GRAFTING PHILOSOPHY TO THE TAGALOG PREFIX KA

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Abstract  
This paper presents Filipino language as a tool in capturing the Filipino world view. By examining the Tagalog prefix “ka” as an accommodation of differences and opposition, this paper shows the infinite depth and breadth of Filipino’s capacity to absorb various kinds and levels of solidarity. This also analyzes the development of Filipino society by the way the prefix “ka” was used especially during the Philippine Revolution and its present-day significance.

Keywords  
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INTRODUCTION  
This study is about the shared aspirations of the revolutionary leaders of the Filipino nation in 1896-98, the initial years of the nation’s struggle from colonial rule. The study takes the perspective of the Tagalog prefix ka. As an expression of the social dimension of experience, ka is not only used as a pronoun for the second person singular of the Tagalog language; it also serves as a prefix that reveals the intersubjective dimension of things, peoples, events, and ideas that dwell within the shared horizon of Tagalog speakers. Not unlike window frames that focus an individual’s perception of reality, ka captures a “world perspective” (Weltansicht) (Cassirer 120) implicitly shared by Tagalog speakers.
Habermas’s method of social analysis will be employed as a heuristic devise for this effort because social presuppositions are best articulated, according to him, during conflict situations that compel social actors to justify their grounds for mutual understanding (The Theory 125). Revolutionary situations, after all, are privileged historical moments when implicit ideological systems are crystallized and formulated as rallying points for social cohesion and collective action among its members. The Spanish colonial regime will be used as a fitting background that will sharpen the shared aspirations articulated by the revolutionary leaders and their followers. Special attention will be given also to the conflicts that emerged among the main characters of the Philippine revolution in order to discover their philosophical assumptions. This endeavor will show that these protagonists had more shared presuppositions and historical continuities among themselves than disagreements. We also expect to come to terms with some of the social presuppositions of our contemporary life since we continue to speak the same language of our forebears.

The writings of Andres Bonifacio, the acknowledged founder of the Philippine Revolution, Emilio Jacinto, the so-called “Brains of the Revolution” and Gregoria de Jesus, their muse or lakambini, along with Emilio Aguinaldo, the first President of the Republic, will serve as primary texts of this attempt to articulate the shared presuppositions of their revolutionary project. Santiago Alvarez’s memoirs (1992) as a General of the revolution will be used as a unifying thread that will weave through the narratives of these leading characters. In spite of Jose Rizal’s protestations against his personal involvement in the revolutionary movement, we shall discover that his ideas inevitably cast their shadow on the horizon of the principles propounded by the Katipunan, the revolutionary organization founded by Andres Bonifacio to liberate the country from the Spanish regime. We are relatively fortunate today because we have more access to primary and secondary texts about the revolution since the centennial celebration of the proclamation of Philippine independence in 1998.

“LANGUAGE SPEAKS” (Heidegger 190)

A discussion on the role of language in social life is an appropriate starting point for this study because languages, according to Habermas’s theory of communicative action, are not mere reference points for objects encountered in the world, but are also indicative of a “social a priori,” a shared context, that conditions the possibility of mutual understanding within a human community (The Theory 131). Humans do not merely speak languages (on the contrary, languages speak through humans); and, through their speech-acts, reveal
something about the distinctive comportment of speakers toward the world. Not unlike prisms that refract the purity of light to the visible world, language reveals the invisible cultural dispositions of a people to the cosmopolitan community of nations.

In a colonial context where mastery of the Spanish language, the lingua franca of the ruling class, serves as the key toward social mobility, daring to use one’s own language in the political arena is tantamount to challenging the prevailing relations of power perpetuated by those who benefit from the colonial system. Unlike previous reformists who tried to prove that they can play and win the language games set up by the colonizers, the revolutionaries expanded and universalized the scope of their battlefield by proclaiming their right to speak their own tongue before the stage of global politics. Emilio Jacinto, for example, celebrated the first anniversary of the initiation of the revolution by proclaiming “before the whole universe” their right to their own government, their own motherland, in the same manner that they have their own language (qtd. in Almario 185; italics mine). He wrote, in Tagalog, that “aming itatanghal sa buong Sansinukuban na kami’y nararapat magkaroon ng isang sariling pamahalaan, isang sariling inang Bayan gaya ng kami’y mayroong isang sariling wika.” [We shall proclaim before the whole universe that we have a right to our own government, our own motherland, in the same manner that we have our own language.”]

Insisting on their right to speak their mother tongue is the primary analogate of the revolutionary arguments to reclaim their motherland and to exercise their right to self-governance. Not unlike the modernists’ daring advocacy to make use of one’s own reason (Kant 1), the Katipuneros believed that to use one’s language is the least that can be expected of anyone who belongs to human civilization. The “Lessons of the Katipunan of the Children of the Nation” stipulated that “Human beings are purely and truly beloved even if they grew up in the woods and knew nothing else but their own language.” [Wagas at tunay na mahal na tao kahit laking gubat at walang nababatid kundi ang sariling wika.”] (Sta. Maria 75).

The revolutionaries, therefore, were not merely reacting to the oppressive conditions perpetrated on them by their colonizers; they were also asserting their fundamental right to enjoy their inherent freedoms and liberties in the same manner that other nations, such as their own colonizers themselves, have enjoyed. The Katipuneros believed that the enjoyment of such freedoms was the initial condition of Katagalugan, their motherland, prior to the coming of the colonizers and they were convinced that such a blessed state of affairs was likewise enjoyed by other countries such as America and Japan (Almario 160-1).

The Katipuneros believed that prior to the coming of the Spaniards, their countrymen and women lived in harmony with their neighbors, especially with Japan.
“Kasundo niya ang mga kapitbayan at lalong-lalo na ang mga taga Hapon” (152). In preparing for the revolution, they looked to Japan as a source of armaments and as a potential diplomatic ally. Upon learning that the Japanese warship Kongo was docked in Manila, they immediately arranged for a meeting with its naval officer, Admiral Kanimura, in order to send a solicitation letter requesting the Japanese Emperor to support their cause. During that meeting, Emilio Jacinto delivered an impassioned speech that revealed the depth of their understanding of world affairs. He said that

The liberty and independence cherished by the members of the Katipunan would be realized with the cooperation of the Japanese nation, being the only nation in the Far East that could lend help to the Philippines in the same manner that France lent aid to the United States to secure the latter’s independence. (Qtd. in Agoncillo *The Revolt* 137)

Although they failed to convince the Japanese Admiral to actively support their cause, the Katipuneros persisted in soliciting support from abroad and actually anticipated the delivery of arms from Japan at the height of the revolutionary upheavals in Cavite (Alvarez 336). Yokohama was even used as the place of publication of their short-lived revolutionary journal, *Kalayaan* [Freedom], as a ruse to confuse the authorities.

**KATAGALUGAN PARA SA KATINUBUANG LUPA [TAGALOGLAND FOR FELLOW NATIVES]**

In a footnote to the so-called “Kartilya,” the code of conduct that the revolutionaries initially signed with their own blood as a testament to their allegiance to the motherland and of their promise to fight for liberation from the atrocities inflicted by their colonial masters, they explained that “the term Tagalog refers to all who grew up in the entire islands, in other words, even Visayans, Ilokanos, and Kapampangans are also Tagalogs” [sa salitang Tagalog katutura’y ang lahat ng tumubo sa Sangkapuluang ito, samakatwid, Bisaya man, Iloko man, Kapampangan man, etc. ay Tagalog din] (Almario 156). Bonifacio was then hailed as “Sovereign of the Tagalogs” [Hari ng mga Tagalog] and his domain was *Katagaluan Sovereignty* [Haring Katagalugan].

When Tagalog was used as the medium of communication in the publication of their journal, *Kalayaan*, the Katipunan dramatically expanded its membership from three hundred on January 1, 1896, to thirty thousand members when the revolution erupted in August, 1896 (Agoncillo 101). Almario estimates that the greatness of Bonifacio as a writer
can be attributed to his capacity to write powerfully in the vernacular language (Almario 15). Since Tagalog was used as the official medium of communication within the Katipunan organization, those who did not speak the native tongue, such as Emilio Jacinto, were compelled to eventually become proficient in using the Tagalog language (Alvarez 54).

As a consequence of using Tagalog as the medium for espousing the revolutionary cause, non-tagalog speakers became suspicious of the motives behind those who initiated the uprising. They viewed the revolution as an attempt of the Tagalogs to dominate the rest of the country. This suspicion was further fomented by the Spanish propaganda and their military strategy of sowing dissension among the natives by means of the classic method of “divide and conquer.” Ataviado reports that on September 13, 1896, the civil governor of Albay issued a document that pledged his constituents’ adherence to “Mother Spain” and deplored the “infamy and ingratitude” of the revolutionaries (Ataviado 9). Among the Bicol provinces, only the “heavily ‘Tagalized’ Camarines Norte” was reported to have had an uprising against Spain (Andaya 63) while the other reported disturbances in Pamplona and Masbate were not initiated by local leaders. The Pamplona raiders “were heard speaking Tagalog” while the “dictator” and “mysterious strangers” who marauded Sorsogon and Masbate were led by a transient named “Fermin Tagalog,” (Ataviado 80; 91) a surname that was most likely used as an accusing finger to his regional origin.

The geographical scope of Katagalugan, from the perspective of the Spanish colonizers, were limited to the first eight provinces that were placed under martial law by the Spanish Governor General during the outbreak of the revolution which included Pampanga, Laguna, Batangas, Cavite, Manila, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan and Tayabas. It should be noted, however, that the people of Pampanga speaks a different dialect from the Tagalogs and the revolutionaries in Cavite were actually supported and joined by Chinese and Ilocano speakers (Medina Ang Kabite 124; 155 ff.).

For the revolutionaries, the term Katagalugan offered a more indigenous sense of identity and righteously depicted their anti-colonial posture in contradistinction to the reformist term “Filipino” which had traces of their vassal status under the Spanish regime. The Philippines was baptized, after all, as las Phelipinas, to pay homage to the Spanish prince, who, after ascending as King Philip II, decided to colonize the country (de la Costa Readings 15).

A closer examination of the original texts of the Kartilya will show that the Katipuneros belabored the fact that the term “Tagalog,” as cited above, refers to the katutubo: “everyone who grew up in the islands” (“lahat ng tumubo sa Sangkapuluang ito”) (Almario 156). This claim is corroborated by the title and content of Bonifacio’s poem,
“Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Bayan” (141) and the message of Freedom’s persona in Emilio Jacinto’s “Pahayag” who asked the latter to communicate her message to his compatriots or katinubuang lupa (163). Even Gregoria de Jesus’ acerbic response to Aguinaldo after he had admonished her for creating discord among her relatives upon their arrival in Cavite, appealed to the native land as the shared arena of the revolutionary struggle: “I did not know that this Revolution is for the sake of relatives only; but to my knowledge this is about the defense of the native land” [“hindi ko nalalaman na ang Rebolusyong ito ay sa magkakamag-anak lamang kundi ang aking pagkakaalam ay sa pagtatanggol ng bayang tinubuan”] (Medina Ilang 50). The “Lessons of the Katipunan of the Children of the Nation” conceived of “The value of the person” in terms of someone “who knows how to be sensitive to and knows how to cherish the land of his birth” [“Ang kamahalan ng tao'y … yaong marunong magdamdam at marunong lumingap sa bayang tinubuan”] (Sta. Maria 75).

KALABAN AT KALAHI

The ambivalent response of the Bicolanos to the initial efforts of the Tagalogs to unify the country is mirrored by the open-ended linguistic function of the Tagalog prefix ka and the exclusionary effect of the root-words that define the meaning of the contents attached to it. Those who were excluded from the geographical reference of the term Katagalugan felt alienated and stayed away from the revolution and assumed the attitude of spectators. This initial set-back for the revolutionaries demonstrates the limitation of language itself in its simultaneous comprehension and the restriction of the scope of its references vis-à-vis the much wider and deeper dynamism of multiple realities.

Aguinaldo’s letter of instruction to his fellow mayors and citizens of Cavite on August 31, 1896, moreover, demonstrates how the prefix ka can be used to embrace both enemies and allies. He wrote: “lusubin ninyo agad ang mga kalaban diyan sa kuwartel at kumbento sa inyong bayan, subalit pagsikapan ninyong huwag umutang ng buhay lalo pa’t kalahi natin” (Aguinaldo 69; italics mine). [“Conquer your foes there, but try not to kill anyone, especially if he is a Filipino”] (57). This declaration demonstrates the unbounded flexibility of the prefix ka because it can accommodate even its nemesis. It approximates the indefinite negativity of the pre-socratic Greek prefix a used by Anaximander in his theory of apeiron wherein the prefix was used to cancel the limitations imposed by the distinctive forms of the material universe. Ka, however, is not a prefix of negation, but a testament to our infinite capacity for inclusion.
Grafting Philosophy

Although the prefix *ka* can be affixed to almost any word to engender an intersubjective dimension, the root-word attached to it poses a limit to the scope of its possible meaning. The tragedy of the Philippine revolution, as exemplified by the death of Bonifacio in the hands of Aguinaldo’s men, demarcates the limitations imposed by language on our lofty ideals vis-à-vis the exigencies of historical realities. As the quotation above shows, Aguinaldo, at the inception of the revolution, did not intend to harm his compatriots, especially Bonifacio, the founding father and supreme head of the *Katipunan*.¹ Aguinaldo, in fact, reduced the punishment imposed by the military tribunal on Bonifacio, from death to banishment. But his followers insisted on the elimination of Bonifacio as a necessary sacrifice on the altar of national unification (59-62).

The unfortunate death of Bonifacio in the hands of the revolutionaries did have a demoralizing effect on the spiritual energy that supported the revolutionary cause. Alvarez narrates how:

After the death of the Supremo Bonifacio, many patriots formerly serving the revolution in the province of Cavite, Manila, Rizal and Laguna lost heart and withdrew from the struggle…. All in all, the revolutionary forces disintegrated as each one resorted to individual efforts to save himself by retreating to open fields and hill country. (119)

The Tagalog text that follows is more picturesque:

*Dahil din sa pagkamatay ng Supremo Bonifacio, sa mga lalawigang Kabite, Maynila, Rizal at Laguna, maraming mga masusugid na Bayaning nagtatanggol sa Paghihimagsik ang nangawalan ng loob at di na nagpatuloy ng paglilingkod sa Inang-Bayan … nagkani-kanyang kanlungan na lamang sa mga parang at bundok, at nag-uwan ang mga taga-iba’t ibang lalawigan.*

More than a hundred years after this event, the Filipino people have yet to resolve this traumatic historical event as we continue to preserve our own interests (*kanya-kanya*) in the absence of a unifying principle (*katipunan*) that will focus our national efforts to promote our common goals. Not even the favorable verdict for Aguinaldo’s Presidency, proclaimed almost a hundred years later, by two national commissions (the National Committee on Research of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the
National Historical Commission) can douse the flames of this national conflagration from which the down-hearted revolutionaries, who felt the immediate impact of this event, had to seek consolation and recuperative reflection under the shadow of fields and mountains before deciding to go home to their own provinces. The revolutionaries did not only retreat physically from the revolutionary struggle; they also had to evaluate the tragedy of their collective fate by mulling over the possible destiny of the nation.

In 2005, the University of the Philippines published two important monographs that continue to tilt the balance of this national debate in favor of Bonifacio. The first was a mock appeal by the imaginary heirs of the Supremo presided by Retired Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Abraham Sarmiento, and the second was Adrian Cristobal’s *The Tragedy of the Revolution*. The latter dramatically reports that after delivering a lecture on Bonifacio under the auspices of the National Historical Institute, descendants and followers of our national heroes collared him to make him realize “how much of our past is not yet history” (Cristobal 205). Bonifacio seems to even had a premonition of his fate, as one witness testified that Bonifacio used to say that:

> The light of history will certainly set things right, so that those who formerly failed to perceive the truth will be able to see things in their proper perspective. Then, they themselves will realize how glorious it was to love one’s motherland. Moreover, they will repudiate in the end the traitors (Alvarez 144) [**Datapwa’t sa huli’y lumilitaw ang ilaw ng kasaysayan, upang ang lalong may malalabong mata ay makakita, na siya ring magpapadilag sa karangalan ng tunay na makabayan at susumpa sa kasamaan ng mga taksil.**]

### THE LETTER K

The omnipresent letter K in our national symbols today was created upon the prodding of the members of the Katipunan who wanted a banner that would serve as a rallying point for their cause. Andres Bonifacio then designated his wife, Gregoria de Jesus and her friend, Benita Rodriguez, to design a flag. This resulted in a banner with a white letter K inscribed in the middle of a red-colored rectangular background (Garcia 3). It was a convenient and familiar symbol for the lengthy appellation: “The most Supreme most Honorable Association of the Children of the Nation” [**Ang Kataastaasang Kagalanggalangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan**]. This design was not only used as a flag; it also appeared on hats, hoods, coats of arms, and other ceremonial insignia used
during their rituals. Many variations were derived from this flag; but the most constant feature was the K inscription on it. Bonifacio explained that the letter K in the middle of the Katipunan banner stood for Kalayaan, or freedom, when he was challenged by the followers of Aguinaldo to define the kind of government he envisioned for the country (Alvarez 319). Even Emilio Aguinaldo, who later wrestled the leadership of the revolution from Bonifacio, used the ancient Tagalog script ḅ of the letter K as the official banner of the revolutionary government.

Following Agoncillo’s initial studies of the Katipunan, Ileto muses that the notion of “‘wholeness’ or ‘becoming one’ implied by the term katipunan is nevertheless also contained in kalayaan” because the latter is derived from the prehispanic idealized “condition of wholeness, bliss and contentment, a condition that is experienced as layaw [care-free] by the individual, who is thus able to leap from the familial to the national” (Pasyon 108-9). Such an idealization did find its imagery in the discourses of the Katipunan, especially in Andres Bonifacio’s “Ang dapat mabatid ng mga Tagalog” (What the Tagalogs should know) where he described the state of abundance and blissful welfare (kasaganaan at kaginhawahan) prior to the arrival of the Spaniards to our shores (Almario 152).

The revolutionaries also addressed themselves and one another as Katipunan or Katipun or “fellows who have gathered together” and their initiation rites were culminated with fraternal embraces amidst shouts of brotherhood (see Alvarez 6, 240, 242, 246). They performed the pre-hispanic ritual of blood compact, or pacto de sangre, by signing their membership of the organization with their own blood; a ritual that expanded kinship ties beyond the nuclear family. Emmanuel Calairo records that when one of the Indio members of the Spanish civil guards joined the early stages of the revolution in 1896, the latter described his conscription in terms of becoming an “adopted” son of the Katipunan. In his own words, the former civil guard quipped: “sumama aco sa Katipunan na siyang umampon sa akin” [“I joined the Katipunan who adopted me”] (86).

References to kinship ties were also used by the contending parties within the revolutionary organization in order to extend cordialities between them. Bonifacio used the term kapatid [brethren] in addressing his arresting officers (Alvarez 334), while Aguinaldo appealed to the same principle of brotherhood in his attempt to commute Bonifacio’s death sentence to a lighter punishment (352).

After his election to the Presidency of the Republic, Aguinaldo’s banner, the one with the ka in baybayin script (✂) inscribed inside an image of a sun with eight rays (☼), was blessed by the officiating priest along with a new set of officers who secretly took their oaths of office in Imus, Cavite, in spite of Bonifacio’s nullification of the election
proceedings in Tejeros (Garcia 12). Zaide and Lugos reported that “General Aguinaldo referred to this flag when he announced on October 31, 1896: “Filipino people! The hour has arrived to shed blood for the conquest of our liberty – Assemble and follow the flag of the Revolution—it stands for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” (15). It served as the official flag of the revolutionary forces until December 30, 1898, when it was taken down from the flagstaff at Biak-na-Bato to signify the temporary end of revolutionary hostilities against Spain (Alvarez 198).

That a pre-hispanic Philippine script became the symbol of modern ideals inspired by the French Revolution testifies to the efficacy of the founding documents of the Katipunan that glorified the civilization of pre-hispanic Philippines as a utopian vision that inspired the revolutionaries to rescue themselves from the ignominies of Spanish colonization. This romantic retrieval of the pre-hispanic past can be traced to the research program previously undertaken by Filipino ilustrados as exemplified by the works of Jose Rizal (Rizal 44).

Rizal’s legacy to the Katipunan is evident not only in the deep respect that the members held for him. His shadow followed the major decisions of the organization as his name was used as their password; his advice was solicited regarding the timing of the revolutionary uprising; an attempt was made to spirit him from his exile to Cuba; and a plan was hatched to thwart his execution. It must be pointed out that Bonifacio, the founder of the Katipunan, was also a founding member of La Liga Filipina, an association organized by Rizal prior to his exile (Sta. Maria 69); and we must remember that the Katipunan was founded on July 7, 1892, the same day when the order of Rizal’s deportation was published in Gaceta de Manila (Corpuz 210). In the afternoon of December 30, 1892, the day when Rizal was shot at Bagum Bayan, his relatives were received by Andres Bonifacio in Cavite, bearing with them his final momentos. Among these was the “Last Farewell,” a monumental document that the Supremo asked to keep for a while “so that he could translate the poem into Tagalog” (Alvarez 71). Bonifacio’s translation has since been published as a valuable part of Philippine revolutionary literature and has been authoritatively authenticated by the poet and National Artist, Virgilio Almario (Almario 200-2001).

Joining the Katipunan after Jose Rizal’s martyrdom was a natural recourse for his relatives in order to avoid persecution by the Spanish authorities. But even prior to the outbreak of hostilities against Spain in 1896, when the Katipunan organized their women’s chapter in 1893, the female members of the Rizal family were already in the roster of its leadership. The first organizational meeting of the Katipunan women’s chapter elected
Josefa Rizal, Jose Rizal’s sister, as President; the Vice-President was Gregoria de Jesus, Bonifacio’s wife; the Secretary was Marina Dizon, Emilio Jacinto’s cousin; and the Fiscal was Angelica Rizal Lopez, Josefa’s cousin (Medina Ang Kabite 133). That Rizal’s sister was elected to the highest position of the Katipunan women’s chapter in 1893, and Gregoria de Jesus, Bonifacio’s wife was only Vice-President, bespeaks, the leadership role that the Katipunan expected from the Rizal family in lieu of his exile and isolation in Dapitan. His other sister, Trinidad and his niece, Delfina Herbosa, were also noted members of the Katipunan (Zaide and Lugos 229). This means that Josefa’s Presidency was not merely her individual initiative, but had the support of Rizal’s clan.

KAKAWING-KAWING [INTERLOCKING LINKAGES] (Medina Ang Kabite 165)

Kinship studies of Cavite during the time of the initial stages of the revolution reveal an interlocking network of relationships among its members and leaders (165). Bonifacio was identified with the Magdiwang faction led by General Mariano Alvarez, who was Gregoria de Jesus’ grand uncle; while Aguinaldo had a network of relatives (kadugo), compadrazcos (kumpare), schoolmates (kaklase), childhood friends (kababata) and fellow Masons (kapwa-mason) at his disposal. In the language of contemporary sociology we can say that Aguinaldo had more “social capital” (Abad 2005). He was, after all, former Municipal Captain of Kawit, Cavite, at the start of the hostilities against Spain and he was the one who initially sent instructions to his “beloved municipal captains and countrymen” [“mahal kong mga kapitan municipal at mga kababayan”] to join him in the uprising against three hundred years of slavery. He was heeded by almost all the towns, especially because he announced that his own town had “no masters here and we are already free” (Aguinaldo 22, 56 and 68).

His growing reputation as a charismatic leader and shrewd military tactician earned the respect of even the non-Cavitenos, who voted for him for the Presidency of the First Republic, while the Spanish emissaries who were negotiating for the Katipunan’s surrender were actually seeking him instead of Bonifacio (Alvarez 170). The efficacy of Aguinaldo’s intricate social network is exemplified by his relationship with Daniel Tirona, the one who questioned Bonifacio’s qualifications for election to the position of Interior Minister. Daniel was the younger brother of Candido Tirona, Aguinaldo’s best friend (kaibigang matalik) (126). Isagani Medina further reports that the seven representatives of the Magdalo faction to the elections in Tejeros were actually related to Aguinaldo by blood, or were brothers in Masonry and the Katipunan, and all were childhood friendships (Medina Ang Kabite 170).4
Aguinaldo also most likely gained sympathy votes when he was voted to the Presidency during the Tejeros convention in March, 1897, in deference to his tenacity to defend the trenches of Pasong Santol in Dasmarinas, Cavite, where his eldest brother, Crispulo, was subsequently killed in battle. Crispulo had offered to substitute for Aguinaldo and had taken Aguinaldo’s post in the trenches in order to allow him to join the second commission at the meeting of the combined Magdalo ang Magdiwang factions at Tejeros (Aguinaldo 21). Alvarez narrates how the election of the officers of the revolutionary organization was postponed in deference to the funeral rites for Aguinaldo’s brother Crispulo (Alvarez 82).

**KATULONG, KATUWANG, KARAMAY AT KASUYO**
**[HELPER, COBEARER, SYMPATHETIC COMPANION AND LOVER]**

In her reflections on “Gender and Kinship in the Philippine Revolution, 1896-98,” Mina Roces argued for the auxiliary role of Filipino women “as helpers” in Rizal and Jacinto’s writings (Roces 41). She cites Jose Rizal’s laudatory “Letter to the Women of Malolos” which was indeed a step forward for the women’s emancipation movement from the timid and subservient image of womanhood proscribed in the proto-nobela, *Urbana at Feliza* by the Presbiter D. Modesto de Castro (34 ff).

Emilio Jacinto’s *Kartilya*, or “Lessons of the Katipunan of the Children of the Nation,” however, took a further step in the advocacy for a more egalitarian relationship with women by asking its members to “not look upon woman as a mere plaything, but as a cobearer (katuwang) and sympathetic companion (karamay) in the hardships of life” (Sta. Maria 75). The term *katuwang* (co-bearer) implies the necessity of a complementary partner who will help lighten the load of the tasks at hand. Moving a heavy object, such as a large table, for example, needs the helping hands of co-bearers. Social events, moreover, such as weddings and baptisms, prescribe an equal number of godparents on each side of the gender divide for the ritual to be consummated.

Accounts of women’s participation in the battles of the revolution are replete with stories of their gallantry (see Alvarez). Gregoria de Jesus, in particular, claimed equal footing with men: “I was considered a soldier, and to be a true one I learned to ride, to shoot a rifle, and to manipulate other weapons that I actually used on many occasions … sleep on the ground without tasting food for the whole day, to drink dirty water” (de Jesus). As *Lakambini* or muse of the Katipunan, she kept the records of the organization by strapping them around her body, literally bearing on her waist the lives of those who were
listed as members of the organization while roaming the city streets whenever warnings were issued about potential raids by the Spanish civil guards (Cristobal 55). When Emilio Aguinaldo was initiated into the Katipunan rites, Santiago Alvarez noted that the one “directing operations was Gregoria de Jesus, the wife of the Supremo Bonifacio” (Alvarez 5).

As lover and companion to the Supremo, she was the sympathetic companion (karamay) of her beloved. While nursing the wounds inflicted on Bonifacio by his captors, on May 9, 1897, the day prior to his execution, Gregoria de Jesus realized that it was her birthday and Andres lamented on how Oryang, Gregoria’s nickname, had tied herself to a “troubled life.” She then reassured him that “It had always been my dream to find as my companion in life a man with a golden love for freedom and for our country” (Roces 41). Her poem, written after the death of her husband and immortalized by the National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera and his wife Cynthia Lumbera in their anthology of Philippine literature, bespeaks of her undying affection for her lover. She lamented after his death that “bangkay man ako, haharap sa iyong kusa” [even as a corpse I shall willingly turn to your direction]” (82). Adrian Cristobal’s account of her love affair with Andres Bonifacio showed that she defied and overcame the conventional courtship manners of her day (Cristobal 54).

Josephine Bracken, referred to in Bonifacio’s Tagalog translation of Rizal’s Mi Ultimo Adios as “estrangherang kasuyo’t aliw” (Almario 150), likewise mirrored the revolutionaries’ image of the woman as helper (katulong) and sympathetic companion (karamay). She helped nurse the wounded members of the revolution and even interceded during at least one of the altercations of the leaders of the Katipunan (Alvarez 84). She stayed in Cavite until May 1897, and walked barefooted along the rugged slopes of the mountains of Maragondon through Laguna province on her way to Hong Kong where she died on March 14, 1902.

The women of the revolution served as a unifying and reconciling force in the midst of emotionally charged encounters between their men who were easily intimidated and tempted to use their armaments to resolve differences and conflicts (Alvarez 1992, 304, 320). And when they were called to shed blood for the motherland, they came to fight side by side with their husbands and brothers. Alvarez narrates how, in the midst of battle, an old lady called Gorya climbed on top of a fort and waved a white piece of cloth used by a priest in saying mass in order to ward off bullets. “But contrary to her hopes,” his narrative laments “she hurtled back and dropped dead to the ground after being hit instantly” (63).

Emmanuel Calairo recorded in his footnotes to Aguinaldo’s Short Autobiography that “The revolt of the Katipuneros in some towns of Cavite and even in Batangas was like a town fiesta because the revolutionists were usually accompanied by women and children
and a brass band. Aguinaldo narrates that when he initially organized his own force to repel the Spanish forces, “All the men gathered there, a thousand of them raised their hands. Even the women did the same…” (Aguinaldo 36).

**KAPWA-DAO AT KAFIESTA [FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS AND FESTIVAL COMPANIONS]**

The revolutionaries appealed to their collective sense of humanity whenever misunderstandings and quarrels erupted among their ranks. When challenged by the Magdalo faction about the savagery of the current status of their factionalism, General Mariano Alvarez responded with a fiery rhetoric: “We are true revolutionaries fighting for freedom of the native land. We are not bandits who rob other people of their property and wealth. Nor should we be likened to beasts for we know how to protect and defend others, especially the political refugees who seek asylum with us” [Kaming mga Katipunan … ay mga tunay na Manghihimagsik sa kalayaan ng bayang tinubuan. Hindi mga tulisang sa pangangagaw ng di kanyang pag-aari at kayamanan at dir in maaaring matulad sa hayop sapagka’t marunong kumupkop at magtanggol sa kapwa, lalo na sa mga dito’y nanganganlong lamang; may isip at hindi humihiya sa mga nagsasalitang matapang, nguni’t walang nagagawa]” (Alvarez 84; 319). The same General, whose *nom de guerre*, incidentally, was “General Apoy” [General Fire], condoned the execution of a spy after the latter was beaten up by his followers for “humanitarian reasons” [*damdaming makatao*] which resulted in the “rather long service [of the said spy] in the revolutionary forces” (130; 134-5).

There were records of minor skirmishes between the Magdiwang and the Magdalo factions during their battles against the Spaniards “because they mistook each other for the enemy.” But Alvarez reports that they eventually end up breaking out with laughter after they found out who the other group was (48). Against the background of the enemy’s cannon fire, people learned to regard it like fireworks in a celebration. All day and all night long, young ladies kept their refreshment booths open. There was singing, dancing, and feasting under the trees; in every corner, there was cockfighting and gambling. These were distractions by which they sought to forget for the moment that, inevitably, they had to offer their life and blood sooner or later.

Town fiestas were occasions used as opportunities to meet, organize, and launch offensives because the Spanish authorities tend to relax their defenses during such
celebrations. The first general meeting of the Katipunan was set on the feast day of Antipolo (9). Ileto reports how, on one occasion, a huge procession was convened in Tayabas, Quezon, as a pretext to attacking the quarters of the Spanish soldiers (Pasyon 95). Following the initial studies of Ileto on the relationship between folk Christianity and the Philippine revolution, Leonard Andaya classified the social structure of the early revolutionary movement in terms of the personal following of commanders and the more significant type of organization led by “charismatic, spiritual leaders” (qtd. in Rodao and Rodriguez 64).

Another example of religious festivities during the revolution was the activities held in honor of the Virgin of Solitude in the capital town of Cavite on November 8, 1896, when the cannon fire from the enemies were greeted by the people as the Spanish contribution to their celebrations. Brass bands, speeches, a beautiful mass, a spectacular procession, and all the other components of a town fiesta were held even in the midst of a revolution (Alvarez 62-63). Festive activities that accompanied revolutionary efforts ranged from offensives led by brass bands and red banners to the Katipunan’s surrender to the Spanish authorities after the Pact of Biak-na-Bato which was marked by the pealing of church bells. The term “Magdiwang” actually means celebration while the term “Magdalo,” with its reference to Mary Magdalene, denotes sympathy, attendance, and helping others in times of need.

KARAMAY AT KAPANTAY [SYMPATHETIC COMPANION AND CO-EQUAL]

Meagre resources hounded the Katipunan from the moment of its inception. Bonifacio admits that the revolution was prematurely born and had to react to the contingencies of the situation after they were discovered by the Spanish authorities. Jose Rizal’s objections against the revolution was based on its lack of logistical preparations and he even suggested to Pio Valenzuela, who was sent by the Katipuneros to consult him, to recruit the services of the wealthy for the revolutionary cause. Intrigues and open conflict also flared among the members when they found out that their common funds were lent to finance the needs of their leaders. Even towards the end of his life, Bonifacio’s attempt to escape the political quagmire in Cavite was marred by his need for food which was not extended to him by the people of Indang, Cavite. He lost his temper and threatened to burn the town; an unfortunate emotional outburst that was reported to Aguinaldo and was consequently used as one of the reasons for his arrest and execution (Alvarez 334; Aguinaldo 75).
Sympathy was one of the primary virtues propounded by the Katipunan. “One of the very first commands,” of the Katipunan’s Kartilla was, “absolute sympathetic solicitude (pagdadamayan) for one another” (Almario 156). Reynaldo Ileto’s *Pasyon and Revolution* has amply demonstrated how the word *damay* had a much older meaning of participation than today’s meaning of sympathy and/or condolence (65).

As a cardinal revolutionary virtue, participation requires the willingness of the members to share their proportionate burden as their contribution towards the collective effort to achieve the goals of the revolution. It is within the context of this participatory meaning of *damay* that we can understand and appreciate Bonifacio’s humble deference to the other leaders of the organization when he initially yielded the revolution’s leadership to Deodato Arellano and Roman Basa, until the time when he realized their ineffectuality (Agoncillo 151). He also withdrew his own list of “Duties to be Done by the Children of the Motherland” after acknowledging the superiority of Emilio Jacinto’s *Kartilya*. Bonifacio was then able to solicit the support of his comrades by delegating to them significant roles to play in the unfolding of the revolutionary drama.

During the elections at Tejeros, Bonifacio tried to keep his equanimity until the time when his credentials were questioned by a member of the local *principalia*. Outvoted and out-maneuvered in the struggle for leadership, Bonifacio’s reputation was openly maligned by ugly rumors that were spread against him prior to and during the elections. Even his winning the vote for the lowest post as Minister of Interior was publicly questioned due to his lack of educational achievement in comparison to another candidate who was nominated by a member of the local elite. This infuriated the Supremo because he only agreed to continue the proceedings of the electoral contest under the provision that everyone should abide by the will of the majority (Alvarez 85-86).

Bonifacio’s loss of composure during that historic moment was unfortunate, but it is understandable against the background of the Katipunan’s precepts that “Whether one’s skin be black or white, all people are equal; it may be that each is superior in knowledge, wealth, beauty but there is no superiority in human dignity [*Maitim man o maputi at kulay ng balat, lahat ng tao’y magkakapantay; mangyayaring isa’y higtan sa dunong, sa yaman, sa ganda, ngunit di mahirhigtan sa pagkatao*]” and that “The value of the person is not … in the high station one has in life…. [*Ang kamahalan ng tao’y wala sa … mataas na kalahayan sa balat ng lupa*]” (Sta. Maria 74-7). Instead of aristocratic postures, the Katipunan Code of Conduct upheld “beautiful behaviour, and is true to his word, with honor and virtue; who does not oppress others or allows oneself to be oppressed [*yaong may magandang ugali, may isang pangungusap, may dlangal at puri; yaong di napaaapi’t di nakikiapi*]. When these egalitarian
principles were publicly violated against the founding father of the organization itself, the Supremo had little room for recourse but to rise up and defend his own dignity and protect the prestigious role that his position represented as founder of The Supreme, most Honorable Association of the Children of the Nation [Kataastaasang Kagalanggalangg Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan].

ANG KAPWA AT ANG KAIBA (THE SAME AND THE OTHER)

One of the complaints raised by the revolutionary movement against the Spanish colonial government stems from its failure to live up to the expectations of the pacto de sangre between King Sikatuna, who represented the natives, and Legazpi, representing the king of Spain. This ritual of friendship, according to Bonifacio, was a covenant sealed with drops of blood drunk by both [kapwa] parties to signify their “true and absolute promise not to renege on their agreement [tunay at lubos na pagtatapat na di magtataksil sa pinagkayarian]” (Almario 152). Bonifacio lamented that the natives expected the newcomers to teach greatness and to further enlighten their minds; but they, unfortunately, were “intoxicated by the sweetness of their own beautiful words.”

With the advent of the colonial regime under the influence of the friars, the ritualistic expression of interpersonal relationships [pakikipagkapwa] was sublimated to submissiveness to the will of God which engendered such negative virtues as fear, meekness, patience and conformity. Examples of these virtues were amply documented in Modesto de Castro’s proto-novel, Urbana at Feliza (Modesto de Castro 3; 5). Through the writings of the ilustrado propagandists who saw the progressive ideas in Europe, the seething outrage being experienced by the Indios in the hands of the friars inflamed and inspired the revolutionaries to subvert the established medieval values by propounding the modernist principle that “true piety is charity and love for fellowmen [tunay na kabanalan ay pagkakawanggawa, ang pag-ibig sa kapwa]” (Almario 157). They believed that “The value of the person is not in being sovereign, not in an aquiline nose or in a white face, it is not in the priestly SUBSTITUTE FOR GOD, nor is it in the high station one has in life … but … in one who has beautiful behavior [Ang kamahalan ng tao’y wala sa pagkahari, wala sa tangos ng ilong at puti ng mukha, wala sa pagkaparing KAHALILI NG DIYOS, wala sa mataas na kalagayan sa lupa … kundi … yaong may magandang asal]” (Sta. Maria 75).

Instead of the metaphysical norms preached by the friars, the Katipuneros relied on the righteousness of their own reason as the standard measure of their relationships. Katuwiran, the Tagalog term for reason, afterall, is derived from katuwidan or straight
forthrightness. Rationality must therefore emanate in action, and not in mere lofty speeches. According to the Kartilya, “Action is what we search for and action is what we look at; thus people who cannot act should not join us, even if they are excellent speakers [Dito’y gawa ang hinahanap at gawa ang tinitingnan; kaya’t hindi dapat pumasok ang di makagagawa kahit magaling magsalita]” (Almario 156). For them the excellent person (may kagalingan) is one who is virtuous, abides by his words, honorable and pure; one who does not allow oneself to be oppressed and does not oppress others; one who “knows how to be sensitive and knows how to cherish the land of his birth [yaong marunong magdamdam at marunong luminagap sa bayang tinubuan]” (Sta. Maria 75). This is corroborated by Bonifacio’s list of “Duties to be done by the Sons of the Nation” wherein the second highest duty (Love of God being the first) is to “Reflect always on the knowledge that true love and faith in God is in loving the land where one was born because it is the real love of your fellow human beings [Gunamgunamin sa sarili tuwina na ang matapat na pagsasampalataya sa Kanya ay ang pag-ibig sa lupang tinubuan sapagkat ito ang tunay na pag-ibig sa kapwa]” (70).

Fellowship, moreover, is not reduced to those who are like oneself but also embraces to others who are different (kaiba). The Kartilya reformulates the golden rule in familiar terms: “What thou dost not desire done unto thy wife, children and siblings, do not do unto the wife, children and siblings of others [Ang di mo ibig gawin sa asawa mo, anak at kapatid ay huwag mong gagawin sa asawa, anak at kapatid ng iba]” (75). As a fraternal organization subsumed by the motherhood of Inang Bayan, familial ties are extended to include not only everyone who signed the Katipunan covenant with their own blood but embraced even their enemies. In one of the first skirmishes with the civil guards, for example, the revolutionaries demonstrated the first Filipino “People Power” revolt by bringing the relatives of the civil guards in front of their quarters in order to persuade them to surrender to the Katipunan (Calairo 92).

Such novel strategies were not uncommon in the early stages of the revolution especially under Bonifacio’s deliberative management style. In electing their own officers, he constantly reminded his followers “never to choose anyone because of gratitude or because of kinship or friendship; they should choose only those who were able and deserving [hindi sa pamamagitan ng palautangang loob o pagkakaibigan o kaya’y pagkakamag-anak]” (Alvarez 152; 387).

A more descriptive text that renders the prefix ka more profusely can be found in Alvarez’es narrative which was unfortunately not included in the English translation. It reads as follows: “Hindi punong kaya iniinalal ay dahil sa kapalautangan ng loob, dahil sa pagkakaibigan, dahil sa suyo o dahil sa kamag-anak. Sa madaling salita; pinunong pinaniniwalaan
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sa karapatan at kakayanan; igagalang at susundin ng mga dapat masakop] [A leader should not be voted for because he has collected a lot of debts of gratitude, nor because of friendship nor because of sweet words nor kinship. In other words, elect a leader who is believed for his rights and abilities, is respectable and deemed worthy of his followers.]” (152, 387).

These early elections were characterized by “exchange of views and impressions [pagmumuni’t palagayan sa sari-saring pag-uusap]” and ended with cheering and jubilation for the elected officers (151-2, 387). Bonifacio also allowed the free flow of ideas among his followers, such as when he asked Santiago Alvarez about the possibility of making their own armaments after realizing the inferiority of their armed forces during their initial skirmishes with the Spanish civil guards. Encouraged by the Supremo’s openness to suggestions, Alvarez recalled the home made cannons of his youth that could be modified to conform to their current needs. The Supremo immediately executed his idea by mobilizing the different talents of their members toward the construction of such cannons; carpenters, tinsmiths, mechanics, bakers and traders were organized to accomplish the task (152-3).

Beyond the shared fellowship in their love for the country, the Kartilya deferred, in its pronouncements, in favor of the less privileged, especially the oppressed. The eighth precept of the Kartilya states that one must “Defend the oppressed and fight the oppressor [Ipagtanggol mo ang naaapi at kabakahin ang umaapi]” while Bonifacio’s list of “Duties to be Done by the Sons of the Nation stipulates that one must “Share what one can with anyone in torment or great suffering from poverty or misery [Bahaginan ng makakaya ang alinnang nagdaralita]” (Sta. Maria 71-75). The strength of men, the physical prowess that makes a man apparently revered by the women of those days, must be used to favor others: especially the weak, the poor and the oppressed.

As the eldest among his siblings who assumed fatherhood when his own father died in his youth, Bonifacio, founding father of the Katipunan, offered a way to reconcile the abyss between sameness (kapwa) and difference (kaiba) by including among the duties of the sons of the nation, the provision that one must desire the happiness of each other by becoming an exemplar of one’s fellows in heeding and fulfilling obligations. He says that “Diligence in one’s means of livelihood is the true love and care of one’s self, wife, child, sibling or countrymen [Ang kasipagan sa paghahanapbuhay ay siyang tunay na pag-ibig at pagmamahal sa sarili, sa asawa, anak, at kapatid o kababayan]” (Sta. Maria 71). Not unlike a diligent father, Bonifacio’s hope is that his unceasing labor for the revolution will ultimately bear fruit for his loved ones. The task of the visionary leader, after all, is
to provide the structural arena wherein profound friendship, relief from oppression and suffering, and prosperity for all can be made possible.

The Katipunan notions of *kapwa* and *kaiba* are both sustained by performing heroic deeds for the native land (*tinubuang lupa*) since the welfare of the first two depends on the third. An impoverished motherland cannot adequately support the needs of its various citizens. Bonifacio thereby exhorts his followers, through his immortal poem, “Love for the Nativeland [*Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa*]” to be willing to sacrifice themselves for the motherland: “When the time comes that the welfare of the nation is endangered and she needs to be upheld, one shall strive to turn and leave behind one’s child, wife, parents and siblings in order to heed her entreaties [*Kung ang bayang ito’y nasasapanganib/ At siya ay dapat na itangkilik, / Ang anak, asawa, magulang at kapatid / Isang tawag niya’y tatalikdang pilit*” (Almario 142). It is from this unconditional commitment that the positive values of freedom (*kalayaan*), industriousness (*kasipagan*), excellence (*kagalingan*) and reasonableness (*katwiran*) comes to the fore and are harnessed as bountiful gifts to be offered to one’s beloved motherland. Interpersonal relations (*Pakikipagkapwa*), when mediated by the ethos of service for others who are different, leads to a societal understanding and structural transformation of one’s kinship relations that include the broader context of fellowship among human beings.

The key to the transition from kinship relations to societal transformation, as Ileto suggests, is when the motherland is enabled to secure for her children the state of making choices for themselves and for each other (*layaw*) (*Pasyon* 108-9). This is the legitimate aspiration of those born under disadvantageous social positions, on the one hand, and the starting point of human development for those who have been privileged to join the emancipated middle classes, on the other hand. The problem of the revolutionaries, therefore, is how to achieve freedom while the question posed by the *ilustrados* was what they can do with their freedoms. Jose Rizal’s heroism proved to be the pivotal link that turned the tide towards the foundation of a new nation and Bonifacio had the insight and the courage to seize the meaning of Rizal’s martyrdom for the nation.

**KABABAYAN, KATIWALA AT KAPANGYARIHAN: MAGDALO AT MAGDIWANG**

[**COMPATRIOT, CONFIDANT AND POWER: MAGDALO AND MAGDIWANG**]

In his battle cry, “Collective Violence of the Sons of the Nation,” [*Katipunan Mararahas ng mga Anak ng Bayan*], Andres Bonifacio refers to the martyrdom of “our beloved countryman Jose Rizal, who already opened in our hearts a wound that will never
heal [sa ating pinakaiibig na kababayan na si M. Jose Rizal ay nagbukas na sa ating pusong isang sugat na kalian pa ma’y hindi mababahaw]” (Almario 154), as the spark that inflamed even the most cold-blooded indifference among his countrymen. Bonifacio then rallied his followers to likewise perform heroic acts that will defend the nation, the sacred ground of their collective aspirations for freedom. The hero or bayani, in Tagalog language, is rooted in the word and world of the nation or bayan. Heros are venerated because of the sacrifices they offered for the sake of their nation. Heroic deeds (kabanyanihan) further inspire others to participate in the common cause of protecting and achieving the collective aspirations of a people.

Emilio Jacinto further articulated this principle of prioritizing the needs of the nation by making a distinction between the nation and its government and emphasized the relative importance of the former by comparing the latter to “a sail that needs the wind, a fruit that requires a flower” (qtd. in Almario 173) and argued that the former is constituted by nothing else but “the gathering of all the Tagalogs; of everyone who grew up in the whole islands [ang katipunan ng lahat ng Tagalog; ang lahat na tumutubo sa Sangkapuluan]” (173-4). According to him, everything is derived from the nation: the soldiers are her children, wealth and abundance are from its workers, might and power comes from the people (177).

Jacinto recognized, nevertheless, that the pragmatic demands of governance require someone who will head and direct the collective action of the members that constitute the government. He then prescribes that the figure head who leads the collectivity must be willing to submit to the principle of equality for all. In the event that those who have been mandated to govern were no longer serving the welfare of their constituents, then the latter has the right to withdraw their support from their leaders and punish them for their misdeeds.

Jacinto argued further that the collective welfare of the nation is the basis for the unity of the different members of societies. Kapangyarihan, the the Tagalog word for power, after all, is derived from yari, to make, which means that it is an artificially constructed human bond that merely depends on contractual agreements (napagkayarian). An agreement that no longer conforms to the whole collectivity (kalahatan), therefore, is null and void because the leaders who represented the nation are mere care-takers or katiwala, of the commonweal (176). Bonifacio’s objections against Spanish rule were premised on the breach of the pacto de sangre between Legazpi and Sikatuna. In his essay “What the Tagalogs should know [Ang dapat mabatid ng mga Tagalog],” he claimed that the Spaniards submitted themselves to the traditional practice the blood compact “as a token of their loyal promise
not to be faithless to what had been agreed upon: ]tanda ng tunay at lubos na pagtatapat na di magtatakil sa pinagkayarian[” (152; *italics mine*). For Bonifacio, the Spaniards reneged on their promises and the natives, therefore, had every right not to abide by a breached contract.

This dialectical and often tragic relationship between the nation and the state had been the story of human organizations since the ancient musings of Sophocles regarding the fate of Atigone and his uncle Creon, and the more sophisticated methods of social analysis articulated in Habermas’s lifeworld-systems theory. The delicate balance between these dualisms are tilted in favour of one or the other depending on the contingent demands of the historical moment. Contemporary events in the Philippines, however, are reminding us that this historical divide between the Magdalo and Magdiwang factions are still replaying their cunning plots. Like a psychological trauma, there remains the opposition of the militaristic minds, on the one hand; and on the other hand, those who represent the marginalized sectors claiming for themselves the title of being the new Bonifacicos of the twenty-first century. The people power events of 1986 and 2001 can likewise be interpreted from the perspective of temporary alliances between the well-organized militaristic forces of the Magdalos and the deliberative non-governmental organizations of the Magdiwangs. The dialectical tension between the state and the nation, the Magdalo and the Magdiwang, can serve as a useful tool in understanding the political upheavals of Philippine society today.

**KABANALAN AT KAWANG-GAWA [HOLINESS AND ACTS OF CHARITY]**

A discussion of the Katipunan world view will be incomplete without taking into account the religious dimension of their thoughts. Suffering a life lived between the yoke of abuses committed by the friars, and the unfulfilled emancipatory promises of the enlightenment project introduced by Rizal and the *ilustrados*, the revolutionaries found consolation in the modernist idea of a God that dwells in the inner recesses of human reason. In his reflective essay, “Liwanag at Dilim,” Jacinto advanced the proposition that Authentic belief, respect, love and following God, therefore, true worship, is the respect, love and following of reason. Every action, speech and movement are therefore measured by this because the whole of reason comes from and dwells in the grandeur, goodness and Divinity of God. [Ang tunay na pagsampalataya, paggalang, pag-ibig at pagsunod sa Diyos, samakatwid, ang tunay na pagsamba, ay ang
Jacinto further argues that humans, with their giftedness of reason, can accordingly distinguish, by themselves, the true light that emanates from the goodness of the simple man from the alluring, but false and pretentious glitter of the bejewelled, carriage-riding, elites (166).

Salvation is to be achieved, as a consequence, “by charitable acts – the beautiful flower of sacred hearts and the sweet relief for those in miserable fates [pagkakawanggawa – ang bulaklak na maganda ng pusong banal at matamis na lunas ng may sawing kapalaran]” and by work which is to be conceived “not as a punishment and suffering but a good given by God as a memorial of his infinite Love [ang gumawa ay hindi parusa at hirap kundi pala at kagalingan na ipinakaloob ng Diyos sa tao bilang alaala ng di matingkala niyang Pag-ibig]” (181). He attributes the source of this work ethic to a popular stanza of Francisco Baltazar: “A person who grew up spoiled is usually bare/Shallow in thinking and judgement [Ang laki sa layaw karaniwang hubad/ Sa bait at muni’t sa hatol ay salat]” (182). For the Katipuneros, one must not waste time: “wealth can be lost and recovered; but time that already passes will not pass again [ang yamang nawala’y mangyayaring magbalik; nguni’t panahong nagdaan na’y di na muling magdadaan]” (Sta. Maria 74).

The biblical allusions cited by Jacinto in Liwanag at Dilim [Light and Darkness], anticipated the primary texts of our contemporary theologians of liberation: the cleansing of the temple (Matthew 21), Jesus’s denouncement of jewels and stones that adorned the house of God (Luke 21) and the exaltation of the humble and the humiliation of the proud (Matthew 14). The friars may have actually succeeded in preaching the Gospels to the Indios but the latter used them as utopian visions that led them to emancipate themselves from the clutches of the colonial order. Religious transcendence, therefore, was to be achieved by the Katipuneros not merely by pious rituals but by using one’s own reason and by living according to the universal tenets of compassion for their brethren.

The revolutionaries also composed novenas that seek forgiveness from their enemies. A popular prayer, for example, was invoked as an offering:

to ask God for the victory of the nation’s freedom. But if this is not in accordance to God, our Lord, for the Blessed Virgin and for the Mother of the Church, we ask
Spain that they will not be heavily punished for rising against her [upang hilingin sa Diyos ang tagumpay ng Bayan. Nguni’t kung ito’y hindi angkop sa Diyos na ating Panginoon, para sa Mahal na Birhen at para sa ating Ina ng simbahan, hinihiling niyang ang Espanya na hindi niya parusahan nang buong bigat yaong mga nagalsa laban sa kanya.]
(Medina Ang Kabite 91-2)

Confronted and terrified by the stench of death in their midst, the revolutionaries realized the contingency of their convictions and invoked the outstretched mercy of God, the all-encompassing Other, to intercede on their behalf in the hope that they can receive forgiveness from their enemies in the event that they failed to obtain the desired freedom for their motherland. God, for the revolutionaries, remained as the final intermediary in the event of their failure to overcome their enemies. They hoped for a possible reconciliation with their enemies, who, after all, share the same faith in a God who will eventually forgive everyone for their transgressions. God, as the ultimate Other, embraces both natives and colonizers as they put their lives at stake in a fierce struggle for the immortal values of freedom and patriotism.6

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

The preponderance of the usage of the prefix *ka* in the Tagalog language is indicative of the importance of the social dimension in our daily lives and offers hope that we shall have the necessary social and intellectual capital that will allow us to weather the global demands of the twenty-first century. This intellectual exercise of rereading Philippine history from the perspective of the Tagalog prefix *ka* is a response to the necessity of reappropriating our past in view of our current needs and a modest attempt to overcome the dread of the uncertain future. Since we cannot predict the latter, we have no other recourse but to dig into the former in order to enable us to celebrate our collective identity towards the future. Every generation must go through this process of historical renewal if they are to move forward with a collective vision of the meaning of their being in the world with others.

That the prefix *ka* can accommodate differences (*kaiba*) and opposition (*kalaban*) confirms the infinite depth and indefinite breadth of our capacity to absorb various kinds and levels of solidarity. We cannot even deny the social dimension of our lives because even our attempt to exclude others from our social sphere merely redounds to our admission of
the reality of the excluded other. Our opponents (*kalaban*) and our enemies (*kaaway*) serve as our complementary co-bearers (*katuwang*) in our shared struggle against one other.

The Katipunan’s principle of being co-bearers is not only applicable to their perceived egalitarian relationships to women but relevant also to our contemporary social issues that demand the complementary participation of other people in order to accomplish shared tasks that cannot be achieved by individual efforts. Co-bearers are able to assist others by maintaining their position on the opposite side, and not by being on the same side as their partners. Differences, therefore, must be encouraged and not expunged from social participation, because they play an important role in the balancing and harmonizing of difficult and complicated tasks that enhance the collective welfare of society as a whole. A contemporary German critical theorist, Karl-Otto Apel, clarifies this notion in terms of a “principle of complementarity” which states that “polar opposite values must presuppose each other but cannot be reduced to each other” (147).

The unfortunate slaying of Bonifacio in the hands of his comrades haunts us to this day as we erect grand monuments in his honor that pale in comparison with those who were compelled to execute him on that lonely spot in Cavite. The third precept in the list of duties enumerated by Bonifacio for the children of the nation is as valid for us today as when he initially wrote it during the initial stages of the revolution: “Engrave in thy heart a hope for profuse honor and destiny, an aspiring for that death which redeems the country by raising it out of slavery [Ikintal sa puso ang pag-asa sa malabis na kapurihan at kapalaran na kung ikamatay ng tao'y magbubuhat sa pagliligtas sa kaalipinan ng bayan]” (Sta. Maria 70).

We continue to mourn Bonifacio’s death at the hands of our own countrymen in a manner that echoes the revolutionaries who tried to relive the sacrifice of Jose Rizal at the altar of their colonial masters. We rekindle the memory of our heroes by living the eternal meaning of their lives in history. *Kasaysayan*, the Filipino word for history, reiterates the meaning (*kasaysay*-an) of collective existence as a nation in terms of its story (*ka-saysay*-an). The Katipuneros continue to teach and to remind us of the national destiny they have given their lives for, the sacred ideals of what we could have been, if only the revolutionaries had succeeded. Their ideals continue to inspire us to become what we truly are as a people who speak and live the language of fellowship (*ka*).

The humanistic values upheld by our revolutionary leaders were most evident during the emotional outbursts that triggered the dissension between Bonifacio and Aguinaldo’s followers. During that dramatic incident, Mariano Alvarez defined for us our notion of humanity in terms of how we deal with others (*pagpapakatao sa pakikipagkapwa-tao*). Being human for him means “to protect and defend others, especially political
refugees who seek asylum with us. We are rational and we do not expose those who talk big but accomplish nothing [marunong kumupkop at magtanggol sa kapwa, lalo na sa mga dito’y nanganganlong lamang; may isip at hindi humihiya sa mga nagsasalitang matatapang; ngunit walang nagagawa]” (84; 319). Premised behind his arguments are the virtues of care, hospitality and a sense of shame; ethical registers that can be invoked only before the eyes of others. Antonio Montenegro, Alvarez’s antagonist, saved Alvarez’s honor and prevented the eruption of violence in their midst through the intercession of Josephine Bracken and Jose Rizal’s sisters, Trining and Josefina, who struck a compromise by putting him under their jurisdiction as a form of house arrest. The women of the revolution, as co-bearers of the national patrimony, served as cradles or safety nets to “bring together” [katipunan] the contending factions of the Katipunan in order to remind them of their shared fraternity as children of the motherland.

Although these events happened more than a hundred years ago, their emotional tenor still ring in our contemporary minds because they echo the intersubjective values that we continue to uphold in our political decisions, especially in our penchant for electing congenial candidates instead of deliberating on their platforms of governance. We have forgotten Bonifacio’s reminder to vote for those who are “respectable and worthy of his followers” and Gregoria de Jesus’s admonition to Aguinaldo about prioritizing the national interest over preserving harmony among our relatives. We have not transcended the problems of nepotism after hundreds of years of tutelage by our ruling elites.

Political decisions, however, are magnified only because they happen on the stage of national events. We can discern the marks of our tendency to promote intersubjectivism, moreover, if we pay attention to the contemporary cultural icons that dominate our everyday lives. Our major television networks, for example, prefix ka in order to announce their brand of programming and to earn the allegiance of their audiences by identifying themselves as either the sympathetic companions of their viewers, or their family members [kapuso or kapamilya]. Our national symbols are also replete with the etchings of the baybayin ka: the medals of our national artists, the emblems of the Philippine National Police, the militant symbolisms of non-government organizations and social movements, and the pacto de sangre performed by misadventurous military officers who appropriated for themselves the symbolisms of the Magdalo soldiers. The mutiny held by military officers who occupied the Oakwood Apartment Hotel in Makati last July 27, 2003, was resolved through the intercession of their leader’s mother (kamag-anak) and their classmates (kaklase or kabatch) in the Philippine Military Academy and they surrendered to their superiors who referred to them as their young kids (bata).
We did not have the opportunity in this study to trace the uses of *ka* in the many other significant social movements of our national history. We focused our attention on the founding events that initiated the trajectory of our nation’s history in order to retrieve the primordial meaning of our collective destiny. But the contemporary symbols used by protesters who continually express their grievances through the parliament of the streets and the revolutionary movements in the countryside remind us of their historical continuity with the symbols used by our founding parents. They bestow recognition on their comrades and sympathizers by marking them with the titular prefix *Ka* before their first names. *Ka* Crispin (Beltran), *Ka* Roger and *Ka* Amado are a few examples of the familiar names that have been called upon to stand in the leftists’ hall of fame. Even rightists of the political spectrum have used the revolutionary symbols to identify themselves with the people. Government programs mimic revolutionary symbolisms by imitating the KKK mnemonic device in order to co-op the support of the people, while politicized youth organizations, such as Ferdinand Marcos’ *Kabataang Barangay* (KB) and the leftists’ *Kabataang Makabayan* (KM), both used the ancient baybayin *Ka* in their symbols of identity.

The discourses of our everyday lives, moreover, leave subtle traces that remind us of the underlying principle of relationality in our domestic affairs. There is a difference, for example, between our household helpers who are treated as *utusan* (servants) instead of *katulong* (assistants) and *kasambahay* (household helpers). Those who belong to the first category, unlike those in the second and the third, are not at liberty to take their own initiative on matters that pertain to their jobs. Bonifacio’s followers were in fact punished by being demoted to mere servants [“*utusan*”] after they were convicted by the revolutionary tribunal as accomplices to the Supremo’s crimes (Alvarez 350). One can be treated as assistants and a member of the household and be given important responsibilities only after gaining the trust and confidence of one’s master. This was indeed the case of the spy who became a Colonel’s assistant after he was pardoned by General Mariano Alvarez for “betraying his race, or a kinsman, a brother or a comrade [*magbili ng kalahi, kadugo, kapatid or kapanalig*]” (Alvarez 130; 365). Today, our domestic helpers who flee from their abusive employers abroad must have been maltreated like slaves (*alipin*) whereas those who stayed were lucky enough to have found families who have treated them as one of their own (*kapamilya*). We still have the unfinished task of expanding the scope of our familiar ties so that it can include others who do not belong to our narrow circles of kinship.

The Katipunero’s identification of the nation with the *katutubo* – anyone raised in the islands – can be expanded in today’s language to everyone who grew up on this
planet because we are all rooted in the same earth that sustains our biological needs. From 
this perspective, marginalized indigenous peoples will no longer be excluded from the 
paradigms of development constructed by mainstream ideologies because their life-forms 
shall become the normative principle of citizenship. Citizenship, after all, is primordially 
and organically rooted in the native land and legally acquired by the ordinary means of 
“naturalization” which requires speaking the language and imbibing the culture of the host 
country. In his celebrated work, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson expressed his 
appreciation for “the wonderful word” of “naturalization” to show that nationhood was 
conceived “in language, not in blood” (Anderson 145), but his scholarly explorations were 
confined to the fictitious dreams of the *ilustrados* and failed to delve into the organic roots 
of the revolutionary language practiced by native Tagalog speakers.

We do have the virtues of hospitality and concern for the welfare of our fellow 
human beings (*kapwa-tao*) which have often been misinterpreted by foreigners in the past, 
and are still misinterpreted by a more recent observer (1998) as attempts to sow 
seeds of gratitude to be harvested in the future (Paterson-Hamilton 430-1). The increasing 
demand for our labor force today among the globalized service industries, such as medical 
personnel and call center operators, may be explained in terms of our tendency to want 
to please others even at the expense of our own personal convenience. The Filipino 
psyche, however, according to the research program embarked by Virgilio Enriquez of 
the University of the Philippines, is grounded in a shared fellowship with what is most 
common among human beings, *pakikipagkapwa-tao*: “not whether someone is rich or 
poor, not whether somebody is young or old, man, woman or child, but rather for the 
fundamental characteristics in people, that is, as human beings” (de Guia 8).

Such negative distinctions, however, would end up in an infinite abyss of denials 
if these avowed “phenomenological descriptions” (vii) fail to gain positive insights into 
what it means to be human. In *Pambungad sa Metapisika*, Fr. Roque Ferriols, S.J. suggests 
that “*nakikipagkapuwa ang kalooban at kalooban* [the infinite depth of the human person can be 
plumbed by participating in the interior life of another]”(161). This is consistent with Ileto’s 
early definition of *damay* (being with) in terms of participation with others. An authentic 
human being, therefore, is someone who can participate, not only in the mundane affairs of 
others, but also share in the profound depths, in the interior life, of another.

Interiority further indicates that there is an agent or someone who can take 
responsibility for the actions being undertaken for others. *Pananagutan*, the Tagalog word 
for taking responsibility, refers to the capacity to respond [*sumagot*] to the demands of the 
situation. We respond with our *pag-ako* or *akuin* or owning up to a deed or misdeed. *Pag-*
ako or akuin, moreover is premised, in the word ako or oneself, as the agent of an act or the owner of an object.

Responsibility cannot be imputed if no one is able to respond and nobody stakes a claim on a situation, action, or object. Blaming others and false modesty for one’s accomplishments will not lead to the immediate determination of the responsible agent nor effectively aid in the resolution of the problems at hand. We tend to attribute good or evil acts to circumstances beyond our control such as luck or accidents predetermined by fate. We thank the wheel of fortune when we are rewarded for our own efforts, while convicted criminals usually claim that they accidentally killed (nakapatay) or unintentionally shot (nakabaril) someone in order to shy away from taking personal responsibility for their deeds.

The self or kaakuhan, nevertheless, is always situated in particular historical contexts that will have to be recognized and accepted as also our own (pag-amin) if we are to achieve a fuller sense of personal identity. Our uniqueness as individual and collective persons is bound with the historical narratives of our individual and collective lives. The eminent historian, Fr. Horacio dela Costa, S.J., upon realizing that history can only teach us about “concrete historical knowledge” concluded that we can only learn, from studying historical events,

a kind of wisdom. Not ready made solutions to our present ills; not fantastic speculations about the future; but the courage to face the fact, the humility to learn from them, the intelligence to act upon them; and the faith to believe that if we do what in us lies, God will do the rest. (“History”69)

What lies in us, I submit, is nothing else than the well-considered voice of our historically mediated “inner (or higher, better, authentic) self which we should respect and listen to if it is our wish to become truly good persons, deserving of the respect of others” (Clarke 166). This historical “inner self” transcends the spectre of individualism by embracing the larger human community of fraternal persons in which we all belong. This larger human community serves as the overarching principle that can guide the transcendence of traditional civilizations that have clashed in recent years due to their lack of mutual recognition for the complementary roles they all play as co-bearers of human civilization. The Katipunero notion of being co-bearers suggests that the western monolithic and linear model of human development can no longer serve as the icon
of modernity with the advent of alternative modernities being foisted by progressive Asian economies such as that of Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and more recently, the resurgence on the world stage of the ancient civilizations of India, China and the Islamic world.

The problems that confront us today – global warming, food shortages and pervasive poverty – require our radical openness to others, as exemplified and embodied by the inclusiveness of the Tagalog prefix *ka* and the necessity of encouraging the emergence of the distinctive contribution to the solution of these shared problems by other cobearers who likewise participate in the charting of our common destiny. Not unlike complex ecological niches that strengthen their propensity for survival by enhancing the plurality of members within their environments, the social fabric of our nations and of our world will likewise be made more stable by the different perspectives contributed by various peoples in our collective discourses that will lead to the enhancement of our common goods. What our forebears have bequeathed to us, as heirs of the “The most Supreme and most Honorable Association of the Children of the Nation” demands that we “consecrate our life … to a large and holy greatness” [Ang kabuhayang … ginugugol sa isang malaki at banal na kadakilaan] (Sta. Maria 74) in service to our nation, in respect for our fellow human beings, and in fidelity to the rationality that dwells in God. Only with this open-ended synoptic inclusion of others can we eventually affirm the grandeur of our own humanity and the greatness of the divinity in us.
NOTES

1 It is notable that upon learning that Aguinaldo’s honor was challenged by a functionary at the port of Manila on his first visit to learn more about the Katipunan from Bonifacio, the latter arranged for a duel to defend the former’s reputation (Alvarez 1992, 6-7). Unbearable intrigues fomented against each other by their followers, however, almost led to a duel between them in January, 1897, had it not been for the alert intervention of the other leaders of the Katipunan (76).

2 It is notable that the philosophical moment of reflection is implicit in the term kanlungan -- a reminder of the Buddha’s search for enlightenment under the Bodi tree and the Visayan word pagpamalandong, the act of sitting under the shade of a tree in order to reflect on one’s fate. The term “retreat,” used by Paula Carolina Malay, Alvarez’s translator, approximates this insight because of its ponderous religious connotation.

3 Agoncillo reports that the first official flag of the society was a red banner with three white letter K’s arranged horizontally at the center (History 156). Zaide and Lugos also referred to the flag with three K’s as the first Katipunan flag, although they also mentioned the flag with one K as an early Katipunan flag (12).

4 If we are to believe Don Telesforo Canseco’s reckoning, Aguinaldo supposedly gathered 146 votes as opposed to Bonifacio’s eighty votes and Mariano Alvarez’s thirty votes during the second round of voting in Tejeros (217).

5 Joseph Ejercito Estrada (Erap) claimed for himself the title of “Bonifacio of the 21st Century” during his inaugural address as the thirty-first President of the Philippine Republic.

6 The “Our Father” addresses God as the heavenly other: “Our father, who art in heavern [Ama namin, sumasalangit Ka]”
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