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The Nontranslation of *Loob* in Ileteo's *Pasyon and Revolution***

Ramon Guillermo

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RAMON GUILLERMO

Translation as Argument

The Nontranslation of *Loob* in Ileta's *Pasyon and Revolution*

This article discusses Ileta's nontranslation of the Tagalog concept of *loob* as integral to the argument and rhetorical persuasiveness of his seminal work, *Pasyon and Revolution* (1979). The meaning of *loob* that readers gather is a deeply religious and mystical one. However, the idiom of *loob* has multifarious and varied usages, and in the vast majority of cases *loob* is a prosaic term. Using some methods in the field of corpus linguistics, this article demonstrates that reambiguating Ileta's translations could lead to different interpretations.

KEYWORDS: CORPUS LINGUISTICS · LOOB · REYNALDO ILETO · ANDRES BONIFACIO · PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION

One is astonished, even today, by simply reading through Reynaldo Ileto's *Pasyon and Revolution* (PR). Indeed, one can hardly believe this book is now 33 years old. It remains one of the most inspired and seminal works in Philippine social science. It unleashed a flurry of furious debates inside and outside of the academe bearing upon its larger implications and grand ambitions (cf., e.g., Guillermo 1989). The following discussion, however, only touches upon a single aspect of this rich and suggestive work. The aim of this article is to comment on Ileto's translation (or, rather, nontranslation) of the central notion of *loob* and to show how this probably played a role in strengthening the plausibility and argument of PR as a whole.¹

Loob in Pasyon and Revolution

According to Ileto (1979, 25), "One of the principal notions that will be developed in later chapters of this book [PR] is that of the loob, or inner being. We will see how loob is intimately connected with ideas of leadership and power, nationalism and revolution." Despite Ileto's recognition of the centrality of the notion of loob for the development of his argument, nowhere does he actually define it for the English reader. That is to say, the concept is never given an elaborated exposition in English that would explain adequately the range of its meanings and semantic complexities.

The German translation theorist Werner Koller (2011, 270–71) calls this kind of exposition an "explanatory translation," which in actual translations is carried out by means of footnotes, comments, or even additions to the text:

Geht man von einem alltagsprachlichen und-sachlichen Verständnis der Funktion der Übersetzung aus, nämlich das, was in einer Sprache gesagt ist, Lesern in einer anderen Sprache zu vermitteln, so kann diese Funktion oft nur durch den Einsatz *kommentierender Übersetzungsverfahren* erfüllt werden, mit denen insbesondere im Fall von Eins-zu-Null-Entsprechungen (Lücken) oder Eins-zu-Teil-Entsprechungen das, was zunächst nicht oder nur unzulänglich übersetzt werden kann, recht eigentlich übersetzbar gemacht wird.

Assuming that one starts out from an everyday and matter-of-fact understanding of the function of the translator, namely, that what has been said in one language should be communicated to readers

in another language, it often happens that this function can only be fulfilled by employing an *explanatory translation procedure*. By means of this method, cases where there is a lack of corresponding terms or where there is only a partial correspondence between terms, which at first cannot or can only be unsatisfactorily translated, can be made translatable.

Throughout Ileto's book, following the Ateneo de Manila University Press stylebook, loob is untranslated and, except for the first occurrence, unitalicized in the midst of his fine English. The quick and dirty gloss of "inner being" in the text (Ileto 1979, 25) (and in the glossary) and a passing reference to it as a "value" in Philippine culture (ibid., 9) do not give the reader a sufficient idea of its scope of usage and variety of meanings. The very lack of adequate translation of this and some other important Tagalog terms in PR seems to imply a problem of translatability at the very outset. How then do readers, many of whom come to read this book not knowing a single word of Tagalog, develop an understanding of this very crucial notion? Fortunately, as the work progresses, Ileto allows loob to accumulate a series of meanings by association and context. (In this discussion, the present author, possibly unlike Ileto, assumes that the reader has at least a working knowledge of Filipino/Tagalog.)

Koller (2011, 178–79) once again gives a thought-provoking account of such a process of meaning accumulation in translation:

Die These der prinzipiellen Unübersetzbarkeit wird häufig an einzelnen, so genannten unübersetzbaren Wörtern demonstriert. Es sind Wörter, von denen gesagt wird, dass sie nur adäquat verstehen kann, wer der kulturellen Zusammenhang, in dem sie gebraucht werden, aus eigenem Erleben kennt. Sinngehalt und Verwendungsregeln dieser Wörter erschließen sich erst in der Lebenspraxis der Sprecher der betreffenden Sprache . . . In der Tat gibt es für viele dieser Wörter in anderen Sprachen nur Teilentsprechungen. Immerhin ist in Betracht zu ziehen, dass auch diese unübersetzbarsten der kulturgebundenen Wörter kaum isoliert, sondern meistens in Textzusammenhängen vorkommen: Kommunikation geschieht im Allgemeinen in Texten, nicht in einzelnen Wörtern. Ein isoliertes Wort oder einen isolierten Satz nicht, ungenau oder falsch verstehen, heißt keineswegs, dass man das gleiche Wort und den gleichen Satz im Textzusammenhang

nicht versteht. Der Leser/Hörer konstruiert aus dem sich progressive entwickelnden Sinngehalt des Textes und in Rückkoppelung zu seinen eigenen Wissensvoraussetzungen die Bedeutung einzelner Wörter, Sätze und Textabschnitte. Das zunächst ungenau oder vage Verstandene wird im Verlaufe der Textlektüre sukzessive adäquater verstanden.

The thesis of untranslatability in principle is often demonstrated in relation to individual, so-called untranslatable words. These are words, of which it is said, that they can only be adequately understood by those who have experienced for themselves the cultural context in which these have been used. The meaning content and rules of usage of these words can only be understood from the life praxis of the speaker of the language in consideration . . . In fact, there are only partial correspondences for these words in other languages. All the same, it must be observed that even the most untranslatable of culture-bound words hardly appear isolated; rather, these occur most of the time in textual contexts: Communication in general takes place in texts rather than in individual words. To understand inexactly or mistakenly understand an isolated word or sentence does not mean that one cannot understand the same word or sentence in a textual context. The reader/listener constructs the meaning of individual words, sentences, and passages from the progressively developing meaning totality of the text and in feedback with his own knowledge base. What is at first inexactly or vaguely understood will be successively more adequately understood in the process of reading the text.

How then could a reader of *PR* go about this successive approximation of the meaning of such a supposedly untranslatable concept as “loob”? One is informed quite early on that “Judas-like” figures in the *pasyon* context have loob that are as hard as stone, which blocks the exercise of *hiya* and *damay*, thereby preventing the attainment of *ginhawa* and *kalayaan*.² Furthermore, one is made to understand that the loob can be “purified,” “directed,” “steadied,” and “renewed” through prayer and penitence (Ileto 1979, 235). The reader also learns that, in accordance with an “animistic” belief in “divine power permeating the universe,” successful purification and renewal of the loob can lead to a great concentration of power in one’s amulets or

anting-anting. Ileto (ibid., 27) writes that “extraordinary individuals like possessors of anting-anting and popular leaders were noted for the radiance about their faces.” Finally, all throughout *PR*, Ileto asserts repeatedly through juxtaposition and analogy that the language of the Katipunan revolutionary movement, which includes the notion of loob, cannot be understood properly outside of what he calls the “pasyon context” or “traditional frame of meaning.” Referring to Andres Bonifacio’s essay, “Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog,” Ileto (ibid., 83) asserts quite firmly that “[a]ny reader of the manifesto would immediately think in terms of the pasyon story.” One need not delve too long on this point, since anyone who has read *PR* would be familiar with these ideas already.

The general meaning one probably gathers just by reading *PR* is that loob seems to have a deeply religious context of usage inseparable from its articulation within the pasyon story and, at a deeper level, invokes mystical notions of power as possessed by certain extraordinary individuals and as present in amulets. Katipuneros and other social revolutionaries mentioning phrases such as “matigas na loob” and “magandang loob” therefore would be best understood within such a context of meanings.³ In fact, a reader of *PR* with no Tagalog language skills would have no other choice, since for all intents and purposes this is the only context of meaning that Ileto provides her or him. By explaining the meaning of loob in the indirect way that he does, one can say that Ileto allows the untranslated word embedded in the English text to accumulate a kind of enigmatic, mantra-like power similar to the amulets that he describes.

The Varied Usages of Loob

While admitting the difficulty of actually translating loob into English, one might propose alternative ways of reading or interpreting this notion to that presented in *PR*. In short, one ought to assert as forcefully as possible that:

- The multifarious usages of the idiom of loob are not necessarily implicated in the pasyon religious narrative.
- Furthermore, these usages likewise do not necessarily have anything to do with amulets and mystical powers.
- The usages of the idiom of loob were probably as multifarious and varied, if not more so, in the past as those of today.

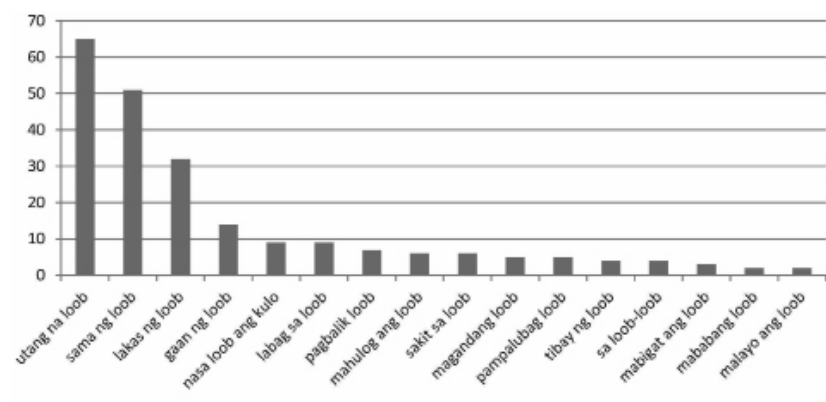
The fact is, despite its poetic and extremely interesting properties, loob is really, in the great majority of its usages, just a prosaic and even mundane

expression of everyday life: “Masama ang loob ko sa iyo, wala kang kwentang kaibigan. Di ka nanglibre noong birthday mo.”⁴

Using the social media search engine Kurrently (www.kurrently.com), the present author scanned tweets and posts on Twitter and Facebook for all usages of the word loob on 27 December 2012 for a total of twelve hours. All reposts and retweets were removed from the data, and the resulting total number of usages of loob added up to 237. The most common among these usages, almost expectedly, were “utang na loob,” “sama ng loob,” and “lakas ng loob.”⁵ Most of the usages described emotional states of individuals. Utang na loob was most often uttered as an interjection denoting frustration. This study also uncovered unusual usages, such as “nagboboil sa loob” or, not so relevantly, “nasa loob ka na ng aking *hart*.”⁶ Obviously, most of these contemporary usages of the loob idiom are at most only indirectly, if at all, related to the *pasyon* idioms and have hardly anything to do with amulets and mystical powers. These are, above all, examples of the sheer mundane quality of this idiom (fig. 1).

In order to gain an idea of the variety of usages of the idiom of loob around the time of the Katipunan, the author selected for analysis three secular, nationalist novels published within the first decade of the twentieth century. These were *Bulalakaw ng Pag-asa* (1909) by Ismael Amado (ca. 1892–?), labeled T1; *Ang Singing ng Dalagang Marmol* (2004), originally published in ca. 1905 by Isabelo de los Reyes (1864–1938), labeled T2; and

Fig. 1. Tweets on Twitter and Facebook posts with most frequent usages of *loob*, 27 Dec. 2012 from 12:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.



the first Tagalog translation of Rizal’s (1909) *Noli me tângere* by Pascual Poblete (1857–1921), labeled T4.⁷

Since Bonifacio’s individual writings were too short for the purposes of the analysis, several of his texts dating from 1894 to 1897 and available in digital format (from the historian Jim Richardson’s website, www.kasaysayan-kkk.info) were combined in order to form a single composite text (labeled AB), which might reflect his usages of loob.⁸

Naturally included in the analysis was the full text of the *Casaysayan nang Pasiang Mahal ni Jesucristong Panginoon Natin na Sucat Ipag-alab nang Puso nang Sinomang Babasa*, first published in 1814 and also known as *Pasyong Henesis* (Pilapil 1939), labeled PT.

For a kind of baseline comparison, *Florante at Laura* (Baltazar 1838/1994) by Francisco Balagtas (1788–1862), considered the principal poetic work of Tagalog literature, was also included in the corpus; it was labeled T3.

Aside from T3, the choice of texts AB (1894–1897) and PT (1939) for analysis is self-evident given the purposes of this study. The use of the other four texts might need further explanation. T1, T2, and T4 were texts composed by Filipino nationalists, who were presumably deeply influenced by the Katipunan revolutionary idiom; at the same time, these works were readily available in digital format through the Gutenberg service, unlike most works of this era. It would be interesting therefore to test their similarity to Bonifacio’s writings. Moreover, Poblete’s lengthy translation of Rizal’s *Noli* (T4) was particularly interesting due to its linguistic depth and richness.

In order to attain a degree of commensurability among the texts with reference to their usages of loob, this study used an orthography standardized toward modern usage, and divergences in expression also sometimes reduced to a single form. (Errors are naturally unavoidable, but hopefully have been minimized.)

The *Pasyon* vis-à-vis Other Texts

The aggregate usages of loob in all the six texts included in this study, a total of 487 (fig. 2 and table 1), show that the two most common are “sama ng loob” (51) and “utang na loob” (31). One observes that this usage is not so different from the contemporary data gathered from Facebook and Twitter excepting the fact that most instances of “utang na loob” from the latter are actually interjections.

Table 1. All usages of *loob* and its collocations in PT (1814), AB (1894–1897), T1 (1909), T2 (1905), T3 (1838), and T4 (1909), arranged according to frequency of occurrence (with totals)

	PT	AB	T1	T2	T3	T4	TOTALS
sama ng loob	1					50	51
utang na loob	2		2	4		23	31
ipagkalooob	3			5		17	25
loob	13	4	1		3	1	22
magandang loob	1					16	17
mahinang loob	3		1			8	12
malakas na loob	2		2			7	11
masayang loob	2		2	1	1	4	10
sakit ng loob	2					8	10
panatag na loob						9	9
pagbigay loob			3			5	8
pagkakaisang loob	4	1	1			2	8
pinagkalooob		7					7
salawahang loob	6			1			7
matigas na loob	3			1		2	6
magulong loob	5				1		6
payapang loob				1	1	4	6
sukal ng loob	5			1			6
alab ng loob						6	6
nababagbag na loob						6	6
taksil na loob	6						6
walang loob	5				1		6
lilong loob	5						5
mababang loob	4		1				5
mag-ibang loob	5						5
matiwasyang na loob	1					4	5
palagay na loob						5	5
taimtim na loob						5	5
balisang loob	4						4
lumbay ng loob	4						4
tapat na loob	1				1	2	4
hunghang na loob	4						4
kaloob		2				2	4
malamig na loob		1				3	4
matimtimang loob	4						4

	PT	AB	T1	T2	T3	T4	TOTALS
nangungusap na loob	4						4
pakitang loob	1	1				2	4
tuwa ng loob	2			1		1	4
magbagong loob	3						3
magnilay sa loob	3						3
malambot na loob	2					1	3
matapang na loob						3	3
mauli ang loob	3						3
may loob	2		1				3
pagbalik loob						3	3
sigla ng loob	1		1	1			3
sumisikdong loob	3						3
sirang loob		2				1	3
tahimik na loob		1		1		1	3
buo na loob	1					1	2
galak ng loob						2	2
gumising sa loob		2					2
hirap ng loob						2	2
kakabakabang loob	1					1	2
kutob ng loob			1	1			2
loob Mo	1					1	2
loob ng bayan			2				2
malaking loob	1					1	2
malupit na loob	2						2
masamang loob					2		2
masiglang loob						2	2
nagkalooob			2				2
nagkaroon ng loob			2				2
niloloob	2						2
wala sa loob			2				2
pagsasalooob				2			2
akay ng loob					1		1
alapaap ng loob						1	1
aliw ng loob					1		1
batong loob			1				1
bigay loob	1						1
buhay na loob			1				1

Cont. Table 1. All usages of *loob* and its collocations in PT (1814), AB (1894–1897), T1 (1909), T2 (1905), T3 (1838), and T4 (1909), arranged according to frequency of occurrence (with totals)

	PT	AB	T1	T2	T3	T4	TOTALS
bukas na loob	1						1
bumalingbaling na loob	1						1
dupok ng loob	1						1
ganid na loob	1						1
gintong loob			1				1
giyagis ng loob	1						1
halaghag na loob	1						1
hamak na loob		1					1
hiling ng loob	1						1
ialay ang loob	1						1
igayak ang loob		1					1
ikahabag ng loob	1						1
iniwan ng loob				1			1
ipagbawa ng loob	1						1
isinaysay sa loob	1						1
kagalingan ng loob						1	1
kalagayan ng loob						1	1
kalooban ng bayan		1					1
kalooban ng lahat		1					1
kalooban ng taong bayan		1					1
kamahalan ng loob		1					1
kusang loob	1						1
loob na iningatan	1						1
loob ng langit	1						1
lumuwag na loob	1						1
mabigat na loob			1				1
maglubag loob	1						1
mahalay na loob	1						1
mahapdi sa loob	1						1
mahimasmasan ng loob	1						1
mahinhin na loob						1	1
mailap na loob	1						1
mairuging loob						1	1

	PT	AB	T1	T2	T3	T4	TOTALS
malumanay na loob	1						1
mapangahas na loob			1				1
marupok na loob			1				1
masigasig na loob	1						1
matamlay na loob				1			1
matining na loob	1						1
nagbalik na loob	1						1
nagtanim ng loob	1						1
nagtatalo sa loob			1				1
nag-uli ang loob					1		1
nalantang loob	1						1
nalulunos sa loob	1						1
nalunasang loob	1						1
nanlulumong loob		1					1
napukaw ang loob						1	1
napukaw na loob		1					1
natilihan ng loob	1						1
natulig na loob	1						1
natunaw ang loob	1						1
nilamuyot na loob	1						1
pagganting loob				1			1
pag-isipan sa loob	1						1
pagsaulang loob					1		1
panimdim ng loob	1						1
pinukaw na loob	1						1
pita ng loob	1						1
poot ng loob	1						1
sala ng loob	1						1
sasalakay sa loob	1						1
sidhi ng loob	1						1
sikdo ng loob			1				1
silakbo ng loob						1	1
simbuyo ng loob			1				1
sugat sa loob						1	1
sumagi sa loob		1					1
TOTALS	168	30	33	22	15	219	

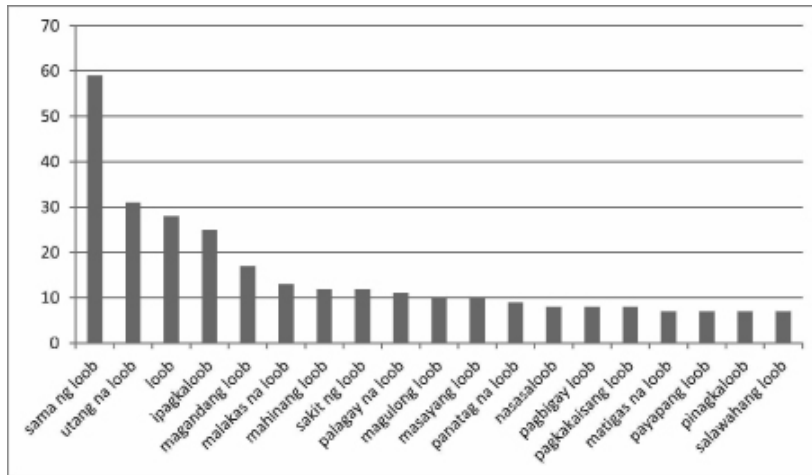


Fig. 2. Most frequent usages of *loob* in PT (1814), AB (1884–1887), T1 (1909), T2 (1905), T3 (1838), and T4 (1909)

It is noticeable that the two most frequent usages from the total text corpus and from Twitter and Facebook, “sama ng loob” and “utang na loob,” do not figure among the most frequent usages, although they do appear, in the *pasyon* (fig. 3).⁹ The most frequent usage of *loob* in the *pasyon* is generally stand-alone, as in “loob niya” or “loob mo.” Despite the common usage of *loob* being found within more or less frequent collocational structures, *loob* nevertheless maintains its independence as a distinct lexical item, and therefore also maintains its productivity in the creative process of binding with other terms. Some usages are positive, such as “mababang loob” and “matimtimang loob.”¹⁰ However, the great majority of usages in the *pasyon* refer to negative states of the *loob*: “salawahang loob,” “taksil na loob,” “magulong loob,” “sukal ng loob,” “lilong loob,” “balisang loob,” “hunggang na loob” and “lumbay na loob.”¹¹ The reason for the emphasis on negative states of *loob* may revolve around the constant appeal to the believer to change or return to his or her *loob*—“magbagong loob” and “magbalik loob.”¹² In fact, religious conversion in Tagalog has been portrayed as a “pagbabalik-loob” (De Mesa 2003, 70–73).

Although the *pasyon* text, along with other friar texts, can be credited undoubtedly with inventing and popularizing new contexts and collocational structures employing the *loob* idiom, it is nevertheless also an undeniable fact that it was the preexisting idiom of *loob*, pagan, non-Christian, and day-to-day, which finally gave shape to the ethico-moral texture of the *pasyon*

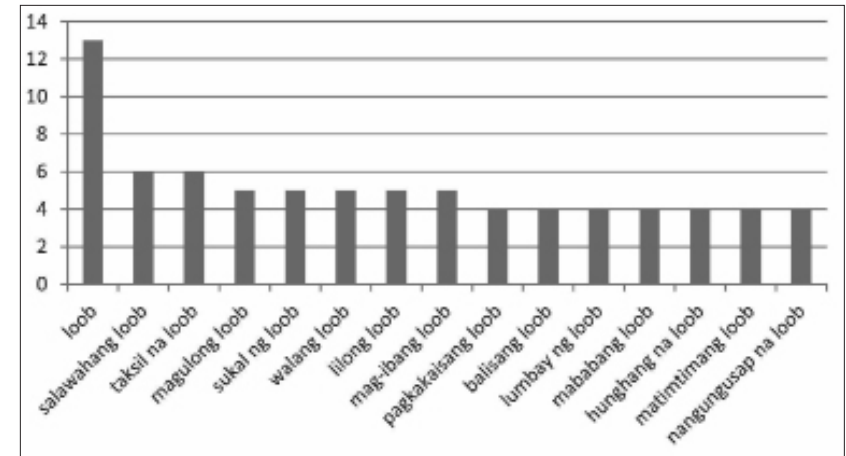


Fig. 3. Most frequent usages of *loob* in PT (1939)

rather than the other way around. The *pasyon* had to enter a preexisting moral-ethical idiom in order to become intelligible to the Tagalog speakers whom the friars wanted to convert.

However, one apparent problem in finding out more about any “preexisting” idiom of *loob* surfaced: the earliest text in Tagalog that is available, the *Doctrina Christiana* of 1593 (Wolf 1947), is already an ostensibly “Christian” text. Nevertheless, given the time of its composition, the use of such words as *kasalanan*, *sampalataya*, *tauo*, *kaluluwa*, *bayan*, *loob*, and other significant culture-concepts can be assumed to be more reflective of “prehispanic” usages than otherwise.¹³ *Loob* appears in *Doctrina Christiana* in the following contexts:

- “ypasonor mo ang loob mo”
- “uinauan bahala namī saloob ang casalanan nang nagccasala sa amin”
- “pinalooban nang dios ang tauo piliin ang balan ybig”
- “ualin bahala saloob ang casalanā”
- “houag ipalaman sa loob ang pagmomora nang tauo saiyo”
- “mei loob na di moli maccasala sa Dios.”¹⁴

These usages, pertaining to *loob* mainly as “will” and, quite interestingly, as “memory,” are currently the only available textual/written traces of the earliest usages and collocational structures involving *loob*.

The usages of *loob* in the *pasyon* can be compared with the most frequent usages of *loob* in Poblete’s Tagalog translation of the secular and nationalist

Measuring Textual Proximity and Lexical Disambiguation

The pasyon, Poblete’s translation of the *Noli*, Bonifacio’s composite texts, and the tweets and posts on Facebook and Twitter reflect a great deal of diversity in usage of the notion of loob. One cannot say that all of the usages of loob that have been discussed so far can be explained by referring to a single explanatory matrix, like the pasyon, which supposedly can give it an ultimate meaning. Meaning probably resides in the uses of words in a language, as Wittgenstein (1984, 263) so forcefully expressed in *Philosophical Investigations*. There are very many uses of the notion of loob outside the language of the pasyon, then as now. In order to disambiguate a term with such manifold meanings, one has to refer to its possible contexts of use.

An example taken from the world of sports might help explain this point. Five sports news articles were semirandomly taken from the worldwide web all containing occurrences of the word “ball.” Text 1 had two occurrences of “ball,” Text 2 had four, Text 3 had one, Text 4 had two, and Text 5 had seven occurrences. Given just this information, one would be hard put to determine just what kind of ball was being talked about in each article.

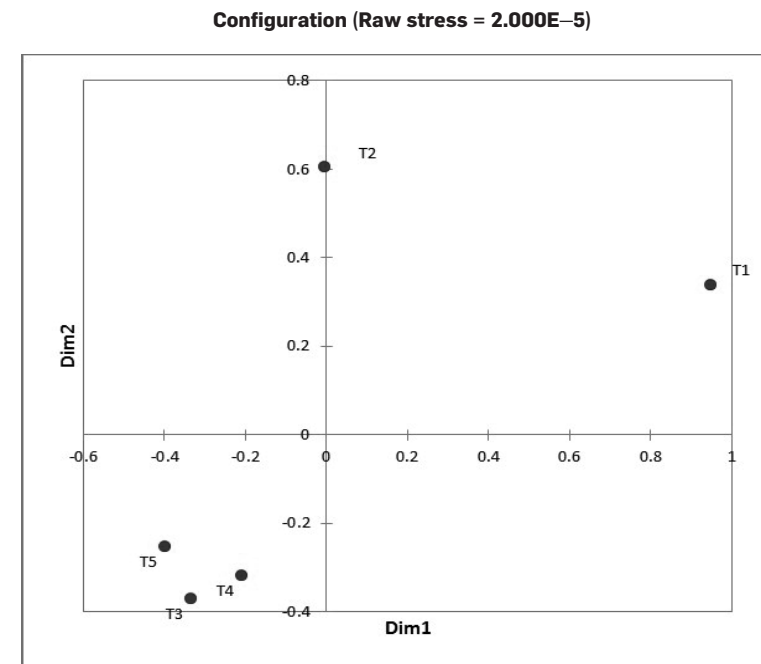
Table 2. Common usages of loob and its collocations in (a) AB, PT and T4; (b) AB and PT; (c) AB and T4; (d) PT and T4

(a) AB ∩ PT ∩ T4	(b) AB ∩ PT	(c) AB ∩ T4	(d) PT ∩ T4
loob	loob	loob	sama ng loob
pagkakaisang loob	pagkakaisang loob	pagkakaisang loob	utang na loob
pakitang loob	pakitang loob	kaloob	loob
		malamig na loob	ipagkaloob
		pakitang loob	magandang loob
		sirang loob	malakas na loob
		tahimik na loob	mahinang loob
			sakit ng loob
			masayang loob
			pagkakaisang loob
			matigas na loob
			matiwasay na loob
			tapat na loob
			pakitang loob
			tuwa ng loob
			malambot na loob
			buo na loob
			kakabakabang loob
			loob mo
			malaking loob

However, if one tested all five articles in terms of degree of lexical overlap with each other by the automated counting of how many words they had in common with each other and used a technique to represent their relative distances to each other in a two-dimensional space, one could arrive at some idea which articles were presumably talking about the same kinds of balls.

In the resulting graph (produced using the method called multidimensional scaling or MDS), one can see quite clearly a kind of clustering behavior for Texts 3, 4, and 5 in the lower left quadrant (fig. 6). Texts 1 and 2 are quite visibly at a distance from the cluster formed by Texts 3, 4, and 5. The texts that are most similar to each other are, in fact, news articles on football (and therefore were talking about “footballs”), while the most dissimilar texts are both on tennis (apparently the vocabulary for singles and doubles games are quite divergent). Naturally, the sports vocabulary for tennis and football are somewhat different from each other. Articles on football necessarily contain a greater degree of lexical overlap with each other than with articles on tennis or basketball. The usages of the word “ball”

Fig. 6. Multidimensional scaling (MDS) graph of textual proximity of five randomly selected sports news articles



in Texts 3, 4, and 5 therefore can be quite clearly disambiguated to mean “football.” This kind of clustering behavior can be used to disambiguate the meanings of certain words by looking into which clusters these texts are being used. Texts with similar vocabularies may talk about similar things and belong to similar genres rather than those with dissimilar vocabularies.

One can try this same technique with the six texts under consideration for the case of *loob*. The lexical overlap of texts with one another can be measured as a percentage of the actual number of terms these have in common with reference to a certain window of arbitrary size. For the purposes of the current study, the 500 most frequently used words of each text will be extracted and automatically compared lexically in order to obtain the percentage overlap between all possible pairs of the six texts. Texts with a greater degree of lexical overlap will be considered closer and in greater proximity to each other than those texts with much less lexical commonality. Needless to say, this is a simple and extremely rough measure of textual proximity. Finer levels of analysis may be gained by including tens or hundreds of digital texts and by increasing the size of the comparison beyond 500 of the most frequently used words in the texts. Errors may also arise due to the necessity of harmonizing the orthography of all texts to attain comparability. The nonreduction of the word-forms to their lemmas, especially in the case of a highly agglutinative language like Tagalog, might likewise create problems. The current analysis also does not exclude function words (such as “na,” “sa,” “ng,” and “at”) from the count, thereby reducing accuracy even further.

Figure 7 visually represents the closeness of the texts under consideration to each other. One immediately notices the clustering behavior in the lower-left quadrant of the *Noli* translation (T4) and Isabelo de los Reyes’s novel (T2) with a distance of 0.018. In accordance with the previous analysis of the occurrences of *loob* in the *Noli* translation, these two secular, nationalist novels written by two individuals with strong revolutionary credentials may provide a distinct context for interpreting and disambiguating usages of *loob* as opposed, for example, to those usages found in the *pasyon*.

Puzzling, however, is the distance of Amado’s (1909) *Bulalakaw ng Pag-Asa* (T1) from both. One would have assumed that it would have clustered together with the other secular, nationalist novels of the same period. Closer analysis is necessary to explain this rather surprising result, but T1 is still closer by far to T2 and T4 than to any other of the texts under consideration. Andres Bonifacio’s texts (AB) likewise do not display

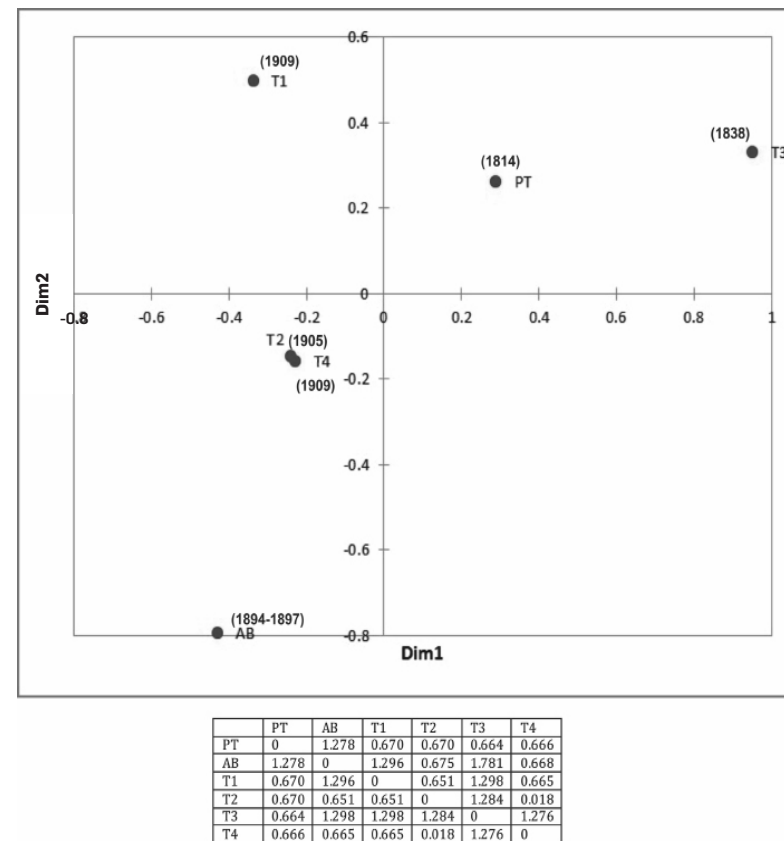


Fig. 7. Multidimensional scaling (MDS) graph of PT, AB, T1, T2, T3, and T4; a visual representation of their relative distances (above) and relative distances of points measured in the representation space (below)

any tendency to cluster with any of the three novels, but its distance from the *Pasyong Henesis* (PT), measured using the graphical scale at 1.278, is almost twice the distance of 0.665 from the *Noli* (T4). This means Bonifacio’s texts are much closer, or more similar lexically, to T4 than they are to PT.

It is perhaps not surprising that *Florante at Laura* (T3), a text close to the *Pasyong Henesis* in time of composition, aside from being also written in poetic form, is nearest to the *Pasyong Henesis* (0.664) than to any of the other texts. It is however very distant from Bonifacio’s texts (AB) (1.781). With only

fifteen occurrences, the idiom of loob does not actually play a significant role in Balagtas's long poem. Among these few usages are: "masamang loob," "aliw ng loob," "iniwan ng loob," "mapayapang loob," "nag-uli ang loob," "gulo ng loob," "tapat na loob," "saya ng loob," "akay ng loob," "pagsaulang loob," and "walang loob."²⁰ Further analysis is needed in this respect, but the elevated, poetic language of *Florante at Laura* may be part of the reason why it is so distant from the other points on the graph.²¹

Undoubtedly, a wider net has to be cast and a larger corpus must be analyzed to arrive at more reliable and conclusive results that take into account both synchronic and diachronic dimensions than are possible in the present study. However, this simple measure of textual proximity might already reveal certain problems with the assumption of a general closeness of fit between the pasyon language and that of Bonifacio and, by implication, with the languages of other leaders and members of the Katipunan.

The use of loob occurs in several types of textual contexts and discursive fields with varying degrees of proximity to one another. The space in which the idiom of loob appears is certainly not smooth, flat, and homogeneous but may indeed be uneven, discontinuous, and heterogeneous. The various usages therefore cannot be collapsed into a single interpretative matrix, subjected to a uniform disambiguation procedure, or reduced to a single hermeneutic strategy. What, for example, are the inflections of the *modern* idiom of loob in today's era of neoliberal, capitalist globalization, marketization of social relations, and labor flexibilization?²²

Conclusion

Ileto's argument is persuasive and powerful, but perhaps it leads to an unnecessary flattening of the massive complexity of discursive realities in the flux of actual usage. Benedict Anderson (2004, xii) already had intimations of this limitation when he noted that the basic idiom of the pasyon "appears to become attenuated or complicated over the subsequent decades" and, moreover, that Robert Love's (2004) study of the Samahan of Papa God shows an alternative way of reading the same idiom and language such that it clearly demonstrates that "any tradition is multistrained, and therefore big generalizations about 'the Tagalogs' (let alone, 'Filipinos') need to be cautiously read" (Anderson 2004, xiii).

Ileto's nontranslation of loob arguably strengthened his argument by permitting the reader with no knowledge of the Tagalog language

access to only one variant of its usage, the religio-mystical one, which was reinforced by sheer repetition through the length of his text. The stylistic persuasiveness of *PR* was so successful, in fact, that even some Tagalog readers studying this work began to see loob only within the context dealt with by *PR*, as if with fresh eyes they saw it gain new powers and shed off its actual banality in day-to-day speech. The same points might hold for other central Tagalog concepts with which Ileto dealt such as *damay* and *hiya*.²³

Joseph Scalice, in his sustained review of *PR*, noticed this particular aspect of Ileto's style.²⁴ Scalice (2009, 11) observed for example that "Words like *layaw*, *damay*, *awa*, *loób*, and *liwanag* seem profound to the non-native speaker and circulate untranslated throughout *Pasyon and Revolution*. They acquire a reified sense of meaning far out of keeping with their actual workaday significance." Furthermore, "[t]he italicized words fly fast and thick and give the portentous feeling of significance. They attain a magical status: academic *anting-anting* which render *Pasyon and Revolution* impervious to scholarly criticism" (ibid., 12).

The criticisms that have been pointed out here are distinct and not reducible to those already aired on the matter of translation in Milagros Guerrero's (1981) early scathing critique of *PR*. In his response to Guerrero, Ileto (1982, 112) asserted that the basic difference between him and Guerrero was that the latter thought that "words can be assigned fixed meanings." In contrast to her position, he claims to have tried to bring out "throughout the book" various layers and plays of meaning and asserts that, "it is precisely because meanings cannot be fixed in some transcendental plane that the archaeology of words like *awa*, *damay*, *loob* and the like must be undertaken" (ibid., 108). Whether or not Ileto's reply to Guerrero is accurate in its representation of her argument, this article has actually tried to show the opposite. Rather than fault Ileto for failing to assign "fixed meanings" to words, I argue that in the deliberate construction of his "archaeology" of words, in his weaving of the layers of meaning, Ileto fails to bring the full semantic complexity of words into play and restricts the reconstruction to one that is conducive to his thesis.

According to the description at the end of the book, "*Pasyon and Revolution*, unlike earlier Philippine historical writings that use largely the Filipino educated elite's categories of meaning, seeks to interpret Philippine popular movements in terms of the perceptions of the masses

themselves” (Ileto 1979, [282]). This is correct in the broadest terms. Indeed, a further probable reason for this fundamental insight having come rather late to Philippine social science, aside from the overwhelming influence of American positivism, is the continuing proclivity to use English, the language of the Filipino elite, as the language of social science combined with a certain cavalier attitude toward the problem of translating cultural categories between languages.

PR is without a doubt an immense, fascinating, and tremendous work of scholarship. With this work, Ileto has opened the door to a new world of discourse by overthrowing a dominant past conception of history to which we can no longer return in good faith. However, the task today may no longer be that of overthrowing dominant historiographical ideas. Rather it may be the lateral exploration of the world that Ileto has helped to open up, by thoroughly testing and exploring its limits and moving further beyond to other worlds new and old.

Although admittedly the methods used in this study were not easily available at the time Ileto was writing his chief work, these techniques can help in these explorations as long as one does not err in the direction of scientism. The criticisms that have been raised here are therefore of a quite different nature from all the other criticisms that *PR* has received in the past and must be answered on their own terms.

Only by pushing the logic of Ileto’s argument beyond its restrictive translations toward an even more empirical, rigorous, and encompassing analysis of political and moral-ethical discourses in Tagalog and other Philippine languages can we advance thinking beyond Ileto’s contributions. In reambiguating his translations, new interpretations become possible.

Abbreviations used

AB Andres Bonifacio’s composite writings (Bonifacio 1894, 1895, ca. 1896a, 1896b, 1896c, 1896d, 1896e, 1897a, 1897b, 1897c, 1897d, 1897e, 1897f, 1897g, 1897h)

PR *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840–1910* (Ileto 1979)

PT *Pasyong Henebis* (1939), better known as *Casaysayan nang Pasiyong Mahal ni Jesucristang Panginoon Natin na Sucat Ipag-alab nang Puso nang Sinomang Babasa* by Mariano Pilapil

T1 *Bulalakaw ng Pag-asa* (1909) by Ismael Amado

T2 *Ang Singsing ng Dalagang Marmol* (1905) by Isabelo de los Reyes

T3 *Florante at Laura* (Baltazar 1838/1994) by Francisco Balagtas (1788–1862)

T4 *Noli me tángere* (1909) by José Rizal, translated by Pascual Poblete (1857–1921)

Notes

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- 1 This short article may be considered an elaboration of a few critical points on the methodology of Ileto’s *Pasyon and Revolution*, which have already been aired in another work by the present author (Guillermo 2009, 202–9).
- 2 Approximate English translations of these terms are as follows: shame; sympathy; relief/ease of life; and independence.
- 3 Approximate English translations of these terms are as follows: hardhearted and being virtuous.
- 4 This translates into English as “I’m upset with you, you’re a good for nothing friend. You didn’t treat us on your birthday.”
- 5 Approximate English translations of these terms are as follows: debt of gratitude; being upset; and strength of the will.
- 6 Approximate English translations of these phrases are as follows: boiling within; “you are already inside my *hart* [sic].”
- 7 All of these texts are available in digital format from the website: www.gutenberg.org.
- 8 Used in this analysis were the following: Bonifacio ca. 1894, 1895; ca. 1896a, 1896b, 1896c, 1896d, 1896e, 1897a, 1897b, 1897c, 1897d, 1897e, 1897f, 1897g, 1897h.
- 9 From the point of view of ideological analysis, the question why these common usages of *loob* (particularly “utang na loob”) do not figure prominently in the *Pasyon* is an interesting one but would involve a rather long excursus for it to be adequately addressed.
- 10 Approximate English translations of these terms are: humility and pious.
- 11 Approximate English translations of these terms are as follows: unfaithful; traitorous; confused; impenetrable; treacherous; anxious; foolish; and sorrowful.
- 12 Approximate English translations of these terms are as follows: renew the loob and return to one’s loob.
- 13 Approximate English translations of these terms are as follows: sin; faith/belief; person; soul; and community/people.
- 14 Approximate English translations of these phrases are as follows: your will be done; we become indifferent to the sins of those who sin against us; God allows man to choose as he pleases; be unaffected by sin; do not take to heart/be unmindful of invectives hurled against you by others; there is a will to no longer sin against God.

- 15 Approximate English translations of these terms are as follows: state of being virtuous; serene; strong will; ardor; unwary; fervent; joyful; serene; and tranquil.
- 16 Approximate English translations of the terms mentioned here are: weak will; hurt feeling; and anxious.
- 17 Approximate English translations of these phrases are as follows: to awaken; aroused; to occur to oneself; and to prepare oneself.
- 18 Approximate English translations of these phrases are as follows: solidarity; will of the nation; will of everyone; and will of the common people.
- 19 Approximate English translations of these phrases are as follows: broken will; cold; humble; and depressed.
- 20 Approximate English translations of these terms are as follows: evil; comfort; failed resolve; serene; returned resolve; confusion; sincere; joy; transported within one's loob; return of the will; and inhumane.
- 21 It will be noticed that the *utang na loob* idiom is not significant in the *Pasyon* and nonexistent in *Florante at Laura*. Does this lack of "utang na loob" have anything to do with Macdonald's (2013) contention in a recent article which identifies "utang na loob" as coinciding with hierarchical social structures and practices? Do they evoke nonhierarchical social formations? This is a problem worth looking into.
- 22 In order to discover these inflections, one would need to undertake an analysis of the idiom of *loob*, which is obviously very much alive and kicking, in the context of working-class language and textual production. One interesting observation that came up in a seminar discussion this author had with a Filipino graduate student at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), Kyoto University, Japan on 26 Apr. 2009 was that "lakas ng loob" often surfaced in the discourse of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who suffered from abusive, unsafe, and precarious working conditions.
- 23 I remember the shocked, incredulous face of one of my professors when I asserted many years ago as an undergraduate student that, to my mind, a good deal of Iletto's argument depended upon his translations.
- 24 Indeed, although Scalice has devoted much more time developing a critical Marxist perspective on Iletto's work, I have been surprised by our convergence of views independently arrived at while using quite different tools.

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