

# ***DIOS INA* (God the Mother) and Philippine Nationalism**

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Many people mistake *Dios Ina* for the Virgin Mary or the Immaculate Conception who is the official patron saint of the Philippines; but to millenarians and initiates of *anting-anting* (amulet) and to believers of the Doctrine of the Infinite God, She is the Supreme Mother (*Kataastaasang Ina*), Flower of Heaven (*Bulaklak ng Langit*), *Gumamela Celis*, *Dios Infinita*, *Animasola*, *Baphomet*, *Amhuman*, Mother of Life (*Nanay ng Buhay*), *Bathalumang Ina* (Mother Deity), etc. In these secret names, she has a totally different life history and context from the Catholic Virgin Mary. She is actually *Inang Pilipinas* (Mother Philippines) or *Inang Bayan* (Motherland) celebrated in the writings of the revolutionary Andres Bonifacio (*Tapunan ng Lingap; Katapusang Hibik ng Pilipinas*).

This paper traces how the term came into use in the literature of the reform and the revolution, the political cartoons under U.S. colonialism, the songs of the First Quarter Storm under the Marcos dictatorship and finally in the songs of the millenarians who believe that *Dios Ina* (God the Mother) is *Inang Pilipinas* or *Inang Bayan*.

## **The Woman as Metaphor for Nation**

In the history of Philippine nationalist consciousness, the first time that the term *bayan* would be given significance was in the

metrical romance of Francisco Balagtas Baltazar, considered one of two literary giants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the other being the Philippines’ national hero Jose Rizal who wrote the two novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. The famous poem “*Florante at Laura*,” published in 1838, is believed to have had a profound effect and influence on the movement for reform, the revolution, the movement for independence and nationhood. This *awit* (song) containing 399 stanzas each consisting of dodecasyllabic quatrains is regarded as an allegory of the cruel Spanish rule in the Philippines. No less than Apolinario Mabini, the “Brains of the Revolution” against the United States wrote it down from memory during his exile in Guam (Subido 1964, 12). Ordinary people used to sing it as they went about their daily chores, tending the carabao, rowing the boat, etc. They read their own suffering under the colonial rule of Spain in this story of two lovers and their fight against the tyrannical rule of Conde Adolfo.

*Sa loob at labas ng bayan kog sawi,  
kaliluha’y siyag nangyayaring hari,  
kagaliga’t bait ay nalulugami,  
ininis sa hukay ng dusa’t pighati.*  
(ca. 1838)

[Inside and outside my unfortunate land,  
treachery reigns; goodness and wisdom have fallen  
into misfortune, vexed into the grave of sorrow and  
grief. – Author’s translation]

*Bayan* in the Tagalog language means the people, nation, the place or territory, town, the center or capital. In Spanish Philippines, *bayan* was where the seat of the government, the catholic church, and the *cuartel* and the civil guards were located – it was the center of progress. It was also the *pueblo* (Salazar 1999a, 11). *Bayan* meant the *loob* – the walled city of Intramuros where the Spanish Governor General resided. It was the little Europe in Manila destroyed when the Americans liberated the Philippines from the Japanese during World War II. In contrast, *labas* meant the outside, the mountains and the fields, the territory under the control of the