

Peasant Syncretic Vision in Times of Rebellions Reconsidered

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"They tried to make sense of the world, in all its becoming, buzzing confusion, with the materials they had at hand. Those materials included a vast repertory of stories derived from ancient Indo-European lore. The peasant tellers of tales did not merely find the stories amusing or frightening or functional. They found them 'good to think with.' They reworked them in their own manner, using them to piece together a picture of reality and to show what that picture meant for persons at the bottom of the social ladder."

- Robert Darnton in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984) p. 64.

"Her responses to questions expose a taproot of rebellion deeper than the surface runners emanating from Sakdalism. They also reveal motives far more complex than the political, economic and social drives commonly attributed to dissident Filipino farmers by students of agrarian unrest. She fought for land. She fought to throw off foreign domination. She sought to rectify an inequitable social system. She fought for all those things, but she sought something more. Her basic motives sprang from a popular tradition of resistance and a village view of history which bore little or no resemblance to the scholarly versions current in the lecture halls of the University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila."

- David Sturtevant, describing the Sakdal peasant leader Salud Alagbe in *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840-1940* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969) p. 287.

James Scott aptly sums up the different ways in which the peasantry's "moral vision" guides their revolts when he remarks:

They take up arms less often to destroy elites than to compel them to meet their moral obligations. Where a shred of the potential normative structure remains, peasants often attempt to drive out the collector of taxes and rents (or to move beyond their reach) and to re-establish an autonomous community... In those cases where the threat to subsistence routines seems cataclysmic and irresistible, the response appears more often to take on millennial and utopian overtones. [1]

Substantial empirical evidence definitely validate one of Scott's basic arguments, i. e., that peasant rebellion and revolt are "largely defensive efforts to protect sources of subsistence that are threatened or to restore them once they have been lost." [2] Peasants, when they revolt, are governed by and invoke values and norms that seek to maintain or restore the rural balance in terms of subsistence and reciprocity. [3]

But rural resistance (and its accompanying rationalization based on the deeply-held existing values and norms) -- as responses to "the

threat to subsistence routines" -- cannot also be exclusively categorized as only either "largely defensive" or desperate rear guard actions to preserve peasant subsistence. Neither can they be simply classified as yearnings for a utopia coinciding with the lost autonomous village economy and society. On the contrary, one may argue that in periods of extreme social stress, peasant consciousness and moral vision take on a form that may be considered different, sometimes uniquely incomparable to that which has broken down with the crumbling of the village's economy. This consciousness and its attendant normative structures combine village-based or village-derived elements with new norms and values that the peasantry critically incorporates from ideas, persons, institutions and practices external to the village.

This syncretism reformulates the peasantry's worldview such that in times of rebellion, it allows them to undertake actions which they normally would consider as forbidden either by the moral precepts of the old order or by the sheer coercive power of rural elites. It

provides them the justifications for their revolt (or participation in a rebellion) as well as the bases of their conceptualization of a new social order which is *transcendent* of the order in which they are immersed at the time of rebellion.

This consciousness has a certain tenacity and resilience. It does not disappear with the end of rebellion; rather it becomes an integral part of the "little" tradition, passed on from one generation to another -- most of the time orally -- and survives as long as the peasantry remains a fairly substantial part of the population. [4] In between rebellions, it may be subsumed and may take a non-political form. But it still sustains the peasants' hopes that in the near future the desired society which earlier rebellions had failed to realize may become a reality. In times of fresh outbreaks of resistance, it is such vision that motivates fervent peasant participation and gives them the bases to support any rebellious undertaking. [5]

Aspects of rural relations are also considerably changed by this new consciousness and vision -- particularly that between peasants and the two types of elites the former relate to (i. e., the rural elites controlling the village and the elites who ascribe to themselves the leadership of a rebellion). On the one hand, a levelling off of control over land and property, a delegitimization of elite "superiority," and the advent of a conception of the world where "the last shall be first" now, become a moral preoccupation of the peasantry. [6]

Having lost all vestiges of their legitimacy, elites are now subject to the same norms and values that govern the lives of peasants. They become "like us" and are therefore not exempted anymore from undergoing the same brutality and harshness that inform peasant life. The peasant outrage that becomes translated into fierce attacks and reprisals against rural elites is therefore not an "irrational" act induced by the impact of the breakdown of the peasant economy. These "furies" are not symptomatic of infantilism or insanity but are actions that peasants see (or feel) as perfectly and morally justified in terms of the changed relationship.

On the other hand, aside from what Scott has noticed about peasant "protest and profanation," peasant relations with rebel or

revolutionary elites exhibit contradictory features: either elites become thoroughly influenced by the peasant vision or a meaningful syncretism occurs which allows for some form of collaboration -- although not lasting -- that may prove decisive in a rebellion.

Rebellious justification may also be mandated by invoking an individual of high moral and political authority whom peasants regard as more powerful than those they encounter in their local or regional locations. This individual may exist in a world geographically or historically distant from the peasantry. But it is this relative distance that, in the peasants' view, is one of its strongest sources of power (apart from such powerful representations of it, like the army, that once in a while traverse and project its power in the regions and villages). The immense breadth of this authority gives peasants the legitimacy to revolt against minor authorities that "misrepresent" the "noble" wishes for the peasantry of the larger ruler. In this way, peasants are able to portray themselves as belonging to a larger politico-moral domain that encompasses the miscreant regional and local subordinates, thereby rendering the latter's influence and power ineffectual.

This paper attempts to broadly explore this variant of peasant syncretism. While one recognizes the merits of the thesis put forward by authors like Scott, this paper hopes to show that restorative moral norms need not be the sole basis for peasant rebellion. Such a thesis imposes limits on our understanding of the capacity of peasants as *active participants* in rebellion or revolt. To a certain extent, it even does injustice to the capacities of the peasant's rebellious *mentalite*.

This paper proposes that the "syncretic" union between "big" and "little" traditions transforms peasant consciousness towards one that seeks to go beyond the "narrow" confines of the village's worldview by appropriating the norms, symbols and explanations of the "big" tradition and combining these with what is indigeneous to the village. Peasants may also reinterpret the concepts and ideals from the big tradition in order to come out with their own vision that is distinctly peasant-focused but which addresses the larger social world. It is his consciousness that propels peasant action into reshaping not merely village relations but even that of the larger society in times of



revolt. In short, as *active actors* in a revolt or a revolution, peasants must be seen as capable of conceptualizing and explaining (along moral grounds in most cases) their actions through ideas, ideologies and other normative frameworks that need not necessarily be derived from their own village moral economy.

A Second Look at Peasants and the Big Tradition

The examination of peasant incorporation of the ideas and ideals of the big tradition and its representatives (either radical or traditional) has largely been dominated by two major positions. On the one hand, some authors (specially Marxists) tend to look at this syncretism as more directed and determined by non-peasant classes with the peasantry playing the role of recipients of whatever concepts and ideals "introduced" from the outside. "Grand" concepts like nationalism, socialism or communism are viewed by these authors as mainly representative of post-agrarian social orders and articulated by non-peasant groups and classes that emerge along with these or-

ders. Peasants "adopt" or are "bequeathed" these concepts courtesy of non-agrarian classes as they are unable to conceptualize them given their "pre-modern" ("pre-capitalist") foundation. But left to themselves, peasants are said to be prone to adopt conservative ("reactionary") political postures. [7]

Where the concern is on how the assimilation process affects the peasantry's modes of thinking and action, some authors tend to underestimate the capacity of peasants in achieving a level of sophisticated syncretism. Peasant millennial movements, for example, are at most times described as politically handicapped due to their "very lack of sophistication with an effective revolutionary strategy and tactics [that] makes them push the logic of the revolutionary position to the point of absurdity or paradox." [8] It is only when these movements "substitute a modern, that is in general, a secular theory of history and revolution: nationalist, socialist, communist, anarchist or some other type that [they] retain [their] revolutionism."

This underestimation of peasant political consciousness has been criticized by scholars

belonging to the so-called "culturalist" school. [9] They argue that this syncretism is "a reworking, a selective appropriation of those elements of a religious (or political) doctrine that answers to the needs of the subordinate classes." [10] Peasants are regarded as more active and "imaginative" than what they previously were pictured to be. During periods of rebellion, peasant syncretism reflect restorative aspirations, reject the major ingredients of the old order, incorporate new elements from "other sources" or reinterpret old symbols and norms, and establish the bases for a worldview that strengthens the village's moral economy. [11]

The tension between elites leading revolts and the efforts of the "little tradition" to redefine and "usurp that rebellion for its parochial ends" is one of the results of this syncretism. [12] Elites usually end up attempting to contain their peasant followers and societies turning against them to ensure the success and stability of their revolutionary goals. In most cases, they usually succeed in once more subordinating the little tradition. But where rebellions are known to have failed, the failure is also due to the sheer strength of the little tradition. [13]

"Culturalists" have, understandably, underscored the importance of giving little tradition its proper due. Yet, the tendency of this impassioned defense of the little tradition is to de-emphasize the fact that the interaction between the big and little traditions also means changes in the nature of the little tradition. Peasants, in the face of powerful external forces, may themselves resort -- with modification and considerable re-interpreting -- to the values, norms, principles and even ideology of these forces to explain why their resistance had gone beyond the village and justify a superior position towards the elites. The little tradition's resilience is either strengthened in the process because of this absorption or is completely changed as new core concepts that would significantly alter the little tradition arise.

In his reinvestigation of the ideological bases of the 1896 Philippine Revolution (which ended over three hundred years of Spanish colonialism), Reynaldo Ileto observes that while Catholicism served as a powerful ideological weapon to culturally subdue Filipinos, it was also this same colonial

weapon that "provide[d] lowland Philippine society with a language for articulating its own values, ideals and even hopes for liberation." [14] Using stories culled from the life of Jesus Christ, and the Aesopian moral lessons provided by daily priestly sermons [15], peasants were able to conceive of a worldview that enabled them to understand, appreciate and explain their participation in the anti-colonial revolution. Commitment to "independence," the revolutionary organization, and the envisioned alternative society came to be understood through the prism of these religious elements. This "marriage" made possible the union of the peasant's personal life and the revolution's nationalist aims. Observes Ileto:

Kalayaan [national freedom] as a political term [becomes] inseparable from its connotations of parent-child relationships, reflecting social values like the tendency of mothers in lowland Philippines to pamper their children and develop strong emotional ties with them... In *Kalayaan*, revolutionists found an ideal term for independence that combined separatism from colonial rule (i. e., a mother who showed cruelty instead of love) and the 'coming together' of people in the *Katipunan* [the organization]. *Katipunan* is *kalayaan* in that it is a recovery of the country's pre-Spanish condition of wholeness, bliss and contentment, a condition that is experienced as *layaw* who is thus able to leap from the 'familial' to the 'national'. [16]

Moreover, a language was created "which enabled the ordinary indio to relate his personal experience in the 'national'." It was a language that "became part of every revolutionary leader's vocabulary in arousing the people." The most effective leaders then were those who spoke to the peasant masses in this quasi-religious form. And even when the revolution was coopted by the Filipino elites, these new leaders were still "forced" to communicate in this language to their peasant mass to ensure continued support in the war against the Americans, even as they took steps to control the peasants' "communist tendencies." [17]

Across the Pacific and within the same historical time frame as Ileto's, the ideology of peasant resistance in South America combined such pre-colonial Andean concepts like the "multiplicity of humanity" with the Spanish legal tradition. There emerged a peasant-based "protonationalism" that sought Andean separation from Spanish rule and a restoration of the old Inca order but clearly along what peasants perceived to be "republican" lines and

existing as a part of an international "community of nations." [18]

What makes the Andean cases doubly interesting, however, is that even as Andean-Spanish *qua* Catholic syncretism informed most of these rebellions, scholars have discovered that peasants -- on their own -- were able to conceive their own version of "nationalism." Mallon argues -- based on her examination of peasant participation in the 1879-1902 Peruvian resistance to a Chilean invasion -- that it was possible for "non-capitalist classes" to come up with a nationalist vision. "Campesino nationalism" hopes for a society

in which local autonomy would nurture local prosperity, without landowner oppression or state exactions, and where a larger confederation could handle commerce, infrastructure and a common defense. It recognized the need for alliance with other classes and for help from leaders who had a broader political preparation and vision... it called out for coalition with other classes that, given their common relation to the condition of production, would be willing to ally with the peasantry in the defense and construction of a nation. [19]

The peasants in three *haciendas* and five communities in the Peruvian central highland in fact proposed, without the assistance of urban elites or other classes normally associated with the rise of nationalism, that "an independent peasant confederation [must be formed] that would defend both the village and the nation." This federation, which drew its inspiration from the pre-colonial Inca tradition combined with what the peasants found "useful" in Spanish, "came fairly close to an alternative national project for their [the peasant] class." [20]

It is not only with the concept "nationalism" that peasants explain their rebelliousness. In a more contemporary vein, Zimbabwean peasants supported a guerilla movement that was immensely sustained by making the latter's goals a part of their lives. According to David Lan:

[Peasants] had come to accept that the names given to the bad world of the present... must be swept aside, while 'socialism' was the name given of the good one that would arrive once this long and bitter but immediate period of warfare was over... The present world had been rejected because it worked to the peasant's severe disadvantage but once this ancestral interregnum was over, the rewards would be better lives lived in comfortable surroundings, better food, better education for their children, better health care, participatory democracy, in short, all the advantages that the modern world would bring. [21]

The revolution became part of a set of symbolic categories preserved and nurtured by the most central personality in the village, the *mhondoro* (spirit medium). Through the mediums, guerrillas and peasants were "exposed" to each other's worlds leading to the consensus that elements of both worlds would enable them to unite against a common enemy and strive for a new world loosely defined as "socialism." Lan narrates:

Thus, when the ZANLA guerrillas made contact with the spirit medium in Danda, they entered a world in which the life of the ancestors had taken on a most pervasive and vibrant intensity... It is against this background that we must listen to the wave after wave of experiences and anecdotes reported by guerrillas and peasants of the miraculous, unprecedented happenings that occurred during the war. Wild animals protecting mujibas, snakes pointing the way to stores of food, spirits keeping people alive under water, trees talking, birds giving warnings and the like. For the world of the present had swung away and they were held for a time in the firm grasp of the ancestors, powered between the future and the past. [22]

These cases present us with the instances where elements introduced to village communities for diverse reasons by external agents (priests or guerrillas) became part of the core explanations of peasant participation in rebellion or constituted the symbols by which they imagine and conjure their own versions of the "grand" concepts. Peasant understanding of these concepts may deviate significantly from how concepts like "Catholicism," "nationalism" and "socialism" are interpreted by the clerical and revolutionary intelligentsia. But it is precisely this re-interpretation that shows us the capacity of the peasantry to incorporate concepts hitherto alien to the village and give these new meaning and substance based on their experiences (plus the political or clerical inputs from the guerrillas or priests). This re-interpretation also helps them come up with an alternative way of interpreting the world and conceiving a politico-moral rationale for their involvement in rebellions.

The Filipino and Andean peasants' re-interpretation of the Christian doctrine became the means by which the indio asserted that the real essence of Catholicism was better understood and internalized by him/her and not by the friar. [23] By extension, it demonstrated that the *Katipunan* became the concrete negation of and superior force over Spanish colonialism. [24] The invocation of the glorious Inca past, which merged with elements from Spanish colonialism deemed as

useful and relevant, allowed Andean peasants to make the important "critical re-interpretation of the past in terms of their own moral and cultural reference," [25] in order to confront their enemies. In a parallel manner, by attributing socialism to "all the advantages that the modern world could bring," African peasants were, in effect, presenting a position depicting a world much better than the one they were living in. [26] More importantly, these syncretic conceptions serve to indicate that peasants do have the aptitude to look and act beyond the village. Rebellions, therefore, cannot be simply reduced to mere restorationist ends. The fact that it was Andean peasants who proposed the idea of a national confederation to defend nationalist aspirations, Filipino peasants who doggedly pursued their ideals of a *nationalist revolution*, and Zimbabwean peasants who braved repression to actively accept the guerrilla promise of a bountiful socialism; all attest that peasants could think and act as citizens in a larger social order and not merely as narrow-minded, status quo preservationists.

The organizational manifestations of this syncretic vision are clearly reflected in the concept of a national federation proposed by the Andean peasants and the strong egalitarianism of the Katipunan before its usurpation of Filipino elites. The above associations -- proposed or actually formed -- reflect how peasants can critically assimilate organizational ideas that are identified with the big tradition and articulate them to give some form of institutional legitimacy to their revolt, and demonstrate to the people that the ability to rule and govern was not the sole expertise of rural elites or representatives of the State. Similar forms of organizational syncretism have been observed by other peasant scholars. An English administrator's description of the re-organization proposal by an Indian peasant leader who ascended to local state power may be the most illustrative.

On entering the town, Dayby Sing proceeded to the schoolroom, a building lately erected by our Government. In this he established his headquarters.... He then constituted a government of his own which he formed on the English model. He appointed a

Board of Revenue, a Supreme Court of Judicature, a commissioner, a Magistrate and a Superintendent of Police. For this last office he did not consider any of his own people properly qualified; so he sent a message to the late incumbent begging him to return and promising him an increase in salary. [27]

A Second Look at Millennialism and the Higher Authority

The phenomenon of millennialism can thus be seen in the same light. These revolts indeed reflect "nostalgic yearnings" by peasants of a lost "compassionate" politico-moral order. [28] But what prevents us from viewing these peasant sentiments as the invocations of a superior moral view which peasants project to those that represent quintessence of an immoral political world (i.e. the rural elites of the State)?

While millennial studies may argue that these are merely utopian elaborations of a lost society or territory, there is equal reason to contend that such desires to return to "the traditional village as a viable economy and society" (Hobsbawm) have also assimilated sentiments that are formerly not of the village confines but have since then become part of



its worldview. As Michael Adas puts it, the ideology of prophetic movements

are normally eclectic both temporally and culturally. They include elements drawn from the past and present experiences and contain visions of the future. They mix, often in incongruous combinations, aspects of the indigenous traditions and ideas derived from outside groups... they can rise in socio-cultural contexts where there is a rich prophetic tradition or where eschatological ideas have been introduced by outsiders. [29]

This definition does favor the restorative thesis on peasant rebellions. But it can also be asserted that it is precisely this eclecticism of elements from the big tradition that also creates the possibility for the peasant to transcend a restorative outlook and conceive of a different view that may not necessarily be a moral re-construction of the previous idea of a village moral economy. Norman Cohn points out that salvation for millenarian sects involves imagining a world totally different from their *status quo*; something that "will be no more improvement on the present but perfection itself." It is a world of "bliss and peace," terrestrial as "it would come in here-and-now rather than after death." It is a world beyond time and history and yet represents the culmination of both. [30] The aims of millenarian movements therefore are not merely attempts at restoring a material world lost by the crisis, colonial invasion or whatever. Rather, it is inherent in these types of peasant rebellion to look at their struggle not as one

for specific, limited objectives, but as an event of unique importance, different in kind from all other struggles known to history, a cataclysm from which the world is to emerge totally transformed and redeemed. [31]

Similarly, when peasants identify their rebellions with powerful individuals it allows them to believe that they are empowered by such authority with the right to act against those who are of lower rank than this authority. They become, in effect, the "real" representatives of this powerful individual. The Russian *muzhiks'* invocation of the Tsar was their way of rationalizing his opposition to the boyars and local state officials. The Tsar shared his children's aspirations; his local officials and landlord allies chose not to recognize this and thus had violated this "sacred principle." Peasant attacks on rural elites were, in effect, based on a perceived position of superiority by virtue of a "support" from the Tsar, Russia's highest authority. [32]

The peasants did not conceive or represent themselves to be making political demands for they stood outside politics... They justified worldly decisions by invoking an authority veiled in mystery and standing outside themselves - God, immemorial custom or 'the will of the tsar.' [33]

The 17th and 18th century rebellions that sought the "utter destruction of the whole social structure which lay on the Russian peasant like a heavy burden" were thus informed by what one author called a "revolutionary ideology" maintained by this myth of Tsarist benevolence towards and in defense of the peasantry. [34] It was a peasantry that took the moral and political and religious offensive against the local elites using a political and religious authority far larger than that of the landlords and local state officials. [35]

It is [a] common assertion that peasants, scattered and isolated by the conditions of their existence are incapable of mobilizing themselves for political action. They need an 'outside leader' we are told - a Peasant King or a modern substitute, [to] come to deliver the people from the thrall. Yet a just and usually distant ruler has often been known to provide the necessary inspiration for peasant revolt. The belief in an 'outside leader' can also be seen as the obverse of a belief in the break-down of the locally recognized structure of authority. [36]

The Contradictory Relationship between Peasants and Rebel Elites

This syncretism adds a new dimension to the nature of elite-peasant relationships. The focus here will be the two predominant types of elite-peasant relationships -- that between non-peasants who enter into an alliance with peasants during revolt, and non-peasants whom the peasants directly stand in opposition to, more particularly landlords and local representatives of the State.

Elites who ascribe to themselves the leadership of a peasant-based and peasant-dominated rebellion enter into tenuous and contradictory relations with peasants. Scott was basically correct in arguing that at certain points in a rebellion, elites tend to contain peasant actions that become unconsciously *une politique d'aventures* [37], mainly to avoid a derailing of the tempo of the revolutionary process and, ultimately, prevent the peasantry's quest to restore the violated norms of reciprocity and the ethics of subsistence. [38]

Yet, if one were to approach this issue from another angle, one may be able to look

at this elite containment of peasant enthusiasm in reverse: elite fears may be viewed as reflective of "narrower" and more "localistic" interests as compared to that of the peasants. Peasants, with their syncretic consciousness and moral vision, may turn out to possess a broader world characterized by a fundamental restructuring of the old society while the elites become the ones seeking to reinstate the status quo ante or control the rebellion's direction in favor of their narrower self- or class interest.

This is perhaps most illustrative among anti-colonial revolts where peasants enter into formal or informal alliances with landed or urban elites against colonizers. Filipino elites who usurped the revolutionary leadership in 1896 from the revolutionary movement's plebeian founders, for example, expressed alarm that their peasant followers "talk of liberties [that] had caused to germinate in the minds of the masses certain socialistic or communistic ideas which forbade no good for the future of certain properties of doubtful origin." [39] The elite-controlled revolutionary government would then proceed to issue decrees that tried to contain these "ideas." In the Andean example, the unified resistance against the Chilean invasion was, in fact, broken up by the landed elites who, in their desire to protect their property, opted to negotiate with the invaders thereby betraying their narrow class interests. This left their erstwhile peasant allies with the responsibility of continuing the nationalist resistance. As Mallon puts it:

For the landowners, the final result was the attempt to defend their conditions of production against both Chilean and Peruvian peasants by seeking peace at any price. For the peasantry, whose resistance to the Chileans was based on their communities and increasingly autonomous from outside control, the outcome was the development of an independent peasant nationalism which, depending on the specific part of the central highlands, was more or less hostile to the landowning class. [40]

Moreover, a yearning for restoring patron-client ties need not also be exclusive to the peasants themselves. Tanabe observes that during the Chiang Mai rebellion of 1889-1890, Thai local petty officials who allied themselves with peasants against the central government "tended to expect the restoration of the disappearing patron-client tie which was seen as better than the direct taxation" by the central state. This was, expectedly, a position that

their peasant allies did not ardently share with them. [43] Akira Oki found out that defense of village autonomy was strongly advocated by rural elites in order to maintain their control over the village community and the land at a time of increased state encroachment and peasant resistance. [42]

Some scholars have, in fact, discovered that in certain rebellions, it is not the peasants who adopt -- critically or whatever -- the agenda and accompanying vision of elite leaders but rather it is the leaders themselves. Aberto Flores Galindo cites the case of two members of the educated "provincial middle class" who became involved in an anti-Spanish conspiracy to restore the pre-colonial Andean world under the leadership of the returned Inca. Galindo, while cautioning of the transitory nature of this phenomenon, nevertheless concedes the power of *this peasant-based millennial vision that had "conquered the imagination of urban creoles and intellectuals."* [43]

It may be counter-argued, however, that this assertion may not hold true with Marxist-led peasant-based revolutions given their comprehensive revolutionary agenda. But how can one account for the divergence between the Party and the peasantry at certain occasions, especially where the former's "tactical goals" seem to be threatened by the latter's desire for sweeping social change leading to radical redistribution, among other things? Does not the euphemism "tactical actions" or "tactical unity" reveal a certain "parochial-ness" among revolutionary elites even as this is subsumed under an extensive revolutionary strategy? James Scott's description of the Nghe-Tinh uprisings -- though one might have certain reservations about his contention that peasant rebelliousness is "traditional" (i. e., largely parochial) -- is most illustrative.

In his struggle against taxes, the interests of the party and the impoverished peasantry coincided. But when it came to the second plank of the peasant program, the equitable distribution of food, the party emphatically denounced the campaign against rich peasants, middle peasants, and small notables as '*une politique d'aventures*.' Here the party and the peasantry parted ways. While the party leaders were undoubtedly correct in seeing the need for a broader coalition of classes, the confiscation of food for the relatively well-to-do was nevertheless an integral, if violent, form of traditional redistributive norm. [44]

Yet, it cannot be denied that there exist instances of successful elite-peasant interactions and collaboration. These are usually the

cases where the elite leaders are either "of the village" themselves, or outsiders who have succeeded in assimilating themselves into the peasants' "world." It is these elites that either become the "mediums" and "interpreters" of the big tradition thereby making it possible for the syncretic union to be meaningful to the peasantry. These elites also act as the translators of the aspirations of the little tradition in order for these to be assimilated and merged with the larger tradition.

On the one hand, prophets of millennial revolts act as interpreters of a crisis, providing "a wide-range of ideas and level of cognition which would rarely have been available to ordinary peasants" and are able to "gain the popular respect and become political leaders among peasants in crisis due to their extraordinary capability which is believed to be attributable to a great accumulation of [religious] merit." [45] On the other hand, through a combination of material benefits -- no matter how minuscule -- to the peasantry and an altering of the radical ideology and collective memory of a tradition of resis-

tance to conform with the moral norms of the peasantry, these elites have been able to mobilize peasant support to their revolutionary cause.

Frances Fitzgerald shows how Vietnamese communists were able to mobilize peasant support not solely by ideology but perhaps mainly by making them "see" Marxism-Leninism's parallel to Confucian norms that have long formed part of their consciousness.

While the Party cadres often used class categories in the 'scientific' or economic sense, they also used them as moral categories.... For the Vietnamese party cadre, Marxism-Leninism was no more a set of doctrines, than was Confucianism, but rather a Tao, or as the Marxists put it, a 'style of work', a 'style of leadership'. The Confucian son learned to imitate a father; similarly, the cadre learned to emulate the revolutionary modes of conduct. To him, policies and programs were of secondary importance. He believed that if all members behaved 'sincerely', they would automatically come up with the correct policies and programs. [46]

As a result,



An oath to rebellion: A farmer joins the underground.

by reversing their roles with the villagers and becoming the 'children of the people,' the NLF cadres gave the villagers a position of power such that they had not even in the days of the empire. Once the cadres had convinced the villagers that they behaved well out of necessity, the villagers let down their traditional defenses, trusted them and tended to believe their propaganda -- often despite evidence that belied it. [47]

Peasant scholars have skeptically viewed this relationship's viability. They argue that it paves the way for the eventual re-subjugation of the peasantry and the little tradition to the agenda of revolutionary elites. [48] Yet, the historical validation of

this skepticism does not negate the fact that the integration of these elites into the village and the attendant syncretic union of radical ideology and peasant village worldview arising from such interaction can and has changed the peasant's well-being. A recent in-depth study of the Philippine communist movement offers this trite comment on how guerrillas changed the lives of the peasantry.

At the very least, the revolution's legacy will be the changes that have transformed the lives of the Filipino peasants. Poor farmers who had

Liberation

once slept with their livestock and produce for fear of thieves no longer did so in barrios ruled by the rebels. Peasants who before had paid two-thirds of their harvest to landlords now paid one-third. The elimination of usury had enabled some rural families to escape indebtedness for the first time in two generations. Illiterate peasants, young and old, had learned to read, write and do arithmetic. They had also learned about political and civil rights and for the first time in their lives had exercised them. [49]

Of course, there is no certainty that once the Party wins power, this relationship still would endure, as the cases of socialist regimes have shown. But whatever occurs in the post-revolutionary period still does not erase the fact that peasant lives have enormously changed while the guerrilla movement was still grappling with the vicissitudes of winning the revolution against the State.

Peasant vs. Rural Elites: Contextualizing Peasant Outrage

If peasant revolutionary elite relationships, under the context of the above syncretic vision, are marked by different types of contradictions, the same vision may help us understand the main and most conspicuous enemy, the rural elites (landlords and local agents of the State). Scott sees the breakdown of the moral bases of rural relationships in a Malaysian village as a result of intensified capitalist process. Peasants sought to morally defend their declining livelihood by invoking village norms and Islam, the national religion, to remind rural elites of their village obligations. Failing to do so, the rural poor's perceptions of their more prosperous counterparts began to shift from deference to contempt and increasing disrespect, until a breaking point is reached where one of the remaining options left for the peasantry is rebellion. [50] And should the rebellion occur, peasant anger is almost always directed immediately at rural elites who, after all, have lost peasants' respect and deference.

While this explanation adequately explains the ideological roots of peasant rebellion, it remains insufficient in explaining instances of brutal peasant reprisals. Scott's presentation is based on the premise of a village economy where skewed economic relationships are preserved through norms of reciprocity and subsistence and revolts are results of a breakdown of such norms. But it must also be recalled that there is another side to the peasant village. As Darnton puts it, rural communities are not always "a happy and har-

monious *Gemeinschaft*" and peasants live a hard and uncomfortable existence. [51] Peasant life is harsh and brutish and exploitation among peasant families is endemic. Inter-village relationships are marked by intense tensions, disagreements and even violence over such issues as village boundaries, water and pasture rights, etc., and a common thread in peasant oral tradition are "tales of struggle between neighboring communities." [52]

This hapless existence nurtures "a spirit of savage revolt" that exists alongside a "spirit of blind submission," fatalism and a frustration that dreams of a "better life" will only remain as dreams. [53] And if ever norms of reciprocity and subsistence keep the village together, at best this moral adhesive is fragile. The ties of peasants to rural elites are always of brittle bonds as peasants would always view with questioning eyes the disparity of living standards. The rural elite, to a certain extent, symbolizes both peasant dreams of prosperity and the frustration of realizing such dreams. Guillaumin's peasant aptly describes such feeling while looking at his landlord's living room for the first time:

That beautiful room contained in fact only beautiful useless things. I thought of our dark kitchen with its dilapidated concrete, our bedroom with its little lumps and holes, wondering if it was fair that some people should be so well set up and others so badly. [54]

Thus, in times of crisis, when most peasants suffer the consequences while the elites appear capable of weathering such, if not even taking advantage of the situation, the "spirit of revolt" could easily be directed at the latter.

Revolts are usually regarded as combining a reassertion of whatever is left of human dignity and an inspiration for a more equitable social order. It is also a "reaction of moral outrage and sense of injustice" [55] over the loss of that dignity and likewise the loss of the rural elites' privileged position of being "truly human." As such, the norms that used to govern elite-peasant relationship have broken down and by abdicating their "humanity," elites are now regarded as peasants' "equals" and thus can be subjected to the brutal codes of conduct that inform peasant lives. [56]

Yet, this explanation is not complete as it can lead to the validation of the thesis that peasant harsh reprisals against rural elites (and in a broader sense, their revolts) are indeed indications of irrational and extremist forms of

behaviors. This is where the role of the syncretic vision comes in -- that of providing the moral justification for instances of peasant brutality.

Christine White cites the anecdote of a peasant who decided to join the Vietminh and become a "communist" at the height of the Nghe-Tinh uprisings. The peasant saw in "communism" a way of explaining the crisis of the 1930s replacing a morally (and politically) ineffective Buddhism. Accordingly, he also saw "communism" as the force capable of enforcing an equitable division of village property among the poor. But more importantly, for him, "communism" was the new moral vision that would provide him the moral right to exact vengeance on the hated Mandarins and French. His definition of the privileges of being a "communist" is a very interesting one indeed:

Being a communist means encouraging each other to cut off the heads of Frenchmen and to cut off the heads of landlords and to divide the property among the poor people, among ourselves. [57]

As to whether the peasant proceeded to exact his vengeance on landlords and Frenchmen is not indicated in the anecdote.

But one is definitely familiar with the brutalities inflicted by the Khmer Rouge on its people. While an in-depth study has still to be made to explain the Kampuchean tragedy from the point of view of the Khmer Rouge, one may tentatively suggest that its actions were partly informed by how its peasant cadres saw the moral justification for their pathological actions. Kiernan and Boua cite experiences of witnesses who listened to Khmer Rouge cadres expressing their "uncontrollable hatred" towards those of the "old society" and how they mockingly warned prisoners about learning "what their (the Khmer Rouge) life had been like." These cadres did so with a confidence they purportedly derived from the "revolutionary teachings" of leaders like Pol Pot. [58]

Andean peasant rebels were a bit more sophisticated in arriving at the proper moral



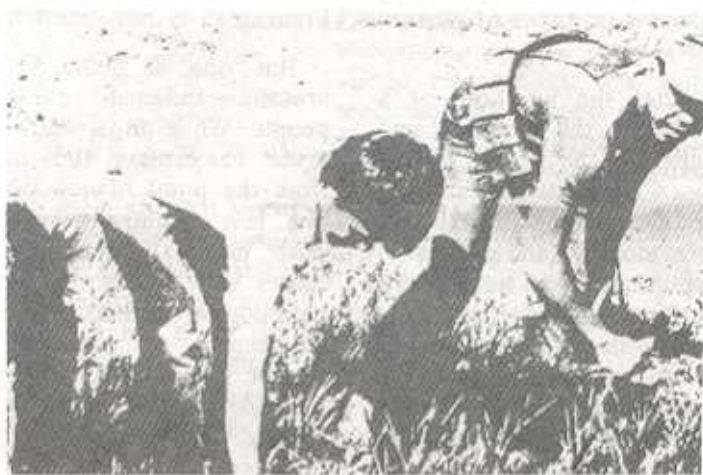
rationale to "kill the Spaniards." According to Jan Szemanski, the rebels treated local Spaniards with extreme brutality but did so because they believed that the local *corregidores* had become the demons of evil. The Spaniards were described as "fearless of God, rebels against the king, heretics, apostates con-

demned to hell, traitors to the king and not Christians at all whose deeds were 'perverse impositions.'" Spanish officials were described as "usurpers, criminals and without fear of God." On the other hand, Tupac Amaru, the reincarnation of the Inca, was depicted as having performed deeds that were "truly Christian." He and his followers saw themselves as more loyal to God than the "Chief Spaniard." The peasants who rallied behind him could thus treat the Spaniards with extreme brutality having been provided the religious, moral and political grounds to do so. [59]

The vision therefore becomes the weapon by which the peasant and his comrades assert their "moral superiority" over elites and state agents and allow them to "gain an ideological [and moral] advantage over the ruling sectors." [60] It also delegitimizes previous relationships that hinged on the dominance (both material and moral) of these colonial and local elites over the peasantry.

Conclusion

This attempt at a different interpretation of the peasants' syncretic vision was largely the result of the discomfiture with the thesis that peasant rebellion is, for most of the time, restorative. The latter, for all its merits, still assumes heavy constraints on peasant abilities to reconstruct a lost order (if ever it existed) or a destroyed past, or to perceive their thoughts and actions as constricted actions to save the rustic village. Human history, it ap-



Liberation

pears, is replete with instances of exactly the opposite.

At the core of this paper is the thesis that peasant consciousness and moral vision are sufficiently variegated and disparate such that to look at rebellion as based on "restorativist" aspirations will

only explain a certain -- but nevertheless important -- aspect of the peasant worldview. The rural world is as complex as any other society and it becomes more intricate as village becomes more and more subsumed within a larger and urban- or town- dominated society. As such, Antonio Gramsci's comment that the "people is not a culturally homogeneous unit, but is culturally stratified in a complex way," [61] can appropriately apply to peasant communities.

The complexity of peasant consciousness and moral vision may, in turn, reflect -- in the last instance -- the divergent material reality of both village communities as they relate to the larger social reality in an uneven and different manner. This material condition(s) could not but play an important role in the type of thinking and normative preferences that peasants take, especially during times of profound changes brought about by either a national crisis or a more specific phenomena like the increase in capitalist penetration of the countryside. [62]

Moreover, peasant communities have had links with the outside world mainly through trade, tribute or the supply of labor. The *raison d'être* of peasants, after all, is that they are cultivators who are "subject to the demands and sanctions of power holders" inside and outside of the village. [63] If such is the case, then anyone can also discern a parallel dialectical and syncretic relationship going on in the level of ideas and normative preference where peasants engage in various forms of cultural "exchanges" with bearers --

merchants, priests, teachers, party organizers, revolutionaries and what have you -- of the ideas from the "big tradition." This exchange cannot but influence both parties in a dialectical way resulting into diverse cultural, moral and political outcomes; one of which is the type of consciousness and moral vision that this paper has been arguing.

Finally, most peasant communities "reside" in societies that have had "longer time frames, spanning centuries." Peasants live in "well-defined 'cultural areas' with complex internal histories, defining cultural notions of social identity and aspiration, order and disorder, justice and vengeance, continuity and changes and the like." [64] Peasants who are exposed to this *long duree* cannot help but be influenced by whatever predominant worldview their long histories have nurtured. [65] These histories allow them to be

capable of political, economic and cultural energy, creativity and mobilization to a degree which often transcends the limitations of locality and class position, to challenge the legitimacy of ruling classes, the state and the whole order of society. They also challenge many of the theoretical assumptions of scholars interested on studying their history. [66]

Yet, it is not only the long histories of these societies that sustain influence on peasant consciousness. There is similarly a *long duree* in terms of what may refer to as "inter-cultural" exchanges among popular cultures, that of the peasants included. Scholars of popular culture have pointed out that peasant tales traverse across boundaries, some undergoing modification to suit the cultural, historical and even political specifics of certain civilizations. [67] It would be hard to imagine that these "popular exchanges" across civiliza-

tions would not have a profound impact on peasant consciousness.

Steven Stern perhaps succinctly summarizes all these main points with his comment on Andean peasants in rebellion. He argues:

The peasant's aspiration and ideological commitment go beyond narrow obsessions with local land, subsistence guarantees or autonomy (i. e., the desire simply to be left alone). Nor can we say that the peasants' material experience, social connection and political understanding were largely bounded by the 'little worlds' of communities and haciendas. For the late colonial period, both directly and through intermediaries, peasants moved in social, economic and ideological orbits that stretched considerably beyond their principal locales of residence and work. Mobilization to install a new Inca-led social order reflected not a simple yearning for local subsistence and autonomy, but an effort to forge a new macro-level polity that blended more successfully local peasant needs and aspirations with supraregional political order. [68]

This then makes peasant consciousness and worldview a dynamic one where side by side with restorative desires and demands for autonomy are "aspirations and ideological commitments [that may] go beyond narrow obsessions with local land, subsistence guarantees, or autonomy (i. e., the desire to be left alone)." We add the qualifier "may" to stress that this argument by Stern does not, in any way, contradict the findings of Scott et. al. Rather, it underscores the diversity of peasant *mentalities* and therefore helps us put the issues raised by authors like Scott in the proper perspective.

Then and only then perhaps can social scientists, peasant scholars, state actors and activists fully comprehend the complexity of the peasant and his world and give him his proper due.

Notes

1. James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976) p. 192.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

3. Eric C. Hobsbawm argues along the same line when he states: "But at the bottom, peasants are and feel themselves to be subaltern. That rare exceptions they envisage an adjustment in the social pyramid and not its destruction, is easy to conceive. Anarchism, that is, the dismantling of the superstructure of rule and exploitation, leaves the traditional village as a viable economy and society. But the times when this utopia can be conceived, let alone realized, are few." E. J.

Hobsbawm, "Peasant and Politics," *Journal of Peasant Studies* (Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1973) p. 12.

4. If, as Damton observes, folktales conveyed through the oral tradition "have enormous power" that sometimes endure centuries, it would not be difficult to imagine the endurance of a consciousness which is based on the peculiar and unusual condition of revolt. *Op. cit.*, pp. 17-20.

5. As Salud Algabre eloquently puts it, "No uprising fails. Each is a step in the right direction." Sturtevant, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

6. James Scott, 'Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition II,' *Theory and Society* (Volume 4, No. 2, Summer 1977) p. 226.
7. 'The agricultural proletariat... is the class which, thanks to universal suffrage, sends into parliament the numerous feudal lords and Junkers...' is how Frederick Engels caricatures the 'reactionary' side of the peasantry. See his *The Peasant War in Germany* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974) p. 16. See also Roisin McDonough, 'Ideology as False Consciousness: Lukacs,' in *On Ideology* (London: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1977) pp. 33-44.
8. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1959) p. 59. See also the complaint of a Filipino author that 'millenarian-populist consciousness' overwhelmed Marxist-Leninist ideology thereby undermining the *Partido's* ability to lead the revolution. See Francisco Nemenzo, 'The Millenarian-Populist Aspects of Filipino Marxism,' in *Marxism in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Third World Studies Center, 1984) pp. 4-13.
9. For a concise summary of the positions of this 'school,' see Robert Edelman, *Proletarian Peasants: The Revolution of 1905 in Russia's Southwest* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987) pp. 17-25.
10. Scott (1977) *op. cit.*, p. 226.
11. See Benedict Kerkviet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of the Cause of Peasant Revolt* (Quezon City: New Day Publications, 1985) pp. 262-266. See also Chatthip Nartsupha, 'The Ideology of Holy Men Revolts in North East Thailand,' in *History and Peasant Consciousness in South East Asia*, Andrew Turton and Shigeharu Tanabe (eds) (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1984) pp. 123-131.
12. Scott (1977) *op. cit.*, p. 222.
13. See Scott's perceptive comment in *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985) p. 29. For failed rebellion, see Kerkviet, *op. cit.* See also Nemenzo, *op. cit.*
14. Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1978) pp. 5-16 and p. 139. Ileto critiques orthodox explanations of Philippine history, i. e., that it was liberalism learned by educated Spanish *mestizos* and the Filipinos that provided the ideological underpinning of the 1896 Philippine revolution.
15. How effective were the friars? One may be able to glean it through the characterization of the predecessors of the Spanish missionaries in the Philippines. According to Peter Burke, 'The friars were popular preachers in the sense that they deliberately appealed to the uneducated and, often drew large audiences. Savonarola preached to tens of thousands at a time in Florence. Friars often preached in the open air and men climbed trees or sat on rooftops to hear them.... The friars drew on the oral culture of their time. They preached in a colloquial style, making use of puns, rhymes and alliteration, shouting and gesturing, drawing on folktales to illustrate their message, and composing songs for their congregation to sing.... The friars drew on popular themes but transmuted them. They told traditional tales but gave them a moral which was not necessarily traditional.' Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 70.
16. Ileto, *op. cit.*, p. 107. 'Layaw' has many meanings in the Tagalog language. Ileto argues that in the language of the revolution, the word's English equivalent would be 'freedom from strict paternal control.' A similar phenomenon was observed in a German peasant village by David Warren Sabean. See his *Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984) pp. 59, 66-67.
17. Ileto, *op. cit.*
18. Frank Salomon, 'Ancestor Cults and Resistance to the State in Arequipa, Ca. 1748-1754,' in Steve Stern, *Rebellion and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World: 18th to 20th Centuries*, Steve Stern (ed) (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987) pp. 143 and 162-163. See also the essay of Alberto Flores Galindo, 'In Search of an Inca,' in the same collection, p. 205.
19. Florencia Mallon, 'Nationalist and Anti-State Coalitions in the War of the Pacific: Junin and Cajamarca, 1879-1902,' in Stern, *ibid.*, pp. 268-269. Underscoring supplied. Mallon also cites studies in Mexico that tend to lead to similar conclusions, p. 269.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 249. See also the piece of Xavier Alvo, 'From MNRista to Katarista to Katar!' which dealt with a similar phenomenon observed by Mallon in the same collection of essays on the Andean peasants, *ibid.* p. 332.
21. David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985) p. 201.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.
23. See, for example, Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1989). In the same way, Maoris who fought the Europeans and Christian missionaries did so because of what they perceived as a wide disparity between religious teachings and the 'white men.' See Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest against the European Colonial Order* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1979) p. 91.
24. Thus Ileto 'In return for what is regarded as Spain's love from her 'youngest child,' the Filipinos have 'shed blood' to defend their mother against her enemies.... But in time, the Filipinos are treated like animals, especially at the instigation of the friars. This violates the *Katipunan* definition of human relationship. A *Katipunan* document states that love between mother and child is what distinguishes man from beast, 'katipunan' being but an extension of this primordial love. In treating the natives like animals... Spain even negates the possibility of love's existence... [T]he atrocities of the friars are vividly listed, but this description is made meaningful only as it reflects the breaking down of the bond between mother and daughter because there is no love.' *Op. cit.* p. 175.

25. See Shigeharu Tanabe, "Ideological Practice in Peasant Rebellions: Siam at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in Turton and Tanabe, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
26. Lan, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
27. Gautama Bahdra, "Four Rebels of Eighteen-Fifty Seven," in *Subaltern Studies IV* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985) pp. 242-253. Underscoring supplied.
28. Tanabe, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-88.
29. Adas, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
30. Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarianism and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970) p. 13.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 28. See also Dennis Shoemith, "The Serious Religion of Jose Rizal: Radical Consciousness in a Contemporary Folk Religion Movement in Southern Philippines," in *Peasant and Politics*, O. B. Miller (ed) (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978) p. 133-173.
32. See Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet Social System: Essays on the Social History of the Interwar Russia* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985) pp. 14-15.
33. Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar* (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 1976) pp. 13 and 22-23.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 23. A similar observation was made by Gyan Pandey on the peasant movement in Awadh, India in 1919-1922. See his "Peasant Revolts and Indian Nationalism: Peasant Movement in Awadh, 1919-1922," in *Subaltern Studies I: Writings in South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982) p. 164.
35. Field observes that Stalin was also seen in a similar light. He recounts a story: "A concentration camp song tells of a prisoner, a loyal communist and innocent of (any) offense who praised Stalin with his dying breath, calling on him to 'investigate everything here'. And sophisticated politicians would respond to watch new outrage with the lament, 'if only Stalin knew.'" *Ibid.*, p. 15. See also George Rude, "English Rural and Urban Disturbances on the Eve of the First Reform Bill, 1830-1831," in *The Face of the Crowd: Studies in Revolution, Ideology and Popular Protest* (Selected Essays of George Rude), Harvey Kaye (ed) (New Jersey: Humanities Press, Inc., 1988) p. 170.
36. Pardy, *op. cit.*, p. 164.
37. Scott (1976) *op. cit.*, p. 149.
38. Again, reflective of an alleged narrow-mindedness of peasant aspirations.
39. Iletto, *op. cit.* See also similar elite apprehensions as described by Christopher Hill in *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1982) pp. 344-360.
40. Mallon, *op. cit.*, p. 267. Underscoring supplied.
41. Tanabe, *op. cit.*, pp. 88 and 95-104.
42. Akira Oki, "The Dynamics of Subsistence Economy in West Sumatra," in Turton and Tanabe, *ibid.*, pp. 284-289.
43. Alberto Flores Galindo, "In Search of an Inca," in Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 205. Argues Galindo: "While they were not ignorant of Europe, Aguilar and Ubalde (the two members of the 'provincial middle class'), like Tupac Amaru, found more solid sustenance in traditional Christian thinking or in the cultural products of the Andean world than in the realm of the Enlightenment." See also Burke, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-29 for upper classes trying to "learn" from the popular culture, and pp. 58-64 for the popular classes critically expropriating some of the tales of the big tradition. Or how about the American revolutionaries in 1776 who were also said to be "fed by both millennial Christianity and Pagan classicism"? See Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969) pp. 60, 108, and 114-118.
44. Scott (1976) *op. cit.*, p. 149. We hasten to qualify here however that the divergences notwithstanding, one cannot set aside the strong possibility of the Vietnamese peasantry being influenced - in a syncretic manner - by the Vietminh's ideological perspectives.
45. Adas, *op. cit.*, p. 112. See also, Chathip Nartsupha, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-134.
46. Frances Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam* (New York: Basic Books, 1972) p. 298. Underscoring supplied. For a citation of the elaborate process of forming a viable cadre-peasant in the village level, see William Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (New York: Random House, 1966) pp. 601-611.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 219. This moral posturing is most conspicuously and ingeniously epitomized by Ho Chi Minh who cultivated his image as "Uncle Ho" to "promote that family feeling which the Vietnamese have often had for their leaders, and which he felt was the proper relationship between the people and their government ... whether in giving sweets to the children or in asking the peasant what they did receive of the hog that was killed for [a] cadre's birthday, he evoked the world of the old village, egalitarian pressure of the small community. Ho Chi Minh with his wispy figure, his shorts and sandals had the sense of irony and understatement so common among Vietnamese..." *Ibid.*, pp. 301-302.
48. Scott (1985) *op. cit.*
49. Gregg R. Jones, *Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement* (New York: Westview Press, 1989) p. 314.
50. Scott (1985) *op. cit.*
51. Darnton, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
52. See, for example, Emile Guillaumin, *The Life of a Simple Man* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1983) pp. xii-xvi and 169. See also, Florencia Mallon, *The Defense of Community in Peru's Central Highland: Peasant Struggle and Capitalist Transformation* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983) p. 33. See also Lewin, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.
53. Darnton, *op. cit.*, p. 26. Lewin, *op. cit.*, p. 54. See also Danilo Dolci, *Sicilian Lives* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981) p. 116.
54. Guillaumin, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118. By no means is this attitude exclusive to the underclasses. American

ruling planters, for example, rallied behind the revolution for fear that their luxurious living was 'being copied by 'their inferiors' and infecting the whole society... sparking 'a chain of imitation carried down to the lowest people, who would seem to have a notion of what *high life* is, by spending more than they can afford with those they call their betters.' Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

55. Barrington Moore, **Injustice: The Social Base of Obedience and Revolt** (New York: M. E. Sharpe Inc., 1978) pp. 17 and 29-30.

56. See the perception of peasants and other participants of the French Revolution in George Lefebvre, **The Great Fear of 1789** (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973) p. 98.

57. Christine Peler White, 'The Peasant and the Party in the Vietnamese Revolution,' in **Peasant in Politics: Grass Roots Reaction to Change in Asia**, O. B. Miller (ed) (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978) p. 26.

58. **Peasant and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942-1981**, Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua (eds) (London: Zed Press, 1982) pp. 323 and 330-333.

59. Jan Szemanski, 'Why Kill the Spaniards? New Perspectives on Andean Insurrectionary Ideology in the 18th Century,' in Stern, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-191. Szemanski mentions some instances of attacks on Spaniards to drive home the point of peasant brutality to wit: 'In Calca province, the rebels caught two Spanish brothers, leaders of Spanish troops. They were killed, their blood and hearts were consumed, their tongues cut off and their eyes pierced. After the Sangarara battle, the rebels took the dead Spaniards clothes and left naked bodies on the field. Once during the siege of La Paz, the rebels killed fifty Spaniards and cut off their heads and hidden parts off. Near Chucuito the rebels painted their faces with Spaniard's blood, while in Juli they drank their victim's blood. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

60. Tanabe, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

61. As quoted in Burke, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

62. Scott (1976) *op. cit.* Turton also argues: 'The expansion of [market] capitalism creates at the same time both a new class, the producers of surplus value, and many new divisions (strata, fractions categories) within and between classes: by location (urban, rural, metropolitan); by occupation (skilled, unskilled, etc.); by gender (male, female, child labor); employed and unemployed producers in advanced and backward sectors (which may crosscut villages and households). The resulting fragmentation has its ideological and political effects dividing even the peasant....' Andrew Turton, 'Limits of Ideological Domination and the Formation of Social Consciousness,' in Turton and Tanabe, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

63. See Eric Wolf, **Peasants** (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1964) p. 2. See also Robert Redfield, **The Primitive World and Its Transformations** (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1953) pp. 30-32.

64. Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 14. Stern cites Theda Skocpol's comment that some studies dealing with revolutions like that of the Chinese are 'remarkably shortsighted' to regard it as a new nation-building revolution in the mid-20th century. China had an imperial Old Regime with a cultural and political history stretching back many hundreds of years ago.

65. On the idea of *long duree*, see Fernand Braudel, **On History** (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980) pp. 209-211.

66. Turton, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

67. Notes Burke: 'The lands from Ireland to India form an important tradition where the same sources are found. Arab folktales like those in *The Book of Sindbad* and Indian folktales (like those in the *Panchatantra*) were circulating in Europe long before the 1500.' *Op. cit.*, p. 55. See also Darnton, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

68. Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 13.