CONNECTED HISTORIES IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

John D. Blanco

Counter-Hispanization in the Colonial Philippines

Literature, Law, Religion, and Native Custom

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the Colonial Philippines

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Connected Histories in the Early Modern World

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Cover illustration: "Map of the San Isidro Biñán Hacienda, along with the separate settlements [sitios] that comprise it and the new demarcation made this past 27 February, 1745." The new demarcations resulted from the agreements following the 1745 Tagalog Rebellion. Source: ES.41091.AGI//MP-FILIPINAS,154BIS, Archivo General de Indias, Seville.

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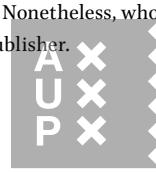

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Per me reges regnant et legum conditores iusta decernun

[Through me kings reign and princes decree justice].

— Proverbs 8:15

Hay en el colonialismo una función muy peculiar para las palabras: las palabras no designan, sino encubren… De este modo, las palabras se convirtieron en un registro ficcional, plagado de eufemismos que velan la realidad en lugar de designarla.

— Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, "La universalidad de lo ch'ixi"[1]

1 "Words have a very peculiar function in colonialism: words do not expose, but veil… In this way, words transform into a fictional record, plagued with euphemisms that mask reality instead of exposing it." Cited in *Sociología de la imagen. Miradas ch'ixi desde la historia andina*, 175.

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This book is dedicated to my parents,
Rene (1936–2016) and Nita.

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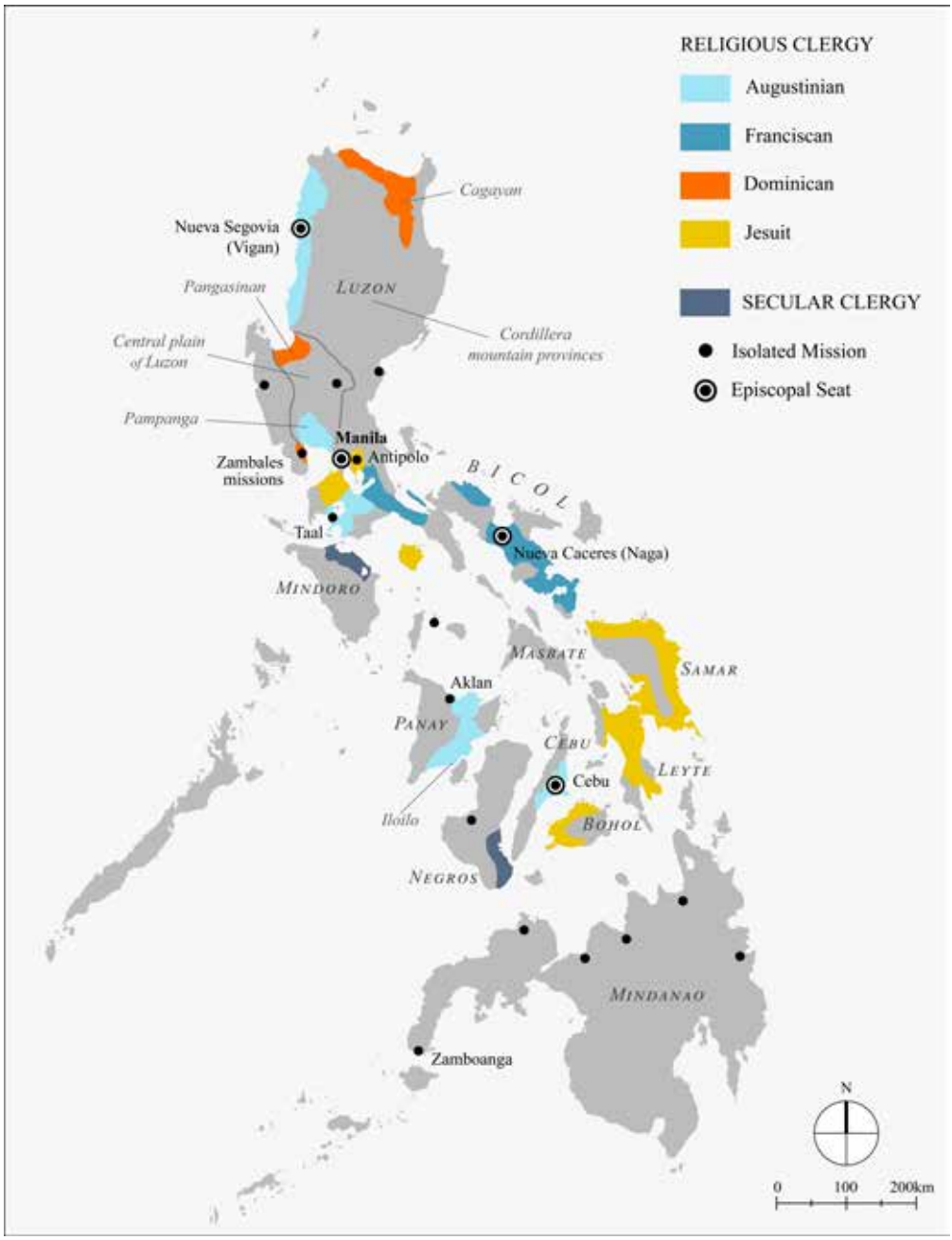

Figure 1: The mission fields of the several religious Orders and the secular clergy c. 1650,with designation of mission towns and placenames mentioned in the book. Copyright © Mathilde Grimaldi, 2022. Map by Daniel Doeppers, in "The Evolution of the Geography or Religious Adherence in the Philippines before 1898," 100. Copyright permission granted by author.

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Introduction: Towards a Counter-History of the Mission *Pueblo*

> Another stereotype that needs reexamination for a better understanding of the Filipino people during the Spanish occupation is the supposed ease, speed, and thoroughness of the Conquest.
>
> — William Henry Scott, *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain*, 22

The Great Unsettlement

In 2009, UCLA archaeologist Stephen Acabado published a surprising and controversial discovery from his research on the dating of the Ifugao rice terraces in the Cordillera Mountain region in northern Luzon (Philippines) (see Figure 2). As the author mentions in the introduction to his study, the rice terraces are included in UNESCO's World Heritage List, which describes the terraces as a "living cultural landscape of unparalleled beauty… Built 2000 years ago and passed on from generation to generation, the Ifugao Rice Terraces represent an enduring illustration of an ancient civilization that surpassed various challenges and setbacks posed by modernization."[1] UNESCO's description, however, relied on early scholarship of the rice terraces, which went largely unquestioned for decades. This earlier estimation was based largely on speculation of how long it would have taken for the existing Ifugao highland population to build such a vast network.[2] Acabado's research, however, based on chronometric data from carbon samples along a section of the network close to the lowland regions of Luzon, determined that, far from being 2000 years old, their creation and period of greatest expansion took place after 1585 – in other words, after the arrival of the Spaniards. His research confirms a hypothesis first developed by Felix Keesing: "the

1 "Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras," web.

2 Stephen Acabado, "A Bayesian Approach to Dating Agricultural Terraces," 802; see also Acabado, "Colonial Resistance through Political and Economic Consolidation," 287–301.

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terraced landscapes of the Ifugao are the end-result of population *expansion* into the Cordillera highlands in response to Spanish colonization."[3] Stitching together Keesing's history with this data led Acabado to the conclusion that the evidence of "indigenous population migration away from the Spanish and into this highland *refugium* [was] significant enough to expand terrace systems" (811).

While Acabado's findings may come as a great disappointment to both UNESCO and cultural nationalists touting the antiquity of this seemingly superhuman feat of environmental engineering, his research exposes us to a different kind of amazement. It allows us a panoramic view of a secret history unfolding just outside the gaze of the Spanish colonizers – for two and a half centuries. If we view the terraces as an invention of the early modern Spanish period rather than antiquity, they attest to a massive, collective refusal of colonial rule: a refusal and flight of coastal and lowland populations into the Luzon northern hinterlands, which led to the great *counter*-settlement of these highlands between the sixteenth and (at least) seventeenth centuries; and, carried on undiscovered by Spaniards until around the 1750s.[4]

Acabado's research has several implications. The first and most important is that the overweening focus on "Hispanization" in Philippine historiography has obscured a twin and counter-history of Spanish depredation, native deracination and derealization, terror, and (in the case of these highland refugee populations) retreat from the coastal and lowland populations. Works like Robert Reed's classic study on "the rapid and complete Hispanization of the Philippines" through Christianity and urban settlement, for example, confidently estimated the procurement of Spanish suzerainty as early as the third decade of the occupation: an estimation that the work of recent scholars like Acabado has debunked.[5] In contrast, the history of the backlands phenomenon in Luzon and other parts of the Philippines reinforces the larger thesis made by Southeast Asian historian and anthropologist James Scott on the unwritten and suppressed histories of *unsettlement* among upland peoples throughout Southeast Asia. As Scott writes, "The history of

3 Cited in Acabado, "A Bayesian Approach," 803. Acabado compared his results with other historical data: most significantly, the disappearance of sixty villages in the lowland areas exposed to the Spanish presence between 1739 and 1789, compared to the preservation of over fifty villages in the highlands from around 1660 to the present day. See ibid., 813; and Acabado, "Taro Before Rice Terraces," 296.

4 Acabado, ibid. 286.

5 See Robert Reed, *Hispanic Urbanism in the Philippines: A Study of the Impact of Church and State*, 11.

Figure 2: Banaue Rice Terraces, Ifugao Province. Copyright © John Crux / Alamy Stock Photo, 2022.

hill peoples is best understood as a history not of archaic remnants but of 'runaways' from state-making processes in the lowlands… The effect of all state-making projects… was to create a shatter zone or flight zone to which those wishing to evade or to escape bondage fled."[6]

The case of the highland Ifugao – also called Igorots or Igorotes, although this term has grown to encompass the Kalinga, Benguets, Bontocs, and Apayos – as well as untold other indigenous identities, is particularly instructive. This culture, routinely derided or condemned by Spaniards as primitive, turns out to be a rather *modern* (or early modern) invention: an amalgamation of different indigenous groups living between the coast and the highlands, who *became* "Igorot" in the layered movements of flight, desertion, and apostasy from the Spanish conquest and mission pueblos.[7] Cultural anthropologist Alicia Magos, who researches the upland

6 See Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 24. Scott's argument draws in part from another (Philippine) anthropologist, William Henry Scott, who argued that the Philippine highland group identified as "Igorots" were actually the amalgamation of generations of lowland assimilation into the highlands, propelled by flight from Spanish dominion. See *The Discovery of the Igorots*; as well as "The Unconquered Cordilleras" in *Rediscovery*, 31–41; and *Of Igorots and Independence*, 11, 29–36.

7 See William Henry Scott, "The Unconquered Cordilleras," 35. For a comparative instance of "mistaken primitivism, see the case of Allen Holmberg's study of the Sirono of Bolivia, in Charles Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*, 3–34.

dwellers of Central Panay – a large island south of Luzon, in the Visayas region – arrived at a similar conclusion, based on her study of Bukidnon epics. Magos was initially struck by the boat-building tradition that these mountain people had retained for centuries through this oral tradition, after they had ceased to build boats or live in the coastal areas of the island. In fact, one of the chanted epics she succeeded in recording (the *Humadapnon*), which belonged to a severely endangered oral tradition, describes frequent episodes of sea travel. Her conclusion was that, while pre-Hispanic settlers on the island probably moved farther into the interior before the Spanish arrival, "[they] were later joined by other people who wanted to escape military recruitment during the Spanish regime… as some Spanish records of the early Spanish period mention the movement of lowlanders to the interior to escape tribute, forced labor and military conscription."[8]

The work of scholars like these leads to a second implication that this book will explore in greater detail. The point of contact, contiguity, and re-encounter between these histories of settlement and unsettlement was captured in the voluminous chronicles, correspondence, and literature of the mission frontier, which constituted *most* of the archipelago until at least the end of the eighteenth century. Yet the latter history remains stubbornly invisible. Why? While classic works of Philippine historiography would confidently pronounce that urban resettlement constituted a great success of Spanish colonial rule, and particularly the accomplishment of the monastic Orders and the Jesuits, one need only stare at the rice terraces in Banaue and other highland areas to acknowledge the equal success of native flight and escape *from* resettlement. This success unfolds before the beholder like words across the pages of a living book.

This living book, which substantiates the work of many recent scholars in history, anthropology, literature, and the arts, calls for a rethinking of Philippine history in the early modern period with greater attention to the colonial subjects who experienced it rather than the architects who imagined it. It is not just that the architects were writing at a far remove from their subjects; as I will argue, it is that their interpreters, detractors, translators, and even the architects themselves, engaged in acts of the imagination and fiction to obscure the lasting legacy of social anomie in the attempted projection of colonial society. The body of work that resulted from this imaginary is the literature of "spiritual conquest."

8 See Magos, "The Sugidanon of Central Panay," in *Edukasyon: Harnessing Indigenous Knowledge for Education*, 129. See also F. Landa Jocano, *Sulod Society*.

By reading this literature of the early modern period against that other living "book" of native flight and deracination etched into the Ifugao rice terraces, I argue, a different history comes to light. For one thing, the divergent character of this (counter-)history suggests that the genesis of Philippine colonial society, which emerged around the consolidation of mission-towns or *doctrinas* administered by Religious Orders, did not and does not reflect the consequence of the nebulous ethno-historical process of "Hispanization" as it is often portrayed; but rather its opposite – counter-Hispanization.[9] That is, mission-towns, far from initiating the process by which Spanish laws would be implemented in the frontier provinces, and in which Indian subjects would culturally assimilate Spanish customs, instead perpetuated a state of social anomie or lawlessness that the conquest had unleashed in these regions.[10]

Moreover, the religious imaginary order, even fantasy, that was expressed in the literature of Spain's "spiritual conquest," had a political function: it supplanted the (absence of) law in the name of supplementing or promising it. Examining these religious and historical texts as examples of literature and even *fiction* will enable us to fill in the gaps of the overarching frame(s) of colonial history, up to the point of calling these very frames into question. The outsized role of the religious imaginary in the writing of colonial history, in inverse proportion to the administration of law and political economy in the frontier provinces under the pastoral care of religious ministers, thus not only calls for a drastic revision of that history, but also a broader reconsideration of the role played by frontier provinces in the Americas as well as the Philippines, in the paradoxes of Spanish rule overseas and in the role of popular Christianity in colonial society.

Contrary to the general consensus in Philippine historiography, which credits the mendicant Orders and the Jesuits for curbing the impunity and violent excesses of the conquest, and facilitating a long, peaceful, and gradual conversion of the population to Christianity, I have focused instead on how the literature and politics of spiritual conquest reflect the contribution of these ministers to a protracted period of social anomie throughout the mission provinces for most of the colonial period (sixteenth-eighteenth

9 The locus classicus of this theory is John L. Phelan's *Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses 1565–1700*.

10 My understanding of social anomie draws from anthropologist Victor Turner's studies of liminality, social drama, and *communitas*, although I apply it specifically here to the literal suspension or malleability of laws under the immunity and impunity of religious privilege throughout the Philippines. See Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, 23–59 and 231–271. See also Marvin Olsen, "Durkheim's Two Concepts of Anomie," 37.

centuries). Instead of the mission serving as a "frontier institution," as Herbert Bolton famously characterized the mission in Latin America, the historical research and literary analyses in this book show that the mission served instead as an agent of *frontierization* – a term coined by Mexican historian Cecilia Sheridan Prieto to describe the social consequences of the mission complex in northern Mexico.[11] The evidence of social anomie, terror, and native maladjustment to Christianity and resettlement, in any case, finds abundant documentation in the religious chronicles and correspondence of the Orders themselves. Our difficulty in seeing and recognizing it as such stems from the narrative pretension and imaginary reach of "spiritual conquest" as the organizing metaphor of Philippine history in all areas outside of Manila (and perhaps Cebu) throughout the colonial period.

In tracing the historical arc of this narrative and the imaginary matrix it sustained, I will advance several interrelated arguments, some more explicitly than others. The first is that the events of Philippine history recorded in the chronicles of the religious Orders, along with the reports and correspondence with the Crown and colonial government, are anchored in an imaginative frame that arises out of Christian theology and, as such, deserve to be studied as works of creative literature as well as for their historical content. The second is that this imaginative frame had a political and a pastoral function. In addition to representing Philippine history in ways instructive, entertaining, and exemplary to the religious Order in question and also fellow (and oftentimes rival) religious Orders, these chronicles *engineered* the disappearance of the conquest as a historical fact, while reinforcing the protracted period of social anomie that ensued. They did so through their defense of the continued legal and ecclesiastical autonomy of the religious Orders and the mission lands from any effective oversight or unmediated exercise of civil or official Church authority. The literature of spiritual conquest, in other words, doubled as a manifesto for a de facto monastic sovereignty, as nineteenth-century propagandist for colonial reforms Marcelo H. del Pilar identified it; or "monachocracy," as scholars like Jean-Paul Potet call

11 "The Mission as Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies" was the title of a well-known essay by Herbert Bolton in 1917. Together with the fort or garrison, Bolton argued, the religious mission served as a "pioneering agency" that was tasked to fulfill both a material and spiritual end through the forced concentration of native populations [Sp. *congregación* or *reducción*] and their conversion to Christianity. See Bolton, "The Mission," 42–61. On "frontierization" [Sp. *fronterización*], see Cecilia Sheridan Prieto, *Fronterización del espacio hacia el norte de la Nueva España*, 63–64.

it today.[12] Religious writings like the historical chronicles of the religious Orders represented Christianity to both colonial officials and natives alike as the continuation of an unfinished conquest of the provinces outside Manila; and as an effective proxy for law in the law's absence or more specifically abeyance in these areas.

Third, the very same weakness of the Crown and colonial government upon which the authority of the religious Orders was based, also forced friars and Jesuits to rely on the very same peoples they were trying to resettle and convert. The literature of spiritual conquest, while overtly celebrating the willingness and enthusiasm of many natives to freely convert to Christianity under colonial conditions, thus also inadvertently reveals the co-invention of Philippine Christianity by friars and natives alike: a protracted surrender to Spanish rule under the religious ministers; the acceptance and refunctionalization of the Devil as a cipher for the native spirit world; the phantasmagorias of miracles and apparitions, as well as their routinization; and the necessary persistence of a frontier that made any form of effective colonial governance impossible.

Fourth and finally, the literature and imaginary matrix of spiritual conquest provide the model for the earliest significant examples of literature and theater in vernacular Tagalog. The significance of these early examples, however, lies not in the conformity of these works to their European models but rather their discrepancy and their preoccupation with the emergence of an ersatz colonial society under the mission town or *doctrina* and the stubborn perseverance of older pre-Hispanic forms of political authority, debt slavery, and poetic expression.[13] With the increased contact between the mission regions and the colonial metropolis of Manila as the seat of colonial government in the eighteenth century, came the proliferation of new practices, ambiguously referred to as native custom(s) [Tag. *ugalí*], which ultimately gave the lie to Christianization and colonial rule.

Taken together, these arguments aim to provide the sketch of a counter-history of mission settlement: demystifying the mission as the magical apparatus that sublates the collective trauma of a subjected people, brutalized by massacre, deracination, and cultural genocide, under the providential narrative of Christianity and civilization. The coherence of

12 See Pilar, *La soberanía monacal en Filipinas: apuntes sobre la funesta preponderancia del fraile en las islas, así en lo politico como en lo económico y religioso*; and Potet, *Seventeenth-Century Events at Liliw.*

13 See Virgilio Almario, *Muling Pagkatha sa Ating Bansa*, 116–117.

this counter-history derives from the ideas of counter-Hispanization, the staging or *mise-en-scène* of Christian phantasmagorias, and the evolution of a baroque ethos, which I describe briefly below.

Beyond the "Hispanization" thesis

Counter-histories inevitably pit themselves against established certitudes that connect historiography with the perceived injustice of the status quo. In this case, my characterization of Philippine colonial society under the mission *doctrinas* as a space of social anomie, as well as its influence on the dual genesis of native custom, popular or "folk" Christianity, confronts perhaps the best-known account of the missionary endeavor in the Philippines in English, John Leddy Phelan's *Hispanization of the Philippines* (first published in 1959). In Phelan's study, the author describes this culture and society as the result of two drives, "Spanish aims" and "Filipino responses." The former was expressed as Hispanization, which the Crown sought to achieve with the assistance of the Church and the religious Orders, i.e. through "Christianization." The result of this effort, however, amounted to what Phelan identified as partial, or incomplete Hispanization.[14] His explanation for why the Philippines was not "fully" Hispanized pointed to the main agents charged with concentrating the native populations into towns and converting them to Christianity: the religious Orders, both monastic and Jesuit. Instead of Hispanization-through-Christianization, Phelan argued, the transplantation of Christianity to the Philippines brought about its "Philippinization." While Phelan doesn't clearly articulate what such a term entailed, readers were left to presume he meant the preservation of pre-Hispanic customs and traditions, along with the selective appropriation of Christianity towards the production of cultural syncretism. The relationship between these two ostensible responses, however, remained ambiguous.

One must credit Phelan for the elegance with which his exhaustive research on the progress and setbacks of the colonial government during the first century and a half of Spanish rule was presented.[15] Yet many

14 John Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, 158–159.

15 As Damon Woods has astutely pointed out, Phelan's "partial Hispanization" thesis was in part a response and modification of the earlier, uncritical appraisal of the religious Orders in New Spain by Robert Ricard (private communication). See *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*. A more systematic critique of Ricard's views appears in James Lockhart, *The* Nahuas *After the Conquest*, 2–5. Lockhart presents a compelling alternative to the evolutionism found in Phelan,

succeeding scholars have pointed out how his rather Hegelian system of abstractions (a fact to which he himself confesses: see 153) also ended up obscuring the historical events and cultural artifacts through which an identification of what is "Spanish" versus what is "Filipino" even comes about.[16] The nebulous character of the ethnohistorical processes laid out by Phelan – Hispanization, Christianization, and Philippinization – have nevertheless become quasi-permanent placeholders for a diverse and oftentimes divergent set of historical occurrences. In fact, this self-referential structure of Hispanization-Christianization-Filipinization has allowed for fuzzy sociological theory to substitute for historical knowledge. This substitution finds a clear example in Phelan's articulation of "partial" or "uneven" Hispanization:

> The paradox is that Spanish success issued from Spanish failure. The Spaniards did not accomplish as much as they set out to do, and this result enabled Filipinos to absorb a modest amount of Hispanic influence without breaking too abruptly or too completely with their preconquest way of life. *The Filipinos were partially Hispanized with a minimum of psychological and physical damage*. The same result did not occur in either Mexico or Peru (158–159: italics added).

One cannot argue, of course, with the assertion that "Spanish failure" appears as a recurring theme in both missionary and secular literature and historiography produced throughout much of the colonial period. But the certitude of Phelan's summation begins to fall apart when we begin to question who exactly these Spaniards were; and what they presumably set out to accomplish. Even a cursory analysis at the enduring conflicts between the colonial government, royal grantees or *encomenderos*, the official Church hierarchy or bishopric, and the regular or monastic Orders (including the Jesuits) reveals that their goals were more often than not incompatible.[17] So conflictive, in fact, that it leads us to wonder what one

based on three stages of encounter and interaction between Spanish and Nahua culture in central Mexico which advanced the nature and character of "double-mistaken identity" (442–446).

16 See, for example, Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, 5–6; Reynaldo Ileto, *Filipinos and Their Revolution*, 29–31; Carolyn Brewer, *Shamanism, Catholicism and Gender Relations in Colonial Philippines 1521–1685*, xxii; and Damon Woods, *The Myth of the Barangay*, 246–247.

17 For a brief history of the encomienda institution in the Philippines, see Eric Anderson, "The Encomienda in Early Philippine Colonial History," 25–36. Encomienda entailed the rewarding of royal grantees (*encomenderos*) with the right to collect tribute and extract labor from the subject native population within a given area, provided that they also helped to finance the concentration

can or can't presume to be the meaning and goal of "Hispanization." If we understand this term, broadly, to entail the acculturation of colonial subjects to Hispanic institutions of government and society, whether this meant the introduction of colonial laws and policies into concentrated settlements, the abolition of pre-Hispanic institutions like debt slavery, the secularization of mission churches into parishes under the official Church, and the teaching of Spanish to native peoples, one would have to conclude that neither *encomenderos* nor the religious Orders shared this goal: in fact, for most of the colonial period they were adamantly opposed to it. What then, constituted the measure of Spanish "success" or "failure?"

Another set of problems emerges when we consider the other side of Phelan's conclusion, which was that the colonization of the Philippines exercised a "minimum of psychological and physical damage… [which] did not occur in either Mexico or Peru." Let us grant at the outset that, since the publication of Phelan's thesis, historians have drastically revised their estimation of depopulation in the Philippines during the first two centuries of Spanish rule.[18] Linda Newson's research, for example, estimates the decline of the native population by around one third, depending on the region. While such a figure clearly doesn't approach the scale of depopulation in the Americas in the wake of the Spanish invasion, it nevertheless compels one to at least question the easy, almost flippant character of Phelan's remarks regarding "minimum psychological and physical damage." In fact, nineteenth-century expatriate propagandist for colonial reform and national martyr, Dr. José Rizal had earlier arrived at the complete opposite conclusion to that of Phelan after researching the colonial history of the Philippines in the British Library:

> Scarcely had [the indigenous peoples of the islands] been brought under the Spanish crown, when they were forced to sustain with their blood and the tribulations of their children the conquistador wars and ambitions of the Spanish people, and in these struggles, in that terrible crisis

[*reducción*] of the population in towns and villages as well as support the missionaries in the task of religious conversion. Anderson characterizes it as an "irregular system for extracting labor, alluvial gold and some local native production from contacted Indian peoples" (26), which persevered in the Philippines despite its demise in the Americas because of "the frontier nature of the colony" (27). He clarifies this to mean that, outside the immediate vicinity of the Spanish cities Manila, Cebu, and Arevalo (Iloilo City), "Private *encomiendas* were purposely concentrated on the frontiers where their continuing military role was deemed necessary" (33).

18 See, for example, Donald Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 252; and Eric Anderson, "The Encomienda in *Early Philippine Colonial History*, 32.

> when a people changes its form of government, its laws, usages, customs, religion and beliefs, the Philippines became depopulated, impoverished and retarded – caught by surprise in their metamorphosis, having lost confidence in their past, without any faith in their present and with no hope of fortune in the years to come… [Filipinos] forgot their writings, their songs, their poetry, their laws in order to learn by heart other doctrines, which they did not understand, other morals, other tastes… They were made abject, degraded in their own eyes, ashamed of what was distinctively their own, in order to admire and praise what was foreign and incomprehensible; their spirit was broken and they bowed down… And in this way the years and centuries passed.[19]

The two assessments cannot both be right. Neither can one square away the implication of Rizal's argument with the one following from Phelan's: the implication that the cultural transformations and conflicts brought about by Spanish rule in the Philippines, mutatis mutandis, very much resemble those examples that come from New Spain or the viceroyalty of Perú.[20] Yet one might say that the historiography of Philippine Christianization as "spiritual conquest" boils down to just such an attempt to do so.

The best-known response from among Philippine Studies scholars to Phelan's Hispanization thesis in recent years has been Vicente Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism*. In this work, the author drew upon his interpretation of translation in early modern religious writings, to reevaluate the "success" of Christian conversion and native resettlement by considering the insertion of native understandings and values into the alien religion. He concluded that it was through the politics of translating religious concepts and terms

19 "Incorporadas apenas á la Corona Española, [los indígenas pueblos isleños] tuvieron que sostener con su sangre y con los esfuerzos de sus hijos las guerras y las ambiciones conquistadoras del pueblo español, y en estas luchas, en esa crisis terrible de los pueblos cuando cambian de gobierno, de leyes, de usos, costumbres, religión y creencias, las Filipinas se despoblaron, empobrecieron y atrasaron, sorprendidas en su metamorfosis, sin confianza ya en su pasado, sin fe aun en su presente y sin ninguna lisonjera esperanza en los venideros días.… [los Filipinos] olvidaron su escritura, sus cantos, sus poesías, sus leyes, para aprenderse de memoria otras doctrinas, que no comprendían, otra moral, otra estética, diferentes de las inspiradas á su raza por el clima y por su manera de sentir. Entonces rebajóse, degradándose ante sus mismos ojos, avergonzóse de lo que era suyo y nacional, para admirar y alabar cuanto era extraño é incomprensible; abatióse su espíritu y se doblegó."
"Y así pasaron años y pasaron siglos." Rizal, "Filipinas dentro de cien años," in *Poesía completa / Ensayos escogidos*, 353–354. Originally published in 1889.

20 This thesis is more carefully explored in the work of Rafael Bernal: see Paula Park, *Intercolonial Intimacies*, 93–119.

that native writers found themselves able to *defer* or *evade* the meaning of colonial rule through Christianity, instead of engaging with it – or rather, engaging with it by subterfuge.[21] To "contract colonialism," as the title of his work suggested, thus meant two opposite and simultaneous dispositions of colonial subjects to Spanish rule: one of capitulation, and one of anticipating, warding off or "bargaining" with the terms of conversion and resettlement. Ultimately, this doubled understanding of conversion and translation – conversion through a creative practice of *mistranslation* – allowed the author to "map the conditions that made possible both the emergence of a colonial regime and resistance to it" (xx). In short, Rafael's answer to the question of why or how natives came to embrace Christianity was to suggest quite simply that in many ways they *didn't*; or rather, through acts of (mis)translation, they approximated or "matched" Christian notions of sin, repentance, and salvation with native concepts of debt, reciprocity, and shame.[22]

In contrast to Rafael, Filomeno Aguilar's *Clash of Spirits* works backward from the focus of his study on the emergence of Visayan planter society at the end of the nineteenth century, to anchor the idea of spiritual conquest in the concept of "Friar Power," which emerged in the early colonial period. The nineteenth century, in Aguilar's study, was dominated by mestizo landowners whose skillful manipulation of workers and institutions alike endowed them with a certain charismatic power. He traces this charismatic power to the Ilonggo and Kinaray-an term *Dungan*, which constitutes a kind of alter ego that "resides in the human body and provides the essence of life" and which contributes to the characteristics of "willpower, knowledge intelligence, and even the ability to dominate and persuade others."[23] The transference of this concept to the friars, Aguilar speculates, allowed natives to explain to themselves how native society was Christianized: without, however, destroying native epistemologies regarding the nature of power and authority: particularly its relationship with the spirit world. He employs the concept "Friar Power" to explain native regard for religious missionaries, who (in his account) expressed their forceful *dungan* through their presentation of Christianity as spiritual conquest. Aguilar interprets spiritual conquest to mean two different things for the colonizing religion and the colonial subject. For the latter, the arrival of Spanish Christianity

21 Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, 83.

22 "Translation," Rafael writes, "enabled [native writers] to negotiate with Spanish authority and hence to contain its demands, including the demands implicit in the Christian notion of death" (Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*, 208: see also 83, 127, and 212).

23 Aguilar, *Clash of Spirits*, 28; see also Herminia Meñez, "The Viscera-Sucker and the Politics of Gender," 96–100.

represented "[a] massive intrusion of Hispanic spirit-beings" (Aguilar 33). These phantasmagorias (metaphysically) overwhelmed and supplanted the native spirit world, with friars appearing as "alien shamans" whose legitimacy was based on their "potency and superior cosmic strength" (38).

While both Rafael and Aguilar's contributions attempt to explain the dichotomy between the apparent success of Christian conversion and the seemingly purposeful misrecognition of certain basic tenets of the Christian faith, both still remain attached to Phelan's assumption regarding the identity of interests between the religious Orders and the Spanish Crown; which, in turn, reinforces the dichotomy and confrontation between Spanish and indigenous worlds that both the Orders and Christian neophytes had refused from the very beginning. In *Contracting Colonialism*, one consequence of this misidentification is the corollary tendency to equate native accommodation (to Christianity, or Spanish rule, or both) with resistance and vice-versa, to the point that the difference between the two falls out of historical consideration. In *Clash of Spirits*, the transposition of spiritual conquest to the metaphysical realm tends to reify the very same complex that the author sets out to critically examine. Spirit becomes Superior Spirit; power becomes Power; and spiritual conquest becomes likened to a cosmic struggle featuring superhero-like leaders who pit or exercise "Power" against one another.[24] Both Rafael and Aguilar's analyses, in different ways, reconfirm the unfinished nature of the conquest and the character of social anomie that forced natives to live in at least two simultaneous yet incompatible realities. The question that remains, however, concerns the role of the religious Orders in reinforcing that condition through the labor of counter-Hispanization.

If we choose to abandon Phelan's prison-house of developmentalist thinking, what approach to reading colonial history emerges in its place? Breaking down the reifications of "Hispanism-through-Hispanization," "Christianity-through-Christianization," and "Filipino identity through Philippinization," begins with two tasks. The first entails dissecting the actors, institutions, and interests that were sometimes allied, sometimes pitted against one another, but which became conflated in the invention of Hispanization as a quasi-historical category. The second involves retracing the dynamic among these forces, with particular attention to the relationship of the religious Orders to the Crown and to their native flocks, as the chief moments of this dynamic: crystallized around concepts like "pacification,"

24 Aguilar adopts the concept of *Dungan* from the work of anthropologist Alicia Magos, in order to account for the cult adoration of certain mestizo capitalist landowners in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

"spiritual conquest," undeception (Sp.: *desengaño*), the Devil, and the threat of religious relapse or "backsliding," as well as cultural artifacts and paraliturgical traditions.[25]

One of the immediate consequences of this approach is to recognize that the Christian conversion of souls, or "Christianization" more broadly, had a much more complex and contested relationship to the Crown, Spanish rule, and "Hispanization" (however one defines it) than Phelan had acknowledged. The dismantling of the Hispanization thesis will also allow us to analyze fully the active role that the religious Orders themselves played in the anticipation and articulation of native custom as quasi-legal realm, set apart from the administration of Crown or civil law in the provinces. A third consequence of reading critically Phelan's account is to rephrase his conclusion that "Filipinos absorb[ed] a modest amount of Hispanic influence without breaking too abruptly or too completely with their preconquest way of life." The question, it seems, has less to do with some presumed quantity of "Hispanic influence" that colonial subjects did or didn't absorb; and more to do with the trajectory of individual and collective self-reinvention that followed from the history of Spanish depredation, epidemic disease, and displacement; and that remains encoded in the missionary chronicles as well as early works of Tagalog literature. Fourth and finally, an analysis and evaluation of the counter-Hispanizing role played by the religious Orders in the maintenance of a permanent colonial frontier – the colony *as* frontier – locates the study of the early modern Philippines within the larger field of Latin American Studies – paradoxically, the same field from which Phelan distinguished the uniqueness of Philippine Hispanization. Here, the comparison of the mission frontier in the Philippines with the peripheries of viceroyalties of New Spain and Perú yields insights about the continuities being forged by the Spanish Hapsburgs and their overseas subjects across the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean.

Spiritual Conquest as (a) Staging [*Escenificación*]

Much of this work concerns the analysis of religious rhetoric as an artifice, whose intentions were political in their substitution of history by exemplum and eschatology. Heading the chain of significations that made this religious

25 Michel Foucault characterized these approaches as the double-writing of a *critical history* and *genealogy*. For an exploration of these two terms and their methodological implications, see Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge and Discourse on the Sciences*, 231–234.

conception of history so persistent is the phrase "spiritual conquest," which the religious historian Robert Ricard used in the title of his early work on the sixteenth-century friar or Mendicant Orders in New Spain (Mexico). Called *La conquête spirituelle du Mexique* [*The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*], published in 1933, the book describes spiritual conquest as: "the work of the Mendicant Orders… *as* Orders. It is a singular and most remarkable fact that the churches of Spanish America were founded by the Mendicant Orders *independently of the episcopacy*, whose authority broke against the pontifical privileges granted to the regular clergy" (4). Curiously, the phrase did not enjoy any wide circulation before the seventeenth century – at least several decades after the historical period Ricard ostensibly covered.[26] Of course, the intermingling of military and religious rhetoric dates back to the time of the Crusades, or (at least in Spain), the "Reconquest" of the Iberian peninsula under the Catholic monarchs. Yet, as I will show, the identification of Spain's conquest as a primarily *religious* one under the leadership of the religious Orders only happens in and through the process by which the Crown self-legalizes its universal claim to dominion over its overseas possessions; even as it cedes any effective authority over that dominion to the Orders themselves. In any case, the point is not to fault Ricard for his anachronistic use of a seventeenth-century phrase to describe the work of the friars in the sixteenth. Rather, our attention to the late appearance of this phrase suggests the articulation of an ideology and iconography that one can distinguish from (and that one should not confuse with) both the "Spanish aims" of the Crown as well as Christian eschatology per se.

Ricard's observation regarding the inefficacy of the official Church before the "pontifical privileges" of the religious Orders specifies the key feature of mission settlements throughout the Americas and the Philippines: their successful resistance to both Crown and ecclesiastical (that is, episcopal) authority. What did this spiritual conquest entail? Following the arrival, pillage, and establishment of peace treaties with various native local chiefs throughout the archipelago, Spanish Admiral Miguel López de Legazpi

26 The anonymous Jesuit play (presented in the form of a colloquy) written around 1622, *Coloquio de la conquista espiritual del Japón hecha por San Francisco Javier* [Colloquy of the Spiritual Conquest of Japan accomplished by St. Francis Xavier], seems to be an early example of the phrase "spiritual conquest" in circulation. Franciscan friar Fr. Paolo da Trinidade wrote *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* in Goa between 1630–1636; and in 1639 Jesuit priest Fr. Antonio Ruiz de Montoya wrote *La conquista espiritual: hecha por los religiosos de la Compañía de Jesús, en las provincias del Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay y Tape* [The Spiritual Conquest: Accomplished by the Religious of the Company of Jesus (the Jesuit Order), in the Provinces of Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay and Tape]. See Celsa García Valdés, *Coloquio de la Conquista espiritual*, 35–57.

established Manila as the seat of Spanish authority over the declared possession of the islands in 1571 under Spanish king Philip II (hence, Philippines). Barely three years later, Philip II's 1574 *Ordinances on the Discovery, Population, and Pacification of the Indies* entrusted the Church, and specifically the religious Orders, with the dual task of preaching to unbaptized Indians; and encouraging peaceful native settlement in concentrated populations.[27] The first involved preparing natives to their conversion to Christianity; and, in cases where no ordained priest was available to baptize and administer the sacraments to the population, to provisionally fulfill that office. The mission as a "frontier institution" (Bolton) would represent the first step or phase in the establishment of the Church overseas; the second phase would entail the creation of parishes administered by ordained secular priests (vs. friars or Jesuits) under the ecclesiastical hierarchy of bishops, which serves as the official authority of the Church.[28] Yet that first step would also involve the missionaries in the work of "pacification," through the process of resettlement that was called reduction [*reducción*]. Tied to this task of resettlement, given the extensive disruption that followed in the wake of the Spanish arrival, friars and (later) Jesuits were expected to model, indoctrinate, and discipline the natives according to the principles of European civic behavior, referred to as *policía* [polity, as well as political or civil life in general]. The purpose of *policía* was to dispose the subject population to the exaction of tribute, the conscription of (forced) labor (called *polos y servicios*), domestic service [*tanores*], and the forced sale of native goods at values fixed by the colonial government (called *vandala*).[29]

One can see in this brief sketch how the term "spiritual conquest" conflates these two roles of the religious ministers, to the degree that they become indistinguishable. Forced resettlement as "pacification" acquires a moral and spiritual dimension, even as the religious Orders identify their interests with those of the Spanish Crown. In Fr. San Agustín's classic account of the early Augustinian mission, the "spiritual conquest" simultaneously designates

27 See Zelia Nuttall, "Royal Ordinances Concerning the Laying out of New Towns," 743–753. These ordinances find earlier expression in the New Laws advanced by Charles V in 1542.

28 See Bolton, "The Mission," 42–61.

29 On the concept of *policía* [*police* in French], see Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78*, 311–361; and "The Political Technology of Individuals," 145–162. For the emergence of this concept overseas, see J. Lechner, "El concepto de 'policía' y su presencia en la obra de los primeros historiadores de Indias," 395–409; and Daniel Nemser, *Infrastructures of Race: Concentration and Biopolitics in Colonial Mexico*, 25–64. Latin American historian Inga Clendinnen highlights the coercive and often traumatic experience of reduction in Yucatan: see *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517–1570*, 59.

the absorption of the frontier into the sphere of Spanish dominion; as well as the defeat of the universal enemy, Satan. Thus do the opening lines of Fr. San Agustín's history read:

> Thus there came the fullness of time as decreed in the inscrutable mind of the Most High to shower His pity on all those nations as in the extensive Islands… and primarily in these Philippines, [the people] lived in the darkness of death, blind beneath the tyrannical empire of Satan, to whom they rendered vassalage in their cowardice and ignorance, and gave him adoration, without participating in the abundant fruits of the universal and copious redemption of the human race [*género humano*] through the immense judgments of God, as other regions of Europe and America now enjoy, where, through the preaching of the Gospel, the torch of truth was lit…[30]

Fr. San Agustín's rhetoric here concatenates a chain of signifiers that sutures the political and eschatological dimensions of the evangelizing mission: high / low, center / periphery, Spain / Philippines, light / darkness, freedom / tyranny, redemption / enslavement. By identifying the "tyrannical empire of Satan, to whom [the natives] rendered vassalage… without participating in the abundant fruits… of the human race," the author presents in condensed form the theological reason through which a political decision – in this case, the condition by which a just war [*guerra justa*] may be waged against indigenous populations in non-Spanish territories – takes place. The liberation of the natives here would coincide with their inclusion into "the human race," which for Fr. San Agustín meant the Christian community or *respublica Christiana*.

The fulfillment of God's Plan, the instrument of a Universal Monarchy [*monarchia universalis*], the liberation of non-Christian peoples from the Devil, and their inclusion in the worldwide Christian community, constituted the main elements of Fr. San Agustín's vision of early modern globalization.[31]

30 Llegó la plenitud del tiempo decretado en la inescrutable mente del Altísimo para apiadarse de tantas naciones como en las dilatadas Islas… y principalmente en estas Filipinas, habitaban en las tinieblas de la muerte, viviendo ciegos debajo del tiránico imperio de Satanás, a quien cobardes e ignorantes rendían vasallaje y daban adoración, sin participar… de los abundantes frutos de la universal y copiosa redención del género humano, como los gozaban las otras regiones de la Europa y América, donde, mediante la predicación del Evangelio, lucía la antorcha de la verdad…" Fr. Gaspar de San Agustin (OSA) and Manuel Merino, *Conquistas de Las Islas Filipinas*, 31.

31 On the ideology of Universal Monarchy in the early modern period, see Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 29–62.

Figures 3 and 4: Frontispiece to Fr. Gaspar de San Agustín (OSA), *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas*, etching; and "Per me Reges regnant" detail. Copyright © Museo Oriental, Valladolid (Spain). Permission granted by museum.

Yet San Agustín also took care to include a bold reminder of the limits and necessity of Crown authority in the attainment of ultimately spiritual ends. In the image, the citation represented as a ray of divine sunlight directed towards king Philip II and Admiral Miguel López de Legazpi, is taken from the book of Proverbs 8:15, and reads: "Per me reges regnant (et legum conditores justa decerunt)" [By me kings reign, and princes decree justice] (see Figures 3 and 4).

San Agustín's reminder of the Crown's dependence on the spiritual mission as guarantor of its authority allows us to track the coalescence of the idea of "spiritual conquest" as it developed in the writings of the religious over the course of the seventeenth century. On the one hand, the prose of *pax hispanica*, Spanish-sponsored peace, underlined the specifically *political* task the Crown would assign to the missionary orders: to complete a truncated conquest by not only preaching and teaching the Christian religion but also ensuring the continuity of peace as the basis of asserting the Spanish title.[32] On the other hand, however, religious missionary chroniclers stage this political task in idealized, *religious*, or in any case politico-theological terms: as a constant battle with the Devil or devils' reign of tyranny for the

32 See Marta Milagros del Vas Mingo, *Las Ordenanzas de 1573, sus antecedentes y consecuencias*, 83–101.

"conquest" of souls; and as the undeception [*desengaño*] of those hearts and minds from the Devil's snares. The representation of this campaign rests on the enduring ambiguity between a *symbolic* "war" and an *actual* one taking place at any given moment on the colonial frontier.

This ambiguity of spiritual conquest paralleled the ever-shifting boundaries between the so-called "pacified" and "unpacified" territories and populations in the Philippines as well as New Spain; and contributed decisively to the independence of friar authority in all areas outside Manila.[33] In 1665, for example Philippine Dominican Fr. Hector Polanco (OP) employed the rhetoric of "ongoing spiritual conquest" [*viva conquista espiritual*] in the Philippines as the main reason that missionaries could and should not subject themselves to the authority of the official Church; nor should the Church try to exercise its authority over the mission territories. He writes:

> One cannot follow [the model of replacing missions with secular parishes administered by ordained priests] that obtains in Peru or Mexico, where for many years the Indians have been reduced to the Faith and in obedience to Your Majesty and the ministers in the tranquil and pacific possession of these Christian lands. In the Philippines the religious remain in a state of an *ongoing spiritual conquest* [viva Conquista espiritual], hoisting high the banners of the Faith and Christian religion… and unless one attempts the reduction of these Indians with humility, patience, good temperament, example, and orthodoxy, the ferocity of their nature and customs will not be held in check, and they will destroy the Christian kingdoms already fashioned.[34]

As if to emphasize his meaning, Polanco catalogs the many revolts and uprisings that, in his opinion, have left the islands in a state of total ruin. "These Christian kingdoms," he concludes, "need spiritual soldiers who

33 See Sheridan Prieto, *Fronterización del espacio*, 63–64; and Ivonne del Valle, *Escribiendo desde los márgenes*. On the violence of "spiritual conquest" in northern Mexico, see Bernd Hausberger, "La violencia en la conquista espiritual," 27–54; and Guy Rozat Dupeyron, "Reflexiones personales sobre la Conquista espiritual," 76–108.

34 Cited in Francisco Colin [SJ] and Pablo Pastells [SJ], *Labor evangélica, v.3*, 734–735: italics added [No se siguen en el Perú y México en donde los Yndios ha muchos años que están reducidos a la Fe y obediencia de Vuestra Magestad y los ministros en quieta y pacífica posesión de las Christianidades. En Filipinas están los ministros *en viva conquista espiritual*, enarboladas las banderas de la Fe y Religión Christiana… [y] *si no se tratara de reducir estos con humildad, paciencia, buen tratamiento, ejemplo y doctrina no se contuviera la ferocidad de su natural, y costumbres, y destruyeran a las Christianidades que ya están formadas*].

will work without rest to assure their fealty to God and Your Majesty" (737).[35]

The imagination of a spiritual conquest extended beyond the Americas and the Philippines, to encompass all the lands where members of the religious Orders were tasked to settle native subject populations in and through the preaching of the Christian gospel. This imagination facilitated the migration of the language of "conquest" from a political to spiritual realm. Religious chroniclers often returned to the rhetoric of spiritual conquest as a reminder to the Crown that it had conferred the task of completing the conquest on the Orders. Of equal importance, however, the imaginary feats of spiritual conquest reported in these chronicles also served as an ongoing defense *against* the direct interference of royal authority and the official church on the missionary frontier, which constituted most of the archipelago outside Manila and the eight Spanish villas where Spaniards were allowed to reside.[36] To repeat Fr. Polanco's words, "let no novelty nor alteration be made of the old way that the missions of the aforesaid Philippine Islands have been administered" (739 passim.).[37] This had the effect of maintaining a "viva conquista espiritual," ongoing spiritual conquest, indefinitely: paradoxically protracting the conquest under the pretense of completing it; and leaving the mission as frontier institution fruitlessly trying to corral ostensibly "Christianized" populations into settlements, while also defending the Church's autonomy to administer its mission parishes [*doctrinas*] outside the sphere of both civil and canon law.

The constantly precarious state of mission territories rendered the difference between conquest, pacification, and "spiritual conquest" ever more indistinct. As Chapter 2 will show, the persistent and undeniable anomaly of friar autonomy from law(s) contributed to the nebulous character of colonial society. For the religious authors of the missionary chronicles and histories, however, the suspension of law in these territories was the sole condition upon which the future of Spanish rule over a resistant population relied. In the eighteenth century, Franciscan chronicler Fr. Juan Francisco de San Antonio (OFM) captures this sentiment in these rambling words:

35 Aquellas Christiandades … necesitan de soldados espirituales que trabajen sin descanso en ellas para assegurarlas para Dios y Vuestra Magestad.

36 For a history of these Spanish settlements, see Luciano Santiago, "Pomp, Pageantry and Gold: The Eight Spanish Villas in the Philippines (1565–1887)," 57–75.

37 que no se haga novedad ni altere el antiguo estilo que se ha tenido en la administración de las doctrinas de dichas Islas Filipinas.

> Religious missionaries have by now acquired in their campaigns enough experiences with the volatile, and fungible character [*genio*] of the natives, to know that while many convert [to Christianity] easily, they are even quicker to pervert it, if the attendance of the Ministers is not *permanent* … [A]nd so unchanging is the genius of these natives, that violence is necessary, so that their roots gain strength to take hold … [E]ach Minister [must] remain a permanent resident in the Fight [*Partido*] … [and] until these Ministers grow in number, some should remain firmly established in the conquered territory, and others could go ahead with the conquest through their Missions because these Peoples cannot be left to themselves and their own opinions …[38]

Given that San Antonio's work was published in 1738, over a century and a half after the so-called "pacification" of the Philippines, any recognition and admiration for the author's missionary zeal should give way to the reader's perplexity. What "conquest" is Fr. San Antonio referring to here – over 150 years after the conquest supposedly *ended*? And who is the enemy: the Devil? The natives? As elsewhere throughout the text, the author underlines the precariousness of both Christianity and Spanish rule among the baptized natives, which reinforces the need for missionaries to remain "in the Fight" [*Partido*] permanently, while also being authorized to exercise violence when necessary, as befit agents of law enforcement under a civil order or regime. As I will explore later, the "natural perversity" of Christian proselytes mirrored the legal perversion of a permanent frontier institution defined by its peculiar relationship to civil and canon laws alike.

Spiritual conquest signifies the chief euphemism and phantasmagoria around which the unfinished conquest of the Philippines was simultaneously denied, written out of existence; and endlessly reconceived as the production and staging of Spanish arrival and rule in missionary literature. It serves as a

38 Fr. Juan de San Antonio (OFM), *Chronicas de la Apostólica Provincia de S. Gregorio de Religiosos Descalzos de N.S.P. S. Francisco en las Islas Philipinas, china, Japón, &c. Parte primera,* 371. [Tenían ya los religiosos en sus partidos adquiridas bastantes experiencias del genio de los naturales tan voltario, y flexible, que si con facilidad se convierten, están mas prontas siempre a pervertirse, si la asistencia de los Ministros no es permanente … [Y] tan perenne es el genio de estos Naturales, que es necesaria violencia, para que tomen alguna robustez sus raíces … Por esta experimentada beleydad propusieron los Religiosos … que se estuviese cada Ministro perpetuamente residente en el Partido, que le tocase, sin vagar de lugar en lugar, para conquistar mas Tierras, y mas Gentes; hasta que con la mayor copia de Ministros, unos se quedasen en lo conquistado a pie firme, y otros pudiesen ir adelante conquistando con sus Misiones pues no era esta Gente para dejada en manos, de sus propios dictámenes …

cipher for the actual events that take place therein.[39] What is interesting about the widespread condition of social anomie that resulted from this indefinitely postponed transfer of power is the unlikely and incommensurate dependence of colonial authority and law – its interpretation, exercise, and limits – on both the religious and native imagination and their constitutive roles in the process of conversion and settlement. Borrowing a concept from the field of Lacanian psychoanalysis (and reinterpreted by cultural historian Serge Gruzinski as well as Philippine historian Reynaldo Ileto), I employ the term "imaginary" [Fr. *imaginaire*] to suggest a phantom apparatus, or working blueprint of a colonial fantasy – in this instance, the fantasy of the law's existence – which supplanted the actual implementation of colonial law and authority under the pretext of supplementing or substituting for the law's absence.[40]

At the heart of this apparatus lies the confabulation of history arising from the creative confusion between the theological and political premises of the Spanish monarchy. This conflation underwrites the many chronicles penned by the religious Orders, as well as a great deal of correspondence and official reports among them. While many of these chronicles serve as primary references for the writing of Philippine history, very seldomly do we follow literary scholars Jorge Mojarro and Isaac Donoso's suggestion that we treat religious writings as not only works of history but also that of literature, even fiction.[41] It should be obvious, in any case, that the entanglement of

39 In his *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, Latin American historian Matthew Restall highlights the stakes of explorers, conquistadors, missionaries, and colonial bureaucrats alike in promoting a "myth of completion [of conquest]," which endlessly reiterates and revises a narrative demonstrating that the colonization of the Americas is an accomplished fact (*Seven Myths*, 65–76). In contrast to both, Restall argues: "[T]he Conquest of the core areas of the Andes and Mesoamerica was more protracted than Spaniards initially claimed and later believed, and when warfare did end in these areas it was simply displaced out to the ever-widening and never-peaceful frontiers of Spanish America … to the point of rendering the very concept of completion irrelevant" (75).

40 Serge Gruzinski used the term to describe at once a Christian repertoire of images, tropes, styles, and gestures that formed "sequences and the succession of situations" that "unveiled a sense of causality and human liberty proper to Christianity that was clearly far from the complex mechanics that tended to make the native submit to games of divine forces and to the absolute control of the community" (*Images At War,* 80). He also used the word, however to describe the ensemble of Indian responses to Spanish rule: see *The Conquest of Mexico: The Incorporation of Indian Societies into the Western World, 16th-18th Centuries,* 2–3). In the case of the Philippines, Reynaldo Ileto characterizes Philippine spirituality (as reflected in the popular nineteenth-century rendition of the Passion of Christ [*Pasyon*]), as a "Pasyon interface": see "Rizal and the Underside of Philippine History," in *Filipinos and Their Revolution,* 48–61.

41 See Jorge Mojarro, "Colonial Spanish Philippine Literature between 1604 and 1808: A First Survey," 423–464; and Isaac Donoso, "El Barroco filipino," 85–146. On the literary value and

verifiable historical events with numerous accounts of apparitions, miracles, prodigies and wonders, not to mention the phantasmagorical appearance of the devil through natural phenomena as well as speaking images or "idols" has required a corresponding disentanglement of such accounts in the service of a more sober assessment of Spanish rule. Yet the task of the literary scholar, as I see it, would have to go a step further. This task would involve an exploration of the sense or logic that allowed religious chroniclers to alloy historical claims with a larger set of theological and *economical* or providential premises: premises that endow such (historical) claims with an imaginary aura.[42]

Baroque Ethos and Native Custom

Acknowledging and restoring the imaginary aspect of "spiritual conquest" to the study of missionary writings, which amounts to exploring the full implications of their status as literary texts, allows the reader to piece together an untold counter-history of mission pueblos and mission society in the Philippines: the counter-history of counter-Hispanization efforts under the religious Orders and native leaders alike. This story would center on the common experience of living in a state of social anomie throughout most areas of the archipelago between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries: a condition not unlike the mission territories in the Americas described by Latin American historians.[43] But it would also highlight the creative, perhaps baroque, ways in which missions and their resettled populations both accommodated to and reinforced the perpetually deferred arrival of

function of colonial texts in the Americas, see Walter Mignolo, "Cartas, crónicas y relaciones del descubrimiento y la conquista," 57–116.

42 For the distinction between theological and providential claims, which revolve around the Christian concept of *oikonomia* ["economy"], see Marie-Jose Mondzain, *Image, Icon, Economy*; and Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*.

43 The characterization of the colonial world as a world turned "upside down" or "in reverse" [*un mundo al revés*] we owe to the indigenous Peruvian writer Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, whose voluminous illustrated *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (c. 1615) documented the abuses and atrocities of colonial officials and the religious missionary Orders, as well as the tragic effects of impunity upon native society: see Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *Sociología de la imagen*, 175–204. Both Phelan and Peter Borschberg have warned against too close a comparison between Iberian colonization in the Americas and across the Pacific (see Phelan, *Hispanization* 153–161; and Borschberg, "Foreword," in Peter Borschberg, ed., *Iberians in the Singapore-Melaka Area and Adjacent Regions*, vii-xx). In taking this warning to heart, however, scholars have neglected or downplayed many of the larger similarities.

the law; to the point of becoming a cultural feature of native custom itself. A (new) tradition, of reinventing tradition.

To characterize this disposition to the absence of law among priests and subject peoples alike as "baroque" is to foreground the epistemological, ethical, and methodological frames that anchor this study. From an epistemological standpoint, José Antonio Maravall's classic study refers to the baroque as the historical consciousness of an epoch, perceived as one of crisis and decline.[44] While this consciousness stemmed from very different historical factors obtained in early modern Spanish society (the failed transition from feudalism to capitalism, the independence of the Low Countries, the Protestant heresy, etc.) than the trauma of conquest overseas, the collective sense of historical rupture, disenchantment, and impermanence in both Spanish and native societies facilitated the translation of one perceived crisis in the terms of the other. The literature of spiritual conquest participated in that translation of crisis, coming as it did from Spanish religious missionaries who saw their theological mission as inseparable from the ultimate political extension of the Spanish monarchy. The rhetoric and theme of *desengaño*, for example, which I have translated alternately as undeception, disenchantment, or disabusal, was common to the neo-Stoic philosophy of courtly drama in early modern Spain, Jesuit spirituality, and missionary literature overseas, all at the same time, but for different reasons and with different stakes.

Beyond the general perception of historical crisis shared by Spaniards, Amerindian civilizations, and native communities exposed to the trauma of conquest, however, there developed strategies of historical agency – ranging from armed resistance to accommodation to colonial rule – that oblige us to consider the baroque not only in terms of an epistemology but also an ethos. In different ways, the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and Argentine sociologist Bolívar Echeverría have described the baroque as a way of seeing – and, by extension, *imagining* the world in order to participate in it. For Deleuze, "The essence of the Baroque entails neither falling into nor emerging from illusion but rather *realizing* something in illusion itself, or of tying it to a spiritual *presence* that endows its spaces and fragments with a collective unity" (Deleuze, *The Fold*, 125). Bolívar Echeverría captures the same ethos at work in the baroque artist's determination to make the "dead past" speak; and, in ventriloquizing the classic or canonical forms or Western culture, investing them with the present and reorienting their function to the needs of their contemporary interlocutors:

44 José Antonio Maravall, *La cultura del barroco*, 47–104.

> [Baroque ethos] accepts the inevitable recourse to the past as formal principle [i.e., established orthodoxy or canon], and attempts to awaken the vitality from its petrified gestures and express its present character [Sp. *novedad*] by animating it with a new substance … and in doing so [the artist] ends up replacing the lost vitality with his or her own – which also results in a strategy of affirming use-value(s) in its / their concrete materiality, leading to their reconstruction on an elevated plane (*La modernidad de lo barroco*, 46).[45]

To consider the baroque as an ethos in the spread of devotional cults of the Virgin Mary, for example (Chapter 5), or native Tagalog writer Gaspar Aquino de Belen's rewriting of the Passion of Christ (Chapter 6), or in the development of native custom(s) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Chapter 7), would be to demonstrate how Indians accommodated themselves to resettlement and the Christian imaginary in order to *inhabit* both, which would mean rendering them serviceable to their *present* survival and welfare according to their understanding. In doing so, native *Indios* could not but refashion resettlement and Christianity in ways that unsettled, and sometimes sparked outright opposition, of their religious ministers. On one level, then, the reading of spiritual conquest as a genre of imaginary literature allows us to study the ventriloquism of theological arguments serving as legal justifications for Spanish rule in the Philippines. On another level, the creative character of the religious imagination also inspired and contributed to the birth and genesis of "Philippine" Christianity – with the adjective *Philippine* signifying a disjuncture, innovation, or maladjustment in the historical transplantation and localization of Christianity that remains in place to this day.

The character of Philippine Christianity as an "upstaging" of spiritual conquest constitutes my second object of analysis. We know, of course, that the projection of a Christian universe upon deracinated peoples and a denatured environment in the wake of the conquest amounted to more than a superimposition and replacement of "old" experiences, values, observances, and practices by "new" ones. Yet by analyzing the social and cultural evolution of Philippine Christianity through literary and cultural artifacts from both Spanish and vernacular Tagalog sources, I trace a curious innovation in the

45 [El arte y ethos barroco] acepta lo insuperable del principio formal del pasado, que, al emplearlo sobre la sustancia nueva para expresar su novedad, intenta despertar la vitalidad del gesto petrificado en él … y que al hacerlo termina por poner en lugar de esa vitalidad la suya propia – éste también resulta de una estrategia de afirmación de la corporeidad concreta del valor de uso que termina en una reconstrucción de la misma en un segundo nivel.

process of native conversion. That was the articulation of *native custom*(*s*) as an obstacle to Spanish rule, insofar as it nurtured and disguised acts of defiance, subversion, and rebellion against colonial rule in counterpoint to the efflorescence of Christian traditions taking place throughout the mission provinces.[46] Christian tradition and native custom, in other words, emerged as interrelated but juxtaposed responses to the ambiguity of law in the Philippine provinces. Both spurred members of the religious Orders, the native elite [called *datus* or *maginoos* in Visayan or Tagalog pre-Hispanic society, respectively], and the larger native populations undergoing conversion to Christianity, to ceaselessly restage and upstage the drama of spiritual conquest by imagining and projecting the terms under which a perpetually deferred and protracted conquest and concomitant state of social anomie would come to an end.

Counter-Histories of the Colonial Illusion

While the conquest and colonization of the Philippines was organized around the Christian conversion and forced resettlement of the native populations throughout the archipelago, *Counter-Hispanization in the Colonial Philippines* shows how the practice of native resettlement and acculturation to the colonial obligations of tribute, forced labor, and the forced sale of native products, spurred countermovements of flight and social reorganization far from the institution of Christian missions and colonial settlements (called *reducciones*) under colonial rule. To this end, Chapter 1 presents a critical history of the conquest and its aftermath, which exposes the disavowal of depredation, deracination, derealization, and social anomie that characterized the religious provinces. Ultimately, I connect these countermovements of unsettlement and marronage to the twin metaphorization of conquest as "pacification" under agents of the Crown; and religious evangelization as "spiritual conquest." Together, these euphemisms masked an underlying struggle over the stakes and direction of early modern globalization set in motion by the European encounter with the Americas and Pacific. Chapter 2 focuses on the armature that held these two euphemisms together and, in this way, generated and reinforced the rule of expediency in the provinces outside Manila. This armature consisted in

46 The two starting points of this controversy are Jaime Bulatao's 1966 essay, "Split-Level Christianity": see *Phenomena and Their Interpretation*, 22–31; and F. Landa Jocano's short work *Folk Christianity: a Preliminary Study of Conversion and Patterning of Christian Experience in the Philippines*, also in 1966.

the juridical exceptions or *fueros* granted to the religious Orders, which they extended to a quasi-jurisdiction over the mission frontier itself. Chapters 3–5 examine missionary chronicles and reports as a "literature of spiritual conquest," in which missionary activities including pre-baptismal instruction, baptism, the designation of areas as mission territory, and the founding of mission towns and settlements, alternately repressed and provoked the engagement of colonial subjects with the twin goals of Christianity and forced resettlement.[47]

My resulting interpretation of the conquest and its protracted conclusion in the literature of spiritual conquest prepares us to read the discrepant emergence of "native custom" as the irreducible and unassimilable object of colonial society from its emergence in the eighteenth century. Paradoxically, however, the field of practices developed by natives as a bulwark against the pastoral authority of the regular clergy (monastic Orders and Jesuits) involved the collaboration of the religious themselves in their development (Chapters 6–7). In this respect, Spanish colonialism in the Philippines aligns with similar readings of religious evangelization in New Spain and Peru.[48] Reading the simultaneous condemnation of native *custom* and exaltation of Christian *tradition* in relation to one another demonstrates an early modern counterpoint to Eric J. Hobsbawm's famous characterization of nationalism as "the invention of tradition": that is the colonial, contrapuntal tradition of perpetual *reinvention* in Philippine culture. The patina of Hispanic acculturation and Christian tradition thus masks the incoherence of the colonial project as well as a growing concern among missionaries regarding the inscrutability and ungovernability of the colonial Indian subject.[49] This "tradition of (re)invention," crystallizes with the growth of vernacular Tagalog literature and theater at the beginning of the eighteenth century, where the staging of spiritual conquest gives way to the upstaging and reimagining of Spanish dominion in vernacular Tagalog theater and metrical romances all the way up to the end of the nineteenth century.

47 While Carl Schmitt employs the term "political theology" to describe what he sees as the secularization of Christian ideas of authority and divine law in early modern theories of sovereignty like Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*, I follow Ernst Kantorowicz's wider use of the term as an originally Western medieval concept of the interdependent and complementary relations between religious and temporal expressions of authority and law: see Schmitt, *Political Theology;* Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies;* Otto Gierke and Frederick William Maitland, *Political Theories of the Middle Age*; and John Neville Figgis, "*Respublica Christiana,*" 63–88.

48 See, for example, Louis Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth*; Solange Alberro, *El águila y la cruz*; William Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred*; and Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes*.

49 See Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Tradition," in Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition*, 1–14.

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