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Sophia Marco

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Dios-Dios in the Visayas

Sophia Marco

In the 1880s messianic movements called *dios-dios* proliferated in several provinces in Luzon and Visayas. Messianic movements were inspired by the enlivened hopes for the coming of the just king and in which the leader identified himself or was identified by his followers as the messiah. The presence of the messiah was a sufficient condition itself to kindle the movement (Kartodirdjo 1973, 15–16). In the Philippines, the epidemics and economic instability of the 1880's provided the physical and psychological environment for messiahs to thrive. In this state of heightened insecurity, many people welcomed the messiahs gladly.

This article seeks first, to define and describe dios-dios movements as they appeared in the 1880s and contrast them with contemporaneous *ilustrado*-led movements. Then, this paper will discuss the dios-dios movement in Leyte. The activities in Leyte were a continuation of the dios-dios movement in Samar (Cruikshank 1985 and 1979a). The description of the movements in this research is based mainly on information from *Sediciones y Rebeliones* and *Expedientes Gubernativos*, document groups in the Philippine National Archives. Lastly, this paper will analyze several aspects of the dios-dios: as a form of avoidance protest and a form of revitalization, its animist influences and its relation to the development of nationalism.

Movements of the 1880s

In April 1884, the followers of Isidro Reyes in Samar were peacefully performing pilgrimages until they had to respond to government persecution by armed defense (Cruikshank 1985, 187–201). The next month, Adriano Novicio launched an abortive uprising in Pangasinan (Memorias 1884). On the Feast of the Three Kings, January 1887,

seventy followers of Gabino Cortes gathered in Arayat, Pampanga to proclaim Gabino as their king. The planned coronation did not take place because Gabino and several others were arrested for illegal assembly and deported to Jolo. However, on the first anniversary of the attempted coronation, Gabino's followers assembled once again and continued to recruit whoever was willing to be a subject of Gabino. His absence mattered little as several members of the group claimed to be possessed by his spirit.¹ Similar events were taking place in Negros Oriental, where Buhawi announced to the people of Siaton and Tanjay that he was God. On February 1887, the *Guardia Civil* discovered that he had already formed a community in the mountain of Siaton.²

The year 1888 was even more disastrous for the colonial government. This was the year Doroteo Cortes drew up a petition for the expulsion of the friars. Cortes, lawyer and businessman from Manila, also led an anti-friar demonstration on 1 March 1888. By September that year, a special tribunal was created to investigate his case as a grave offense against public authority.³ In Calamba, Jose Rizal's brother-in-law, Manuel Hidalgo was being watched by Guardia Civil informants who tagged him as an individual who did nothing but *propaganda filibustera*.⁴ This was a prelude to the Calamba hacienda troubles. Just as the Calamba folk would bank on Rizal for salvation, peasants elsewhere also had their hopes for deliverance. In Leyte, Francisco Gonzalez issued banners and *oraciones* to preserve people from cholera and keep them safe in the coming revolution.⁵ Buhawi, Gabino and other so-called *dioses* continued attracting believers from various provinces.

While the ilustrados struggled for assimilation and representation in the Cortes as the means to attain justice, peasants all over the colony pinned their hopes on several gods and kings who offered to deliver them from earthly woes, while other groups staged uprisings as reactions to specific policies or situations of the government. There was great disparity in the methods of resistance used by the ilustrados and those used by rural folk. Most rural movements, as they existed in the 1880's, had not yet absorbed ideas of modern nationalism.

Definition of Dios-Dios

Dios-Dios was the term used in guardia civil reports and other government records to refer to activities of a religious and political nature.

The term dios-dios refers to the fact that these activities are usually initiated by a person who claims to be or who is considered to be God on earth (ibid.). The term was also used to refer to those who style themselves as representatives of these incarnated deities. Dioses was a term that also appeared in the newspapers to refer to followers of people like Gabino Cortes in Pampanga and Buhawi in Negros. Both Gabino and Buhawi claimed to possess supernatural powers. The more generic phrase *secta politica* usually precedes dios-dios in the reports. This reflects the government perception of the religious meetings as having the actual intent of subverting government authority.

Associations with a religious character appeared all over the Philippines. In Luzon, the rituals and practices of these movements were greatly influenced by Christianity. But in the Visayas, these *sectas politicas* seemed to have a particularly animist stamp. Both religious and civil authorities considered such activities as a return to idolatry; hence the guardia civil reports label them as dios-dios or mentidos dioses (false gods).

Colonial agents discovered that the leaders of the dioses not only proclaimed themselves as gods, but also as rulers. Gabino was supposed to be crowned; Francisco Sales assumed the title *Rey*; and Buhawi already organized his own "regime" in an upland *sitio*.

Colonial records sometimes label members of these groups as *babaylanes*. Dios Gregorio's followers in Antique were reported to be collecting *contribuciones babaylanes*.⁶ *Babaylan* was the term used for healers and later, rebel leaders, in western Visayas. Cullamar (1986) studied the many manifestations and transformation of babaylanism—the whole complex of activities based on pre-hispanic animist practices. Bauzon has a more nuanced use of the term *babaylanism* to refer to the culmination of radical movements in Negros in the movement of Papa Isio (Bauzon 1997, 32–49).

The term dios-dios has a wider scope than babaylan. Dios-dios was a term used for movements that were associated with a reversion to the indigenous religion. The term was used for movements in any place in the country. There were news reports referring to dioses in Pampanga, Ilocos and Pangasinan.⁷ As long as there was an association that entailed some kind of religious practice of which the colonial regime disapproved, that association was labeled as dios-dios—a mockery of what real religion ought to be. The *babaylanes* referred to a specific type of dios-dios as they occurred in western Visayas.

Ilustrados and Dioses

Peasant movements like *dios-dios*, run through the Philippines side by side with the Propaganda movement. Indonesia experienced a similar phenomenon of traditional unrest contemporaneous with the rise of movements of modern nationalism. This was due to the unevenness of the impact of westernization (Kartodirdjo 1973, 67). In the contrast between the ilustrado movements and peasant associations, we have a vivid picture of the gap between the views of the uneducated masses immersed in their traditional culture and the intellectuals who had a modern western-influenced education. This disjunction is something this country had in common with what Geertz calls the "new states"—those states emerged as nations by overthrowing colonial rule (Shils 1963, 3).

Ilustrados had clear goals and, as much as possible, they coordinated their actions according to these goals. But resistance to colonial injustice was not something that could always be coordinated. And the peasants usually followed a different course: that of flight and withdrawal and formation of what the colonial records referred to as *sectas politicas*. While the ilustrados sought reform, the leaders of the *sectas politicas* promised the total transformation of the social order. While ilustrados followed enlightenment philosophy and a rational approach to problems, *sectas* seemed to be guided by fantastic hopes of salvation through supernatural intervention. Some members of these groups even appeared to be pathological cases, exhibiting what the reports called *monomania religiosa*. Some of them were also regarded as simple frauds. When Gregorio Dios of Antique was finally killed by the guards, for example, they found he had a crystal ball with a figure of Louis Bonaparte inside it with mirrors attached to the ball.⁸

Although the ilustrado movements and the *sectas politicas* may seem so far apart, the Spanish government saw both groups as threats. The Dominican chronicler of the Calamba incidents even compared the situation in Calamba with that of Antique with the Babailanes and Samar with the Dioses (Arcilla 1970).

The Dioses as Peripheral Movements

The dioses illustrate how the *pueblos* can be considered an ambiguous center of colonial life (Ileto 1888, 145). It was an ambiguous center in the sense that even if the *gobernadorcillo* and the parish priest had

coercive powers, they could not always maintain the allegiance of the residents of their pueblo. It was possible for residents of a pueblo to dedicate their time and energies in pursuits which were outlawed by or at least unprofitable to the colonial system. They could even cease to be part of the pueblo. They may form associations deemed illicit by the Spaniards. These associations possess another history, a history which is often overlooked if one simply focuses on the pueblo and its elite (*ibid.*).

Many of those arrested as members of dios-dios only complied with some aspects of pueblo life but avoided what they considered inconvenient. Some dioses were more peripheral than others. Those of Samar and Leyte managed to keep distance from the municipal officials. They evaded their civic duties as much as possible, deliberately failing to get their cedula and escaping personal services. They had been Christianized but were still imbued with the animist traditions of pre-colonial religion. The organization of dioses in Leyte was very loose. Many of them practiced *kaingin* farming and were accustomed to a dispersed settlement pattern. The dioses in Samar assembled in big groups several times. These assemblies of 4000 to 7000 people at Bonga were prompted by predictions of a cataclysm and the appearance of a magical city (Cruikshank 1979a, 6). In Leyte, what could be considered a big group would be the forty-eight individuals arrested in Barugo in northern Leyte, in June 1889.⁹ Usually, only groups of 5–15 persons at a time were caught by guardias. It must be noted, however, that these groups were found all over Leyte. In 1890 the province of Leyte had forty-seven towns the largest of which included Dagami (population: 24,836), Tanauan (18,509), Burauen (14,912), Palo (17,736), Ormoc 917,503), Carigara (11,173), Jaro (10,721) and Baybay (14,032).¹⁰ Tacloban (5,226). The capital was not a very big town but this was where the governor's house was located. Agents of American business houses were also stationed in the town.¹¹ Guardias arrested dioses in all of the above-mentioned towns. Earliest news of dios-dios activities in Leyte were reports about 48 people caught in Barugo (8971) in May 1889 followed by reports of meetings in Biliran (6201) in July 1889 and Jaro.¹² Guardia Civil discovered recruiters in the mountains of Ormoc and Merida early November 1889.¹³

The dios-dios groups varied in the extent of their involvement in the market economy. Those more deeply involved experienced more social dislocation. This usually resulted in more cohesive and violent movements as evinced in the evolution of the movements of rice farm-

ers led by Gabino Cortes in the Central Luzon Plain and the laborers (*jornaleros*) led by Papa Isio in the sugar haciendas of Negros. The dioses of Samar and Leyte were also involved in the market economy but not with the intensity of the peasants of Negros and Central Luzon.

Many of the Leyte dioses were abaca suppliers. Leyte was exporting 4,500,000 pesos worth of abaca by the year 1892.¹⁴ In the recorded interrogations from 1885–1890, the accused Samareños and Leyteños, however, did not express any complaints about their arrangements with the buyers of their abaca. But in 1904 some dioses were captured by the constabulary. When they were questioned about why they attacked towns, they said that certain of their countrymen, who were prominent in the revolution and who have been employed by mercantile houses as agents in the purchase of hemp had oppressed them by paying them only a nominal price for their hemp then selling it at a much higher price (*Annual Report* 1905, 3)

A Survey of Dios-Dios Movements

Banners, prayers written on slips of paper and a booklet announcing the coming of a king named Francisco Gonzalez—all these were found by the guardia civil when they patrolled several towns in Leyte in from May to October of 1889. The colonial officials interpreted these as signs of subversive activity, the suppression of which was to engage their energies for the next year. The Leyte activities had their origins in Samar which had its own share of action in 1884 when Isidro Reyes proclaimed the advent of a king who would rule the Visayas.

The Politico-Military Governor of the Visayas witnessed these dioses flourish in several islands. He wrote the Governor General that all these movements must be quelled, once and for all, but to do so, one must survey them with serene detachment.

Early in the Spanish conquest, Bankau, a religious leader from Bohol, led a rebellion in Carigara. The 19th century saw the rise of similar socio-religious movements. In Ilocos 1811, Lungao tried to make his own religion. He dressed as Jesus Christ, had 70 companions whom he called apostles and announced redemption to fishermen (Montero 1887–1895, 400–1). A 1785 revolt in Ituy, Isabela was spearheaded by Lagutao. Like the later dioses, he was a healer who claimed to possess supernatural powers. When a small pox epidemic struck

Cagayan, Christians and Kalingas died, Lagutao said that this was the result of their having forsaken their old beliefs. Dominican friars rallied people from other towns to fight Lagutao (Marcos 1976, 240–44).

In Libmanan, Nueva Caceres, pueblo authorities discovered in February 1865 that Ignacio Dimas, Luis Rodrigues and Francisco Santa Maria were claiming to be *Tres Cristos*.¹⁵ They told people that they had the power over pestilence and viruses. They had other benefits and ills at their disposition to mete out to whomever would deserve these. Ignacio Dimas also claimed to be married to the queen of Spain.

Don Manuel Abella, the *defensor de presos*, assigned to Dimas and his followers, said that the group was in the house of a certain Clemente Eco because they were guests at the baptismal celebration of Eco's nephew. The baptism was held on 29 January 1865 and about sixteen individuals were there. Meetings of more than ten people required an official permit (*permiso juridical*), if not, the meeting would be considered an act of sedition. When he was interrogated by the judge, Dimas, an illiterate drifter from Albay, said that he was married to the queen of Spain. Clemente and Pascual Eco, the hosts of the baptismal celebration, had known Dimas since November because Dimas was curing Libmanan folk struck by cholera. Luis Rodrigues had asked Dimas to cure his wife, Pascuala. Dimas went around Libmanan stopping by homes where groups of ten or twelve persons would come to him. Rodrigues said that Dimas was reputed to be a good healer. Dimas and his common law wife had been staying in Clemente Eco's house since December before Dimas was apprehended in February.

During the investigations, the property of some people involved were held in embargo. Some of them had rather substantial possessions. Inocencio Llamado had a house made of wood valued at 150 pesos, fields worth 100 pesos, ten carabaos (5 male and 5 female) worth fifty pesos and three horses. Clemente Eco, one of the *cabezas*, had a house made of wood valued at forty pesos, twelve carabaos (seven male and five male) worth forty-five pesos.

The written sentence passed for Dimas and his followers revealed the state of the locality in which the *Tres Cristos* operated.¹⁶ The community had been afflicted by an epidemic of cholera and another caused by viruses. Apart from that, the town had been ravaged by locusts and famine. The presence of the *Tres Cristos* fuelled their restlessness as they clutched at any sign of deliverance from their calamities. The *Tres Cristos* were condemned for public disturbance to eighteen months of prison with public works and three other persons

were given a shorter term of eight months while the rest were absolved. Dimas and his co-accused had to pay 240.98 pesos which was the cost of the proceedings.

The Visayas had its own generous share of religious leaders. In 1862 an old woman named Benedicta had herself called *La Santa de Leyte* and drew some 4000 followers off to Mt. Agani. She predicted that the island would sink. Benedicta began activities in Tanauan, Leyte and attracted persons from Burawen, Dagami, Palo and other towns. She was carried on a litter and led candle-lit processions to the mountains. The government simply had the leaders of her entourage arrested (Cuerva 1914, 371-72). In 1872 Father Juan Perfecto of the district of Concepcion in Panay built a following of 20,000 believers. Church authorities were forced to prevent him from preaching, then to send him to Paragua (Schumacher 1987, 24). Guillermo Bianito alias Puti, caught in Capiz and deported to Davao on 17 January 1888, claimed to be the soul of Juan Perfecto.¹⁷ Bianito, originally from Barrotac Nuevo, Iloilo was found in the vicinity of Panay and Ponte Verde pretending to be a priest. It was for this kind of activity that he had previously been arrested and jailed. He was severely reprimanded by the parish priest but when he escaped, he resumed his activities with greater vigor. He exhorted people to give contributions for a mass in Sto. Nino in Cebu. He offered people medicines which he claimed were from heaven. Upon scrutiny, these medicines proved to be a mixture of cologne and aromatic herbs. He also roamed around the cemetery. He even went as far as telling a certain Teodorico Billones to pay him to bless his rice fields to prevent them from being consumed by locusts. He pronounced his blessing over the rice fields, but the locusts, heedless of the benedictions, completely consumed the fields the next day. The judge sentenced Bianito to exile. Keeping him in jail was perceived to be a threat to public peace.

Such attitudes and practices probably arose because of the dire circumstances in which the people found themselves. Another factor was the inadequate knowledge of the Catholic faith. Most areas of the Visayas were superficially Christianized. Politico-Military Governors who wrote *Memorias* of Leyte, Samar, Negros, Panay in the 1880s to the early 1890s all described the population of their province as easily seduced by superstitious persons. People from the mountainous interior came in contact with the Christians of the coastal towns and adopted their Christian practices. In the shortage of priests after the expulsion of the Jesuits, and the subsequent decline in religious in-

struction, some of these groups had little more than syncretistic set of beliefs. Under social and economic stress, mass withdrawals to the mountains took place. Both civil authorities and friar curates saw the activities as a bastard child of Christian and pagan practices. The high point of these movements was the decade of the 1880s. A provincial view of events may lead one to regard these sectarian activities as localized and endemic aberrations. To the colonial officials, however, the situation was more akin to an epidemic. The Provincial Governor of Negros Oriental, writing his *Memorias* in 1891, gives a rather disdainful description of the dios-dios members as making profane temples adorned with banners of different colors." Their leader, dressed in colorful robes, preached to his followers, who, for their part, were rapt in attention, as if his outrageous doctrines had been pronounced by a sacred orator" (Espada 1891).

The movements in the western Visayas tended to be more confrontational and violently anti-Spanish. In 1887 Buhawi from Zamboanguita, Negros Oriental announced to the people of Tanjay and Siaton that he was their redeemer and they no longer had to pay tribute to the colonial government. Buhawi organized the people in the upland *sitio* of Cajidiocan on the shores of the river Siaton. His followers settled in a community of 72 houses and with a *camarin* that served as a church. On another mountain, this community had planted corn on a large *caingin*. About 2000 fugitives formed Buhawi's community.¹⁸ Buhawi and his followers would attack towns. It was in an attempted attack on Siaton in August 1888 that Buhawi died. The infantry division under Faustino Villabrille was largely responsible for the suppression of Buhawi and his followers.¹⁹ Though his wife and some relatives tried to continue his movement, they were rounded up by the government and exiled (Cuesta 1980, 433–35).²⁰ Among these stragglers was Juana Gaytera known as *Divina Pastora*. The *principales* of Siaton wrote a negative conduct report about Juana. In 1885, she had joined the criminal band of Miguel Paira alias Quilat then joined Buhawi's group and continued his activities after his death. She had been living with Matias Beragsang. Her wild life notwithstanding, people believed her to be a saint. They gave her money and other gifts. The *principales* interpreted her activities as a scheme to induce people not to pay their obligations. Juana would make people kiss an *estampa* and they even danced before her. Several former *capitanes* gave testimonies that Juana really succeeded in waylaying the pueblo folk to go to the mountain resulting in the depletion of *tributantes*. Some of the barrio folk really

attributed supernatural powers to Juana and they disappeared from their homes and did not fulfill their obligations. When Matias and Juana finally decided to get married, they came down from the mountains and presented themselves before the parish priest on 22 November 1888. They now wished to live in the *pueblo*. The parish priest surrendered them to the civil authorities. Matias was imprisoned for two years in Bacood then deported to Jolo in August 1890. He was granted release in July 1896.²¹ Records on Juana's punishments or release have not been located.

Another aggressive group was organized by Gregorio Dios in Antique. Gregorio had assembled as many as 400 people who terrorized not only pueblos in Antique but also Iloilo. This uprising of 1888–1890 developed in the mountains of Southern Panay near the sacred animist site of Mt. Balabago (McCoy 1982, 374). This was the site where babailanes of Panay would gather together every seven years and dedicate offerings to the spirits of their ancestors who resisted Spanish rule (Schumacher 1987, 241). Local forces were inadequate for the defense of the province and the governor general dispatched two additional companies of guardia civil. Gregorio withdrew to the mountains of Tubungan and managed to elude Spanish troops until the guardias finally figured out a strategy of misleading Gregorio's numerous look-outs and spies. By March and April 1889, the guardias were finally catching up with the fugitives. They caught small groups of Gregorio's followers during several patrols in the barrios between Tubungan and Igbaras. First, his children were captured, then his wife and more of his followers. Among his supporters were the *tenientes* and *cuadrilleros*. When they were interrogated, these people admitted to having collected contribuciones babaylanes and spreading subversive ideas against Spain. One of them had already bought pieces of land using the money he had collected.²² Gregorio Dios was supposed to have encouraged the people of Pandan and Bulanao to settle and clear the forests that covered it.²³ Also known as Hilario Pablo or Papa, Gregorio had with him a crystal ball with a bust of Luis Bonaparte with mirrors behind it to attract people.²⁴

Dios-Dios in Samar and Leyte

The guardia civil in Samar discovered suspicious activities in 1883. At first there were simply pilgrimages to a shrine dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi to thank him for sparing them from the cholera epi-

demic. Isidro Reyes proclaimed himself as Conde Leynes, received gifts as homage to himself and convinced the Samar peasants to go to Bonga and make a pilgrimage as thanksgiving for having been spared from the cholera epidemic that had ravaged the province. The provincial governor suppressed their acts of devotion forcibly then followers of Reyes had to defend themselves. The pilgrimages did not abate and the guardias threatened violent dispersal that led the people to arm themselves with bolos and clubs and take a defensive stance. Several times, large groups of pilgrims would assemble at Bonga with the belief that a great cataclysm would come and the only way to survive was to go to Bonga. Two hundred fifty-seven pilgrims were arrested on 5 March 1884. On 21 March, 4000 people came to Bonga, then again on 30 March, 7000 people gathered again. In April 1884 a battle took place between government troops and around 1500 pilgrims at Bonga (Cruikshank 1985, 188–90). Of this group, only 257 were captured so the rest fled but resumed their activities. By June 4, a certain Francisco Sales announced that he would come to rule. He could be aided in battle by six invisible negroes who would assure him of victory (Cruikshank 1979a, 11). By December 1884, companies of regular infantry combed the eastern coastal hinterlands in search of dioses (12). The activities, however, never came to a complete halt as fugitives sought followers elsewhere.

The fugitives from Bonga continued to seek contributions for a Mass in honor of a certain Papa Solano and in petition for the appearance of a city called Cadiz.²⁵ The purveyors of these ideas even had a written request to prospective donors seeking their sympathy because the Spanish were very oppressive (*los Españoles nos comen carne y Juesos*—translation of Visayan letter [the Spaniards are devouring our flesh and bones]). In the new city, called Cadiz, the new fees to be levied would be more just. Those who testified in the investigations held in 1885 in Catbalogan said that the persons who requested for contributions for the Mass also sold them objects, specifically *cascarras de oliva* (olive pits), which they thought would preserve them from snake bite as well as guardia civil. Many of them pronounced *culebras* (snakes) and guardia civil in the same breath. One of Papa Solano's more dependable solicitors, Ciriaco Dabuco, was arrested in San Miguel, Leyte and had a list of 650 persons who had made contributions of four to six cuartos each.²⁶ Dabuco spread the word about Papa Solano and Fruto Sales, the ruler of the city. People even assembled in April 1883 in sitio Lantangan, near Gandara, Samar to see whether or

not the city would appear. About 600 persons waited there for three days. Since the city did not appear, the crowd dispersed.²⁷ There were, however, subsequent assemblies of people awaiting the appearance of this city. The Politico-Military Governor authorized the deportation of Dabuco and 128 others to Balabac on 17 July 1885; the others were sent to prison with public works.²⁸

Jose Nofies led another splinter group as he tried to recruit people to go to Jerusalem where, he said, they would be exempt from contributions, *cedulas personales*, compulsory public work.²⁹ Nofies, on the other hand, pointed out Raguel Gallano as the leader who was addressed as Don by others. He and his mistress, Saturnina, would even wear distinctive clothing to mark themselves off as leaders.³⁰ These people most probably suffered the same fate as the followers of Dabuco. With the exile of all these troublemakers, the provincial governor was confident that the events at Bonga would not be repeated.

But recruitment did not cease and another group of eleven was caught in the house of Nepomuceno Villareal in Sulat. They had *oraciones*, *banderas* and three daggers. They said that the paraphernalia was prepared to welcome a certain Don Pablo who lives in the mountains of Tarasan at the boundary of Dapdap.³¹ They planned to recruit others. Slips of paper with the initials SORS, whose meaning nobody could explain, were distributed by one of the group members to persons who were willing to be part of the community (*empadronado en el padron del DiosDios*). Available at one peseta each, the slips of paper were supposed to be an effective safeguard against epidemics.

The recruiters told the people that they were to welcome the King of the Visayas who would come on 15 October in a great ship measuring 57 *brazas* (Spanish fathom) in length and 25 *brazas* in breadth. It would be manned by Germans. The king had told them to request the *gobernadorcillos* of Sulat to prepare four cows and 40 pigs as food for the Germans and that all the people in Sulat should contribute chicken, eggs and rice. Everyone should have *banderas* and the *papeletas*. This ruler would demand only two *reales* as tribute.

All the people caught in this incident were authorized for deportation by the provincial chief, Chacon, on 19 April 1887 to Jolo, Mindanao, Paragua and Balabac.³² For a time, Samar was peaceful but little incidents soon showed signs of a revival of the dios-dios activities. In 1887 guardias caught some people attempting to meet secretly. In November 1888 a certain Jose Paano in Borongan was awarded a Medal of Civil Merit for his services in the Samar affair and in that

same month, the lieutenant of the guardias was kidnapped. The colonel who wrote the report was convinced that this was an act of vengeance. There were still prominent fugitives from the 1884 affair, noted the colonel, and he recommended that all persons living in the mountains should be made to transfer to more accessible areas to deprive the fugitives of means of support.³³

Guardias discovered unauthorized meetings in the *visitas* of Dapdap and Cambatutay in western Samar on 13 March 1889. The lieutenant of the visita was fined for allowing such activities to go on under his jurisdiction.³⁴ These *visitas* were near the pueblo of Tarangan where there was a shrine with a miraculous image of St. Francis of Assisi. Pilgrims from Leyte, Cebu, Bohol, Masbate, Albay and Sorsogon would go there to fulfill their devotions. Guards of the area had already been alerted that Francisco Sales might be found in the place but they could not locate him. The people of the area did not even know him and he might have changed his name. The guards of Barugo, Carigara, Capoocan and Jaro found no clues about any connection between the two provinces.³⁵

The Politico-Military Governor of Samar, however, reassured the Governor of the Visayas that Samar was peaceful. He stressed that many have come down from the highlands. He even said that he himself did the rounds of the towns on horseback to oversee the elections and recruitment for work gangs. All he witnessed were manifestations of obedience and compliance. He took the credit for encouraging more confidence between the natives and the Spaniards so that they could make their grievances openly instead of resorting to flight (*ibid.*).

Leyte seemed to have been the place where suppressed activities in Samar had their outlet. There was not much tension in Leyte until 29 May 1889 when *guardia civil* patrols discovered a peaceful meeting of 48 people in Barugo in which they said the people were engaged in idolatrous practices (*hacen dios-dios*). The *guardia civil* also confiscated a chest which contained three banners, pads of receipts, *cedulas de poblacion* signed by Rey Francisco Rosales and other blank *cedulas*, three pouches of wooden crosses, certificates signed by a doctor, and slips of paper with some prayers to P. Burgos.³⁶ The politico-military governor of the Visayas ended his letter informing the governor general about these activities with the observation that these were not offenses against the government but evidence of some people exploiting the superstitious tendencies and ignorance of the natives. However, the *guardia civil* and the provincial governor decided to treat the

activities as acts of subversion. They then proceeded to search the towns for any sign of the dios-dios presence.

The 1862 episode of *La Santa de Leyte* seemed to be repeated with the advent of the dioses and their purported leader 1888 Fruto or Francisco Sales of Jaro (formerly called Salug). Sales claimed to be sent by God to save the people from a deluge to be sent by God to punish the perversity of humanity (Arcilla 1914, 357). He was most probably the same leader claiming to save the people of Samar from a cataclysm. Fruto, according to Artigas y Cuerva, saw a stream on the way to Carigara. He dug a trench and dumped a sack of salt into the water and told people that from there the sea was going to gush out (ibid.). Fruto sold banners which were supposed to deliver the buyer from a coming pestilence and revolution.³⁷ His proclamation as king, his foretelling of the rise of a city, and distribution of objects to avoid certain harm resemble what the persons from Samar said in their testimonies when they were interrogated by the colonial authorities. In fact, the Provincial Governor, Luis Prats believed that the dios-dioses of Samar passed into Leyte in 1888 through the San Juanico Strait to continue what they had been doing in Samar. This was corroborated by the fact that the detainees questioned in Catbalogan in 1885 said that it was a certain *indio famoso*, Fruto Sales, who would come to be the ruler of a city that would miraculously appear.³⁸ The pronouncements on the booklet of Rey Sales that a city would arise and the distribution of objects to save people from illness repeated the promises that were given to the Samareños.

Francisco Gonzalez's booklet, dated 1887–88, announced his ascendance to the throne and the appearance of the magnificent city of Samarino on January. Guardia Civil discovered his followers selling banners and slips of paper with prayers. The booklet instructed that the banners must be possessed and the prayers should be recited every morning at 6:00. Both banners and *oraciones* were supposed to preserve the people from sickness and also from harm in a coming revolution. The slips of paper were even signed by persons who claimed to be *medicos titulares*. Rey Francisco also issued cédulas to persons who accepted his rule. Prayers on the booklet invoked Jesus, Mary and Joseph for deliverance from the plague (*Libranos del Peste*).³⁹

The booklet said that soldiers would be recruited. The German city that was supposed to arise would be of such unfathomable grandeur. It would have a church adorned in gold. The ruler would have at his command 80,000 soldiers, twenty-five ships and 4000 cannons. Anyone

who intends to visit his kingdom could only do so until February because in the next month, there would be a revolution in Manila, Cebu and all other islands in the Visayas. All those who possess the banners would be delivered from harm since these banners would mark them off as good Christians and subjects of Holy Mary. Sales also authorized certain recruiters. Esteban Batalino bore authorization papers signed by Francisco Sales when he went to Cebu to spread the word.⁴⁰

Government Reaction

The Governor of the Visayas, Francisco Luno, took the disturbances in stride. When he wrote the Governor General in 26 June 1889 and sent him the documents captured from the assembly of dioses in Barugo in May, Luno recommended a "soft approach." He did not stress the political threats which the movement posed. Rather, he emphasized that the most notable evil from the administrative point of view was the fact that Francisco Sales was collecting fines and taking advantage of the ignorance of the greater majority of the natives. And the only fault of the common folk was unauthorized assembly.⁴¹ He said the dios-dios movements appeared all over the Visayas except Cebu and it is a phenomenon that had to be viewed with serenity.

Luno interpreted the activity as taking the form of the old religious practices but with prayers that invoke Jesus and the Blessed Mother. This activity, he maintained was due to Catholic doctrines badly understood and modified according to the traditions, character, habits, customs, geography and topography of the island. Since the culture was primitive, the activities have taken the character of superstition. These unorthodox customs were not heresies but rather more akin to fetish.

Luno told the Governor General that the parish priests were alarmed. To them the biggest evil would be apostasy or heresy. Since the people had no show of violence and the issue seemed to be more religious, Luno could not see an offense when there is actually no offense. So he hesitated to initiate a crackdown. He said they could tighten their vigilance over groups in case they developed into something that could threaten the integrity of the state. The people who had been making illegal solicitations would be penalized. The origin of the evil was religious ignorance and confusion; this was clearly the problem of the parish priests. Luno suggested that they temporarily leave their parishes based in the towns and preach the Gospel where it had

not yet been heard and draw the lost sheep back to the flock. He had communicated with the governor of Samar who told him that events like these could not be considered as against the state. An overly forceful reaction could produce an insurrection where there was none.⁴²

Luis Prats, the Politico-Military Governor of Leyte, on the other hand, actively suppressed the movement or, more accurately, the mere signs of it. From May 1889 to May 1890 guardia civil patrols broke into a few clandestine meetings. Based on the testimonies of the accused, the guardias usually arrested people while they were going about their daily activities: buying food, selling abaca in the town or attending their crops. Many were arrested in October and November of 1889. Most of them were sent first to their pueblo jail, then sent to Tacloban for interrogation. Prats held interrogation sessions in Tacloban, then from there, he sent the prisoners to Manila or to a penal colony. The lack of hygienic conditions in the provincial jail in Tacloban obliged the governor to transfer the prisoners elsewhere to prevent an epidemic.⁴³

The investigation was conducted by asking the persons about the banners and *oraciones*: How much did you pay for the *oraciones*? Are you a member of the dios-dios? Why were you meeting in a shack in the abaca plantation? The answer of the majority of the detainees was that they had not even heard of dios-dios neither did they possess the items in question. And the few who did admit to having *oraciones* could not even read them, but kept them because they were told that these items were effective against snakebite, disease and other dangers.

The primary means devised to identify who indeed was part of the movement or not was to require the gobernadorcillo, the principalia and the parish priest of different towns to issue certificates of conduct for persons arrested. The towns were placed under a sort of martial law with the principalia and friar curates segregating the dios-dios from non-dios-dios.⁴⁴

Certificates could contain positive or negative information. Some certificates even stated that a few people were actually responsible citizens but their ignorance or their desire to make money made them vulnerable to deceivers. The majority of these conduct certificates, however, were issued for persons labeled *vagos*, *indocumentados*, *sin domicilio fijo*, most of whom were also accused of having taken part in secret meetings of dios-dios. A bad conduct certificate was as good as condemnation to prison or exile so no matter how ignorant the detainees were of the charges against them or no matter how much they

denied their involvement in dios-dios, they were usually deported. At the end of the set of marathon interrogations from 29 April to 5 May 1890, Prats stated that the majority were indeed involved in the movement as leaders or believers. He considered all their activities as a danger to national integrity (*ostensibles muestras de desvio a la integridad nacional*).⁴⁵ He sent these detainees to be punished outside Leyte in several installments: fifty prisoners on 5 May 1890 to be sent to Manila, forty-four more on 19 May 1890 again to Manila, another twenty-eight to Manila then San Ramon on 28 August 1890, thirteen more again to Manila on 12 November 1890, 14 more on September 1891 to be sent to Jolo.⁴⁶ It is highly probable that more people were deported since arrests continued. The lists in the archives are not complete. Faustino Ablen, a prominent dios-dios member was not among those arrested. Faustino later became a leader of *pulajanes* who became the scourge of the early American regime in the Philippines (Hurley 1973, 123)

Although some people fled and others were caught with daggers and other bladed weapons, the guardias had no violent encounters. By 1891 the movement seemed to have been neutralized.

Animist Aspects of Dios-Dios

The central leadership of the events in Leyte cannot be traced. Instead, what the interrogations revealed was the participation of some *mediquillos* in the illicit activities. The *mediquillo* was anyone with a smattering of training who could prescribe medicines, apply poultices, set broken bones and the like. There was no strict line separating *mediquillo* from *curandero*, the Spanish name for a herbalist or healer aided by spiritual powers (Ileto 1988, 138).

In fact, the much vaunted Fruto Sales turned out to be far from the ruler who would herd the peasants into paradise out of exploitation. By his own admission, he was a twenty-six-year old jobless drifter, twice guilty of rape (imprisoned six months for the first and three months for the second). He was able to cure a certain woman with a herb called *laddan*. He said he was not a *mediquillo* but seemed to be trying to become one since he was arrested in Alang-alang receiving medicinal herbs from Angel Flores.⁴⁷ Angel Flores appeared to be a more likely leader. The principales of Dagami and Jaro certified him as an unsavory character who had an evil influence on people; he made people kiss his hand, called everyone brother and styled himself as a healer.⁴⁸ Healers had an important role especially in epidemics.

According to Ileto, "the rise of scientific medicine in the context of the epidemics of the 1880's signaled the delegitimization of the activities of these traditional healers" (Ileto 1988, 139). This was true only from the point of view of the regime since many people relied on the traditional healers. Even well into the twentieth century, people of Samar and Leyte put more trust in these *mediquillos* or *tambalan*. People of Leyte and Samar believe that *tambalans* could cure sicknesses caused by spirits; something way beyond the competence of scientifically trained physicians. Moreover, the long rituals the *tambalan* performed had a quieting and favorable effect (Arens 1957, 121). Some *tambalans* were more ambitious than others and capitalized on other people's incredulity while others could not brush aside the air of mysticism bestowed on them. *Tambalans* could gain knowledge of herbs and learn how to contact spirits either because the power had been bestowed upon him or he had undergone the required rigid training. *Tambalans* cured generally with the use of herbs or by performing ceremonies and offerings to appease the spirits who had caused the illness (124). *Tambalans* also gave persons *anting-anting*. In the twentieth century, these could also take the form of tattoos of figures or abbreviated *oraciones* (ibid.).

The investigations on *dios-dios* activities revealed the persistence of animist beliefs in *anting-anting*. Only a few of the prisoners of Leyte admitted that they had the *oraciones* and banners. These people did not know how to read and they kept the *oraciones* because of their effectiveness against poisonous snakes, disease, ghosts, witches and even infidels. One person paid as much as 5 reales and 8 cuartos for one banner and 2 *papeletas* of *oraciones*.⁴⁹ The prisoners from Samar, on the other hand, said that the olive husks to be worn on a belt would spare them from poisonous snakes and *guardia civil*. It was in these objects that these people took refuge from inimical elements like disease, death and evil. The use of these *anting-anting* expresses anxiety over the threatening impact of uncontrollable or evil forces. In a way, *anting-anting* are a record of hopes desires and expectations of uneducated peasantry (Arens in Polo 1988, 20).

The use of *anting-anting* also manifests the animist belief in the magical and arbitrary nature of power, natural and political. McCoy (1982, 370) contends that this continuing influence of animist concepts was perhaps a barrier to the long term development of a more modern political consciousness among these groups of peasants.

In other Visayan provinces, a reversion to animism provided an effective set of symbols and recognizable pattern of charismatic leadership in the mobilization of the peasantry for either secular or religious purposes. Lacking an alternative political ideology to deal with pressing secular problems, the peasantry made repeated use of the animist traditions in revolts against both Spanish and American colonial regimes. (371)

The figure of the tambalan in Samar and Leyte also had the power to rally the people to form a community outside the colonial regime. However, the predominantly scattered pattern of settlement prevented the upland farmers of Leyte from forming large groupings. They instead formed many small groupings dispersed over the island. Many of them simply persisted in their silent but firm avoidance of entering the colonial sphere of influence and continuation of die-hard, ancient customs which were outlawed by colonial agents. The dios-dios movement began with some political undertones which some of the people in Samar seemed to have taken to heart. But the possibility of a Visayan king did not capture the imagination of the people in Leyte. What interested them was the anting-anting that could aid them against everyday dangers.

Flight and Avoidance

The dios-dios and other sectas politicas fit into what Michael Adas classified as *protest of denial through flight*. Adas groups non-confrontational or avoidance resistance into three main types: first, protest of denial as everyday resistance; second, protest of denial through exit; third, protest of denial through retribution (Adas 1986, 68). Modes of avoidance protest are rooted in everyday patterns of work, social action and even amusement.

In order to be meaningfully classified as protest, each mode of avoidance response must involve a conscious articulated intent to deny resources, services or injury to those who are perceived as the sources of their sufferings while evading direct clashes with their adversaries. (69)

Colonial Filipinos often tended to resort to this kind of resistance. The label of laziness which many writers of *Memorias* use to describe rural folk (more specifically the men) was probably due to feigned incompetence, ignorance and other forms of foot-dragging—everyday forms of protest by denial. Incidentally, the *Memorias* of Panay 1870

and of Negros 1890 both describe the men as lazier than the women. The *Memoria* of Panay describes the men of Antique as having a great fondness for sedentary life (*tienen grande apego a la vida sedentaria*). The women of Antique, on the other hand, were reported to be often busy with agricultural tasks or sewing piña and abaca. Those of Iloilo were also reported to be on the frontline of important businesses for which they possess much acumen (*Es muy general encontrar mujeres al frente de los negocios de mas importancia que desmpeña con mucho acierto*).⁵⁰

Avoidance protest could also be accompanied by more disruptive, retaliatory actions like banditry. However, even the simple action of flight was alarming since it deprived pueblos of manpower and source of taxes. It was common that groups would withdraw to unoccupied areas beyond the state's control. Some sectarian communities in the Philippines manifested this aspect of avoidance protest. Their formation began with passive withdrawal from the pueblo society and severance of ties with the colonial state. They may therefore be classified as the protest of denial through exit (75). In the Visayas, formation of communities outside the pueblo center were greatly influenced by the traditional methods of upland farming which made the farmers quite mobile. The governor of Samar wrote in 1832 "No one is less stable in residence than these Indios. They are all the time changing their residence to evade the importuning visits of *cabezas de barangay* or take fuller advantages of fish or crop opportunities elsewhere" (Cruikshank 1979b, 109). The provincial government had to undertake the Sisyphean task of consolidating control over Samar towns (Cruikshank 1985, 208). The Samar experience was shared by other Visayans: demand for new caingin fields, the impact of Muslim raids, floods, fevers and disease- all these could cause shifting or abandonment of a site (*ibid.*). These settlement habits persisted well into the late nineteenth century. The Politico-Military Governor of the Visayas reminded the Governor of Samar of a decree dated 25 July 1885 that ordered the *remontados* to come down from the mountains. The decree also condemned the practice of caingin and equated it with arson. He ordered that his decree be first implemented in Samar and Antique, then in the other provinces within his jurisdiction.⁵¹

Most Visayan revolts involved mass withdrawal of the population from settled lowland villages under Spanish control to remote mountain areas which were difficult to place under surveillance. In the nineteenth century world, the mountains were sparsely populated and were constantly used as a refuge zone. This transfer of residence can

be seen as a protest of denial through exit, one of the most common forms of peasant resistance in Southeast Asia (Adas 1986, 75). In the case of Leyte, The provincial governor, Prats lamented the fact that the dios-dios activities prevented the government from collecting taxes and reaching a right quota of people for compulsory labor. In spite of exhortations by the parish priests and warnings and punishments for the *cabezas*, many people refused to come down from the uplands. This resulted in a deficit in the coffers.

As mentioned above, recruitment of work gangs was also a problem in this province. In 1891 several public buildings in Leyte were dilapidated due to a recent typhoon. The only way to be able to build up roads, bridges, communication systems and buildings destroyed by the last typhoon was through personal services (*prestacion personal*).⁵² The buildings remained in disrepair since nobody could begin working on them.

Members of the dios-dios were tagged as *indocumentado, sin domicilio fijo, vago* and they were often found in areas not very easy to watch. The majority of the detainees were abaca cultivators who had no fixed residence. Many of them were in their twenties and early thirties. They did not know how to write, signed their name with a sign of the cross and came up with a variety of excuses for not having their cedula: The cedula was either misplaced, confiscated by the guardia civil, left in jail, given to wife or brother or the person simply said that he did not have the money to get it. One of the more elderly detainees could not recall the number of times he had been imprisoned for not acquiring his cedula and for not rendering personal services. The commotion that resulted from the discovery of the paraphernalia related to Rey Sales gave the provincial government a chance to arrest a good number of these people who refused to submit to this form of taxation.

The problem of flight was an urgent matter that had to be addressed by the Military Governor of the Visayas. In January 1889, he informed the governor general that he was going to require the people living in the remote areas to transfer to more populated areas. He suggested that these policies be enforced first in Samar and Antique, but should be applied to all other provinces with some slight modifications.⁵³

The pattern of withdrawing from the control of the pueblo authorities was a habit among people of Leyte rooted in their demographic and geographical conditions. The Jesuit missionaries in the early 17th century realized that the Visayans in Leyte adapted themselves to their

environment in a way that involved dispersal. The people lived in swiddens and only with great reluctance did they abandon their clearings and live in town. Although the parish priest could convince them to temporarily stay in a *reduccion*, there was a melting away of the population with each attempt of the missionaries to make townsmen of them (De la Costa 1967, 291).

Upland farmers of Leyte and other parts of the Visayas usually cultivated rice on hillside swiddens with natural drainage. Usually the rice supply was not enough for the whole year so root crops were eaten for part of the year. Farmers wished to distribute to several different crops the risks of bad weather or infestation by locusts and other pests. Early Jesuit missionaries observed that a family on its clearing was self-sufficient. Transferring the family to a town would take away its self-sufficiency without providing it with any other means of support. Town life also brought many disadvantages: the impositions of the pueblo government, forced labor, continual calls upon them to act as bearers and oarsmen for *encomenderos* and missionaries. Since there were no pack animals in Leyte, the people had to act as the beasts of burden. Although large pueblos existed in Leyte in the nineteenth century, portions of the population still continued to evade colonial demands on production and manpower.

In 1890 the population of the province was 270,495 but Luis Prats, the Politico-Military Governor, and writer of the *memoria* says that the actual population could possibly reach 275,000 since there were many who did not fulfill their civil duties, i.e. they failed to acquire their *cedulas personales* and render compulsory labor services (Prats 1891). In Samar, the problem was so acute that the Politico Military Governor had to issue a circular to tell the local authorities (*tribunales*) to take measures to compel people to come down from the uplands and to prohibit *caingin* farming.⁵⁴

The *caingin* system or swidden farming had many social implications. First, it greatly influenced the mobility of farmers. The tough grass and secondary growth which normally followed the harvest of crops rendered the swidden difficult to recultivate, particularly because farmers had neither work animals nor plowing implements. This mobility in response to land-use and economic activities brought about the impermanence of settlements and communities. That is why interior settlements in the past were scattered rather than nucleated in pattern. Third, because of population dispersal, the development of unified and large groupings did not take place. Social units were kin-

ship units, composed of one or a number of extended families (Jocano 1975, 5).

The governor of Samar noted that the people of Samar withdrew into the mountains more because of their natural inclinations. Most of them did not even know the local authorities, neither the *cabezas de barangay* and much less the provincial chiefs. The fact that these people could not be enlisted in the work gangs was a great loss for the State.

Remontados were ordered to come down from the mountains in a decree issued 25 June 1885. This decree also penalized caingin as arson. Since the Spanish authorities considered caingin as ecologically unsound and conducive to remontadismo, it just had to be stopped. The state could extract no surplus from those who practiced caingin, a form of subsistence farming. The colonial government also considered it detrimental for it deprived the pueblo of manpower that could have been used for agriculture, industry and commerce. The passivity of people who withdrew into the uplands could also be transformed into hostility if these remontados were waylaid by fanatics, *malhechores* and seditious groups. The order issued by the provincial governor ordered them to return to the *pueblos* within thirty days of issuance with a punishment for violators of imprisonment for sixteen days or a fine of 8 pesos. The decree required that clusters of at least twenty houses should be formed. Parish priests and *gobernadorcillos* were ordered to oversee the implementation of these policies. Roads should be maintained to keep these clusters accessible. *Gobernadorcillos* and *tenientes* would be penalized if they were not able to enforce these rulings.⁵⁵

McCoy regards the values of fear and avoidance as a consequence of animist religion on the peasant cultures of the Philippines and other parts of Southeast Asia. Just as the householder seeks only to avoid the harm from local spirits when building his house, so man in all his contacts with a spirit impregnated universe hopes only to avoid the invisible spirits who are latently or actively maligned. The preference for avoidance had practical manifestations in the effort of large segments of the population to escape demands and requirements of the colonial government rather than to complain about them. The habit of flight, therefore, was something deeply ingrained by both animist tradition and ecology.

A Phase of Revitalization

Anthony Wallace used the term revitalization to designate a culture change phenomenon that could be observed all over the world. A re-

vitalization movement is a deliberate, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture (Goodenough 1963, 288–92). The term, revitalization, brings to mind an organism. Just as the human body reacts under stress to preserve its own integrity, the social organism also reacts when it is threatened by more or less serious damage (Wallace 1956, 264–65). Revitalization movements are recurrent features in human history. And in the Philippines, communities which felt imbalances caused by colonial rule had attempts at revitalization usually by resorting to a return to babaylan leadership. In Eastern Visayas, the movements were an effort to evade circumstances that prevented them from practicing their traditions.

Revitalization movements have a basic process structure. This involved what Wallace called “mazeway reformulation, communication, organization, adaptation, cultural transformation and routinization” (268). The mazeway is nature, society, culture and personality seen by one person (266). The leader initiates in formulating an alternative vision of society or a solution to its problems. In Leyte, the most identifiable problems were the threat of cholera, taxation, forced labor and other services required by the municipal government. The leader then communicates his vision to others. In Leyte, there were many agents distributing oraciones. These oraciones were sold to people as a cure for cholera. But aside from that, the written proclamations of Rey Sales informed people that they had to possess oraciones and banners to be saved from a revolution. Rey Sales also predicted the appearance of a city. There is usually a period of organization for the movement. In the case of the Leyte dioses, the organization was very loose. Dioses were not caught in huge meetings. Rather, there were several agents who sold “power-bearing” paraphernalia. The next stage in the revitalization process involves facing opposition from the dominant groups in society. Many of the dioses of Leyte could not physically resist arrest. Since they had hardly any organizational structure, they could not put up a consolidated resistance. However, even if the principales and parish priests zealously tried to weed out the dios-dios in their area of jurisdiction, many of the dioses evaded arrest and continued their activities well into the twentieth century.

What were the dioses trying to revitalize? They were trying to recover the security they enjoyed by maintaining their traditional life ways in the face of the threat of the expanding surveillance power of the principalia. Many of those accused as dioses simply wanted to continue their own system of agriculture and to continue or develop

certain rituals from which they derived some security. It was a revitalization in a mitigated sense, since these life ways had never been moribund, but they were indeed threatened. The immoderately heavy crackdown on the defenseless, harmless and non-violent dioses helped transform them into a violent, though fragmented rebel force during the Philippine American War.

Movements in the 1880s were all in nascent stages. They developed according to the challenges they encountered. Although many members of these movements were jailed and exiled before the outbreak of the revolution, the movements proved to be resilient and passed through many stages of development until the twentieth century. In 1888 Rey Gavino's followers in Arayat, Pampanga very plainly admitted that they had been meeting to prepare for the coming of their king.⁵⁶ This Pampanga movement had a long and complicated career especially after their king and leader, Gabino Cortes died. When Felipe Salvador took over, he consolidated the movement, transformed it first, into a revolutionary force against the Spaniards, then, a support to Aguinaldo's revolutionary government against the Americans and finally, as a rebel enclave against the American government.

Groups in the Visayas also had an extended existence. Babaylan groups in Panay, like Gregorio Dios in Antique, may have been suppressed but their style of resistance was transported by immigrants to Negros. Dios Buhawi who was supposedly killed in 1888 was the subject of folk legends. Members of his group later participated in the movement of Papa Isio, who had originally migrated from Antique (Cullamar 1986, 30). Dios-dios members in Samar and Leyte were dispersed by guardia civil and many of them were deported to penal colonies from 1884-1890 but their spirit was very much alive in the *pulahanes* of the twentieth century. The upland farmers who preferred resistance by avoidance evolved into "the most formidable organization of religious desperadoes that American arms were ever to face" (Hurley 1973, 56). When Faustino Ablen, the leader of the Leyte *pulahanes* was captured by American troops and scouts in 1907 the movement should have disintegrated. Instead, the remaining rebels in Samar and Leyte brought their idea of the New Jerusalem to Surigao. Government troops battled a group of 500 Surigao colorums in 1924 (Arens 1979, 194).

While the movements in Leyte and Samar initially tended towards avoidance and withdrawal, Buhawi, Dios Gregorio and Papa Isio were immediately aggressive and targeted persons who they identified as

sources of oppression. Later, the pulahanes, who were descendants of the dios-dios were more aggressive and tended to be controlled by criminal characters who used the fragmented upland communities for their own gain but still using healers as a source of unity.

Revitalization movements did not always provide the leadership that the peasants needed to help them lift themselves out of their condition. In the case of Leyte, the abaca farmers of Palo, Tacloban, Dagami and the other towns were vindicated by their lukewarm response to the promise of a celestial city by a spurious pretender. They simply continued resisting excessive extractions of the pueblo officials in the way that best suited their demographic and geographic conditions. Their form of avoidance was a long standing defense mechanism to colonial government demands on production and manpower by maintaining their upland clearings. These acts of evasion were expressions of discontent. They took the alternative of flight but did not commit themselves to support someone trying to style himself as their savior. In other Visayan islands, the ideology offered by the babaylan had a power to mobilize. In Leyte, the potentially equivalent figure of the tambalan could be a source of unity but tended to have a much less political character.

The Problem of Leadership

These revolts also present us with the problem of leadership. Rey Sales, the purported leader of the dios-dios in Leyte comes across as a fraud, more than anything else. Other leaders had this element of charlatantry: when Gregorio Dios was killed in an attempt to rescue his wife from the pueblo jail, he had with him a crystal ball with a bust of Emperor Luis Napoleon in it with some mirrors attached to attract the people. One of the leaders in Samar even used special clothes to distinguish himself from others. Rey Sales, whoever he was, was even supposed to have placed a fake star on a hill, telling people that the star was a sign of his authority. Aside from trying to make it appear that the sea was going to spring forth from a stream (Cuerva 1914, 358). All these people mentioned above collected fees from the people. In the Leyte case, the ultimate receiver of the fees was never found. Novicio's qualities as a leader were all the more questionable since he failed to rally a substantial following. Even his colleagues quickly revealed his plans.

Gregorio Dios in Antique also manifested some acumen as he convinced the *cuadrilleros* and *tenientes del Barrio* to collude with him and assist him by collecting contributions and warning him about approaching patrols.⁵⁷ Rey Sales' leadership, on the other hand remains largely on paper. His vision of a city seemed to have been shared by none of those interrogated. Or perhaps his followers simply escaped. In other provinces, the leadership of Gavino, Gregorio, Buhawi, provided a chance for people to change their situation. The case in Leyte was simply a discovery by the guardias of the continuity of age-old customs of coping with disease and other dangers.

The fighting words in Rey Sales booklet seemed to have been lost on his prospective "vassals." He had promised a city and an army but he was not able to communicate his message to the people of Leyte. In Samar, some farmers had even gone so far as to wait for Cadiz to appear only to be sorely disappointed. Probably the people of Leyte had heard of these false promises and placed little hope in them. They had no expectations of social change, since, in the first place, they had lived in virtual independence until the *principalia* and *guardias* forced them to finally submit to colonial control. The notable character of these leaders is that, whether or not they had the right intention, they were able to tap into a complex of the beliefs in the people that prepared them to accept even just a portion of the message offered by these leaders.

Dios-Dios and the Development of Nationalism

The study of revolt manifests the various dichotomies present in colonial life. The upland-lowland dichotomy is a running theme in Philippine History (Bauzon 1997, 3). This source of division based on geography was widened by the impact of colonial rule. The highlands often became a refuge for those who refused to submit to the obligations imposed by colonial officials usually based in lowland pueblos. Ileto stressed the discontinuity between the pueblo centers and outsiders. O.D. Corpuz offers a more precise image of colonized Filipinos living in three worlds: the world of the pueblo, governed by colonial laws; the world of the *doctrina*, governed by the friars; and the native world, which the Filipinos tried to fashion for themselves (Corpuz 1989, 186-87).

Events in Samar and Leyte manifested the gap between the pueblo

officials and illiterate abaca farmers. The certificates of conduct were a clear demarcation between those who allowed themselves to be integrated within the colonial culture and those who did not. The farmers' impulse to dispersal contradicted the colonial policy of centralization. They were, therefore, considered as inimical to the state until they were effectively placed under its control through the penal system. The peasants' futile wait for the promised city and the illiterate farmer holding on to his oraciones are vivid images of the absence of a real means for social justice for them during that period in our history.

All the above groups tended to be excluded from the national community as imagined by the ilustrados. But it was among these communities that experimentation in indigenous institutions could take place. Swidden farming in the uplands encourages "centrifugal" settlements (Jocano 1975, 22). This had an impact on the kind of community that the *dios-dioses* of Samar and Leyte could form. It was predominantly kin-based. Community solidarity among the various scattered settlements was based on access to healers, shared custom of the use of anting-anting, and non-fulfillment of various pueblo obligations. Other than that, there was little else to bind them more closely to the pueblo and much less to the colonial state. These people had no habits of obedience to civil authorities with whom they had infrequent contact. Even the proclamations of a supposed king of the Visayas did not take firm root in these people.

The movements then give us a sense of the obstacles that had to be surmounted by the nationalist movements. Dios-dios movements cannot be equated with nationalist movements, although, they produced a certain hostility to the colonial regime which modern nationalistic movements could later build upon. The lack of solidarity can also be traced to the absence of existing non-colonial institutions that could have been tools of unity. Colonial Java, for example, did not have religious restrictions like the Philippines. They had institutions like the *tarekat* (the mystical brotherhood) and the *pesantren* (village religious school) which fostered group cohesion among peasants. In the Philippines, the old animistic religion went underground as missionaries gained converts. Ironically, it was the institutions that the friars introduced that became venues for the expression of grievances and opportunities for united action against persons perceived to be oppressors. The *Cofradia de San Jose*, since it was founded by an indio,

Hermano Pule, was suspect for the beginning, although it took the form of the confraternity, which was so important in the friars' missionary work. The *Guardias de Honor* were founded by the Dominicans to foster devotion to the Blessed Mother, but to their dismay, it transmogrified from a licit into an illicit society whose members feared an impending catastrophe unless they all assembled in the place designated by their leader.

The pilgrimage was another opportunity for people to assemble in big groups. Pilgrimages were generally innocuous activities centered around the shrine of a miraculous image. Security always had to be stepped up during these occasions, but since the people were constantly with the priests, there was not much to fear. In Samar, however, the pilgrimage became the nucleus for a rebellious group to form. What began as pilgrimages of thanksgiving to a shrine of St. Francis of Assisi developed into a group that resisted government attempts to prevent their devotional activities. In the case of the Philippines, the kind of cohesion formed in these kinds of venues was not firm. It was also very localized and seldom did people establish strong ties with people who belonged to other provinces.

Another source of unity was the common hope of deliverance from injustice. The *Dioses* had a millenarian character. "Millenarianism usually envisages an ideal and romanticizes the time to come as a golden age in which all injustices will be removed and all disorders relieved. During the millenium, perfect happiness and peace will reign" (Kartodirdjo 1973, 8). The millennium will be inaugurated by cataclysms. The faithful who wish to survive cataclysmic disasters are told to observe the prescriptions of the leader (9). Various groups of dioses possessed this millenarian sense in different degrees.

At first glance, the rebellions look like irrational flights from reality—a kind of escapism that was doomed to failure because it relied wholly on supernatural forces and operated along mystic-magical lines which were completely inadequate in facing colonial forces (Kartodirdjo 1966, 321). However, millenarian movements were actually mundane in character. "They were essentially concerned with the hardships of the peasantry. They were therefore, religious but not other-worldly. They were concerned with rational goals pertaining to the world even if these goals were not rationally perceived" (17). The participation of the peasantry in the movements in the 1880s was motivated by the need to escape from all sorts of evils they perceived as coming from the colonial regime: forced labor services, exorbitant taxes, restrictions on re-

ligious practices. They joined the movement because the leader presented them with an alternative which seemed rational to them.

Rebel leaders in the Philippines presented their prospective supporters with alternative communities wherein life could be much more harmonious. In the case of the *Guardias de Honor* this utopian community was a new town called *Cabaruan*, eight miles from *Malasiqui*, *Pangasinan*, formed by migrants and supported by raiding the neighboring *barrios*. The fabled utopia could be the appearance of a new city out of nowhere as promised to the peasants in *Samar*. The 1888 rebellions also had a strong nativistic element. The leaders promised to eliminate foreign rule and restore pre-colonial conditions. *Buhawi*, *Dios Gregorio*, *Papa Isio* emphasized the need to oust the colonial rulers. Other leaders, like *Rey Gavino*, advocated peaceful means of attaining an ideal society, while others in *Samar* thought that this ideal place would simply appear. After the series of arrests and deportations, the movements in *Samar* and *Leyte* appeared to have been extinguished. But this was just an illusion. In the following decades, *dioses* and *pulahanes* would not only maintain their distance from municipal centers but become a menace, staging surprise attacks and forays into the towns. After the *pulahan* campaigns of 1902–1907, they, again, appeared to be extinguished by the constabulary (Arens 1979, 190). The casualties and arrests appeared to finally signal the extinction of the group until they again reappeared in *Surigao* in 1924. This time newspaper reports would tag them as “*colorums*.” The rebel community in *Surigao* spread their fervor to *Agusan* and *Cotabato* and revived the movement in *Samar* and *Leyte*. Colonel H. Boweres, the head of the expeditionary force sent to fight in *Surigao* ordered the burning of *Socorro*, *Surigao*, where the rebels wanted to establish a *New Jerusalem* (Milagros 1976, 65). It took 600 constabulary men to disperse the rebels. The Constabulary forces allowed the corpses of the *colorums* to rot on the spot where they fell to prove to all that they had no power to come back to life. The *oraciones* written in *libritos* (booklets) would later be tattooed by the *tambalans* on whoever wanted to be spared from illness, evil spirits or deadly weapons. In the 1930s, 30 children were tattooed to save them from dysentery (Anacion 1991, 61 and 66). Even until the 1940s there were groups that bore the marks as the *Samar* and *Leyte dioses* of the 1880s (Arens 1979, 194). Even in the 1980s *oracion* tattoos were still used by members of religious groups in *Leyte* like the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association, *Amahan-Inahan* and *Alsa Masa* (Anacion 1991, 76, 85, 86).

In the 1880s the benefits of independence were a common desire but the idea of a nation and the allegiance to a sovereign state was still distant to the peasantry. In Calamba, there were ideas of a "great republic," in Samar, there was word of a New Jerusalem, but there were many restrictions to people's ability to participate in elite-dominated politics that is often associated with the formation of a national consciousness.

Many of the so-called dioses, especially those of Samar and Leyte, did not intend their activities to be an overt expression of discontent with the colonial regime. Indeed, they were galled by the exactions of the colonial administration but responded with avoidance, rather than confrontation. It was the forcible suppression of these peaceful activities that resulted in a sense of outrage that resulted in a deeper hostility among the communities at the fringes of the colony. It was this hostility that produced the more aggressive actions in the following decades. The Spanish regime sowed its own destruction by the forcible suppression of any spontaneous associations among the population. Initially, these associations had no political aim, but the government reaction compelled them to eventually adopt first a defensive, and later, an aggressive position. In this way, their real discontent led them to become one of the many participants of a revolution whose official ideology drew nothing from their attitude of avoidance and their animist propensities. The mishandling of the dios-dios movements was a factor that made the regime's cruelty more patent and motivated people to fight. This had already happened in the case of the Cofradia de San Jose whose persecution by the government resulted in the uprising of the Tayabas regiment the following year. The Cofradia activities were religious but the soldiers of the Tayabas regiment fought for independence. It was the first Philippine revolt that had independence as a rallying cry (De la Costa 1964, 188).

The dioses and *malhechores*, then, did not have a hand in directing the nationalist revolution of the next decade. However, it was their real experience of suppression, oppression and deprivation in the 1880s that predisposed them to be influenced by nationalist movements and to become the many unacknowledged fighters for nationalism. Their initiatives for change, then, have to be taken into account as possible contributions in the building up of the national community. While the filibusteros raised the battle cry for independence, the dioses attempted to actualize that independence in the most basic social setting.

Notes

1. *El Comercio*, 11 January 1888.
2. *El Comercio*, 6 September 1887.
3. Report on Interrogations, 26 September 1888, Intramuros, Sediciones y Rebeliones vol. 26, henceforth SR.
4. Guardia Civil report, 4 October 1888, Calamba, SR 18.
5. Translated booklet, SR 29.
6. Guardia Civil report to Politico-military Governor of Iloilo, 19 September 1889, *Guardia Civil* (henceforth GC) 1888–1889-A.
7. *El Comercio*, 6 September 1887, 25 November 1887, 11 January 1888.
8. Commandant of Civil Guard to Governor of Iloilo, San Joaquin, 17 May 1888, SR 26.
9. Politico-Military Governor of Visayas to Governor General, Cebu, 29 June 1889, SR 29.
10. Memoria del Estado Moral y Material de la Provincia de Leyte 1890.
11. Frederick Emory Foster (of Peele Hubbel) to Mr. Edwards, Manila, 12 April 1872.
12. Politico-Military Governor of Visayas to Governor General, Cebu, 17 June 1889, SR 29; Guardia Civil Colonel of Third Division to Governor General, Cebu, 5 July 1889, SR 29.
13. Politico Military Governor of Visayas to Governor General, Cebu, 9 November 1888, SR 29.
14. *Guia Oficial de Filipinas* 1892, p. 179.
15. Court proceedings and other papers on the case of the Tres Cristos, February-June 1865, SR7.
16. Sentence passed by the Alcalde Mayor and Juez de Primera Instancia of Camarines Sur, Don Jose Feced, 7 June 1865, SR 7.
17. Expediente Conta Guillermo Bianito por fingirse Santo estfando varias naturales de Capiz, August 1887–February 1888, EG 1886–1894.
18. *El Comercio*, 6 September 1887.
19. Captain of Guardia Civil to Governor General, Cebu, 21 January 1889, GC 36.
20. EG1887–1890 Contra Abud y Eugenio, 25 Sept. 1887, Dumaguete and Contra Matias Beragsang, 20 March 1890, Bacolod, EG 1886–1893.
21. Expediente contra Matias Beragsang 1890–1896, EG 1885–1896.
22. Colonel of Guardia Civil to Governor General, Cebu, 13 and 23 April 1889, GC 32.
23. Historical Data Papers (microfilm, PNL), Antique.
24. Comandant of Civil Guard to Governor of Iloilo, San Joaquin, 17 May 1888, SR 26.
25. Testimonies of captives, Anting-Anting (henceforth AA).
26. Testimonies of Santiago Beloso, Wenceslao Cruz, Ciriaco Dabuco, Catbalogan, 31 October 1884, AA.
27. Testimony of Mariano Collano, Catbalogan, 30 December 1884, AA.
28. Authorization by Politico-Military Governor, Don Frayle Ochoa, Catbalogan, 17 June 1885, AA.
29. Testimony of Don Juan Atoy, Catbalogan, 27 October 1885, AA.
30. Testimony of Jose Nofies, Catbalogan, 7 October 1885, AA.

31. Various Testimonies in Proceedings against Benigno Martines and others, 11 October 1886, Catbalogan, EG 1886-1894.
32. Don Pelayo Ma. Chacon y Lopez to Governor General , 21 April 1887, EG 1886-1894.
33. Guardia Civil report to the District commander, Tacloban, 23 November 1888, SR 29.
34. Confidential letter to Governor General from the Guardia Civil chief in Catbalogan, 25 June 1889, SR 29.
35. Report from the Politico Military Governor of Samar to the Politico Military Governor of Visayas, 24 June 1889, Catbalogan, SR 29.
36. Inconsistencies in names and spelling follow the various reports: Sales, Rosales, Gonzalez; Politico Military Governor of the Visayas to Governor General, Cebu, 17 June 1889, SR 29.
37. Translations of booklet of Francisco Gonzales, SR 29.
38. Various testimonies, AA.
39. Translation of booklet of Rey Francisco Gonzalez (no originals found as of now), SR 29.
40. Authorization for Estevan Batalino, SR 29.
41. Politico Military Governor of the Visayas to Governor General, Cebu, 17 June 1889, SR 29.
42. Confidential letter from Politico Military Governor of Visayas to the Governor General Cebu, June 1889, SR 29.
43. Letter from Politico Military Governor of Leyte to Governor General , Tacloban, 23 June 1890, SR 29.
44. Certificates from the Gobernadorcillos of Baybay, Tanauan, Dagami, Palo and other towns, May to October 1890, SR 18, 29; EG1889-1897/1890-1898 has many certificates from Palo principales and parish priest.
45. Authorization signed by Luis Prats, Tacloban, 19 May 1890, EG1889-1897/1890-98.
46. Authorizations signed by Prats SR19, SR 31, EG 1889-1897/1890-1898.
47. Testimony of Fruto Sales, Tacloban, 30 April 1890, EG 1889-1897.
48. Certificates of Conduct by *principalia* of Jaro, 2 May 1890 and Dagami, 13 May 1890, EG 1889-1897.
49. Various Testimonies, May 1890. Tacloban, EG 1889-1897.
50. Memoria de Panay, 1870.
51. Politico-Military Governor of the Visayas to the Politico-military Governor of Samar, 18 January and 30 January 1889, SR 18.
52. Memoria de Leyte 1891.
53. To Governor General from Politico-Military Governor of the Visayas, Cebu, 18 January 1889, SR 29.
54. Circular from the Politico Military governor of the Visayas, Cebu, 30 January 1889, SR 18.
55. From Politico Military Governor of the Visayas to Politico Military Governor of Samar, Cebu, 30 January 1889, SR 27.
56. Governor of Pampanga to Governor General, Bacolor, 24 September 1888, SR 27.
57. Report of Guardia Civil commander of 3rd regiment, Iloilo, 6 March 1889, GC1888-1889 A Bundle 32.

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