existence of such barriers in large part accounts for the foreign

¹*La Solidaridad*, original texts with English translations by Guadalupe Fores-Guanzon, 2 vols. (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1967), 1:199. This

location of *La Solidaridad*. Colonial censorship, fed by the suspicion and hostility of the Spanish friar orders toward any attempt at challenging their authority, along with the threats of imprisonment, exile, and execution, made it dangerous to ask for reforms in the colony. Hounded by colonial authorities, many of those in the first generation of nationalists were forced to leave the Philippines for Spain and other parts of Europe where a more liberal political climate allowed them to speak out.²

It is important to underline at the outset the ethnolinguistic heterogeneity of this first generation of nationalists. Though they were all young men of mostly middle-class backgrounds educated at universities in Manila and Europe, they came from the various linguistic regions of the archipelago and differed, at least in the eyes of colonial law, in their ethnic makeup. Most spoke the local vernaculars such as Tagalog, Ilocano, Kapampangan, Ilongo, and so forth as their first language and counted among themselves mestizos (Spanish and Chinese), indios or "natives," creoles (Spaniards born in the Philippines, in contrast to the more privileged *peninsulares*, or Spaniards born in Spain). Collectively they came to be known as *ilustrados*, "enlightened." In Europe during the 1880s and early 1890s they were joined in their campaign for reforms by Spanish liberals and Freemasons, at least one Austrian intellectual, and an older generation of Filipino exiles in England and Hong Kong who had suffered earlier in the hands of colonial authorities. Known in Philippine historiography as the Propaganda Movement, these reformers were based in Barcelona and later in Madrid, with ties to Manila and surrounding towns. *Ilustrados* themselves traveled widely to study at universities in Paris, Berlin, and London, and it was not uncommon for them to be multilingual. Their efforts, largely liberal in character, were focused on seeking the assimilation of the Philippine colony as a province of Spain, restoring Filipino representation in the Spanish parliament, encouraging greater commercial activities, and

newspaper began publication in Barcelona in 1889 and later moved to Madrid, ceasing publication in 1895. The translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

²See John Schumacher, *The Propaganda Movement: 1880-1895* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1973) for a concise overview of this generation. I am indebted to this work for much of the historical background on the formative years of Filipino nationalism.

securing equal treatment of the colony's population regardless of race before the law. That is, Filipino nationalists at this time wanted to be recognized not just as "Filipinos," for this merely meant in the late nineteenth century one who was not quite indio or Chinese, yet not quite Spaniard. They also wanted to be seen as Spanish patriots, as much at home in Spain as they were in the Philippines.

Nationalism in the Philippines thus began as a movement among groups uncertain about their identity and anxious about their place in colonial society. Beneficiaries of the increasing commercialization of agriculture and the penetration of European trade starting the later eighteenth century,³ they sought not a separate nation — at least not yet—but a claim on the future and a place on the social map. Their initial appeal was not for the abolition of colonial rule but for its reformation in ways that would expand the limits of citizenship and political representation. The first generation of nationalists thus sought not separation but recognition from the motherland. This wish brought with it the imperative to communicate in a language that could be heard and understood by those in authority. Such a language was Castilian.

Traversing ethnolinguistic differences, Castilian served as the lingua franca of the *ilustrados*. Learned haltingly and unevenly first from private tutors and later on for those who could afford it at clerically controlled universities in Manila, Castilian allowed this small group of nationalists to speak with one another.⁴ Equally important, Castilian provided them with the medium for communicating with others both

³For details on the economic and political changes of the long nineteenth century in the Philippines, see Jonathan Fast and Jim Richardson, *Roots of Dependency: Political and Economic Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Philippines* (Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1979); Alfred McCoy and E. J. de Jesus, eds., *Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1982); and Greg Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in Nineteenth-Century Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996).

⁴There is no satisfactory history of education in the Philippines, but see John Schumacher, S.J., "Higher Education and the Origins of Nationalism," in *The Making of a Nation: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Filipino Nationalism* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991), pp. 35-43; Encarnacion Alzona, *A History of Education in the Philippines, 1565-1930* (Manila: University of the Philippines Press, 1932). See also Morton Netzorg, *Backward, Turn Backward: A Study of Books for Children in the Philippines, 1866-1945* (Manila: National Bookstore, 1985) for brief, laconic descriptions of grammar books that were used to teach children Castilian.

within and outside colonial society. Thus they could address Spanish officials in Spain as well as in the Philippines; and Europeans and later on Americans who knew the language. With Castilian, they found a second language common to each because it was native to no one.⁵ At the same time, they found in Castilian the means with which to translate their interests in terms that were audible and readable within and beyond colonial society. The foreignness of Castilian, the fact that it did not belong to them, was precisely what made it indispensable as a lingua franca for seeking recognition.

There is a sense, then, that Philippine nationalism did not originate with the discovery of an indigenous identity by the colonized and his/her subsequent assertion of an essential difference from the colonizer. Rather, its genesis lies in the transmission of messages across social and linguistic borders among all sorts of people whose identities and identifications were far from settled. Further, such transmissions had foreign origins and destinations, crossing provinces and continents, emanating from distant cities and strange locales. These transmissions were in Castilian for the most part, a language long heard in the colony but, because of the colonial practice of dissuading natives from learning it, largely misunderstood and barely spoken by the vast majority of those living in the archipelago. Castilian was in this sense a foreign language to most; and among *ilustrados*, it was a second language with which to represent the interests of the majority of the colonized. Thus we can think of Philippine nationalism as a practice of translation, here understood first as the coming into contact with the foreign and subsequently its reformulation into an element of oneself. From this perspective, nationalism, as I hope to show, entails at least in its formative

⁵The exception to this would of course be the creoles, since presumably they would have been speaking Castilian as a first language. However, the number of creoles in the movement was relatively small, and the majority of first-generation nationalists were mestizos and indios. But just as significant is the fact that prior to the 1890s, the creoles were those to whom the term *filipino* with a small "f" was applied by the colonial state. *Filipino* thus began as a term denoting Spaniards born in the Philippines in the same way that *Americanos* first referred to those of Spanish parents born in the New World. That *filipino* was historically associated with the capacity to speak Castilian as well as a familial link to Spain further underlines the hybrid origins of national consciousness. It was precisely the accomplishment of the first generation of nationalists to convert an ethnolinguistic term into a national one by the beginning of the 1890s.

moments neither the rejection nor the recapitulation of colonialism. Rather, it is about the discovery of an alien aspect residing within colonial society and its translation into a basis for a future history,

The Promise of Castilian

The sense of exhilarating possibilities opened up with one's contact with the foreign comes across in the *La Solidaridad* article on the telegraphy cable system. Reaching outside the Philippines, it was a system that surpassed the communicative limits of colonial society. The "language of electricity" cut across linguistic differences to the extent that it belonged to no particular group or country. That it could send messages to the world was due to the fact that all languages could be translated into its codes. It was thus exterior to all other languages, and this is what gave telegraphic technology the quality of a new kind of *lingua franca*.

The nationalist editors did not identify with the inventors of the telegraph or, as we saw, with the contents of its transmission, but with its peculiar power to cross linguistic and geographical boundaries. Such crossings were crucial to their project. We can see this heightened fascination with communication in their reliance on the Castilian language. *La Solidaridad* was not the first Filipino nationalist newspaper, although it proved to be the most influential publication of the movement. An earlier nationalist paper was *Diarióng Tagalog*, founded in 1882 by Marcelo H. del Pilar (who would later become the editor of *La Solidaridad*). Based in Malolos, a city north of Manila, it was a bilingual publication, featuring articles in the Tagalog vernacular and in Spanish. Though it did not last long, *Diarióng Tagalog* was the first in a long line of bilingual nationalist newspapers that would appear in the Philippines through the first half of the twentieth century.⁶

Throughout the history of nationalist publications, then, print Castilian always had a significant place. While vernacular languages such as Tagalog or Cebuano were used in specific regions to express politi-

⁶See Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*, pp. 94-5; Doreen Fernandez, "The Philippine Press System, 1811-1989," *Philippine Studies* 37 (1989): pp. 317-44; Wenceslao Retana, *El periodismo Filipino: Noticias para su Historia, 1801-1894* (Madrid, 1905); and Resil Mojares, *The Origins and Rise of Filipino Novel: A Generic Study of the Novel until 1940* (Manila: University of the Philippines Press, 1983).

cal sentiments, Castilian invariably accompanied these expressions, allowing them to circulate beyond their regional confines. We can think of Castilian, then, as a second language for translating the primary languages of the archipelago. It relayed sentiments and wishes not only across linguistic regions. For those who could use it, it had the power to convey messages up and down the colonial hierarchy linking those on top with those below. In this capacity, Castilian played a function analogous to that of the telegraph, transmitting messages within and outside the colony.

Given the power of Castilian to expand the possibilities for contact and communication, it comes as no surprise that nationalist *ilustrados* should become invested in its use. Hence in the pages of *La Solidaridad*, we read of the persistent demand among nationalists for the teaching of Castilian to all inhabitants of the colony. Colonial policy from the latter sixteenth through the end of the nineteenth century had installed Castilian as the official language of the state. The Crown had repeatedly mandated the education of natives in Castilian. However, as with many other aspects of colonial policy, such injunctions were honored more in their breach rather than in their observance.⁷ By the end of more than three centuries of Spanish rule in 1898, only about one percent of the population had any fluency in Castilian.⁸

Several reasons account for the limited spread of Castilian. The Philippine colony was located at the furthest edges of the Spanish empire. Even with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, travel to the Philippines from Spain was still a matter of several months. Possessing nei-

⁷For a succinct overview of colonial policy and practice, see John L. Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959); Eliodoro Robles, *The Philippines in the Nineteenth Century* (Quezon City: Malaya Books, 1969); more recently, see the work of Greg Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in the Nineteenth Century Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996).

⁸See United States, *Census of the Philippines Islands*, 1903, 5 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1905), 2:76-78. The census claims that "less than 10% or the people" could speak Castilian, but that only about "1.6% of the population had superior education." I take the latter figure to be more representative of literacy rates in Castilian than the former, for one can well imagine 10% of the population capable of uttering simple phrases in Castilian in response to the questions of census takers but most likely unable to speak or write fluently in that language.

ther the gold nor the silver of the New World colonies, the Philippines had few attractions for Spanish settlers. Fearful of repeating the large-scale miscegenation between Spaniards, Indians, and Africans in the New World, the Crown had established restrictive residency laws discouraging Spanish settlement outside the walls of Manila. As a result, no sizable population of Spanish-speaking creoles or mestizos ever emerged.⁹

Ilustrado nationalists argued that such limitations could be remedied. Enforcing existing laws, the government, if it chose to, could devote resources to building schools and providing for the more systematic instruction of Castilian. Yet the state seemed not only incapable but unwilling to carry out these measures. It seemed then to be violating its own laws. Such conditions came about, as *ilustrados* saw it, largely because of the workings of the Spanish friars. They had long blocked the teaching of Castilian in the interest of guarding their own authority. It was their steadfast opposition to the teaching of Castilian that kept the colony from progressing. Cast as figures opposed to modernity, the Spanish clergy became the most significant target of *ilustrado* enmity. In their inordinate influence over the state and other local practices, the friars were seen to stand in the way of "enlightenment," imagined to consist of extended contact and sustained exchanges with the rest of the "civilized" world. Thanks to the friars, colonial subjects were deprived of a language with which to address one another and reach those at the top of the colonial hierarchy.¹⁰

How did the Spanish clergy assume such considerable influence in the colony?

To answer this question, one needs to keep in mind the immense significance of Catholic conversion in the conquest and colonization of the Philippines. Spanish missionaries were the most important agents for the spread of colonial rule. Colonial officials came and went, owing

⁹See Nicholas Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines: From Conquest to Revolution* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1971).

¹⁰For another treatment of the place of the friar in the *ilustrado* imaginary, see Vicente L. Rafael, "Nationalism, Imagery, and the Filipino Intelligentsia of the Nineteenth Century," in *Discrepant Histories: Translocal Essay in Filipino Cultures*, ed. Vicente L. Rafael (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), pp. 133-58; Schumacher, *Propaganda Movement*; and *Revolutionary Clergy: The Filipino Clergy and the Nationalist Movement, 1850-1903* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1981).

their positions to the patronage of politicians and the volatile conditions of the home government. They often amassed fortunes during their brief tenure and, with rare exceptions, remained relatively isolated from the non-Spanish populace. By contrast, the Spanish clergy were stationed in local parishes all over the colony. They retained a corporate identity that superseded the governments of both the colony and the mother country. Indeed, they claimed to be answerable only to their religious superiors and beyond that to a God that transcended all other worldly arrangements. It was their access to an authority beyond colonial hierarchy that proved essential in conserving their identity as indispensable agents of Spanish rule.

Through the clergy, the Crown validated its claims of benevolent conquest. Colonization was legitimized as the extension of the work of evangelization. Acting as the patron of the Catholic Church, a role it had zealously assumed since the Counter-Reformation, the Crown shared in the task of communicating the Word of God to unknowing natives. While the state relied on the Church to consolidate its hold on the islands, the Church in turn depended on the state in carrying out its task of conversion. Missionaries depended on the material and monetary support of the state, drawing on colonial courts to secure its landholdings (especially in the later nineteenth century), on military forces to put down local uprisings and groups of bandits, and on the institution of forced labor for the building of churches and convents.

However, the success of the Spanish missionaries in converting the majority of lowland natives to Catholicism rested less on coercion—it could not, given the small number of Spanish military forces in the islands—as it did on translation. As I have elsewhere discussed at length, evangelization relied on the task of translation.¹¹ God's Word was delivered to the natives in their own tongue. Beginning in the latter sixteenth century Spanish missionaries, following the practice in the New World, systematically codified native languages. They replaced the local script (*baybayin*) with Roman letters, used Latin categories to reconstruct native grammars, and Castilian definitions in constructing dictionaries of the vernaculars. Catholic teachings were then translated

¹¹See Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993).

and taught in the local languages. At the same Lime, the missionary policy insisted on retaining key terms in their original Latin and Castilian forms. Such words as *Dios*, *Espiritu Santo*, *Virgen*, along with the language of the mass and the sacraments, remained in their untranslated forms in Latin and Castilian so as not to be confused, or so the missionaries thought, with pre-Christian beliefs and rituals.

Through the translation of God's Word, natives came to see in Spanish missionaries a foreign presence speaking their "own" language. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, this appearance — as sudden as it was unmotivated from the natives' point of view — of the foreign in the familiar and its reverse, the familiar in the foreign — roused native interests and anxieties.¹² For what they apprehended in the friar was the force of communication, that is, the power to cross borders and speak in ways otherwise unanticipated and unheard of, and to do so in a language other than their own. Conversion was thus a matter of responding to this startling — because novel — emergence of alien messages from alien speakers from within one's own speech. It was to identify oneself with this uncanny occurrence and to submit to its attractions, which included access to an unseen yet omnipresent source of all power.

Conversion translated the vernacular into another language, converting it into a medium for reaching beyond one's own world. But the intermediary for addressing what lay beyond was the Spanish missionary. He stood at the crossroads of languages, for he spoke not only the vernacular but also Castilian and Latin. And because of his insistence on retaining untranslated words within the local versions of the Word, he evinced the limits of translation, the points at which words became wholly absorbed and entirely subservient to their referents. The imperatives of evangelization meant that translation would be at the service of a higher power. Unlike the telegraph cable, which opened up to a potentially limitless series of translations and transmissions, evangelization encapsulated all languages and messages within a single, ruling Word, Jesus Christ, the incarnate speech of the Father.

Through the missionaries, converts could hope to hear the Word of the Father resonating within their own words. Put differently, Catholic conversion in this colonial context was predicated on the transmission

¹²Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, esp. chaps. 2, 4, 6.

of a hierarchy of languages. Submitting to the Word of the Father, one came to realize that one's first language was subordinate to a second, that a foreign because transcendent presence ruled over one's thoughts, and that such thoughts came through a chain of mediations: roman letters, Castilian words, and Latin grammatical categories superimposed on the vernaculars.

We can think of the missionary then as a medium for the communication of a hierarchy of communications that was thought to frame all social relations. Through him, native societies were reordered as recipients of a gift they had not expected in the form of a novel message to which they felt compelled to respond. What made the message compelling was precisely its form. The missionary's power lay in his ability to predicate languages, that is, to conjoin them into a speech that issued from above and was meant to be heard by those below at some predestined time. The power of predication, therefore, also came with the capacity for prediction, that is, the positing of events as the utterance of a divine promise destined to be fulfilled in the future. To experience language hierarchically unfolding, as for example in prayer or in the sacraments, is to come to believe in the fatality of speech. All messages inevitably reach their destinations, if not now, then in the future. Moreover, they will all be answered, if not in one way then in another. The attractions of conversion thus included the assurance that one always had the right address.

In tracing the linguistic basis of missionary agency, one can begin to understand how it is they became so crucial in legitimating colonial rule and consolidating its hegemony. The rhetoric of conversion and the practice of translation allowed for the naturalization, as it were, of hierarchy, linguistic as well as social. They made colonization seem both inevitable and desirable. At the same time, one can also appreciate the depth of nationalist fascination, with the friars and their obsessive concern with the Spanish fathers' influence over the motherland. As "sons" of the motherland, the *ilustrados* wanted to speak in a language recognizable to colonial authorities. To do so meant assuming the position of the friar, that is, of becoming an agent of translation who could speak up and down the colonial hierarchy, making audible the interests of those at the bottom to those on top. It also implied the ability to speak past colonial divisions: to address the present from the position of the future, and to speak from the perspective of what was yet to arrive. It is

with these historical matters in mind that we can return to the nationalist demand for the teaching of Castilian.

The Risk of Misrecognition

Remarking on the royal decrees providing for the teaching of Castilian to the natives, a writer for *La Solidaridad* deplores the failure of authorities to enact these laws. All the more unfortunate since "the people wish to express their concerns without the intervention of intermediary elements (*elementos intermediarios*). Moreover, in the Philippines, the ability to speak and write in Castilian constitutes a distinction. There, it is embarrassing not to possess it, and in whatever gathering it is considered unattractive and up to a point shameful for one to be in a position of being unable to switch to the official language."¹³

To speak Castilian is to be able to address others without having to resort to the help of "intermediary elements," which are of course the Spanish friars. Unlike the Dutch East Indies, for example — where Melayu existed as a common language between colonizer and colonized and would in time become the basis for the national language, Indonesian — in the Philippines, colonial officials almost never learned the local languages, just as most natives were unable to speak Castilian.¹⁴ Both relied on the missionary to translate and therein, as we saw, lay the basis of their influence. Educational reforms that would spread Castilian would eliminate this "shameful" situation. "Direct intercourse between rulers and ruled," would be possible, as the writer would go on to say as both would come to dwell in a common linguistic milieu.

¹³Anon., "Enseñanza del Castellano en Filipinas," *La Solidaridad*, 1:8-12. The citation appears on p. 8.

¹⁴For the history of Melayu, see Henk J. Maier, "From Heteroglossia to Polyglossia: The Creation of Malay and Dutch in the Indies," *Indonesia* 56 (October 1993), pp. 37-65; and James T. Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997). My understanding of the history of the language of nationalism in the Philippines has been influenced not only by the ways it seems to have differed from the history of the Indonesian language but also by the ways in which such differences have produced at certain moments instructive similarities. Mater and Siegel, along with Benedict Anderson, "The Languages of Indonesian Politics," in *Language and Power: Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990) 123-51, have been indispensable guides for thinking through the topics of language and politics in the Philippine case.

However, as the writer notes, Spanish friars have refused to give up their position. Instead of recognizing the desire of natives to learn Castilian, friars have come to suspect their motives. He or she who advocates the teaching of Castilian are treated as potential "enemies of the country . . . a *filibustero*, a heretic and depraved (*perverso*)" (11). Not only do Spanish fathers stand in the way of direct contact between the people and those who rule them, they misrecognize natives who speak Castilian as subversives and criminals. While nationalists associate the learning of Castilian with progress and modernity, the Spanish friars see it as a challenge to their authority: a veritable theft of their privileges. For indeed, the word for "subversive," *filibustero*, also refers to a pirate, hence to a thief.

Blocked from disseminating Castilian, nationalists also become suspect. Rather than accept the position laid out for them as "natives," they insist on speaking as if they were other, and thus foreign to colonial society.¹⁵ Responding in Spanish, nationalists claim they have been misrecognized. It is not they who are criminals, but the friars who accuse them. Over and over again, writers for *La Solidaridad* refer to friars as "unpatriotic Spaniards," hence the real *filibusteros*. In an article not atypical in tone and content, one writer asks:

In fact who is the friar? Somebody egoistic, avaricious, greedy . . . vengeful . . . They have been assassins, poisoners, liars, agitators of public peace. . . . They have . . . stirred the fire of the most violent passions, aroused in every way the ideas of rebellion against the nation . . . converted the people thus into parricides. . . . [They] enjoy the sight of fields strewn with cadavers and sing of their prowess to the accompaniment of the sad lamentations of the helpless mother, the afflicted wife, and the unfortunate orphan. Look at the true picture of those great iron . . . those hypocrites, executioners of mankind, monopolizers of our riches, vampires of our humble society.¹⁶

¹⁵See "Si Tandang Basiong Macunat," a widely distributed tract written by a Spanish friar Miguel Lucio Bustamante (1885) that lays out these charges. Cited in Schumacher, *Making of a Nation*, p. 20.

¹⁶"PADPYVH" (Pio de Pazos), "Los Frailes en Filipinas," *La Solidaridad*, 1:228-30.

In the nationalist imaginary the crimes of the friars begin with covetousness, progress to murder, and culminate in parricide. From their perspective, the friars are subversives who stand in the way of a happier union between the colonial state and its subjects. Yet neither the state nor the Church recognizes this fact. Authorities won't listen, or more precisely, they mishear, mistaking the *ilustrado* desire for Spanish as his or her rejection of Spain. The delirious enumeration of clerical criminality in the passage above reflects something of a hysterical response to repeated miscommunications. Such alarm is understandable, given the grave consequences of being misheard in the way of imprisonment and executions.

What is clear is that having a common language does not guarantee mutual understanding, but the reverse. Castilian in this instance is a shared language between colonizer and colonized. Yet the result is not the closer union that nationalists had hoped for, but mutual misrecognition. Each imagines the other to be saying more than they had intended to. Acting on each other's misconceptions, they come to exchange positions in one another's minds. Questions about language lead to suspicions, conflict, and violence. Rather than reconcile the self with the other, Castilian has the effect of estranging both precisely by confusing each with the other.

Historically, as we have seen, it was the Spanish friars who had monopolized the ability of the self to speak in the language of the other, controlling the terms of translation by invoking a divinely sanctioned linguistic hierarchy. Conversion occurred to the extent that natives could read into missionary discourse the possibility of being recognized by a third term that resided beyond both the missionary and the native. But by the late nineteenth century, this situation had been almost reversed. Nationalists addressed Spaniards in the latter's own language. The friars did not see in Spanish-speaking natives a mirror reflection of themselves. For after all, given the racial logic of colonialism, how could the native be the equivalent of the European? Rather, friars tended to see nationalists as *filibusteros* guilty of stealing what rightfully belongs to them and compromising their position as the privileged media of colonial communication. In their eyes, nationalists were speaking out of turn. Their Castilian had no authority inasmuch as it was uttered outside hierarchy. From the friars' perspective then, nationalist attempts to translate their interests into a second language only placed them

outside the linguistic order of colonial society. Thus were nationalists rendered foreign. Speaking Castilian they appeared to be other than mere natives and therefore suspect in the eyes of Spanish fathers.

Speaking Castilian produced strange and disconcerting effects. For nationalists, Castilian was supposed to be the route to modernity. Progress came, so they thought, in gaining access to the means with which to communicate directly with authorities and with others in the world. It followed that Castilian was a means of leaving behind all that was "backward" and "superstitious," that is, all that came under the influence of the friars. To learn Castilian was to exit the existing order of oppression and enter into a new more "civilized" world of equal representation. Castilian in this sense was a key that allowed one to move within and outside colonial hierarchy.

Nonetheless, such movements came with certain risks. Speaking Castilian, one faced the danger of being misrecognized. We saw this possibility in the vexed relationship between nationalists and colonial authorities in the Philippines. The dangers of misrecognition, however, also carried over into Spain. Seeking to escape persecution, nationalists often fled abroad. Most gravitated to Barcelona and Madrid, which became centers of nationalist agitation in the 1880s to the mid-1890s. In these cities, Filipinos found themselves reaching a sympathetic audience among Spanish liberals and other Europeans. Their writings were given space in Spanish liberal newspapers. In Madrid and Paris, Filipino artists such as Juan Luna and Felix Resurrection Hidalgo won a string of prizes painting in the academic style of the period, which one might think of as speaking a kind of Castilian. And in the pages of *La Solidaridad*, one reads of political banquets where nationalists addressed Spanish audiences and were greeted with approval and applause.

Castilian seemed to promise a way out of colonial hierarchy and a way into metropolitan society. However, in other nationalist accounts we also see how this promise fails to materialize. Nationalists find themselves betrayed by Castilian in both senses of the word. Out of this betrayal, other responses arise, including phantasms of revenge and revolution. It is to these successes and failures of translation and recognition and the responses they incur that I now wish to turn.

The Limits of Assimilation

Reading once again the newspaper *La Solidaridad*, we get a sense of the attractions that Castilian and Spain held for Filipino nationalists. An instructive example is the speech delivered in 1889 by Graciano Lopez-Jaena, one of paper's editors, during a political banquet in Barcelona.¹⁷ He begins with a declaration of his own foreignness. He announces to the Spanish audience that he is "of little worth, accompanied by an obscure name, totally unknown and foreign to you, with a face showing a country different from your generous land, a race distinct from yours, a language different than yours, whose accent betrays me" (28). That is, he comes before an audience and tells them in their language that "I am not you." Hence, not only am "I" a foreigner, but one who is in some respects lower than "you." Lopez-Jaena calls attention to the difference of his appearance, aligning it with his accented Spanish, which "betrays me." Yet he continues, even if "I am a nobody" (*si nada soy*), "I am encouraged by the patriotic interest that my speech might awaken in everyone. . . . Be indulgent toward me." The audience responds with a murmur of approval, "Good, very good" (*bien, muy bien*).

Here, the native addresses the other in the latter's language. He appears as someone acutely conscious of his difference from those he addresses. "I" am not "you," he seems to be saying, yet "I" (*yo*) announce this in your language. The audience hears and responds with approval. In this way, the native not only maps the gap between himself and the other; more important, he succeeds in crossing it. Traversing racial and linguistic differences, his "I" is able to float free from its origins and appear before a different audience. When the audience responds with a murmur of approval, it identifies not with the speaker but with his ability to be otherwise. The audience comes to recognize the native's ability to translate: that is, to transmit his "I" across a cultural divide. The native defers to his audience — "I am nobody" — and that deference, heard in the language of the audience, meets with approval. Recognized in his ability to get across, to keep his audience in mind, and to know his place in relation to theirs, the native can continue to speak, now with the confidence of being able to connect.

¹⁷Graciano Lopez-Jaena, "Filipinas en la Exposicion Universal de Barcelona," *La Solidaridad*, 1:28-46.

The contents of Lopez-Jaena's speech are themselves unremarkable and predictable. The speech contains the usual call for reforms — economic, political, and educational — that would lead to the improvement of the colony. It extols the riches of the archipelago while lamenting the state's inability to make better use of them. And it invariably identifies the friar orders as the source of resistance to change in the colony. Finally, it calls on Spain to rid the colony of friars and devote attention to the development of commercial opportunities in the Philippines and to the needs of its inhabitants.

What is worth noting is the reception he gets. As it appears in the printed version, the speech is punctuated by the sound of applause ranging from "mild and approving" to "prolonged and thunderous," particularly when he lauds Spanish war efforts in repulsing German attempts to seize Spain's Pacific island possessions. By the end of the speech, the audience explodes with "frenzied, prolonged applause, bravos, enthusiastic and noisy ovations, congratulations, and embraces given to the orator" (148).

In the course of his speech, Lopez-Jaena goes through a significant transformation. He starts out an obscure foreigner, but by the latter half of his speech, he begins to refer to himself as a Spaniard. In criticizing the ineptitude of the colonial state and denouncing the ill effects of the friars, he says, "There are efforts to hide the truth. But I, a Spanish patriot above all, for I love Spain, I must raise the veil . . . that covers the obstacles that prevent the Philippines from forging ahead" (1:44). From being a mere native, a "nobody," "I" am now a Spaniard like "you." This transformation is both recognized and produced by the audience's response. Using a language not his own, Lopez-Jaena is heard. Castilian in this case allows for what appears to be a successful transmission of messages, of which there are at least two: the contents of the speech, and the mobility and transferability of the "I" and "you" into a "we" (*nosotros*). We can understand the frenzied applause at the end of the speech as a way of registering this event. That a foreigner appears, proclaims his difference from and deference to his hosts in their own language, thereby crossing those gaps opened up by his presence; that an audience forms around his appearance, seeing in him one who bears a message, and recognizes his ability to become other than what he had originally claimed to be: this is the dream of assimilation. It is the materialization of the fantasy of arriving at a common language that has

the power to take one beyond hierarchy. Although it begins with an acknowledgment of inequality, Castilian as a lingua franca allows one to set hierarchy aside. To become a "patriot" is thus inseparable from being recognized by others as one who is a carrier of messages and is therefore a medium of communication. It is to embody the power of translation.

What happens, though, when there is no applause, or when the applause is deferred? what becomes of the movement from a native "I" to a Spanish "I" when the sources of recognition are unknown or uncertain? Outside the banquet, such questions arose to confront nationalists in the streets of the metropole. We can see this, for example, in the travel writings of Antonio Luna.

La Solidaridad regularly featured the travel accounts of Luna, who would later become one of the most feared generals of the Philippine revolutionary army in the war against Spain and would subsequently be enshrined as part of the pantheon of national heroes by the Republic. As a student in Paris, he visited the Exposition of 1889 and under the pseudonym "Taga-ilog" (a pun on the word *Tagalog*, which literally means from the river), wrote of his impressions. He was fascinated by the exhibits from other European colonial possessions but felt acutely disappointed that the Philippine exhibit was poorly done. In one article, he praises the exhibits from the French colonies. He is particularly envious of the displays from Tonkin, which show the regime's attempts at assimilating the natives through the teaching of French. Such examples bring to mind Spanish refusal to spread its language in the Philippines. By comparison to those in the French colonies, "We Filipinos (*nosotros filipinos*) are in a fetal and fatal condition."

In the very next paragraph, however, Luna writes,

The path is shown to us [by the French]. . . . But we, Spaniards (*nosotros españoles*) do not want to follow this path. . . . It behooves this race of ours—this race of famous ancestors, giants, and heroes—to think of greater things. Our Filipinos already know the most intricate declensions of classic Latin; never mind if they do not understand a word of Castilian.

And then in the next paragraph:

We who had the fortune of receiving in those beautiful regions (of the Philippines) the first kiss of life. . . , learned Castilian . . . without understanding it. Later in that town, isolated from all cultures, we saw among 14,000 inhabitants a teacher without a degree, a priest who alone knew Castilian, a town with one deplorable school without equipment for teaching and without students.¹⁸

There are at least three references invoked by the pronoun "we" (*nosotros*) in the passages above: *nosotros filipinos*, *nosotros españoles*, and a *nosotros* that is left unspecified as it sees (*vimos*) the conditions in the colony. What triggers this switch from one referent to another is the embarrassment and disappointment Luna feels in seeing the Philippine exhibit. Its crudeness and inadequacy become suddenly apparent when compared with the French exhibit. Comparison leads him to think of the latter as somehow superior in that it reveals what is lacking in the former. In this sense, we might think of "French" as that which encapsulates "Castilian." Through the perceived modernity of the French, the Spanish comes across as woefully unmodern. The invocation of "French" seems here to have the effect of joining the colonizer to the colonized in the Philippines, implied by the rapid changes of registers in Luna's "we." That "we Filipinos" can also, in the next instance, become "we Spaniards" is precisely because another term, the French, appears as a point of reference.

Here, a different kind of assimilation is at work, one that contrasts with the banquet scene. The audience in Lopez-Jaena's case responded to his speech and took note of his capacity to distinguish, then suture, differences. In Luna's case, the slide from "Filipino" to "Spaniard" and back is provoked by embarrassment, not applause. He sees the Philippine exhibit and imagines others seeing it, then comparing it to the French, as he does. He thus becomes aware of another "we" an unmarked and anonymous presence who wanders into the exhibits and sees him looking. He is of course also part of that anonymous "we," who we could think of as the crowd.

¹⁸"Taga-ilog," "Algo sobre las colonias franceses," *La Solidaridad*, 1:550-4.

A crowd by definition is something that exists outside oneself. To become part of a crowd is to feel oneself as other. As James T. Siegel writes, "The crowd . . . is a source of self-estrangement within society. One becomes like it and unlike oneself and one does so precisely by responding to it. Becoming alien to oneself and replying . . . are one movement."¹⁹ As part of a crowd of onlookers, Luna's sense of foreignness is intensified. He finds himself not only split between "Filipino" and "Spaniard" but also between one who sees and one who is seen. Castilian addressed to Spaniards allowed Lopez-Jaena to reconceive hierarchy and set it aside, even if only momentarily. In Luna's case, however, Castilian spoken, even to oneself amid a crowd, only produces a redoubling of his alienation. Assimilation occurs without recognition. He finds himself to be where he is not: in Paris, as part of an anonymous crowd, not quite Filipino or Spaniard. Recognition fails him as he shuttles between identifications, unable to consolidate either one.

One can translate, be understood by the other, yet find oneself unrecognized. Luna's dilemma in Paris becomes even more pronounced on the streets of Madrid. In one essay, he reports the following exchange with a Spanish woman:

"But how well you speak Spanish."

"Castilian, you mean, madam"

"Yes, señor. I am surprised that you speak it much as I do (*lo posea tanto como yo*).

"It is our official language and that is why we know it."

"But, dear God! Spanish is spoken in your country?"

"Yes, madam."

"Ahhh"

And in that long "Ahhh," suspicious and expressive, would be wrapped all the opinions formed by that Madrid woman. Perhaps we are thought to be little less than savages or Igorotes; perhaps they ignore the fact that we can communicate in the same language, that we are also Spaniards, that we should have the same privileges since we have the same duties.²⁰

¹⁹Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, and Revolution*, 180.

²⁰Taga-ilog, "Sangre Torera," *La Solidaridad*, 1:796.

In speaking Castilian, Luna is greeted with astonishment, then an “ahhh!!!” He reads into that response a series of possibilities, all of which rest on the suspicion that what he has said has been misplaced. Rather than arrive at its intended address, his message — that yes, “I,” too, am a Spaniard; that “I” am not a savage — has been lost. The self that speaks Castilian cannot get across. The native finds himself stranded in that “ahhh!!!” which is neither his first nor his second language, but simply a sign for all that has been left unsaid. On the streets, he discovers that “possessing” Castilian, as the woman put it, renders one an oddity, to which the only appropriate response is suspicion. Her suspicion in turn, triggers his, as he finds himself assimilated into what he thinks is her image of him: a “savage,” etc. Castilian as a *lingua franca* in this context draws him to anticipate misrecognition. That is, he is forced to assume the place of the other where he appears as one who is relentlessly foreign. Rather than embody the power of translation, Luna finds himself the target of insults. In another essay on his impressions of Madrid, he writes:

My very pronounced Malay figure which had called extraordinary attention in Barcelona, excited the curiosity of the children of Madrid in the most glaring manner. There is the young girl (*chula*), the young woman, or the fashionably dressed (*modistas*) who turn their heads two or three times to look at me and say in a voice loud enough to be heard: “Jesus! How ugly (*¡Que horroroso!*). He’s Chinese. He’s an Igorot.” For them, Chinese, Igorots, or Filipinos are all the same. Small and big boys . . . , not content with this proceed to yell out like savages: Chino! Chiiinitoo! Igorot! In the theaters, in the parks, in gatherings everywhere, there was the same second look at me, the mocking smile . . . , the half-stupid stare. Often, in thinking about these spontaneous manifestations, I asked myself if I were in Morocco, in the dangerous borders of the Riff, and I come to doubt that I lived in the capital of a European nation.²¹

Subject to racial insults, Luna begins to doubt again. He wonders if he is in Morocco rather than Madrid, that is, whether he is in a civilized society or among those it considers less so. Indeed, he starts to regard his body as if it were not his own, forced to see it as it is seen by others.


²¹Taga-ilog, “Impresiones Madrileñas de un Filipino,” *La Solidaridad*, 1:682-6

He thus experiences it as excessively visible, the object of second looks, its difference too pronounced. His mere appearance comes across as a provocation, almost an affront to those who see him and thus an invitation to respond. They do so not by hearing him speak or even by asking about his identity but by supplying him with others. Called an assortment of names except his own, Luna finds himself assimilated into the category of the "foreign." Yet this foreignness is not that of the crowd. A crowd forms around his appearance, but it is one that sets itself against him. In Paris, he could at least disappear into the crowd and find a place in its anonymity. In Madrid, he is set upon by it.

Being targeted by the crowd — being taken in by being taken apart — drives Luna to speak, but this time to a separate audience. He ends his essay on Madrid with the following warning: "Disenchantment will be terrible. We are told so much about her . . . , we think so much of her beauty . . . that when the image melts before the heat of realism, the disappointment is fatal" (686).

Assaulted by suspicions and insults in Castilian, Luna talks back. However, his message is no longer directed at Spaniards but to an audience that is absent from the streets of Madrid: Filipinos in the Philippines. It is as if the crowd enables him to find another address. Walking in Madrid, he cannot even recognize Spain, thinking that he might as well be in "Morocco," or at least the Morocco that exists in Spanish minds. The image of Spain, so mystified in the colony, turns out to "melt" on contact with reality. The crowd's speech has the effect of dissipating the colonial aura. It returns Luna back to the very conditions that he had sought to escape: that of being a foreigner under suspicion. Like Lopez-Jaena in the banquet, he, too, transmits messages that he did not originally intend. However, rather than win recognition as one who embodies the power of translation, Luna finds himself made to embody excess.

It is not surprising that amid these scenes of rampant misrecognition, he stops referring to himself as a Spaniard. He turns instead to an absent audience, the "Filipinos in the Philippines," thereby imagining an alternative destination for his words. He thus separates Castilian from Spain, appropriating the other's language not in order to return it to him but to set him aside. In doing so, he assumes the position that had been imputed to him by colonial authorities. He becomes, that is, a *filibustero* who in talking Castilian chooses not to return it to its source.

He begins to traffic in stolen goods. In addressing "Filipinos in the Philippines" from Spain in Castilian, he establishes for himself and others in his position a different route for the transmission of messages, one that in circumventing the mediation of colonial authority takes on a new kind of immediacy. By shifting the locus of his address, Luna converts his foreignness into a constitutive element of his message. 

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