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Asia Pacific: Perspectives is a peer-reviewed journal published at least once a year, usually in April/May. It welcomes submissions from all fields of the social sciences and the humanities with relevance to the Asia Pacific region.* In keeping with the Jesuit traditions of the University of San Francisco, *Asia Pacific: Perspectives* commits itself to the highest standards of learning and scholarship.

Our task is to inform public opinion by a broad hospitality to divergent views and ideas that promote cross-cultural understanding, tolerance, and the dissemination of knowledge unreservedly. Papers adopting a comparative, interdisciplinary approach will be especially welcome. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to submit their work for consideration.

* 'Asia Pacific region' as used here includes East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Oceania, and the Russian Far East.

Primerang Bituin: Philippines-Mexico Relations at the Dawn of the Pacific Rim Century

by Evelyn I. Rodriguez, Ph.D.

Abstract

Since the end of WWII, the region of countries bordering, and various island nations within, the Pacific Ocean, has drawn much attention, and been subject to a variety of institutional arrangements intended to promote certain political, economic, and environmental interests. Because of this, the mid-twentieth century is widely held as the starting point for Pacific Rim relations, and studies of Pan-Pacific interactions almost strictly concentrate on examining or trying to forecast their political, economic, and environmental outcomes. This study, however, proposes that the earliest and longest Pacific Rim relationship was actually that between Manila, Philippines and Acapulco, Mexico, and was sustained by the Manila Galleon Trade, between 1565 and 1815. Furthermore, it argues that the most significant result of this 250 year relationship was the profound cultural exchange which occurred between the Mexico and the Philippines.

The study sketches the prevalent discourse regarding the origins and effects of Pacific Rim dealings, and then it describes the history of the Manila Galleon Trade. Finally, it highlights some of the deep ways Mexican and Filipino pre-twentieth century societies were influenced by their trade with each other, and argues that this calls for more scholarly consideration of how contemporary Pacific Rim relations can have a significant bearing on culture, as well as socioeconomic and environmental matters.

One of the earliest memories I have of San Diego, California, where I grew up, is of my Filipina mother holding an animated conversation with our Mexican neighbor: They are seated on lawn chairs, in our neighbor's garage. In between studying for their US citizenship class, they are marveling at various words they have discovered we share: civic words like "*gobierno*", "*presidente*", and "*libre*"; and everyday terms like the days of the week, numbers, time, and, of course, "*tsismis/ chismis*". Their inventory seems endless, and each time one mentions something that the other recognizes, peals of delighted laughter and astonishment ensue and fill the garage.

Many years later, I have come to realize that this scene was just one outcome of the extensive historical connections which commenced between the Philippines and Mexico during the 16th century. In this article, I recount the three-century relationship fostered between Mexico and the Philippines under Spanish rule, and highlight some of the enduring legacies which have resulted from this pan-Pacific association. In doing so, I hope to illustrate that the transnational relationships which existed, and continue to be created, within the region we now call the "Pacific Rim" produced durable and lasting cultural effects, as well as political, economic, and environmental ones.

The Conventional History of the Pacific Rim

Today, the Pacific-bordering countries of East Asia and Russia; Southeast Asia, the Southwest Pacific, and the Americas are popularly and institutionally, through organizations like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), recognized as constituting "the Pacific Rim". The significance of this region has generally been traced back to 1854, after USN Commodore Matthew C. Perry negotiated the Treaty of Kanagawa, "opening Japan" to the West after two centuries of seclusion (Gibney 1992). But the geopolitical and geoeconomic importance of this zone did not really come into public consciousness until after World War II, after it began to undergo "spectacular growth in production and international trade" (Linder 1986:1).

As a result, most contemporary studies of the Pacific Rim have concentrated on the region's economic expansion, and its dynamic political relationships and institutions, and its security architecture, including the positions and character of each nation's military. For instance, in their volume outlining a post-Cold War agenda for the Pacific Rim, Bundy, Burns, and Weichel emphasize restructuring "regional relations along more cooperative, transnational lines," strengthening "collective security agreements that emphasize nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and demilitarization," and protecting "the environment and human rights"—all "in the search for continued [economic] growth" (1994: 4-5, 8).

This article aims to revise the traditional history and foci of Pacific Rim studies by proposing that the Mexico-Philippines relationship created and managed by Spain from the 1500s to the 1800s was the first Pacific Rim association, especially to demonstrate that the cultural byproducts of the transcontinental ties deserve as much attention as their economic, political, and military counterparts.

Ang Umpisa/ La Empieza

The relationship between the Philippines and Mexico began with almost a cosmic coincidence nearly 500 years ago. In March 1521, Ferdinand Magellan "discovered" a group of unrelated islands in the western Pacific, which would later be named and claimed *Las Filipinas*, for King Felipe II of Spain. That same year, only five months later, the heart of the Mexica¹ empire, *Tenochtitlán*, was surrendered to a Spanish armada led by Hernán Cortés, marking the creation of "New Spain" in the southern region of North America.

Cortés and his Spanish expedition's *conquista* of the Mexica kingdom began in the spring of 1519. By November of that year, the Spanish armada, along with about 6,000 Tlaxcalans (a tribe that had been conquered by the Mexica), had ventured from the eastern coast of present-day Veracruz to the enormous capital city of *Tenochtitlán*, in central Mexico (Hassig 1994). Shortly after, Cortés seized the Mexican emperor, Moctezuma II,² despite what is acknowledged by records from both sides to have been a hospitable reception. Numerous humiliations, the murder of two Mexica monarchs, the deaths of 450 Spanish men and 4,000 Tlaxcalan soldiers, and a three-month siege involving the cruel obstruction of

Tenochtitlán's food and water supply later, Cortés finally conquered Mexico for Spain (Prescott 1936).

In this way, Spain's conquest of Mexico took a brutal two and a half years. Its conquest of the Philippines, by comparison, was prolonged, but "almost bloodless." As the final *Mexica* emperor, Cuauhtémoc, and the *Mexica* took their last stand against Cortés and his troops, Magellan's three remaining ships and 150 crewmen were forced to flee from the Philippines, captainless, after Magellan was slain by natives of Mactan, led by their chieftain, Lapulapu, who refused to have Christianity and tributes to the King of Spain imposed upon them. It would take three subsequent Spanish expeditions³ after Magellan's for Spain to establish its first colony in the Philippines, and another expedition after that to establish its first Filipino town and to seal its conquest of the islands. With the exception of the first one, all of these journeys were launched from Mexico.

In July 1525, an ill-fated fleet of seven ships left La Coruña, Spain, reached the southern islands of the Philippines (present-day Mindanao), but then witnessed its commanders untimely deaths in the Pacific. Two years later, in November 1527, Cortés, who had become the "virtual... lord and master" of *Nueva España*, "one of the most extensive, richest and strategically important vice-royalties in the dominions of powerful Spain," personally financed and assembled a party to sail to the Philippines from Zihuatanejo, Mexico, and placed his cousin, Alvaro de Saavedra Cerón, at its command (Agoncillo 1990; Giordano 2005). Following Magellan's sea route, Saavedra reached northeastern Mindanao in February 1528, but then died "on the high seas" (Agoncillo 1990). In 1543 a Spanish expedition from Juan Gallego, Mexico (present-day Navidad), finally set up a short-lived colony on the eastern coast of Mindanao, and named the cluster of culturally diverse and separately governed islands "*Las Islas de Filipinas*" in honor of their prince, Felipe II. But, like his predecessors before him, their captain, Ruy Lopez de Villalobos, never returned to Spain, because an incurable fever seized him after his capture by the Portuguese in Malaku. Finally, in February 1565, four vessels commanded by Miguel López de Legaspi, reached Cebu, a central island, from Juan Gallego, Mexico. In April of that same year, Legaspi built and settled in *la Villa de San Miguel*, "the first Spanish town established in the Archipelago," and finally secured Spain's conquest there—forty-four years after Magellan first landed in the region (Agoncillo 1990).

Legacies

Spain's protracted effort to institute its reign in the Philippines gave rise to 334 years of Spanish control over the islands (1565-1899), while it's shorter but nearly ruinous struggle to overthrow the Aztecs led to 300 years of Spanish occupation in Mexico (1521-1821). These centuries of Spanish rule created a significant relationship between the Philippines and Mexico, and left an abiding impact on each country's landscapes, institutions, and people. In fact, historian David Joel Steinberg writes that modern Filipino culture is very much a product of the interaction of cultures in the

Philippines during the Spanish occupation and that, "Without them, the history of the nation would have been radically different" (Steinberg 1982). And in 1829, former US Ambassador to Mexico, Joel Roberts Poinsett, wrote, "The character of this people [Mexicans] cannot be understood, nor the causes of their present condition be fully developed without recurring to the oppression under which they formerly laboured" (Poinsett 2002)*. I will now explain how Spain controlled and governed Mexico and the Philippines, in order to highlight notable ways in which imperialism in *Nueva España* and *Las Filipinas* affected these countries' modern "national characters".

Colonizing Mexico

From the onset, Spain understood that harnessing the wealth of Mexico and the Philippines would require the cooperation (i.e., labor) of their indigenous populations, and that this, in turn, would be obtained by means of the spiritual conversion of each colonies' natives.

Since Spain did not secure its invasion of the Philippines until 1565, its project of indio spiritual conversion begins in Mexico. Almost immediately after *la conquista de Tenochtitlán*, Cortés requested a group of Franciscan monks to be sent from Spain "to protect and evangelize the Indians" (Joseph and Henderson 2002:115). In response, in 1524, a group of missionaries who would later come to be known as "the Twelve Apostles of *Nueva España*" ("the Twelve," for short) arrived in Mexico, by order of Charles V's Minister General, Francis Quiñones. Heavily influenced by currents in Renaissance humanism, the Twelve eschewed all comfort and embraced poverty and humility in all their works. Thus, when they arrived barefoot and ragged in Tenochtitlán, but were received by Spanish governors who knelt before them and kissed "each of their hands," the *indio caciques* ("chiefs") who witnessed this were astounded and became curious about the power and words of these men.

So it was that, through men who appeared poor and lowly in the eyes of the world, as though others just as poor, broken, and despised, the word [the Christian gospel] was introduced to this new world, and broadcast among those infidels who were present, and thence to the innumerable villages and peoples at their command (Mendieta c. 1571-1596).

"The missionaries lost no time in the good work of conversion" (Prescott 1936). Though they could not speak the native language, they acquired interpreters to help them proselytize until they learned *Nahuatl*, and/or until the natives became competent in Spanish. They founded schools and colleges to train native youth in Christian ways. Upon the grounds that the *indios* were continuing to offer brutal and idolatrous "sacrifices and services [to] demons," the friars began to obliterate their temples (and everything they contained), so that "in a few years the vestige of the primitive teocallis was effaced from the land" (Prescott 1936:638).

Then, in 1531 on a hillside named Tepeyác, in Tenochtitlán, a dark-skinned apparition calling herself *la Virgen de Guadalupe* (*la Virgen*) is said to have appeared to a

poor, childless *indio*, Juan Diego. According to the official (i.e., Vatican) and popular (folk) accounts, *la Virgen* asked Juan Diego, in Nahuatl, to tell the bishop to build a temple at that site. When Juan Diego did as requested, Juan de Zumárraga, Mexico's first bishop, refused to believe him, and insisted that Juan Diego bring back a "sign" to prove his story. When Juan Diego returned to Mary, she sent him to fill his *tilma*⁴ with roses and then told him to bring them, untouched, to the bishop. Later, when Juan Diego unfolded his cloak to present Mary's roses to Zumárraga, a life-size figure of the *la Virgen* had appeared on his *tilma*, exactly as Juan Diego had described her.

Regardless of its veracity, this story captured the imaginations and hearts of countless *indios*, who later came to understand her manifestation in Tepeyác as a sign of Mexico's "chosen" status as the heart of Spain's empire in the Americas. This, arguably more than anything else, accelerated the Spaniards' Christian conversion of the *indios*. Thus, by 1545—the year Captain Lopez named *Las Islas Filipinas*—the Franciscans had converted reportedly over nine million Mexican *indios*, and had insured the physical survival of the Spanish in Mexico by pacifying the "millions of Indians who resented the Spaniards for having forcibly enslaved them" (Mendieta c. 1571-1596:120).

Between the arrival of the Franciscans and the time the Spanish also introduced a number of other institutions, ideas, and sicknesses to *Nueva España*. In 1528—the year Cortes' cousin, Saavedra, died at sea after reaching Mindanao—the Crown established an *encomienda* system⁵ in Mexico similar to the one that they had instituted in the Caribbean islands, to exact labor and tributes from the native population. In 1530 they began to introduce Spanish plants, animals, and tools; and they began to extensively conscript the *indios* from all over Mexico into mining in gold and silver mines, building ships to send to California and the Philippines, and constructing the large stone edifices, roads, and watercourses they needed to erect Spanish towns (Zorita 1585).

In 1535, Tenochtitlán was made the capital of the newly-established "*Virreinato de Nueva España*," or "Viceroyalty of New Spain," renamed "*la Ciudad de México*" (Mexico City), and given its first viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza. The Viceroyalty of New Spain consisted of a territory that originally consisted of present-day Mexico, Central America, Florida, and parts of the Southwest United States; and later came to include the Philippines.

By 1545, a decade after Mendoza was given vice regal power of *Nueva España*, Mexico had changed dramatically from the days of the Mexica. A new dual economy of *haciendas* ("great landholdings") in central and southern Mexico, and of gold and silver mines in the north, had emerged. Deadly European epidemics the *indios* had not developed immunities from⁶ and a "harsh system of tribute and labor extraction" had decreased Mexico's indigenous population by as much as 85%. And a growing influx of Spanish settlers and African slaves (Vaughn 2001)⁷ had intermarried to create what Gloria Anzaldúa calls "a new hybrid race" of *mestizo Mexicanos* (Anzaldúa 1999), Mexicans of indigenous and/ or

Spanish, and/ or African descent.

All this racial diversity and "mixing" eventually helped produce a *casta*, or caste, society in Mexico, which was stratified by race and wealth (Rudolph and American University (Washington D.C.). Foreign Area Studies. 1985). The goal of this caste system (Table 1) was to show that certain racial mixtures were more positive than others.

Table 1: Mexico's Colonial Casta System, in descending order of social position (Source: Evelyn I. Rodriguez)

Casta	Description
<i>Peninsulares</i>	European-born whites (Spaniards)
<i>Criollos</i>	American/ Mexican-born whites
<i>Mestizos</i>	Spanish-Indio descent
<i>Mulattos</i>	Spanish-African descent
<i>Indios</i>	Natives
<i>Negros</i>	African descent

In it, European-born Spaniards, or *peninsulares*, were at the top of society, followed by their American-born offspring, *los criollos*. After *los criollos* were the offspring of unions between the Spanish and the *indios*, *los mestizos*. After *los mestizos* were *los mulattos*, those of Spanish and African descent; then *los indios*, and finally *los negros*, the African slaves. By virtue of their position at the top of the *casta* system, *peninsulares* held the most prestigious and well-paying jobs in New Spain, while those *criollos* and *mestizos* beneath them could work most jobs, but were considered ineligible for certain positions. Meanwhile, unconverted *indios* and Africans were deemed as only eligible for the most degrading work.

This project of racial formation—"the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed" (Omi and Winant 1994)—was motivated mostly by the desire "to safeguard the social position of the Spaniards" in a truly "new world" which offered inestimable opportunities for social mobility⁸ to persons of any family, color, or financial background (Los Angeles County Museum of Art 2004).

By the seventeenth century, the *casta* system had become more evolved (and involved), with the Spanish naming and classifying more "castes" which might be produced through the union of various "mixtures;"⁹ it had spawned a popular genre of paintings¹⁰ and, most relevant for any discussion on Mexico's "national character," it created an enduring and unequal racial and color (skin pigment) hierarchy, which attributed supremacy to those of European descent and white skin, and inferiority to indigenous and other darker-skinned Mexicans.

Colonizing the Philippines

By the time Spain successfully established *la Villa de San Miguel* in 1565, it had been experimenting with various ways of colonizing people for almost half a century in Mexico, so it was able to transplant what “worked” for them in Mexico, and to revise strategies for enterprises they thought could have gone better. Accordingly, one of Spain’s first priorities in the Philippines was “pacifying” the indios, through armed force, but especially via religion, in ways similar and dissimilar to how the early missionaries had operated in *Nueva España*. The Spanish felt that use of religion and culture to “mould the natives in the Hispanic image” was particularly important in *las Filipinas*, because, unlike in Mexico, they had not inherited a unified state in the Philippines, but rather, “fragmented units of islands and islets of various sizes separated by numberless bodies of water” (Agoncillo 1990:74-75).

The first priests to establish a religious settlement in the Philippines were Franciscans who arrived in 1577, followed by the Jesuits who arrived in 1581. Both these orders first came to Manila, the walled, European-style city (also called “Intramuros”) that Legaspi constructed and established as the Filipino capital after defeating the Muslim natives of the prosperous and strategically-located¹¹ village of *Maynilad* in 1571. At the Synod of Manila in 1582, representatives of several orders “agreed to divide the Philippines into spheres of influence” (Steinberg 1982:64). Thus, the Jesuits and Franciscans were later joined by the Dominicans in 1587 and then by the Augustinian Recollects in 1608.

All these orders were obligated by the Synod to contribute to Filipino *reducción*¹² by building and living in “*pueblos*,” settlements centered around a *plaza* which contained the church and a convent, “instead of going around chasing souls” (Agoncillo 1990:80). As orders established *pueblos* throughout the various islands, “new Christian converts were required to construct their houses around the church and the unbaptized were invited to do the same” (Agoncillo 1990). Notably, they also founded a number of schools, including the Philippines’ first university, the (Dominican) University of Santo Tomas (UST). Since the terms of the Synod also outlined that missionaries must “proselytize in the vernacular [native dialect] rather than in Spanish,” the majority of Philippines indios, unlike the indios in Mexico, “never learned much Spanish, because they gained education and religion through the friars in their own Philippine language” (Steinberg 1982:64).

Having learned from *Nueva España* that one way to effectively draw Christian converts among the *indios* was to take advantage of their tradition of and partiality for “burdensome ceremonial” and “fantastic idols” (Prescott 1936:638), in the Philippines,

...the Spanish friars utilized the novel sights, sounds, and even smell of the Christian rites and rituals—colorful and pompous processions, songs, candle-lights, saints dressed in elaborate gold and silver costumes during the May festivals of flores de Mayo or the santa Cruzan, the lighting of firecrackers even as the Host was elevated, the *sinákulo* (passion play),¹³ and

the Christian versus Muslim conflict dream (*moro-moro*) [to] “hypnotize...” the spirit of the indio (Agoncillo 1990).

This method of attracting indio converts, combined with the widespread *reducción* efforts of the Franciscans, Dominicans, Recollects, and *encomenderos* (to a minor extent), had the effect of establishing “common religious and ethical precepts, a common faith” across *Las Filipinas* by the start of the 17th century, “but not a common language or sense of single community” (Steinberg 1982). This served Spain very well by practically erasing any likelihood of a sizeable *indio* rebellion (since communication between Filipino groups who spoke distinct dialects was not viable), while facilitating their efforts to indoctrinate the *indios* with Christian teachings and to train them to become loyal subjects of the Spanish crown.

As this was ongoing, privileged Spanish nationals were making small fortunes off the transplanted *encomienda* system in *Las Filipinas*. Like his American counterpart, the Philippine *encomendero* had the right to impose tribute on male residents of his *encomienda*, and he

... was duty-bound to defend his *encomienda* from external incursions, to keep peace and order, and to assist the missionaries in teaching the Christian gospel to the residents within his sphere of influence (Agoncillo 1990).

But, despite being “entrusted”¹⁴ with the physical and spiritual welfare of those living within their *encomiendas*, most *encomenderos* notoriously abused their power in the Philippines and the New World by arbitrarily raising the rates of tributes paid in money or in kind,¹⁵ artificially inflating the costs of staple products by stockpiling them and selling them to the natives at higher rates, and unconscionably exploiting the *indios*’ labor (Agoncillo 1990:84-85).

Similar abuses had led to the formal eradication of Mexican *encomiendas* in 1560;¹⁶ but in the Philippines, the government, another institution transplanted from the New World,¹⁷ often looked away from the transgressions of its *encomenderos*, choosing instead to devote its attention and resources to overseeing its critical galleon trade between Manila and Mexico.

The “Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade” was made possible by the trade route discovered by Legaspi’s chief navigator, Fray Andres de Urdaneta, during Legaspi’s return voyage from the Philippines to *Nueva España* (earlier considered impossible), after his 1565 conquest. Once established, it was “the only regular fleet service in the huge stretch of the Pacific Ocean for two hundred fifty years” (Agoncillo 1990:85), making two treasure-laden journeys a year (on one outgoing vessel and one incoming vessel), between Manila and Acapulco de Juárez, on the west coast of Mexico. The vessels primarily brought silver from *Nueva España* to *las Filipinas* in exchange for porcelain, silk, ivory, spices, and other goods from China, for Mexico and Spain.

Although this trade route has been described as “the most persistent, perilous, and profitable commercial enterprises in European colonial history” (Mathers 1990), in the Philippines, it only benefited a small group of Chinese mer-

chants in Manila¹⁸ and “a very small coterie of privileged Spaniards,” and it created widespread, long-standing damage on the native economy (Agoncillo 1990:85). By 1815, when the Manila-Acapulco trade was finally terminated because of the creation of the “Royal Philippine Company,” which shipped directly from Manila to Spain via the Cape of Good Hope, “many of the significant Filipino cottage industries such as weaving and extractive industries were... ruined and disregarded along with agriculture” (Agoncillo 1990:86).

While Philippine administrators reserved almost all their time and energy for overseeing the galleon trade, the rest of the colony had turned into what social critic, Marcelo H. del Pilar, derisively called a “*frailocracia*” (“friorocracy”) (Agoncillo 1990:79). As it had in Mexico, a society stratified by class and color emerged in the Philippines, under Spanish rule (Table 2).

Table 2: Philippines' Colonial Social System (Source: Evelyn I. Rodriguez)

Casta	Description	Social Positions in Philippines
<i>Peninsulares</i>	European-born whites (Spaniards)	Highest administrative positions, clergy
<i>Insulares</i>	Philippine-born whites (Spaniards)	High administrative positions, clergy
" Filipinos"	Spanish-Indio descent	Lower administrative positions, <i>ilustrados</i>
Chinese <i>Mestizos</i>	Spanish-Chinese descent; Chinese-Filipino descent	Merchants, lower administrative positions
Chinese	Immigrants of Chinese descent	Merchants
<i>Indios</i>	Natives	Menial labor

At the top, were the Iberian-born *peninsulares*, then the *insulares* or Philippine-born Spaniards. After them were the “Filipinos,” Spanish-Indio *mestizos* (the educated Filipino *mestizos* among this class were referred to as “*ilustrados*”); then the Chinese *mestizos* and the Chinese; and, lastly, the darker-skinned natives, the *indios*. It was unnecessary and too expensive to import African slaves to the *las Filipinas*, so a negro class never really emerged during the Spanish colonial era,¹⁹ and a substantial *criollo* population never really developed in the Philippines, since many *peninsulares* never truly settled in the Philippines. *Peninsulares* often only stayed in the islands long enough to complete the tenure of a temporary civil appointment before returning either to Mexico or the Spain.

This state of affairs made parish priests the most powerful citizens of the islands, since they “more often than not [were] the only Caucasian and the most important official dominating the town during the entire span of the colonial period” (Agoncillo 1990). As Del Pilar explained,

The friars control all of the fundamental forces of society in the Philippines. They control the educational system, for they own the University..., and are the local inspectors of every primary school. They control the minds of the people because in a dominantly Catholic country, the parish rectors can utilize the pulpit and confessionals to publicly or secretly influence

the people; they control all the municipal and local authorities and the medium of communication; and they execute all the orders of the central government (Agoncillo 1990:79).

Revolución

Across the Pacific, in Mexico, strong criticisms of members of the highest caste of that society had also emerged. However, in New Spain, this caste was not primarily composed of priests, but of secular *peninsulares* who had been given near-exclusive control of the colony's high offices and monopolies (Espinosa Productions and KPBS-TV San Diego 1999). Mexico's *criollos* and *mestizos* especially resented the power of the Mexican *peninsulares*, and opposed their oppression of the *indios*. So, when *peninsulares* seized control of Mexico City after Napoleon III briefly usurped the Spanish throne in 1808, *criollos* and *mestizos* all over Mexico began to plot various rebellions. About two decades of disorderly and violent civil war ensued. In 1821, the revolution incited and led by *criollo* priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (executed by the Spanish in 1811) and *mestizo* priest José María Morelos y Pavón (executed by the Spanish in 1815), finally achieved Mexican independence.

Meanwhile, conditions for all but the “tiny upper echelons of society” in the Philippines worsened. Loss of the galleon trade caused tremendous economic dislocation in the archipelago, since its economy had come to be almost entirely dependent on it. The loss of the empire in Latin America and the Caribbean made *peninsulares* increasingly suspicious of, and alienated from, anyone born in the Philippines. As the Philippines became more polarized, “locally born Filipinos began to see the country as rightfully theirs and the *peninsulares* as alien rulers” (Steinberg 1982:39).

For over half a century after the loss of New Spain, the Spanish were able “to hide endemic domestic instability in Spain and political, economic, and military weaknesses in the Philippines by bravura” (Steinberg 1982:39). They continued to try and “Hispanize” Filipinos by supplanting *baybayin* (pre-colonial writing) with the Latin alphabet, by legally requiring natives to adopt Spanish surnames (to make it easier to exact taxes and labor, and to control migration), by proselytizing in local dialects to prevent the archipelago's many tribes from recognizing their collective repression and subsequently forming a force in opposition to Spanish rule, and by educating only the colony's top *mestizo* intellects to prepare them to Christianize and govern the natives (Agoncillo 1990:91-100).

However, and somewhat in following with the precedent set by their *criollo* and *mestizo* counterparts in Mexico, Filipino *ilustrados* increasingly began to articulate a dormant nationalist sentiment. In 1886, one of these *ilustrados*, twenty-six year old Jose Rizal (now the Philippines' national hero), finished writing his first novel, *Noli Me Tangere*. Embedding an indictment of Spain's rule of the Philippines in the tale of a son's pursuit of justice for his dead father, a young woman's coming-of-age, and the ill-fated romance they shared (Rizal 1887), “the *Noli*” sent political shockwaves

throughout Spain and the Philippines. More significantly, its author's execution by firing squad in 1896 activated a grass-roots movement which had already been conspiring for independence, and provided the spark which finally provoked widespread Filipino insurgency against Spain.

In 1898, lead by non-*ilustrado* Andres Bonifacio, and a new military leader, Emilio Aguinaldo; and only two years after Rizal's execution and the commencement of the Philippines Revolution, the Philippines finally won its independence from Spain. But within months after its inauguration, the Republic of the Philippines found itself at war for its freedom again—this time, with its former ally, the United States.²⁰

"Bajo el Toque de la Campana"

Ultimately, the Spanish ruled Mexico for 300 years, and the Philippines for 334. Now that I have narrated the relevant the histories of the Philippines and Mexico up to their independence from Spain, I highlight how the relationships, people, events, and structures from both these countries' colonial periods have left enduring effects on both these nations and their people. For long after *Madre España's* forced departure from these countries, Filipinos and Mexicans continue to live "*bajo el toque de la campana*" in many ways. Here, I discuss the effects of Spanish colonialism on Mexican and Filipino religions, histories, systems of stratification, and identities.

In both the Philippines and Mexico, one of the most obvious lasting cultural outcomes of Spanish colonization—besides their noticeable similarities in social structure, normative commitments, and problems—is a unique Roman Catholicism. Today, the Philippines is remarkable for being the only predominately Christian country among its East and South East Asian neighbors, with about 80% of its population having been baptized Roman Catholic. Mexico, meanwhile, is home to over 85 million (95% of its population) Catholics, making it the second largest Catholic country in the world (Our Sunday Visitor Inc. 1998).

The theatrical and accommodating ways that each country's earlier missionaries drew *indios* to the Church have made Catholicism in these places characteristically unique. Today, the Catholicism practiced in Mexico and the Philippines continues to co-exist with pre-colonial traditions, superstitions, and beliefs. In Mexico, the most notable example of this is the veneration of the Aztec goddess-cum-"saint," *Guadalupe-Tonantzin*. In many parts of Mexico, *Guadalupe* has come to command more devotion than Christ. Her image adorns everything, from prayer books, to beach towels, to the tattooed backs of the most *macho* men; and millions make the pilgrimage to her basilica in Mexico City every year to implore her protection, cures, and good blessings. In the Philippines, I witnessed a local example of the fusion of pre-Hispanic traditions with modern Catholicism while observing women at the gates of a parish in Calamba (Jose Rizal's hometown). As parishioners entered the church grounds, these women offered to light hand-made candles for a few *centavos* each, promising that each one burned would fulfill a secret prayer—whether it be calamity for an enemy, or affection in a

yearned-for lover's heart. The persistence of *indio* folk beliefs and practices in Mexican and Filipino Catholicism might first appear to reflect the obstinacy of superstition; but I argue that it is symbolic of *indio* resistance to full "Hispanization," and of their cultural resilience and creativity, even amidst a powerful institution's destruction of nearly all records of their former forms of worship.

This destruction of the pre-colonial past, incidentally, is another—less readily apparent, but direr—cultural consequence of Spain's three-century presence in the Philippines and Mexico. In the Philippines, which already lacked extensive recorded histories of/ by its various groups before Magellan arrived, the zeal of the Spanish missionaries to destroy what little evidence existed of the islands' pre-colonial cultures resulted in the eradication of virtually all the archipelago's pre-colonial writings, art, and, ultimately, memories. In Mexico, such absolute historical amnesia was only averted because of haste and avarice. "The colonial enterprise engaged in destroying Mesoamerican civilization and stopped only where self-interest intervened" (Batalla 1975:29). During the demolition of the pre-colonial cities and temples, some left various places and items only "superficially" (for lack of a better term) ruined so that they could find, steal, and hoard indigenous "treasures." This saved some sites and artifacts from complete destruction, but still left relatively little behind of what was once an immense and thriving civilization.

This erasure of all or most of the Mexico and the Philippines' pre-Spanish histories means that, for the "average" Filipino or Mexican today, it is very difficult to recall an "evocative era prior to the Spanish period" to which they can "turn with pride" (Steinberg 1982:34). What's more, the absence of a pre-colonial history has stressed the "outsider" and the "alien" in their cultures, "denying the reality of the native." And this has left many Mexicans and Filipinos not only unsure of who they were before Spain, but also profoundly ashamed of "having no culture."

The inferiorizing of native people (especially by native people themselves) was and is compounded by the internalization and continuing operation of the race and class structures and ideologies that Mexico and the Philippines inherited from their colonizers. The *casta* system invented in the New World and later transplanted in *Las Filipinas* created durable associations between lighter skin and entitlement, beauty, intelligence, and even morality. Conversely, it linked darker skin with insignificance, repulsiveness, and a lack of intelligence and morality. Since most native Filipinos and Mexicans were/ are darker skinned, these frameworks, combined with their loss of a pre-colonial sense of self, has had intensely self-denigrating effects. Jose Rizal recognized this in the 19th century when he wrote that Filipinos had

... little by little... lost their old traditions, the memories of their past; ... gave up their writing, their songs, their powers, their laws in order to learn by rote other doctrines which they did not understand.... Then they declined, degrading themselves in their own eyes; they became ashamed of what was their own;

they began to admire and praise whatever was foreign and incomprehensible; their spirit was dismayed and it surrendered (quoted in Agoncillo 1990:100).

Although I cannot go into a very extensive discussion of this here, it is worth noting (especially since it is one of the foci of my larger research on Mexican and Filipino American immigrant families and rituals) that the degradation of the natives of Spain's former colonies is experienced differently according to gender, as well as by class and color. Present-day feminine ideals in Mexico and the Philippines have been clearly fashioned after those introduced by the Spanish. In Mexico, the foremost model of femininity is embodied by the Spanish-induced miracle of *la Virgen*. *La Virgen* is everything the biblical Mary is—and more. In the Bible, Mary is God's "favorite daughter," who unquestioningly puts herself at God's service when she is told she will bear God's son, despite being a virgin (Luke 10:26-38). Beyond that, *la Virgen* is seen as having taken "upon herself the psychological and physical devastation of the oppressed *indio*" (Anzaldúa 1999:52), and as "pure receptivity" who "consoles, quiets, dries tears, calms passions" (Paz 1950:25). She is a model of Mexican femininity that epitomizes and elevates chastity (as her name implies), obedience, and selflessness.

For Filipinos, who prior to Spanish rule maintained a bilateral kinship system and egalitarian gender relations,²¹ uphold Maria Clara de los Santos ("Maria Clara"), the primary female protagonist from Rizal's *Noli*, as the fundamental archetype for Filipina womanhood. Though only human, Maria Clara exemplifies ideals similar to *la Virgen*. She is naturally beautiful (she is a light-skinned *mestiza*), but always conscious of her dress and comportment. She is an unselfish, unquestioning daughter, who is willing to "sacrifice" her own serenity in order to assure her father's peace. She is resilient, enduring physical illness and profound heartache throughout Rizal's story. She is a pure ("virginal"), patient, honest, and loyal sweetheart. And when she realizes that she cannot be with the "one love" that can complete and fulfill her, she does the only other thing she can do: she voluntarily surrenders her life to God.

Such paradigms for femininity indicate and require that Filipina and Mexican women bear the responsibility of establishing the "moral worth" and "beauty" of their people. This implies that Mexicanas and Filipinas not only are subject to the racial "inferiorization" experienced by all Mexicans and Filipinos; they are expected help lift their people from their cultural shame by embodying sometimes pleasurable, but always selfless, deferential, and restrictive gendered ideals.

Anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla poignantly captures the tragic contradiction of this native "colonial mentality" when he observes that, "In this way of thinking about things, the majority of Mexicans have a future only on the condition that they stop being themselves" (1975:30). Batalla articulates how, for a former subject who has embraced her/his master's way of thinking, the only way to "have a future" is to deny oneself, and to demean and/ or forget one's origins—in short, to be like one's colonizer.

Despite these tragedies, some positive Philippine-Mexico

cultural connections were made possible under Spanish rule, via the galleon trade—what I argue was the conduit for the first real Pacific Rim relationship. Philippine historian Teodoro A. Agoncillo writes that,

The mango de Maynila, tamarind and rice, the carabao (known by 1737 in Mexico), cockfighting, Chinese tea and textiles including the famous *mantón de Manila*, the use of nipa palm raincoat (*shirgo* or *chino*), fireworks..., chinaware, and even tubã²²-making came to Mexico through the trans-Pacific trade (Agoncillo 1990:87).

He continues that, "In exchange, [contact with Mexican culture] brought innumerable and valuable flora into the Philippines: avocado, guava, papaya, pineapple, horses and cattle" (Agoncillo 1990:87). And he goes on to explain how major religious figures in Philippines culture (such as the Virgin of Antipolo, the image of the Black Nazarene of Quiapo) have Mexican origins, and how "a considerable number of Nahuatl elements crept into the Philippine languages" (Agoncillo 1990:87), including the Pilipino words "*nanay*" ("mother," from the Nahuatl word "*nantli*") and "*tatay*" ("father," from the Nahuatl word "*tatli*").²³ Again, the conversation described at the beginning of this article is another example of the linguistic effects of the intercultural exchanges between Mexico and the Philippines, which were facilitated, in part, by the galleon trade.

This contradiction, the erasure of a history before 1521, and a culture and people blended from various nationalities, colors, languages, and religions are three *toques* of Spanish colonialism that reverberate throughout Mexico and the Philippines, to this day.

Conclusion

In relating the transnational interactions which occurred between the Philippines and Mexico between the 16th and 19th centuries, I hope I have demonstrated that their 20th and 21st century counterparts—and the various relations which have been instituted as a result of the history between these nations included in the Pacific Rim—can produce profound cultural exchanges, as well as significant political, economic, military, and environmental consequences. Hopefully, this illustration of the deep ways Mexican and Filipino pre-20th century societies, were and have been influenced by each other, will inspire more scholarly consideration into the considerable and long-standing outcomes on people and cultures, including transnational and diasporic movements and transformations of labor, that today's Pacific Rim associations and organizations will assuredly create.

ENDNOTES

1. Nahuatl term for what we today refer to as "Aztec".
2. This is the most common rendering of the emperor's name, which is spelled "Motecuhzoma" in the León Portilla's Aztec accounts (León Portilla, Miguel and Lysander Kemp. 1962. *The Broken Spears; the Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*. Boston: Beacon Press.).
3. All of these were in conscious violation of the 1529 "Treaty of Zaragoza," a treaty brokered by Pope Alexander VI which divided the world outside of Europe between Portugal and Spain and included

- the area where the Philippines lies as part of Portugal's dominion.
4. A long shawl used by Mexican *indios*.
 5. The *encomienda* system granted Spanish subjects property and control of Indian labor in exchange for helping to convert natives to Christianity, and/ or governing new territories. This lured many Spaniards to the Americas, in search of easy land and money
 6. Such as smallpox, measles, typhoid, and yellow fever.
 7. Opponents of the enslavement of Mexico's indigenous people ironically proposed to import black slaves from Africa. Although this was ultimately too expensive for the Spanish to implement, records indicate that about 6,000 African slaves reached Mexico.
 8. More out of administrative neglect (ie, Spain did not want to be bothered), than out of any true aspiration for a new democratic society.
 9. For example, Spaniards and *mestizos* were said to produce "*castizos*"; *indios* and Africans said to produce "*lobos*" ("wolves"); and Spaniards and mulattos, "*albinos*". These names and categories never achieved consistent usage.
 10. "Most casta paintings were conceived as sets of sixteen scenes, painted on either a single canvas, or separate surfaces. Each image depicts a family group with parents of different races and one or two of their children. The racial mixtures are identified by inscriptions and the scenes are hierarchically arranged" (Los Angeles County Museum of Art 2004).
 11. On the Philippines' Manila Bay and the Pasig River.
 12. The venture of "collect[ing] all the scattered Filipinos together... *bajo el toque de la campana*" ("...under the peal of the bell") or in concentrated areas which could easily be administered by the Church or an *encomendero* [man who had received an *encomienda*]" (Agoncillo 1990).
 13. Re-creating the days and events before Jesus Christ's crucifixion.
 14. The literal translation of "*encomienda*" is "It entrusts."
 15. This is in spite of the fact that their right to impose tributes were supposed to be "according to the limit and kind set by higher authorities" (Agoncillo 1990).
 16. They were later restored because of pressure from Mexican colonialists.
 17. "From 1565-1821, the Philippines was a captaincy-general administered by the Spanish king through the Viceroyalty of Nueva España" (Agoncillo 1990). As in Mexico, administration of the Spanish colony in the Philippines was divided into different levels (in descending order of size and importance): national, provincial, city, municipal, and *barangay* (local district). The Spanish crown governed through the *gobernador y capitán-general*, the King's sole representative and spokesman in the Philippines. The *gobernador-general* had legislative, executive, and judicial power over the entire colony. Beneath him was the *alcalde mayor* who exercised executive and judicial authority at the provincial level (or a *corregidor* if the province was unpopulated, and had been declared a military zone), then the *ayuntamientos* (city governments, composed of a number of councilors and an *alguacil mayor*, or chief constable) at the city level, the *gobernadorcillo* ("little governor") at the municipal level, and finally the *cabeza de barangay* at the district level. Only a Spaniard could be an *alcalde mayor*, a *corregidor*, or serve on an *ayuntamiento*. Only Filipino or Chinese *mestizo* men who were literate in oral or written Spanish could serve as *gobernadorcillos* or *cabezas de barangay* (Agoncillo 1990).
 18. "Tempted by the lucrative trade Chinese immigrants converged at... Manila in Binondo as early as 1637. By 1687, a community of Christian Chinese and mestizos was already formally based in Binondo" (Agoncillo 1990).
 19. Although there were, and still are, natives who are "dark skinned, short, small of frame, kinky haired, snub nosed, and with big black eyes," who live in the Philippines, the *Aeta*. The *Aeta* escaped Spanish and American colonization in the forests of the Philippines. Their genealogy "confound[s] anthropologist and archaeologists;" however, currently, one accepted theory suggests that they "are the descendants

- of the original inhabitants of the Philippines who arrived through land bridges that linked the country with the Asian mainland some 30,000 years ago... when the Malay peninsula was still connected with Sumatra and other Sunda Islands" (Cultural Center of the Philippines 1994).
20. In 1902, the US decisively defeated the Philippines in the Philippine-American war; it would continue to occupy the Philippines until 1946.
21. "Women before the coming of the Spaniards enjoyed a unique position in society that their descendants during the Spanish occupation did not enjoy. Customary laws gave them the right to be the equal of men, for they could own and inherit property, engage in trade and industry, and succeed to the chieftainship of a *barangay* in the absence of a male heir" (Agoncillo 1990).
22. "Coconut toddy." A liquor made by extracting the sap of an unopened coconut bud.
23. "*Nanay*" and "*Tatay*" are used more commonly; but the "true" Tagalog words for "mother" and "father" are "*ina*" and "*itay*."

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