

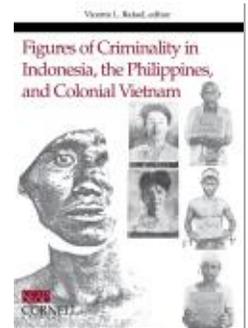


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THE USUAL SUSPECTS: NARDONG PUTIK, DON PEPE OYSON, AND ROBIN HOOD

John Sidel

Both scholarship and the culture industry in the Philippines have concurred on a view of “crime” as reflecting certain features of Philippine society. In particular, scholars and screenplay writers alike portray criminality in the archipelago as a form of societal “resistance” to injustices unpunished—or perpetrated—by predatory agents of capital and the state. Bandits and gangsters thus appear as authentic local heroes of the poor and downtrodden, “social bandits” in the sense popularized by Eric Hobsbawm.¹ Their success in evading “the law” is attributed to their Robin Hood-like popularity, to their intrinsic powers, *anting-anting* (magical amulets), and charisma, and to the “weakness” of the state. While numerous scholars, comic book writers, and movie producers have concurred in these depictions of “primitive rebellion” and “social banditry” in the Philippines, this paper offers a very different view of crime in the archipelago, one which takes as its essential point of departure an analysis of the Philippine state.

Compared to its counterparts elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the Philippine state is distinguished by its highly decentralized, politicized, and privatized administration of law enforcement, a legacy of the American colonial period. Since the first years of this century, elected municipal mayors in the Philippines have by law enjoyed considerable discretion over the appointment, transfer, payment, and removal of municipal policemen,² who thus, in the words of the Director of the Philippine Constabulary in 1908, have typically functioned as the “messengers, muchachos, and

¹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981); Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1959).

² See the “Brief History Of The Municipal Police,” in Maj. Emmanuel A. Baja, *Philippine Police System and its Problems* (Manila: Pobre’s Press, 1933), pp. 202-221.

servants" of the towns' chief executives.³ Provincial governors, moreover, have long held the authority to appoint "special agents," security officers, and jail wardens, and have consistently intervened over the years in the appointment, promotion, transfer, and removal of provincial commanders of the Philippine Constabulary (PC).⁴ In addition, congressmen and senators have, through the powerful Commission on Appointments, retained a measure of influence over the promotion and transfer of high-ranking Constabulary/Police officers, thus diluting the otherwise unimpeded discretion of the President in his control over the nation's primary law-enforcement agency. Long-time president Ferdinand Marcos worked to centralize and bureaucratize law enforcement through an Integrated National Police subordinated to the Philippine Constabulary (PC-INP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in 1975. From 1975 through 1990, policemen throughout the archipelago served as members of the PC-INP/AFP, their assignments, promotions, and transfers determined by ranking PC/AFP officers instead of elected officials.⁵ Today, however, due to legislation enacted in 1990, elected officials at municipal, city, provincial, and national levels have regained significant discretionary powers over the supervision and appointment of Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel.⁶

Viewed as a set of apparatuses geared for the maintenance of "order" and the administration of "justice," the decentralized, politicized, and personalized law-enforcement agencies of the Philippine state do constitute a structural "weakness" highly favorable to criminal activity. The limited capacities of national police agencies and the subordination of police forces to municipal and provincial elected officials allow criminals to exploit the parcellized jurisdictions of local law-enforcement authorities in the archipelago. As Eric Hobsbawm has noted:

The ideal situation for robbery is one in which the local authorities are local men, operating in complex local situations, and where a few miles may put the robber beyond the reach or even the knowledge of one set of authorities and into the territory of another, which does not worry about what happens "abroad."⁷

Viewed alternatively, however, as predatory apparatuses geared not for the suppression of "crime" and the administration of "justice" but for the regulation and exploitation of illegal economies, these police forces appear less unsuccessful in stemming "lawlessness" and more successful in imposing "the law" upon Philippine society. After all, Philippine policemen have figured most prominently over the years not as the defenders of justice but as the protectors of bandits, car thieves, cattle rustlers, illegal loggers, *jueteng* (illegal lottery) operators, and smugglers, the

³ "Report of Acting Director of Constabulary, Department of Commerce and Police, Bureau of Constabulary, Manila, P.I., August 8, 1908," in Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Department, *Report of the Philippine Commission to the Secretary of War, 1908, Part 2* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909), p. 372.

⁴ On this point, see Cicero C. Campos, "The Role Of The Police In The Philippines: A Case Study From The Third World," PhD dissertation, Michigan State University, 1983, pp. 205-206.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 166-169, 211-230.

⁶ See, in particular, Section 51 of Republic Act No. 6975, in Rod B. Gutang, *Pulisya: The Inside Story of the Demilitarization of the Law Enforcement System in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Daraga Press, 1991), pp. 164-165.

⁷ Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, p. 21.

organizers of bank robberies and kidnappings, and the distributors of illegal firearms and narcotics. Through selective and discretionary enforcement of the law, the police have perhaps not so much failed to eradicate crime as they have managed to exact monopoly rents from the proceeds of illegal commerce. In their enforcement of the law, the police—and the elected officials to whom they are responsible—are thus quite successful *as racketeers*.

Reexamined against this backdrop, much of what has passed for “resistance,” “primitive rebellion,” or “social banditry” in the Philippines no longer appears so decisively in opposition to the state. “Outlaws,” ironically perhaps, have often relied heavily upon “the law” and its selective enforcement. Bandits and gangsters have often depended for their survival not upon the popularity they enjoy among subaltern communities of peasants and the urban poor, but rather upon the informal franchise and protection they receive from the police and the elected officials to whom the police are responsible. As Anton Blok, a leading critic of Hobsbawm’s “social bandit” formulation, notes: “This yields the following hypothesis, which may be tested against data bearing on all kinds of robbery: *The more successful a man is as a bandit, the more extensive the protection granted him.*”⁸ Insofar as Filipino gangsters serve as the subcontracted agents of the state, they resemble not so much Hobsbawm’s social bandits as what Blok calls *mafia*: entrepreneurs who use private, formally unlicensed violence as a means of social control and economic accumulation.⁹ Through a monopoly of violence and provision of protection, *mafia* thus assume the position of police, even as police take on many features of *mafia*.

Against the backdrop of these revisionist arguments, the pages below revisit Cavite, a province long notorious for its bandits, cattle rustlers, carnappers, and smugglers.¹⁰ Two case studies compare the most successful outlaws in the province during two successive periods: Leonardo Manecio alias Nardong Putik in the early post-war heyday of localized, civilian control over policing (1946-1972), and José “Don Pepe” Oyson in the era of centralization and military integration (1975-1990). The narrative situates Manecio and Oyson within evolving local landscapes of criminality and maps the shifting geography, organization, and social representation of crime in the province. Following Blok’s example of close attention to criminals’ connections to representatives of the state and of dominant social classes, the pages below chronicle the rise and fall of two outlaws more aptly seen as *mafia* bosses than as social bandits. A concluding section compares these two Caviteño criminals and then turns to a set of broader questions about the social representation of criminality in the Philippines.

I. CAVITE’S NOBLE ROBBER?: THE CASE OF NARDONG PUTIK

Throughout the early postwar period (1946-1972), a diverse geography of crime intersected with the complex circuitry of Cavite’s evolving capitalist economy. Cattle

⁸ Anton Blok, “The Peasant and the Brigand,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 14,4 (September 1972): 498. Italics in the original.

⁹ Anton Blok, *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village 1860-1960: A Study of Violent Peasant Entrepreneurs* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), p. 6.

¹⁰ See Carolyn I. Sobritchea, “Banditry in Cavite During the Post World War II Period,” *Asian Studies*, volumes XXIII-IV (1984-1986), pp. 10-27.

rustlers preying upon rice-growing areas, highwaymen patrolling overland transit routes, smugglers claiming the coastal shores, and carnappers operating in suburban towns all responded to the growth of nearby Manila and the expansion of its markets for stolen or smuggled goods. By and large, these assorted *mafia* were firmly subordinated to the local law-enforcement authorities, their criminal monopolies sponsored and protected by town mayors and their flunky policemen, or, as in the case of smuggling, by provincial-level politicians and their protégés in the PC.¹¹ Tellingly, the careers of Cavite's cattle rustlers, highwaymen, and carnappers typically followed the rise and fall of their political patrons and police protectors. Against this backdrop, one notorious outlaw clearly stands out as the most successful, long-lasting *mafia* boss in Cavite in the pre-martial law postwar period: Leonardo Manecio alias "Nardong Putik."

In July 1972, Manila newspapers heralded the premier of the film "Nardong Putik (Kilabot Ng Cavite)" [Nardong Mud (Terror of Cavite)], starring Ramon Revilla. Establishing Revilla's reputation as an action-movie star, the film chronicled the life and times of the legendary Caviteño bandit Leonardo Manecio, alias Nardong Putik, whose exploits in the mid-1950s and late 1960s had, through banner headline newspaper stories and an earlier film, received more popular attention than any other outlaw figure in Philippine history. Following Manecio's death at the hands of National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agents in October 1971 after an extensive manhunt, photographs of his bloodied and bullet-riddled corpse had graced the front pages of Manila dailies, and the promoters of the film took full advantage of the advance publicity. Newspaper advertisements promised that "AMULETS (ANTING-ANTING), GUNS, NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, DEATH PHOTOS and FATAL CAR H-81-31-CAVITE '71 used by NARDONG PUTIK (Courtesy of NBI) will be distributed in different Theaters and can be viewed by the public."¹²

The film etched in the popular memory a portrait of Nardong Putik as a charismatic, magically endowed Robin Hood figure, a "social bandit" par excellence. Aside from good looks and exceptional martial skills, he possesses an *anting-anting* which renders him virtually invulnerable to his enemies. Nardong Putik's outlaw career, moreover, begins with the death of his father at the hands of cattle rustlers, marking him as a victim of social injustice. Seeking revenge, he joins the town police force. As a film critic reviewing the film explained:

Nardong Putik becomes a policeman, a terror of a policeman who delivers justice out of the barrel of his gun. Because of his merciless pursuit of justice, he is removed from the Cavite police force. Fast as lightning a series of events occur . . . Nardong Putik is accused of liquidating the town officials of Maragondon. A killing here, a killing there. Nardong Putik becomes The Terror of Cavite, defending himself against whoever challenges his bravery and putting away whoever acts conceited in his presence.

¹¹ See John Sidel, "Walking in the Shadow of the Big Man: Justiniano Montano and Failed Dynasty Building in Cavite, 1935-1972," in *An Anarchy of Families: State and Family in the Philippines*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy (Madison: University of Wisconsin Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1993), pp. 140-142.

¹² Paid advertisement, *Manila Times*, July 13, 1972, p. 23.

In spite of all the killings, Nardong Putik still has a set of golden rules for his henchmen: don't steal carabao, don't rape, don't poison fishponds, don't steal cars. Whoever disregards these commandments is dead meat . . . ¹³

Although the film has clouded popular memory, to the point where Ramon Revilla's Nardong Putik today overshadows the one chronicled in newspaper stories and local legend, it is still possible to establish several elements of correspondence between the two outlaw figures. Caviteños still impressed by Manecio's martial prowess and machismo describe him as *barako* (from the Spanish word *barraco* for boar), a term connoting manliness and potency. Photographs of Manecio alias Putik taken in the late 1950s reveal a strikingly handsome young man, whose good looks never fail to elicit admiration from Filipinas of all ages. In addition, some such photographs show Manecio's bare torso to be covered with numerous tattoos, including large letters spelling out KILABOT (The Terror) across his lower abdomen. Moreover, besides these magically endowed tattoos, Manecio supposedly possessed a stone amulet—shaped like a turtle entwined with a serpent—as well as a number of distinctly Masonic¹⁴ charms which were believed to render him virtually invulnerable to harm.¹⁵

As in the film, Manecio enjoyed a reputation in Cavite as a kind of "noble robber"—a victim of injustice himself, a provider of local justice and protection, and a Robin Hood figure.¹⁶ Indeed, Manecio's criminal career began with the death of his father, Juan "Putik" Manecio, at the hands of cattle rustlers in the town of Dasmariñas, Cavite, in October 1944.¹⁷ Subsequently, according to Manecio's own claims in an exclusive interview with a newspaper correspondent in 1956, he faced continuing harassment from his father's killers, who attempted to murder him and later arranged for his arrest and conviction on trumped-up charges of "robbery in band." Imprisoned, Manecio escaped in 1951 after learning of the death of his brother at the hands of his enemies. Reincarcerated soon thereafter, he escaped again in 1955, allegedly incensed about cattle rustling in the barrios of Dasmariñas and two neighboring municipalities. Once freed, he is said to have assumed the role of a local Robin Hood. As one Cavite politician noted years later:

When there are thefts or highway robberies or hold-ups, the victims do not seek help from the government, since they do not expect any results from

¹³ Clodualdo Del Mundo Jr., "'Nardong Putik': Makatotohanan?" in *The Urian Anthology 1970-1979*, ed. Nicanor Tiongson (Manila: Manuel L. Morato, 1983), pp. 148-149. Translation by the author.

¹⁴ Cavite has traditionally been the most important locus of Masonic activity in the Philippines outside of Manila. See Teodoro M. Kalaw, *La Masonería Filipina* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1920), p. 195.

¹⁵ Moises Timbang Saunar alias Esing Cavite, interview with the author, November 7, 1992, New Bilibid Prison, Muntinlupa.

¹⁶ See Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, pp. 42-43.

¹⁷ Church notarial records maintained at the Parish of the Immaculate Conception in the Poblacion of Dasmariñas, Cavite cite "Gun Shot" as the *causa mortis*.

that corner. The word on the street is that they take their complaints instead to Nardong Putik and immediately get the justice they are asking for.¹⁸

In its exclusive focus on the picaresque exploits of Manecio alias Putik, this narrative downplays the social, political, and economic circumstances that underlay his unparalleled longevity as a Cavite *mafia* boss. In fact, while Manecio's father was a small-time rice farmer, José Barzaga, the sponsor and godfather or *padrino* at Leonardo's baptism as an infant in 1925,¹⁹ belonged to a wealthy Dasmariñas clan whose scions included prominent lawyers and politicians in the town.²⁰ Thus Juan "Putik" Manecio and, by extension, his son Leonardo claimed a long-standing affiliation with a major political faction in Dasmariñas that centered around the intermarried Carungcong, Mangubat, and Barzaga families.²¹ By contrast, the cattle rustlers who killed Manecio's father in 1944, for example, were in fact members of a so-called guerrilla group whose members comprised the opposing political faction in the town. Throughout much of the Japanese Occupation period (1941-1945), this armed band competed with a rival group under Colonel Estanislao Carungcong (4th Infantry Unit) for control over "turf" in the town, whose residents were "taxed" in exchange for "protection."²² While nominally deployed against the local Japanese garrisons, these "guerrilla groups" in fact spent their time rustling cattle. As one Dasmariñas resident later recalled:

It was about three thirty in the morning when I heard our old clock strike which woke me up. Two gunshots were heard from a distance. After a little while many more shots were heard. I heard my wife who had been awakened at that time murmur, "Oh, those guerrillas. Some persons have been robbed of their carabaos."²³

Drawn into local factional politics in Dasmariñas after the murder of his father, Manecio soon enlisted as a full-time armed retainer in the services of the Carungcongs, Mangubats, and Barzagas.²⁴ When pre-war Dasmariñas Mayor Felicísimo Carungcong was reappointed following Liberation in 1945, Manecio

¹⁸ Rogelio L. Ordoñez, "Ang Kabite at Ang Mga Montano," *Asia-Philippines Leader* 1,4 (April 30, 1971): 47. Translation by the author.

¹⁹ Baptismal Records of the Parish of the Immaculate Concepcion, Dasmariñas, Cavite, p. 192.

²⁰ See the references to Francisco Barzaga in "Historical Data of Dasmariñas" prepared by the Dasmariñas Elementary School Teachers, School Year 1952-1953 in *Historical Data Papers* (Manila: National Museum, 1953).

²¹ While the Carungcongs predominated in politics and the Barzagas in the legal profession, the Mangubats owned over two hundred hectares of prime irrigated rice land and a major rice mill in Dasmariñas.

²² See Melinda C. Tria, "The Resistance Movement in Cavite, 1942-1945" (MA thesis, University of the Philippines, 1966), pp. 21, 29-34.

²³ "A Memorable Incident During the Concentration of the People in the Town of Dasmariñas, Cavite by Japanese on December 17, 1944," in "Historical Data of Dasmariñas" in *Historical Data Papers*.

²⁴ As Hobsbawm notes: ". . . where landowning families fight and feud, make and break family alliances, dispute heritages with arms, the stronger accumulating wealth and influence over the broken bones of the weaker, the scope for bands of fighting men led by the disgruntled losers is naturally very large." Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, p. 95.

joined the town police force. In 1946, however, the newly appointed Governor of Cavite named a member of the anti-Carungcong faction as the new Dasmariñas Mayor. Dismissed from the town police force, Manecio reportedly found work as a bus driver but in 1947 was arrested by Philippine Constabulary officers and charged with kidnapping, murder, robbery in band, and illegal possession of firearms. Acquitted of all but the last charge, he served a six-month sentence in the national penitentiary in Muntinlupa. Returning to Cavite in 1948, he remained a target of harassment by remnants of the anti-Carungcong guerrilla group and their allies elsewhere in Cavite. After working briefly for the Mangubats on their fishing fleet in Manila Bay, Manecio returned to Cavite in 1950 to face charges of robbery in band, a crime of which he was convicted and sentenced to eighteen months in Muntinlupa. In September 1951, however, he again escaped from Muntinlupa and returned to Cavite.

During these early years, Manecio served as a mere *bata-bata* or henchman of the Carungcong and Mangubat clans in Dasmariñas. In Cavite during this period, elections were notoriously violent and local politicians deployed scores of armed retainers as bodyguards, campaigners, assassins, and election-day enforcers of vote-buying and fraud. Viewed against the backdrop of the local elections held in November of 1947 and 1951, the timing of Manecio's imprisonment in March 1947 and "escape" from Muntinlupa in September 1951 thus appears more the product of orchestration than of coincidence. If Manecio's enemies arranged for his arrest, conviction, and imprisonment to keep him out of Dasmariñas for the 1947 elections, so must the Carungcongs and Mangubats have helped to engineer his early departure from Muntinlupa in time for the 1951 campaign.

Provincial-level political developments in Cavite inaugurated the second phase in Manecio's outlaw career. Manecio's patrons, the Mangubats and Carungcongs, enjoyed close ties to Senator Justiniano Montano, Sr., and enlisted their henchman in his employ.²⁵ In September 1952, the mayor of Maragondon, a remote Cavite town, was kidnapped and stabbed to death along with the police chief and two municipal policemen. A preliminary investigation implicated Senator Montano, the Vice Mayor and two municipal councilors of Maragondon, and several Montano henchmen from elsewhere in Cavite, including Manecio.²⁶ PC officers loyal to then Governor Camerino (Montano's arch-rival) summarily arrested all the suspects, including the Senator. In the subsequent trial, witnesses claimed that a Montano flunky had brought Manecio to a meeting with the Senator where the so-called "Maragondon Massacre" was planned. Under considerable pressure, Manecio corroborated this account and confessed his guilt. In 1954, however, the election to the presidency of Ramon Magsaysay, Montano's close ally, and the sworn testimony on Montano's behalf of such political luminaries as Manila Mayor Arsenio Lacson, led to the dismissal of the case against the Senator. Left behind bars as the "fall guy" in the Maragondon case, Manecio had only Montano to thank for his fate.

²⁵ Over the years, Montano supported various Carungcongs in bids for municipal office in Dasmariñas and careers within the Philippine Constabulary. He likewise showed special consideration towards the Mangubats, whose construction company won numerous government contracts for public works projects.

²⁶ "Information," filed September 19, 1952 in Manila by Special Prosecutors Eпитacio Panganiban and Felix Q. Antonio in *People of the Philippines vs. Justiniano Montano, Magno Iruquin, Mariano de Raya, Leonardo Manecio alias Nardong Putik, alias Kilabot, et al.* (Cavite City: Court of the First Instance of Cavite, 7th Judicial District, 1952).

Though abandoned by Montano, Manecio still had close ties to his long-time patrons in Dasmariñas as well as growing links to those most appreciative of his testimony against the Senator. In July 1955, Manecio “escaped” from the Constabulary’s provincial stockade in Imus, aided by officers reporting to acting Governor Dominador Mangubat, Manecio’s hometown benefactor.²⁷ Thus freed, he was available to assist the Mangubats and Carungcongs in the closely contested local elections in Dasmariñas four months later. However, the election in November 1955 of Delfin Montano, the Senator’s son, as Cavite Provincial Governor removed Manecio from the protection of the provincial law-enforcement authorities.

It was in this context that Manecio first emerged as a *mafia* boss in his own right, an outlaw with a private criminal monopoly not reducible to the protection or sponsorship of any single law-enforcement authority. By early 1956, reports began to surface in the Manila newspapers about the activities of “Nardong Putik” in Cavite. Claiming as his bailiwick the neighboring towns of Dasmariñas, Gen. Trias, and Imus, Manecio was described as having eliminated cattle rustling and imposed a system of protection payments—collected in cash or kind—on landowners and tenant farmers alike. Residents of these towns interviewed by the author in 1991 and 1992 recall this “protection racket” as most favorable to the owners of rice mills and large landholdings in these towns. Tenant farmers lacking in influence with the local authorities, by contrast, are said to have borne the brunt of Manecio’s exactions. Members of Manecio’s *tropa* (gang), recruited from among his local network of relatives and criminal accomplices, dealt severely with farmers and local officials who were less than fully cooperative. The gang’s occasional cattle rustling escapades in other nearby towns supplemented these regular “protection” remittances, as victims agreed to pay out “brokerage fees” to Manecio for “retrieving” and returning their stolen carabaos.

A confluence of economic and political circumstances combined to facilitate Manecio’s effective monopoly over cattle rustling in the municipalities of Dasmariñas, Gen. Trias, and Imus. Comprising two friar estates during the Spanish era, these three contiguous towns had evolved into a rice-bowl zone of intensive *palay* (wet-rice) cultivation, with ten thousand hectares of irrigated paddy plowed and harrowed by some four thousand carabaos.²⁸ Tenant farmers cultivating small parcels tilled most of this land, owing half of their produce to landlords and delivering much of their remaining share to local rice millers, traders, and moneylenders. Living at the margins of subsistence and lacking in local political clout, the sharecroppers were highly vulnerable to cattle rustlers and thus paid Manecio out of their share of the harvest.

Moreover, unlike other rice-bowl towns in Cavite such as Naic and Tanza, the adjoining municipalities of Dasmariñas, Gen. Trias, and Imus comprised a zone in which Manecio enjoyed nearly complete political protection. In Gen. Trias and Imus, he won the backing of ex-governor and Montano foe Dominador Camerino, whose political career had long been supported by the two towns’ most prominent landed families. While Camerino’s protégés won re-election to the mayorships of Gen. Trias

²⁷ Documents presented by Manecio after his capture in 1958 included a PC identification card and authorization papers signed by a certain Lt. Fabian Ver (!).

²⁸ See *Census of the Philippines 1948, Volume II, Part I: Report by Province for Census of Agriculture: Abra to Cebu* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1953), pp. 535, 544; and *Census Of The Philippines 1960: Agriculture, Volume I - Report by Province: Cavite* (Manila: Bureau of the Census and Statistics, 1963), pp. 17-4, 17-18.

and Imus in 1955, Senator Montano's son defeated Camerino for the provincial governorship and thus assumed control over Cavite's constabulary command. Against these hostile provincial authorities, Camerino and his backers in Gen. Trias and Imus thus supported Manecio as a counterforce to insure protection from cattle rustlers and to keep the Montanos' supporters in these towns—including prominent landed families such as the Triases of Gen. Trias—on the defensive. Moreover, as newly elected Montano mayors in other towns worked for selective implementation of 1955 agrarian reform legislation against their landed opponents,²⁹ the large landowning families in Gen. Trias and Imus loyal to Camerino used Manecio's presence to discourage tenant farmers from pressing for more favorable tenancy conditions or expropriation proceedings now provided for by law.³⁰ Meanwhile, in Dasmariñas, the newly elected mayor, Remigio Carungcong, while a Montano protégé, belonged to the same clique of families that had backed Manecio since his father's death in 1944.

Following the elections of 1957, however, developments in provincial and national politics began to conspire against Manecio. Accused of attempting to assassinate Governor Montano in 1956 and blamed for the November 1957 election-day killing of the Cavite PC Commander, Manecio became the target of a vigorous manhunt. Demands for Manecio's capture took on a new sense of urgency following the ascension to the presidency in 1957 of Carlos Garcia, whose son-in-law belonged to a prominent Dasmariñas clan at odds with Manecio's sponsors, the Carungcongs and Mangubats. In May 1958, PC troops finally captured Manecio in a rice mill in Kawit. Despite the best efforts of his lawyer, Manecio returned to the penitentiary in Muntinlupa, sentenced to life imprisonment for his many crimes.

Manecio remained in Muntinlupa for over a decade, biding his time while the Montanos further entrenched themselves in power in Cavite.³¹ Prison guards remember him as a well respected and feared prisoner, whose status was greatly enhanced by the frequent visits of prominent Cavite politicians to his cell. Indeed, Manecio won appointment first as the "mayor" of a special ward for mentally disturbed prisoners, and subsequently as the "mayor" of the ward for juvenile delinquents, a position in which he played a key role in supplying young boys to older prisoners and in quashing a number of prison riots. Following the election to the presidency in 1965 of Ferdinand Marcos, an arch enemy of the Montanos, Manecio gained additional privileges. Reclassified as a "living-out" prisoner, he slept outside the maximum security prison and was free to move around the prison grounds so long as he reported to his guards three times a day. According to one source, Manecio was even allowed to make supervised visits to Cavite while still nominally serving his life sentence.³² In October 1969, weeks before the presidential and congressional elections, hearing rumors that the Montanos were plotting his

²⁹ Naic Mayor Macario Peña strictly enforced the newly legislated seventy-three share tenancy rule in favor of tenant farmers, while Carmona Mayor Cesar Casal engineered the expropriation of three large estates in his town.

³⁰ On Senator Montano's prominent role in the passage of this legislation, see Frances Lucille Starner, *Magsaysay and The Peasantry: The Agrarian Impact on Philippine Politics, 1953-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), pp. 136, 149-150, 181-184.

³¹ See Sidel, "Walking in the Shadow of the Big Man," pp. 138-144.

³² Inspector Diomedes Bador, interview with the author, November 7, 1992, New Bilibid Prison, Muntinlupa.

murder, Manecio “escaped,” with the blessings of his political patrons and prison officials.³³

Once at large, Manecio returned to his former bailiwick in the towns of Dasmariñas, Gen. Trias, and Imus. His long-time mentor, Mayor Carungcong, remained in office in Dasmariñas, a Camerino crony held the mayorship in Imus, and members of the Carungcong clan had risen to high-ranking positions in the Constabulary in Cavite. Mayors closely linked to Camerino also afforded Manecio protection in two other nearby municipalities. Moreover, while the Montanos still held the Cavite governorship and congressional seat, and, through their protégés, many municipal positions, President Marcos had launched an offensive against their political machine, sending loyalist Constabulary officers to Cavite. In his election-related and criminal activities, Manecio thus joined forces with a Palace-backed, province-wide effort to dislodge the Montanos.

While these political developments worked in Manecio’s favor, economic change had begun to transform the geography of crime in his old bailiwick. On the one hand, cattle rustling was no longer the most lucrative racket in these municipalities. By the late 1960s, the towns of Dasmariñas, Gen. Trias, and Imus saw declining hectareage devoted to rice cultivation and a decreasing reliance by local farmers on carabaos (in favor of tractors, harvesting machines, and modern threshing equipment).³⁴ On the other hand, the proximity of these municipalities to the evolving national capital region presented increasingly attractive opportunities for criminal activities geared toward the Manila market. Beginning in the 1950s, these towns had begun to establish themselves (under Manecio’s aegis) as a base for extensive carnapping operations: several “syndicates” maintained repair shops where jeepneys and cars stolen in Manila were overhauled for resale. By the late 1960s, these carnapping operations had grown more successful and more lucrative. Meanwhile, the proximity of the nation’s premier metropolis encouraged the cultivation of marijuana in these towns for sale on the expanding urban market.³⁵

As in the 1955-1958 period, Manecio assumed the role of the *mafia* boss in these towns. Banking on the privileged relations he enjoyed with the mayors and policemen of these municipalities (and with friendly elements in the provincial Constabulary) Manecio imposed his “protection” over the extensive illegal economies in his domain. Landowners and tenant farmers paid for “protection” from cattle rustlers, while car thieves and owners of marijuana plantations similarly submitted to his rule. Victims of carnappers and cattle rustlers likewise offered Manecio “brokerage fees” for arranging the retrieval of their purloined property.³⁶

In some respects, however, Manecio’s *mafia* personality had changed with the passing of time. One photograph of Manecio taken during this period reveals a garishly dressed gangster in his mid-forties, sporting a noticeable paunch, a large gold necklace, and carefully curled forelocks, the contrast with his 1950s image

³³ Former prison officials interviewed by the author in January and November 1992 readily admitted their collusion in Manecio’s “escape.”

³⁴ 1971 *Census of Agriculture: Cavite, Volume I* (Manila: National Census and Statistics Office, 1975), pp. 4-50.

³⁵ National Bureau of Investigation, *Annual Report Fiscal Year 1970* (Manila: Department of Justice, 1970), p. 19.

³⁶ Justiniano S. Montano, Sr., Privilege Speech before the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines, February 11, 1971.

strikingly reminiscent of Elvis Presley's transformation over the years. Reports of Manecio's activities following his 1969 escape also depict the outlaw as relying heavily on a group of M16-toting bodyguards, consorting frequently with prominent politicians and Constabulary officers, and owning a marijuana plantation and other properties in Cavite. Manecio's legendary charisma and Robin Hood reputation no longer appear as prominent elements of his power.³⁷

As in 1958, a series of political developments led to Manecio's undoing in 1971. In February 1971, Manecio allegedly murdered two agents of the National Bureau of Investigation who were investigating reports of a marijuana plantation under his protection in Barrio Navarro, Gen. Trias.³⁸ A well-publicized NBI manhunt for Manecio ensued.³⁹ Meanwhile, shifting alignments in Cavite in anticipation of the November 1971 elections began to complicate Manecio's situation. Plotting to undermine the Montanos' grip on Cavite, Marcos had recruited notorious smuggler and former Montano crony Lino Bocalan to run as the Nacionalistas' candidate for the Cavite governorship, with Camerino as his running mate. Enormously wealthy and well connected from his illicit activities, Bocalan brought along with him key former Montano supporters—such as the Carungcong of Dasmariñas—into the Nacionalista camp. While the scenario of an alliance between Bocalan, Camerino, and the Carungcong against the Montanos promised an end to Manecio's divided loyalties, this scenario dashed the hopes of up-and-coming Imus-based politician Juanito "Johnny" Remulla, who, though also a Nacionalista, aspired to the Cavite governorship himself. Vying for a provincial board seat in the November 1971 elections, Remulla found himself at odds with Bocalan, the Carungcong, and, by extension, Manecio, whose activities and influence in Imus intruded upon Remulla's home turf. With the assistance of his personal bodyguard, Demetrio "Metring" Villanueva, Remulla is said to have covertly assisted an NBI team in tracking Manecio down. In October 1971, less than a month before the local elections, an encounter allegedly took place between Manecio and members of an NBI team on the national road in Kawit, in which the famed outlaw was shot to death.⁴⁰ Knowledgeable sources, however, dispute the NBI's account of Manecio's death, claiming instead that the gangster was poisoned and knocked unconscious beforehand in a nearby resort and then propped up against the steering wheel of the car in which his bloodied corpse was subsequently found.⁴¹

Thus the famed Caviteño outlaw's career came to a close, as colorfully—and as violently—as it had begun. Revealingly, Manecio's death came not as a result of declining support but through a complex series of developments in factional politics at the local, provincial, and national levels. Tellingly, also, his career ended in the

³⁷ Moises "Esing Cavite" Timbang Saunar, interview with the author, November 7, 1992, New Bilibid Prison, Muntinlupa; Ligorio "Toting" Naval, interview with the author, November 19, 1992, Alima, Bacoor, Cavite.

³⁸ By some accounts, the NBI investigation and visit to Cavite occasioned extortionate demands for "protection" that Manecio violently rebuffed.

³⁹ National Bureau of Investigation Director Epimaco A. Velasco, interview with the author, October 28, 1992, NBI Headquarters, Taft Avenue, Manila.

⁴⁰ Special Agent Epimaco A. Velasco, "Leonardo Manecio y Malihan @ "NARDONG PUTIK"," Report of October 10, 1971 Re: Killing of two (2) NBI Agents (Manila: National Bureau of Investigation, 1971).

⁴¹ These sources include former close associates of Manecio, a long-time Cavite-based newspaper reporter, and a former police chief of a Cavite municipality.

heat of an election campaign, at the hands of law-enforcement officials, and in a dispute over the “protection” and control of “turf” in the lowland towns of Cavite. Overall, thirteen Caviteños lost their lives in the course of the 1971 local election campaign, and three Cavite mayors fell to assassins’ bullets the following year. In this context, Manecio’s death appeared not as the tragic end of a popular Robin Hood, but as merely another casualty of intensified factionalism in a province of political gangsters and gangster politicians.

II. CAVITE’S GODFATHER?: JOSE “DON PEPE” OYSON

Followed shortly thereafter by President Marcos’ declaration of martial law in September 1972, Manecio’s death marked the end of an era for criminality in Cavite. By the 1970s, cattle rustling had fallen by the wayside, as tractors replaced carabaos and industrial estates and residential subdivisions supplanted rice fields as the mainstays of Cavite’s suburban northern towns. Moreover, with the construction of the Coastal Road, Gen. Aguinaldo Highway, and South Expressway, passenger traffic became less vulnerable to highwaymen on remote Cavite roads. In addition, after the closing of the US naval station at Sangley Point, Cavite City no longer played host to a lively illegal economy centered around gun-running, luxury contraband smuggling, and prostitution. Meanwhile, the creation of an Integrated National Police subordinated to the Philippine Constabulary in 1975 and the subsequent creation of regional PC/AFP commands removed law enforcement from the hands of local elected officials and effectively centralized policing powers in the hands of top Manila-based PC and AFP officers. In subsequent years, such rackets as carnapping on the outskirts of Metro Manila and smuggling in Manila Bay fell largely under the discretion of PC colonels and generals rather than Cavite mayors and governors.

Even as these developments drew control over criminal rackets away from the hands of Cavite-based *mafia* bosses, the economic transformation of Metro Manila and neighboring provinces offered new opportunities for criminal activities in Cavite. With the closer integration of the Philippines into a regional economy in the 1970s and 1980s, the province fell into the orbit of big-time criminal elements operating in Manila and linked to international syndicates in Hong Kong and Japan. Thus, even as protection for criminal activities in Cavite was effectively “nationalized” with the centralization of law-enforcement, a rapid internationalization occurred in the production and distribution of illegal goods in the province. This trend has perhaps been most evident in the “illegal recruiting” of overseas contract workers, cases of which today fill court dockets in Cavite much as cattle rustling did thirty years ago. Yet while scores of fly-by-night illegal recruitment agencies have preyed upon unsuspecting Cavite residents in recent years, none has established a monopolistic position in the industry. In the international drug trade, by contrast, one well known *mafia* boss—José “Don Pepe” Oyson—imposed his rule over Cavite.

Like “Nardong Putik” before him, Oyson was the subject of a posthumous film biography, “Don Pepe Oyson: The Rise and Fall of a Drug Lord,” which was filmed and released in 1990, less than a year after his death at the hands of a Manila policeman detailed with the NBI. Unlike the Ramon Revilla classic of 1972, however, this action movie, starring the lesser known John Regala, was noteworthy neither as

a commercial success nor as a memorable pathbreaker in the genre. In fact, the melodramatic "Don Pepe Oyson" presents the famed drug lord not as a popular Caviteño folk hero armed with supernatural powers, charisma, and Robin Hood appeal, but rather as an ordinary Manileño driven by desperation and opportunism to criminal entrepreneurship in the illegal narcotics trade.

As the film opens, Pepe Oyson appears as a lower-class Manileño struggling to stay alive, provide for his family, and maintain his male pride in the face of constant dangers, hardships, and humiliations. Poorly armed and poorly paid, Pepe works as a warehouse security guard, daily defending himself against thieves and against the complaints of his materialistic wife, who soon leaves him (and their daughter) for a richer man. A burly but cuddly bear of a man, Pepe is fearsome in combat but sweetly affectionate with his daughter and protective of his sister, whose lodging and schooling he supports with his meager salary. Concerned for his family, Pepe engages in violence only when provoked—by local drunkards in the squatter settlement where he lives, or by his sister's boyfriend, a policeman who mocks Pepe's low status and subjects his sister to pre-marital sexual intercourse and, after a shotgun wedding at Oyson's insistence, wife battering.

Desperate for money to pay for his ailing daughter's hospital bills, Oyson accepts a friend's invitation to work as a *bata-bata* of the drug lord Don Ochoa. First tasked as the driver for dangerous exchanges of drugs and cash, Oyson soon earns a promotion with an assignment to kill Ochoa's arch rival. Though successful in this task, Oyson loses his nerve when a journalist marked for assassination by Ochoa begs for mercy, appealing to him as a fellow family man and father. Reprimanded by Ochoa for this lapse, Oyson threatens the startled "drug lord" and stalks away, starting his own rival gang with former members of Ochoa's entourage. By killing off Ochoa's couriers and establishing his own network of dealers, Oyson earns the ire of his former boss. A victim of his own success, "Don Pepe" devolves into an obese, garishly dressed, decadent, and emotionally distant version of his former self. Gunfights claim the lives of Oyson's sister, daughter, and closest henchmen. In the last scene, he mounts a desperate solo attack on Ochoa's mansion, armed with a machine gun and wearing a white suit. Predictably, the film closes with Oyson's wife sobbing and wailing "Pepe, Pepe . . ." over his blood-spattered corpse.

Considerably less idealized than the film version of Leonardo Manecio alias Nardong Putik's life, "Don Pepe Oyson: The Rise and Fall of a Drug Lord" portrays the slain *mafia* boss as a tragic hero, whose fall from grace recalls Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) in the later *Godfather* movies. Originally an honest, hard-working family man, Pepe is driven by desperation and disillusionment into a life of violence and crime. Demonstrably impressive with a pistol or his bare hands, he gradually loses his martial prowess and increasingly relies on henchmen and high-powered firearms to defend himself and intimidate his enemies. Once modest in his income and personal style, he slips into a haughty and garish "godfather" role modelled after "Don" Ochoa. Lacking in charisma, amulets, and Robin Hood appeal, Oyson winds up not as a primitive rebel but as a crude and mean-spirited gangster-entrepreneur, a *mafia* Don.

In its exclusive focus on the tragic fate of José "Don Pepe" Oyson, the film relegates to virtual obscurity the social milieu of his criminal career. For example, the film neglects to provide key details about Oyson's illegal activities: the illegal drugs he is selling, his sources, customers, and market. Similarly, Oyson's geographical whereabouts are somewhat obscure: most of the film takes place somewhere in

Metro Manila, yet occasional shots depict an Oyson compound in a distinctly rural, bucolic setting. The law-enforcement agencies of the Philippine state, moreover, are completely peripheral, appearing in only a few scenes, and then as weak, ineffectual, and easily neutralized or corrupted. In one scene, a police colonel is shown to accept an envelope stuffed with pesos from Oyson; in another, junior police officers claim that the drug lord is "untouchable." "How can we catch him?" they grumble. "No one provides information, no one files complaints, no one talks." As in the legend of Nardong Putik, the law-enforcement agencies of the Philippine state appear chronically weak in the face of "rampant," unchecked criminality.

In contrast with Leonardo Manecio alias Nardong Putik, José "Don Pepe" Oyson, as the film version of his life suggests, was neither a native of Cavite nor a fugitive from the law. Born in 1934 in Binondo, Manila's Chinatown, Oyson was a tall, athletic youth whose physical prowess allowed him to rise above his family's modest means. Finishing high school in 1956, he won a college basketball scholarship offered by Roberto Oca, the waterfront labor leader and politician.⁴² Working part-time for Oca to help pay for his tuition, Oyson also became a star basketball player on the team that won the intercollegiate championship in 1959. While Oyson evidently never graduated from college, basketball stardom allowed him to mix with the likes of Oca, well-connected sports journalists, and other prominent figures active in off-court betting (and game-rigging). Through these associates, Oyson evidently gained access to businessmen, politicians, and law-enforcement officials involved in smuggling activities in Manila Bay. By most accounts, Oyson spent the better part of the 1960s providing muscle for smuggling operations along the coastal shores of the city.

By the 1970s, moreover, Oyson's involvement in this illegal commerce had drawn him southwards to the shores of Cavite. He had taken as his common-law wife Erlinda Figueroa, whose family hailed from Tanza, a Cavite town best known as the base for the smuggling of foreign ("blue-seal") cigarettes. Newspaper reports list Oyson among members of Cavite-based smuggling syndicates arrested in 1976 and 1979 by Constabulary officers for the "ship-side" smuggling of contraband cigarettes. In these ventures Oyson appears to have joined remnants of a syndicate once run by Lino Bocalan, the avowed "fisherman" from Tanza who served briefly as Governor of Cavite (1971-72) before being suspended and imprisoned by Marcos following the declaration of martial law. By some accounts, Oyson also engaged in ship-side smuggling of textiles and electronic goods on behalf of other syndicates based in Metro Manila.⁴³

In the early 1980s, moreover, a confluence of fortuitous circumstances provided Oyson with the ingredients of further commercial success. First of all, a Constabulary colonel related to Oyson's common-law wife evidently became a close aide of Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile. Meanwhile, one of Oyson's smuggling partners and financiers, the Binondo-based merchant Benito Tan alias Go Pok alias "Manok" (Chicken), had won the protection of AFP Chief of Staff Fabian Ver in his illegal

⁴² For details of Oca's labor racketeering activities on the waterfront in Manila's South Harbor, see Johnny C. Tan, "The Waterfront Controversy and Our Civil Liberties," letter of January 11, 1963 to Joaquin M. Roces, General Manager, Manila Times Publishing Company, found in the "Oca, Roberto" file in the Lopez Museum library, BenPres Building, Pasig, Metro Manila.

⁴³ Commander Guillermo Paraida, interview with the author, January 1992, Economic Intelligence and Investigation Bureau (EIIB) Headquarters, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Paraida served as the Chief of the Bureau of Customs' Intelligence Division from 1981 to 1986.

currency transactions (“dollar salting”) and other criminal activities.⁴⁴ Moreover, Oyson himself, as the owner of a prominent nightclub on Roxas Boulevard and the proprietor of one of the largest cockpits in the Las Piñas/Parañaque area of Metro Manila (just north of Cavite), had “entertained” and befriended numerous policemen from various municipalities in the national capital region, especially Las Piñas, Parañaque, and Pasay City. Finally, by the early 1980s, perhaps through the Hong Kong business partners of his Binondo-based financier, Oyson had brought in shipments of an illegal and highly addictive drug previously unavailable in the Philippines, “shabu” or methamphetamine hydrochloride, the East Asian version of what is known today in the United States as “crack.” Within a few years, this drug had gained an expanding and enduring market in the densely populated national capital region.

Enjoying these multiple commercial advantages, Oyson had by the mid-1980s emerged as the godfather of a multi-million peso criminal empire that spanned Manila Bay from Cavite to Bataan. With municipal and provincial law-enforcement personnel and other officials on his payroll,⁴⁵ Oyson was free to smuggle in—and to distribute—“shabu”⁴⁶ and other contraband almost anywhere along Manila Bay.⁴⁷ In 1985, an exposé published by a Bataan-based newspaper described in great detail Oyson’s smuggling and drug trafficking operations in Bataan, Cavite, and Metro Manila as well as the collusion of local civilian and police officials in these localities.⁴⁸ Soon thereafter, the author of this newspaper exposé disappeared after he was abducted by armed men. A subsequent investigation revealed that he had been stabbed to death, his remains burned, placed in a plastic bag, and dumped in the sea off the coast of Cavite.⁴⁹ This investigation led to the arrest and trial—for kidnapping and murder—of Oyson and three other men, including a hired killer (allegedly paid fifty thousand pesos for his part in the deed), Oyson’s cock handler, and a Philippine Constabulary Narcotics Command (PC-NARCOM) agent so beholden to the “drug lord” that he had the name “Don Pepe Oyson” tattooed on his body.⁵⁰ Two PC sergeants, described as a close friend and a *compadre* (baptismal co-parent) of Oyson, faced related charges in military court.

⁴⁴ On the connections between Benito Tan and AFP Chief of Staff General Fabian Ver, see PC/AFP Colonel Gerardo N. Flores, “Affidavit” of August 27, 1987, Annex “B” of Civil Case No. 0063, Go Pok alias Benito Tan, Petitioner, versus The Presidential Commission on Good Government and The People of the Philippines, Respondents (Manila: Sandiganbayan, Second Division).

⁴⁵ Knowledgeable Caviteños claim that Oyson included the mayors and police chiefs of several coastal towns in Cavite on his payroll, and that he gained the cooperation of the security aide of the provincial governor in distributing *shabu* in the province.

⁴⁶ Oyson also reportedly set up “laboratories” in Cavite, Las Piñas, and Parañaque for the “re-cooking” of the drug.

⁴⁷ Ligorio “Toting” Naval, interview with the author, November 11, 1992, Alima, Bacoar, Cavite.

⁴⁸ Timoteo Olivares, “Untouchable Smugglers Exposed, Bataan politician linked as brains,” *Luzon Tribune*, January 13-19, 1985.

⁴⁹ See the various documents included in Criminal Case No. 20507, People of the Philippines versus Jose Santos Oyson @ “Don Pepe,” Raymundo Bagtas y Caparas @ “Reddie,” Herminio Catan, and Napoleon Ibañez (Makati: Regional Trial Court, National Capital Judicial Region, Branch 144, 1985).

⁵⁰ “Opposition to the Motion to Bail Filed by Accused Oyson, Bagtas, Cruto, and San Miguel,” filed by Vicente D. Millora, Private Prosecutor, January 4, 1986, pp. 2-3; and “Transcript” of

The trial revealed Oyson's extensive network of friends and accomplices among various law-enforcement agencies.⁵¹ Moreover, during the course of the trial, Oyson was first allowed to reside in the Makati Medical Center and later released on bail, while his accomplices, supposedly held without bail in the Makati jail, spent evenings at Oyson's nightclub on Roxas Boulevard in the company of the Makati jail warden and slept in the air-conditioned office of the Makati police chief. Unsurprisingly, Oyson and the other suspects were acquitted on a technicality in 1988.

Despite the inconvenience and negative publicity caused by this case, Oyson retained firm control over his criminal empire. From a strategically located base in the southern Metro Manila municipalities of Las Piñas and Parañaque, his illegal activities evidently expanded into *jueteng* operations in Cavite and professional basketball game fixing. Moreover, Oyson evidently had a hand in facilitating the transshipment of heroin flown into Manila's international airport (conveniently located in Parañaque) and bound for the US market.⁵² By 1989, Oyson's group ranked as one of the three major drug syndicates operating in the country.⁵³ Numerous high-ranking military and law-enforcement officials, and members of the police forces of several Metro Manila and Cavite municipalities, were still said to be on his payroll.⁵⁴

In the Las Piñas Narcotics section, Major Gonzalo Gonzales and several of his subordinates are said to comprise the largest membership of policemen in the drug cartel belonging to Don Pepe. The top henchman of this cartel is a certain Atong, who operates in the Las Piñas, Parañaque, and Cavite areas. This Atong is said to be untouchable because of his connections with police authorities. The NBI estimated that 40 percent of policemen are connected with the drug cartel.⁵⁵

In this period of political uncertainty and rapid change in the military and law-enforcement hierarchies, Oyson had to work hard to maintain his multiple forms of protection. The escalating tensions between Defense Minister Enrile and AFP Chief Ver, for example, may well have played a role in Oyson's arrest and indictment in 1985 for the Bataan-based newspaper reporter's kidnap-murder, as suggested by the persistent involvement of Justice Minister Estelito Mendoza, an Enrile ally, in the

Hearing, held December 22, 1986, before Hon. Candido P. Villanueva, Presiding Judge of this Court, p. 17, found among the documents relating to Criminal Case No. 20507.

⁵¹ See "Sworn Statement of Mr. Jose Oyson y Santos Given to INV AGT [Investigating Agent] I Virgilio T. Publico in the Presence of ILT [Investigating Team Leader] Gil C. Meneses, Here at the Office of the Chief, Special Investigation Branch National Capital District, Criminal Investigation Service, Philippine Constabulary Headquarters, Camp Crame, Quezon City, This 13th Day of May 1985."

⁵² US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) officials claim that Manila became a major transshipment point in the international heroin trade in the early 1980s. William C. Bish, Narcotics Attaché, US Embassy, interview with the author, January 21, 1994, US DEA office, Ramon V. Magsaysay Building, Roxas Boulevard, Malate, Manila.

⁵³ Senator Ernesto F. Herrera, "A Just War Against Drugs," Privilege Speech delivered on September 21, 1989, in *Speeches of the Senators: A Collection of Speeches by the Senators of the Philippines* (Manila: Senate, 1990), p. 168.

⁵⁴ Former EIIB and Customs intelligence officials told the author in January 1992 that the United States Drug Enforcement Administration has in its possession a videotape of high-ranking law-enforcement officials dancing with Oyson at his nightclub on Roxas Boulevard.

⁵⁵ Senator Ernesto F. Herrera, "A Just War Against Drugs," Privilege Speech delivered on October 12, 1989, in *Speeches of the Senators*, p. 175.

case. After the ouster of Marcos in 1986, moreover, Oyson had to hedge his bets more than ever. Foreseeing the restored Congress's discretion over law enforcement, he bankrolled the successful 1987 campaign of one candidate for the Parañaque seat in the House and maintained personal ties with a key member of the Senate. In addition, against the backdrop of numerous military coup attempts, he provided financial support to the Reform the Armed Forces Movement and allegedly assisted in the escape of renegade Lt. Col. Gregorio Honasan from a Navy prison ship in Manila Bay in April 1988. Meanwhile, through his nightclub, cockpit, supply of "shabu," and enormous wealth, Oyson remained the patron of ranking Constabulary officers and local policemen from Bataan, Cavite, and the southern municipalities of Metro Manila.

Ultimately, however, Oyson ran up against the Philippines' most ambitious law enforcer, Police General Alfredo Lim, whose appointment as Director of the National Bureau of Investigation in December 1989 led to Oyson's demise in early 1990. A much decorated officer in the Manila Police Department in the years before martial law, Lim was first relegated to a desk job and eventually banished to the Northern Police District in the 1970s and 1980s due to his alleged political loyalties to opponents of President Marcos.⁵⁶ Appointed as Superintendent of the Western Police District (WPD) following Marcos's ouster in 1986, Brigadier General Lim assumed control over law enforcement in such key areas as Binondo, Manila's Chinatown, and the port area. Having proved his allegiance through his heroic defense of the Aquino regime during several coup attempts, and cemented it by establishing warm relations with José "Peping" Cojuangco, the President's brother, Lim was personally promoted by Aquino in 1989 to the rank of Major General and the WPD was removed from the supervision of the Metropolitan Police Force and the Capital Command (CAPCOM). Aquino's move, which left Lim only nominally responsible to the PC/INP Chief, generated considerable resentment among the officers of the Constabulary, who had enjoyed more than a decade of PC/AFP domination over career policemen.

Lim's appointment, moreover, came in the midst of a brewing controversy over the prominent role of law-enforcement officers in the illegal narcotics trade. Senate hearings in the autumn of 1989 had led to published reports about three international drug syndicates operating in the Philippines—Oyson's group and two Binondo-based Chinese gangs—and to public allegations against ranking Constabulary officers reportedly involved in the drug trade, including the commanding officer of the PC Narcotics Command. Over the next few months, a number of the seventy drug traffickers who had been identified in the Senate hearings died in "shoot-outs" with law-enforcement agents. The most prominent victims were members of the Binondo-based Chinese gangs and their killers were mostly NARCOM personnel. The godfather of the Hong Kong-based "14-K Gang," moreover, was variously described as having died in a similar episode or as having left the country, escorted to the airport by an unidentified police general.

Enjoying the President's favor and importing numerous WPD protégés, Lim assumed the directorship of the National Bureau of Investigation in January 1990 and immediately launched a campaign to expand the NBI's role in the enforcement of

⁵⁶ See, for example, Miguel Deala Paruñgao, *The Manila Police Story* (Manila: Regal Printing Company, 1976), pp. 96-100, 171; and Miguel Deala Paruñgao, *The Lawmen And The Lawless* (Manila: Regal Printing Company, 1977), pp. 134-149.

“the law” in the illegal drug trade. In March 1990, WPD patrolmen detailed with the NBI accosted Oyson at a billiards tournament in Cubao, Quezon City, and “invited” him to the NBI headquarters in Manila for questioning. Alone with three NBI/WPD patrolmen in a police van while his bodyguards rode in a separate car, Oyson was shot dead, supposedly after attempting to grab the gun of one of the policemen. In subsequent months, other members of Oyson’s syndicate likewise fell victim to an intensified law-enforcement campaign.

Since Oyson’s demise in 1990, the drug trade has remained a highly profitable, and hotly contested, industry in Metro Manila and neighboring provinces such as Cavite. Rivalry between Lim’s NBI and the PC’s NARCOM over heroin transshipment, for example, led to a series of armed confrontations between agents of the two law-enforcement bodies in the summer of 1990. With the abolition of the Philippine Constabulary and the subordination of the newly created Philippine National Police to elected officials in 1990, moreover, the illegal drug trade has become more decentralized. In Las Piñas, Parañaque, Pasay City, and Cavite, elected municipal officials—and law-enforcement agents subordinate to them—have assumed control over the distribution of “shabu.” With local police forces responsible to local elected officials rather than a centralized military hierarchy, the powers of law-enforcement authorities at the national level are quite limited and the possibilities for centrally protected criminal monopolies severely circumscribed. As in the 1980s, the coastal Cavite towns today remain among the primary points of entry for the ship-side smuggling of shabu, yet the re-localization of law enforcement appears to have prevented a new “drug lord” from claiming Manila Bay for himself in the style of “Don Pepe.”

III. CRIME IN CAVITE: GEOGRAPHY, ORGANIZATION, REPRESENTATION

As the case studies of Leonardo Manecio alias “Nardong Putik” and José “Don Pepe” Oyson have made clear, Cavite’s most successful outlaws have been essentially predatory and conservative, their coercive resources deployed in pursuit of economic accumulation and in support of political domination. Whether in the service of gangster politicians or in league with kleptocratic Constabulary officers, these criminals have exacted “monopoly rents” and “predatory incomes,” first by reproducing and enforcing conditions of economic insecurity and limited access to scarce resources upon a captive population of rural and urban poor, and then by selling “protection” and illegal goods and services to this same captive population.

Moreover, as the two case studies have suggested, the rise and fall of Cavite’s most successful outlaws, and the longevity and scale of their criminal empires, have depended heavily upon privileged access to politicians and agents of the state’s law-enforcement apparatuses. Emerging where illegal economies of scale spanned multiple and/or overlapping police jurisdictions, these outlaws’ empires and monopolies on violence achieved a measure of autonomy irreducible to the protection of a single politician or law-enforcement agency. Ultimately, however, Cavite’s criminals rose and fell, flourished and faded, lived and died, at the sufferance of those controlling the coercive levers of the Philippine state, its court rooms and prisons, its enforcers and executioners. Imposing not “lawlessness” but rather “the law” upon society, criminals in this notoriously bandit-ridden province

have served essentially as sub-contracted law-enforcement agents, their successes bearing witness not to the state's supposed "weakness" but in fact to its "strength."

Viewed comparatively, the case studies of Leonardo Manecio alias Nardong Putik and José "Don Pepe" Oyson underscore the shifting geography, organization, and social representation of *mafia* activity in Cavite. In terms of geography, Manecio's construction of a cattle rustling empire in the 1950s in the northern towns of Cavite reflected a distinctive social terrain, characterized not by large landed estates but rather by share-cropping, scattered landholdings, wet-rice cultivation based on animal traction, economic insecurity among an impoverished class of share tenants, and proximity to metropolitan markets for stolen cattle.⁵⁷ Located "between wholesale markets of the city and the rural latifundia," Cavite's rice-bowl towns provided a "fertile field" for criminal predation and "protection" from both rampant cattle thievery and potential class conflict.⁵⁸

By the 1980s, socioeconomic change in Cavite had drastically altered the setting for criminal activity in the province. The mechanization of agriculture, the construction of paved highways, and the replacement of rice paddies with residential subdivisions and industrial estates reduced the attractions of cattle rustling and carnapping in Cavite. Meanwhile, the continuing availability of coastal towns as strategically located entry points for smuggled goods combined with urbanization, rising population density, and closer integration with Metro Manila (thanks to the Coastal Road, the Gen. Aguinaldo Highway, and the South Expressway) to make the province a key site for the import, marketing, and consumption of illegal narcotics, most notably "shabu."

In terms of organization, moreover, the cases of Manecio and Oyson further highlight the changing nature of criminal activity in Cavite. In the pre-martial law period, Cavite's most enduring and successful outlaw operated as the political *lider* and hired assassin of local politicians and as the protector and enforcer of large landowners in the province. Enmeshed in small-town networks of family and faction, he relied for his survival and success upon the maintenance of close personal relationships with both the members of his *tropa* and the other local power brokers in his bailiwick. In this context, the personal projection of physical prowess was essential for creating and sustaining a local monopoly on violence and "protection." In the 1970s and 1980s, by contrast, the most successful criminal figure in Cavite served as the sub-contracted agent of Binondo-based financiers, the partner of Hong Kong-based syndicates, and the accomplice and patron of high-ranking Manila-based PC/AFP officers. Embedded in a cash economy, he operated essentially as a businessman, making multi-million-peso deals and maintaining a large retinue of full-time employees, a chain of legal business establishments, and an elaborate

⁵⁷ Similar conditions prevailed in those regions of Italy where mafia achieved the greatest prominence and power. On this point, see Pino Arlacchi, *Mafia, Peasants, and Great Estates: Society in Traditional Calabria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See also Diego Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 83-89.

⁵⁸ Diego Gambetta describes western Sicily as a similar area "in which the structure of property was such that it allowed greater autonomy to the protector: whereas on large estates several men looked after one property, here, where properties were smaller, one man looked after several fields for different customers. The price of the protection was therefore higher, since the independence of the protector was greater relative to the protectee." Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia*, pp. 87-88.

network for the marketing and distribution of “shabu.” In this context, the cooperation of PC officers, NARCOM agents, and Cavite policemen, as well as the availability of hired killers, provided the coercive resources necessary for the imposition and maintenance of an effective criminal monopoly spanning numerous municipalities and law-enforcement jurisdictions. In short, growing economies of scale, internationalization of illegal commerce, centralization of law-enforcement, and the suburbanization of Cavite transformed the organizational basis of criminal activity in the predictable direction of monetization and rationalization, trends only partially reversed by the resubordination of the police to local elected officials after 1990.

Finally, the cases of Manecio and Oyson highlight the changing social representation of local *mafia* domination in Cavite, as amply illustrated by the contrasting film biographies and popular personae of the two *mafia* bosses. In the case of Leonardo Manecio alias Nardong Putik, the Cavite bandit’s good looks, possession of *anting-anting*, and supposed Robin Hood-like popularity served to identify him as a latter-day “man of prowess,” buttressing the coercive power which underlay his monopoly on “protection” in the northern towns of the province. As one scholar of *mafia* has noted:

a reputation for credible protection and protection itself tend to be one and the same thing. The more robust the reputation . . . , the less the need to have recourse to the resources which support that reputation.⁵⁹

In the case of José “Don Pepe” Oyson, by contrast, the Manila-based smuggler and drug trafficker reached the height of his career when he was in his forties and fifties, sporting spectacles and a beer belly. As his nickname, “Don Pepe,” suggests, Oyson adopted the public personality of the godfather or *padron*, entertaining Constabulary officers, policemen, journalists, and politicians in his nightclub and cockpit, plying them with wine, women, song, gambling tips, money, and “shabu.” Despite his declining physical prowess, Oyson in this sense remained to the end a “big man,” amassing and dispensing his “fund of power” to “a coterie of loyal, lesser men” in sports arenas, pool halls, nightclubs, and cockpits.⁶⁰ Perhaps the role of tattoos in the two case studies best captures the changing personae of Cavite’s criminals: Nardong Putik proudly sported tattoos as emblems of his prowess; Oyson’s underling, by contrast, tattooed the drug lord’s name on his body to signify his personal allegiance and subordination to the “big man” himself.⁶¹

In their contrasting portraits of Cavite’s most successful mafia bosses, the film biographies of Leonardo Manecio and José Oyson highlight the changing portrait of “the outlaw” in the Philippine popular imagination. In the first instance, the Nardong Putik of the 1972 film represents the quintessential “noble robber,” whose

⁵⁹ See Diego Gambetta, *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 44.

⁶⁰ Marshall D. Sahlins, “Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5,3 (April 1963): 289, 292.

⁶¹ On the role of tattoos in signifying relations of dependence in pre-colonial Southeast Asia, see Michael Aung-Thwin, “*Athi, Kyun-Taw, Hpayà-Kyun*: Varieties of Commendation and Dependence in Pre-Colonial Burma,” pp. 78, 84, and B. J. Terwiel, “Bondage and Slavery in Early Nineteenth-Century Siam,” pp. 124, 135, both in *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983).

picaresque exploits, charismatic features, and Robin Hood-like services in a bucolic setting counterpose themselves against the capitalist transformation of rural society and the predatory apparatuses of the state, thus offering some hope for resistance against social injustice and political oppression. In the second instance, the Don Pepe of the 1990 film appears as a tragic figure, whose response to the hardships and humiliations of urban poverty lies in criminal and violent entrepreneurship which serves only as a form of social mobility and self-enrichment.

In emphasizing the colorful personalities of Cavite's most successful outlaws, these films obscure the economic and political bases of their success, their role in capitalist exploitation, and their links to and dependence on the law-enforcement agencies of the state. Viewed sequentially, the films present a shift from the romanticization of the *picaro* (adventurous rogue), waging a desperate, rear-guard battle against the capitalist transformation of rural society, to the melodrama of the *mafioso*, escaping urban poverty through entrepreneurship in violence and crime. As products of the Philippine movie industry taken from two different historical junctures, these films may reflect changes both in popular culture and in underlying societal conditions, as suggested above. With Nardong Putik's passing, it appears, Cavite has witnessed the disappearance of the "noble robber," the victim of injustice who, like Robin Hood, rights social wrongs, enjoys the admiration and support of the poor, is essentially "invisible and invulnerable," kills only in self-defense or just revenge, and "dies invariably and only through treason, since no decent member of the community would help the authorities against him."⁶² In his stead, less honorable avengers have taken center stage:

They are heroes not in spite of the fear and horror their actions inspire, but in some ways because of them. They are not so much men who right wrongs, but avengers, and exerters of power; their appeal is not that of the agents of justice, but of men who prove that even the poor and weak can be terrible.⁶³

IV. AUTHOR'S CONFESSION: THE ROBIN HOOD PUZZLE

So far, so clear: revelations of the gap between "myth" and "reality," and a detailed examination of changes in the organization, geography, and social representation of criminality in Cavite. Yet in the case of Cavite's Nardong Putik, the author must confess to continuing puzzlement. Unfinished sentences on the doorsteps of widow's homes in Dasmariñas, furtive glances in the *carinderias* (road-side food stalls) of Gen. Trias, and drunken, Masonic threats from a shotgun-toting amputee in a shack on the edge of Muntinlupa's prison grounds: such were the traces of Nardong Putik which could be found among the industrial estates, residential subdivisions, and golf courses that have come to replace the rice fields of his former bailiwick. No one who knew the man appeared too eager to reminisce about his exploits, to share a laugh about his foibles, or to shed a tear for his passing. Even Nardo's former fellow carnapper and inmate in Muntinlupa seemed infinitely more interested in recounting the history of Masonic amulets in the Philippines than in revelling in the old gang's misdeeds in the badlands of pre-martial law Cavite.

⁶² Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, pp. 42-43.

⁶³ Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, p. 58.

Meanwhile, the most forceful proponents of the Nardong Putik myth were found among those who could easily be described as his worst enemies. For example, the flattering comments quoted above were spoken in April 1971 by none other than Juanito “Johnny” Remulla, the Cavite politician who, several months later, plotted Nardo’s murder. Remulla’s description of Nardong Putik is perhaps worth quoting again in full:

When there are thefts or highway robberies or hold-ups, the victims do not seek help from the government, since they do not expect any results from that corner. The word on the street is that they take their complaints instead to Nardong Putik and immediately get the justice they are asking for.⁶⁴

A similar paradox is apparent in the essentially sympathetic film biography which action movie star Ramon Revilla, Sr. produced, directed, and starred in. The film is scrupulously faithful to the “real-life story” of Leonardo Manecio alias Nardong Putik, as Revilla proudly recounted to the author over lunch in Manila in 1995. Even the ending is essentially “true-to-life,” as Revilla explained, thanks to consultations with his long-time cockfighting chum (and, until recently, political ally) Johnny Remulla. Indeed, the last segment of the film does introduce Remulla (played by the famous actor Rudy Fernandez) and depicts him as masterminding Nardo’s murder. In memory and in myth, it seems, Nardong Putik’s enemies honored him well.

What, then, is the logic of the legend of Nardong Putik in Cavite? Neither the yearnings of subalterns nor the efforts of state propagandists can be seen as the driving force of this legend, which seems to have circulated via word of mouth, newspaper articles, radio commentary, *komiks*, and film. At least as much as anyone else, Nardong Putik’s own mortal enemies appear to have promoted the outlaw’s reputation as a Robin Hood-like figure, as a charismatic man who enjoyed considerable respect and popularity in a society characterized by great injustice and inequality. But why would Johnny Remulla—who, as Provincial Governor of Cavite (1979-86, 1988-95), earned great notoriety for union-busting, violent land eviction schemes, and accumulation of vast wealth and landholdings—speak of Nardong Putik in the language of Eric Hobsbawm? Why would Remulla give his blessings to his pal’s film hagiography of the very man he arranged to be murdered?

In the legend of Nardong Putik, the Cavite outlaw’s luster and legitimacy depend, to a great extent, upon the projection of his intrinsic personal power, as expressed through references to his martial prowess and possession of magically potent *anting-anting*. Nardong Putik, like other successful outlaws, constructs his reputation through acts of violence that establish his personal visibility, his singularity, and his bravery and willingness to risk his life in combat. Paradoxically, in Nardong Putik’s case, the outlaw’s singularity involves magical powers of polymorphism—the ability to change his form. In addition, the charismatic outlaw’s appeal and authority rest on his courageous and violent opposition to the predatory forces of the state. Commenting on Ramon Revilla’s “Nardong Putik” and other films in the same genre, one scholar has noted:

Revilla’s themes do not vary: a man with his back against the wall has no choice but to fight those he perceives to be the perpetrators of injustice. This

⁶⁴ Ordoñez, “Ang Kabite at Ang Mga Montano,” p. 47. Translation by the author.

is the reason why all the heroes in Revilla's films turn their back on society to lead the life of a fugitive, killing policemen and other government agents with impunity.⁶⁵

Thus, against the backdrop of Nardong Putik's long "outlaw" career, the mythology surrounding his life can be seen as working not only to romanticize his activities, but also to obscure the essential origins of his power. Depictions of this bandit as a provider of protection and material rewards to grateful peasants masks his role as a predatory extortionist who imposed his will by violence. Cast as a subaltern champion of primitive rebellion and everyday forms of resistance, Nardong Putik is seemingly uninvolved in "primitive" capitalist accumulation and everyday forms of oppression and domination. In short, Nardong Putik appears not as a local *mafia* boss, but as a charismatic and popular Robin Hood-like figure.

In this context, the impulse of men like Remulla and Revilla to protect and promote the reputation of Cavite's most famous gangster makes most sense, perhaps, if we consider how much of *themselves* these gangster-politicians recognized in Nardong Putik. Even as Provincial Governor of Cavite, Johnny Remulla was—like his predecessors—known to surround himself with a coterie of bodyguards and hangers-on notorious for their involvement in illegal activities. Among the town mayors most loyal to Johnny were a handful whose sponsorship of local criminal rackets—smuggling, carnapping, contract killing, and illegal gambling—was well established in Cavite, while five mayors who unwisely opposed or betrayed Johnny wound up losing their lives to assassins' bullets. Winning elections through vote-buying, fraud, and intimidation, Remulla also won loans and public works contracts for his companies, vast landholdings for his family, and countless millions through kickbacks, bribes, and percentages, all through his hold over state office in Cavite. Much like Nardong Putik, Johnny Remulla was a first-class gangster, but one who, thanks to local family wealth and connections, a University of the Philippines law degree, and Upsilon fraternity connections, could move further up the gangster food chain, feasting more liberally on the biggest racket of all: the state.⁶⁶

Like Nardong Putik and other gangsters, Johnny Remulla, Ramon Revilla, and other gangster-politicians of their ilk share a common self-image and a common style and logic of self-legitimation. Success in attracting women and prodigious numbers of offspring, for example, are valorized as a sign of a local politician's intrinsic powers. A reputation as an enthusiastic and successful *sabungero* (cockfighting aficionado) and sponsor of cockfighting tournaments (often followed by lavish feasts) is also important, as seen in the case of Ramon Revilla, Sr., owner of the biggest *sabungan* (cockpit) in Cavite. The victories of the local *politico's* fighting cock vividly reflect his personal prowess and potency, while the selective sharing of some of the bounty—a practice known as *balato*—binds supporters closely to him.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Soledad Reyes, "The Outlaw and the Prostitute: Images of Otherness in Popular Culture," in *The Romance Mode in Philippine Popular Literature and Other Essays* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1991), p. 293.

⁶⁶ See Sheila S. Coronel, "Cavite: The Killing Fields of Commerce," in *Boss: 5 Case Studies of Local Politics in the Philippines*, ed. José F. Lacaba (Pasig City: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 1995), pp. 1-29.

⁶⁷ Filomeno V. Aguilar, Jr., "Of Cocks and Bets: Gambling, Class Structuring, and State Formation in the Philippines," in *Patterns of Power and Politics in the Philippines: Implications for*

Moreover, much as the outlaw relies on Church paraphernalia for *anting-anting*, the local politician affirms his privileged access to the spiritual world through identification with the institutions of organized religion, sponsoring baptisms, weddings, funerals, and Holy Week processions, liminal moments in which common feasting reaffirms both small-town "communitas" and the potency of the sponsor. Finally, as with the provision of spiritual resources, the local politician poses as the source of material welfare as well. Public resources, funds, and prerogatives are passed off as flowing from the local politician's personal powers and magnanimity. Thus various public works projects are portrayed as evidence of generosity towards constituents: bridges, public markets, *barangay* (smallest administrative unit of a village) basketball courts, funds for fishermen's cooperatives, repairs of public school buildings, all flow forth as the gifts of the *politico*. Cavite's recently completed highway, "Governor's Drive," is only one of many examples.⁶⁸

As with the legend of Nardong Putik and other supposedly Robin Hood-like Philippine gangsters, the myths propagated by and about local politicians in provinces like Cavite work to claim that power is not simply reducible to money and state office. The *anting-anting* of Nardong Putik, the weddings and town *fiestas* sponsored by Governor Remulla, the movie-star looks and cockfighting victories of Senator Revilla—all locate the source of power in the intrinsic personal qualities of these aspiring powerbrokers. These various mechanisms thus represent claims that power—unlike money and electoral office—does not circulate and that the "big man" is essentially irreplaceable and indispensable.

Moreover, legitimation along these lines also obscures the derivative nature of power, its origin in the predatory state, and its role in the process of capital accumulation. Through Nardong Putik's Robin Hood escapades, Governor Remulla's funeral donations, and Senator Revilla's public works projects, power is equated with personal benevolence even as its source in the state apparatus and the cash economy remains conveniently hidden. Big man/little people, public/private, monopoly/common property: such distinctions thus fade from view. Extracting monopoly rents from various state-based rackets, exploiting low-wage labor, and expropriating the country's scarce natural resources, these predators pose as the providers of land, employment, and sustenance. As in the myth of Robin Hood, there is always a malevolent Sheriff of Nottingham lurking in the background as a less promising alternative to the local predator. But, as in the case of Robin Hood, the victory of the Cavite gangster is ultimately a victory for the status quo:

The Iustice and the scherreve bothe honged drye,
To weyven with the ropes and with the winde drye.

Development, ed. James F. Eder and Robert L. Youngblood (Tempe: Arizona State University Program for Southeast Asian Studies, 1994), pp. 147-196.

⁶⁸ These paragraphs borrow heavily from John T. Sidel, "The Philippines: The Languages of Legitimation," in *Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia: The Quest for Moral Authority*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 136-169, especially pp. 156-161.

Then “finally,” as one scholar of Robin Hood has noted, “he makes his peace with the King and is appointed Chief Justice of the Forest.”⁶⁹ Such is the logic of the Robin Hood legend, not only in bygone times in Nottinghamshire, but in recent Cavite history as well.

⁶⁹ J. C. Holt, “The Origins and Audience of the Ballads of Robin Hood,” *Past & Present*, 18 (November 1960): 99.