

Colonial Reception and Cultural Reproduction: Filipino Elites and United States Tutelary Rule¹

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Abstract This essay opens up the problematic of state intention versus local reception through an analysis of United States colonial rule in the Philippines. Specifically, I examine how the Filipino political elite received the project of democratic tutelage, c. 1899–1910s. I argue that the Filipino elite received the Americans' project through a particular tactic, one which is analytically irreducible to "resistance." By this tactic, which I call "domestication," the elite refashioned the Americans' imposed discourses and institutions in accordance with their preexisting political culture. The elites thereby reproduced the very cultural field which the Americans tried to uproot, effectively thwarting the project from the outset.

Introduction

After formally acquiring the Philippines from Spain in 1899, American colonial administrators embarked upon a project of democratic tutelage. The goal of it was to teach Filipinos the ways of American-styled democracy. American policy makers like Elihu Root insisted that the Filipinos, during Spanish rule prior, had acquired "a theoretical rather than a practical acquaintance with the processes of government" and had been given "no opportunity to learn . . . how to govern themselves" (USDW 1899: 26). The Filipinos were thus mired in an arrested state of political development, a state of "political childhood" (Root to Lowell 1904). The project of democratic tutelage was aimed at remedying this presumed situation, hastening the Filipinos' political development. Under America's "strong and guiding hand," Filipinos would get "free self-government in ever-increasing measure." They would learn "democratic aspirations, sentiments, and ideals" and be uplifted from their putatively primitive political state. Only after the Filipinos had learned to govern themselves properly would they be granted full independence (USDW 1899: 27; USPC 1900: I, 4).

To carry out the project, American administrators constructed a tutelary colonial state which offered the Filipinos free elections, local office, and their own national legislative assembly. On the one hand, the Filipinos would vote, hold office, formulate legislation, and administer with some level of autonomy. On the other hand, American administrators, strategically positioned at higher positions within the

colonial state and retaining ultimate control, would facilitate the process. They would supervise and survey from above, giving the Filipinos “object lessons” in the proper modes of political practice and ensuring that the Filipinos were learning their lessons properly. In this way the Filipinos would get a “practical political education” (Taft 1908: 31, 42). They would learn the “character” necessary for self-government, the “self-possession, self-mastery, and the habit of order and peace . . . the steadiness of self-control and political mastery . . . of [political] maturity” (Wilson 1921: 52–3). Under tutelage, the Filipinos were to be transformed (Rafael 1993a: 186–7).

A recent literature on colonialism has revealed that similar projects were contemporaneously enacted throughout the colonial world. David Scott (1995), for example, shows that the British tried to transform Sri Lankans into “reasonable,” rights-bearing subjects. Conklin (1998) likewise reveals that the French tried to transform Algerians into “civilized” peoples. All such projects — American, British, and French alike — were aimed at compelling peripheralized peoples to adopt Anglo-Saxon political modernity. Marking the emergence of new colonial governmentalities, they were aimed at what Philippine administrator Bernard Moses (1905: 15) called “political assimilation” — a religious conversion taken to the political register. But while existing literature has paid much attention to these colonial projects, it has paid less attention to how they were received by local actors. While we know that the rationale of such projects can be traced to Lockean ideas on reason and education (Mehta 1997), while we know that they were sometimes contradictory and often wracked with internal tension (e.g. Thomas 1994), we know much less about how they were actually interpreted and practiced by local actors. In the Philippines, the American administrators may have spoken incessantly about Anglo-style “self-government,” but this does not mean that the Filipinos received their words in the ways the Americans’ had hoped. The Americans may have inserted Filipinos into political office to give them “object lessons” in “political mastery,” but this does not mean that Filipino officials practiced office in accordance with the Americans’ projections. In short, there is a difference between intention and reception (e.g. Berezin 1997: 35–6; Pratt 1992: 6).

How, then, did the Filipinos actually receive the Americans’ tutelary project and its proffered elements? How did they make sense of and interpret the Americans’ discourses of “free self-government”? How did they practice the new tutelary offices into which they were inserted? I seek to answer these questions by focusing upon the receptive practices of the Filipino political elite, the Filipinos directly subjected to tutelage and its “political education.” Looking at zones of engagement both exemplary and mundane, I track what Filipino elites did to and with the tutelary

elements imposed upon them amidst the first decade and a half of American rule (c. 1899–1910s).² I claim that, indeed, the Americans' tutelary intentions were not matched by local reception. The elites received the tutelary project and its imposed elements in ways unforeseen and undesired by the American administrators. They took in what the Americans offered, but not in the manner for which the Americans had hoped. In fact, the Filipino elites received the tutelary project through a particular tactic, one which had the effect of thwarting the Americans' project. I shall call this tactic 'domestication.' My ultimate goal is to show how it worked, in historical and logical detail.

To domesticate something is to tame it. It is to take that which comes from the outside and act upon it so as to make it amenable to ones' safe surroundings, to ones' preexisting "home." It is to encompass the new within the old and familiar, to insert the foreign into ones' already existing field of discourse and practice. It is to apply what one knows upon that which might initially be unknown, to harness it according to and through ones' preexisting practical schemas and discursive categories. It is to extend the past onto the present, receiving the exogenous by making it indigenous. Domestication thus has the effect of "resistance," but as I will argue by the end, it is hardly reducible to the latter.

This, then, was how the Filipino political elite received the Americans' tutelary project and its elements. As the elite faced the Americans' tutelary project and its discourse of "free self-government," as they were placed into the tutelary state and its institutions, they domesticated them all. They extended their prior practical schemas and discursive categories onto the elements which the Americans' offered, taming them in accordance with their preexisting conceptions. The effect was that they undermined the Americans' project and its transformative designs. To show the workings of this domestication, I focus upon certain subgroups of the Filipino elite and how they received (a) the Americans' discourse of "free self-government" and (b) the local tutelary political offices into which the elites were inserted. First, though, I will outline the broad characteristics of Filipino political elite and specify the particular elite segments that are the subject of my analysis. I will then outline the discursive field of these elites prior to American colonial rule, the very field from which the elites would later draw to receive, so to domesticate, the Americans' tutelary project.

The "Eligible Class"

Not all Filipinos were targeted for practical political education during tutelary rule. Driven by the belief that the majority of Filipinos were

simply too “ignorant” to benefit from tutelary politics, the American administrators initially restricted the suffrage and office-holding to various wealth, property-holding, and education requirements.³ As a result, only some ten percent of the population organized political parties, voted and/or took up political office. This group of Filipinos thereby constituted a political elite. Organizing parties, voting, and holding political office, this elite were directly submitted to the Americans’ tutelary project and its political education. As administrator William H. Taft put it, they were “the eligible class” (Taft 1908: 26).

Existing studies have shown that the political elite was neither monolithic nor homogeneous.⁴ In relation to the rest of Philippine society, however, they did in fact share some basic characteristics. Foremost, the political elite had already come to occupy high positions within local status hierarchies before American arrival. First, due to the Americans’ restrictions on the electorate and office-holding, the elite constituted the wealthier fraction of the Filipino population, enjoying socioeconomic privileges denied to others. Many were large landowners, while others were merchants and professionals (e.g. lawyers, journalists, and doctors) — all of whom had benefitted from the articulation of the Philippines with the world market in the 19th century.⁵ Second, many of the political elite had been educated at home or abroad. The most educated, typically schooled in Europe or in local prestigious universities like Santo Tomas, were known as *ilustrados*, literally meaning “enlightened ones.” The lesser educated, not always educated in the most prestigious educational institutions, were known as *medio ilustrados*, or “middle *ilustrados*.”⁶ But in any case this education meant that, under Spanish rule, the elite enjoyed a certain prestige or cultural capital which the masses did not enjoy. It also meant that many of them could hold political office under Spanish rule, thereby giving them a basis of political power even if they did not necessarily command the landed power of their peers or kin.⁷

In short, the Filipino political elite constituted a status group which had already been wielding multiple forms of capital before American arrival. They were not strictly an economic class. Indeed, what had enabled the elites to attain their privileged positions in the first place was not their relative wealth alone, but the fact that they had deployed their wealth, along with their other forms of capital, to initiate exchanges with those around them. Philippine society was not yet abstracted by the mediations of free labor, it was rather a society constituted by personalized exchanges between kin members, merchant and landowner, landlord and tenant, peasant and peasant. Such exchanges most often took the ideal typical form of patron-client relations. Personal debts were incurred and accrued,

tokens of return given but full payment was infinitely deferred. In this moral economy, then, ones' status and power was determined by ones' position within circulations of exchange and indebtedness. Those who incurred personal debts from the most people, i.e., those who occupied nodal positions within circulations of exchange, had the most status and power. This was how the Filipino elite had come to power. They had used their privileges as sources of surplus by which to initiate and maintain personalized exchanges with others. Landlords provided tenants with land, productive tools, and funds for familial rituals, while their colleagues or cousins in bureaucratic positions provided interpretations of Castillian codes (or ways to get around them), along with access to state resources.⁸ In these ways did the elite incur and cultivate various debts owed to them, hence rising to the top of local hierarchies.

Having so risen to high positions within their society by the late 19th century, the elites were not hesitant to demand colonial reforms from Spain. This is the other basic characteristic of the elite: in the late 19th century, many of them involved themselves in attempts to secure more power for themselves. These attempts ranged from demands for local reform to violent revolution. In the late 1880s, for example, some of the more cosmopolitan *ilustrados* began calling for various educational, economic, and political programs. Later, other elites joined in and began to organize revolutionary movements against Spain (1896–1898). A select number of the elites then proceeded to rebel against American rule, only to later submit to and participate in the new tutelary scheme by 1902. Of course, not all of the elites immediately participated in violent rebellion, but the larger point is that the political elite, reformist or revolutionary, were an ascendant and ascending status group.

With these basic characteristics of the elite as a whole in mind, I will be speaking here of two subgroups specifically. First are the national-level *ilustrados*. Compared to the rest of the elites, these national *ilustrados* were more educated, and located much of their political activity in the urban center of Manila. This subgroup was particularly important during the American regime. They helped to constitute the leadership of the Nacionalista political party that dominated national politics during the American regime.⁹ The second subgroup included the provincial *ilustrados*. These actors had connections to the national *ilustrados*, especially through their participation in the Nacionalista party. They also had relatively high levels of education. Their activities, however, were located in the peripheral areas of Manila. They occupied provincial offices and, to some extent, the higher posts of the municipal governments during American rule (i.e. municipal mayor). They were thus connected to the national *ilustrados*, but did not enjoy as much national status.

Nonetheless, as they were connected to the national-level elite, and since they occupied the higher posts in the provincial areas, they too were important players in tutelary politics during the American regime.¹⁰ Like their counterparts at the national level, the provincial elites were subjected to the transformative attempts of tutelary rule.

Mabini and *Ilustrado* Discourse, 1880s–1890s

The national *ilustrados* and their provincial associates of the Nacionalista party were crucial players in tutelary politics during American rule, but many of them had also been important during the revolutionary turmoil of the late 1890s.¹¹ This means that they had led, or had at least been exposed to, the elite discursive explosion that preceded and accompanied the revolutionary period. By this explosion, new political ideas and ideals were articulated in unprecedented manner, all of which served for the elites to imagine themselves, their society, and future in particular ways. The subsequent discourses were certainly complex, bearing multiple influences. But common strands and themes underlay them, constituting thus a basic discursive field upon which the elites maneuvered and through which they acted.¹²

The common strands and themes of the elites' field can be seen most clearly in the writings of Apolinario Mabini. As one of the most important and respected Filipino intellectuals of the late 19th century, Mabini came to be known as the "brains of the Philippine revolution." He had helped to organize the elites' short-lived revolutionary government at Malolos (1899) and to write its founding constitution.¹³ There were three basic elements to Mabini's thought. First, Mabini premised his entire philosophy upon a certain definition of society. He defined society as an "association of men who are together for *mutual help*, so that each could enjoy the highest possible well-being; a situation that can never be arrived at by the sole efforts of individuals without the aid of others." Relatedly, he claimed that the necessary condition for life is daily and personalized "mutual exchange" between humans (Mabini 1931 II: 22–23). Mabini thus imagined society to be a personalized matter; that is, an entity constituted by persons connected to one another through personalized acts of mutual exchange. To some extent, this definition of society captured important features of the social world in which Mabini and his peers were living. Quotidian life throughout the Philippine archipelago in the late 19th century had long been structured around personalized relations of exchange and indebtedness idealized as reciprocal. In a sense, then, Mabini's definition of society objectified these social relations into a philosophical system. He claimed, in fact, that those reciprocal

relations were a natural necessity, part of God's law of nature (Mabini 1931: II, 22).

Second, Mabini offered ideas about moral action. He claimed that since natural law was given by God, natural law dictated morality. That which conformed to natural law was moral, that which did not was immoral (1931: II, 22–23). And since natural law was reciprocal exchange, one whose actions corresponded to reciprocal exchange was behaving morally and in a virtuous manner, while one who erred on the terms of reciprocity was neither acting morally nor virtuously (1931: II, 22–23). Again, these ideas were abstractions of quotidian practices. Relations of exchange in the Philippines had long been propped by a certain moral economy in which persons were obliged to return a service or gift rendered to them by another (e.g. Bourdieu 1977: 171–97). When a person provided a service or gift, the receiver incurred an *utang na loob*, a “debt of the soul.” If one not did not pay the debt, one would experience the charge of *hiya* or shame — that is, the disapproval of the community and hence the threat of exclusion from the circulations of exchange which constitute the community.¹⁴

Lastly, Mabini formulated a set of political ideals, deriving notions of justice and rights logically from his definition of natural law/society. That which was “just,” he claimed, was that which adhered to the terms of mutual exchange. Moreover, one had a natural right to engage in mutual exchange. It followed that injustice was that which transgressed mutual exchange, and similarly, ones’ rights were trampled upon when ones’ gift was not reciprocated (1931: I, 104). Finally, freedom in Mabini’s view was the unhindered ability to take a position within circulations of reciprocal exchange (1931: II, 271). One who was undeservedly denied the possibility of engaging in the mutual exchanges so necessary for life could legitimately consider themselves oppressed and unfree.

Mabini thus offered a set of ideas about society, morality, and politics, but these were not simply ideas. They were recipes for action, instantiated in political practice. Indeed, the elites’ revolution against Spain was in large part justified through the kinds of ideas Mabini articulated. In Mabini’s view, when the Spanish explorer Miguel Lopez de Legaspi had initially arrived to the Philippines he set into motion a situation of reciprocal exchange. Legaspi had made an implicit agreement with the local Filipino chief, Sicutuna, to establish the first Spanish settlement in the archipelago, such that Spanish rule was predicated upon a “blood compact” of “mutual obligation” between the Spaniards and Filipinos (Majul 1996: 262–5). In the late 19th century, however, the Spaniards were pillaging the Philippines economically, leaving it in ruin, and depriving the Filipinos of prosperity (at least in the view of the Filipino elites). By

such behavior, then, the Spanish were erring on the terms of reciprocity, transgressing the ties of mutual dependence and help which the initial compact between Spaniards and the Filipino people had implied. Revolution against Spain was thereby justified.

The justification for revolution had further grounding in Mabini's definition of Reason, or *razón*. Mabini defined *razón* as "a regulative power constraining men from violating the rights of others to self-preservation" (quoted in Majul 1996: 237). Since self-preservation demanded reciprocal exchange, *razón* was the faculty which facilitated and sustained such exchange. But *razón* was also fallible. It could function improperly at times, such that the natural law of reciprocal exchanges would be threatened (i.e. the secular world and its evils could pose challenges to God's laws). On this Mabini refers to instances in which the means of living are appropriated without proper return, e.g. through the use of force (1931: II, 23). In such cases, the terms of reciprocity are transgressed and the mutual interest which men have in helping one another becomes a clashing of interest — neither virtuous, reasonable, nor moral. Hence the justification for revolution against Spain: Mabini believed that the Spaniards were no longer the proper representatives of *razón* on earth, for the Spaniards were no longer adhering to the natural law of mutuality. Spanish rule had to therefore be replaced by a new authority, one "more in tune with Justice and [*Razón*]" (1931: II, 24).

The Filipino *ilustrados*, Mabini's peers precisely, had it that they should be the new political authority. They believed that since they were the most educated and intelligent, they had a privileged capacity and should take the reigns of power. To them, having education and intelligence meant two interrelated things. First, it meant the ability to see the truths of the world, the truths unfolding from God's natural law of mutual exchange. In other words, it meant the ability to access *razón* and thus the ability to protect oneself and others from transgressions against it (Mabini 1931: II, 23). Second, and relatedly, education and intelligence implied the ability to initiate and realize the operations of *razón* on earth. This self-fashioning makes sense. Educated Filipinos had been able to obtain positions in the Spanish colonial state, and they had often used those positions to provide services and surpluses to commoners. The educated Filipinos could thus access things (e.g. economic resources, state privileges, and legal knowledge) which commoners could not, things which could then be inserted into local circulations of exchange and debt. Only the educated Filipinos, then, could occupy nodal points in those circulations (Sidel 1995: 150–1). With their education, state access, and high positions, only the educated Filipinos could mediate between outside powers (surpluses) and their immediate locale, thereby initiating and carrying out the

natural law of mutual exchange (Majul 1996: 51–2). It is therefore fitting that the elites not only referred to themselves as *ilustrados*, but also as the “brains of the nation” (e.g., Rizal 1922: V, 282). By this image they scripted themselves precisely as the sole bearers of *razón*, i.e. the privileged ones who could access, initiate and realize natural law on earth. As the “brains of the nation,” they were the nerve center for the circulations of exchange that constituted the social cum national body.

When the elites set up their new Philippine constitution and their temporary independent government at Malolos in the midst of revolution in 1899, their self-fashionings became unprecedentedly manifest. Scripting themselves as the “oligarchy of intelligence,” the elites planned for the Philippine Republic to be directed by the educated and wealthy factions (Calderon 1919: 474; Majul 1967: 164). They restricted office-holding in the towns subsumed under the Malolos government, and they planned to replace all Spanish priests with Filipino priests of the Filipino National Church. The Filipino Church was to be under the direction of Malolos and its leadership, thus relegated to the margins. In this way, then, the elites tried to solidify their self-proclaimed position within the emerging national hierarchy. They tried to occupy the place which agents of the Spanish Crown agents once occupied, claiming themselves to be the new bearers of *razón* (Majul 1967: 185, 196).

In short, prior to American rule, the Filipino elite had articulated their own political discourse, structured by ideas and ideals of reciprocity and *razón*, hierarchy and natural law. Moreover, the elites had activated that discourse in practice. They had instantiated their schemas as they justified revolution against Spain and set up their Malolos government to rule their proclaimed Philippine Republic. The elites had thereby constructed an entire field of both meaning and practice. Of course, it was precisely this field which the Americans derided and so attempted to replace, construing the elites as “aristocrats” at best — “caciques,” “tyrants,” or “oligarchs” at worst — who did not know how to properly govern themselves (e.g., Root 1916: 45).¹⁵ Nonetheless, as we will soon see, it was from this field also that the elites drew to receive tutelage, and in the end to stop it short in its tracks.

Violence and Signs

As I have said, American rule was structured by the attempt to teach the Filipinos the ways of free self-government, Anglo-style. It should be clear, however, that violence preceded this attempt. The Filipino elites responded to the arrival of the American military by continuing their anti-colonial rebellion from late Spanish rule, and the

Americans were quick to use guns to subdue them. The Philippine-American war thus began. Force was the backdrop of tutelage.¹⁶

Officially, the war lasted from 1899 to 1902. Some peasant forces persisted in rebellion after 1902 (e.g. Iletto 1979), but most of the insurgent leaders finally dropped their arms by then. Much could be said about the war, but here a certain double-process amidst it is most important for our purposes. On the one hand, the Filipino elite insurgents eventually deferred to American rule in no small part because of the wars' violence. The Americans were arguably superior in terms of military resources, and they were no doubt quite devious, if not horrific, in their methods. All in all, thousands of Filipino lives were lost, and the war animated endemics like cholera (May 1991: 270–75). No surprise, then, that the Filipinos eventually surrendered. In fact, in their public declarations of surrender, the former insurgents often made reference to the violence and devastation of the war as a compelling factor.¹⁷

On the other hand, however, another related logic was at work. To see this, consider the story told by one elite insurgent, Felipe Buencamino, who was captured by the Americans in November of 1899 and then declared loyalty to the U.S. (later to serve in various capacities in the new regime):

[While a prisoner] I got hold of an American almanac in which was the Constitution of the United States, and with the aid of a soldier who was on guard, and who had a slight knowledge of Spanish, I was able to understand it and to make a translation. Having seen and read those grand principles which it contained, and which were in accordance with their rights and desires, I changed by mode of thinking and abandoned the *insurrecto* cause . . . Therefore my conversion was principally due to having studied the American constitution . . . [I]t was one of the noblest documents ever written by a man; that I had never seen in any laws or constitutions of European powers sentiments so noble as those expressed in that. In none of those documents had I ever seen the expression 'rights of liberty.' These were details which had convinced me that [his fellow insurgents] should surrender themselves to the Americans" (ERP, Container 164, "Special Correspondence, 1900–1902," October 1901 folder).

Buencamino's testimony here was made to American authorities, therefore its validity cannot be assured. But it is at least suggestive of how written and verbal signs, not only guns, might have also contributed to the elites' deferral to American rule. Buencamino submits to American rule having read the Americans' signs, in this the Americans' "noblest document." Indeed, amidst the war the American authorities offered a range of signs to Filipinos, trying to make it clear that, despite the violence, United States rule was to be structured by benevolence. Among these were proclamations for a peaceful democratic tutelage. One of the first and more important of these proclamations was the proclamation issued by the Americans of the Philippine Commission in 1899. It read in part:

To the People of the Philippine Islands:

The United States striving earnestly for the welfare and advancement of the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands ... is ... solicitous to spread peace and happiness among the Philippine people; to guarantee them a rightful freedom; to protect them in their just privileges and immunities; to accustom them to free self-government in an ever-increasing measure; and to encourage them in those democratic aspirations, sentiments, and ideals which are the promise and potency of a fruitful national development (USPC 1900: I, 3-4)

As with Buencamino's reception to the American Constitution, this proclamation was received by Filipinos with interest, attracting "large attention" throughout the Islands. In Manila, Filipinos "gathered about the posters [of the proclamation] in groups while one of their number would read and explain." Copies of the proclamation "passed from hand to hand among the natives" and stretched out into the interior (USPC 1900: I, 6). In fact, many Filipino insurgents were compelled by it. Soon after it was issued, some Filipino insurgents associated with the Malolos government temporarily dropped their arms to meet with key American administrators. In the meetings, the Filipinos went over the proclamation "sentence by sentence" and asked the Americans "to explain what was meant by certain phrases." The Americans in turn "fully explained" each one, and the insurgent emissaries returned to the interior bases to inform their *compadres* of what they had learned (USPC 1900: I, 9-10).

It was not long after the proclamation of 1899 when many elites began to drop their arms and submit to tutelary rule (Cullinane 1989: 78-79). Indeed, in the provinces, the Americans made haste after the proclamation to match deeds to their words, hoping to show through practical action that they would fulfill their promises. In each town captured by the military, authorities laid down the foundations for tutelary rule by holding local elections and, in effect, allowing preexisting elites to return to office (Diamonon 1920: 17-21). Former insurgents who declared allegiance to the United States were allowed to take up positions in the new tutelary state. This was the route that many elites took. Dropping their arms, they took local office and, in the end, deferred to the United States (Larkin 1972: 120; May 1991: 202-203; Owen 1979: 564).

The violence of the Philippine-American war thereby led to the elites' deferral, but so too did the signs offered by the Americans. In those signs the elite insurgents saw something. Certainly they had already seen violence, and they were faced with its threat all the while. But reading the Americans' discourse about "liberty," hearing the Americans proclaim "free self-government in an ever-increasing measure," and watching the new local governments of civil rule being established, the insurgent elites also saw something more

affirmative for themselves, thus succumbing to the Americans' offerings. Both violence and signs set the backdrop for tutelage. But the question remains: what exactly did the Filipinos see in those signs? How did they make sense of the Americans' discourse and the new offices? This is the issue of reception to which we can now finally turn. Consider first how the elites received the Americans' discourses of "free self-government."

"Free Self-Government"

In 1905, six years after the proclamation of 1899, a public hearing was held in Manila. It was occasioned by the arrival of the U.S. Secretary of War and a party of U.S. congressmen who had come to hear the Filipinos' complaints about U.S. rule. The hearings are of particular interest because they mark the first time since the rebellion in which Filipino elites and high-ranking American administrators openly discussed their respective views on colonial rule. But they are of special interest also because, among the Filipinos attending and speaking at the hearings, were former elite insurgents, such as those elites who had met with the Americans in 1899 to discuss the proclamation, "sentence by sentence." Those elites had come along with their peers as members of the *Comité de Intereses Filipino*, a political organization which claimed some ten thousand members and whose leadership would be crucial players in colonial politics for years to come. The *Comité* thereby constituted an early organizational basis for the national *ilustrados* (Cullinane 1989: 191–3).

At the hearings, one of the *Comité* members, Señor Vicente Ilustre, stood before the distinguished American gentlemen of the committee and argued that the United States should grant political autonomy to the Philippines. He claimed that the Philippines was a country of very high "political capacity," that it was — contrary to the Americans' views on the matter — quite capable of "self-government." This claim is not surprising. Even though the elites had conceded to American rule, they also desired to have more political autonomy than the Americans were currently providing. The Americans had promised "free self-government in ever-increasing measure," but by 1905 they had only given local governments to the Filipinos (the Americans still controlled the national center). What is surprising, though, is how Ilustre justified his claim that the Philippines was deserving of more autonomy. He read a petition, signed by himself and his fellow *Comité* members, which said in part:

If the Philippine archipelago has a governable *popular mass* called upon to obey and a *directing class* charged with the duty of governing, it is in condition to govern itself.

These factors ... are the only two by which to determine the political capacity of a country; an entity that knows how to govern, the directing class, and an entity that knows how to obey, the popular masses (USPC 1905: 12).

What is so curious here is that while Ilustre's talk of "directing classes" and "popular masses" was intended to be a justification for self-government, the Americans had been withholding self-government precisely because there was such a disparity between classes. As I have already discussed, the Americans' rationale for colonial rule was that if Philippine independence were to be granted, the islands would "retrogress" into "tyranny." The "aristocratic" elites would take the reigns of power and subject the "ignorant, credulous, and child-like" masses to their "despotic" designs (Taft 1908: 8). Rather than undermining this rationale, then, Ilustre's petition legitimated it further. Indeed, later the American administrators derided the petition directly. Appalled at the "candor" with which the elites spoke of "directing classes," they took it as another example of the Filipinos' despotic orientation and hence their need for continued American tutelage (Taft 1908: 75; Worcester 1914: II, 942-3).

For the Filipino petitioners, however, the talk of directing classes and popular masses was not an example of their ignorance of "free self-government." It was rather a basic element in their own definition of it. Take what the petitioners say about what might have happened had not the Americans taken possession of the islands:

If the country [the Philippines] should have ruled its own destinies, far from being *tyrannical* — according to the scruples of some people — the government established would have been a *model of justice*, for neither the culture of the directing class is great enough to impose *obedience in a tyrannical sense* nor is the culture of the popular masses so wanting as to allow themselves to be tyrannized. It is only where there is *positive want of equilibrium* between the culture of one class and the ignorance of another that a government is able to tyrannize a people, *which condition does not exist in the Philippines* ... (USPC 1905: 12, my emphasis)

The petitioners reject the idea that the division between a directing class and the popular masses would be tyrannical. They claim to the contrary that the two classes could exist as "a model of justice" as long as there is an "equilibrium" between them. We see here the activation of Mabini's political schemas. Mabini, recall, had defined justice as adherence to the natural law of *razón*, i.e., adherence to mutual help and exchange. When there is reciprocity, there is justice. Likewise he defined injustice to be non-reciprocity, a transgression of *razón*. The petitioners at the hearings of 1905 were thus articulating similar notions. Just as Mabini had defined justice as adherence to natural law, and as he theorized that law as dictating mutual

exchange and help, so do the petitioners define “justice” to be a state of “equilibrium” between the classes, a state of reciprocity. And just as Mabini had defined injustice as a lack of reciprocity, a transgression of *razón*, so do the petitioners suggest that tyranny was a disequilibrium, a “want of equilibrium.” Indeed, one of the original petitioners, Macario Adriatico, later expanded upon this notion of equilibrium. In an article written years after the hearings, Adriatico contended that when there is a directing class leading the masses, “there would not be the danger of one class . . . governing the rest, because even so there would be no clashing of interest . . . because there would be *mutual dependence* among the several elements of which it is composed” (Adriatico 1917: 42). Like Mabini, Adriatico defined “justice” as a matter of “mutual dependence.”

In his essay, Macario Adriatico also refers to the directing class as the “aristocracy of the intellect” (1917: 41). This is informative also. As we have seen, in the 19th century the elites conflated intelligence with the ability to access and ensure the natural law of *razón*, the law of mutual exchange. That was why they had insisted that only those with intelligence should serve as heirs to Spanish authority after the Revolution, for only those Filipinos with the proper education could rightfully become the new authoritative presence, the new bearers of *razón*. In speaking of the “directing class” as the “aristocracy of the intellect,” Adriatico was scripting the directing class as those privileged bearers of *razón*. He was imagining the directing class to be the “brains of the nation” who had the privileged capacity to access, initiate, and realize God’s natural law of mutual dependence and exchange. It is no surprise, then, that Adriatico and his petitioner peers claimed that the directing classes and popular masses could live as a model of “justice.” The directing classes would ensure and fulfill the law of *razón*, and there was nothing “tyrannical” about that. It is no surprise, either, that the petitioners at the hearings claimed with appalling “candor” that the popular masses had to “obey” the directing class. Since the directing class bore *razón*, to disobey them would be to disobey *razón*. It would be to violate natural law. And by the same token, to disobey the directing class would go against one’s own best interest, for it was in one’s own interest to follow *razón* and its terms of necessary mutual exchange. To obey the directing class and the *razón* which that class represented would be to follow natural law. It would be to act morally and follow one’s own interest. In a sense, to obey the directing class would be a state of freedom, since freedom as Mabini defined it was the unhindered ability to engage in mutual exchange and help. To obey the directing class would be “free self-government” precisely.

There is more. Since only the directing class was authority, since only they bore *razón*, they were in a certain sense sanctioned by a

God. As the keepers, protectors, and bearers of *razón*, they were also, by the same token, the keepers, protectors, and bearers of natural law which, as Mabini had premised, was the very law of God. The directing class could then consider themselves to be the legitimate counterparts to the priesthood, accessing natural law and the God which created it so as to bestow benefits upon the people and demand their returns (Rafael 1993b: 163). As the most “intelligent,” as the bearers of *razón*, and therefore as well-suited leaders, the directing class could mediate between this world and an outside power. To obey this class would be to follow the will of God.

In sum, for the Filipino elites at the hearings, “free self-government” entailed such things as reciprocity, the *razón* by which reciprocity functions, and the divine authority of certain persons who would protect and ensure it all. It meant a state in which a directing class and the popular masses would live in “harmony” and “mutual dependence,” a state in which the popular masses obeyed the directing classes and the *razón* which they represented. It was a state, in a sense, without a state; for while political authority was deemed contingently necessary, the propriety and legitimacy of that authority was seen as resting upon the character of personalized relations between subjects of God.¹⁸ This was a conception of “free self-government” quite different than that of the Americans, who measured political capacity according to such things as “knowledge of objects of government, respect for law, and a willingness to submit to the will of the majority” (Forbes 1928: II, 347; Perkins 1962: 218).

A conflict of codes, and of perceptions, ensued. The elites believed that the Philippines already had the basic elements of “free self-government.” They looked around them and saw that there was already a directing class who knew how to govern (i.e., themselves), and a popular mass who knew how to obey. All the while, the Americans derided them, taking the elites’ words as signs of political ignorance, of vanity, and of despotic ways (e.g., USPC 1905: 45). Nonetheless, the elites stood firm in their self-fashionings. Apparently unmoved by the Americans’ derision, they persisted in their political ideas and imaginings. In fact, years later, in 1910, when the elites reflected back upon the hearings of 1905, they sensed that something had gone awry there, that there had been a “capital defect” at the hearings. But, revealingly, they did not see that the “defect” was due to a conflict of codes. Instead, they believed it was they that had let themselves be subjected to an “unmerciful questioning [by the Americans] before a numerous public” (*La Vanguardia*, 17 June 1910, p. 2, reprinted in USNA, BIA, RG 350, folder 21431-71). They apparently saw no problem with their particular political discourse. The only problem they saw was their presumed public humiliation. They thus persisted in their claims to be the directing class “called to

guide the masses" (*La Democracia*, 30 June 1910, p. 2 reprinted in USNA, BIA, RG 350, folder 21431-71).

We can now understand how the elites received the Americans' discourse about self-government. In hearing the Americans' tell them in the petition of 1899 that the Filipinos would be provided "free self-government in an ever increasing measure," the elites took telling that to mean their own conception of self-government. They disarticulated the the Americans' words from their original field and rearticulated them through their own field. They took free self-government to mean the benevolent rule of the "directing class" and hence the realization of *razón*. They therefore did not internalize the Americans' discourse and its authorial intention, they rather persisted in their own discourse which was entirely different, the very discourse which they had been articulating before the Americans' arrival. In receiving the Americans' words, the elites transposed onto them their preexisting categories. They received the Americans' words by domesticating them.

Of course, in this case, domestication was merely a matter of words. And it effected little else than some conceptual confusion at the public hearings, on both sides of the table. But much more was at stake in tutelary rule than words alone. The American administrators firmly believed that in order to truly teach the 'true' meaning of self-government, they had to provide Filipinos with practical political "experience": "Free self-government is not a matter of intellectual apprehension, but of character and acquired habits of thought and feeling" (USDW 1899: 26). This is why the American administrators had constructed an extensive system of municipal and provincial governments to be manned by Filipinos, elected through a restricted suffrage (May 1980: 41-56). The new officials were to perform basic duties such as taxation and administration, while the Americans would supervise them from atop, punishing any acts of official transgression below. The local governments would thus be the site wherein Filipinos could acquire a "practical political education," receiving "object lessons" in proper governmental practice (USDW 1901: I, 21). As administrator Taft put it, the local governments would be where the "seeds of popular government can be sown" (quoted in May 1980: 41). But there was a hitch. For given their particular conception of government, the Filipino elites saw in those offices things which the Americans did not see. The effect would be much more than some conceptual confusion.

"The Seeds of Popular Government"

Even before the hearings of 1905, local governments had been established. As I have noted already, the American authorities, in

tune with their seminal proclamation of 1899, offered elections and offices as the war waned. By 1902, then, Filipinos across the archipelago were serving as municipal mayors, provincial governors, and provincial board members, all under the watchful eye of American field agents who were to teach them “much needed lessons in self-government” (USDW 1901: 43). Notably, occupying many of the new offices were former insurgents of the revolutionary period. Moreover, occupying the higher reaches of the new offices were the provincial *ilustrados* who would soon cultivate ties to the Manila-based elites at the hearings of 1905.¹⁹

Soon after the local governments were finalized, however, the Americans encountered subtle disturbances to their designs. Over the course of 1901 and 1902, for example, the new municipal officials had been collecting illegal taxes and pillaging the local treasuries for themselves, voting “all of the available funds for the payment of their own salaries” (quoted in Cullinane 1971: 21). The new officials had also been using the local police forces as their “personal muchachos” and had been generally deploying the prerogatives of office for their own “private profit” and “private desires.” They had thus been exercising “arbitrary power” and showing no “sense of responsibility . . . to the public at large” (USPC 1901: 40; USDW 1901: I, 20–21, 31; USPC 1904: 84). It was all quite disturbing to the American administrators indeed. In their eyes, such behaviour was fundamentally transgressive: it was “political corruption,” the very antithesis of proper liberal democratic governance. The administrators had come into political maturity in the 1890s at home, a time when their colleagues were fighting urban bosses, political machines, and the threat to liberal democracy which it all seemed to represent (Buenker 1988). And having carried that ideological baggage with them to the Philippines, they took the Filipinos’ corruption to be an expression of how Filipinos “have but a faint conception of what real civil liberty is and the mutual *self-restraint* which is involved in its maintenance” (USDW 1901: I, 20; my emphasis). What the Filipinos needed to learn was the “American spirit of service.” They needed self-discipline and “self-control.” They needed to recognize that political office is “a public trust, that a government officer was to labor for the welfare of his community, and that the public revenues were to be used for the public benefit and for no other purpose” (Forbes 1928: I, 259–60). In the larger scope of things, this meant that Filipinos had to adhere to the terms of legal-rational action. Rather than serving their own “personal interests” and “aggrandizement,” they had to submit to the legal codes and regulations which the Americans introduced (quoted in Cullinane 1971: 15). They had to submit to “an impersonal order,” as Weber (1968: I, 217) might put it, and they had to orient their actions accordingly.

The Filipinos, though, were not submitting. To understand exactly why, it should be clear that under Spanish rule, the kinds of practices which the Americans coded as corrupt had in fact been the norm, not the exception. Under Spanish rule, there had been little limitation upon the officials' powers. Officials, many of them Filipino elites, were expressly given a monopoly over all kinds of duties. They were in charge of public works, directing the local police force, collecting taxes, and more. And whatever duties they were not expressly given they took upon themselves to enact. Officials were known, for example, to engage in illicit trading activities, embarking upon commercial efforts or acting as the commercial agents for their friends. They often used the privileges and powers of office to realize those efforts precisely (Bankoff 1992: 682–4). Under Spanish rule, then, political office had been carried on in a highly personalistic manner. Officials served as nodal points in networks of exchange, the circulation of money, favors, and grants of all kinds passed directly through their hands. This personalization is exemplified by the fact that there had been no Tagalog word for “taxes” during Spanish rule. Moneys given to officials were known as *buwis*, at that time seen as “tribute” (Forbes 1928: I, 259–60). Officials provided protection, public works, legal services, bureaucratic access, and the like; in return, members of the community gave them money here and there, even services in kind, thereby sustaining personalized relationships of exchange between officials and locals (Bankoff 1992; Larkin 1972: 93–4). Indeed, it was precisely through this use of office that many elites had been able to maintain or further aggrandize their positions within local hierarchies (Cullinane 1989: 49–52; Sidel 1995: 150–51).

Understanding this context is crucial for apprehending the Filipino elites' ostensible corruption during the early years of American rule. For if we unpack the “corruption” during American rule more closely, we find practices remarkably akin to those of the pre-American period. Consider a certain disparity in the Americans administrators' claims about political corruption. On the one hand, administrators complained that local officials were filling their “own pockets” with public funds rather than using those funds for local infrastructural development as expressly dictated by the Municipal and Provincial Codes (USPC 1904: 84). That is, the officials were using office for private profit and not for “the public good.” On the other hand, the administrators also discovered that officials were soliciting “illegal taxes” (or “voluntary contributions” as they were sometimes called) which often went into “money, material, and labor” for the making of public works in the community (Cullinane 1971: 32; USPC 1914: 14). In one case, the municipal president of the town of Jaro, whose treasury was empty, “macadamized the public roads, put in permanent concrete culverts over all the

waterways and at street crossings . . . [and] obtained money enough to build a new school, and a market partly of concrete" (Forbes 1928: 158-9). In another case, municipal mayors personally pledged 4,000 pesos each to build local schoolhouses (Larkin 1972: 196).

All of this suggests that as soon as the officials were pocketing money for their own "private profit" they used at least some of that money in their locale. In other words, they were collecting taxes as tribute, just as in the days of old. They were providing surpluses to the community and receiving "illegal taxes" or "involuntary contributions" in return for their services. Hence, not only were officials found to be building infrastructure but also giving out political appointments to friends and providing legal service to commoners (Grossholtz 1964: 162-3; May 1980: 54; USPC 1910: 83). An investigation in 1907 thus disclosed that the practice of collecting "illegal taxes" was highly regularized and that it was seen by locals as a legitimate kind of taxation, i.e., a practice of giving "contributions" for which the giver would get returns:

The custom of collecting so-called 'voluntary contributions' for public and semi-public purposes exists in many municipalities of the islands . . . In towns where it is desired to raise money by voluntary contributions, it not infrequently happens that each person is assessed a certain amount, and told that such sum is his share of the contribution which must be paid. [These people] are thus led to look upon all contributions as taxes (WPC Volume I, Item 26).

As in the Spanish days, then, the Filipino officials were using their privileged positions to offer surpluses, returns to be collected. They were carrying on with the new offices as they always had before. No surprise that over sixty percent of the local Filipino officials during American rule had served also served as officials in the Spanish regime prior.²⁰ The Filipino elites were simply transposing their old schemas onto the new offices.

To a certain extent American administrators recognized this themselves. To them, the Filipinos' corruption was a hangover from the Spanish period, a matter of bad "habits" to be remedied (USDW 1901: I, 21). They therefore made efforts to undo them. Beginning in 1903, they made the municipal governments more directly accountable to the provincial level, where sat American supervisors. American supervisors were then given the duty of inspecting local affairs and annulling any undesirable ordinances passed by the municipal councils. They were also supposed to work with the Filipino provincial governor to bring charges against corrupt municipal officials. Lastly, the American Executive Bureau at the central level of the state was given the duty of taking in all charges of corruption and investigating them so as to charge, remove, or otherwise punish offenders. It was to be an intensification of

surveillance and discipline, aimed precisely at restructuring the Filipinos' bad habits (Cullinane 1971: 19–21; Taft 1908: 31–34). Most curious, though, is that corruption persisted despite the administrators' efforts. "Neglect of duty," "fraud," "bribery," "abuse of authority" — all manner of transgressions were to be found throughout the first two decades of tutelage, with only minor levels of decrease. In 1903, for example, 88 officials were found guilty of corruption. The next year found 116. Ten years later, in 1913, 80 were found guilty, and in 1917 there were 71 (Cullinane 1971; Governor of the Philippine Islands 1918: 33–4). Of course this data is difficult to interpret adequately. But the reports of outside investigative commissions from the U.S. suggest that corruption was a serious problem throughout. An investigative commission in 1910 found that "caciquism, i.e., local 'bossism,' is just as potential now as ever" (USDW 1910: 7). The Wood-Forbes commission, traveling throughout the archipelago in 1920, found "caciquism" and "corruption" to be "seething" in nearly every province (United States Congress, House 1921: 43; Hoyt 1963: 116, 121, 125–6, 173–4, 183). Corruption remained a persistent problem.

So what was going on, exactly? An incident in 1901 is suggestive. In that year, a prominent Filipino elite named Pedro Paterno visited the American administrators of the Philippine Commission. During his visit, he suggested to the administrators that "decorations and orders of nobility" be awarded to the newly elected municipal officials (Williams 1913: 284). The Americans, of course, found that ridiculous. They were allowing the elites to hold local office so that they could learn the ways of democracy, not the ways of an aristocracy. To Paterno, however, the suggestion must have been perfectly reasonable. Otherwise he probably would not have raised it.

Paterno's request has a history. Previously, during Spanish rule, the Spanish state had conferred decorations and various other sorts of honorifics upon Filipino officials serving in their bureaucracy. That was how Filipino elites had been able to acquire titles such as *Don*, "together with such emblems of authority as canes, hats, and a retinue of deputies" (Rafael 1993b: 163; Larkin 1972: 91–2). It was also how they had been able to elicit the token signs of deference from their inferiors. For all of those decorations and honorifics signaled that the recipient was deserving of their position. They signaled that the recipient has divine authorization, such as the kind which accompanies the privileged position of bearing *razón*. The Spaniards' recognition of the Filipino officials had been an explicit statement that the official held a privileged place within the divine political order, running all the way up to the Crown and hence to God. Moreover, when the Filipino elites scripted their new government which was to replace Spanish rule after independence,

they had planned that the Filipino officials should receive orders of nobility. "There were to be four orders of nobility varying in degree and descending to the children. The holders of these were to wear a medal and be supported at the public expense" (WCF, *Journal* Vol. I, p. 43). Thus, Paterno, in demanding honorifics from the Americans, seems to have been demanding the sort of recognition that state officials had always received. It was as if he was imagining the new Filipino officials to be the privileged bearers of *razón*. It is thereby that the first legislation which municipal councils passed during tutelary rule was legislation that fixed "the fees which...priests should be allowed to charge for baptism, marriage, and burial ceremonies" (USDW 1901: I, 32). Prior to that, during Spanish rule, Spanish priests had been the ones who decided on such fees, often with no limits (USPC 1900: I, 57). It was one of the many privileges of being a representative of God, of being an enacter and ensurer of His natural law. By limiting those fees under U.S. rule, the municipal councillors were claiming a legitimate authority over and against that of the priest. They were establishing themselves as legitimate local leaders who could access and ensure the operations of natural law: the bearers of *razón*.

The 1908 annual report of the Filipino governor of Tayabas, Manuel Quezon, reveals this self-fashioning even more starkly. In his report, Quezon refers to himself and the rest of the officials in his province as the "directing class." Furthermore, he writes that the "directing class" in his province "controls public opinion" while "no minister of any religion can boast of having complete control of the public conscience" — as if to boast that he and his peers had effectively claimed the monopoly of *razón* over and against former monopoly by the Spanish priests. He also writes:

Caciquism, as a social evil, does not exist in this province. The common people live happy and satisfied; justice is administered to them, their rights are not overridden by the directing class. The directing class is . . . law-abiding. It is not too much to say that there is a perfect accord between rich and poor, cultured and uncultured. . .

Municipal administration . . . is, as a general rule, in very good condition. The members of the municipal council . . . are interested in the public welfare. The provincial board goes ahead with this work admirably; its members are in perfect accord and each of them shows a special interest in the province (USPC 1909: 461).

The similarity between this talk and the discourse of the petitioners at the hearings of 1905 should be clear. Just as the petitioners of 1905 stated that the "directing class" lives in "harmony" and "justice" with the "popular masses," so does Quezon claim that the "directing class" in his province administers "justice" and lives in "perfect accord" with the local population. Quezon thereby scripts

local office as the institutional site for the directing class, not as a site to learn the Americans' ways of government.²¹

The officials' corruption takes on a new light. While it was, in a sense, a "habit" leftover from Spanish rule, it was more precisely the extension of the elites' schemas about what the directing class should do and how they should act in office. What the Americans' coded as corruption was but the practical extension of the elites' own political terms. It was an enactment of "mutual dependence" between the directing class and the popular masses, a realization of mutual help and mutual exchange carried out through tribute and its returns (e.g., legal services, political appointments, public works). In short, what the Americans called corruption was for the Filipino elites the law of *razón* activated in practice. Perhaps this is why administrator Forbes found himself lamenting early on that "there is no public opinion against [corruption]" (WCF, *Journal*, Vol. I, p. 52). Perhaps, too, it is why observers as late as the 1920s learned that "the use of public office for purpose of bribery and graft is very general . . . and is in no public sense a dishonorable thing . . . Graft is almost a perquisite of office" (Romualdez 1925: 30). As late as the 1930s, in fact, it was discovered that

[T]he provincial governor is regarded by a large proportion of the people of his province . . . as a personal guide, philosopher, and friend. To him go his followers for advice regarding family and business affairs, to get a relative out of jail, or to ask for jobs for themselves or their parientes . . . *the governor's authority is still thought of as having no limit*, and he is often besought to intervene in judicial matters and otherwise to exert arbitrary power in behalf of faithful supporters and their friends" (Hayden 1942: 285).

This is not to say that officials could always exert power in an "arbitrary" manner. There were limits. The American Executive Bureau (which had been given the task of taking in and investigating complaints of corruption) noted that Filipinos themselves were registering complaints against Filipino officials. This suggests that the Filipinos were seeking to put some kind of constraint on official practices; that they believed their own official power had to be limited. Those constraints and limitations, however, did not align with the ones the American administrators wanted to impose. Return to the reports of the Executive Bureau: the Bureau reported that Filipinos were making charges of corruption against officials, but they also report that upon investigating those charges they found that many of them were either "groundless" or were leveled by the "political enemy" of the accused official (USPC 1904: I, 694). Both are telling.

Take first the "groundless" charges. To say that a charge is groundless is simply to say that it has no basis in legal-rational norms, no basis in the Americans' administrative codes. It is to thereby suggest that the charge has basis in some other kind of code. What

kind of code? The Bureau does not say exactly. But its records do give one telling report of a “groundless” charge of corruption. The charge was registered in 1913 by the Governor of Capiz against some justices of the peace whose districts the Governor had visited during the year. His complaint was that the justices had failed to “salute” him, despite that his “visits were frequently announced.” This was hardly corruption in the Americans’ view, which is why the Executive Bureau dealt with the complaint by a letter which simply said: “the theoretical principles of democracy prevailing under this government do not require such courtesies as a matter of law” (Worcester 1921: II, 954). But the salutes which the administrators deemed as excessive were much more than courtesies. During Spanish rule, courtesies such as salutes were ways of showing deference and respect. They were not unlike the decorations and orders of nobility given to officials in the Spanish colonial state; they were signs that the receiver bore *razón*. To not offer the salutes or tokens of deference was to therefore suggest that the official did not bear *razón*. In the Filipinos’ conceptions, this was a serious offense indeed (Hart 1928: 156–7).

This example discloses that charges of corruption by Filipinos were predicated upon the code of *razón*, not upon the Americans’ legal-rational code. Consider, then, the charges of corruption leveled by the “political enemies” of the official. What did those charges mean? It should be clear first that political officials rose to position in this period by cultivating personalized ties of mutual indebtedness with other elites who voted them into office. Voting privileges were restricted to the relatively small number of elites in any given locale, such that voting became a highly personalized matter. In effect, then, any elected office-holder had an *utang na loob* (“debt of the soul”) to the elites who had voted them into office. And if they remained true to that *utang* they kept their friends and followers; if they did not, they acquired enemies. A “political enemy,” then, was someone to whom the official had not fulfilled their debt (Hollsteiner 1969: 163; Lande 1965: 5–23). It follows that a charge of corruption by a political enemy was a charge that the official had erred on a debt, that he had transgressed the terms of *razón*. One of the few documented charges by a political enemy to which we have access suggests as much. The charge was leveled in 1907 in the city of Iloilo by one Quintin Salas. The accused was the provincial Governor, one Benito Lopez. From the scanty record, we find that Salas accused Governor Lopez of corruption because Lopez had “failed to satisfy the expectations of Salas.” It seems that Lopez had a “debt of gratitude” to him, but that he had erred on it (WPC Vol. I, Item 27). This is informative indeed. A “debt of gratitude,” rendered in Tagalog as *utang na loob*, meant a personalized debt incurred from a prior act of giving. It meant that one had to provide a return. For Salas to accuse

Lopez of erring on a debt of gratitude was therefore to accuse him of transgressing the law of mutual exchange, it was to accuse Lopez of not providing a return. This is why Salas had taken it upon himself to register a charge with the Executive Bureau: Lopez had transgressed the natural law of *razón*.

In sum, the kinds of limits which the Filipinos were trying to impose on officials were the limits set by the terms of *razón*. In other words, corruption meant any transgression of the natural law of mutual exchange, not a transgression of legal-rationality. But then, corruption had always been defined by the Filipino elites in this way. In the 1890s the elites believed that the Spanish authorities were failing to adhere to the terms of mutual exchange. They believed that the Spaniards were pillaging the Philippines without offering returns. The elites thus scripted Spanish rule as corrupt and felt justified in revolting against it. Similarly, during the revolution, the Filipino officials of the Malolos government who were collecting taxes from locals without providing any form of return were also considered to be corrupt (Guerrero 1982: 171;). Apolinario Mabini had put it quite bluntly: “every practice contrary to . . . [*razón*] and truth, is properly an abuse, that is to say a corrupt practice, since it corrupts society” (Mabini as quoted in LeRoy 1906: 858). The strictly moral notion of corruption that the elites had articulated in the 1890s was thus the notion which they carried with them into American rule. A civics text, written in 1905 in native Tagalog, is telling here. In his *Mga Katwiran ng Filipino* (“The Reasons/Rights of the Filipinos”), Honorio Lopez writes:²²

If any leader does not know how to give to his subjects, one can bring an action against him to a higher leader on account of his shortcomings or one can shout to all so that everyone can unite towards overthrowing him from this position or replacing him with someone who knows how to respect his subjects, and if the highest leader fails to satisfy he should defend and clarify to himself and to all the law that he violates in order to make everyone understand his mistake, because law is the freedom that is not only made into a duty, but the real cleansing of the people (Lopez 1905: 21, my translation).²³

Lopez says here that a leader who deserves to be removed from office is one who “fails to satisfy.” This is what the Iloilo official in our previous example had been accused of. But more revealingly, Lopez says that a leader who deserves to be removed from office is one who violates law (*katwiran*). Here Lopez circumvents legal-rationality as the standard for official action. Had Lopez wanted to make legal-rationality the standard he might have more precisely used the words *batas* or *kautusan* instead of *katwiran*, words which were also used at the time to refer to law. But Lopez specifically uses the word *katwiran*, an important difference. Whereas *batas* or *kautusan* imply secular or man-made law and thus equate more readily with the

Americans' notion of law, *katwiran* translates into English as "law" but also into Spanish as *razón* (Calderon 1915; Nigg 1904; Diokono 1983: 6). And in popular folk idioms, the word *katwiran* referred to the "light" or "straight path" which an upright political leader must follow, as opposed to the evil and deceitful path of taken by those who do not adhere to mutual help and exchange (Ileto 1979: 106–7; see also Gorospe 1977: 293–5). By so scripting an officials' offense as an offense against *katwiran*, Lopez was scripting corruption as a transgression of *razón*, not legal-rationality.

For the Filipino elites, in sum, the parameters for official action were set by the natural law of *razón*. Legal-rationality was not the operative code. It follows that the disciplinary mechanisms which the Americans installed to uproot corruption remained largely ineffectual. Rather than serving as the means by which to punish transgression of legal-rationality, they served as the means by which to punish transgressions of *razón*. The Filipino elites complained when a peer did not give them the proper salutes or when an official erred on a personal debt. Even the mechanisms of discipline which the Americans' instituted were thereby domesticated. It is no surprise that "corruption" proceeded as it did, despite the Americans' efforts to uproot it. The Filipino elites were "sowing the seeds" for their own kind of self-government, the very kind of government which the Americans tried to prevent from taking root in the first place.

Conclusion: Domestication and Reproduction

Domestication thereby effected the elusion, and illusion, of tutelage. When the Americans told the Filipinos that their intervention would provide them "self-government in ever-increasing measure," the elites saw in that phrase things which the Americans did not see, attaching to it a field of signifieds quite different than to which the Americans referred. The elites thus submitted to tutelage, but only after they transposed onto it their own schemas — only after, that is, they completely redefined it. Likewise, when the Americans' inserted the elites into local governments to discipline them, the elites saw in the new offices their own ideals, fashioning the offices to be sites for the directing class. The result was a putatively "corrupt" politics which thwarted tutelary intentions and frustrated the Americans' designs.²⁴

The Filipino elites' effected the elusion of tutelage, but this is not to say that they were "resisting" it. Indeed, reducing domestication to a matter of "resistance" (at least as some literatures conceptualize resistance) would be problematic.²⁵ In approaches inspired by Foucault, for example, resistance occurs through the very same field of power which is ostensibly being opposed. It happens through the very same terms which power relations produce, just that those

terms are reappropriated and redeployed (e.g. Foucault 1990: 101; Mitchell 1991: xi).²⁶ The Filipinos' reception was entirely different. The Filipinos did not reappropriate or redeploy the elements from the field of power which the Americans' offered; they were never quite encompassed by that field at all. They did not contest from within or challenge the power relations which the Americans tried to impose because, by their domesticating practices, they stopped those power relations from being operative in the first place. To "resist" a mode of power is to be already constituted by that mode of power. The Filipino elites never were.

Nor did the elites engage in quotidian acts of subversion through the use of "hidden transcripts" (Scott 1985). They did not deviously try to undermine tutelage from spaces unseen or unmarked by the Americans.²⁷ While their acts of corruption might be treated as analogues to this kind of activity, I have shown that they were a bit less cunning than that. Their "corruption" was not produced by conscious efforts to halt or diametrically oppose tutelary power, it was little more than the expression of an alternative mode of power entirely — that is, the power effected through personalized relations of exchange and symbolically figured through ideas and ideals of *razón*. The elites therefore did not have to resort to hidden transcripts. Due to their domesticating practices, they did not see anything to resort or hide from.

Domestication is much more straightforward and perhaps less valiant than any of the previously noted brands of resistance. In fact, the story can be summarized rather simply: social actors act in according to their own preexisting schemas, they order and engage the world in terms of what they know. Then, when confronted with elements imposed from the outside, the actors extend their preexisting schemas onto those elements. They indigenize the otherwise foreign by reference to the familiar, they tame the otherwise threatening present in accordance with the more comfortable terms of the past. Domestication is therefore an instance of a more general phenomenon: cultural reproduction. By domesticating the new, actors reproduce the old.²⁸

Of course, we should not overstate the case. Cultural change can indeed occur. As Sahlin (1985) suggests, change can even be part and parcel of reproduction, and vice-versa. But within the larger scope of the Filipinos' colonial experience, we might conclude that change was minimal, at least relative to the grandiose hopes that the American colonialists had initially articulated. If the Americans hoped to induce radical change, if they threatened to eradicate the elites' prior political schemas and replace them with the schemas of their own version of "self-government," the elites tamed that threat, however unwittingly. They thereby reproduced their prior political

practices and schemas. The kind of radical change projected in the Americans' tutelary project simply did not happen.²⁹ Perhaps, then, the story told here of domestication (hence of reproduction) might provide a lesson of sorts for existing studies of colonialism that overemphasize the disciplinary and transformative intentions of state projects while neglecting local reception to them (e.g. Mitchell 1991; Scott 1995). For, as we have seen, there is indeed a difference between intention and reception.

Notes

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² I focus on this period (c. 1899–1910s) because after it the tutelary project began to shift away from practical political education and towards mass public education and infrastructural development.

³ In 1903, for example, only 2.44 percent of the population could vote. That percentage would not increase significantly until 1913 (Hayden 1942: 267).

⁴ On the various differences within the elite, see Cullinane (1989: 12–55), from which the following discussion is largely based. The elites were internally differentiated along linguistic and/or regional lines, as well as along lines of relative education, wealth, and status.

⁵ Data tabulated from Cullinane (1989) shows that one-third of the elites who held municipal and provincial office during the first decade of American rule were landowners, while another third were landowners and merchants at once.

⁶ Michael Cullinane of the University of Wisconsin has pointed out this category to me through helpful conversations.

⁷ Education was one way of attaining bureaucratic positions in the Spanish colonial state (Cullinane 1989: 39–40).

⁸ The literature on this is extensive, but see for example Fegan (1982: 97–8); Hollsteiner (1973); Kaut (1961); and Sidel (1995: 152–156).

⁹ This group includes the elites who took up seats in the Philippine Assembly, during 1907. Prior to that, many had held office under Spanish rule and local office during the early years of American rule (for biodata see May 1980: 187–188). But the group also includes the Manila-based ilustrados who helped forge the Nacionalista party but did not necessarily take up Assembly seats, such as those who helped to form the *Comité de Intereses de Filipino* (for biodata see USPC 1905: 15).

¹⁰ Henceforth I use the term "elite" to refer to these two subgroups, for the purposes of brevity. The specific names of their key representatives are strewn throughout the analysis below. It should be clear that, in focusing upon these actors, I exclude the less educated and less prominent elites who occupied lower-level municipal positions in the regions of the archipelago

outside of Manila. I also exclude some of the ilustrados not connected with the *Nacionalistas*, such as Pardo de Tavera.

¹¹ Close to seventy percent of the national *ilustrados* (i.e. members of the first Philippine Assembly), for example, had held formal office in the revolutionary Malolos government (May 1980: 188). This does not include more subtle forms of participation.

¹² See Schumacher (1991) and Majul (1967) for discussions of these discourses. I use the term "field" to highlight the common schemas of understanding and action held by the elite (recipes for action and more consciously-articulated discourses, e.g., Sewell 1992), not an essential "Filipino culture." Moreover, in discussing this field, I highlight coherence, thereby bracketing the ways in which it was internally-contradictory.

¹³ Certainly there were other important thinkers also, such as Mabini's contemporary Felipe Calderon. But a reading of the work of Calderon shows that, despite some minor conflicts they had with each other, their ideologies were not all that different (see Calderon 1919; Majul 1967: 19-39, 161-5).

¹⁴ On these idioms, see Hollsteiner (1973) and Kaut (1961). Criticisms of their improper scholarly usage exist, but see Rafael (1993b: 121-35) for a justified revival of their relevance for analysis.

¹⁵ Administrator William Taft complained that "while [the elites] deal in high sounding phrases concerning liberty and self-government, they have very little conception of what means..." (quoted in Cullinane 1971: 15).

¹⁶ Detailed local studies of the war include May (1991) and Scott (1986).

¹⁷ See, for example, the public surrender note of General Trias in Batangas (reprinted in May 1991: 183).

¹⁸ Rafael (1993a) finds similar political ideas articulated by working-class segments in Manila, just that the working-classes did not see the elites as the ones who could best ensure and realize the natural law of mutual dependence.

¹⁹ On these two points, see Cullinane (1989: 226-56); Guerrero (1982: 169-72); May (1991: 275-78).

²⁰ Figured from Cullinane (1989: 563-588).

²¹ Quezon, before becoming provincial governor, had also served at the municipal level. He later became an important national *ilustrado*. He stands here as an example of the two subgroups under consideration in this analysis: local or provincial *ilustrados* and national-level *ilustrados*.

²² Lopez had served in the revolution against the United States, after which he became editor of the Tagalog sections of various nationalist papers of the elites (National Historical Institute 1992: III, 154). I refer to him here as merely indicative, but not definitive, of Filipino notions of corruption. Further, he should be read as indicative of Tagalog elites in Manila solely, not as indicative of elites in other regions.

²³ The text in the original Tagalog reads as: "Kapag naman ang punong sino pa man, ay di maalam magbigay sa kanyang pinagpupunuan, ay maaring isakdal sa lalong puno ang kakulangan, ó kung di kaya naman ay inhiyao sa kalahatan upang pagkaisahang iya'y alisin sa tunkol ó halinan ng ibang maalam gumagalang sa kanyang pinamumunuan; at kung ang lalong kapunupunuan ang magkulang, sa sarili naman ó ng kalahatan ay ipaglaban at ipaaninao ang ini-inis na katuiran ng maunaua ang kaniyang kamalian; sapagkat ang katuiran ay ang kalayaang hindi lamang dapat nating tunkulin, kundi talagang kahambuan ng tao."

²⁴ Certainly socioeconomic processes enabled and were involved in domestication, but a full analysis of these processes is outside the scope of this essay.

²⁵ Ortner (1996) discusses the many usages of, and problems with, existing approaches to "resistance." I contrast resistance with

“domestication” so as to distinguish different ways of receiving, that is, different tactics.

²⁶ Foucault (1990: 95–6) writes that “resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.” Rather, “by definition” resistances “can only exist in the strategic field of power relations.” Foucault thereby assumes a functioning system of power relations within which resistances occur as dysfunctionalities, an assumption which I am suggesting cannot be made in regards to colonial sites. To resist a mode of power, as Foucault tells of it, is to already assume the centrality that mode; as if to say that the colonial projects which administrators enacted were always already effective in implanting new power relations and replacing prior ones (Kaplan and Kelly 1994: 128).

²⁷ Rafael (1993a) hints to this kind of resistance in speaking about Filipino nationalist plays under American rule.

²⁷ Here I am drawing upon Sahlins (1981: 67). While “domestication” may seem akin to what Rafael (1993b) calls “localization,” I would suggest a minor difference. For Rafael, localization appears primarily a linguistic phenomenon, a matter of (mis)translation. By “domestication,” I am trying to highlight a more general practice not exclusive to situations of linguistic difference. Nonetheless, my formulation of domestication has been greatly informed by Rafael’s innovative work (1993b).

²⁹ I discuss domestication over the longer run of American rule elsewhere (Go 1997).

References

Abbreviations Used in References

- BIA Bureau of Insular Affairs, USNA
 ERP The Papers of Elihu Root (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division)
 RG Record Group No., BIA, USNA
 USDW United States Department of War
 USNA United States National Archives (Washington, D.C.)
 USPC United States Philippine Commission
 WCF The Papers of William Cameron Forbes (Houghton Library, Harvard University)
 WPC Worcester Philippine Collection (University of Michigan, Harlan Hatcher Library, Rare Books and Special Collections)

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