

Illicit Intimacies: Gender, US Military Empire, and Nationalism in the Postwar Philippines

by

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to the hardest working people I know

To my parents, Arnold and Elizabeth Fajardo

And to my *lola*, Erlinda Rivera Teodocio

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGCT	Army General Classification Test
AWOL	absent without leave
Capt.	captain
Ch.	chaplain, a religious leader within the US military
Col.	colonel
COMNAVPHIL	Commander of the US Navy in the Philippines
CTCA	Commission on Training Camp Activities
FANHS	Filipino American National Historical Society
GI	government issue (the term colloquially refers to enlisted US servicemen)
Hukbalahap	<i>Hukbong Bayan Laban Sa Hapon</i> (People's Anti-Japanese Liberation Army)
Lt.	lieutenant
MBA	Military Bases Agreement
NARA	US National Archives and Records Administration
OAO	Olongapo Amerasian Organization
PKP	<i>Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas</i> (Communist Party of the Philippines)
Pvt.	private
RG	record group
SBFZ	Subic Bay Freeport Zone
Sgt.	sergeant

SPP	<i>Socialistang Partido ng Pilipinas</i> (Socialist Party of the Philippines)
VD	venereal disease
VFW	Veterans of Foreign Wars

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines alliances and tensions between the US military, the Philippine government, and Philippine nationalists in regulating what I call *illicit intimacies* after World War Two. Illicit intimacies refers to diverse forms of intimacy between US servicemen and Filipinas—such as sexual relationships, marriage, domestic arrangements, friendship, and physical proximity—imagined to disrupt the heteropatriarchal norms and social order of US imperialism. US military officials and their Philippine allies attempted to control the desires, bodies, and behaviors of enlisted men and Filipinas in order to assert control over local spaces and contain perceived threats to the allied nations. Through close readings of US military records, Philippine cultural productions, and oral histories, I highlight the centrality of intimate management in the Philippines to the expansion of US military imperialism at the start of the Cold War. I argue that the US military’s biopolitical regulation of intimacies and targeting of “indecent” Filipinas worked to maintain US power in the country despite the US and Philippine government’s promotion of decolonization and friendship following Philippine independence in 1946. While rooted in heteropatriarchal contestations of power, the regulation of intimacies stigmatized Filipinas and their mixed-race children, affecting the physical and material realities of those associated with US military personnel.

The significance of intimate management to the maintenance of US power is well documented in the scholarship on US empire in the Philippines. Yet, much of this work has focused on the colonial period, or what has been called “formal” empire. This dissertation’s major contribution to the scholarly literature is its critical examination of the era of decolonization, and the effects of postwar intimate management on subsequent generations. Bridging the fields of

Philippine, Filipino, and Filipino American studies, this dissertation employs a transnational lens to trace the influences of US militarism, Philippine nationalist politics, and heteropatriarchy on the lived experiences of Filipinas and their children in the Philippines and the US. Moving beyond a focus on US legislation and official policy, I emphasize the smaller-scale, and often unofficial, ways in which US military-imperial power was reinforced, maintained, and resisted, but never really left the Philippines.

Introduction

Aurora Rivera met her fiancé, a white US soldier from Kentucky named James Adkins, in her hometown of Angeles, Pampanga, where he was stationed in 1945. The couple dated for two years before becoming engaged. Although Rivera was only nineteen years old, both of her parents died during the war and she was ready to start a family of her own. Adkins was four months older and just as eager to make plans for their future together. During World War II, the US military created a policy that required US servicemen to obtain permission from their commanding officers to marry. The intention of this policy was ostensibly to help enlisted men in their pursuit of legal marriage.¹ Following military policy, Adkins and Rivera submitted their application for marriage within the US Army on August 28, 1947.²

For this interracial couple, obtaining approval was an uphill battle. Adkins's commanding officer, Lt. Col. Paullin, disapproved of the couple's marriage request, stating that Adkins would soon be transferred out of the Philippines without the possibility of an extension.³ Paullin advocated that Adkins be sent to the US "for a readjustment period" in order to rethink his decision to marry. He emphasized that Adkins's "extreme youth," being only twenty years of age, made him incapable of making a responsible decision. He believed that after returning home, Adkins would come to "a more mature viewpoint" regarding marriage to a Filipina.⁴ Following these suggestions,

¹ Caridad Concepcion Vallanca, "The Second Wave: Pinay & Pinoy, 1945-1960," (San Francisco, CA: Strawberry Hill Press, 1987), 57.

² James Adkins to Commanding General, Philippines-Ryukyus Command, Request for Permission to Marry, August 28, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

³ Lt. Col. C S Paullin to Commanding General, Philippines-Ryukyus Command, September 2, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

⁴ Throughout this dissertation, I use the term Filipina to refer to Filipino women.

the commanding general denied the couple's request to marry. He also ordered Adkins's transfer to the US within six months.⁵

Despite this outright rejection, Adkins and Rivera were determined to marry. They submitted a request to reapply for US Army approval of their marriage, claiming that there were "extenuating circumstances" because Rivera was five months pregnant.⁶ Once their request was approved, they began to collect evidence to strengthen their application. Adkins worked with a Philippine immigration official who assured him that he had a good chance of remaining in the Philippines if he were to marry a Philippine citizen.⁷ The couple also garnered the support of several commanding officers within Adkins's unit to vouch for their marriage. These officers acknowledged potential counterarguments such as cultural conflicts, claiming that Adkins and Rivera had "surmounted" these "problems" in their relationship.⁸ Moreover, recommendation letters evaluated both the soldier and prospective bride's character, commenting on their respectability, dependability, and sincerity.

Yet, for a second time, their application was rejected. Frustrated, Adkins submitted a complaint and demanded to know why their marriage was not approved.⁹ Typical of the bureaucratic process, the US Army began an investigation two months later to determine whether allowing a third application was justified. Capt. Luetggen of Camp Rizal headquarters looked into the couple's situation and conducted several interviews with Rivera's family members.¹⁰ Luetggen

⁵ James Adkins to Commanding General, Philippines-Ryukyus Command, September 13, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ James Adkins, Affidavit, dated September 13, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

⁸ 1st Lt. Frederick Fay to Commanding General, Philrycom, September 19, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD; Assistant Field Director, American Red Cross, Jerry Gutman to Commanding General, Philrycom, October 1, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

⁹ Col. John O. Lawrence to James Adkins, December 20, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁰ Ch. Edward Luetggen to Ch. Joseph Koch, Philippine-Ryukyus Command Headquarters, February 5, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

determined that Rivera's grandparents—with whom she lived—were not opposed to the marriage but were anxious that Adkins might abandon their granddaughter. They expressed concern about the soldier disgracing Rivera, leaving her without adequate support to take care of their unborn child. Luetgen also reported that Rivera's home conditions were "above average" and that she had relatives who "owned stocks" and were well-employed in Manila. This in-depth investigation proved that Rivera was "modestly financially stable" and came from a "decent home," thereby legitimating her relationship with Adkins. After receiving Luetgen's evaluation, Adkins and Rivera were permitted to submit a third request to marry. This time, the couple collected additional documentation, including medical certificates attesting to Rivera's pregnancy and additional letters of recommendation.¹¹ After a few more months of waiting, Adkins finally obtained permission to marry Rivera, provided that he apply for an allotment to ensure his wife's financial security.¹² The whole process took well over six months and required many hours of interviews, a mountain of evidence, and courage to challenge figures of authority.

The case of Adkins and Rivera is emblematic of a larger system in which intimacies between US servicemen and Filipinas were managed in the postwar Philippines. While US military officials had always expected their men to engage in sexual relationships with women while stationed abroad, serious romantic relationships leading to interracial marriage were especially concerning. As the bureaucratic struggle of Adkins and Rivera reveals, the US military's marriage application process became a means to control perceived threats to the military institution and the US nation. Due to their differences in race and citizenship, Adkins and Rivera destabilized the racial order and defied white middle-class norms. In the late 1940s, there were still many US states—including Adkins's

¹¹ Paullin changed his mind about Adkins and Rivera from his original assessment. See Lt. Col. C S Paullin to Commanding General, Philippines-Ryukyus Command, October 14, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

¹² Capt. John Dunn to Commanding Officer, Ordinance Service, Philippines, February 21, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

home state of Kentucky—with anti-miscegenation laws in full force.¹³ While US servicemen such as Adkins could have skirted the law by obtaining a marriage in the Philippines without permission from his commanding officers, most enlisted men were not informed about legal policies. Moreover, commanding officers threatened servicemen who disobeyed military orders with the loss of rank, pay, and other benefits.¹⁴ In other words, US military officials exploited the bureaucratic structure in order to pressure interracial couples into dropping out of the marriage application process, ignoring their lack of legal authority to deny marriages. Some servicemen went absent without leave (AWOL) and stayed in the Philippines, and others left their Filipina fiancés and children behind.

Those who were able to overcome the difficult application process needed to prove that their relationships were wholesome, normative, and financially stable. In the case of Adkins and Rivera, US military officials commented on Adkins’s “extreme youth,” reflecting broader concerns about the naiveté of enlisted men, and the belief that they were the victims of deceitful Filipinas who sought money and US citizenship. Moreover, concern about whether Rivera would become a “public charge” reflected anxieties about her “moral character” and the economic costs of a “failed” marriage. The couple’s final application put many of these anxieties at ease, as it provided sufficient evidence for the couple’s potential to overcome their so-called incompatibilities. Their final evaluation emphasized Rivera’s “above average” home conditions and financial stability. While treating Adkins paternalistically, these evaluations scrutinized the social status and perceived decency of Rivera and her family to determine her assimilability into American family life. Adkins and Rivera’s relationship defied white, middle-class family norms in terms of race and nationality, yet their *documentation* of respectability and decency ultimately granted them consent to marry.

¹³ For a map of states with anti-miscegenation laws in force until 1965 see Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford, England; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 243.

¹⁴ Caridad Concepcion Vallangca, “The Second Wave: Pinay & Pinoy (1945-1960)” (San Francisco, CA: Strawberry Hill Press, 1987), 57.

The US military's investigation into Rivera's moral character also indicated concern about public health and disease stemming from "indecent" women. During and after World War II, the US military began to intensely combat the spread of venereal disease (VD) due to high rates of prostitution in the Philippines, and all around the world, where US servicemen were stationed. Their efforts to curb the spread of VD produced the image of local women as a diseased threat to the morality and health of US troops. This image served to justify intense surveillance of US servicemen and their Filipina partners. In this context, the leisurely activities of servicemen who drank in bars, danced in clubs, and developed intimate relationships with Filipinas became a suspicious source of "illicit," non-normative sexual behavior imagined to threaten US national security and postwar stability.

These efforts to combat illicit intimacies relied on the participation of the Philippine state. While dependent on the US government for aid and rehabilitation, the postwar Philippine government developed strong alliances with the US military. Following Philippine independence in 1946, these alliances served to promote the US government's rhetoric of decolonization and racial inclusion to counter critiques from the Soviet Union of American racism.¹⁵ As Adkins and Rivera's evaluations reveal, the language of US military officials shifted to reflect this rhetoric. The problems that Adkins and Rivera purportedly "surmounted" revolved around "cultural differences" rather than race. US military officials claimed to be concerned with the "compatibility" of couples and the economic impact of failed marriages rather than maintaining the color line. In the Cold War context, marriage processing supported the US government's effort to promote the image of racial inclusion while at the same time remaining committed to protecting the white nuclear family ideal.

¹⁵ Cindy I-Fen Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race During the Cold War* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2013), 2.

The case of Adkins and Rivera also points to concerns within Philippine society regarding intimacies with US servicemen. Rivera's grandparents were worried that their granddaughter would be left behind by Adkins with no financial support, thereby destroying her reputation and future prospects of marriage to a Filipino. American GIs had gained a reputation for not taking their Filipina partners seriously and leaving them *hanggang pier* [abandoned at the pier] with "illegitimate" children. Women left behind became the subject of *tsismis* [gossip] by neighbors throughout the local community despite the fact that many Filipinos understood American racism as a central reason for why white servicemen could not imagine their Filipina girlfriends as legitimate wives. In the postwar period, the image of Filipinas left behind became a common trope within popular, nationalist literature and films critiquing the corrupting influence of the US military in Philippine society. Rivera's grandparents supported their granddaughter's decision to marry, yet their distrust of Adkins corresponded with the growing perception in Philippine society of US servicemen as morally deprived rather than as heroes of the nation.

This dissertation examines the alliances and tensions between the US military, the Philippine state, and Philippine civilians in managing intimate relationships between US servicemen and Filipinas.¹⁶ I trace the discourse of illicit intimacies in the postwar period and consider the impact of this history on the lives of Filipinas and their children in the Philippines and the US. I argue that the US military's biopolitical regulation of intimacies and targeting of "indecent" women worked to

¹⁶ Throughout this dissertation, *Filipino* refers to a national-cultural identity that does not correspond strictly to citizenship or place due to the racialization of the term in the history of US imperialism. I refer to US citizens with ancestral ties to the Philippines as Filipino or Filipino American, following as much as possible the categories that individuals describe for themselves. Many Filipinos who were living in the US prior to the war, whether US or Philippine citizens, served in the US military in both segregated and non-segregated units. Filipinos living in the Philippines joined as Philippine Scouts. The Philippine Scouts were an organization of military units created during the Philippine-American War in 1901 to serve under the US Army against the Philippine Revolutionaries. These units were abolished after World War II, after the US military became racially integrated. Some Filipinos who served in the US military were granted US citizenship for their service, but many others were denied due to the US Rescission Act of 1946. To provide clarity within this complex matrix of race, citizenship, and belonging, I describe as much as possible the background of historical actors and how they identified themselves.

maintain US imperial power despite the US government's promotion of decolonization and racial equality.¹⁷ The threat of prostitution and sexual immorality, imagined to originate in the bodies of women, strengthened colonial alliances between US military and Philippine government officials to the detriment of Filipinas and their children. The US military, alongside the Philippine state, created and reproduced what I call *the figure of the Filipina prostitute* to justify their control over the imagined physical, economic, and political threats of Filipinas to the US military establishment and the allied nations. This figure circulated within Philippine culture as Filipino heteropatriarchal nationalist writers echoed the language of the US military in their arguments for a sovereign Philippines. For these nationalists, the trope of women *hanggang pier* symbolized the evils of American modernity and civilization. Yet even ordinary Filipino civilians, whose commitments differed from that of nationalists, conjured this figure in their everyday negotiations with US military authorities. The figure of the prostitute was therefore not only a means to impose or critique US imperialism. It reverberated in quotidian interactions between townspeople who were often motivated by opportunities for personal rather than political gain, whether they ultimately supported, challenged, or resisted US power.

Historical Context and Periodization

Intimacies and US Empire in the Philippines

The management of intimacies has played a central role in imperial politics and defining the colonial relationship between the US and the Philippines since the late nineteenth century. During the Philippine-American war, for example, the US military's regulation of prostitution became a

¹⁷ The term *biopolitical* comes from Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988). Biopolitics refers to a form of power that exerts a *positive* rather than a "repressive" influence in regulating human life. As opposed to what Foucault calls "juridical power," biopolitical power does not come from laws or institutions but exists everywhere, in all processes and discourses that normalize large populations and thereby generate "the function of administering life" (138).

major political issue that called into question the US government's management of the colony.¹⁸ In 1900, press coverage of the US military's "inspection system," which examined and treated sex workers, outraged progressive activists who felt that the government condoned the regulation of vice.¹⁹ Not only did reformers argue that the US military's approach to prostitution was immoral, but that US colonial officials required feminine oversight. They used what they considered to be a mismanagement of intimacies to argue for women's inclusion in imperial politics.²⁰ White women also used intimacies to promote their position as moral authorities in the Philippines.²¹ Letters that white female teachers wrote back to their loved ones in the US claimed that young girls in the Philippines were inferior due to their sexual freedom, lack of discipline, and poor hygiene.²² These anecdotes about primitive sexuality in the islands circulated alongside visual images of native women's breasts. As Nerissa Balce argues, colonial intimacies enacted an American "porno-tropic tradition" through photography, emphasizing the nakedness of indigenous bodies sexualized in scenes of nature.²³ While incorporating "the ideas, images, and vocabularies of the conquests of the New World, the frontier, and the legacies of slavery," this tradition naturalized US imperial rule in the Philippines.²⁴

During the early US colonial period, the regulation of intimacies between US and Philippine subjects helped to define non-normative sexuality while also reinforcing US imperial power.²⁵ As

¹⁸ David J. Pivar, "The Military, Prostitution, and Colonial Peoples: India and the Philippines, 1885-1917," *The Journal of Sex Research* 17, no. 3 (1981): 263.

¹⁹ Paul Kramer, "The Darkness That Enters the Home," in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Roland Sintos Coloma, "White Gazes, Brown Breasts: Imperial Feminism and Disciplining Desires and Bodies in Colonial Encounters," *Paedagogica Historica*, 2012, 243–61.

²² Ibid. During the Philippine-American War, teachers from the US, mainly white women, were sent to the Philippines to aid in the imperial project of tutelage. These teachers were referred to as "Thomasites" because the first ship that transported roughly 600 American teachers to the Philippines in 1901 was called the USS Thomas.

²³ Nerissa Balce, "The Filipina's Breast: Savagery, Docility, and the Erotics of the American Empire," *Social Text* 24, no. 2 87 (2006): 89–110. The term "porno-tropic" comes from Ann McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995).

²⁴ Ibid, 92.

²⁵ Victor Román Mendoza, *Metroimperial Intimacies: Fantasy, Racial-Sexual Governance, and the Philippines in U.S. Imperialism*,

Victor Mendoza argues, the racial-sexual governance of the Philippines, and specifically the racialization of Philippine indigenous peoples as primitive and perverse, influenced the US cultural shift away from policing same-sex acts toward identifying “deviant” individuals. Despite the fact that laws governing sodomy had expanded beginning in the late nineteenth century US, these did not immediately transfer to the US colonial Philippines.²⁶ US colonial administrators drew on existing Philippine laws targeting “vagrants” to regulate “perverse” sex acts that they believed to be a part of the native Philippine subjects’ nature. While the category of the “homosexual” did not emerge in the US until the 1940s, the management of intimacies in the early colonial Philippines, while targeting non-normative *people* and their “bad habits,” contributed to the development of the “degenerate” as a kind of pseudoscientific species.²⁷ While containing perversion to the colonized and the colony, the collective fantasies about Philippine people engaging in illicit acts maintained racial and civilization hierarchies that justified US rule.²⁸ Yet even while relationships between US and Philippine subjects were considered dangerous, interracial relationships during the colonial period (between men and women) also legitimated and supported US rule through claims of benevolence.²⁹ The close social proximity that Americans developed with Filipinos may have threatened to blur the color line and infect the US population, but these very intimacies became mobilized in arguments supporting US empire and exceptionalism.³⁰

US colonial rule in the Philippines also brought Filipinos—mainly male students and laborers—to the US mainland. Following US legislation excluding Chinese and Japanese laborers, Filipinos became a new source of migrant labor in farms on the West Coast, fish canneries in

1899–1913 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2015).

²⁶ Ibid, 35.

²⁷ Ibid, 59.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Marie T. Winkelmann, “Dangerous Intercourse: Race, Gender and Interracial Relations in the American Colonial Philippines, 1898 - 1946” (Ph.D., United States -- Illinois, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015).

³⁰ Ibid.

Alaska, and sugar plantations in Hawaii.³¹ Through a racialized discourse that viewed certain Philippine ethnic groups as especially hardworking, the US colonial government provided a means to promote Filipino migration to the US without the possibility of permanent settlement.³² While the vast majority of Filipino migrants, considered “non-citizen US nationals,” were men, many sought out intimate relationships with women outside of their race. Filipinos met white and Mexican women in taxi dance halls in California, for example, fueling the ire of white communities.³³ The dangerous intimacies that Filipino laborers and students posed to US racial hierarchies throughout the 1920s threatened white nativists who felt that invading Filipinos were already stealing their jobs.³⁴ Anxieties about “primitive” Filipino male sexuality and the instability of the color line led to riots, protests, and eventually legislation to end US imperialism in the Philippines by the 1930s.³⁵ The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 promised Philippine independence in ten years, and the Filipino Repatriation Act of 1935 set in place a structure to encourage the return of Filipinos to the colony.³⁶ Throughout the history of US-Philippine relations, intimacies have structured arguments both supporting and opposing US imperialism.

World War II and the Postwar Era

While the “dangerous” intimacies of the 1930s US mainland contributed to the promise of Philippine independence, the outbreak of World War II shifted the US-Philippine relationship, bringing the two nations even closer. US and Philippine military forces banded together to fight the

³¹ Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Migration and Empire in Filipino America, 1898-1946*, (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 61-69.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 11.

³⁴ Filipinos were not the only racialized group targeted by white nativists. As historian Mae Ngai argues, economic insecurities by the Depression Era caused an increase in racial tensions and created widespread fear of arrest and deportation that particularly affected Mexican laborers. See Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 72.

³⁵ See Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 407-431.

³⁶ Ibid.

invasion of the Japanese imperial army on December 8, 1941. After Japanese troops seized Manila and most of Central Luzon by April of 1942, starving and wounded US and Philippine soldiers were forced to march over sixty miles from Bataan to Tarlac, Philippines.³⁷ Known as the Bataan Death March, this event took roughly 10,000 casualties and solidified military alliances between Americans and Filipinos during the war. Although there were some segments of Philippine society that felt that Japanese occupation would be good for the country, the violence and brutality that took hold of Manila and Central Luzon devastated and traumatized the nation.³⁸ The rhetoric of “Asia for Asians” did not convince enough Filipinos that collaboration with Japanese officials would bring them peace and long-awaited independence.³⁹ Even while the severity of the Japanese occupation was felt unevenly across the country, Filipinos by and large enthusiastically welcomed the return of US troops to the Philippines at the end of the war.

The postwar Philippine government maintained a close relationship with the United States. The economic devastation following the war compelled the country’s new leaders to comply with the US government’s unequal terms for granting postwar aid.⁴⁰ Holding economic power over a weakened Philippine state, the US government pushed for treaties that would ensure American political, economic, and military hegemony over the region. The US congress passed the Bell Trade Act in 1946, which allowed American citizens equal access to Philippine natural resources and the ability to import US goods into the country duty-free and in unlimited quantities.⁴¹ In 1947, the

³⁷ Vina A. Lanzona, *Amazons of the Huk Rebellion: Gender, Sex, and Revolution in the Philippines* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 33.

³⁸ Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Manila, Philippines: C&E Publishing, 2008).

³⁹ Oral history interview with Silver Berenguer, member of Filipino Historical Society, Manila, September 24, 2016. Berenguer spoke to me about his childhood experiences during the Japanese occupation in Sorsogon, a province located in the Bicol region of the Philippines. He came from a moderately wealthy family that owned a plantation. He remembers that his father would often invite Japanese servicemen into their family home for coffee and *meriyenda* [snacks], and that their relationship was positive in comparison to the experiences of Filipinos in other areas. As Agoncillo and other Philippine scholars have argued, those who lived in provinces further away from Manila experienced a very different Japanese occupation.

⁴⁰ Vina A. Lanzona, *Amazons of the Huk Rebellion: Gender, Sex, and Revolution in the Philippines* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 79.

⁴¹ Anne E. Lacsamana, *Revolutionizing Feminism: The Philippine Women’s Movement in the Age of Terror* (New York, NY:

Military Bases Agreement (MBA) allowed the US the right to own and manage military facilities throughout the Philippines for up to 99 years.⁴² Moreover, as the Philippines gained independence in 1946, US immigration laws shifted to severely limit the number of Filipinos entering the US to a number of 50 per year.⁴³ Many Filipinos questioned the meaning of Philippine sovereignty considering the restrictive, exclusionary, and inequitable legislation that passed after the war that hindered Philippine economic development and maintained the nation's dependency on the US. Yet at the same time, Filipinos were eager to re-establish a sense of peace, order, and normalcy following four years of fear and deprivation under the Japanese occupation. Some even felt safer with US military bases in the country to protect them from potential future invasions. Traumatic events in recent public memory—the Bataan Death March, for example—strengthened US-Philippine military alliances and helped to justify a close postwar “friendship” with the US.⁴⁴

Alongside the Philippine state's practical concerns about economic stability, local politics influenced the nation's dependency on the US after the war. Debates about Philippine sovereignty were tied to class politics between Philippine elites and members of the Philippine Left that centered around competition over local resources. Leaders of the postwar Philippine state, including President Manuel Roxas and his supporters, became threatened by the growing power of the Philippine Left, especially the Hukbalahap.⁴⁵ The Hukbalahap (People's Anti-Japanese Liberation

Routledge, 2016), 27.

⁴² For more on the history of US bases in the Philippines, see Roland Simbulan, *The Bases of Our Insecurity: A Study of the US Military Bases in the Philippines*, 2nd edition (Metro Manila, Philippines, 1985) and Roland Simbulan, *Forging a Nationalist Foreign Policy: Essays on U.S. Military Presence and the Challenges to Philippine Foreign Policy* (Quezon City, Philippines, 2009). For a sociological perspective see Victoria Reyes, *Global Borderlands: Fantasy, Violence, and Empire in Subic Bay, Philippines* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ The discourse of Philippine-American friendship goes back to the Philippine-American war. See Reynaldo C. Ileto, “The Philippine-American War: Friendship and Forgetting,” in *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream, 1899-1999*, ed. Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis H. Francia (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2002) and Sarita Echavez See, *The Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 95.

⁴⁵ Vina A. Lanzona, *Amazons of the Huk Rebellion: Gender, Sex, and Revolution in the Philippines* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 78-79.

Army), known as the “Huks,” united leaders of peasant organizations in Central Luzon and the Communist and Socialist Parties of the Philippines in the fight against the Japanese military during the war.⁴⁶ Peasant rebellions began to gain power during the 1930s, well before World War II broke out, and their cause only continued to gain momentum as landlords in the provinces became stripped of their resources due to the war.⁴⁷ In fact, postwar elections nominated 6/8 congressional seats from Central Luzon to members of the Hukbalahap.⁴⁸

The success of the Philippine Left was short-lived, however, due in large part to the political alliances that reinforced US-Philippine political, military, and economic relations. Despite the fact that the Huks fought and died alongside US troops against Japan during the war, their relationship to the US quickly shifted once the war ended. With the support of the US government, the Philippine state brought on a series of violent killings and repression against who they considered to be communist groups. The US military greatly assisted the postwar Philippine state in numerous attacks against the Huks as President Roxas and his supporters believed that the Philippine Left wanted to overthrow the republic.⁴⁹

Understanding local politics in the Philippines is central to interpreting the expansion of US imperialism in the immediate postwar period and throughout the Cold War. Filipino elites in Manila and the provinces formed strategic alliances for their own political and economic gain that had broader implications for US power.⁵⁰ In reality, the majority of those subjected to anti-communist violence at the hands of the Philippine state and US military were peasants who joined the Huks for

⁴⁶ Hukbalahap is short for “*Hukbo ng Bayan Laban Sa Hapon*” meaning People’s Anti-Japanese Liberation Army.

⁴⁷ Vina A. Lanzona, *Amazons of the Huk Rebellion*, 31, 28.

⁴⁸ Benedict J. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977). Kerkvliet argues that while the Huks gained political power in the postwar period, Manila elites conspired to oust Huk congressmen in their repression of peasant revolt.

⁴⁹ For a detailed account of the US government’s role in the Huk movement, and its relationship to global anti-communism and imperialism, see Colleen Woods, *Freedom Incorporated: Anti-communism and Philippine Independence in the Age of Decolonization* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

a variety of reasons. A minority desired complete revolution. Most fought to reinstate livable conditions and to reduce exploitative relations between landlords and tenants by working within the political and economic system.⁵¹ Nonetheless, Philippine elites concerned about their own consolidation of power—with the exception of a few leaders who sympathized with the Huks—were set on diminishing the strength of the Left.⁵² Their strategic alignments with the US government ensured that enemies of the state would not pose a threat to Philippine elites, and this interest aligned with the staunch anti-communist stance of the US postwar government. This also meant that promoting a pro-US-Philippine relationship became a national priority. Any challenges to US hegemony therefore put individuals at risk of being associated with communism. Even while Philippine leaders may have resented the inequality within the postwar US-Philippine relationship, their support of US imperialism—even through a discourse of decolonization—served to expand their own power just as it benefitted Philippine elites in previous generations.

Complicating these questions of Philippine sovereignty and local power was the large number of US troops stationed in the Philippines after the war. US servicemen remained in the Philippines to assist in national development, rehabilitation, and security. As soon as the war ended, the Philippine state continued to fight against the Huks, which by 1950 had evolved to become the army of the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (Philippine Communist Party), or PKP, called the *Hukbo Magpalaya ng Bayan* (Army for National Liberation), or HMB. As historians have argued, the Philippine state's mission to repress the Huks became subsumed within the US government's ultimate goal of combating communism on a global scale. As Philippine elites drew on US military

⁵¹ Benedict J. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977). Kerkvliet argues that a breakdown in the patron-client relationship between landowners and peasants initially led peasants to organize; landowners were unwilling to fulfill obligations to peasant families who provided a share of their crops in exchange for living on the land. Traditionally, landowners would provide rice without interest, yet as US capitalism began to influence the Philippine upper class, these relationships became more exploitative.

⁵² Vina A. Lanzona, *Amazons of the Huk Rebellion: Gender, Sex, and Revolution in the Philippines* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 76-85.

power to maintain their own control over local resources, the US government had their own objectives in ensuring their economic interests, utilizing Philippine land for military exercises, and maintaining US bases as launching pads to contain communism in other parts of Asia.

The continued presence of US servicemen in “friendly” territory played a large role in the institutional narrative of US exceptionalism. In response to critique from the Soviet Union of US racism and inequality, the US government began to transform its discourse of liberal democracy to argue for racial assimilation and decolonization. This shift in discourse, which was also influenced by a growing movement for Civil Rights in the US, led to changes in legislation following World War II that affected communities of color. For example, the Truman administration advocated for the end of racial restrictive covenants, which attempted to dismantle the widespread practice of excluding people of color from buying property and living in white neighborhoods.⁵³ Immigration laws also began to change, as the Magnuson Act of 1943 repealed Chinese exclusion and the Luce-Cellar Act of 1946 allowed Filipinos and Indians to naturalize as US citizens. Then in 1952, the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act dismantled racial prohibitions of immigration. To commemorate this progressive movement, the US emphasized their strong relations with the Philippines after the war, celebrating decolonization through an event called “Philippine-American Friendship Day,” established on July 4, 1946.⁵⁴ This performative gesture served to demonstrate to the world the “success” of US liberal democracy.⁵⁵

This strategy of racial inclusion and decolonization supported the expansion of postwar US power by associating US liberal democracy with freedom, and socialist ideas with tyranny. Yet, US officials were not merely concerned with threats to the economic order. Following the war, anxieties

⁵³ Cindy I-Fen Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race During the Cold War* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2013).

⁵⁴ See Colleen Woods, *Freedom Incorporated: Anti-communism and Philippine Independence in the Age of Decolonization* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020), 185-186.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

about national security and stability affected the most intimate aspects of American life, as concern about subversion also influenced the ways that US officials defined and interpreted non-normative bodies, behaviors, sexualities, and lifestyles. In this context, the promotion of the American nuclear family—and the naturalization of reproductive sexuality—became tied to sustaining the nation’s future.⁵⁶ While non-normative sexuality, a concept that developed through racial discourse and imperialism, was imagined to weaken the nation’s “moral fiber,” many believed that this would make Americans susceptible to sexual and political seduction.⁵⁷ In this context, control over an imagined racial-sexual menace necessitated “domesticating” the threat of the “exotic.” As Manan Desai argues, postwar cultural production through exotica—popular music created to represent Asia, Oceania, Hawaii, and other “faraway tropical islands”—“aid[ed] in the production of readily consumable images of a decolonizing world.”⁵⁸ Desai calls this form of colonial nostalgia a “fantasy of containment” that made the exotic world less threatening by turning the unknown into something knowable and domesticated. The harmonious image that blended east and west, which exotica created, emerged to “contain” the threat of blackness within an American society slowly moving towards racial integration. In this Cold War context, the US government’s push towards Americanization through the inclusion of “assimilable” and non-threatening racialized groups—particularly Asian Americans—assuaged fears of miscegenation and non-normative sexuality while also attempting to erase US histories of racial exclusion and violence.⁵⁹

Periodization

⁵⁶ Robert G. Lee, “The Cold War Origins of the Model Minority Myth,” *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*, Asian American History and Culture (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1999), 161. For more on the history of the American nuclear family and Asian American history see Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Manan Desai, “Korla Pandit Plays America: Exotica, Racial Performance, And Fantasies of Containment in Cold War Culture,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 48, no. 4 (August 1, 2015), 717-718.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

This dissertation focuses primarily on the period following World War II from 1946-1965 (Chapters 1-3). Throughout, I use the term *postwar* as a temporal category to mark the end of World War II, but also to emphasize the significance of the war itself on the lives of Filipino survivors and their children. After the Philippine-American war, World War II became the most traumatic event in the nation's collective memory.⁶⁰ Even while another war—the Cold War—concurrently affected the everyday lives of Filipinos during this time period, its impact was less tangible by comparison. The term *postwar* stresses the persistence of emotional memory in how Filipinos and Americans related to one another during this period. Moreover, this moment is distinct because of the political and economic transitions that occurred after World War II that redefined US-Philippine relations. The management of intimacies in the postwar period reveals tension and contradiction around the meaning of Philippine independence and US imperialism, yet it remains an understudied moment in history.

The final part of this dissertation (Chapters 4 and 5) moves beyond the postwar period to trace the impacts of intimate management on subsequent generations, from 1965-present. Considering this longer stretch of time reveals continuity in the political structures and discourses regulating intimacies in the Philippines throughout the Cold War.⁶¹ Despite the efforts of US and Philippine officials to produce narratives of exceptionalism and emphasize change during this period, their alliances continued to support the expansion of US militarism into other parts of Asia. Moreover, examining the maintenance of US-Philippine alliances over time sheds light on ongoing colonial relationships and the effects that they have had since on Filipinos in the US and in the

⁶⁰ See Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Manila, Philippines: C&E Publishing, 2008).

⁶¹ Scholars have examined the issue of intimacies, especially US military prostitution, and its connections to Philippine politics during the Marcos era from 1965-1986. See, for example, Sylvia H. Chant and Cathy McIlwaine, *Women of a Lesser Cost: Female Labour, Foreign Exchange, and Philippine Development* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 1995), Sandra Pollock Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus, *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia* (New York: The New Press, 1994), and Meredith L. Ralston and Edna Keeble, *Reluctant Bedfellows: Feminism, Activism and Prostitution in the Philippines* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2009).

Philippines. Throughout this dissertation, I refrain from describing this history as *postcolonial* because of the possible interpretation of the end of empire. My use of postcolonial does not refer to a specific time period, but rather a transnational critique of colonialism that connects the Philippines to a global decolonial project.

Theory and Methods

Intimacies and Imperial Power

Drawing from scholarship on race, gender, sexuality, and empire, I understand *intimacies* to encompass a broad range of relations imagined to be private, personal, or familial. Throughout this dissertation, these relations include sex and sexuality, sexual and romantic desires, emotional attachments, domestic arrangements, and social contracts such as marriage. Yet what is imagined to be private, personal, and familial is rooted in social knowledge about bodies and the physical environment. As Víctor Mendoza succinctly puts it, “Even as one might presume it primarily an expression of interiority...intimacy remains always implicated in various bodies’ negotiations of spatial proximity, social contact, and the construction (and transgression) of the private sphere.”⁶² Recognizing intimacy as a dynamic concept that changes over time and space, and which includes heterogeneous relations, I maintain the plural form of the word. By emphasizing multiplicity, *intimacies* in the plural challenges the simplistic assumption that intimacy is always sexual or tender.

Some scholars have critiqued the usage of intimacy as a framework for studying empire due to its association with sentimental feelings of love, peace, and tenderness. As Ramón Gutiérrez argues, such a method creates histories “devoid of the blood and sweat and tears of which colonial conquests and racist regimes were made.”⁶³ Gutiérrez’s push for a deeper critique of intimacy is

⁶² Víctor Román Mendoza, *Metroimperial Intimacies: Fantasy, Racial-Sexual Governance, and the Philippines in US Imperialism, 1899–1913* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2015), 11.

⁶³ Ramon A. Gutierrez, “What’s Love Got to Do with It?” *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (December 1, 2001):

reasonable considering how, as Elizabeth Povinelli argues, scholars have tended to support the fantasy of love as a “socially exfoliating” event that transcends prejudice and inequality.⁶⁴ A wide range of otherwise critical scholars of gender and sexuality have maintained the liberal notion of love as an “intimate event” that mysteriously just happens to individuals (or not).⁶⁵ The issues that Gutierrez and Povinelli raise revolve around two questions: What role do the social meanings assigned to intimacies play in obscuring the violence of liberalism and colonialism? And, are all intimacies in colonial and imperial contexts violent or exploitative? In this context, intimacies are uneasily disentangled from historical, political, and personal meanings.

The framework of this dissertation draws heavily from the scholarship of Ann Stoler, Anne McClintock, Nayan Shah, Peggy Pascoe, Laura Wexler, Victor Mendoza, and others who have laid a foundation for interpreting imperial power—and violence—through the study of intimacies. As Ann Stoler reminds us in many of her works, the significance of studying the intimate lies not in whether intimacies represent “universal romance” or “colonial tragedy.”⁶⁶ Rather, it lies in recognizing that intimacies are not only a consequence of imperialism, but are essential to the creation, development, and maintenance of imperial power. Intimacies are therefore “privileged sites for the implementation of colonizing techniques of surveillance and control.”⁶⁷ Foucault’s concept of biopolitics figures centrally within this framework of intimacies and empire.⁶⁸ Since the nineteenth century, bodies have been subject to state regulation not only through laws or decrees stemming from centralized, sovereign power. As many scholars of empire have demonstrated, knowledge and techniques produced around maintaining healthy populations and subjects emerged as a positive

866–69.

⁶⁴ Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 175.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, First edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), xxii.

⁶⁷ Ibid, xxi.

⁶⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

form of power over human life. While approaching intimacies through this lens, I assume that love, romance, and desire are necessarily shaped within structures of violence and exploitation. Yet, even while understanding intimacies as “matters of the state,” I recognize the potential for these same relations to represent a range of personal meanings, including comfort and pleasure, in the experiences of individuals.

Intimacies as a category of analysis requires attention to gender. As the work of Ann McClintock and others have shown, imperialists have wielded gender power and ideas about sexual reproduction to assert colonial hierarchies.⁶⁹ Drawing from both psychoanalysis and historical methods, McClintock argues that while the patriarchal family structure has been historically understood as natural, imperialists have projected images reflecting gender hierarchy in order to inscribe other forms of social difference such as race.⁷⁰ By producing maps and images that feminize colonized lands, imperialists have constructed racialized peoples and their environments as erotic, dangerous, and needing to be tamed. McClintock theorizes that this assertion of gender power is a means of assuaging white male anxieties about the unknown in a way that naturalizes their control. In other words, gender works as a cultural process that promotes the stabilization of racialized categories. As Edward Said has argued, the cultural processes that construct and maintain the binary between civilization and savagery become further justification for colonial expansion.⁷¹ Moreover, these processes are tied to intimacies as the maintenance of racial hierarchies necessitates the management of sexual reproduction. Scholars such as Peggy Pascoe have documented the ways that this has functioned in the US context. US anti-miscegenation laws were not just about restricting

⁶⁹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995). Many scholars have examined gender and empire in the US context. For example, see Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of US Imperialism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez, *Securing Paradise: Tourism and Militarism in Hawaii and the Philippines* (Duke University Press, 2013), and Adria L. Imada, *Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the US Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

⁷⁰ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995), 45.

⁷¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978).

individual rights but also protecting the futures of white families by maintaining structures of white supremacy and heteronormativity.⁷²

The focus of this dissertation on intimacies between men and women reflects the gendered structures of power that typify colonial relationships. Because of their proximity to heteronormative power, relationships between men and women are most visible in military records regulating intimacies. As Margot Canaday documents, the military institution was especially concerned about “moral degeneracy” during World War II.⁷³ The US military invested in psychological and intelligence testing in order to identify homosexuality as a psychopathic disorder associated with feminine body types. While they also continued to penalize through court martial those who practiced same-sex acts, their move towards locating the origins of degeneracy within individuals perceived to be gender non-conforming made performances of heteronormativity more crucial. Those who were able to pass as “straight,” for example, were able to benefit from the GI bill after the war.⁷⁴ US military records managing intimacies in the postwar Philippines reveal concerns about the *visibility* of homosexuality among US servicemen, which partially explains why heterosexual relationships are far more extensive in the archive.

Place

My understanding of intimacies in imperial contexts critically examines space and place as “imaginative geographies” and tactile environments in which intimacies occurred.⁷⁵ I draw from

⁷² Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford, England; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁷³ Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

⁷⁴ Race also played a significant role in assessments of gender and sexual normativity. Moreover, as Canaday discusses, women who had sex with other women were not as forcefully policed. Due to the fact that women had not reached first class citizenship status, their non-normative sexual behaviors were considered non-threatening. See Margot Canaday, *The Straight State*, 176.

⁷⁵ Imaginative geographies comes from Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978).

source material that was either produced in, or made reference to, the areas and people of Angeles, Cavite, Manila, and Olongapo, Philippines. Angeles, Cavite, and Olongapo are towns located outside of major US Army and Navy bases that grew in prominence and size after the war. Although the city of Manila did not house a major US military base, a large number of US servicemen were stationed at military installations throughout the metropolitan area. I chose to focus on these geographies for several reasons. Olongapo and Angeles are well-known sites of US militarism in the Philippines and are associated in particular with prostitution and crime. US military records related to prostitution in the Philippines during the postwar period are abundant with reference to these two towns. Drawing from records that reference Manila allows for comparison between how intimacies were perceived in the nation's capital versus these two more highly stigmatized base towns. Moreover, I travelled to libraries in Cavite after exploring US military records related to the nearby US naval base of Sangley Point. This geography remains understudied in the scholarly literature, perhaps because Cavite did not develop the same kind of reputation as Olongapo and Angeles as "sin cities," thus providing another important point of comparison.

My approach to *place* draws from borderlands theories that conceptualize place in relation to categories of difference such as race, class, and nation. Victoria Reyes's spatial analytic, "global borderlands," proves useful for examining the negotiation of sovereignty over intimate crimes in the Philippines. Reyes argues that global borderlands, which include militarized zones, are arms of empire that "lay within, rather than alongside, geopolitical borders."⁷⁶ Spaces of "foreign-local encounters," global borderlands reproduce inequalities "based on differences in nationality and class."⁷⁷ Reyes demonstrates how inequalities are reproduced in interactions between Filipinos and US military personnel on the ground that reflect the unequal power dynamics established within

⁷⁶ Victoria Reyes, *Global Borderlands: Fantasy, Violence, and Empire in Subic Bay, Philippines* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019), 3.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

official treaties, military agreements, and even tax laws. Reyes speaks to the spatial boundedness of these negotiations and contestations of power, and the ways that they have set Subic Bay, Philippines apart as an “unsettled” place wherein “a set of different norms and laws are enforced.”⁷⁸

Building from this concept of global borderlands, this dissertation addresses the “unbounded” ways in which empire reproduces itself and seeps through borders.⁷⁹ As Ann McClintock argues, borderlands are places that operate differently due to their “liminal condition.”⁸⁰ They are dangerous places as they exist “on the margins between known and unknown” and therefore elicit male paranoia and fear of engulfment, dismemberment, and emasculation.⁸¹ Borders are naturalized by the gender hierarchy as men over-assert masculine dominance in the attempt to gain control over unbounded territory. This conception of borderlands aligns with Gloria Anzaldúa’s field-defining theorization of borders as spaces that construct liminal identities and subject marginalized people, especially women, to greater violence. Anzaldúa’s focus on the subjectivity of the marginal, those who occupy the unnatural boundary, extends the notion of borderlands to gendered and sexualized bodies and identities. As Anzaldúa writes, “*Los atrevesados* live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulatto, the half-breed, the half-dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the “normal.”⁸² In other words, the borderland creates a relationship between normal and non-normative that transcends physical markers, treaties, and official agreements.

I understand global borderlands by also considering what Edward Said has called imaginative geographies. Imaginative geographies refers to the unequal cultural processes that construct and

⁷⁸ Ibid, 3. See also 196, n. 27.

⁷⁹ Ann Laura Stoler, *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 5.

⁸⁰ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995).

⁸¹ Ibid, 27.

⁸² Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera* (San Francisco, CA: Spinster, 1987), 25.

reinforce difference between physically distant spaces and peoples. As Said argues, *Orientalism* depended on imaginative geographies to produce the notion of Western modernity over colonial backwardness and primitivism.⁸³ While Orientalism produced imagined distinctions between East and West through art, scholarship, and other representations of the Orient, these knowledge-making processes were also constitutive of European self-making and ideas of superiority. Important to this concept of imaginative geographies is *space*. As geographer Derek Gregory argues, “[imaginative geographies] are “constructions that fold distance into difference through a series of spatializations.”⁸⁴ They occur when “designing a familiar space which is ‘ours’ and an unfamiliar space beyond ‘ours’ which is ‘theirs.’”⁸⁵ In other words, the processes that create “our” space are dependent on establishing an imagined distance that defines, classifies, and contains the Other.

Gregory also expands on Said’s *Orientalism* by considering how American-imagined geographies of the orient over the twentieth century have shaped a “colonial present” through the interplay of colonial *amnesia* and *nostalgia*.⁸⁶ While amnesia refers to the forgetting of violent colonial histories built on Orientalism, nostalgia dominates through its idealization of the Other and its treatment of other cultures as “fixed and frozen.”⁸⁷ The concepts of amnesia and nostalgia are useful for interpreting the approaches of the US military towards maintaining imaginative geographies that have distinguished Filipino and US spaces. US military officials strategically deployed racist stereotypes of Filipina sexuality originating in colonial histories, even while claiming to promote friendship and mutual respect between US servicemen and the local population. In this way, the discourses of colonial amnesia and nostalgia worked in tandem to recreate an imagined spatial distance.

⁸³ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978), 12. See also 49-72.

⁸⁴ Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004), 17.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 17.

⁸⁶ *Ibid* 8-9.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 10.

Local

My approach to *place* is also informed by theorizations of “the local” in Southeast Asian history. Since the 1960s, historians of Southeast Asia have advocated for methods that illuminate indigenous perspectives and experiences outside of imperialist or nationalist narratives.⁸⁸ As Deirdre de la Cruz argues, this “ongoing process” of searching for “something else” within imperialist records, referred to as “localization” by historian Oliver Wolters, is critical yet contradictory.⁸⁹ Localization attempts to decenter the foreign even while conceding its significant role in transforming the local, resulting in a history that understands the agency of Southeast Asians as “reactive.”⁹⁰ De la Cruz importantly pushes beyond this framework and thus points to events and phenomenon in Philippine history that are “deterritorialized” or not bounded exclusively by place. Considering the Filipino diaspora and the ways that Filipinos have imagined themselves outside of regional or national communities, but instead through the notion of a “universal,” the idea of a local constructed against the foreign is inadequate.⁹¹

In Philippine history, like in other Southeast Asian and imperial contexts, the local has been imagined as a concept defined homogeneously against the actions, power, and culture of multiple colonizers. This is especially true of Philippine nationalist histories that emerged after World War II, and it is this very framework that scholars of Philippine Studies have long worked to dismantle.⁹²

⁸⁸ Deirdre de la Cruz, *Mother Figured: Marian Apparitions and the Making of a Filipino Universal* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 15.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 15-16. The term “localization” comes from historian Oliver Wolters in “Towards Defining Southeast Asian History,” in *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982).

⁹⁰ As De la Cruz elaborates, this has been a defining characteristic of Southeast Asian histories since the 1960s. In the Philippine context, this has meant studying history based on regions in opposition to nationalist narratives.

⁹¹ Ibid 17.

⁹² For postwar nationalist histories see Teodoro Agoncillo, *The Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the Katipunan* (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines, 1956) and Renato Constantino and Letizia R. Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (Quezon City, Philippines: Tala Pub. Services, 1975). For postcolonial critiques of Philippine nationalist histories see Neferti Xina M. Tadiar, *Fantasy Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the*

De la Cruz further explains that the problem with the concept of local is that it is “brought into relief only through its relationship to an *outside*, and it is thus inherently instable.”⁹³ While acknowledging these limitations, I argue that *local* remains important for writing critical, self-reflexive histories of the Philippines due to the comparative lens that multiple locations or orientations can provide. My main concern is that scholars have too often imagined the constitutive outside of the local as singular and authentic. Throughout this dissertation, I remain committed to the concept of the local and its imperfections by examining the multiple ways that the outside is imagined, and by acknowledging the entanglements of the local with elements from the outside. My usage of local recognizes scales of varying granularity, including the imperial-national view from which this history cannot escape, as well as smaller scales of region, province, neighborhood, and on-the-ground experiences of place.

Place remains significant because of the fact that progressive histories of US imperialism have continued to ignore events, phenomena, actions, and experiences that are less visible through the lens of empire. Deep engagement with communities and the places with which they identify—as in the work of scholars such as De la Cruz—allows for comparison between the multiple imagined constructions of what lies outside of the local. While not an ethnography, this dissertation considers knowledge gained through conversations, interactions, oral histories, and other experiences that are rooted in place. According to Dipesh Chakrabarty, proponents of a deterritorialized framework of empire “usually do not ask of themselves any questions about the place from where their own thinking comes.”⁹⁴ This placelessness, he argues, reproduces a history of capital that places Europe at the center.⁹⁵ In considering the multiple meanings of the local and the outside, I attempt to

New World Order, (Hong Kong and London: Hong Kong University Press, 2004).

⁹³ Ibid, 16. Italics added.

⁹⁴ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), xvii.

⁹⁵ Chakrabarty calls this History 1, or the history of modernity that sees capital’s revolution as complete in Europe yet

decenter the US while acknowledging this approach as an imperfect solution to the problem of decolonizing Philippine history.

Archives

This dissertation is based on archival and oral history research conducted throughout the US and the Philippines. Within this transnational project, I incorporate interdisciplinary, mixed methods in an attempt to decenter the narratives of US military actors. The main US-based archives that I draw from include the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in College Park, MD and San Francisco, CA, which house extensive collections related to US military activity in the Philippines. I also gathered materials from the Library of Congress, the Wisconsin Historical Center, and the Pinoy Archives of the Filipino American National Historical Society in Seattle. Despite the overwhelming number of sources located at these archives, the material largely focuses on the perspectives of US-based actors. I therefore spent the majority of my research time in the Philippines, searching for fragments that could speak to the heterogeneous perspectives of Filipinos and create a cohesive narrative. This dissertation's main archives in Metro Manila include the American Historical Collection at Ateneo de Manila University, the Lopez Memorial Museum and Library, the Ortigas Foundation Library, and the Mowelfund Film Institute in Quezon City. Outside of Metro Manila, I visited regional libraries in Olongapo, Angeles, and Cavite.

Absences and silences in the archival record led me to seek out cultural productions and conduct oral histories to better understand the perspectives of historical actors outside of US military bureaucracy. I examined Tagalog novels, short stories, and films produced in the postwar Philippines that shed light on local perceptions of illicit intimacies. Moreover, I conducted oral

developing in other parts of the world. This history is in tension with what he calls History 2, a narrative wherein capital's revolution in the colonies was not "developing," but different and incomplete. History 2 produces a different subjective experience that disrupts the logic of capital, as consciousness and resistance to capital emerge from outside.

histories in Tagalog with Filipinas, many of whom developed intimacies with US servicemen, and Amerasians, the mixed-race children of US servicemen and local women, in Olongapo. These oral interviews provide a glimpse of how those who were the most impacted by intimate management and the US military presence understand and interpret their own histories. By reading and listening against and “along” the grain, this mixed-method approach highlights the tensions, contradictions, and ambivalences within postwar alliances and intimacies that have defined Philippine-American relations.⁹⁶

Throughout this dissertation, all translations of archival and oral history materials are my own, unless otherwise noted.

Historiography

US Empire History

This dissertation sits at the intersection of three main scholarly fields: US Empire History, Asian American Studies, and Philippine Studies. This in-between and outside position is advantageous for bridging conversations and providing new ways of seeing. Scholarship on US empire has greatly expanded over the last few decades, particularly following the US War on Terror. Since Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease’s *Cultures of US Imperialism* in 1993, scholarship on empire and its significance to US national culture and identity have pointed critically to silences and absences within dominant narratives of US history.⁹⁷ No longer is US imperialism understood as exceptional or an aberration in the broader narrative of the nation’s history. Many scholars have documented the influence of empire abroad and at home. Moreover, US empire studies has become even more

⁹⁶ Reading “along” the grain means focusing on affect within the “shadowy places” of the archive that shed light on imperial power. This approach comes from Stoler’s work on historical ethnography. Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

⁹⁷ Amy Kaplan and Donald E Pease, *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).

critical of nationalist and Orientalist frameworks, often drawing from critiques originating in postcolonial and critical ethnic studies scholarship. Examining these scholarly trends over the last few decades reveals that some of the most important voices shaping the history of US imperialism are often positioned outside of the field.

Some have argued that scholarship invested in critiquing US power ignores local power dynamics that do not center around US imperialism. Addressing this issue, scholars from native and borderlands studies have reimagined centers and peripheries within US imperial history. For example, Richard White's *Middle Ground* and Pekka Hämäläinen's *Comanche Empire* challenge the orthodox narrative of American dominance over passive natives by considering alternate configurations of power.⁹⁸ Anthony Mora's work on New Mexico corrects the dominant view of US empire's center and periphery by emphasizing not only American power in relation to Mexico, but also considering Mexican imperial formations.⁹⁹ In the dominant American narrative, the assumption of a homogenous, ethnic-national Mexican identity obscures the history of imperial violence by not only the US but also Mexico against native groups in the American west. By examining other centers of power, these works collectively challenge the binary of colonizer and colonized prevalent in the scholarly literature.

Recent scholarship has emerged from native studies pushing the field towards engaging with settler colonialism. Alyosha Goldstein's work has emphasized, for example, that placing US colonialism and empire abroad in the same analytic frame as settler colonialism in North America blurs the formal versus informal split that has long dominated scholarship on US empire.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ See Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008)

⁹⁹ Anthony P. Mora, *Border Dilemmas: Racial and National Uncertainties in New Mexico, 1848-1912* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2011).

¹⁰⁰ Alyosha Goldstein, ed., *Formations of United States Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

Goldstein argues that there is no proper inside or outside the nation state, however, “popular investments in the modular nation form and claims to a discrete and territorially delimited political community have definite material force.”¹⁰¹ In other words, despite the fact that globalization has made nation-states less powerful, the ways that historical actors have imagined nation versus empire continues to have real effects and is reflected in scholarship. While many still think of colonialism only as an overseas affair, the connections between settler colonialism and overseas colonialism remain under-explored even if no scholar would deny the annihilation of native communities as a violent *colonial* project.¹⁰² To challenge this containment of settler colonialism to the past, and the conflation of overseas colonialism with empire, Goldstein argues that indigeneity is “key to critical analysis.”¹⁰³

This dissertation contributes to the movement towards transnational histories of US imperialism that take into account problems of US centrism voiced in postcolonial and ethnic studies. Transnational refers to the flow of capital, people, and ideas beyond nation states. A transnational approach is significant for addressing the continuation of treating overseas colonies as the only form of imperialism. Doing so discounts settler colonialism as past and treats US foreign engagements abroad as irregular. Keeping this momentum towards transnational histories seems even more important considering recent scholarship and scholarly debates that have returned US empire studies to questions and frameworks that were thought to be put to rest. Paul Kramer argues that some have taken a transnational approach that ironically supports a nationalist frame.¹⁰⁴ While focusing his critique on the work of Daniel Immerwahr, Kramer’s criticism calls out a subset of historians whose understanding of inclusion resists engagement with postcolonial thought. Their

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 2.

¹⁰² Ibid, 11.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 3.

¹⁰⁴ Paul A. Kramer, “How Not to Write the History of US Empire,” *Diplomatic History* 42, no. 5 (November 1, 2018): 922.

“nationalist transnationalism” engages with the history of the US “in the world” but in ways that are ironically disconnected from the critical thought about place and nation that generated the transnational turn.¹⁰⁵

Asian American Studies

It is worth emphasizing that critiques of nation-based scholarship that reproduce colonial epistemologies are not new. Critically engaged Asian American and ethnic studies scholarship has already made these kinds of field-changing arguments that take seriously postcolonial thought. Kandice Chuh argues that an Asian American studies that is “distinctly ‘about’ *here* [the US] can effectively support a colonial epistemology contrary to the project of social justice.”¹⁰⁶ Drawing on postcolonial and transnational methods, Chuh reimagines Asian American studies as a subjectless field that maintains a commitment to social justice and anti-colonialism by recognizing and being self-reflexive about the place from which scholars of Asian American studies write. Thinking of Asian American studies itself as a formation of multiculturalism, Chuh proposes a deconstructive framework that exposes the “internal contradiction” of Asian American studies so as to avoid flattening relations of power.¹⁰⁷

Many others have emphasized critical transnational methods. Mae Ngai’s *Impossible Subjects* exemplifies this critique of nationalism and US multiculturalism by focusing on the distinctions in experiences of racialized groups as a result of US immigration law.¹⁰⁸ Ngai’s focus on the influence of colonialism, the racialization of labor, and the construction of borders emphasizes contradictions in the US liberal multicultural discourse of exceptionalism and immigrant inclusion. Additionally,

¹⁰⁵ The term “nationalist transnationalism” comes from Kramer.

¹⁰⁶ Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 15.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰⁸ Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

Catherine Ceniza Choy's *Empire of Care* explicitly responds to concerns within Asian American studies about US-centricity and the affordances and limitations of nation-based frameworks.¹⁰⁹ Choy argues for a “postnationalist” framework to examine the relationship between US imperialism, race and sexuality, and the migration patterns of Filipina nurses to the US. Moreover, more recent scholarship such as the work of Karen Leong, Cynthia Wu, and Lynne Horiuchi have pushed the field towards conversations that connect settler colonialism and Asian American racialization.¹¹⁰ They argue that while the field of Asian American studies established itself by focusing on race-based restrictions on immigration and citizenship, this focus has overshadowed and silenced issues of native sovereignty.

Within this move towards critical, postcolonial Asian American studies, Philippine history remains important as it provides another context to engage with formations of US imperialism. Filipino and Filipino American studies continue to be marginalized within Asian American studies. This dissertation contributes to the growing scholarly literature on the Filipino experience by connecting US militarism in the Philippines to Asian American history. In tracing how US-Philippine postwar alliances affected Filipina War Brides in the US and those left behind in the Philippines, I highlight the racial and sexual discourses that have reinforced the binary between legitimate wife and prostitute. Rather than celebrate the visibility of Filipinas in the US as an important “second wave” that allowed Filipino American communities to develop, this critical perspective makes connections to other Asian American histories wherein US racial discourse attempted to obscure imperialism through a language of racial inclusion.¹¹¹ A transnational approach makes clear the ways that this

¹⁰⁹ Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003), 10.

¹¹⁰ See Leong Karen and Carpio M V, “Carceral States: Converging Indigenous and Asian Experiences in the Americas,” *Amerasia Journal* 42, no. 1 (2016): vii–xviii., Also within *Amerasian Journal* 42, no. 1 see Cynthia Wu, “A Comparative Analysis of Indigenous Displacement and the World War II Japanese American Internment,” and Lynne Horiuchi, “Spatial Jurisdictions, Historical Topographies, and Sovereignty at the Leupp Isolation Center”

¹¹¹ For more on racial inclusion in this context see Cindy I-Fen Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race During the Cold War* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2013). For an example of a “second wave” history see Caridad

binary lens—which classifies Asians as either assimilable or threatening—continues to stigmatize those outside of the imagined US domestic space. This imaginative geography constructs the US mainland as devoid of imperialism.

Philippine Studies

Since the 1970s, Philippine studies scholars have been invested in decolonizing Philippine history through critiques of US-based scholarship and Philippine nationalist histories. Some of the main contentions within this field stem from what Caroline Hau refers to as “epistemic privilege.”¹¹² The issue revolves mainly around the positionality of American scholars influencing their sources, audience, and citational communities. Critics argue that American scholars produce Orientalist histories of the Philippines that reflect colonial dynamics. Moreover, language and “access to worlds” privileges US-based scholars of prestigious academic institutions whose networks offer greater opportunities for visibility and acknowledgement. As Martin Manalansan and Augusto Espiritu explain, one of the key problems is the lack of dialogue between Filipino American, Philippine, and Filipino Studies to create linkages between these fields.¹¹³

In response, some scholars in Philippine and Filipino studies have argued for a “critical Filipino approach.” Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, for example, argues that scholars of Filipino American studies should consider frameworks of exclusion beyond US laws and policies. In her study on Filipino migration to the US, Rodriguez complicates the traditional “three waves” narrative, which has tended to privilege US immigration law and labor demands.¹¹⁴ Rodriguez focuses on the

Concepcion Vallangca, *The Second Wave: Pinay & Pinoy 1945-1960* (San Francisco, CA: Strawberry Hill Press, 1987), 57–77.

¹¹² Caroline Sy Hau, “Privileging Roots and Routes: Filipino Intellectuals and the Contest over Epistemic Power and Authority,” *Philippine Studies Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 62, no. 1 (2014): 29–65.

¹¹³ Martin F. Manalansan and Augusto Fauni Espiritu, *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2016), 9.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

Philippine government's labor export policies to control local protests of structural adjustment, which allied the neocolonial state with US imperialist interests.¹¹⁵ By examining the Philippine state's exportation of labor, Rodriguez demonstrates that economic inequalities affecting Filipino American communities occurred due to the role of the Philippine state, not only US legislation.¹¹⁶ Her critical approach that extends beyond US frameworks reveals a different and more complex narrative.

This dissertation takes seriously the claim of Rodriguez and others that missed connections produce less nuanced scholarship. Contributing to this movement towards bridging fields, my analysis focuses on the effects of postwar alliances on Filipinos and Filipino Americans on both sides of the Pacific. In this way, transnationalism means not only engaging with archives beyond the US, but a commitment to a broader scope of scholarly inquiry that examines the movement of people and ideas in multiple directions. This dissertation is *transnational* in its examination of the formations of US imperialism and militarism in the Philippines and in the lives of Filipinos beyond the nation. In this narrative, the history of US empire in the Philippines is not only useful for understanding US history or Philippine history, but also for deepening the connections between multiple fields that have been historically divided.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is organized into three parts. The first two chapters make up Part One, "Prostitute or War Bride?" which examines the policies and practices of US military officials, alongside their Philippine allies, in managing prostitution, venereal disease, and marriages. Chapter One focuses on the US military and Philippine government's anti-VD campaign and the alliances that were formed in order to control local people and spaces imagined to be diseased. I trace the

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 38.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 37.

discourse of illicit intimacies within a wide range of materials produced by the US military including correspondence records, court martial records, newspapers, posters, pamphlets, and films. Chapter Two focuses on the processing of marriage requests within the US Army and Navy after World War II. By examining marriage request files of both interracial and same-race couples, this chapter explores the ways that race and respectability determined which Filipinas were deemed assimilable spouses worthy of marriage, migration, and US citizenship.

Part Two, “Illicit Intimacies in Philippine Culture,” contains the third chapter. Chapter Three examines representations of GI-Filipina intimacies within Philippine popular cultural productions including novels, shorts stories, and films. These cultural materials reveal that interracial relationships between US servicemen and Filipinas surfaced as a metaphor for US-Philippine relations and Filipino nationalism. Filipino heteropatriarchal nationalists reproduced the figure of the Filipina prostitute to critique the economic and moral influences of US militarism in Philippine society. With attention to gender and sexuality, this chapter follows Part One by examining the power of illicit intimacies to negatively impact the physical and material lives of Filipinas. Collectively, the first two thirds of this dissertation form a critique of the ways that US military empire, the Philippine state, and Filipino nationalism have obscured and denied the experiences, perspectives, and subjectivities of women and children most directly affected by the violence of war and militarism throughout the country.

In Part Three, “Reparative Intimacies,” which contains the final two chapters, I turn to oral history to document the stories of Filipinas and Amerasian children about their life experiences and perspectives on US militarism. I center the narratives of individuals who have faced social stigmas due to their association with US military personnel. These stories provide a rare glimpse of voices that are silenced within the archives. Chapter Four brings together the oral histories of Filipina War Brides and women currently living and working in Subic Bay, Philippines. This chapter explores

questions of innocence, trauma, and shame in the narratives of women who immigrated to the US and those who were left behind. Finally, Chapter Five is based on oral history interviews I conducted with members and leaders of the Olongapo Amerasian Organization. This last chapter focuses on the strategies of Amerasians in Olongapo to challenge social stigma and develop community based on a shared identity as Filipino Amerasians.

PART ONE

Prostitute or War Bride?

Chapter 1

“Females of Questionable Character”: the US Military’s anti-VD campaign

In the documentary *Basing Landscapes*, Filipina American artist and filmmaker Michelle Dizon interviews women in Olongapo, Philippines about their experiences as “pick up” girls “during the time of the Americans.”¹¹⁷ The film does not historicize the women as subjects; their faces are never shown, and their names are never revealed. We only see a black screen and hear multiple voices telling the most difficult stories of their lives, at times in tears. This presentation heightens our awareness of sound, compelling us to listen closely to the Tagalog rather than to judge or impose our own narratives based on visual stimulation. We hear several women’s voices, each one affirming what another previously says.

The film begins with a woman explaining the normal sights around the military base in Olongapo, and how common it was to find American customers.

Makikita mo diyan every afternoon or early in the morning, maraming karga mga ‘kano naglalalakad diyan. Kabit hindi ka pumasok sa bar, maglakad ka lang magkakaroon ka ng customer. Kaya may tinatavag kami noon panahon ng military base na “pick up” [nananaboy]

[Every afternoon and early in the morning you would see Americans walking around. Even if you didn’t enter a bar, you could get a customer by just walking around. That’s why there were some that called us ‘pick up’ during the time of the military base.]

This testimony paints a picture of Olongapo as a place inundated by Americans who roamed around preying on women and girls. The fact that there were so many Americans around made finding sex work easy. Another woman in the documentary continued to explain how a sexual transaction would

¹¹⁷ Thank you to Sarita See for suggesting this documentary. The full video is available to stream at <https://vimeo.com/77088456>.

commonly occur between US servicemen and a woman or girl. “*Kunyawari flower vender ako, sasabihin sa akin, bibili ako labat ng bulaklak mo, pero sasama ka sa akin. Ganun.*” [Let’s say I was a flower vender. He would say to me, “I will buy all of your flowers, but you’re coming with me. Just like that.”] As she explains, any woman who walked the streets could say, “Hi Joel,” and if she was pleasing to the serviceman they would flirt and soon enough find themselves at the nearest hotel. It happened “just like that.”

In Dizon’s documentary, the women who speak in the group interview argue against the term *sex worker*, and strongly state that they were “prostituted women.” The term “prostituted women,” while widely used by feminist activists and scholars in the Philippines today, insists on the limited agency of women and girls who engaged in sexual intimacies with US military personnel in base towns such as Olongapo.¹¹⁸ The term challenges the misogynist narrative in which women’s agency is interpreted as illicit desire and untamed female sexual power. *Basing Landscapes* exposes this perspective and complicates the US military’s narrative of power and agency. *American* bodies littered the streets and actively sought out Filipinas. The serviceman who approached the flower vender initiated sex with the command “*sasama ka sa akin*” [you’re coming with me] while understanding her economic necessity to sell all of her flowers. In other words, US soldiers—not Filipinas—threatened public health and morality as the vagrants or streetwalkers searching for pleasure.

Dizon’s film attempts to recuperate the stories of Filipinas in Olongapo from the discourse of illicit intimacies. The film’s design of stripping viewers from visual pleasure limits the possibility of profiling women and girls yet again as prostitutes. Their bodies are spared from the stereotype of the gold-digging whore or the ambitious social climber. By reducing the viewer’s focus to sound, the

¹¹⁸ The portrayal of Filipinas in this context as “prostituted” is a strategic, political move that victimizes sexual laborers while intentionally overshadowing liberal, progressive frameworks of women’s “agency,” power, or resistance. For more on the strategies of Filipina feminists see Mina Roces, *Women’s Movements and the Filipina, 1986-2008* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2012).

film emphasizes the voices of women who are too often overlooked, unheard, and forgotten. Yet, the film also reveals how the perspectives of Filipinas remain obscured even within critical, feminist productions. For example, when one of the women explains that they were called pick up girls [*may tinatawag kami...na 'pick up'*] the translation in the English subtitles reads “we called ourselves...pick up.” In explaining how they were called pick up girls *by others*, the women in the film clearly distinguished themselves from a category of identity that was imposed on them. While a small mistranslation, this example points to additional layers of inequality that disempower Filipinas from controlling their own narratives.

This chapter draws from US military records and the writing of the US's Filipino allies to examine the management of sexual intimacies such as prostitution and streetwalking. Official and unofficial efforts to manage sexuality in the postwar Philippines reinforced a narrative in which Filipinas actively seduced naïve enlisted men, justifying the need to protect the health, morality, and productivity of US troops. I trace the discourse of illicit intimacies focusing particularly on the stigmatization of Filipinas and local spaces in order to critique the ways that it has silenced women's voices. In doing so, this chapter demonstrates that control over the bodies and reputations of Filipinas emerged from multiple sites of power and involved the work of US military officers, enlisted men, Philippine authorities, politicians, and bar owners. This chapter argues that the US military's campaign to manage prostitution and the spread of VD was central to maintaining US imperial power in the postwar Philippines. While the protection of white family values and normative sexuality became tied to national health and security, the US military focused on identifying “prostitutes” as a corrupting influence over US servicemen. As this chapter discusses, racialized bodies and spaces emerged as primary arenas for the struggle over local power contradicting national discourses of exceptionalism and friendship.

Historical scholarship on intimate management during and following World War II is nearly absent, as historians have mainly focused on the Spanish and US colonial periods.¹¹⁹ Scholars in other fields, particularly sociology, have explored contemporary issues related to the US military, prostitution, and sexual intimacies contributing to our understanding of the “bar system.” The bar system became a means of regulating the selling of sex through legal commercial establishments while also concealing prostitution.¹²⁰ Yet this literature has centered on the period from 1965-1992. This chapter contributes a history of the immediate postwar period from 1946-1950 in order to better understand how forms of regulation within the US military developed over time. Moreover, this chapter points to the broader social impact of intimate management beyond the immediate context of sexual labor.

I begin with brief overviews of the histories of prostitution and venereal disease control to contextualize the joint anti-VD campaign between the US military and the Philippine government. The sections that follow focus on the uneven alliances that emerged in this campaign, as well as the ways that anti-VD strategies reproduced colonial discourses and relationships. By focusing on the physical and psychological methods that served to redirect the romantic and sexual desires of enlisted men towards more wholesome activities and commitments, these sections demonstrate the ways that the US military developed imaginative geographies to promote emotional distance. This process reveals how an imagined cultural superiority over Filipinas and local spaces became a strategy for promoting segregation while also creating tensions on the ground. Finally, the last

¹¹⁹ The history of comfort women remains understudied despite the fact that the topic of sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army is well-known. This is perhaps due to the difficulty of this topic considering the trauma that Filipinas, and other women, experienced. There is also more that historians can learn about the US military’s relationship to the Japanese comfort women system. See George L. Hicks, *The Comfort Women: Japan’s Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995).

¹²⁰ For more on the “bar system,” see Sandra Pollock Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus, *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia* (New York: The New Press, 1994).

section documents the violence that Filipinas experienced in quotidian interactions, emphasizing the impact of these discourses within everyday physical confrontations.

History of Prostitution in the Philippines

Most historical scholarship on prostitution and venereal disease control have focused on the Spanish and US colonial periods.¹²¹ This scholarly literature has expanded our understanding of prostitution policies and laws as well as the social factors that have contributed to increases in sexual labor in Philippine urban areas. Maria Luisa Camagay's work on prostitution in Manila, for example, examines the outbreak of venereal disease near the end of the nineteenth century, which she argues led to the arrest and deportation of women infected with syphilis.¹²² Other scholars such as Luis Dery, Ken De Bevoise, Greg Bankoff, and Andrew Abalihin have focused on the red-light districts of Manila and the policies that were put in place by the Spanish colonial government to manage public health and keep the streets clear of vagrants.¹²³ According to this literature, the Spanish instituted legal, state-regulated prostitution in 1897 modeled after a *Reglamento* in Madrid that was meant to curb the spread of disease by keeping women clean. Regulating women's bodies by requiring weekly health checks, registration fees, and controlling women's labor through *tarjetas* were tied to constructions of modernity in the colony and the metropole.¹²⁴

¹²¹ There are no known historical sources on prostitution before the Spanish colonial era. See collection on prostitution from the Center for Women's Resources, Quezon City, Philippines.

¹²² Women were deported to Davao, Philippines. See Maria Luisa Camagay, *Working Women of Manila in the 19th Century* (Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1995).

¹²³ See Luis Camara Dery, *A History of the Inarticulate: Local History, Prostitution, and Other Views From the Bottom* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 2001); Ken De Bevoise, *Agents of Apocalypse: Epidemic Disease in the Colonial Philippines* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Greg Bankoff, *Crime, Society, and the State in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996).

¹²⁴ *Tarjetas* were used to log the health checks and registration of women with the city. See Andrew Jimenez Abalihin, "Prostitution Policy and the Project of Modernity: A Comparative Study of Colonial Indonesia and the Philippines, 1850-1940" (2003).

Historical scholarship has also examined the shift in law and policy from the Spanish to the American colonial period. According to Dery, the US colonial government abolished the legal *Reglamento* that the Spanish had initiated in the 1880s and instituted only a year before the American arrival.¹²⁵ Yet, the US military essentially continued the Spanish program of licensed prostitution through “inspection systems” despite the illegality of regulating prostitution.¹²⁶ The work of David Pivar and Paul Kramer explores how transnational politics affected this system after a US journalist wrote about the military’s endorsement of prostitution.¹²⁷ As these historians have demonstrated, prostitution policy in the Philippines, and its perceived negative influence on the morality of US military personnel, greatly influenced debates about US imperialism especially among white American feminists. White feminists focused on the issue of prostitution policy in the colonies to argue for women’s inclusion in imperialist politics as feminine, moral authorities. As a result of their progressive efforts, the colonial government officially outlawed licensed prostitution and regulation, requiring brothels and other houses of prostitution to restructure their trade in ways that would be invisible to the public. Despite attempts throughout the 1920s and 30s to re-establish legal systems to regulate prostitution, these were unsuccessful and laws banning vagrancy, prostitution, and regulation in 1917 and 1918 remained in full force.

Venereal Disease History in the US Military

¹²⁵ Luis Camara Dery, *A History of the Inarticulate: Local History, Prostitution, and Other Views From the Bottom* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 2001).

¹²⁶ Paul Kramer, “The Darkness That Enters the Home,” in *Haunted By Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

¹²⁷ David J Pivar, “The Military, Prostitution, and Colonial Peoples: India and the Philippines, 1885-1917,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 17, no. 3 (1981): 256–69; Paul Kramer, “The Darkness That Enters the Home,” in *Haunted By Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006). Historian Motoe Terami-Wada also adds to this transnational focus by considering the Japanese community in Manila. Terami-Wada argues that from 1890-1920, Japanese women who were often illegally trafficked to the Philippines gained a reputation for prostitution. See Motoe Terami-Wada, “Karayuki-San of Manila: 1890-1920,” *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 34, no. 3 (1986): 287–316.

The cultural meaning of VD in the postwar period also emerges from a longer history of public health, sexual regulation, and morality in the US. Since the late nineteenth century, VD has symbolized corrupt sexuality, pollution, and contamination. Those who contracted VD were thought to be sinful men who engaged in risky behaviors due to “moral turpitude.” Yet, these views shifted slightly in the progressive era. Historian of medicine Allan Brandt argues that when birthrates of Anglo families fell below those of new immigrants, VD became understood as a “family poison.” In the era of eugenics, VD was no longer perceived as an individual sexual disorder but a social problem that threatened white American families. “Fallen women,” or women in prostitution became responsible for disease spread to “sinful men” who then infected “innocent women” and their children. Prior to the 1910s, those who suffered from VD found it difficult to obtain treatment due to stigma and the lack of medical knowledge about sexual illnesses. Once VD became a social problem, progressives argued for education programs, rehabilitation programs, and other strategies of control as important measures for the nation’s future. Physicians began to study cures for VD, and in 1919 sexual education was taught in public schools.¹²⁸

As historians have documented, methods of education and rehabilitation during the progressive era targeted working class women and women of color. As the US prepared to enter World War I, training camps that prepared men for war located along the US-Mexico border in Texas and New Mexico became known for prostitution and disease.¹²⁹ In 1917, the War Department created the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA) as a progressive solution to the sexual immorality and disorder that was associated with women on the border who flocked to the military camps. Women were rounded up in large numbers. They were arrested, incarcerated, and classified

¹²⁸ Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1985).

¹²⁹ Mark Thomas Connelly, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 136.

based on perceived ability to be reformed.¹³⁰ State-wide laws in 1918 supported the CTCA's actions, which required all women perceived to be prostitutes to be physically examined and contained.¹³¹ Yet, eventually physicians argued that it was not only prostitutes who were responsible for VD but delinquent young girls they believed to be “flappers” who were the source of disease.¹³² They claimed that flappers were promiscuous but not necessarily prostitutes, which altered their approach to anti-VD efforts.¹³³ As a result of this belief, the CTCA made anti-VD a national campaign to ensure that women writ-large were free from disease; doing so they argued was “patriotic.”¹³⁴ Areas where promiscuous women were believed to frequent became placed “off-limits” with physical signs marking such areas that read “verboten,” or forbidden.¹³⁵

The CTCA emphasized treatment and positive rather than repressive strategies to control men's behaviors. They referred to their strategies as “invisible armor” that would protect servicemen from contracting disease and weakening their strength in combat. Programs that would promote recreational activities to keep servicemen occupied while off-duty emerged. Moreover, the CTCA argued that VD made servicemen physically weaker and less masculine.¹³⁶ Instead of criminalizing individuals, the approach to the behaviors of US servicemen revolved around psychological tactics to boost morale and wholesome activities to entertain men.

Historians of medicine have noted that following World War I the US experienced an increase of VD across the country. While it was appropriate to talk openly about sexual matters during the war, people stopped discussing it in the interwar period. Efforts to address VD and

¹³⁰ Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 77, 87.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 87.

¹³² *Ibid*, 81.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 84. In some cases, parents forced their daughters to marry US servicemen they had sex with to recuperate their reputations.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 78. See also Mark Thomas Connelly, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 140.

¹³⁵ Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 56.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 64-65.

public health also decreased. By 1936, there were renewed efforts to make VD a public health concern and to begin to discuss the problems that were being ignored. Thomas Parran, a US Public Health Service officer, called a national conference for VD that led to the creation of the National VD Act as a part of the New Deal.¹³⁷ As the federal government began to address social problems, especially the spread of syphilis, anti-VD efforts resurfaced as a part of New Deal social reform.¹³⁸ While issues of morality were still concerning, especially for the Catholic Church which advocated for abstinence and against the use of condoms, prophylactic kits and condoms had finally become more widely available compared to the previous era.

By the US's entry into World War II, VD had once again become a major public health concern. Many of the strategies that were developed during World War I by the CTCA resurfaced during World War II though there were also some differences. Anti-VD efforts had become more large-scale as they were implemented in all areas where VD was a concern. Legislation including the May Act of 1941 supported these efforts by granting federal agencies, such as the Social Protection Division, authority to rule over local governments in the management of VD. This act became enforced twice, in the states of Tennessee and North Carolina.¹³⁹ Moreover, in 1943, the War Department declared VD "in line of duty" meaning that it was considered among other illnesses that normally occur in the course of one's military service such as the common cold. This military policy shifted the perception of VD control as one of individual responsibility to social responsibility. The policy also meant that US servicemen were no longer deducted pay for "time loss" due to VD recovery or penalized in any other ways for sexual illnesses.

The rates of VD across the US dropped considerably after the war due to the discovery of antibiotics and penicillin, and these rates remained low until the 1950s when federal funding for anti-

¹³⁷ Ibid, 144.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 155.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 166.

VD measures decreased yet again. Yet, among US servicemen VD rates were still a major concern where troops were stationed around the world. To address this issue in the Pacific, the US Army established VD control councils in every area of the Philippine-Ryukyu Command, which was an alliance of US Army forces in the Philippines and the Ryukyu Islands, Japan. VD control councils were made up of seven or so members including commanding officers, chaplains, medical personnel, and other officers. Members met monthly to discuss VD statistics in their area, trace locations of infected women, and strategize on how to address the particular issues that their men faced. Reports and minutes from council meetings as well as correspondence between members reveal some differentiation in terms of policy and practice between area commands. Some, for example, attempted to control VD by emphasizing recreational activities as a primary strategy. Others stressed the importance of providing prophylactic kits early on to enlisted men and to limit their movements within the city. Most areas turned to films and posters to convey the sexual danger of local women. What these strategies had in common was their emphasis on treating VD as an illness from which enlisted men required protection while criminalizing local women as carriers of disease and immorality. This approach stemmed from earlier social constructions of disease and morality previously discussed, based on gender, race, and class.

Fragile Alliances: US-Philippine Anti-VD Control

Philippine prostitution laws that were in effect postwar stemmed from the colonial era. The revised penal code of 1930 (originally from 1917) officially outlawed prostitution as a result of US progressive politics, defining it as a “willful act of a woman” selling sex for money.¹⁴⁰ This code was not revised again until 1987. The revised penal code specifically stated that “municipal councils”

¹⁴⁰ Juan F. Rivera, *The Legislative Process of Local Governments* (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press, 1956). See also Felicidad F Manuel, “Prostitution in the Philippines: A Term Paper in History 204” (University of Manila, 1955), 1.

were required to prohibit prostitution, and other vices, and “to provide for the punishment and suppression of vagrancy and the punishment of any person found within the town without legitimate business or visible means of support.”¹⁴¹ This indicated that the power to enforce anti-prostitution and vagrancy law rested with local governments.

According to Philippine law, the US military needed to work with local governments in order to administer their anti-VD campaign. However, in July of 1946, the US Public Health Services and the Department of Health and Public Welfare in the Philippines signed a joint cooperative agreement that ensured US aid to the Philippines to assist with issues of public health.¹⁴² This agreement earmarked funds for seven groups of public health services, one of which specifically outlined the control of VD.¹⁴³ Through this agreement, intimate management became a cooperative effort between the two nations while subsumed within broader plans to improve public health. While the agreement conflicted with municipal codes that granted local governments the authority to enforce anti-VD programs, US military officials were often met with disagreement and fragile alliances on the ground, especially in provinces outside of the city of Manila.

Philippine leaders in Manila maintained a strong alliance with the US military and established a system of regulation that reflected mutual goals. Municipal codes in postwar Manila established ordinances that regulated female laborers within bars and clubs. Manila Ordinance 2019, for example, required that “waitresses” and “hostesses” in bars, restaurants, cafés, and hotels obtain a license from the city treasurer to work. In order to procure such a license, female employees over the age of 21 were required to present health certificates that stated they had passed a VD check

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 45.

¹⁴² Florencio Cruz, “Joint cooperative program for the control of VD in the Philippines” *Journal of the Philippine Medical Association*, 1 July 1950: 309–13.

¹⁴³ Conrado S Dayrit, Perla D. Santos-Ocampo, and Eduardo R De la Cruz, *History of Philippine Medicine, 1899-1999: With Landmarks in World Medical History* (Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 2002), 67.

with a physician. Women were also required to pay a one peso fee for this certificate.¹⁴⁴ Yet not all municipalities outside of Manila had equivalent policies for managing prostitution as some did not require waitresses and hostesses to procure health certificates. This inconsistency created problems for US officials in certain areas where local officials were unwilling to cooperate.

In response, VD control councils attempted to carry out much more intense methods against the local population than simply registering female employees of high risk areas. These included raids of suspected “houses of prostitution,” round ups of “females of questionable character” on the streets, incarceration, forced treatment, as well as coordinated efforts to deport women positive with disease from areas where US military personnel frequented.¹⁴⁵ Even women who took rides in jeeps from US military personnel on their way to work were suspect.¹⁴⁶ As McCormick, Chief of Staff in the Pacific, put it, “venereal disease can be reduced only by continuous coordinated effort to remove from the community all those who are known to practice prostitution.”¹⁴⁷

The Manila Health Department worked closely with the US Army to set up a system to control VD and required that “every woman of every bar in Manila be tested weekly.”¹⁴⁸ In addition, following the lead of US military police, health workers in Manila helped to organized and carry out a raid of 600 “houses of prostitution” in the area.¹⁴⁹ Dr. Joseph Moore, a US Army consultant on VD control reported that there were roughly 6000 prostitutes in several houses, and that the only

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 16.

¹⁴⁵ Capt. H. Frazier to Commanding General Philippines Command, Brief of Minutes of Council Meetings of Major Subordinate Commands, May 26, 1949, RG 554, Entry A1 1464, Box 435, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁴⁶ Teodoro K. Molo to United States Army Forces, Pacific, August 31, 1945, RG 496, Entry 187, Box 496, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁴⁷ L.D. McCormick, Chief of Staff to the Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, Letter 9L-46, January 14, 1946, RG 496, Entry 187, Box 496, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁴⁸ Report of Proceedings of Philrycom Venereal Disease Control Council, July 1, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁴⁹ B. M. Fitch, Brigadier General U.S. Army, to Commanding Officer MP Command, July 12, 1945, RG 496, Entry 187, Box 1584, NARA College Park, MD.

way to reduce the impact on public health they needed to “scatter” the women so that they would have to “work on the run.”¹⁵⁰ According to Moore, this would mean that women would eventually leave the profession by finding it more difficult to sell sex on the streets.¹⁵¹ Moore’s report notes that the raid required one VD control officer, a Manila health worker to serve as a guide, and two military police officers.

The reports of organized raids reveal the exchange of goods, services, and funds between the US military and public health managers in Manila. For example, Ray Thussel, the medical chief Manila Health Department’s VD division, agreed to guide US military police into houses of prostitution in exchange for vehicles.¹⁵² A letter written by Thussel to military police explained the plan for a complex raid of three houses to occur later that week in Manila. Thussel stated that the women would be immediately taken to social hygiene clinics in the area for examination and then confinement to prevent further spread of disease. This letter also explains that such raids throughout the city would “continue until the approximately 600 houses of prostitution in the city [were] closed.”¹⁵³ Another public health worker, Jose Locsin, also wrote a letter to US military police detailing his agreement to assist with a roundup of women.¹⁵⁴ Like Thussel, Locsin served as a guide by providing the whereabouts of women who were believed to sell sex in the city. Locsin assured military police that he knew where 200 “sick women” were being housed, and that he would see to it that they be transported to a correctional facility for women. In closing his letter, Locsin revealed that he required a certain number of medical supplies for his hospital.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ray Thussel, July 12, 1945 Letter to Military Police Command, RG 496, Entry 187, Box 1584, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁵³ Ray Thussel, July 12, 1945 Letter to Military Police Command, RG 496, Entry 187, Box 1584, NARA College Park, MD., 4-5.

¹⁵⁴ Jose C. Locsin, August 7, 1945, Letter to Colonel Hildebrand, RG 496, Entry 187, Box 1584, NARA College Park, MD.

In his response to Locsin, Col. Hildebrand of the military police recommended that Locsin also begin organizing treatment centers in the cities of Manila, Dagupan, San Fernando, Tacloban, Batangas, Cebu, and Tarlac.¹⁵⁵ This recommendation emphasized that local health officials from Manila take on the responsibility of creating hygiene clinics instead of US military officers. Such a suggestion reflects the difficulty that US military officials experienced when attempting to enforce anti-VD policies on their own, in places outside of metro Manila. The US military's strategies at times created conflict on the ground with municipal authorities in the provinces of Central Luzon, especially when they involved managing local businesses and their female employees. Central Luzon, known as the rice capital of the Philippines, is where the *Socialistang Partido ng Pilipinas* [Socialist Party of the Philippines], or SPP, was first established in 1932.¹⁵⁶ Since the 1930s, the peasant movement grew in strength in the countryside in areas such as Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Bulacaan, and Tarlac. The difficulties that the US military had with the anti-VD campaign in those places corresponded with the repression of peasant revolt and the imagined threat of communist sympathizers throughout Central Luzon.

The US military developed an intense anti-VD campaign in Angeles, Pampanga that at times drew on economic and military power to compel local government leaders to comply. The case of Angeles demonstrates how the management of VD and sexual intimacies created tension between US military officers, Angeles public officials, and townspeople. In January 1947, the VD control council of Camp Angeles reported that there was a high rate of VD in the area and that they needed to take more "severe" measures.¹⁵⁷ Part of the problem was that military officers in Angeles were "not getting complete cooperation from the Mayor and Chief of Police" in their anti-VD

¹⁵⁵ Colonel Hildebrand to Jose C. Locsin, August 3, 1945, RG 496, Entry 187, Box 1584, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁵⁶ Vina Lanzona, *Amazons of the Huk Rebellion: Gender, Sex, and Revolution in the Philippines* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 28.

¹⁵⁷ Brigadier General J.W. Anderson, War Department, Washington D.C., to the Commanding General, Philippines-Ryukyus Command, January 31, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

campaign.¹⁵⁸ According to Maj. Harris of Camp Angeles, the commanding officer was to make another attempt at collaborating with city officials, and if this did not work the entire town of Angeles would be “placed off-limits to military personnel.”¹⁵⁹ A practice that came from World War I, being placed “off limits” meant that a physical sign would be placed in front of establishments considered “high risk” for VD, to notify US servicemen that they were forbidden to enter. Establishments in base towns such as Angeles depended on the business of American customers and faced financial loss without the support of the US military. Moreover, being marked publicly as unclean and indecent also affected the reputations of establishments and their employees.

Because government officials sometimes refused to cooperate, at times due to nationalist politics and sympathy with the Hukbalahap, this left local establishment owners in a vulnerable position. They were essentially forced to choose between defending the reputation of their businesses and losing economically or agreeing to the demands of US military police. Intimate management affected the livelihood of business owners who may not have had any relation to prostitution. According to one VD control council report, “the attitude of the average Filipino civilian was that the army was trying to ‘run’ them.”¹⁶⁰ While this report represents an interpretation by US military personnel of how Angelinos felt, it nonetheless indicates how the management of sexual intimacies became a vehicle through which local power relations were contested.

The economic impact, however, of non-cooperation was eventually too much. According to the VD control council notes of 1948, “Through education by the army and civil authorities, the local populace now realize that it is for their own good to report to the clinic for examination and, if necessary, treatment.”¹⁶¹ The report does not specify what was meant by “education.” Nonetheless,

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Report of Proceedings of the Philrycom Venereal Disease Control Council, April 29, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁶¹ Report of Proceedings of the Philrycom Venereal Disease Control Council, April 29, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457,

by 1948 local business owners in Angeles gave in and relinquished their female employees for mandatory health checks by the US military. Angeles officials also began to dialogue with military representatives. In May of 1948, a meeting was held with the VD control council of Clark Field (previously named Camp Angeles) with city officials. Their meeting notes indicated that they had come to an agreement about the hiring of waitresses, social hygiene inspections, types of uniforms waitresses were allowed to wear, and special inspections by the US military of hotels and other establishments.¹⁶² Furthermore, the report claimed that “full cooperation was promised by all concerned in this problem. Results of this seem to be improving, however, it is still too early for a positive statement to be made.”¹⁶³

The situation continued to “improve,” according to VD control council reports, in the months that followed. Military police were only worried about a few small businesses. These “were mostly small *panciterias* [Filipino noodle restaurants] which refused to have their waitresses checked at the social hygiene clinic.”¹⁶⁴ Moreover, according to the VD control council report of July 1948, “an estimated 200 unemployed girls, the majority having previous venereal disease records, [were] removed from Angeles.”¹⁶⁵ The report did not specify where the women were transported or how they reacted to being forcibly removed from the city. This case and the violence it produced points to the uneven management of intimacies by the US military and Philippine governments. While postwar political and economic alliances created stronger ties between the nations, this friendship also increased inequalities on the municipal level that kept female workers particularly vulnerable.

Box 242, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁶² Col. James E. Bousch, President VD Control Council Stotsenberg Area Command, Proceedings of the Stotsenberg Area Command VD Control Council, June 11, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ VDCC, July 12, 1948, Report of Proceedings of the Stotenberg Area Command, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

Managing Philippine Spaces and Bodies

The Military Bases Agreement (MBA) of 1947 gave the US the right to maintain sixteen bases and an additional seven to use throughout the country. Their rights over the bases included control of water, air, land, transportation, facilities, and the flow of goods and services. Moreover, according to the MBA, the US also maintained the right to enter private property and manage “health and sanitation” in nearby areas.¹⁶⁶ As Victoria Reyes argues, the MBA gave the US an expansive set of rights over local spaces, but over time the Philippine government worked to curtail US power through various amendments. One amendment, for example, shifted US rights from being able to “retain the use of the bases” in Leyte-Samar to requiring the US military to obtain permission from the Philippine government *before* using the bases.¹⁶⁷

Yet, the assertion of power over territory and bodies extended beyond treaties, agreements, and amendments. In the postwar period, the management of local spaces revolved around several key tactics through which the US military made full use of their right to manage “health and sanitation” near US military facilities. These included monitoring areas outside of US military camps and bases for cleanliness and order—regulations that could be very loosely applied to suit various forms of policing. Business owners, workers, and customers became subject to inspections, physical examinations, and at times threats to their reputations and ability to find work. Moreover, managing local spaces also involved regulating the movement of people. This key element of spatial regulation entailed restricting the movement of women on the streets and within proximity to US military-occupied spaces. Women walking on the streets became subject to harassment, intimidation, and at times violence.

¹⁶⁶ Victoria Reyes, *Global Borderlands: Fantasy, Violence, and Empire in Subic Bay, Philippines* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019), 28.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 28, 31. Another amendment in 1966 changed the number of years that the Philippines would lease the bases to the US from ninety-nine years to twenty-five.

As Ann McClintock argues, imperialists have long used techniques of classification and naming in order to assert dominance over territory. The creation of maps, for example, has allowed imperialists to more efficiently monitor and manage territory and large populations. Imperialists employ gendered language in creating maps to naturalize conquest and assuage feelings of insecurity.¹⁶⁸ In the Philippines, US military personnel created maps of base towns and other cities nearby that documented areas where “indecent” women could be located. Although military records do not show an example of a map they drew, VD control council reports and correspondence between medical officers discussed the creation of maps. For example, Maj. Garret wrote a letter updating the commanding general of Nichols Field of specific locations around Angeles where his enlisted men encountered local women.¹⁶⁹ In his letter, Garret indicated that he had enclosed a map which “outlined in red” the areas where airmen encountered VD, requesting that these areas be placed “off limits” to personnel.¹⁷⁰ Garret received the information about the locations of “pick up” girls through questionnaires that airmen filled out while receiving medical treatment. After testing positive for VD, enlisted men were given a “contact form” in which they listed all of the possible places where they could have contracted the disease. According to orders from the headquarters of the Philippine-Ryukyus Command, “in every possible instance a map is to be sketched on the reverse side of the contact form.”¹⁷¹ Maps became essential to the organization of raids as descriptions of areas during medical interviews had proven to be too vague to aid in policing efforts.

¹⁶⁸ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995), 29. McClintock discusses how a Portuguese trader in 1590 created a map to lead him to diamond mines in southern Africa, naming a mountain “Sheba’s breasts.” The outline of the mountains, rivers, and roads resembled a woman’s naked body, symbolizing “the conquest of the sexual and labor power of colonized women,” 2.

¹⁶⁹ Major Louis M. Garrett to Commanding General, Philrycom, February 7, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 75, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁷⁰ Major Louis M. Garrett to Commanding General, Philrycom, February 7, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 75, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁷¹ Col. Roy E. Fox to Commanding Officer, Philrycom, May 27, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

Maps also aided in the classification of areas as dirty and off-limits to US military personnel. Using maps that US servicemen had drawn themselves alongside those of local guides, US military authorities were able to mark the Philippine landscape with physical signs to further establish control over places that challenged military authority.¹⁷² Officers adjudicated each place they investigated based on a number of factors including public health standards, morality (determined by the character of the owner), and if the place was in “good order” (if “thugs” or other “undesirables” frequented the place this could lead to off-limits status). Meeting public health standards included a number of criteria such as general cleanliness and adherence to the requirement that all female waitresses be routinely checked for VD. This meant that even establishments that were not associated with prostitution could still be placed on an off limits list if they refused to cooperate with anti-VD policies. Moreover, a woman who tested positive for VD was assumed to engage in illicit sexual activities. This affected not only the individual but also the reputations of local establishments. As military records indicate, many areas where US troops were located ultimately developed reputations for prostitution including certain neighborhoods of Manila, Cavite, Samar, and other militarized regions outside of Luzon.¹⁷³

The practice of classifying certain places as illicit contradicted the logic of US military officials who believed that pick ups were located everywhere. The reports of VD control councils reflect an anxiety about the impossibility of sanitizing and treating the local population—one that was assumed to always be diseased. According to US Army medical officer Guy Denit, examinations

¹⁷² According to a letter from Capt. Richard Walmer to Commanding officer of Military Police Battalion, July 12, 1947, the Pasig Dispensary “have in the past shown a map of the locality where pickups were contacted.” RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁷³ VD reports for the Naval Station listed the highest rates of VD exposure in Olongapo, Angeles City, Cavite, and Manila. Areas outside of the Philippines included Bangkok and Hong Kong. See D. G. Duvigneaud, Medical Officer US Naval Station, Subic Bay, to Senior Member, Disciplinary Sub-Board, Subic Bay, December 1, 1954, RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, 181-59-0157, Box 5. See also Theo. E. Hoffman, Medical Officer, US Naval Station Sangley Point, to Operations Officer, January 3, 1955, RG 313, Phil, Sangley Point, NARA accn# NN373/91, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA.

of local women were “worthless” in preventing VD incidence and a waste of military time and resources.¹⁷⁴ In Denit’s professional opinion, some women were asymptomatic, and prostitutes could never be completely free from infection anyway as they were likely to become reinfected soon after treatment.¹⁷⁵ Yet, council members continued in their attempt to police an invisible enemy. The act of marking local places with a sign that warned of danger provided the perception of greater security and control. These physical markers also displayed power over people and regions that resisted US military control.

In addition to the marking of places with off limits signs, the construction of VD clinics also shaped the local landscape. In Manila, the US military aided in the creation and management of the Division of Social Hygiene and the Venereal Disease Health Clinic. According to reports from the Philippine-Ryukyu command headquarters, these two main facilities operated 168 hours a week on a 24/day schedule for seven days. They had four attendants in each facility, each working 42 hours per week. To provide a sense of the impact of these clinics, the report stated that each facility provided an average of 2,097 prophylactic kits to servicemen monthly. US Army officers understood the meaning of having these clinics available in public locations. Offering prophylactic kits and condoms openly in the Philippines did not represent a neutral practice of safety and protection. The Catholic church viewed VD clinics as immoral institutions that promoted illicit sexuality. In his correspondence to medical officers in Washington, DC, Capt. Cantrell of Philippine headquarters argued that the physical location and visibility of clinics warranted discussion. Cantrell recommended that a future project focus on making clinics “attractive so that personnel aren’t reluctant to enter,” and that the stations administering prophylactic kits be “conspicuous, but do not

¹⁷⁴ Guy B. Denit, Chief Surgeon U.S. Army, to General Headquarters of the U.S. Army Forces Pacific via Circular Letter No. 29, July 22, 1945, RG 496, Entry 187, Box 1584, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

offend the civilian population by making them a place of disorder or a nuisance.”¹⁷⁶ This correspondence reveals the deliberate attempt to balance local relationships with improving the accessibility of military health clinics. Cantrell warned against offending Filipinos, acknowledging the stigmas and assumptions of immorality associated with the visibility of VD clinics.

US Army and Naval officers made plans to create new VD clinics in the provinces as well. In Guiuan, Samar, US Naval officers tested a program to microscopically examine waitresses employed in twelve public establishments before offering a fully-fledged clinic. This was their response to reports of a “high incidence” of gonorrhea in the area.¹⁷⁷ Because their operation was working well, the District Inspector of the Philippine Department of Health and Public Welfare wrote to health officials in Manila, recommending that an official “VD unit” be immediately established to control and eradicate disease there, in Guiuan, Samar.¹⁷⁸ These processes relied on collaboration between health officials in Manila and US Naval officers who supported US military interests without incorporating discussion with local leaders in Samar. Instead of addressing the economic depression that led some women in Samar to sell sex, the US military and Philippine state invested in methods that reinforced assumptions about local places and people as unhygienic and immoral. These processes strengthened US control over Philippine landscapes and people through inequitable treaties and uneven alliances.

A key element of spatial regulation entailed monitoring the movements of women on the streets. Women who walked the streets unaccompanied were informally expected to have in hand what were called “steady papers” or “walking papers,” which referred to proof of employment.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Capt. R.E. Cantrell, Headquarters Philippines-Ryukyus Command, to Surgeon General, Department of the Army Washington D.C., March 22, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁷⁷ A. Dasmarinas, District Inspector, Republic of the Philippines Department of Health and Public Welfare, Cebu City to the Director of Health Manila, Philippines, December 24, 1946, RG 313, Subic Bay, No 17-37377, Box 7, NARA San Francisco, CA.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ See “Oral History With Dorentino Floresta,” in *The Olongapo Colonial Experience: History, Politics, and Memories* (Quezon City, Manila, Philippines: Independent Media, 2003), 121-125.

By carrying documentation of financial support, women protected themselves against arrest for vagrancy, or prostitution. If found to be without steady papers, US military police asserted the right to arrest, confine, and examine streetwalkers as a part of their program to maintain local health and sanitation near US military facilities. VD control council reports documented these arrests and provided details about their perceived effectiveness in cleaning up the streets. On July 12, 1947, military police raided the barrio of Porac in Angeles and arrested “40 young women.”¹⁸⁰ The report celebrated this accomplishment, noting that “35 of these women had positive slides for Gonorrhoea and five had open lesions for Syphilis. All of these were treated by the USPHS free.”¹⁸¹ A few months later, military police investigated a contact report identifying a woman in Rizal City, Manila and apprehended her along with six others who happened to be with her at the time.¹⁸² These reports dehumanized women by treating them as unnamed numbers. This practice justified the targeting and incarceration of streetwalkers for the benefit of clearing the streets of those perceived to be vagrants.

Women were at times arrested arbitrarily due to non-specific reporting of contacts. Medical officers put pressure on enlisted men to report contacts when they were in medical ward recovering from VD. The process relied on imperfect memory of a single transaction and accepted this as truth. In one case a contact report stated that they had contracted VD from one of “three girls living in a one-room domicile in Calibangbang,” an area north of Angeles. Military police tested two of the women, both of whom were free from disease. They then concluded that the third woman was the source of infection thus warranting her arrest. Military police in this case, and many others,

¹⁸⁰ Maj. John F. Harris, Philrycom VD Control Officer, Medical Service, to Chief Surgeon Philippines-Ryukyus Command, July 12, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Report of VD Control Council, Medical Detachment 57th Infantry Regiment, Philippine Scouts, October 31, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

followed leads provided by enlisted men and did not hesitate to apprehend and examine women for being in the relative locations mentioned in contact reports.

In some areas, commands discussed using physical force against streetwalkers and other uncooperative women. In Camp Batangas, they debated using “strong-arm methods” despite such violence being “against the principles of the Philippine government.”¹⁸³ They ultimately decided against this idea, because “at present we have insufficient military police to do an adequate job.”¹⁸⁴ The ethics of such methods were not the main reason against utilizing a violent strategy, but rather relations with the Philippine government were at stake as well as practical aspects such as not having enough men. The discussion arose due to the problem of in-base establishments such as The Rainbow Movie Theater, which was noted as a “gathering place for girls.”

The policing of women and girls was not limited to streets, but also vehicles. In a letter to the US Army regarding prostitution in Manila, a Filipino Congressman named Teodoro K. Molo, who had been cooperating with the US Army’s anti-VD campaign, insisted that something be done about "the female species" riding in US military jeeps.¹⁸⁵ Molo believed that Filipinas had found "loopholes" to "enjoy their dirty elicited business" by using military vehicles and urged the US Army to ban the practice. After the war, civilians hitching rides with US servicemen in their jeeps became common. With public transportation still unreliable, and very few cars or other means of transport, ride shares with friendly servicemen were a practical solution, as much as they were an opportunity for enlisted men to pick up women. As Molo’s letter demonstrates, the suspicion was that women who were riding with servicemen used jeeps for immoral purposes. This led to his suggestion that

¹⁸³ Report of Proceedings of Venereal Disease Council, Headquarters Camp Batangas, July 31, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Congressman Teodoro Molo assisted in the US military's anti-prostitution efforts. He served as a Philippine senator in the 1960s. See letter to the US Army Pacific headquarters, NARA College Park, RG 496, Entry 187, Box 1584, August 31, 1945.

“the female species” only be allowed to ride outside of the hours of “6p.m. And 6a.m.” while also being required to submit proof of employment.¹⁸⁶ Philippine leaders such as Molo shared the same anxieties as the US military about indecency and the morality of the postwar nation.

Streets, vehicles, and public establishments remained closely monitored. However, without the means to check every single woman in every public place, these methods proved more threatening to the local population than they were efficient at curtailing disease. US authorities had greater control over bodies that entered US bases and other military facilities because every individual presented identification upon entering. As military correspondence indicates, commanding officers increased their attention to entry points because of the belief that indecent women were passing through. A notice informed the Philippine command: “Exclusion from camp areas of all civilians except those on official business. Particular care should be exercised to assure that laundresses or others do not practice prostitution in the camps or in the immediate vicinity.”¹⁸⁷ Yet, this policy was not enough to resolve the issue for commanding officers, who continued to discuss how to control female visitors over the next few years. In 1947, a memo circulated giving specific instructions to the US Army Depot command in Manila, where there had been concern about civilian women entering military facilities. The memo outlined new regulations for visitors, stating that civilians were permitted but would be “detained at the Main Gate until the officer or civilian employee is called by the phone.”¹⁸⁸ In this system, officers were required to meet their female guests at the gate and to accompany them at all times. Enlisted men were only allowed visitors “in emergency cases” and were permitted to meet female guests at the gate but they were

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Guy B. Denit, Chief Surgeon US Army, to General Headquarters of the US Army Forces Pacific via Circular Letter No. 29, July 22, 1945, RG 496, Entry 187, Box 1584, NARA College Park, MD.

¹⁸⁸ Memorandum Number 20, “Instructions Governing Visitors to Depot,” September 16, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

prohibited from entering. Gatekeepers at the entrances of US bases and facilities became stricter to ensure that Filipinas did not enter US military property to sell sex while disguised as laundry women.

These types of gatekeeping policies continued into the 1950s. US naval records indicate that in Subic Bay, female guests were restricted to certain hours for both officers and enlisted personnel. As noted in a correspondence regarding guest restrictions, “female guests will be permitted only in the lounge of the BOQ [Bachelor Officers’ Quarters] and only between the hours of 0900 and 2200.”¹⁸⁹ During the daylight hours of 9am and 10am, officers were permitted to entertain female guests within the base, but evenings and overnight entertainment were strictly prohibited. The policy did not explicitly mention civilian male guests, however, any overnight activities between men would have likely aroused concern about “perversion.”

The ways that US military and Philippine elites sought to control local establishments, public spaces, and the movement of women reveals how power became contested in complex ways on the ground. These forms of control affected the daily lives of the local population, especially women, in ways that are not clearly visible in treaties, agreements, and amendments. One of the main impacts of the US military’s intensified anti-VD campaign was the loss of employment opportunities for Filipinas. For example, in Sangley Point Naval Station, a local bar called Scarlet Angel was placed off limits because there were two female employees who tested positive for VD. Scarlet Angel was hoping to have the off limits sign removed and have their bar reinstated as an approved establishment by the US military. According to a letter from the bar owner’s attorneys to the commander of Sangley Point Naval Station, Scarlet Angel had recently fired the two women. They explained, “We should like to bring to your attention that the two girls who brought about the ‘off limits’ penalty to this particular bar have both been dismissed. The bar itself has been drastically

¹⁸⁹ T. W. Samuel, Commanding Officer, US Naval Station, Subic Bay, to All Bachelor Officers’ Quarters Occupants, November 23, 1954, RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, 181-59-0157, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA.

improved, cleaned and renovated to suit the taste of its patrons.”¹⁹⁰ Nameless and expendable, the “two girls” were mentioned among other problems of Scarlet Angel including its dirty appearance, inferior design, and weak construction that they had quickly “improved.”

Intimate Management, Local Space, and Anti-Nationalist Politics in Angeles City

Throughout the 1940s and '50s, prominent attorney and staunch supporter of the US government and military, Renato Tayag, published essays in major Philippine newspapers on issues facing his hometown of Angeles, Pampanga.¹⁹¹ Tayag received his law degree from the University of the Philippines, and fought alongside US troops in Bataan during World War II. After the war, he was chosen to study at the Judge Advocate General’s School in Ann Arbor, Michigan.¹⁹² Tayag wrote in English, and published numerous books and articles about a variety of topics. Some of his pieces were humorous and meant purely for entertainment with titles such as “Are Filipino Men Lousy Lovers?” However, most of his writing focused on local politics through opinion pieces covering current events in Angeles, Pampanga and the nation. Some of his postwar essays were collected and published as a book called *The Angeles Story* in 1956.¹⁹³

Tayag's writing provides a glimpse of the local debates in Angeles from an anti-nationalist perspective, and the centrality of questions of sexual morality within these debates. He emphasized that major problems revolved around relations between Angelinos and US servicemen due to their proximity to one another outside of the US military base at Clark Field. Tayag drew from the writing and activism of a civic organization called the Angeles Jaycees—many of whom were prominent

¹⁹⁰ Viniegra, Olaes, and Santamaria, Attorneys for “Scarlet Angel,” to Capt. F.F. Gill, Commander, US Naval Station Sangley Point, March 31, 1955, RG 313, Phil, Sangley Point, NARA accn#: NN373/91, Box 6, NARA San Francisco, CA

¹⁹¹ Renato D. Tayag, *Recollections & Digressions*, Revised edition. (Manila, Philippines: Philnabank Club, 1985).

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Renato Tayag, *The Angeles Story*, (Manila, Philippines: Benipayo Press, 1956). See Kapampangan Collection, Angeles University Foundation, Angeles, Philippines.

business owners—as well as letters that he received from Angeles residents to support his claims. He purported to represent “the people,” arguing that Angelinos hoped that he could use his power to make change that would bring Angeles government leaders to cooperate with the US military. In his essays, Tayag insists that the “anti-American” position of local government officials in Angeles ultimately harmed the city’s development. Tayag’s essays reveal the ways that some Filipinos in Angeles imagined and debated the contest over space between local government officials, the Philippine state, and the US military.

One of the primary targets of Tayag’s writing was the mayor of Angeles, Manuel Abad Santos, who refused to cooperate with the US military. Abad Santos allegedly claimed that “sovereignty could not be had for a couple of greenbacks.”¹⁹⁴ He came from a wealthy and prominent family in Pampanga whose association with anti-colonial Philippine nationalism is well documented. Abad Santos’s uncle, Pedro Abad Santos, led the peasant movement in San Fernando and also founded the Socialist Party of the Philippines. He was very involved in leading strikes and demonstrations throughout Pampanga.¹⁹⁵ Manuel Abad Santos also had another political uncle, Jose Abad Santos, whose politics conflicted with that of his brother Pedro. After obtaining law degrees from Northwestern University and George Washington University as a *pensionado*, Jose Abad Santos became a part of the Philippine elite in Manila as secretary of justice under President Manuel Quezon.¹⁹⁶ Rather than take after Jose, Manuel Abad Santos’s politics closely resembled his uncle Pedro’s.

¹⁹⁴ While there is not much published on Manuel Abad Santos’s life outside of Tayag’s books, there are some blogs that commemorate his accomplishments and dedication to his country, created by his close friends and relatives. See: <http://viewsfromthepampang.blogspot.com/2014/01/361-manuel-abad-santos-fighting-mayor.html>

¹⁹⁵ Vina A Lanzona, *Amazons of the Huk Rebellion: Gender, Sex, and Revolution in the Philippines* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 28.

¹⁹⁶ The *Pensionado* Act by the US congress created a scholarship program to send roughly 300 Filipinos to study in the US. The program was created after the Philippine-American war. For more on this program, see Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 204.

For Manuel Abad Santos, the US military created problems in Angeles that stemmed from American arrogance and disrespect of Filipinos. In one case, a US airman named Charles Hawkins flicked the ashes of his cigar into the collar of an Angeles police officer named Dionisio Calma due to a personal dispute. In retaliation, Calma severely beat the US serviceman.¹⁹⁷ In another case, a US airman named Robert Elkins engaged in what appeared to be a domestic dispute with a “barmaid” named Maria Lopez. Angeles police officer Florencio Batac attempted to intervene when Elkins punched him in the face. Elkins’s aggression led to a more intense altercation between the two men, and ultimately Batac “pistol whipped” Elkins before the two were broken up.¹⁹⁸ To address the increased tension between US servicemen, Filipino police officers, and Filipinas, the commanding officer of Clark Air Base, Col. Karl Barthelmess, placed the entire city off limits. Meanwhile, Mayor Abad Santos received this off-limits policy as a threat to the local community. He swiftly instituted an additional checkpoint outside of Clark Air Base that required US servicemen entering Angeles to answer to local authorities. Using his power as mayor to assert control over local space, Abad Santos supported the right of Angeles authorities to police individual servicemen who entered “his” city.

Tayag claimed that Mayor Abad Santos’s decision to support Angeles police officers only increased the animosity on the ground between US servicemen and the people of Angeles. Filipinos who worked on base with US military personnel allegedly experienced more tension because of the political controversy that surrounded the public altercations. According to Tayag, Santos exploited the “nationalist feelings” that these controversial events generated in order to promote an anti-US agenda. He perceived Santos’s focus on controlling space and intimacies as a means to obscure the city’s most pressing problems: economic instability, corruption, and sexual immorality. Tayag

¹⁹⁷ Renato Tayag, *The Angeles Story*, 3.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 3.

referred to Santos's political strategy as "negative nationalism," or an "empty" rhetoric based on emotion without substantive policies to allow for national growth.

Central to Tayag's claim of negative nationalism was the belief that any anti-US military argument misunderstood the local economy and the experiences of "the people." He stressed that by limiting job opportunities without providing alternative forms of economic growth, the city of Angeles would not survive. Tayag had the Angeles Jaycees, a civic organization whose membership included many prominent business owners, on his side. He argued that local business owners experienced too great a financial loss due to the arguments of "nationalists" who did not fully appreciate how reliant the local economy was on American aid and business. The more pressing concern for Tayag was not who had the authority to manage and settle disputes between Filipinos and foreign nationals, but how to maintain citizens' sources of income and ability to survive economic recession even if that meant supporting US imperialism. Tayag's arguments echoed that of other Philippine elites in Manila who valued maintaining the status quo over challenging US authority.

Tayag took his argument of "negative nationalism" even further in his accusation that Mayor Abad Santos supported prostitution in the city. He claimed that "negative nationalism" was only a guise meant to conceal local government corruption and immorality. He explained: "Potent vested interests like owners of the bars, nightclubs, and the public utilities" supported Mayor Abad Santos.¹⁹⁹ In exchange for their votes and payment, Santos turned a blind eye to their illegal dealings. For example, Santos became well-known in the town for letting "criminals" free "because of politics." One civilian purportedly wrote to the mayor asking about the corruption happening under his watch:

Is it true that a certain policeman, though, not eligible, was promoted in rank over the eligibles? that his assigned duty is that of making a round of the nightclubs, bars, hotels and

¹⁹⁹ Renato Tayag, *The Angeles Story*, 35.

restaurants collecting periodical 'voluntary' contributions? and is it true that these contributions run into more than P14,000 a month?

According to Tayag, townspeople were concerned with the circulating rumors that the mayor and other officials secretly supported sex work through the bar system and that some received compensation for not prosecuting bar owners guilty of committing these crimes. One Angelino insinuated that Angeles authorities also maintained brothels: "Is it true that some town officials and policemen own and maintain houses of ill-repute?"²⁰⁰ In Tayag's writings, townspeople raised the issue of prostitution not as a symbol of US military dominance, but of the corruption of local politicians.

Tayag claimed that the mayor's nationalist rhetoric was a political strategy to justify his and other local leaders' defiance of the Philippine government and US authority. Cooperation, within his logic, would have worked against Santos's personal interest in profiting from the "illicit businesses" that the military attempted to control. Tayag's anti-nationalist argument pushed for a stronger relationship between local governments and the US military in order to effectively stop corruption and sexual immorality. Anti-nationalists such as Tayag understood local alliances with the US government as important for establishing mutually-beneficial political and economic relations.

Many of Tayag's essays focused on the "shame" that Angelinos felt due to the "illicit businesses" in their town. Due to the "rampant prostitution," crime, and the belief that their government offered no solution, many Angelinos decided to leave "for good to carve new destinies in scattered faraway places..."²⁰¹ People found it difficult to do mundane things such as go to the grocery store or attend mass without running into illicit transactions or passing by "girly bars." Sexual labor became a part of their daily routines.²⁰² Even regular hotels in Angeles were

²⁰⁰ Renato Tayag, *The Angeles Story*, 45-46.

²⁰¹ Renato Tayag, *The Angeles Story*, 21.

²⁰² Renato Tayag, *The Angeles Story*, 44.

encouraging prostitution in order to profit from room sales.²⁰³ As Tayag put it, “These persons [Angelinos] have become disappointed in their town, have even become ashamed of it perhaps. And so they left and declared Angeles ‘off limits’ to themselves and their families even before Colonel Barthelmess [the commander of Clark Air Base] put it so to his men.”²⁰⁴

In focusing on local politicians such as Abad Santos, Tayag tied political corruption and anti-capitalism to the illicit sexuality of Filipinas in Angeles. Much like in the rhetoric of US military officials, sexual immorality was intimately connected with political and economic immorality. Tayag’s critique of pimps and bar owners might appear to support women’s rights—as men are rarely held accountable for the crime of prostitution—yet his message treated women as objects needing to be regulated rather than people to protect against abuse and exploitation. He also advocated for more punitive measures that criminalized women such as the “extermination of prostitutes, pimps, and prostitution.”²⁰⁵ For Tayag, prostitution was symptomatic of a greater problem threatening to hold back Philippine economic development. His writing directly challenged nationalist rhetoric of anti-US resistance in order to convince Angelinos to accept a practical solution to political and economic inequality. For Philippine elites such as Tayag, working within US power was the best solution.

Managing the Movement of Servicemen: Race, Class, and Segregation

Much of the negotiation and collaboration that occurred between Philippine governments and US military officers centered on controlling local spaces and women’s bodies, however, the US military also strategized to control the physical movement of their own men. US military officials discouraged repressive measures against US servicemen; therefore, commanding officers chose to

²⁰³ Col. James B. Bousche, Proceedings of the Stotsenberg Area Command Venereal Disease Control Council, May 11, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242.

²⁰⁴ Renato Tayag, *The Angeles Story*, 21-22.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

implement positive reinforcement strategies to restrict illicit intimacies. Hierarchies of race and class influenced the design of these policies.²⁰⁶ For example, the US military believed that “low intelligence” was a primary reason that VD was common among enlisted men. They examined results from the Army General Classification Test (AGCT), a standardized intelligence test, and argued that there was a correlation between an individual’s low scores and VD incidence.²⁰⁷ Servicemen who underperformed on this exam were eliminated from the service in the Philippines in areas where disease rates were considered high.²⁰⁸ In other words, soldiers who were perceived to have low intelligence were physically segregated from high-risk environments.

Some officers made similar claims against Black soldiers even if they performed well on the AGCT. In 1944, Chief of Staff Marshall of the War Department sent out a circular to all units ordering that commanding officers adjust their strategies in light of new US Army statistics that showed Black servicemen had the highest rates of VD compared to white servicemen.²⁰⁹ While some individuals understood that VD rates were a reflection of various environmental factors such as the availability of condoms, prophylactic kits, the predominant view assumed that factors such as race, class, and aptitude indicated one’s capacity for sexual responsibility. The assumptions that were made based on VD statistics about Black enlisted men mirrored the long history of racial pseudoscience influencing social knowledge of Black bodies.²¹⁰ Based on the predominant belief that Black men were naturally hyper-sexual, strategies that attempted to shift Black male desire was

²⁰⁶ The hierarchical nature of the US military played a large role. While officers had college degrees and were primarily white, enlisted men came from low-income and more racially diverse backgrounds.

²⁰⁷ Maj. John F. Harris, Philrycom VD Control Officer, “Causes for the General Decrease in the Command VD Rates,” to Chief Surgeon Philippines-Ryukyus Command, July 7, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ See Chief of Staff G.C. Marshall, War Department Washington, D.C., to all Base Section Venereal Control Officers and all Negro Units, February 28, 1944, RG 496, Entry 187, Box 496, NARA College Park, MD.

²¹⁰ For more on the history of scientific “discoveries” and their damaging myths about Blackness and sexuality, see Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

perceived as inefficient and sometimes even a waste of military resources. If certain groups of enlisted men could not be held responsible for their behaviors due to perceived cognitive deficiencies, this prioritized physical segregation over psychological forms of distancing.

In 1948, by executive order, President Truman committed to abolishing racial discrimination within the US military, leading to the end of segregated units. Prior, the US military established Jim Crow segregation in Philippine towns, with certain streets and neighborhoods known as “white,” “Black,” or “Filipino” only. Yet even while the US government worked to desegregate US Army and Navy units, the unofficial strategies and practices of US military officials and their Philippine allies recreated segregation. One way was by adjusting the number of Black servicemen who were sent to the Philippines—a practice that goes back to the Philippine-American War. As historian Cynthia Marasigan argues, biological racism in the nineteenth century led to the belief that Black bodies were better equipped to survive the tropical climate of the Philippines.²¹¹ In 1898, the US enacted a law to enlist 10,000 volunteers who were “immune to diseases of tropical climates’ with four out of ten regiments designated as all-Black units.”²¹² This practice of controlling the enlistment of servicemen of color during World War II continued as four out of ten Black units were also sent to the Philippines. Managing the number of Black servicemen sent to the Philippines gave US military officials control over potential “racial problems” within integrated units.

In 1946, US Army and Air Force officials formed a committee to discuss the appropriate “racial balance” for the Philippines. Ennis Whitehead, the commanding general of Pacific Air Command, claimed that Black troops posed a serious risk to US military operations in the Philippines due to the “high incidence” of VD within Black units.²¹³ After examining military

²¹¹ Cynthia L Marasigan, “Between the Devil and the Deep Sea: Ambivalence, Violence, and African American Soldiers in the Philippine-American War and Its Aftermath” (History PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2010).

²¹² *Ibid.*, 8.

²¹³ Hal M. Friedman, *Creating an American Lake: United States Imperialism and Strategic Security in the Pacific Basin, 1945-1947* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 130.

statistics and sharing their personal observations, other officers agreed, and added that Black servicemen were also responsible for the majority of crimes involving US servicemen in the Philippines.²¹⁴ One officer, General James Christensen concluded that the presence of Black troops in the Philippines was creating more problems than it was worth.²¹⁵ The committee agreed, and together they began to formulate a plan to reduce the number of Black soldiers to 10%, which they arbitrarily considered the “appropriate racial balance.”²¹⁶ Historian Michael Cullen Green argues that the Philippine state pushed for the reduction in Black troops due to the perception that they were responsible for causing racial tension on the ground.²¹⁷ President Manuel Roxas came to an informal agreement with US generals that Black servicemen would simply not be stationed in the Philippines.²¹⁸ In 1947, Black US Army units were removed and “either returned to the United States or sent to Yokohama” where the racial climate was considered less tense. According to Green, this decision was made in response to riots between Black and Filipino servicemen that occurred between 1945-1946.²¹⁹ Filipinos reproduced anti-Black bigotry that they were taught through the influence of US colonial education. These discussions about racial balance demonstrate the contradiction between US policies of integration and racial inclusion after the war and the promotion of segregation through alliances with the Philippine government.

While working to restrict the quota of Black servicemen, another strategy centered on physically distancing US troops and women by keeping enlisted men on base. US Army officers discussed the correlation between high attendance at US Army-approved recreational activities and low incidences of disease in their units. According to VD control reports, this correlation occurred

²¹⁴ Ibid, 130.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 130.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 131.

²¹⁷ Michael Cullen Green, *Black Yanks in the Pacific: Race in the Making of American Military Empire after World War II*, The United States in the World (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 45.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

across units and over time. In July of 1947, the incidence rate of VD per thousand for the Rizal command near Manila dropped drastically and that same month, “after-duty activities showed a marked increase.”²²⁰ Later that year, the VD report for the Philippine-Ryukyus Command showed that the bowling and basketball leagues as well as the Army-organized dances were “serving in a great respect with the low incidence of venereal disease.”²²¹ In Angeles, US Army officers recruited troops to participate in basketball, football, bowling, swimming, and other competitive athletics. To prove that these programs were working, the VD control council also kept track of the number of individuals who attended each event to compare to VD rates in each unit. On October 1, 1947, the VD control council noted, for instance, that the “the drop in VD cases [was] partly attributable to the athletic program and games.”²²²

Promoting recreation as an anti-VD strategy did not originate in the Philippines, however, these strategies shaped the local geography in unique ways. For instance, building stadiums only for troop entertainment created entirely exclusionary spaces that emphasized distance between Americans and Filipinos. The US military not only enforced policies to prevent US troops from finding entertainment in Manila, they released Rizal Stadium to the Philippine government, which they had been renting for \$7500 a month, to build their own sports arena. According to Philrycom’s director, Lt. Col. Kenyon Woody, hosting US Army events and athletic practices within Rizal stadium meant that enlisted men had easy access to explore the city without official supervision. With the argument that transportation to escort enlisted men from the stadium back to base was too costly and difficult to organize, the freedom that troops experienced in finding their own way back

²²⁰ Lt. Col. Shelly P. Myers Jr. to Commanding Officer, Camp Rizal, August 27, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241

²²¹ Capt. James R. Nolan to Commanding General, Philippine-Ryukyus Command, October 31, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 24.

²²² VD Control Council Report to Commanding General of the Far East Command, October 1, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD. See also notes from the Infantry Regiment: Report of the 57th Infantry Regiment (PS) Venereal Disease Control Council, May 31, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242, NARA College Park, MD.

to base lead them to explore intimate relationships in the city. To resolve this problem, Woody suggested that the US Army invest in their own buildings to strictly ensure separation.²²³

Designing recreational activities in ways that minimized soldiers' engagements with the local population was a strategy used across units, not just those close to the Manila area. Many units used the method of scheduling events at specific times that they believed would make it difficult for their men to roam around town outside of US Army supervision. According to one VD control council report, "A properly scheduled athletic program would tend to keep personnel more interested in post activities and keep them away from areas where infected women operate."²²⁴ The VD control council discussion at the Stotsenburg Area Command in Angeles City moved to inform their enlisted men of the recreation and sight-seeing tours being offered at their command, in order "to deviate these enlisted men to go to indecent places around the Manila Area where they are liable to go with undesirable women."²²⁵ Even though Angeles is several hundred kilometers from the Manila city center, it was still a major destination for enlisted men in search of entertainment. By scheduling competitive sports competitions and touristic opportunities at certain times, thus making transportation into the city difficult, US Army officers imagined that men would have less desire to travel far from base, thereby regulating the opportunities they might have to develop intimacies.

Recreational designs were also racially specific. US Army officers in the Philippines received a letter from the Department of the Army in Washington DC encouraging officers dealing with high rates of VD among Black troops to consider organizing "swing nights" for their men. The idea

²²³ Lt. Col. Kenyon Woody, Director Philrycom, to G-1, July 16, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

²²⁴ Report of the Manila Provost Marshal Command Venereal Disease Control Council, April 7, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242, NARA College Park MD. Another strategy was to open snack bars at specific times—weekend evenings—to keep soldiers near their posts and out of public taverns. See Colonel George R. Connor, General Headquarters Far East command, Venereal Disease Control Information Letter to Commanding Generals Far East Command and Philippines-Ryukyus Command, February 2, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD, pg. 2.

²²⁵ Col. James E. Bousch, Report of the VD Council Meeting, July 12, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242.

came from a military camp in Virginia that had been using this strategy to control VD among Black soldiers.²²⁶ According to the letter, “This program was designed to reduce the incidence of venereal infection in Negro troops and so far has proven successful.”²²⁷ The letter continued, “Provision of increased Negro enlisted men’s social activities on the post. It is a proven fact that a soldier engaged in recreations, athletics, or other desirable leisure time activities is less likely to seek entertainment in an environment conducive to exposure to venereal disease.”²²⁸ While officers believed that psychological methods would not work for Black servicemen—who they argued did not have the intellectual capacity for sexual discipline—they focused on methods that emphasized physical segregation.

Responses to the suggestion for dealing with Black troops were no longer applicable to units in the Philippines at the time the letter reached them in early 1948. The majority of Black troops had already been transferred to other regions. The VD control council at the Ordinance Service Center in Manila read the letter received from Washington DC out loud at their meeting, and one of the officers stated, “I think this program of swing music is only applicable to Negro troops and not our troops.” The reasoning behind this response was that in the Manila Ordinance Service Center there were nine cases of VD in the last month and none of them were Black soldiers. Five of the men were white and four were Filipino. They therefore decided to go with other control measures including having unit commanders take on more responsibility for influencing their men and giving VD lectures on Saturdays during training and other scheduled lectures.²²⁹

²²⁶ Major General Edward F. Witsell, Department of the Army, Washington D.C., to Commanding Generals of the Army Ground Forces, All Armies, ZI, Military District of Washington, January 15, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Proceedings of the Board of Officers, Venereal Disease Control Council, Ordinance Service Center, Manila Area, March 9, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242, NARA College Park, MD.

US Army and Navy officers believed recreational programs to have an added benefit to VD control, especially for Black troops, though their discussions suggest that recreation alone was not enough to sway soldiers in general from seeking taboo forms of entertainment. While manipulating soldiers to spend their time in US Army-approved places, recreation was only one method of restricting soldiers' movements. As the next section discusses, other methods focused on creating emotional and psychological distance between soldiers and Filipinas.

Imaginative Geographies in anti-VD Strategy

Spatial regulation was not only about managing physical spaces as US commanding officers employed *imaginative geographies* as an emotional tactic.²³⁰ The knowledge-making strategies of US military officers demonstrate how imaginative geographies worked to control both enlisted men and the local population. This happened in a variety of ways, but importantly through the creation of visual media that servicemen consumed either for educational or entertainment value. Visual aids constructed an imagined spatial distance between US servicemen and Filipinas by emphasizing differences in color, customs, values, and physical environment. By educating enlisted men about cultural differences, US military officials believed that they would overcome sentiments that emerged from their physical proximity to the local population.

²³⁰ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978), 12. See also 49-72.



Figure 1: US Army Cultural Ambassador poster. Exact date unknown (1950s?). Lopez Memorial Museum and Library, Pasig, Philippines.

As Derek Gregory argues, imaginative geographies are “constructions that fold distance into difference” through the production of both colonial amnesia and nostalgia.²³¹ Narratives of amnesia erase colonial histories to promote exceptionalism and benevolence while nostalgia establishes dominance by treating the Other as non-modern.²³² US Army and Navy “information guides” were one method of producing knowledge about the Philippines that erased the history of US colonialism. Information guides were usually books or booklets meant to acquaint US servicemen with local customs, cultures, and best practices while overseas. One information guidebook included a poster entitled “Cultural Ambassadors” that explained how US soldiers should act in the

²³¹ Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2004), 17.

²³² *Ibid*, 10.

Philippines as “representatives” of the US (Figure 1). This poster echoed the arguments of the US government and Philippine state by emphasizing the historical “friendship” between the nations:

Most Filipinos have been our friends for a long time. They haven't seen us for a couple of years and they are eager to resume that friendship now that we're together again. We feel the same way, too...But when you haven't seen a friend for a couple of years you wonder if he has changed. The Filipinos haven't...But have we?...That actually depends on you...To make sure we haven't—that we're still the friends we've been for more than 40 years—is your military responsibility. Treat our friends like friends...Treat them with respect, consideration, and understanding... Respect their customs and feelings as they do ours...If you do that our long friendship won't go sour. And you'll prove yourself one of Uncle Sam's best ambassadors of democratic goodwill.²³³

This poster argues that friendship between the US and the Philippines has been an important aspect of an American commitment to equality and respect. The characterization of US democracy erased the history of violence, imperialism, inequality, and racial exclusion between the US and the Philippines.²³⁴ While aligning with the US government's postwar mission to maintain friendly alliances with the Philippines, this poster also demonstrates a pattern in the US discourse of colonial amnesia. As Philippine studies scholars such as Reynaldo Ileto have argued, the US government promoted “friendship” after the Philippine-American war to erase memories of the war's brutal, genocidal killings.²³⁵ According to the US colonial textbooks produced after the war, if Filipinos had only been mature enough to realize that the Americans had the best intentions, they would not have resisted US aid and their own progress.²³⁶

The concept of friendship has taken on many, sometimes contradictory, meanings in the history of US-Philippine relations. During the Philippine-American War, US military personnel

²³³ Cultural Ambassadors information guide, exact date unknown (1950s?), Lopez Memorial Museum and Library, Pasig, Philippines.

²³⁴ This rewriting of history is notable in other information guides produced by the US Navy which referred to US colonialism as an “administration.” Another guide described the Philippine-American war as an “American occupation” wherein “disappointed Filipino nationalists fought unsuccessfully against US Army units.” See *Subic Bay and the Philippines: Liberty Information Guide*, exact date unknown (1960s?), Ateneo de Manila American Historical Collection.

²³⁵ Reynaldo C. Ileto, “The Philippine-American War: Friendship and Forgetting,” in *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream, 1899-1999*, ed. Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis H. Francia (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2002), 4.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

condescendingly referred to the Philippine revolutionaries' war strategy as "amigo warfare," because it depended on deception and trickery in order to confuse enemies from friends in battle. They adopted tactics of "playing dead, hiding, and waiting" to give themselves an advantage in a situation of unequal force. This was necessary as Philippine revolutionary strength began to dwindle after the first few years of war.²³⁷ As Sarita See argues, friendship also played a role in how the defeated Filipinos understood their relationship to their new, American colonizers, either continuing forms of amigo warfare or "by accommodationist forgetting, literally and figuratively burying the past."²³⁸ Some Filipinos skillfully adapt in disadvantageous circumstances through performances of friendship that conceal distrust, while others choose to collaborate through forgetting as a self-preserving strategy of survival.

The Cultural Ambassador poster (see Figure 1) also included examples of how to act appropriately, focusing especially on the context of intimacies. One example was of dating customs, warning servicemen to make sure to obtain parental consent before taking a woman out on a date. The poster showed the woman's mother wearing traditional clothing and explained that these rules stemmed from "old Spanish custom." Another example warned servicemen against "wolf howls" and "whistling at Filipino women," explaining that Filipinas "may be modern but they are modest." This example suggested that while Filipinos appeared to have developed in some respects, their culture remained traditional and in conflict with American modernity. Moreover, the poster claimed, "Filipino culture and customs have stood the test of time. Many things may seem 'strange' and may not rate high with you..."²³⁹ Referring to Filipino indigenous burial practices and dating customs, this final statement treated the ethnically and linguistically diverse people of the Philippines as

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Sarita Echavez See, *The Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 95.

²³⁹ Cultural Ambassadors information guide, exact date unknown (1950s?), Lopez Memorial Museum Library, Pasig, Philippines.

singularly unchanging and non-modern. Posters such as this demonstrate how narratives of amnesia and nostalgia created imaginative geographies by reinforcing distance through difference.

Another method of creating imaginative geographies revolved around the promotion of tourism. Commanding officers organized Army-sponsored tourist excursions and encouraged soldiers to enroll in photography courses, both of which were meant to keep soldiers occupied and engaged with the local population and culture in more wholesome ways. The strategy of turning soldiers into tourists achieved two main goals: 1) US Army officials were able to more efficiently monitor soldiers' movements; and 2) the process created a particular viewing subject who enjoyed the environment from the lens of an outside observer. As Timothy Mitchell argues, the act of gazing at cultures on display through travel and sight-seeing is a process of "self-making" that distances the viewing subject from the objects being viewed or studied.²⁴⁰ While engaged in this process, the soldiers' gaze would reinforce his superiority over an objectified landscape and people and remind him of the differences between them that intimacies tend to obscure.

The issue for officers seemed to revolve around holding the attention of enlisted men in alternative activities as they found great pleasure in roaming around the towns. In response, the committee of the Manila Provost Marshal Command decided to conduct a survey to see what the average soldier wanted, and specifically what would "keep his interest here [on base]."²⁴¹ The results of the survey were perhaps what officers themselves predicted, that enlisted men preferred to be off base while on liberty, and they enjoyed exploring the cities, dancing in local clubs, and interacting with Filipino people. The only way to keep enlisted men on base and get them to attend the approved excursions was to institute policies that restricted them to certain areas, and to create

²⁴⁰ Timothy Mitchell, "The World as Exhibition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 2 (April 1, 1989): 217–36.

²⁴¹ Capt. Ralph E. Weaver, President VD Control Council, Manila Provost Marshal Command Report, February 7, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242, NARA College Park, MD.

numerous opportunities to travel as a group supervised by a US Army or Naval officer. Restrictions varied across commands at different points in time, depending on each units' needs. For instance, sailors of the Sangley Point Naval Station were required to remain "in the general vicinity of the command," defined as "that area within thirty miles (forty-eight kilometers) radius of the Naval Station."²⁴² Other commands prohibited soldiers from traveling to specific areas of nearby towns rather than imposing a radius of approved travel.²⁴³

Offering frequent, supervised tourist excursions offset unchaperoned movements outside base. At the Stotsenburg Command in Angeles, officers started to offer a weekly trip to Baguio, as well as an additional trip "scheduled for approximately 25 men to visit Subic Bay."²⁴⁴ Col. James Bousch noted that "very few men" were attending these trips, and felt that there was still much more to be done to encourage more wholesome entertainment.²⁴⁵ Organized tours allowed officers to control where enlisted men spent their free time, and it gave them oversight if and when any issues arose between their men and the local population. VD control council reports indicate that officers did not have faith that troops would refrain from developing intimacies that were believed to cause problems. They saw it as their duty to intervene and monitor even more closely the behaviors of their men, even during their hours of liberty when enlisted men were free to spend their time as they wished. Ft. Stotsenberg VD control council reports in July of 1948 show that photography courses were encouraged for the purpose of monitoring soldiers' movements.²⁴⁶ The photos from these courses were not private, as they passed through a development process in which images were

²⁴² Capt. W.C. Asserson, Jr., Commanding Officer US Naval Station Sangley Point, to SM#20-49, List I, February 1, 1951, RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, NAID: 2790817, Box 11.

²⁴³ For lists of areas near Manila that were placed "off limits" see Circular No. 25 to the Philippines-Ryukyus command, March 25, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 75, NARA College Park, MD. See also Col. Carroll D. Hudson, Headquarters of Philrycom to Commanding General, Philippine-Ryukyus Command, July 11, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 75, NARA College Park, MD.

²⁴⁴ Col. James E. Bousch, Report of the VD Council Meeting, July 12, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242.

²⁴⁵ Col. James E. Bousch, Report of the VD Council Meeting, July 12, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 242.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

screened and also preserved within military records. While teaching soldiers new artistic and technological skills that benefitted individual growth, photography as a strategy of imaginative geographies allowed officers to keep an eye on the activities of enlisted men without needing to be physically present.

Both photography and tourism provided individuals a sense of power and pleasure in looking, which made these tools valuable to officers' broader objectives of monitoring and reshaping soldiers' desires and behaviors. The act of looking required the soldier to identify an object of gaze, to turn people and environments into objects of his personal consumption. Looking is a unidirectional activity that stimulates the subject visually while also allowing him control over what is seen and what is not. Photography in this sense is a process of image making that does not record an objective vision of events despite its social power as a technology used to prove reality and truth. Even the interests of officers in monitoring the gaze of the soldier and understanding his subjectivity indicates the way in which photography provided an outlet for individuals to create new meaning out of their experiences. The experiences became more about what was documented and the process of documenting rather than an exchange of intimacy. Encouraging soldiers to look turned them into viewing subjects, diminishing opportunities for equal exchanges of glances.

Tourism aided in maintaining a psychological distance, which was deemed necessary considering that ultimately soldiers did not comply with officers' requests to maintain a physical distance from local women.²⁴⁷ The *Daily Pacifican*, a US Army newspaper published in Manila, interviewed four soldiers on their liberty preferences. Willard Peterson, a US Army reporter, asked the question, "If you had an entire day to spend in Manila, where would you like to go?"²⁴⁸ According to Peterson's article, the G.I.s "preferred to take advantage of Manila's recreational

²⁴⁷ Dean Welshhons, "Soldiers Consider Problems of the Foreign Marriage," *Daily Pacifican*, September 1, 1946, 8.

²⁴⁸ Willard Peterson, "Soldiers Prefer Local Recreation to Sightseeing," *Daily Pacifican*, September 22, 1946, 7-8.

facilities rather than [the] scenic attractions” that the Army encouraged.²⁴⁹ Two of the interviewees, Sgt. Ulrich and First Sgt. Wilmont, mentioned night clubs in Manila where they liked to go dancing. Other responses included spending the day bowling and “watch[ing] the Filipino people bargain in their shops and hawk their wares on the sidewalk.”²⁵⁰ All of these responses had one thing in common. Soldiers preferred unsupervised activities that brought them into contact with and allowed them to “watch” Filipinos rather than Army-organized tours that isolated them. Emphasizing the cultural and social distance between soldiers and the local people became an important psychological strategy given the limits of enforcing physical segregation against the desires of soldiers.



Figure 2: US Navy Anti-VD Poster, “Remember”
RG 52 Box 3, NARA College Park MD

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

Another main anti-VD strategy was to create visuals such as posters that reproduced racist stereotypes of Filipinas and Asian women in general. These visuals portrayed Asian women as threatening yet alluring in contrast to white women. One poster designed for Japan (Figure 2) showed a white woman at home staring longingly at a framed photo of her serviceman boyfriend. A Japanese woman wearing a kimono holds an umbrella with “VD” written on it, and the caption reads, “There’s no medicine for REGRET.” With a temple in the background, this poster tied venereal disease to the bodies of Asian women and an exotic, foreign landscape.

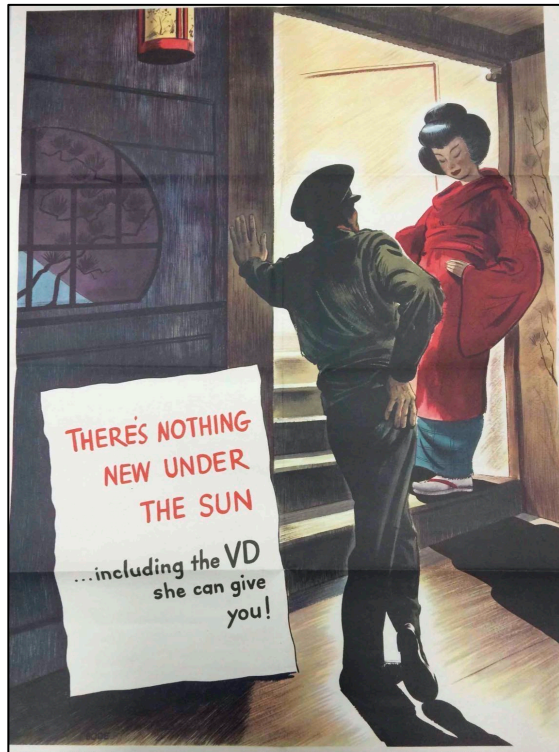


Figure 3: US Navy Anti-VD Poster, “There’s Nothing New Under the Sun”
RG 52 Box 3, NARA College Park MD

Another poster created for servicemen in Japan (Figure 3) showed a woman dressed in a red, Japanese kimono standing in the entryway to a house. Her hand is placed on her hip and she looks down at a sailor who casually leans against the door frame, evaluating the invitation presented in

front of him. The poster emphasizes the difference and distance between the pair. They stand opposite one another while the shadows that hide the sailor's face contrast the bright light illuminating behind the woman. While using color, light, and dress to construct difference, this poster suggested that VD would be the only lasting thing a serviceman could expect from a relationship with an Asian woman. Through the caption "There's Nothing New Under the Sun," this image conveyed colonial nostalgia by presenting the allure of the exotic while also domesticating it. While the pair stand at the entryway to an exciting and different world, the fact of VD is argued to be already known and therefore not so thrilling.

In both of the posters discussed here, the woman resembles a Japanese geisha. While there were few popular depictions of Asian women in American media in the 1940s, the image of the geisha was easily the most common and recognizable as a symbol of Japanese femininity. The geisha, a Japanese hostess who studies the art of dance and entertainment, became a "mysterious target for desire" in the West as well as a "dangerous object" to be controlled.²⁵¹ Well-known in Western culture through films and plays such as *Madame Butterfly*, the figure worked to stereotype Asian women in general as subservient, docile, sexual, and ready to serve American men.²⁵² While these qualities might have been appealing, the figure of the geisha also evoked tragedy. Typically, the American-Japanese couplings in films and plays end in suicide, abandonment, or other forms of death.²⁵³ Within this narrative, Asian women were portrayed as both exotic and threatening. Yet in the poster discussed above, the serviceman has the situation under his control.

²⁵¹ Yoshiko Ikeda, "Changing Images of Japanese Women in American Films: From the Teahouse of the August Moon (1956) to *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005)," *Regioninés Studijos*, no. 3 (2009): 47.

²⁵² The original *Madame Butterfly* is a short story by John Luther Long published in 1898. There have been many stage and film adaptations since. Those produced before the 1960s include a play by David Belasco in 1900, an American silent film by Sidney Olcott in 1915, an American film by Marion Gering in 1932, and an Italian-Japanese musical in 1954.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

Posters featuring women in Kimonos were originally designed for servicemen in Japan yet they were nonetheless distributed throughout the Philippines. Some officers such as Capt. Cantrell of the Philippine-Ryukyus command headquarters argued that these posters did not fit the Philippine environment. He claimed that poster designs for the Philippines should have a more generically “oriental rather than a Japanese background.”²⁵⁴ The limited reach of Japanese posters to servicemen stationed in the Philippines led to numerous correspondence about creating more effective posters. Cantrell emphasized that all posters should be “thoroughly reviewed” for the following:

1. Do they attract attention?
2. Are they brief and yet fully convey the message they were intended to convey?
3. Do they contain any information which might be offensive or might make a soldier belligerent towards their message?
4. Is there any other way the message could better be put across?

The conversation that Cantrell participated in conveys that military officials did not take lightly the creation of anti-VD posters. They thought carefully about what kind of message they wanted to convey and how effective it would be. Moreover, Cantrell recommended that poster designs refrain from producing information that “might be offensive” focusing on how the serviceman might react. In other words, using sexist and Orientalist imagery was acceptable, and even preferred, as long as it aligned with the attitudes of servicemen.

²⁵⁴ For the discussion of “oriental” poster designs, see Capt. R.E. Cantrell to the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, APO 500, February 2, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.



Figure 4: Commanding officer catching couple in the act
Daily Pacifcan, June 30, 1945, 2, Wisconsin Historical Society

Anti-VD posters worked alongside other visual media to construct a narrative of Filipinas as threatening yet desirable. In the *Daily Pacifcan*, cartoons often addressed the excitement and dangers of illicit intimacies while satirizing the efforts of officers who tried to prevent them.²⁵⁵ One image printed in 1945 showed a commanding officer intervening in an intimate moment between a GI and a Filipina (Figure 4). The serviceman holds a half-dressed woman by the waist and says: “I’m happy to announce sir, that ALL resistance on this island has stopped!” In this caption, “resistance” crudely referred to the racialized enemy as well as the Filipina’s resistance to having sex. This image conveys what Ann McClintock calls the “porno-tropic” tradition of colonizers projecting

²⁵⁵ US Army VD control council reports include discussions regarding the use of by-lines in the *Daily Pacifcan* to curb VD rates. See Maj. John F. Harris, Philrycom VD Control Officer, “Causes for the General Decrease in the Command VD Rates,” to Chief Surgeon Philippines-Ryukyus Command, July 7, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

“forbidden desires and fears” onto native populations.²⁵⁶ While caught doing something prohibited, the soldier performs a fantasy of dominating both the woman and the militant landscape. The act of sex through the imperial gaze naturalizes the white man’s domination of local people and spaces.



Figure 5: Joe Roberts “Across the Puddle” cartoons
Daily Pacifican, Wisconsin Historical Society²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995), 22.

²⁵⁷ Top left: February 8, 1946 “I always wanted to taste a banana fresh from the tree”; Top right: January 29, 1946 “I often wondered if there wuz any money in growing rice!”; Bottom left: February 5, 1946 “I should have brought my fishing gear”; Bottom right: February 10, 1946 “I’m anxious to see you in one of those frontless evening gowns!”

Like other anti-VD materials, *Daily Pacifican* cartoons communicated contradictory messages. Filipinas were depicted as threatening yet desirable and conquerable. This duality is especially clear in the 1947 series by Joe Roberts called “Across the Puddle” (Figure 5).²⁵⁸ Using sarcasm, word play, and light humor, these cartoons satirized white soldiers in relationships with Filipinas in ambiguous ways. In all of the cartoons, the white man is overweight, balding, and lazy while the Filipina is clearly too attractive for the man she is with. This suggested that Filipinas were attracted to soldiers for reasons other than his looks; perhaps she wanted his money and citizenship. While poking fun at GIs who believed they had found “true love,” they served as a warning for those who might have identified with the cartoon. Yet, while emphasizing distance through difference, the cartoons also portrayed Filipinas as exotic and sexually available to the average Joe. The cartoons stressed contrast in terms of color, size, and position. In one cartoon the canoe is off-balance symbolizing the inequality between the pair. Many cartoons also portrayed scenes of nature. Like other US military-produced media, these cartoons created imaginative geographies that exploited an image of adventure and thrill that was both informative and provocative.

Redirecting Soldier Desire: Camaraderie and Morality Building

While discouraging illicit intimacies, commanding officers attempted to redirect the desires of servicemen towards more wholesome activities. They did this mainly by promoting ideas of fraternity and duty towards the military family and moralizing about the importance of loyalty to respectable women. Instead of educating servicemen on medical or scientific information about the

²⁵⁸ The title “Across the Puddle” is a play-on-words taken from the phrase “across the pond,” which refers to countries on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean from the US. In this context, the “puddle” refers to the Pacific Ocean, and the series focuses on life for American soldiers in the Philippines. *Across the puddle* ran for six months from January to June of 1946.

spread of disease, anti-VD material including posters, pamphlets, and films conveyed militarized notions of masculinity to influence troop behavior. This propaganda pointed servicemen towards desires, ambitions, and values that they believed kept servicemen disciplined in the Philippines.

Some anti-VD pamphlets created for servicemen in the Philippines avoided explicit reference to sex. Instead they emphasized “duty to God, country, and family.” Examples of pamphlet titles include, “HEALTH OF THE ARMY,” “DON’T TELL THE FOLKS,” and “VD CAN WRECK A LOT OF PLANS.”²⁵⁹ As these titles suggest, the pamphlets reminded servicemen not to let down their families who were counting on them to stay healthy and out of trouble. The family included the US Army as well as the serviceman’s parents. Moreover, these pamphlets stressed that servicemen think about their plans for the future. Instead of conveying information about specific diseases or statistics about risk, these pamphlets focused on guiltting servicemen into behaving for the sake of his fellow men and loved ones back at home. Anti-VD materials that redefined masculinity as discipline and moral strength appeared to contradict the visuals that celebrated the conquest of local women.

One anti-VD film entitled “Story of DE 733” warned servicemen of how even just one individual case of VD could destroy the entire military family. According to Capt. Jessie Wright, this film was the most recommended film to be shown throughout the Philippines because it was “the best VD film available, both for basic information and motivation.”²⁶⁰ The film’s synopsis read: “A dramatic basic informational film on VD built around a combat theme. It is typically ‘Navy’ throughout. It tells the story of how a DE [Destroyer Escort] was a battle casualty as a result of a number of its crew contracting VD. It is peppered with humor but explains the principles of VD

²⁵⁹ Maj. John F. Harris, Philrycom VD Control Officer, Medical Service, Philippines, to Chief Surgeon, Philippines-Ryukyus Command, July 7, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD

²⁶⁰ For detailed descriptions of the anti-VD films shown to naval personnel in the Philippines, see Capt. Jessie G. Wright, ComNavPhil, to Base Medical Officer, US Naval Operating Base in Samar, Leyte, October 4, 1946, RG 313, Subic Bay, Box 7-8 (53283-84), NARA San Francisco, CA.

control effectively.”²⁶¹ VD did not just impact one individual’s life but affected every member of the crew. Narratives such as this one reinforced the idea that fraternity was more important than an individual’s sexual urges.

To reinforce desirable behaviors, the US Army and Navy in the Philippines created a “morality building program.” Each unit within the Philippine command earned a numerical score for their positive moral behaviors each month:²⁶²

- 25 points for sponsoring Chapel service
- 1 point for each man who attends Chapel service
- 10 points for each consecutive day without a case of VD
- 5 points for each day without a court martial
- 3 points for finishing a course in the Army
- 3 points for each individual ranking among the first 5 in his class
- 2 points for each man enrolled in the US Armed Forces Institute or other courses offered by the army

This system attempted to increase moral and spiritual values with the objective of motivating enlisted men away from sexual affairs. Notably, the point values for VD were higher than for court martial, a judicial proceeding for those who committed crimes against military law. Yet this program also subtracted points for undesirable behaviors, and ranked each unit based on their total number of points each month. The points subtracted were as follows:²⁶³

- 8 points for each case of VD
- 5 points for court martial
- 3 points for a delinquency report
- 2 points for special court martial
- 1 point for summary court martial

Rewards such as extra leisure time, exclusive access to recreational facilities, and recommendations for promotions were given to the units with the most total points at the end of each month. In

²⁶¹ The Staff Medial Officer, ComNavlPhil, to Base Medical Officer, US Naval Operating Base in Samar, Leyte, October 4, 1946, RG 313, Subic Bay, Box 7-8 (53283-84), NARA San Francisco, CA.

²⁶² Capt. H. Frazier to Commanding General Philippines Command, Brief of Minutes of Council Meetings of Major Subordinate Commands, May 26, 1949, RG 554, Entry A1 1464, Box 435, NARA College Park, MD.

²⁶³ Ibid.

addition to the group awards, individuals were recognized and given additional incentives to maintain positive moral behavior. Enlisted men were chosen by their platoon leaders and awarded certificates and “Good Conduct” medals (Figure 6) to honor their achievements.²⁶⁴



Figure 6: Certificate given to individual soldiers for good conduct
Recipients were given ratings for two categories: Character and Efficiency
RG 554, Entry A1 1464, Box 435, NARA College Park, MD

The efforts to redirect the desires, ambitions, and loyalties of servicemen centered on discipline in contrast to the approaches towards women which emphasized punishment. US military officers compelled enlisted men to reassess their core values and reminded them that certain behaviors distracted from their military duties. In some ways, such strategies were no different from other industries and work environments. Yet their interventions had broader social and cultural consequences beyond public health. The VD control program affected not only the lives of enlisted men but also influenced how these men related to the people and spaces around them.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

Sexual Assault On the Streets of Olongapo

The discourse of illicit intimacies dehumanized Filipinas who worked or lived in areas stigmatized by the presence of US military personnel. Some servicemen operated under the assumption that women who walked the streets without steady papers were criminals deserving of abuse. US servicemen at times took policing efforts into their own hands and became violent with the women they encountered. In one incident in Subic Bay in 1946, a group of US Marines found Filipinas on the street that they thought were prostitutes and decided to “clip” the women’s hair.²⁶⁵ According to the *New York Times*, “some said they had been slapped or hoisted off the floor by their tied hands while being questioned on suspicion of such offenses as vagrancy, loitering and prostitution.”²⁶⁶ These marines took it upon themselves to interrogate, humiliate, and punish Filipinas they believed were streetwalkers or prostitutes.

Cases of sexual assault on the streets of Olongapo were commonplace, even in circumstances where women were walking together in a group. On May 27, 1954 at around 11pm, Lourdes Reyes, her sister Perla Reyes, and two other women were walking home from the movie theater when two sailors made sexual advances toward them. According to both Lourdes and Perla’s testimonies, when the sailors would not back down, the women turned and started to run.²⁶⁷ The men then chased the women all the way to the end of an alley that was flooded with water so they could not run any further. Perla pointed her umbrella at the soldiers, threatening them to leave. At this point, the two companions of Lourdes and Perla managed to escape, leaving the sisters trapped in the alley. One of the soldiers grabbed a hold of Lourdes while Perla attempted to free her sister.

²⁶⁵ (no author), “Philippine Newsmen Report on Marines,” *New York Times*, November 10, 1946, 51.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Lourdes L. Reyes Citizen’s Complaint, US Naval Station, Subic Bay, Philippines, May 27, 1954, RG 313, Subic Bay General Correspondence, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA.

Neither of the testimonies explains what the other soldier was doing, but Perla described a short verbal exchange between her and the sailors:

I told the Americans that if they intend to create a scandal, I will hit them with my umbrella. The Americans answered that, “We are friends.” I told them that if we are friends, please get out of this place. A few more minutes two of my companions run away. When my sister tried to do the same, she was followed by one of the Americans and he hold her at the shoulder. She was shook by the American violently that it left a mark on her arm and it was later found out that her one earring was missing. I tried to hit the American with my umbrella, but he did not relaxed [sic] he hold on to my sister.²⁶⁸

The sailor’s usage of the concept of friendship echoed the discourse of US imperialism in the Philippines, which insisted on the Filipino being America’s greatest ally or little brown brother. The sailor shouted to Perla, “We are friends,” in the attempt to pacify her and to disavow his previous aggressive behavior. Just as passersby started to witness what was happening, the sailor denied any intention to violate the two women. His actions and explanation parallel the violence of US empire and colonial amnesia. For the US government, the international community witnessed the display of US-Philippine friendship, which served to hide postwar inequality and exploitation. Within this analogy, Perla’s response corresponded with postwar Philippine nationalists: “If we are friends, please get out of this place.”²⁶⁹

Eventually, witnesses called the Shore Patrol, US Armed Force Police officers whose duty was to protect enlisted men in the area, to apprehend the two sailors. They did not arrive quick enough, however, to prevent one of the witnesses from being hit in the face. As Lourdes describes, a Filipino sailor named Demetrio Silva saw the women being chased and caught up to the scene with a rock, threatening to throw it at the sailors. One of them smacked Demetrio and knocked him to the ground.²⁷⁰ Shore Patrol arrived a few minutes later, took the men in their custody, and recorded the

²⁶⁸ Perla Reyes, Statement Report on Miss Lourdes Reyes to US Naval Station, Reservation Police Office, May 27, 1954, RG 313, Subic Bay General Correspondence, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Lourdes L. Reyes Citizen’s Complaint, US Naval Station, Subic Bay, Philippines, May 27, 1954, RG 313, Subic Bay General Correspondence, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA.

testimonies of the women and witnesses. In the end, Lourdes Reyes and Demetrio Silva filed complaints of maltreatment, assault, and battery with the US Navy Reservation Police Office. Lourdes visited a doctor right after she escaped who noted the bruises on her upper arm and an erythema in her ear.²⁷¹

The archival record does not indicate what became of their case. It is unknown how the sailors were penalized, if at all. In many cases of street violence, Filipino victims had no way of obtaining justice. Lourdes and Perla at the very least had the privilege of submitting complaints in order to have their sides of the story recorded. Their status as respectable women with decent jobs (Lourdes was a practicing beautician and Perla a schoolteacher) allowed their narratives of the event to be heard. Yet, their status as Filipinas affected what happened next. The documents do not show any subsequent action addressing their complaints or requests for compensation; it is as though the case was satisfied and dropped after simply being recorded. Considering that US Military officers nearly always sided with their men—even in cases of murder—it would not be out of the question to assume that nothing was done to rectify what happened to Lourdes, Perla, and Demetrio.

These examples of violence on the streets of Olongapo demonstrate the vulnerability of Filipinas in the everyday spaces where they lived, worked, and commuted. The gendered discourse of sex and morality not only maintained heteropatriarchal forms of intimate management but normalized everyday violence against women. Whether or not specific cases of street assault were directly related to institutional efforts to police women's sexuality, they took place in and contributed to a larger system that privileged the status of male perpetrators. Even in cases where women were clearly victims of physical attack, failure to defend their claims of decency discredited their stories and prevented them from being heard.

²⁷¹ Desiderio Hebron, M.D., to Whom it May Concern, May 28, 1954, RG 313, Subic Bay General Correspondence, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA.

Conclusion

While motivated by different agendas, US military officials, Philippine elites, local government officials, and business owners sustained uneven and fragile alliances in managing the threat of prostitution, VD, and immorality. The US military's concentration on reducing illicit intimacies in ways that were physical, psychological, and emotional reproduced distance through difference between Americans and Filipinos who worked and interacted in close proximity to one another. While steeped in local postwar politics concerning public health, morality, the economy, and US imperialism, these efforts normalized violence against women on the streets. In this context, the figure of the Filipina prostitute represented the US military and Philippine state's anxieties about the inability to control local people and spaces.

The narrative of the Filipina as a diseased, sexual threat maintained colonial amnesia by denying the violence that women experienced as subjects of US military and Philippine government authority. While the voices of Filipinas, which might provide an alternative narrative, are rare within the archival record, moments of contradiction provide opportunities for critique. In these moments, Filipinas are imagined to be agentic and dangerous, yet at the same time they are depicted as submissive and exotic in order to strengthen military masculinity. These images point to the illogical and imaginative quality of US designs and strategies, as well as their tendency to shift depending on the needs of US military imperialism.

As this chapter has argued, the postwar anti-VD campaigns became a means to maintain US authority and control even while creating distance from the colonial past. The anti-VD campaigns relied on the figure of the Filipina prostitute as a threat to public health, security, and morality to justify greater force over areas perceived to be unstable. Even while any Filipina walking on the street was morally questionable, the figure of the prostitute supported a binary discourse of Filipinas as either illicit and deserving of punishment, or respectable and worthy of inclusion.

Chapter 2

Exceptional Love: Race and Sexuality in the Regulation of GI-Filipina Marriages



Figure 7: Carlotta arrives in the US
Daily Pacifican, October 16, 1945, 4. Wisconsin Historical Society

In a postwar cartoon from the *Daily Pacifican*, a US Army newspaper published in Manila, a Filipina arrives at the home of a white US soldier to introduce his child. The caption reads, “Whatta surprise—why, Carlotta, what brings you all the way from Manila?” This cartoon humorously conveyed the consequences of illicit intimacies. At his doorstep unannounced, Carlotta threatens to sabotage the future of the serviceman’s white, middle-class family. The man’s surprise indicates that

Carlotta is out of place. While most US servicemen imagined their interracial relationships with Filipinas as temporary affairs, they did not expect them to extend beyond their time in the Philippines. Cartoons such as this one humorously reminded white soldiers to keep their affairs in order as they implied that sexual relations with Filipinas could unexpectedly alter their futures. Within this narrative, “love” was exceptional. Rather than “love at first glance,” as some postwar couples believed they had found, it was unexpected pregnancies that complicated the imaginative geographies separating white US servicemen from Filipinas.²⁷² As the satire in this cartoon suggests, postwar anxieties about interracial intimacies centered on the potential for Filipinas and their mixed-race children to destabilize white family values through the crossing of borders.

This chapter documents the unofficial policies and informal strategies that US military officers deployed in order to reduce the number of interracial marriages in the Philippines, especially those between white servicemen and Filipinas. In this context, the figure of the Filipina prostitute emerged as a warning against miscegenation and the threats it posed to white middle-class families. Though this figure stemmed from the anti-VD campaign, the Filipina as prostitute became an effective justification to disapprove of marriage requests and also to deny the legitimacy of mixed-race, Amerasian children.²⁷³ This chapter argues that even through unofficial means, the US military’s regulation of marriages helped to define the *exceptional* interracial couple and ultimately controlled

²⁷² One Filipina War Bride, Natalia Murray, described her engagement as “love at first glance.” See Alma A. Polk, “War Bride Fails to Get Project: Learns How Complex Racial Matters Are in US,” *Courier (1950-1954)*, December 22, 1951, 2.

²⁷³ *Amerasian* is a term popularized by writer Pearl S. Buck in the postwar period to refer to the children of US servicemen and Asian women. For more on the history of Amerasians, see Sue-Je Lee Gage, “The Amerasian Problem: Blood, Duty, and Race,” *International Relations* 21, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 86–102, Patti Duncan, “Genealogies of Unbelonging: Amerasians and Transnational Adoptees as Legacies of US Militarism in South Korea,” *Militarized Currents: Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific*, (University of Minnesota Press 2010), 277-307. For studies of Filipino Amerasians, see C. Gastardo-Conaco et al., *Filipino-Amerasians: Living in the Margins* (Quezon City: University Center for Women’s Studies Foundation in collaboration with the Pearl S. Buck International and Agencies Collaborating Together with Amerasians, 1999), Maria B. Montes, “U.S. Recognition of Its Obligation to Filipino Amerasian Children Under International Law,” *Hastings Law Journal*, vol. 46, no. 5 (1995): 1621, P. C. Kutschera and Jose Maria G. Pelayo III., *The Amerasian Paradox*, (ERIC Clearinghouse, 2012), and Lora Chapman, “Just Being Real: A Post-Colonial Critique on Amerasian Engagement in Central Luzon’s Sex Industry,” *Asian Journal of Women’s Studies* 23, no. 2 (2017): 224–42.

who became War Brides and immigrated to the US.²⁷⁴ Strategies of selective incorporation worked to limit the overall number of GI marriages in the Philippines at a time when US immigration laws were becoming more racially inclusive. Documenting this process reveals that control over GI marriages served to maintain US imperial structures of power through cultures of anti-miscegenation and racist tropes of Filipina sexuality, even while appearing to promote racial equality, inclusion, and American democratic values. These efforts reinforced the imaginative geography of the Philippines as a space of disease and immorality and US domestic space as clean and hospitable.

The 1945 War Brides Act (Public Law 271) made it possible for the wives, fiancés, and children of US servicemen to immigrate outside of the national quota system. The law specified that the alien spouses and alien children of United States citizens, “if otherwise admissible under the immigration laws” would be permitted to apply.²⁷⁵ The concept of who was admissible and inadmissible within this law mirrored the language of the 1924 Immigration Act (Johnson-Reed Act), which was used to bar Asian immigrants from entry and naturalization in the US.²⁷⁶ Despite the fact that the law originally intended to uphold Asian exclusion, recent and ongoing changes in US immigration law allowed for many Asian women to obtain War Bride status.²⁷⁷ With the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, Chinese women were considered “admissible” and allowed to

²⁷⁴ In this paper, I use the term *War Bride* loosely to refer to women who married US servicemen in the postwar period. Some, but not all, of these women immigrated to the US under the War Brides Act of 1945 or other acts of Congress allowing for the immigration of fiancés such as PL 213 and PL 717. I also use the terms “military wives” to refer to those who married in later time periods. For more on the War Brides Act, see An Act of December 28, 1945, US House and Senate, 79th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 591, Statute 59, pg. 659. <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/79th-congress/c79s1.pdf>

²⁷⁵ An Act of December 28, 1945, US House and Senate, 79th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 591, Statute 59, pg. 659. <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/79th-congress/c79s1.pdf>

²⁷⁶ Susan Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 135.

²⁷⁷ The vast majority of War Brides were white women from Europe, New Zealand, and Australia. Lawmakers originally intended for this law to “give back to the veterans,” to honor their military service by decreasing the “burdens” placed on their readjustment to civilian life. Those who pushed for the War Brides bill were conservatives who took on “severely restrictionist” positions on immigration issues, yet they also understood that importing foreign brides could serve as a kind of reward for the nation’s postwar heroes. See Susan Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 135.

enter as War Brides.²⁷⁸ Very few Japanese and Korean women immigrated in the immediate postwar period, however, after the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952, which changed their immigration status, many more were included.²⁷⁹ The War Brides Act also allowed more Filipinas than ever before to enter the country. The status of Filipinos changed following the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1934, which limited the number of Filipino immigrants to 50 per year. The Luce-Cellar Act of 1946 raised this quota to 100, and also permitted Filipinos to naturalize as US citizens. Filipinas who immigrated under the War Brides Act were not counted within this quota system, allowing for approximately 16,000 Filipinas to enter the country between 1945-1965.²⁸⁰

The scholarship on War Brides from Asia has importantly documented the ways that the US legal system has shaped the racial inclusion of Asian women.²⁸¹ Within Filipino American history, scholars have argued that the War Brides Act allowed for a “second wave” of Filipino migration to the US that contributed significantly to the development of Filipino American communities.²⁸² Others have contributed to the scholarly literature by examining the migration experiences of Asian

²⁷⁸ In fact, the majority of Asian War Brides who immigrated during the immediate postwar period were Chinese.

²⁷⁹ Before the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952, acts of congress in 1948 and 1950 allowed for the short-term entry of those considered “racially inadmissible.” Public Law 213 which passed on July 22, 1947 permitted spouses married to US citizens to immigrate if they obtained permission within 30 days of the bill’s passage. Due to the excessively short time window, only 14 Japanese women were admitted in 1947 and 298 in 1948. Another opportunity came in 1950 through Public Law 717, however applicants were similarly granted a short period to have their applications in order. See Miki Ward Crawford et al, *Japanese War Brides in America: An Oral History* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010). These temporary windows of opportunity also benefitted Korean war brides, though the majority of Korean spouses to American servicemen met their husbands well after WWII. See Ji-Yeon Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 2.

²⁸⁰ FANHS, *In Our Auntie’s Words: The Filipino Spirit of Hampton Roads*, (San Francisco: T’Boli Publishing, 2004), 135. Other scholars estimate much lower numbers depending on their definition of “War Bride.” According to historian Susan Zeiger, 2,215 Filipinas immigrated under the War Brides Act. See Susan Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010).

²⁸¹ Notable works that provide a sense of the broader picture while taking a comparative approach to the War Bride experience include Elfrieda Berthiaume Shukert and Barbara Smith Scibetta, *The War Brides of World War II* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988), and Susan Zeiger, *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010).

²⁸² See Caridad Concepcion Vallangca, “The Second Wave: Pinay & Pinoy (1945-1960)” (San Francisco, CA: Strawberry Hill Press, 1987), 57–77; Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS), *In Our Aunties Words*; Emily Porcincula Lawsin, “*Beyond Hanggang Pier Only*”: *Filipina American War Brides of Seattle, 1945-1965*, (MA Thesis, University of California Los Angeles), UCLA special collections.

women, as well as their efforts to find a place for themselves in America.²⁸³ This scholarship has mainly focused on the experiences of Asian women *after* they obtain War Bride status. This methodological orientation privileges US legislation such as the War Brides and Fiancés Acts and does not account for the transnational processes that not only determined who became War Brides but also stigmatized women who were left behind. This chapter contributes a transnational approach to this literature by examining the role of the US military and the ways that unofficial policies, strategies, and actions had the power to limit the immigration of Filipinas to the US despite racially inclusive legislation. Moreover, this chapter documents the racial and sexual discourses that defined the Filipina War Bride against the figure of the prostitute, ultimately stigmatizing women left behind. The image of Asian women may have shifted towards domesticity within US culture, however, these assimilable women were contrasted with those “contained” to extraterritorial space who continued to be perceived as economic, sexual, and moral threats to the nation.

This chapter draws primarily from US Army and Navy records including correspondence, reports, meeting minutes, and application files pertaining to the marriages of US servicemen and Filipinas. I examined well over 100 marriage application files, which comprised approximately 1,000 pages of documentation. Out of this collection, roughly 20% were Filipino nationals, 7% Filipino-American US citizens, 30% White, 40% Black, and 3% Mexican.²⁸⁴ While the vast majority of Filipina War Brides married US servicemen of Filipino descent, which was one outcome of the anti-miscegenation practices that I discuss throughout this chapter, finding documentation related to

²⁸³ For a comprehensive analysis of the experiences of Japanese military wives, see Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, n.d.). For a rich study on the Korean War Bride experience, particularly through oral history, see Ji-Yeon Yuh, *Beyond the Shadow of Camp Town: Korean Military Brides in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

²⁸⁴ These racial categories are imperfect representations of the identities of the servicemen. They are based on what US servicemen themselves wrote on their official application forms, with the exception of “Black.” While “Black” was sometimes used, it was used interchangeably with “Colored,” “Negro,” and “Negro American.” I have chosen to use Black to avoid reproducing offensive terminology. At times, I use the category Latino to describe servicemen who were Puerto Rican, as they were listed at times under “Black” and other times as “White.” Sometimes Mexican American servicemen were also listed as “White.”

interracial marriages was very difficult. Marriage files in the archives were organized based on last name, not race, which meant that I needed to sift through a sea of Filipino and Filipino-American applicants before stumbling across a single interracial application. The organization of the archive brought me to an unscientific method of searching. Yet while the archive might appear logical and ordered, a quantitative approach cannot measure the power of US officials in determining the number of GI-Filipina marriages. My method therefore draws attention to the absences and silences around rejections and discriminations that were never recorded.

I begin this chapter with a brief overview of the historical context, particularly the image of Asians in US society, which affected the treatment of Filipinas who wished to marry US servicemen. The next sections analyze the marriage process with regard to race, gender, and sexuality, focusing on the late 1940s and '50s. I explain how the threat of the Filipina prostitute affected applications differently, depending on the race of the serviceman and where the couple planned to live after marrying. I then examine how the marriage application process affected Amerasians, the children of US servicemen and Filipinas. The final section considers the continuity of US military strategies over time, drawing from a transcript from a US Army and Navy marriage conference in Subic in 1964.

*From Yellow Peril to "Sexual Model Minority"*²⁸⁵

As scholars have argued, the image of Asian Americans in general transformed after World War II. According to historian Cindy I-Fen Cheng, the US government's strategies for promoting US hegemony shifted after the war to address critiques of US democracy from the Soviet Union focused on American racism.²⁸⁶ President Truman's Committee on Civil rights in 1947 promoted

²⁸⁵ This term comes from Susan Koshy. See *Sexual Naturalization: Asian Americans and Miscegenation*, Asian America (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

²⁸⁶ Cindy I-Fen Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race During the Cold War* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2013).

anti-racist policies that had long impacted racial minorities, including Asian Americans. Yet while the US government worked to integrate people of color into American culture in some respects, they also targeted potential communists in ways that bifurcated Asian as either assimilable or dangerous.²⁸⁷ No longer exclusively a yellow peril, as Asian American groups were considered during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, US interests in the Cold War necessitated the creation of a “model minority” who would assuage American anxieties over communism, miscegenation, and transgressive sexuality.²⁸⁸ After World War II, the racial discourse was beginning to change as Asian Americans were able to socially transform from exotic and threatening to potentially assimilable.²⁸⁹ While this form of racial inclusion served to buttress US claims of equitable democracy, it also depended on maintaining Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners or “outsiders within.” In other words, US multiculturalism allowed for the image of integration while also maintaining white supremacy.

The image of Filipinos within the US imperial and Cold War imagination followed this broad historical pattern, but with some key differences. As the only group in Asia colonized by the US, Filipinos maintained a special status as US “non-citizen nationals” that allowed them to migrate to the US mainland during periods when most Asians were excluded from the country.²⁹⁰ Due to this status, Filipinos supplanted Chinese, Japanese, and Indian laborers as these groups fueled white anxieties about Asian invasion in the early twentieth century. Yet in contrast to East Asians, Filipinos were represented as *primitive* in dominant culture. US colonial treatment of the Philippines as a source of raw materials such as sugar and rubber rather than a region valuable for luxury goods

²⁸⁷ Cindy I-Fen Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America*, 4.

²⁸⁸ Robert G. Lee, “The Cold War Origins of the Model Minority Myth,” *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*, Asian American History and Culture (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1999), 146-147.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 149.

²⁹⁰ For more on this history see Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Migration and Empire in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (New York: NYU Press, 2011).

reinforced this image.²⁹¹ Moreover, Filipino men became associated with primitive sexuality as their intimacies with white women began to threaten the racial social order.²⁹² Due to the absence of Filipinas in the US in the early twentieth century, Filipino men intermingled with white and Mexican women they met on the West Coast where many of them labored.

The absence of Filipinas limited the possibilities for Filipino cultural citizenship within a heteronormative society based on the nuclear family.²⁹³ As a response to scenes of Filipino men dancing with white women in taxi dance halls and roaming around west coast cities in mixed company, state anti-miscegenations laws prohibiting “Mongolians” from marrying whites were applied to Filipinos by the 1930s.²⁹⁴ Anxieties about interracial intimacies between Filipinos and white women not only increased the sexual oppression of Filipino men but led to the anti-Filipino movement advocating for the end of US imperialism in the Philippines.²⁹⁵ The threat of Filipino primitive sexuality to the purity of white womanhood promoted the creation of the Filipino Repatriation Act of 1935 and the Tydings-McDuffie Act that outlined the terms for Philippine independence.²⁹⁶ This context is significant for interpreting the shift in racial policies after World War II. The US military’s push for same-race marriages between Filipino US servicemen and Filipinas after the war tempered white fears about Filipino primitive sexuality, including their intermingling with white women and their penetration of white spaces. While postwar policies

²⁹¹ Susan Koshy, *Sexual Naturalization: Asian Americans and Miscegenation*, Asian America (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 12.

²⁹² Linda España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles’s Little Manila: Working-Class Filipinos and Popular Culture, 1920s-1950s*, Popular Cultures, Everyday Lives (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006).

²⁹³ As historian Nayan Shah argues, US legislation in the early twentieth century intended to “protect” American citizens left Asian migrants “estranged.” Even when more migrants were granted US citizenship, Alien Land Laws and anti-miscegenations laws kept Asian men (as few Asian women were able to migrate in the early twentieth century) from integrating within American society. See Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011).

²⁹⁴ Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford, England; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 92-93.

²⁹⁵ Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Migration and Empire in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (New York: NYU Press, 2011).

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

shifted towards the racial inclusion of Filipinos, the US military maintained racially defined spatial boundaries.

The American image of Asian *women* also shifted after the war. Many scholars of Asian American studies have documented the history of US laws associating Asian women with sexual immorality and forbidden desire beginning in the nineteenth century. The Page Law of 1875, for example, restricted Chinese and other “Mongolian” women suspected of prostitution from entering the US. These women were believed to be “corrupters of young white boys” and were reduced “to the menacing stereotype of the syphilitic prostitute.”²⁹⁷ The debate about Chinese and Japanese prostitution, which centered on Orientalist tropes, became a significant political issue that supported anti-Chinese immigration law at the end of the nineteenth century.²⁹⁸ Moreover, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924, which extended Asian exclusion, ensured that few Asian women migrated to the US until these laws were lifted. By the mid-twentieth century, several acts of legislation changed the status of Asian female migrants to the US. The 1943 Magnuson Act repealed Chinese exclusion and the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act dismantled racial prohibitions affecting Japanese immigrants.

The dominant racial construction of Asian women as a sexual threat to American families changed as their increased visibility in the US became interpreted as evidence of assimilation and inclusion in the Cold War context. According to Susan Koshy, by the postwar period Asian women had become a “sexual model minority” constructed against black and white women to “mediate a crisis of white bourgeois sexuality” where white men sought both sex appeal and traditional values of family centrism. As Koshy argues, the War Brides Act of 1945 played a significant role in this

²⁹⁷ Susan Koshy, *Sexual Naturalization: Asian Americans and Miscegenation*, 11. Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 80.

²⁹⁸ Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*, Asian American History and Culture (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1999), 89.

period through the arrival of thousands of Asian women as the wives of US servicemen. While deemed safely assimilable, War Brides of Asian descent promoted the image of US racial inclusion and democracy thereby reinforcing the postwar perception of Asian women as docile, feminine, and domesticated.

This history of anti-Asian legislation and the image of Asian women in the US influenced the ways that US military officials interpreted interracial marriages between US servicemen and Filipinas. Their strategies also reflect changes in racial discourse, where Filipinas were always suspect but not always threatening. Those who married within their race, and an exceptional few who married Black, White, and Mexican US servicemen, represented the possibility of racial inclusion in the American liberal democracy.

Working Against "Race Prejudice": The Power of US Military Bureaucracy

In January and February of 1947, US Army Chaplain Forkner gave talks at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila discouraging Filipinas from marrying their American soldier fiancés.²⁹⁹ Forkner stated, "If Filipino girls are thinking of a pleasant life in the United States where they can raise a happy family, they had better think some more."³⁰⁰ With this explanation, Forkner defended a new US Army policy: "Owing to difficulties arising from marriages between Filipino girls and white American soldiers here, Army authorities in the Philippines have adopted a policy of disapproving all applications of GIs to marry Filipino girls, except for emergency reasons."³⁰¹ Forkner warned young women that their interracial relationships would not work out in the long

²⁹⁹ See "Discourage GI-Filipino Marriages," *Atlanta Daily World*, January 11, 1946, 1; "Filipino Girls Told Bitter Truth About Racial Prejudice," *Detroit Free Press*, January 5, 1946, 7; "Chaplain, Judge Discourage GI-Filipina Marriages," *This Week*, January 19, 1946, 10; Jesus V. Merritt, "1063 Filipino Girls Become Brides of Colored Soldiers," *Afro-American*, February 2, 1946, 1; "Marriages of Filipino Girls to GIs Bound to Fail Says Army Chaplain," *Manila Times*, February 9, 1946; "Race Prejudice: Padre Warns GI's Against Marry Filipinos: Well Meaning Advice," *South China Morning Post & the Hong Kong Telegraph*, February 26, 1946, 8.

³⁰⁰ No author, "Discourage GI-Filipino Marriages," *Atlanta Daily World*, January 11, 1946, 1.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

run, but he emphasized that this belief did not stem from “race prejudice.” He explained that racism was “wrong and extremely unfortunate,” but that it was a reality that made interracial marriages in the US between *white* men and Filipinas “doomed to failure.”³⁰²

Forkner’s claims were misleading, as the US military continued to approve of marriages between US servicemen and Filipinas during and after the time of Forkner’s speeches. However, there is truth in his claim that disapproval was an inevitable part of the process of applying for permission to marry. During World War II, the US military established the policy of requiring US servicemen to obtain permission from their commanding officers to marry. This policy was ostensibly meant to protect and assist US servicemen by providing the steps—of a complex process—they would need to take to legally get married abroad. Yet, the multi-step bureaucratic procedure allowed for the possibility of intervention in the marriages of interracial couples through delays in the processing of paperwork, the requirement of additional documentation, and other strategies that could discourage interracial couples from marrying. While Forkner argued that interracial marriages were discouraged due to their inevitable failure, he denied racism through a logic of efficiency and order. His statements paralleled the way that military bureaucracy and its appearance of rationality through systematic procedures obscured inconsistency and inequality.

Completing the application process itself involved several steps. A soldier first requested a formal application form from their commanding officer. This form asked for biographical data of both the serviceman and his prospective bride, information about the income of both families, and specifically asked if pregnancy was a factor in the couple’s desire to marry. At the bottom of the form, both the servicemen and the prospective bride were required to sign a statement that their marriage would grant them no special rights within the service and that the serviceman could be transferred or given a new duty assignment at any time. After submitting the paper application,

³⁰² Ibid.

commanding officers deliberately let the applications sit for an arbitrary period of time ranging from 60 days to 6 months, a waiting period designed to force the couple to reflect on their decision to marry. If they still wished to marry after the waiting period, the couple would be required to attend marriage counseling with their commanding officer and then a chaplain who would interview the serviceman and his prospective bride. Following Philippine law, applicants under the age of 21 were required to obtain parental consent to marry in the form of a written letter of approval. Applicants under the age of 25 were required to submit letters of advice from parents or family members.³⁰³ After submitting all of the required documents, the commanding officer and chaplain would write evaluation letters and send the application to the commanding general who gave the final verdict.

Despite the formality of this procedure—which even appeared to follow Philippine law—the US military had no authority to grant marriage licenses or deny the legal marriages of its servicemen. In some cases, US servicemen married legally in the Philippines and once they had already done so there was nothing that commanding officers could do to deny their marriage. They often threatened enlisted men with punishments such as reduction in pay grade and court martial, yet they did not always follow through with these threats. Moreover, commanding officers were often themselves confused about how to handle these situations. In other words, the processing of marriages involved a variety of unofficial strategies and tactics that maintained an appearance of order and control.

In the Philippines, most aspects of the marriage procedure created opportunities for inconsistency and inequality. For instance, while commanding officers typically assigned a waiting period of up to six months before they evaluated an application, this strategy did not apply to Filipino US servicemen engaged to marry Filipinas. Orders directly from the commander of the US Naval forces in the Philippines stated, “The six (6) months waiting period may be waived in cases

³⁰³ Belen T.G. Medina, *The Filipino Family* (Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2015), 88.

where both prospective spouses are of the same race and nationality.”³⁰⁴ The waiting period bought commanding officers and chaplains time to convince servicemen in interracial relationships to change their minds about marriage. It also provided time to arrange for the serviceman to be transferred out of the country. This was exactly what happened in the case of a white soldier, Calvin Gregory, and his fiancé Helen Manalo. According to a letter that Manalo wrote to Gregory’s commanding officer, they had been waiting to marry for the past two years because Gregory was suddenly shipped to Korea. Manalo sought an explanation and help with their application, explaining that they were in love and would not give up on obtaining approval.³⁰⁵ Yet, Manalo likely did not receive the answer she was looking for. All couples were required to sign a statement as a part of their marriage applications agreeing that servicemen were “subject to transfer without consideration of his marital status.”³⁰⁶

When transfers were not possible, commanding officers required counseling sessions with military chaplains who were instructed to dissuade servicemen from marriage. While marriage counseling is a common practice in the Catholic tradition, where a priest helps a couple prepare for marriage and secure their relationship, in this context counseling was used as a form of intervention.³⁰⁷ Commander Pihlo defined marriage counseling within the US Navy, explaining that anyone could do it:

any of the other officers could do the type that the chaplain does in this case. This is not what we call premarital counseling. Premarital counseling takes a couple, where the assumption already exists, the premise exists that there is a good match and by counseling—

³⁰⁴ Hugh H. Goodwin, Commander of US Naval Forces Philippines, to All US Naval Forces Philippines, August 5, 1954, RG 313-59-141, Sangley Pt. General Correspondence, Box 9, NARA San Francisco, CA.

³⁰⁵ Helen L. Manalo, August 30, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 81, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁰⁶ See marriage application, Calvin Gregory and Helen Manalo, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 81, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁰⁷ Commanding officers recommended counseling to address many other perceived problems within the service, including the issue of VD. According to one VD control council report, “chaplains personally interview each recruit, to discuss rectitude of life, its importance to a profitable military career with emphasis on venereal disease prevention.” See Colonel George R. Connor, General Headquarters Far East command, Venereal Disease Control Information Letter to Commanding Generals Far East Command and Philippines-Ryukyus Command, February 2, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

the counselor or the chaplain presumes that this could help them with the early phases of their marriage by telling them some of the problems that will come up against them...how they should meet those problems. He thereby helps them in their early married life. This is premarital counseling, and *we do not use this type of counseling* in the frequent cases where the man comes through and requests to get married. This is why I say that any officer is as qualified as a chaplain *to try to talk them out of it.*³⁰⁸

Commander Piphon made these claims to a group of commanding officers debating how to solve the problem of marriages in the Philippines. He revealed that “counseling” was not premarital counseling in the sense of helping a couple achieve success. He emphasized that the purpose of counseling within the service was to “try to talk them out of it.” At this meeting, Lt. Edwards also added, “I also give a little talk...about the possibility that she may be subject to prejudice in the United States and she will have difficulty in a marriage of mixed races...but these are things I believe they have heard so many times that they go in one ear and out the other.”³⁰⁹ Commanding officers such as Piphon and Edwards used counseling to dissuade interracial couples from marrying, and they shared these strategies in an attempt to find more effective solutions for influencing enlisted men and their prospective brides.

Counseling was also a method used to justify disapproval letters written by commanding officers and chaplains. In the case of a sailor named James Edward Brown, marriage counseling allowed officers to gather information about his relationship in the Philippines that led to the rejection of his application. The report of the marriage request stated, “He and his prospective bride were interviewed by the naval station Chaplain and Personnel Officer. During the course of these interviews, it was learned that the following differences in age, religion, and education existed between the serviceman and his prospective bride.”³¹⁰ The report went on to state that the

³⁰⁸ Italics added for emphasis. Elipsis in original text. Com Nav Phil, “Study Conference Relating to Conduct of U.S. Naval Personnel,” October 19, 1964, General Correspondence 1945-1959, No. 1737377, Box 1-3, NARA San Francisco, CA, 16.

³⁰⁹ Ibid, 18.

³¹⁰ H. Miller to Chief of Naval Personnel, September 28, 1955, account: NN373/91, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA.

prospective bride was a Catholic, 27 years old, and had only completed four years of grade school. Brown was Protestant, 20 years old, and had a high school education. In the report, marriage counseling is referred to as “interviews,” which also indicates how commanding officers and chaplains approached their sessions. Based on the facts that they gathered, which indicated that the couple defied respectable norms, the commanding officer concluded that Brown’s fiancé had “low moral standards.” Brown’s application was ultimately disapproved, meaning that if he still wished to marry he would have had to request reconsideration to reapply.

The requirement of marriage counseling or interviews with couples introduced another layer of bureaucratic difficulty that reduced the overall number of marriages in the Philippines. Yet even if a couple received multiple letters of disapproval from commanding officers and chaplains, they could still eventually obtain approval for marriage. In many cases, it took couples several tries, but they were ultimately approved. One commanding officer, Col. Hubbard, explained to his fellow officers that he had been informally keeping track of how many servicemen within his unit had applied for marriage and then eventually dropped out. According to Hubbard, “Fifteen of the 67 dropped out before actually signing the comnavphil application for permission to marry. This was due to several factors, mostly the counseling at the first sergeant and/or platoon leader level. This left 52 who submitted their applications to marry from 1 January to 1 April 1964.”³¹¹ Although in this particular case there were only fifteen servicemen that purportedly “dropped out,” this example indicates the way in which commanding officers and chaplains saw it as their responsibility to try to reduce the number of marriages even through informal methods.

The number of couples who would have married but were intimidated from applying are not visible within the archive. Because the strategies of commanding officers centered on pressuring

³¹¹ Comnavphil refers to US Navy commanders in the Philippines. Com Nav Phil, “Study Conference Relating to Conduct of U.S. Naval Personnel,” October 19, 1964, General Correspondence 1945-1959, No. 1737377, Box 1-3, NARA San Francisco, CA, 6.

servicemen to drop out of applying, marriage rates, which account for the number of applicants approved, do not include couples who never submitted their applications. In other words, at least on record, there were relatively few rejected applications. Nonetheless, the discussions of officers about their processes reveals the inequity that they attempted to conceal. While on the one hand maintaining a high approval rate and claiming not to intervene in the private lives of servicemen, the US military continued to engage in surreptitious practices that supported anti-miscegenation while appearing non-discriminatory.

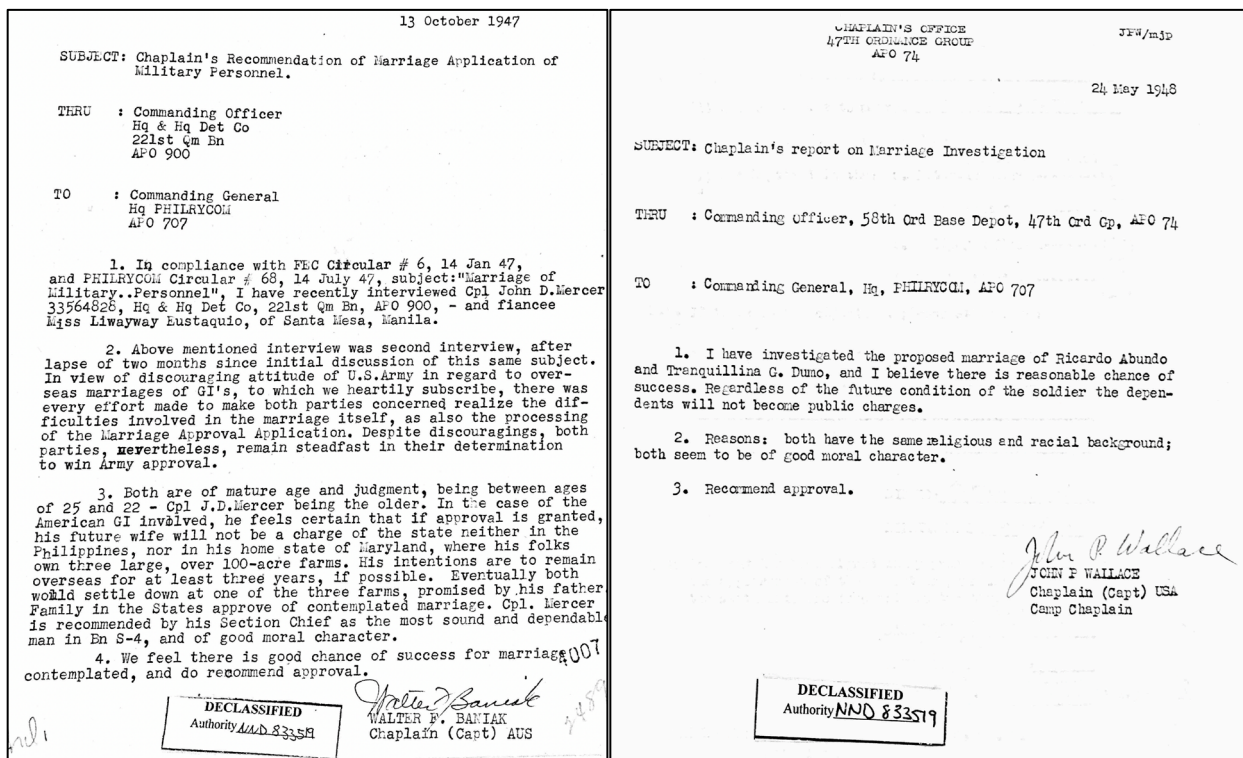


Figure 8: Racial difference in Chaplain approval letters.³¹²

The attempt to protect white servicemen is clear in the records. The evaluation letters of same-race couples in the archive were notably shorter than those of other racial backgrounds (See Figure 8). These letters often included only a few sentences about the racial and religious background of the

³¹² Left: Ch. Capt. Walter F. Baniak, Chaplains Office, to Commanding General of Philrycom, October 13, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 83, NARA College Park, MD; Right: Ch. Capt. John P. Wallace, Chaplains Office, to Commanding General of Philrycom, May 24, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD

pair, and the opinion of the officer on the likelihood of them finding success in the future. In Figure 8, Ch. John Wallace recommended approval of the marriage of Ricardo Abundo with little details (image on the right). The letter (on the left) from Ch. Walter Baniak writing for a white serviceman named John Mercer is much lengthier. This kind of letter, including more details and justifications was typical of those found in the archive of marriage request files of white servicemen. Moreover, the physical weight of paperwork of each applicant differed significantly by race. Those of white applicants were heavier and included more documents such as letters of recommendation, affidavits, and other notes that were necessary to support their marriage cases. Those of couples who were both Filipino, regardless of nationality, were noticeably lighter and revealed shorter descriptions and justifications overall.

Commanding officers may have promoted anti-racism by claiming that racial discrimination in marriage processing was “wrong and extremely unfortunate,” yet their strategies to intervene reinforced a culture of anti-miscegenation that affected interracial marriages.³¹³ Anti-miscegenation strategies were so embedded within the culture of the institution that commanding officers felt the need to defend against potential criticism whenever they vouched for an interracial couple. Ch. Robert E. Lynch's evaluation letter specifically referred to the actions that he had taken to dissuade one couple:

The prospective bridegroom Mike Bonomo has expressed his desire to enter marriage with Miss Carolina Tan. I have spoken to both parties on several occasions concerning their marriage. I have pointed out all the difficulties that will be involved in a marriage between a Filipino and an American. They realize these difficulties and desire to enter marriage despite these difficulties. In my opinion they love each other sincerely and intend to make a success out of their marriage.³¹⁴

³¹³ “Discourage GI-Filipino Marriages,” *Atlanta Daily World*, January 11, 1946, 1.

³¹⁴ Robert E. Lynch, 52D Transportation Service, to the Commanding General of Philrycom, February 25, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78, NARA College Park, MD.

Evaluation letters that US Army chaplains such as Lynch wrote tended to emphasize how active they were in attempting to prevent marriages. Lynch's evaluation shows two sentences in which he refers to his attempts to talk the couple out of marriage ("I have spoken...", "I have pointed out all the difficulties...") to reiterate his concrete efforts in "counseling." The fact that officers such as Lynch emphasized their efforts suggests that chaplains were perhaps concerned about being judged by other officers for not working hard enough to prevent interracial marriages. Such evaluations reveal that officers were willing to support interracial marriages but only if they could reasonably argue that the couple was exceptional.

Commanding officers and chaplains stood to prevent illicit marriages that they believed would not be accepted in American communities, but were willing to make some exceptions if the couple seemed assimilable. For example, in evaluating white soldier Roland Chase and Helen de la Cruz, Ch. Henry Foss stated that he had discussed the "race problem" with the couple:

There are both racial and citizenship barriers to a successful marriage...The citizenship barrier to a successful marriage can be cared for by naturalization if the marriage is consummated. The racial barrier, though irremovable, is well recognized by both applicants and I feel that it is definitely surmountable, though extremely difficult.³¹⁵

In this letter, Ch. Foss suggested that Chase and de la Cruz were normative in some ways, but not in others. The fact that they were a heterosexual couple who could "consummate" a marriage meant that they could obtain US citizenship for de la Cruz. Yet, the fact that they were a white-Filipina pair was an "irremovable" difficulty they would continually face. Foss suggested that this interracial couple could never become fully accepted in white society because of their racial incompatibility, however, their normativity in other areas meant that they still had a chance to be included.

Evaluations such as this reveal the enormous effort that was required of white-Filipina couples due to dominant ideas of race and sexuality that US military culture attempted to maintain.

³¹⁵ Ch. Henry A. Foss, 24th Air Depot Wing Clark Air Force Base to the Commanding General of Philcom, October 5, 1949, RG 554, Entry A1 1464, Box 342, NARA College Park, MD.

Money and Good Character: Finding “Decent” and “Respectable” War Brides

Carmen Nerpiol Monteclaro, a Filipina War Bride from Ilo-Ilo, married a Filipino American US serviceman and immigrated to the US in 1949. Monteclaro’s Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) record shows that she was a housewife who had not worked in the past five years, she had no children, and that she had \$250.00 cash in the bank (Figure 9). Page four of her immigration application included her signature below a lengthy paragraph listing all “classes” of people considered threats to the nation including “idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded, epileptics, insane persons...prostitutes, or persons connected with the business of prostitution.” One of the reasons that the wife of US servicemen could be denied an immigration visa included involvement in prostitution.

PAGE 4

(24) To the best of my knowledge and belief, I am not a member of any one of the following classes of individuals deportable or excludable under the immigration laws: Idiots; imbeciles; feeble-minded; epileptics; insane persons; persons with constitutional psychopathic inferiority; persons afflicted with chronic alcoholism; persons afflicted with tuberculosis; persons afflicted with a loathsome or dangerous contagious disease; persons convicted of or admitting the commission of a crime involving moral turpitude; anarchists; persons who believe in or advocate the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States; persons deportable under the provisions of the Act entitled “An Act to exclude and expel from the United States aliens who are members of the Anarchistic and Similar Classes,” approved October 16, 1918, as amended; prostitutes, or persons connected with the business of prostitution; polygamists; smugglers of aliens; persons convicted of violating the narcotic laws; or persons convicted under the Alien Registration Act of 1940 of interfering with the military or naval forces of the United States, or of subversive activities against any government in the United States. (If within one of the foregoing classes, explain fully on separate sheet.

(25) My deportation WOULD result in serious economic detriment to my citizen ~~or legal resident~~ ~~alien~~ spouse, ~~parent, or minor child.~~

Carmen Nerpiol Monteclaro
(Signature of applicant)

NOTE CAREFULLY.—This application must be sworn to before a notary public or an officer of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

I, CARMEN NERPIOL MONTECLARO, do swear (~~and~~) that I know the contents of this application and the same are true to the best of my knowledge.

Carmen Nerpiol Monteclaro
(Complete and true signature of applicant)

Subscribed and sworn to before me by the above-named applicant at SAN FRANCISCO
this 29th day of March, Anno Domini 1949.

[Notary Signature]
NOTARY PUBLIC IN AND FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA.
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES NOV. 1, 1951.
(Title of officer)

Figure 9: Monteclaro INS record signature page
INS 1300, RG 85, NARA San Francisco, CA

The practice of screening applicants for connections to prostitution, diseases, and other kinds of perceived dangers has a long history of racializing Asian women as sexual and moral threats to the nation. Monteclaro's application reflects this history, however, it also documents the inclusion of Asian women as US citizens. It was this possibility of obtaining US citizenship that brought US military officials to invoke the figure of the Filipina prostitute.

While attuned to the fact that Filipinas who married US servicemen might eventually immigrate to the US, commanding officers and chaplains evaluating couples assumed a binary discourse that defined women as either respectable or illicit. Their language signaled stereotypes of bargirls, laundrywomen, and streetwalkers and focused on identifying the economic status, occupation, education, and perceived intelligence of prospective brides. In scrutinizing the "moral character" of Filipinas, the marriage application process implied that those who did not meet the standards of marital success were illicit women who did not have a place in US society. Many of these perceived markers of non-normative appearance, behavior, or status had no association with a history sexual labor yet suggested that the individual would not be approved by the INS based on sexual immorality. The image that commanding officers and chaplains relied on, of the disease-infected bar girl who preyed on enlisted men, surfaced in their letters distinguishing her from exceptional women worthy of marriage, US citizenship, and belonging within the nation.

One main criteria for assessing the legitimacy of marriage was proof of the prospective bride's economic support, either through employment or family wealth. Similar to the ways that US military personnel required women walking the streets of military base towns to carry steady papers as evidence that they were not streetwalkers, this requirement indicated status and decency. Often, applications of interracial couples listed multiple sources of income for the prospective bride. In the case of white soldier Jose T. Benavides of New Mexico and Pilar Sambile, the couple stated that the

prospective brides family “has ample income for her support or other incapacity of the prospective husband.”³¹⁶ They also stated, “Adequate support for the wife will be from the husband’s army income.” The application went on to list the exact amounts within their bank accounts, war bonds, and family allotments. The evaluation letters of this couple indicated that Sambile “has the bearing of a respectable girl,” and also explicitly referenced her “support” and security through insurance³¹⁷. These types of assessments based the character of Filipinas on their economic worth.

The US military’s application for marriage also requested information about the occupation or employment of prospective brides, however, the vast majority of applicants did not list one. Those that do show up in the record include housekeeper (13), typist/stenographer (5), dressmaker (3), beautician (2), salesgirl (1), student (1), and hostess (1).³¹⁸ These occupations do not reflect the strong claims of US military officers that the majority of women engaged to servicemen met their fiancés in the bar setting. This suggests that there were much more diverse settings in which enlisted men met and dated Filipinas, or that the stigma associated with bars and clubs prevented couples from mentioning prior employment within their applications. Only one applicant admitted that she was previously a “hostess” on her application. However, because both applicants were “of the same race and religion” the chaplain’s evaluation did not include any mention of her previous employment in a bar and fully supported her marriage to a Filipino US serviceman.³¹⁹

Commanding officers and chaplains often assessed the intelligence of prospective brides, using this criteria as an indication of their ability to assimilate within US culture. In the case of white soldier from Texas S/Sgt. Jessie Gonzalez and his fiancé Severa Haber of Camarines Sur, the

³¹⁶ Benavides lists his race as “white” on their marriage application. However, his evaluation letters also reveal that commanding officers did not see him as fully “white.” He is described as having family from Mexico, and as “Spanish-speaking.”

³¹⁷ David Madias to Commanding Officer, Camp Rizal, Philrycom, April 7, 1948, RG 554, A1 1457, NARA College Park, MD.

³¹⁸ These numbers are based on my archive of approximately 100 application files.

³¹⁹ Capt. Stephen M. Snopkowski to the Commanding General of Philrycom, June 26, 1948, RG 554 Entry A1 1457 Box 77, NARA College Park, MD.

chaplain evaluating the couple wrote, “The prospective wife is a woman above average intelligence should find it easy to adapt herself to the way of life of her prospective husband in the United States.”³²⁰ In other cases, the woman’s intelligence was assessed based on her level of English proficiency. The two officers evaluating Isabel Ferido, a fiancé of a Black soldier named Sgt. Ollie T. Barbary, both mentioned the fact that Ferido had surprisingly good communication skills. According to Ch. Weems, “The prospective bride speaks good English.”³²¹ Ch. Train wrote, “Mrs. Ferido is several years older than Sgt. Barbary, but possesses qualifications which offset this factor. Her looks belie her added three years; and her comprehension of the English language is superior to that of most Filipinas.”³²² In this case, despite the fact that there were some factors that made this couple non-normative, the fact that Ferido spoke “superior” English distinguished her from the average Filipina. Both education and intelligence were important factors that commanding officers used to interpret an individual’s capacity for discipline and morality. While US military officers believed that individuals of “low intelligence” were more susceptible to contracting VD and engaging in illicit sexuality, this metric served the purpose of distinguishing Filipinas from immoral women lacking in education and aptitude.

These judgements of character came from short interactions in interviews or counseling sessions and were not based on deep knowledge of the individual applicants. Often times commanding officers made assessments that commented mainly on physical appearance and their perception of the individual’s demeanor. For example, in the case of Filipino US citizen Robert Corpuz and Maria Lopez of Nueva Ecija, the chaplain commented on the excellent record and

³²⁰ Ch. Capt. Arthur M. Finnegan, Headquarters 52D Transportation Medium Point, to Commanding General, Philrycom, June 16, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 80, NARA College Park, MD.

³²¹ Ch. Capt. Silas L. Weems, Headquarters 57th Infantry Regiment, to Commanding General of Philrycom, December 21, 1947, RG 554 Entry A1 1457 Box 77, NARA College Park, MD.

³²² Ch. Capt. Joseph E. X. Frain, Headquarters 670th Medium Port Philippine Base Service Command, to Commanding Officer, Philrycom, March 3, 1947, RG 554 Entry A1 1457 Box 77, NARA College Park, MD.

character of the pair, and then described how Lopez looked.³²³ Capt. Prather, the officer who interviewed the couple, stated that Lopez's "intelligent, nice appearance" gave her the "bearing of a decent respectable girl."³²⁴ Prather's comments indicated Lopez's level of class in order to support his belief that their application for a US visa would be approved. Another prospective bride was described similarly as having an "intelligent, nice appearance" and also describes her as "decent" and "respectable." An evaluation of white soldier Jessie Gonzalez and Severa Haber of Manila described the couple as having "conducted themselves with true decency" during their interview³²⁵. Evaluation letters focus on how the couple, and particularly the prospective bride, appeared in terms of dress, demeanor, and manner of speaking to determine whether the Filipina seemed respectable. These quick judgements were more important for officials concerned about those who might become War Brides.

Another explicit criterion to determine a woman's respectability was her spiritual and moral character. Officers at times interpreted differences in religion to mean that interracial couples were indifferent about their future family's spiritual health. In same-race relations, however, such as the marriage of Lt. Juan Acayan and Rebecca Galvez, difference in religion was easily accepted. One of the few Filipino officers of the Philippine Scouts wrote about one couple: "prospective wife [Galvez] is a Methodist but with the attach [sic] statement she expresses her willingness to join the Faith of her future Catholic husband."³²⁶ Simply indicating an intention to convert was enough to authenticate the couple's seriousness of faith and therefore their commitment to God and good moral values.

³²³ Capt. Howard Prather, Headquarters 22nd Base Post Office, to Commanding Officer, Camp Rizal Philrycom, January 21, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 79, NARA College Park, MD.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ch. Arthur Finnegan to Commanding General, Philrycom, June 16, 1948, RG 554 Entry A1 1457, Box 80, NARA College Park, MD.

³²⁶ Lt. Elias G. Calimbas, Headquarters 97th Infantry Regiment Philippine Scouts, to Commanding General of Philrycom, March 5, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

More often than not, interracial couples were perceived to face too many cultural differences to overcome a difference in religion. This was true in the case of 27-year-old Sgt. John E Tice, a white soldier with a protestant background who applied to marry a Catholic girl of 22 years named Gloria Rodriguez. Chaplain Bollinger wrote with regard to their application:

I hereby certify that I have interviewed Sgt. John E. Tice and Gloria Rodriguez regarding their application for marriage and believe that the possibilities of the success of their marriage are not particularly good. Miss Rodriguez is Catholic but says she will change to protestant because she wants to marry Sgt. Tice. They would probably be unhappy in the States.³²⁷

Even though Rodriguez indicated an intention to convert, this was not enough to convince commanding officers of her sincerity. Using the language of cultural difference, Bollinger argued that interracial couples needed to be more “compatible” or similar in other criteria in order to be approved for marriage. The idea of cultural compatibility revolved around the woman’s proximity to whiteness and perceived assimilability into middle class American life. This meant not only skin color, but also financial stability, intelligence, English speaking ability, and religious affiliation. Although Rodriguez may have been willing to convert to Christianity, there were too many other markers of this couple’s distance from white, middle-class norms that called into question the potential for Rodriguez’s assimilation into Tice’s family.

While finances, occupation, education, and religion were all indicators of moral character, female sexuality also mattered. In one case where Robert Hart, a white soldier, applied to marry a Filipina named Maureen Trinidad, Capt. Prather wrote down his doubts about the pair's moral character on a post-it note. The hand-written note was attached to their file: “Prospective wife has 2 illegitimate children by a former serviceman who has gone home to the states. Suppose he comes back?” Capt. Prather’s negative evaluation of Trinidad centered on the fact that she had “illegitimate

³²⁷ Ch. Oran E. A. Bollinger, Chaplains Office AFWESPAC Engineer School, to Commanding General, AFWESPAC, January 9, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1460, Box 269, NARA College Park, MD.

children” that were under the care of her mother, and that her former affair also involved a US serviceman. Prather assumed that Trinidad would abandon her children in the Philippines and argued that she was “not considered fit or worthy of being the wife of a service man.”³²⁸ In cases involving white-Filipina couples such as Hart and Trinidad, previous relationships, children, or premarital sex signaled immorality.

For other interracial relationships involving servicemen of color, sexual morality was not as highly scrutinized. When Kenneth Freeland, a Black soldier, applied to marry Josephine Framil, Ch. Wallace noted the pair’s “good moral character” and “same religious background despite the fact that the couple had been “living together as husband and wife for 18 months.”³²⁹ Wallace then argued that “public propriety and religious principles demand that approval of their marriage be granted as soon as possible.”³³⁰ Premarital sex in this case was not used to discredit Framil’s character, but to argue that the relationship could be saved. In other words, officers were not merely concerned with relationships being interracial when they involved Black-Filipina couples, but were focused on protecting whiteness.

Despite their fixation on white-Filipina couples, commanding officers often explicitly denied that their interventions were about race. They argued that they were simply concerned about cultural compatibilities. Nonetheless, their evaluations of “culture” centered on the prospective bride’s appearance, demeanor, and status in order to prove that she was not a bargirl or an indecent woman. This process ensured that interracial couples, especially white-Filipina pairs, could assimilate within US culture without being perceived as too disruptive of white heteronormativity. These evaluations reproduced the figure of the Filipina prostitute. While Filipinas in interracial relationships were

³²⁸ Capt. Howard M. Prather to the Commanding Officer, Camp Rizal, Philrycom, June 25, 1948, RG 554 Entry A1 1457 Box 81, NARA College Park, MD.

³²⁹ Ch. Capt. John P. Wallace to Commanding General, Philrycom, February 18, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 80, NARA College Park, MD.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

judged based on the perception that illicit affairs were likely born out of prostitution, their relationships were scrutinized much more harshly for their association with immorality. Clues such as a financial status, employment, education level, and appearance were offered as proof of one's respectability *or* incapacity for a successful marriage. While officers sometimes made note of "moral character" in their evaluations of same-race couples, these cultural factors were secondary to racial compatibility. Within this process, the figure of the Filipina prostitute became a means to deny applications perceived to threaten white men and white spaces. These marriage evaluations connected back to the long-established figure of the female Asian deviant as they redefined the Asian woman as non-threatening and assimilable.

Filipinas in White Communities: Emphasizing Racial Segregation

US military officials were concerned about where a couple would live in the future. When it came to making special requests in the marriage application procedure, this was often done for applicants who were both Filipino nationals where issues of immigration were not a concern. For instance, officers went above and beyond for Philippine Scouts, a unit of Filipino soldiers in the US Army, who often married Filipinas from their hometowns. When Marceliano Agpawa, a Philippine Scout, applied to marry Julia De Vera of his hometown in Pangasinan, their application was positively reviewed by military officers who each mentioned the couple's similar background. Capt. Ward wrote just one line in his approval letter: "It is believed that the contemplated marriage has a fair chance of success due to the fact that both parties are of the Filipino race."³³¹ Generally, officers did not approve of granting permission to marry to troops "below the top three grades," meaning

³³¹ Capt. William E. Ward to Commanding General, Philippines-Ryukyus Command, January 15, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 77, NARA College Park, MD.

of lower rank. This was because they would not be permitted to obtain living quarters as married men. Yet, they were able to overlook this policy when it involved two Filipino nationals.³³²

The region where the serviceman was from also mattered. If the serviceman was from a southern state like Kentucky or Virginia, their application was less likely to be approved on the grounds that anti-miscegenation laws prohibited them from marrying in those states. The only exceptions were cases in which the Filipina's complexion made her potentially white-passing. If a woman was said to have a "mestiza" quality, this only helped the couple's application. One letter described Asuncion Sanz as "almost full-blooded Spanish" based on the opinion of Ch. Luetngen.³³³ In another case, the bride was described as "mestiza" in order to de-emphasize the racial difference between the pair.³³⁴

In the state of New Mexico, where anti-miscegenation laws were already repealed, officers emphasized cultural compatibilities between servicemen and Filipinas. Jose T. Benavides, a Mexican American native of New Mexico, met Pilar Sambile while stationed in Camp Rizal, Philippines. One of the officers who interviewed the couple, David Madias, wrote that he had discussed with them the "domestic and racial and other problems in the Philippines and in the United States," in the attempt to convince the couple that their "mixed-marriage" would present difficulties. Since they still wished to marry, the evaluations listed a number of characteristics that could justify their interracial relationship, such as the respectability and character of the pair. Moreover, in this case, education and language became a means to compensate for the racial difference. Chaplain Weems wrote, "both parties finished the seventh grade. Miss Sambile speaks some English but speaks Spanish. T/5

³³² Ch. Capt. John P. Wallace to the Commanding General, Philrycom, January 13, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 77, NARA College Park, MD. See also Ch. Capt. John P. Wallace to Commanding General Philrycom, May 24, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD; and Ch. Capt. John F. Albert to Commanding General of Philrycom, January 15, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

³³³ Chaplain Capt. Edward M. Luetngen to the Commanding General of Philcom, January 15, 1949, RG 554, Entry A1 1464, Box 343, NARA College Park, MD.

³³⁴ See marriage file of Donald F. De Nunno. Letter from Chaplain Luetngen, Headquarters Camp Rizal, to Commanding General, Philcom, June 7, 1949, RG 554, Entry A1 1464, Box 343, NARA College Park, MD.

Benavides speaks Spanish and English, also his parents speak both.”³³⁵ Language was another marker of difference that worked in the favor of Benavides and Sambile due to the perception that this provided them a shared cultural compatibility.

In cases where the serviceman was from a state where anti-miscegenation laws were in full force, the response often focused on the prospective bride’s darker appearance. Josephine Pareja described herself in the biographical portion of her application as a “mestiza,” yet her evaluation letter expressed concern about her complexion. According to Capt. Alexander Maish,

Due to the deep brown color of the prospective bride's skin and her typical Filipino features, it is doubted if she would find many communities in Florida where she would not have to contend with race prejudice. With her limited education and financial resources, it is felt that the chance of success in the United States for this marriage is too slender to warrant official approval³³⁶

Ch. Lombardi reinforced Maish’s assessment providing two reasons:

...first the prospective bride has very marked Filipino features which would not be accepted in American society, especially in Florida where the above couple expect to make their permanent home; second; letter from prospective husband's parent consenting to the marriage does not appear authentic”³³⁷

Both negative evaluations mentioned the skin color of Pareja and her “Filipino features” that would make her marriage to a white American concerning, especially in Florida where anti-miscegenation laws still applied. Notably, both letters list additional reasons to reject the application such as their doubts about the bride’s respectability, acceptance within the groom’s family, and their integrity.

Lombardi’s evaluation suggested that the parent consent letter was forged, though he did not explain why. However, parental approval was not a legal requirement in the Philippines for this case since Pareja was 24 years old and the serviceman was 26. Their concern about Pareja’s assimilation in the

³³⁵ Letter from Post Chaplain Silas L. Seems, Headquarters of Ft. McKinley Area to Commanding General of Philrycom, April 5, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78, NARA College Park, MD.

³³⁶ Capt. Alexander M. Maish, Company Commander of 30th Engineer Base Survey Company, to Commanding General, Philrycom, February 17, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 77, NARA College Park, MD.

³³⁷ Ch. Capt. Dominic J. Lombardi, Catholic Chaplain’s Office 10th General Hospital to Commanding General Philrycom, February 4, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 77, NARA College Park, MD.

US clearly influenced their evaluation of the couple's marriage despite Pareja's attempts to argue for her potential consideration as a "mestiza."

In addition to state anti-miscegenation laws, another concern revolved around housing. From 1917-1948, racial restrictions were the standard policy of the housing industry across the US that segregated neighborhoods in the attempt to protect white property values. Racial restrictive covenants allowed "individual parties" within neighborhoods to agree to exclude individual people and families of color that they believed would reduce the economic value of their homes. In 1926, the US Supreme Court supported this practice claiming that "racial restrictive covenants were the actions of private individuals and not of the state and where thereby not in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment."³³⁸ These covenants could restrict sale, lease, conveyance, ownership and occupancy of land and were prominent in cities and later in suburbs. According to historian Cindy I-Fen Cheng, the issue of race in the Cold War led to changes in how the US supreme court interpreted these racial restrictive covenants. The Truman administration wanted to prove to an international community that US democracy worked for all. In 1948, the US Supreme Court ruled against state enforcement of racial restrictive covenants, which in theory would guarantee the right of people of color to buy property and live in "white" neighborhoods.

US military officers not only considered which state an interracial couple might live, but whether they planned to live in an urban, suburban, or rural setting. Their concerns about region reflect broader concerns about integration that affected the nation at the time. In cases where an interracial couple planned to move to a rural area, US military officers overlooked issues of race, skin color, and other kinds of evidence that might suggest indecency. One chaplain wrote reluctantly in favor of the marriage of Emeroy Bounds and Luz Crisostomo primarily because the soldier

³³⁸ Cindy I-Fen Cheng, *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and Race During the Cold War* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2013), 21.

planned "to return to his farm after separation from the army, so the difficulty regarding race difference will not be very great."³³⁹ As Ch. Luetngen explained, isolating the woman within acres of the family farm would eliminate social pressures from the outside that might put strain on the future marriage. This couple planned to live in New York state, but in a rural area where they would not attract too much attention. Another couple, Jesse Wescott and Purisima Boranday, also received a "reluctant yes" due to their housing situation. Ch. Luetngen wrote that there was a "reasonable chance" for Wescott and Brandy if they were to reside where "the racial problem will not be too great to face."³⁴⁰ These considerations reveal that commanding officers were not only concerned with abiding by US law, but they thought about how an interracial couple might create conflict within white neighborhoods across the country.

US military officials were acutely aware of the fact that granting soldiers "permission to marry" would play a crucial part in determining who would be eligible to take advantage of the War Brides Act and immigrate to the US. Based on the correspondence of US Army officers, a common assumption was that Filipinas were primarily motivated to marry due to this factor. The real possibility of migration therefore made US military officers concerned about where couples were planning to live, and if they would be able to "readjust" well to life in the US or the Philippines.³⁴¹ They often mentioned in evaluation letters the extent to which they believed the couple could "readjust" to new living arrangements and places. US military officers played the role of

³³⁹ Ch. Capt. Edward M. Luetngen, Headquarters Camp Rizal, to Commanding General of Philcom, February 4, 1949, RG 554, Entry A1 1464, Box 342, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁴⁰ Ch. Capt. Edward M. Luetngen, Headquarters Camp Rizal, to Commanding General Philrycom, May 3, 1948, RG 554 Entry A1 1457 Box 87, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁴¹ See, for example, Chaplain Capt. Edward M. Luetngen, Headquarters Camp Rizal, to Commanding General Philcom, February 4, 1949, RG 554, Entry A1 1464, Box 342; Chaplain Earnest L. Harrison to headquarters 97th Engineer General Service Battalion, to Commanding General Philrycom, December 18, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78; Post Chaplain Silas L. Weems, Headquarters Ft. W McKinley Area Command, to Commanding General, Philrycom, April 10, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 85.

immigration officials, determining who was fit for US citizenship through unofficial strategies that maintained anti-miscegenation and whiteness.

Testing their Love and Commitment

In the late 1940s, when young servicemen stationed in the Philippines decided to marry, some believed that they had found “love at first glance.” Others realized that they were in love only after they had already left. A few soldiers sent personal letters to their commanding officers alongside their marriage applications explaining their situation. Pfc. Joseph Green, a Black soldier from Bolingbroke, GA, left his pregnant girlfriend Cirira Mumalang behind in the Philippines after promising to marry her. He later regretted this decision and pleaded to be transferred back to the Philippines:

I can't rest contented knowing the condition of the girl I left Behind, I love her and I want to [do] the thing that is right towards her and what I think will be pleasing in the eye sight of God. So I ask you to please help me to get married so I can live in peace, at the present I seem to be going around in Circles.³⁴²

Green expressed that he was in an unstable emotional state. He felt he was “going around in Circles” because of the anxiety about not being able to marry his fiancé and do the “right” thing by taking care of his family. He realized that he loved her only after it was too late.

Yet, the decisions that commanding officers and chaplains made about GI-Filipina couples were not based on the feelings that they may have had for one another. Emotions were among the least significant factors from the perspective of military officers evaluating prospective marriages. In this postwar context, a couple was assessed based on the marriage's potential impact on American society and the military institution. Although at times commanding officers expressed in their evaluations that couple's felt sincere “affection” and “love” for one another, more important for

³⁴² Cpl. Joseph Green to Chap. James L. Bowser, April 7, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 81, NARA College Park, MD.

obtaining military approval was their persistence and commitment to the application process. In fact, commanding officers noted when certain couples had proven that they were truly sincere in their desires to marry.³⁴³

In some cases, sacrifices made by a US serviceman indicated his dedication. James P. Wilson, a 20-year old black soldier from Salem, New Jersey, applied to marry Martha Beredo, a 17-year old Filipina of Batangas, Philippines. The young girl was pregnant, and the couple had been living together for seven months. The first and main reason for Ch. Regaspi's approval of their application had to do with the serviceman's sacrifice. According to Regaspi, "The prospective husband has proved to be with sincere devotion and deep sense of responsibility to his prospective wife by maintaining her adequately."³⁴⁴ The fact that he was already living with her and providing for her financially demonstrated the couple's commitment from the perspective of the officer.

The most important test of devotion was the willingness to put up with the harsh approval process. In the application of white soldier John D. Mercer and Liwayway M. Eustaquio, Ch. Baniak wrote:

In view of discouraging attitude of US Army in regard to overseas marriages of GI's, to which we heartily subscribe, there was every effort made to make both parties concerned realize the difficulties involved in the marriage itself, as also the processing of the Marriage Approval Application. Despite discouragings, both parties, nevertheless, remain steadfast in their determination to win Army approval.³⁴⁵

Chaplain Baniak wrote this evaluation after the couple's second interview, months after they had originally applied. He emphasized that his approval was based on the soldier's determination after having faced rejections from two other officers. Enlisted men of lower rank such as Mercer could

³⁴³ Capt. Stephen M. Snopkowski, Headquarters Camp Rizal, to the Commanding General of Philrycom, June 26, 1948, RG 554 Entry A1 1457, Box 77, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁴⁴ Ch. 1st Lt. Teodoro T. Regaspi, Camp Angeles, to Commanding General, Philrycom, December 2, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 87, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁴⁵ Ch. Capt. Walter F. Baniak, Hq & Hq Det Co, to Commanding General, Philrycom, October 13, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 85, NARA College Park, MD.

not avail of married living quarters, which was another means to test whether or not a soldier would drop out of the marriage process due to the fact that he would only be able to see his wife sparingly.³⁴⁶ Despite being told that he could not obtain married housing, as well as many discouraging conversations with officers, Mercer and Eustaquio remained determined to marry. Ch. Baniak respected this determination and saw as indicative of a sincere desire compared to those soldiers who made the decision to marry just because "it's cheaper [than prostitution]" or they just want to "get it regular."³⁴⁷

In addition to persistence in the face of obstacles, commanding officers considered the extent of family support, particularly in the US. If the soldier's family in the US appeared to be accepting of their son's Filipina wife, this was another sign that the marriage might last. Ch. Drake wrote in favor of Sgt. Homer Carter's marriage stating that he had received "parental acquiescence in marital intentions of the applicants."³⁴⁸ Referencing the letter of the groom's mother, Drake's second reason for approval hinged on the groom's "long range preparation" for marriage. Family acceptance distinguished interracial marriage engagements from frivolous or hasty proposals born out of prostitution.

The strategy that required US servicemen to prove their commitment through a number of bureaucratic obstacles gave commanding officers and chaplains power over interracial marriages. These couples, many of whom experienced discouragement from their family members and communities, needed to remain committed to challenging military authorities in order to see their marriages through. Yet stating that they were "in love" was not enough. Couples had to work to

³⁴⁶ Ch. Col. Wilson B. D. E Chant, Exec. Chaplain Section, to AGP (Enlisted Branch), October 16, 1947, RG 554 Entry A1 1457 Box 85, NARA College Park, MD. See also Major Kenneth J. White, Asst. Adj. General, to Commanding Officer, Quartermaster Service Philippines, Oct 17, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 85, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁴⁷ See discussion about the perceived motivations of servicemen to get married. Col. Hubbard, Com Nav Phil, "Study Conference Relating to Conduct of US Naval Personnel," October 19, 1964, General Correspondence 1945-1959, No. 1737377, Box 1-3, NARA San Francisco, CA, 26.

³⁴⁸ Ch. Capt. Dayton D. Drake, Headquarters Camp Angeles, to Commanding General, Philippines-Ryukyus Command, February 27, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78, NARA College Park, MD.

show that they were truly committed by enduring a difficult and emotional process that judged the respectability and assimilability of the Filipina.

“GI Babies”: the Problem of the American Mestizo

The difficulty in obtaining permission to marry remained for white-Filipina couples even in cases involving children. In one case, a white soldier named Robert Lewis applied for permission from the US Army to marry his Filipina fiancé, Emilia Mernelo.³⁴⁹ In their application, the couple noted that Mernelo was pregnant with Lewis’s child. The officer evaluating their application, Maj. Kenneth White, denied their request stating that “the contemplated marriage is not considered in the best interest of the service.” White did not further explain what was meant by this statement. In closing his letter, White acknowledged that Mernelo was pregnant and recommended that her condition be “reported to the American Guardian Association.” The American Guardian Association (AGA) was a non-profit created during the US colonial period to care for mixed-race children left behind by American servicemen in the Philippines. White’s recommendation encouraged the soldier to neglect his responsibility and identity as a father. It also maintained historical patterns established since US colonization that normalized the abandonment of mixed-race children by white US servicemen.³⁵⁰

At times the reasons commanding officers provided for rejecting an application included vague statements such as “not in the best interest of the service” but other times they gave more specific reasons. In one case, a sailor named Richard Boswell applied to marry a Filipina who was four years older than him. Despite the fact that she was pregnant with his child, their request was

³⁴⁹ Maj. Kenneth J. White to Commanding Officer, Engineer Service, Philippines, Sept 17, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 82, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁵⁰ On colonialism and mixed-race “illegitimate” children in Philippine literature, see Caroline Hau, *Querida: An Anthology* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, 2013).

denied with the primary reason being a discrepancy in ages.³⁵¹ In cases of same-race couples, age discrepancies are often overlooked suggesting that race played a major role against this couple. In another case, the fact that the prospective bride, a Filipina named Elisa Ramos, had two children of a previous relationship was the primary reason for rejecting the marriage request. The disapproval letter went on to state that pregnancy “cannot be accepted as an excuse” for marriage under these circumstances.³⁵² In cases involving white servicemen, marriage requests were rejected despite the fact that children were involved.

Black and Latino servicemen were treated differently when pregnancy was a reason listed for marriage on their applications. For example, with regard to the application of a Black soldier named Wurthener James and his fiancé Dorothy Ray, Ch. Koch wrote that he recommended approval based upon: “a. Parental consent, b. Pregnancy of prospective bride, and c. Consent to an allotment.”³⁵³ The fact of pregnancy in this case was listed as the second reason. In the case of Johnnie Carter, Ch. Drake wrote that “The advanced stage of pregnancy in this case (seven months) is the principal circumstance around which approval or disapproval revolves.”³⁵⁴ Drake also argued for another serviceman named Clay Cunningham claiming that the “pregnant condition of the bride” was an “extenuating circumstance.”³⁵⁵ Still others argued that marriage in the case of pregnancy for Black soldiers would “improve” the soldier’s productivity. For the marriage of James Harvey, Capt. Wright

³⁵¹ F.F. Gill, Commanding Officer Sangley Point US Naval Station, to Commander US Naval Forces, January 3, 1955, RG 313 Box 5, NARA San Francisco.

³⁵² F.F. Gill, Commanding Officer Sangley Point US Naval Station, to Commander US Naval Forces, February 1, 1955, RG 313 Box 5, NARA San Francisco.

³⁵³ Ch. Col. Joseph R. Koch, Headquarters Philrycom, to AG-P January 26, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 81, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁵⁴ Ch. Capt. Dayton D. Drake, Headquarters Camp Angeles, to Commanding General, Philippine-Ryukyus Command, February 25, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁵⁵ Capt. Dayton D. Drake, Headquarters Camp Angeles, to Commanding General, Philippines-Ryukyus Command, March 5, 1948, RG 554 Entry A1 1457, Box 79, NARA College Park, MD.

wrote, “It is believed that the approval of the marriage of this couple would materially improve the morale of the subject soldier, and therefore, in effect, be in the best interests of the service.”³⁵⁶

In a few cases that involved Latino servicemen, pregnancy was also noted as a contributing factor to justify expediting the processing of a marriage request. Rudolph Frausto, a Mexican American soldier from New Mexico, applied to marry Juana Anita Mok of Santa Cruz, Manila. Their families were “anxious that they marry” according to Chaplain Finnegan who submitted a request for officers to waive the 60-day waiting period typically assigned to interracial marriages. The main reason that Finnegan cited was that the families were in approval of the marriage, and the second reason was “for the legitimization of the offspring” because the couple was already living together and Mok was pregnant.³⁵⁷ While there were multiple reasons in this case, including the domestic arrangement and approval of the family, the factor of pregnancy was still expressed by Finnegan as an additional reason contributing to approval.

Another soldier, Antonio Gomez of New York city, also benefitted from listing pregnancy in his application to marry Norita Martinez of Cebu. In his evaluation letter, Ch. Koch recommended approval based on the same two reasons as in Frausto’s evaluation: family approval and pregnancy. In Gomez’s application, however, pregnancy was cited as the primary reason and parental consent the secondary reason.³⁵⁸ Officers were clearly inconsistent about the extent to which pregnancy was significant, though it more often than not played a role in the applications of servicemen of color in comparison to white servicemen.

Marriage was not the only means that fathers could have remained in their children’s lives. These fathers could have recognized and supported their children despite being denied marriage.

³⁵⁶ Capt. Thomas H. Wright, 9th Ind., to Commanding Officer, 1st En, 24th Inf. Reg., June 23, 1948, RG 554 Entry A1 1464, Box 347, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁵⁷ Ch. Capt. Arthur M. Finnegan to Commanding General, Philrycom, April 19, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 80, NARA College Park, MD.

³⁵⁸ Ch. Col. Joseph R. Koch to AG-P, March 22, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457 Box 80, NARA College Park, MD.

Nonetheless, the bureaucratic process provides a window into understanding the context in which fathers who knew they had children made decisions about their futures. Marriage processing brings out the perspective of officers towards intimacies that were considered illegitimate, and the immense pressure that they placed on troops to avoid having families abroad. Despite the support provided to Black and Latino servicemen who wished to marry due to pregnancy, by and large the overall message was that interracial relationships were not to be encouraged. For white servicemen the pressure was even greater. The belief that children of US servicemen were born out of illicit intimacies and therefore did not belong to their parents corresponded with the rate at which these children were left behind. According to statistics gathered after the war from the Philippine Red Cross, there were roughly 6,000 abandoned “GI babies.”³⁵⁹ Of these 6,000, 75% were fathered by white servicemen and 25% by servicemen of color.³⁶⁰

The American public became aware of the “problem” of GI babies after the war due to press coverage that promoted international adoptions and donations to save “America’s foreign children.” One article in the *Oakland Tribune*, for example, published a Chicago Daily News Foreign Service advertisement that urged Americans to donate to the American Guardian Association in the Philippines. The article discussed the potential for these children to become “leaders of lawless elements or leaders among our best citizens.” The colonial discourse of supporting American values came through in these advertisements. The ad also stereotypically claimed that the mothers of GI children were unable to care, feed, and educate their children. In another ad, Filipina mothers were argued to be irresponsible for not registering their children with the AGA. The article explained that there were an estimated 8,000 GI babies in the Philippines, however, this was “only a fraction of the true number” as mothers refused to cooperate with the AGA. The article went on to claim that

³⁵⁹ Kerima Polotan, “GI Babies,” *This Week*, February 15, 1948, 7.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

various “individuals and institutions” had “from time to time” attempted to sponsor GI children, however, the mothers refused to give up their children for adoption. US discourses reinforced the idea that Amerasians were America’s children who did not belong with Filipina mothers. Instead, they needed to be saved by American kindness and benevolence.

This discourse also applied to other Amerasian children outside of the Philippines. After World War II, writer Pearl S. Buck founded an international non-profit organization to care for the children of US military personnel abroad, focusing particularly on Asia and the Pacific. Although her push for aid as well as international adoptions became more well-known at the height of the Cold War in the 1970s, her work began after World War II. Buck popularized the term “Amerasian,” which blended “American” and “Asian,” to refer to these mixed-race children. The term then became stigmatized as it was associated with abandonment and prostitution. As other scholars have argued, the work of non-profits such as Pearl S. Buck International perpetuated the colonial amnesia of US imperialism in Asia and the Pacific. The promotion of transracial adoptions reinforced a Cold War narrative of racial inclusive in order to support American democracy. Yet, this narrative neglected to address the violence that created the conditions of Amerasian abandonment. Karen Dubinsky described this phenomenon, “First you destroy our country, then you rescue our children.”³⁶¹

The belief that the mixed-race children of US military personnel did not belong with their parents, especially their mothers, was also widespread in the Philippines. A popular Filipina writer named Kerima Polotan wrote an article in the Manila periodical *This Week* arguing that the Philippine government was “responsible” for caring for the children as she claimed the mothers were poor women “from the provinces” who came from “menial” backgrounds and were

³⁶¹ Setsu Shigematsu and Keith L. Camacho, *Militarized Currents Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 293.

“irresponsible” caretakers. Moreover, Polotan sarcastically stated, “Until such a time when a conscience-stricken father somewhere in the United States acknowledges his child and returns to marry the mother, the baby, born of a Filipino mother and residing in this country, remains a Filipino³⁶².” Polotan attributed this childhood neglect to both parents, whom she considered to be unconscionable and reckless. Moreover, her argument rested on the belief that “less than 1 percent” of the abandoned children were “legitimate” and that the vast majority were undernourished and “on the verge of starvation.”

Another postwar editorial in the *Philippine Free Press* by Jamie Molano of Lingayen, Pangasinan described the children of US military personnel as “another GI left-over.”³⁶³ In his editorial discussing the ways that the country had been affected, both good and bad, by the US military, Molano brought up the issue of mixed-race children. He commented, “the child next door is asking for a cookie. He is a blue-eyed, fair-skinned little thing. Another GI left-over.” Through his flippant tone, Molano associated mixed-race children with the US military, abandonment, and poverty after the war. These children, according to Molano, were left behind just like other unwanted items brought over by the US military: the jeepney, airplane metal, steel fences, and even old US Army books that filled local libraries. Yet some items, such as GI hand grenades, continued to harm Filipinos after the war.

Postwar publications discussing the problem of mixed-race GI children pointed to the changing status of mestizos in Philippine society. As historian Nicholas Molnar argues, US colonial administrators viewed the American mestizo in Philippine society as future leaders of the nation who had the potential to further the American colonial project. While mixed-race people in the US in the early twentieth century were understood as threatening, US colonial administrators

³⁶² Kerima Polotan, “GI Babies,” *This Week*, February 15, 1948, 7.

³⁶³ Jamie N. Molano, “GI Left Overs,” *Philippine Free Press*, May 3, 1952, 18.

acknowledged constructions of race in the Philippines as much more fluid as a result of Spanish colonization. As Vicente Rafael argues, unlike in Latin America, “*mestizness* in the Philippines has implied, at least since the nineteenth century, a certain proximity to the sources of colonial power. To occupy the position of *mestizo/a* is to invoke the legacy of the *ilustrados*.”³⁶⁴ The *ilustrados* were a generation of mixed-race, Spanish-speaking, and highly educated Philippine elites. While recognizing the status of *mestizo-ness* in Philippine society, the US colonial strategy took advantage of this association in order to promote imperial interests.

While Molnar argues that the meaning of “*mestizo*” disappeared by the postwar period because Philippine nationalism became more “racially inclusive,” the term still applied to “GI babies.” In Polotan’s editorial, for example, she used the term “GI babies” interchangeably with “*mestizo*.” Instead of leaders of the nation, mixed-race Filipinos after the war became associated with the US military, prostitution, and immorality. Even while postwar Philippine society claimed *mestizos* were “Filipino” rather than outsiders to the nation, mixed-race children remained stigmatized because of their illicit heritage. Race may partially explain this difference, as the majority of left behind mixed-race children were Black. Filipino attitudes towards darker complexions contributed to their perception of Amerasians as Filipino, but different.

In many cases, the children of US servicemen attempted to distance themselves from their roots, especially when they entered the public eye. For example, one famous Filipina changed her name from Alice Lake to Anita Linda in order to invoke Spanish *mestizness*. Linda was the daughter of a white US soldier named James Lake who served in the Philippines during World War II. Left behind after the war, Linda and her family were living in poverty until she was “discovered” for her “*mestiza*” beauty and recruited for a career in film.³⁶⁵ Another well-known Filipina film

³⁶⁴ Vicente L. Rafael, *White Love: And Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 165.

³⁶⁵ Newspaper clippings from Mowelfund Film Institute Library: Anita Linda, *Tiempo*, January 26, 2012 and *Entertainment of Phil Daily Inquirer*, September 12, 2005, A2-6.

actress, Hilda Koronel, also was discovered for her mestiza looks.³⁶⁶ The daughter of a white US soldier and a Filipina mother, Koronel was born with the name Susan Reid in Angeles, Pampanga. To disassociate herself from her American origins, Koronel also hispanized her name. Many mixed-race *white* Filipinos of American ancestry after the war entered showbusiness because of the value of light skin in Philippine society.³⁶⁷ In claiming Spanish rather than American heritage, these Amerasian women allowed Filipino audiences to imagine them not as children of “prostitutes” but mestiza leaders of the nation.

Pushing the Legal Limits: the Marriage Conference of 1964

The US military’s approach to GI marriages and children changed little over the next few decades. In 1964, the US Army and Navy held a joint “Marriage Conference” in Subic Bay to address the problems associated with GI marriages. During this meeting, commanding officers and chaplains shared their best strategies for reducing the number of marriage applicants.³⁶⁸ They clarified military policy for one another and offered solutions to common problems in units across the Philippines. This conference revealed the ways that commanding officers and chaplains continued to deliberately abuse their authority into the 1960s through unofficial strategies. The conference’s transcript shows debate around specific tactics but demonstrates that the majority were in agreement about the main objective to limit the number of interracial couples. These officials understood that in regulating marriage they at times pushed the limits of their power, yet they justified their methods with the notion that they were protecting the nation, and naive men, from the multiple threats of illicit Filipinas.

³⁶⁶ Newspaper clipping from Mowelfund Film Institute Library: “Entertainment,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, September 12, 2005, A2-6.

³⁶⁷ Vicente Rafael, *White Love*, 165.

³⁶⁸ Com Nav Phil, “Study Conference Relating to Conduct of US Naval Personnel,” October 19, 1964, General Correspondence 1945-1959, No. 1737377, Box 1-3, NARA San Francisco, CA.

One US Navy official, Col. Hume, told a story to illustrate the problems they were discussing at the conference. In this story, a sailor requested an extension to stay in the Philippines because he claimed that it would be “good for the Navy.” Four officers approved of this request before the case landed on Hume’s desk. Hume felt that there was something suspect about “a youngster who is 20 years old” to want to remain in the Philippines, so he investigated the case further. When he dug deeper, he found that the sailor had also just requested permission to marry a Filipina who was pregnant with his child. For Hume, this case exemplified the problem of US military officers, who he felt were failing to protect their own men from destroying their lives.

Hume went on to explain why this story was so troubling. After spending some time counseling the sailor, Hume found out that the sailor’s parents abandoned him when he was just five years old and that he was put into foster care. Hume argued that due to the “repetition compulsion” that was “characteristic of human behavior” there was no way that this sailor could possibly take care of a family. He explained, “the prospects of his developing a broken home in his efforts of marriage are about 9 out of 10” but this would be the case if the prospective bride were a white American. Because they planned to move to the South “where a Filipino is likely to be subjected to unthoughtful of kinds of discrimination and problems toward him and his wife and children,” the relationship would inevitably fail.³⁶⁹ For Hume, this was a classic situation of an illicit woman—who in this case already had two “illegitimate children”—taking advantage of a naïve sailor for his money and US citizenship. Hume claimed that after 10 minutes of meeting the sailor, he knew the sailor was “decent” because he had no VD record. He argued that this “youngster” from a “broken home” must have felt “morally obligated” to marry the woman because she was pregnant. Hume felt that commanding officers were failing to protect vulnerable enlisted men who were looking in the wrong places for love.

³⁶⁹ Ibid, 21.

In addition to his paternalistic desire to save this sailor, Hume emphasized the expense that these mistakes were creating for the US military. As much as these marriages were perceived to be immoral, they were also costly. Hume explained, “And he’s going to adopt them [the Amerasian children], they will become dependents as far as the military is concerned, people who need to be moved, people who need to be taken care of as far as illness is concerned.” Moreover, other officers listening to Hume’s story commented that they had problems with “non-support claims” when servicemen eventually abandoned their wives and children. It was unfortunately the military’s responsibility, they argued, to respond to these growing requests for financial support.

Some felt that the legal system was not on their side. Col. Hubbard added that many of these Filipinas, who he insinuated were prostitutes, attempted to trap US servicemen using “civil breach of promise or criminal simple seduction suits.” These cases, he argued, generated “many illegal, moral problems” as young girls under the age of 18 attempted to sue sailors for taking their virginity, claiming that the men had promised to marry them. Philippine law protected women’s virtue from “simple seduction” by allowing her family to sue in cases where a man broke his promise of marriage after taking the woman’s virginity.³⁷⁰ Stating that these young women were perpetrators and not victims, Col. Hubbard argued that lawsuits took time and money from US military personnel. “Put a legal hold on a man and there we are,” he lamented.³⁷¹

Another problem was that some Filipino lawyers purportedly abused their power. Col. Hubbard mentioned that there was one attorney in Olongapo signing affidavits for multiple women—they confiscated 22 thus far—to provide walking papers to female vagrants. Hubbard claimed that these affidavits were fraudulent, and that the women did not actually have any source

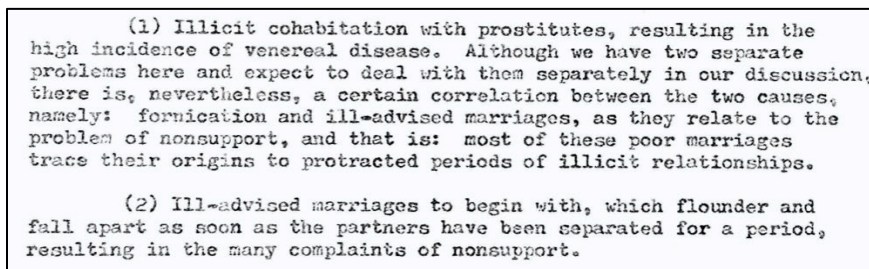
³⁷⁰ The protection of women’s virtue through simple seduction law was a means to secure a family’s property, wealth, and reputation. Simple seduction is defined as “*carnal knowledge* of a woman who is single or a widow of good reputation, who is over 12 but under 18 years of age, committed by means of *deceit*, such as a promise of *marriage*. Art. 338, RPC.” Ismael G. Khan, *Everybody’s Dictionary of Philippine Law* (Quezon City, Philippines: C & E Pub., 2007).

³⁷¹ *Ibid*, 9.

of income. Instead, they were using them to find servicemen and trap them into marriage through illicit sex. Hubbard continued to insist that Filipinas on the street went to great lengths to develop intimacies with enlisted men in order to take advantage of them.

Yet, not all officers present at this conference were in agreement about the threat that Filipinas posed. Lt. Butts chimed into the discussion to state that there was too much attention to whether or not the woman was a prostitute. He argued, “our primary mission is counterintelligence. We thus have vested counterintelligence interest in an alien who is in a position to enter the United States.” He explained that despite the suspicion that this was happening they had not been able to *prove* that Filipinas were a security risk. This was because “the standard investigation into a girl’s background investigation is, has she been a bar girl?”³⁷² This approach, he argued, focused on the issues of morality and race while missing what he thought was the bigger threat.

As this discussion shows, Filipinas were imagined to pose multiple kinds of threats to the US military, enlisted men, and the nation. Nonetheless, the majority of officials continued to argue that focusing on prostitution was the best strategy to prevent marriages. Commanding officers clearly viewed marriage and prostitution as connected issues. Commander Piphio outlined the main two problems they were to address at the beginning of the conference, making this connection clear (see Figure 10).



(1) Illicit cohabitation with prostitutes, resulting in the high incidence of venereal disease. Although we have two separate problems here and expect to deal with them separately in our discussion, there is, nevertheless, a certain correlation between the two causes, namely: fornication and ill-advised marriages, as they relate to the problem of nonsupport, and that is: most of these poor marriages trace their origins to protracted periods of illicit relationships.

(2) Ill-advised marriages to begin with, which flounder and fall apart as soon as the partners have been separated for a period, resulting in the many complaints of nonsupport.

Figure 10: List of problems to be discussed at 1964 Marriage Conference

³⁷² Ibid, 19.

Commander Piphoo linked prostitution and marriage by focusing on immorality and their costs to the institution. Venereal disease required time and money in medical wards to recover, and also took away from the morale of enlisted men. Marriages led to servicemen lawsuits and non-support claims, which also drained military time and resources. Both forms of intimacy were considered illicit because, Piphoo argued, most originated in prostitution.

Yet, the conversation made clear that the US military's definition of "prostitution" differed greatly from how the state defined it. Lt. Edwards explained:

... from the Embassy point of view, the State Department point of view, to be a prostitute, for example, is not just what we call being a prostitute. It is a regular offering of herself for cohabitation or intercourse for hire with a number of people over a continuing period. It's not just a girl who is shacking up with a couple of guys off and on and getting someone's money...I think it's a rare case, and I've never seen one, where a serviceman is marrying a girl who has been turned down for an alien spouse visa.

Lt. Edwards revealed that what the US military referred to as prostitution was not actually prostitution in the traditional or legal sense. In most cases, the intimacies that occurred between servicemen and women who worked in bars, clubs, and restaurants near US military bases were not clearly or strictly a transaction of sex and money. Edwards alluded to the economic dependence of Filipinas on servicemen, but clearly distinguished the kinds of intimacies that they pursued to obtain financial security from what is traditionally understood as prostitution.

Edwards raised this issue in the context of strategizing to prevent marriages. He admitted that he had been manipulating enlisted men in his unit into dropping out of the marriage request process by exploiting this key difference in how military prostitution is understood. He claimed that most enlisted men did not know how prostitution was defined legally, and that this ignorance could be the key to preventing marriage. Edwards would tell his men that they would not be able to obtain an alien spouse visa due to the sexual immorality of their fiancés. Making troops believe that their fiancés were prostitutes persuaded men that they were wasting their time in applying for marriage.

Those listening to Edwards's strategy agreed, and also concurred that it was best to keep enlisted men ignorant of this distinction. The more they believed that their Filipina lovers were prostitutes for having a history of sleeping around meant that they would fear her not passing US Embassy standards for entry into the US. The group agreed to use the threat of shame to dissuade their men from marrying and migrating to the US.

One specific tactic that exploited this shame was called the "barracks ridicule." This was a form of group pressure where commanding officers deliberately spread knowledge of a serviceman's intention to marry, or the fact that his girlfriend was pregnant, with his peers. The idea was that once others knew of the serviceman's *romantic* engagements in the Philippines, they would tease him, and the social pressure would eventually cause him to change his mind about marriage.

Col. Hubbard, explained:

If you are careful in developing this [barracks ridicule] it can happen and we have had many of them - not many, but relatively many - drop out because of the ridicule. Once his barracks mates know he has put in the paper to become a barrio individual they ridicule him on the basis of 'Why do you need to do that' or 'I know her' or 'I've seen her out with this sailor and that sailor.' All these things add up to the man [who] will probably not take the step [to marry her] because of the ridicule he gets from the people he lives with.³⁷³

Col. Hubbard encouraged other officers to "develop" the barracks ridicule in their own units because of its effectiveness in pressuring servicemen to quit the marriage application process.

Encouraging his peers to make comments like "I know her," implying that his girl slept around with many other servicemen, associated his fiancé with military prostitution. Hubbard bragged about the fact that this particular strategy had a positive impact on the number of men dropping out of the marriage process.³⁷⁴

If the barracks ridicule failed, chaplains recommended using counseling to shame enlisted men. Chaplains used marriage counseling to indirectly insult prospective brides. Maj. Taylor stated

³⁷³ Ibid, 27.

³⁷⁴ Ibid, 6.

that rather than directly tell his men to leave their fiancés, he would simply make the prospective bride look undesirable. For example, he would ask questions in marriage counseling such as “where do you work?” or “have you ever worked at a bar?” Then the questions would get more intrusive such as “Are you registered at the local hygiene clinic?” This questioning aimed to reveal whether the woman’s previous employment associated her with prostitution, or if she had a venereal disease or multiple sexual partners in the past. As Maj. Taylor noted about this strategy, hearing such shameful information out loud was sometimes successful in making servicemen change their plans to marry.³⁷⁵

Lt. Hume also shared the opinion that counseling needed to be more personalized. Rather than tell soldiers what to do, officers needed to get to know troops better. He suggested that officers who spent the time to truly get to know their men, listening to them and developing trust, were more successful in persuading them not to marry. Officers present at the conference agreed with Lt. Hume’s point, and concluded that the length of time spent in counseling as well as taking a more personal approach in general mattered. They agreed that ideally one would spend 1.5-2 hours in each session and hold multiple sessions if necessary.

Discouraging illicit intimacies with Filipinas and their own children involved investing in a closer bond with servicemen. And officers reasoned that the extra investment was worth it. Lt. Hume estimated that 1 hour of counseling was worth \$25. He argued that this was cost-effective when compared to spending \$160 on four days of hospital care for the delivery of each child, \$5 a month on medical care for each child, and the cost for the whole family to go to the United States. A major part of the decision in determining if servicemen were fit for marriage had to do with what was most efficient, productive, and economical for the institution. At times, arguments about productivity and efficiency overshadowed and obscured the racial bias and misogyny underlying the decision-making of these officers.

³⁷⁵ Ibid, 30.

At times, they expressed some sympathy for Amerasian children. Several officers brought up the fact that many abandoned children remained malnourished and impoverished. Yet these facts served as additional evidence in favor of preventing GI marriages. Lt. Hume questioned: “What was going to happen to the children” when the marriage eventually broke up?³⁷⁶ Lt. Hume’s point was that it was more practical to leave the children behind than to allow incapable servicemen to attempt to care for them. He added that problems stemming from the home would eventually get in the way with the serviceman’s productivity on the job, becoming a “significant liability.”

While officers acknowledged that they did not have the legal authority to deny marriage, they used the figure of the Filipina prostitute to manipulate enlisted men psychologically. In one case, a Puerto Rican soldier who was described as “lighter skinned than his prospective spouse” was being transferred out of the Philippines after having submitted his marriage request. According to his commanding officer, “He demanded his rights as a citizen. He knew in advance of our precedent in the past and by our own regulations that we have no legal right to refuse this service upon demand.”³⁷⁷ Another officer further explained, “And I was reminded once again by my inspector that you can’t refuse this service...you can insist upon it to the extent that you can insist, but after that you can’t refuse.”³⁷⁸ Knowing that they had no official power over marriage requests, officials worked hard to come up with other strategies. They were well aware that any kind of “waiting period” deliberately and arbitrarily imposed on marriage requests was prohibited, but many continued to practice this. Other strategies revolved around obscuring the requirements for the marriage request procedure to make it more difficult for men to apply.³⁷⁹ What was argued to be the

³⁷⁶ Ibid, 56.

³⁷⁷ Ibid, 41.

³⁷⁸ Ibid, 42.

³⁷⁹ Ibid, 27. Still others preemptively restricted “overnight” passes to try to limit “illicit cohabitation” and other situations where servicemen would be able to become intimate with Filipinas. Another strategy attempted to motivate men indirectly by controlling factors related his accommodations and rations. They threatened to revoke a serviceman’s comrats (meal stipend for married servicemen) if he decided to get married. Another threat included rejecting extensions to remain in the Philippines; this forced servicemen to decide if they still wanted to get married even though they would

most effective strategy overall, however, was the use of the racist stereotype of Filipinas as sexual deviants. The figure of the Filipina prostitute, whether or not officials believed her to be a genuine problem, served to deter marriages while also reinforcing the stereotype associated with women left behind.

Conclusion

The archive of GI-Filipina marriage requests reveals that unofficial practices and strategies empowered military officials to intervene in the lives of enlisted men and Filipinas even when they lacked the legal authority to do so. Military bureaucracy—the tedious paperwork and unclear policies and procedures—provided the conditions for racial bias and discrimination to thrive. Considering marriage application files from the 1940s and ‘50s as well as the 1964 marriage conference transcript, it is clear that officers saw themselves as playing a crucial role in managing the personal lives of servicemen under their ranks. These examples demonstrate the ways they consciously asserted their power to impact the number of interracial marriages. Moreover, it was often in quotidian encounters that officers created productive intimacies with servicemen—they initiated personal conversations, encouraged gossip, and tailored “counseling” sessions in ways that could pressure GIs to abandon Filipino families. These efforts drew soldier desires away from local women and children—intimacies that were associated with prostitution and immorality—towards commitments that were meant to uplift the individual and support the military community.

These practices and procedures relied on the figure of the Filipina prostitute, a woman who threatened servicemen, the military institution, and the nation with disease, immorality, and economic loss. Through these methods, US military officials directly influenced who ultimately married and became a War Bride or military wife. Filipina War Brides therefore do not just represent

be shipped to another country or back to the US.

those women who were engaged to US servicemen, but those whose relationships were able to overcome a long and discriminatory process. The biases of officers against interracial applicants contributed to the fact that the majority of Filipina War Brides married US citizens of Filipino descent, shaping Filipino American community development. While the visibility of Filipinas in the US after World War II appeared to represent the US government's commitment to racial inclusion and assimilation, the US military's actions of selective incorporation reveal continuity in maintaining white supremacy within US imperialism. These processes reaffirmed the imaginative geographies that settled the US with Filipinas believed to be assimilable, decent, and worthy at the expense of racializing those left behind as sexual threats belonging outside of the US nation.

PART TWO

Illicit Intimacies in Philippine Culture

Chapter 3

The Figure of the Filipina Prostitute: Gender and Philippine Nationalism

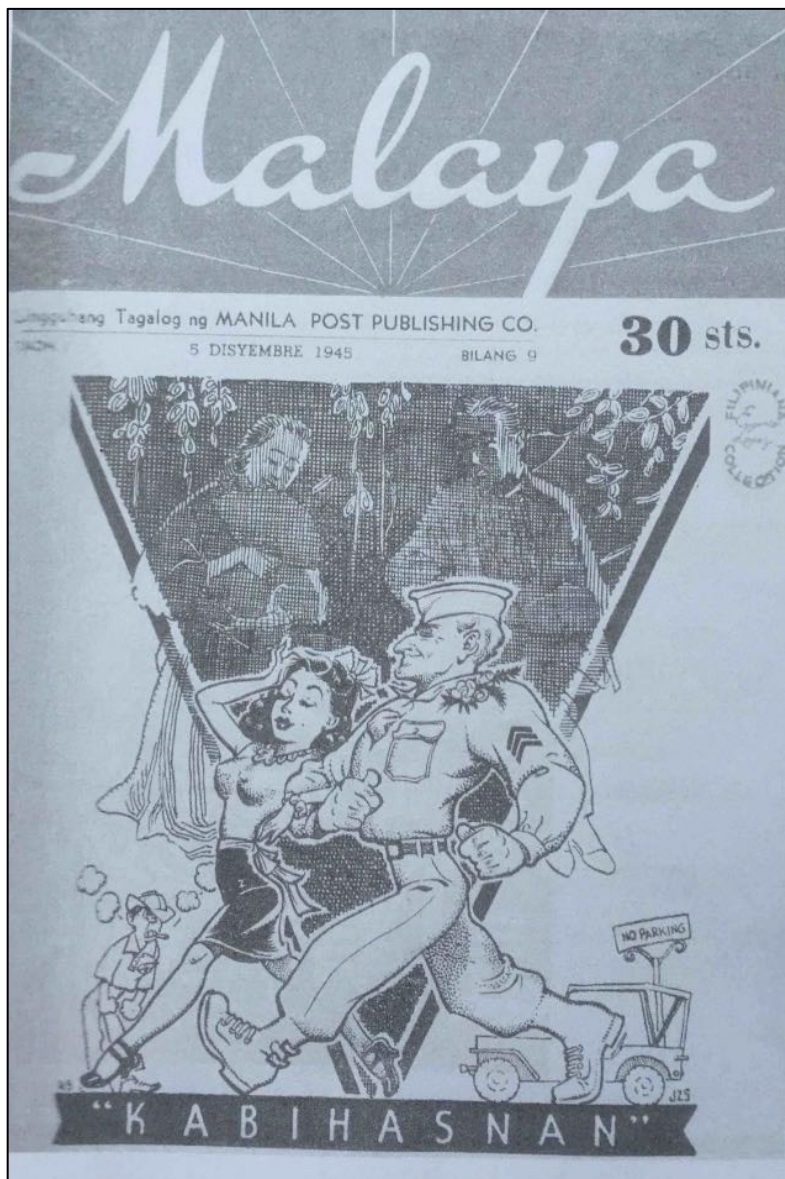


Figure 11: Cartoon of GI-Filipina couple from *Malaya* December 5, 1945. Lopez Memorial Museum Library, Pasig, Philippines

On the cover of the December 1945 issue of the Tagalog magazine *Malaya*, a cartoon image shows a Filipina walking down the street while linking arms with a white American G.I. (Figure 11). The woman defies Philippine gender norms and notions of respectability based on her dress, makeup, and confident attitude. She appears in tight-fitting American fashion with her nipples and contour of her body clearly visible. Her lips are painted dark. In Philippine culture, the kind of women who dare to wear red lipstick are stereotypically thought to be prostitutes.³⁸⁰ This image satirically communicated anxieties about women's changing roles in the period after World War II. While the Filipina and the GI have their eyes closed, unaware of what occurs around them, the Filipino man watches in anger as his ears burn at the sight of an American jeep parked illegally and the interracial pair marching in front of him. From the view of the Filipino man, the Filipina's illicit sexuality is linked to the white serviceman's disregard for Philippine authority. The caption *kabibansan* or "civilization," presented in quotes, referred sarcastically to the US imperial promise of independence and progress.³⁸¹ Here, the promise is fulfilled in the form of "loose" women and social disorder. While Americans claimed to bring civilization in their projects of colonial uplift, the presence of US servicemen instead disrupted Philippine culture by seducing Filipinas.

Malaya, like many other Philippine-language publications such as *Filipina*, *Limnag*, *Bagong Aran*, and *Light*, circulated anti-colonial nationalist ideas throughout the Philippines after World War II.³⁸² These newspapers and magazines flourished during the Japanese occupation, as the

³⁸⁰ The association between red lipstick and sex work exists in other cultures as well. See Rumi Sakamoto, "Pan-Pan Girls: Humiliating Liberation in Postwar Japanese Literature," *Portal Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 7, no. 2 (2010): 1–15.

³⁸¹ The caption "civilization" reflects a critique of the American promise of modernization, articulating an understanding of "modernity" that values gender and sexual conservatism. As Dipesh Chakrabarty argues, "most anticolonial nationalist modernizers experienced European colonial rule as actually skimping and not delivering on the promise of modernization." See Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Muddle of Modernity," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 3 (2011): 671.

³⁸² There is not much published on the history of Philippine periodicals during the Japanese occupation. However, these periodicals are archived under the title "Japanese Occupation Philippine Periodicals" in the Worcester Philippine History Collection, University of Michigan.

government promoted the production of Tagalog and other Philippine languages over English. This strategy of encouraging Philippine nationalism was meant to support anti-US sentiment and reinforce Japan's "Asia for Asians" imperial project. Despite the repression and brutality of the Japanese occupation, the strategy of promoting artistic and literary production in local languages provided the structures to argue for political freedom, which Philippine nationalists continued long after the war was over. These publications were produced by an educated class, providing an intellectual critique of both US imperialism and the Philippine state. Their arguments for an independent Philippines mirrored the US military's misogynist discourse of illicit intimacies to push for Philippine traditions over US modernity.

The *Malaya* image forwarded a gendered, nationalist critique of US imperialism by idealizing Philippine traditions. The image shows a downward-pointing triangle cloth resembling the Philippine flag. Behind the cloth under a tree is a couple dressed in Philippine national costumes who are drawn in a realist style. The woman wears a *terno* and the man a *barong tagalog*, traditional articles of clothing made of *piña* fibers specifically designed for the tropical heat of the Philippines. A form of *Filipiniana* [Filipino dress], the *terno* and *barong tagalog* have their origins in pre-colonial Philippine culture though they represent a national identity "constructed by adopting the Hispanic legacy."³⁸³ The woman in the *terno* coyly covers her face with an *abaniko* [handheld fan] and there is a noticeable gap between the man and woman in contrast to the interracial pair in the foreground who are linking arms. The dress, posture, and setting of the Filipino couple recall the modest tradition of Philippine dating culture stemming from Spanish Catholic influence. The juxtaposition of the two

³⁸³ Alicia Arrizon, as quoted in Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns, "Your Terno's Draggin': Fashioning Filipino American Performance," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 21, no. 2 (July 2011): 202. Another name for the *terno* is the *traje de mestiza*, and sometimes it is referred to as the "Maria Clara" dress. The Spanish origins of these names reflects the fact that the dress "emerg[ed] from the mestizo body" as it was traditionally worn by women of the upper class to symbolize wealth and status (202). As Burns argues, contemporary Filipino performance artists often utilize the *terno* in their art as a symbol of Spanish colonial influence in the performance of gender and class.

couples, who are even drawn in contrasting artistic styles, compares US colonial influence in Philippine society to that of the Spanish. In the distance and no longer clearly recognizable behind the cloth, the older Filipino couple are static and contained to history while the Americanized couple's forward motion symbolizes the country's move toward a dystopian future.

The *Malaya* cover exemplifies the motif of gender and anti-US imperialism in the writing of Philippine heteropatriarchal nationalists following World War II. Amid national debates about Philippine sovereignty, nationalist periodicals such as *Malaya* published short stories, poems, and advertised films that revealed anxieties about the country's future through depictions of GI-Filipina intimacies. In this chapter, I analyze these texts published in Tagalog and English for what they reveal about postwar Philippine politics and culture. I argue that the figure of the Filipina prostitute emerged in this context as a metaphor for the Philippine state's support of US neocolonialism. I call this figure *the Filipina prostitute* not because all characters literally sold sex in these texts, but because of the insinuation of prostitution within multiple tropes of gender and sexuality. At times, she appeared as a co-ed, a jeep girl, or, in Tagalog, *hanggang pier* [left at the pier]. Other times, she was a bar girl, an entertainer, or simply described as having multiple sexual encounters with US servicemen. Filipino heteropatriarchal nationalists defined her in relation to previous constructions of femininity such as the traditional woman portrayed in the background of the *Malaya* cover—figures who were also construed within and against imperial discourses.³⁸⁴ Moreover, this chapter reveals how figure of the prostitute took on different meanings on the ground outside of nationalist politics. I examine complaint letters written by Filipino civilians to US authorities which also reproduced the US military's language of deviant women. These letters attest to the proliferation of a powerful, moralizing discourse that individuals mobilized for political and personal objectives.

³⁸⁴ See Denise Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

As the *Malaya* cover reveals, the figure of the Filipina prostitute emerges in a triangulated relationship with the Filipino male character and the US serviceman. Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* provides a lens for interpreting the relations of power and desire represented in the erotic triangle of these postwar Filipino nationalists.³⁸⁵ Sedgwick discusses Rene Girard's theory of erotic rivalries, which insists that the bond between rivals is just as intense as the bond between either of the rivals and their shared object of desire. She builds on this concept, pointing to the gender asymmetry of erotic triangles. Sedgwick argues that there is a special relationship between men in triangles involving two men and a woman. Unlike in relations between women, which do not carry the same power in American society, the homosocial bond between men corresponds with the structures that maintain patriarchy. In the *Malaya* cover image, the Filipino man's anger at the sight of the interracial couple is fueled by rivalry with the US serviceman who racializes the Filipino as infantile and inferior. Notably, the Filipino man appears much smaller than the other figures. The desire to attain equality with, and the attention of, the US serviceman necessitates the Filipino male figure to uplift himself through the domination and objectification of the Filipina.³⁸⁶

This erotic triangle in postwar texts highlights tensions between Philippine nationalists, Filipino elites, and the US military. Filipino heteropatriarchal nationalists imagined their postcolonial struggle not only as a fight against US power, but also against other Filipinos who supported US-Philippine friendship and compromised their integrity for personal gain. They promoted their vision of national liberation, defined by tightened gender and sexual norms, by exposing the weakness of

³⁸⁵ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1985). Thank you to Victor Román Mendoza for pointing me to this text.

³⁸⁶ The erotic triangle in Philippine literature is not new in the postwar period. Vicente Rafael examines Philippine nationalism through "seditious plays" that challenged US power in the early 20th century. He argues that these dramas "triangulate social desire, casting nationhood in terms of the masculine struggle over a feminized object." See Vicente L. Rafael, *White Love: And Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 48.

the Philippine state. Despite their anti-colonial positioning, these nationalists reproduced the gendered language of the US military, unable to separate themselves entirely from US imperial discourse. This pattern attests to the strength of the relationship or homosocial rivalry between the imagined Filipino male figure and US imperialism. Such a contest for power from all sides played out on the bodies of women. As this chapter later demonstrates, the various tropes that argued for greater control over women's roles and sexuality resulted in material consequences in the everyday lives of women who lived and worked near US military establishments.

Scholarship on gender and nationalism in the Philippines has not fully addressed the ways that political changes in the US-Philippine relationship after World War II reshaped nationalist politics.³⁸⁷ Moreover, while the scholarly literature importantly problematizes the ways in which elite men imagined Filipina femininity, its gender analysis is limited to critiques of the nation as female. This chapter builds on this work by also examining constructions of masculinity in the making of Filipino nationalism. In doing so, I also highlight the experiences of ordinary Filipinas in order to underscore the relationship between heteropatriarchal discourse and material reality in the everyday lives of women. Following the call of feminist scholar Anne Lacsamana for a greater focus on materialism, the final two sections of this chapter examine how Filipinas who lived near Sangley Point, a former US naval base, mobilized and were subjected to the figure of the Filipina prostitute in ways that negatively affected their livelihood.³⁸⁸ In these sections, I draw focus to the on-the-ground experiences of Filipinas adding to the work of scholars who have challenged the treatment of women solely as objects of colonialist discourses.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷ For discussions of gender and nationalism in the Spanish and US colonial periods in the Philippines, see Raquel A. G Reyes, *Love, Passion and Patriotism: Sexuality and the Philippine Propaganda Movement, 1882-1892* (Singapore; Seattle: NUS Press, 2008) and Vicente L. Rafael, *White Love: And Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

³⁸⁸ See Anne E. Lacsamana, *Revolutionizing Feminism: The Philippine Women's Movement in the Age of Terror* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016).

³⁸⁹ See Denise Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012) and Genevieve A. Clutario, "The Appearance of Filipina Nationalism: Body, Nation, Empire" (PhD Dissertation,

I begin this chapter by analyzing the ways that the Filipina prostitute figure was constructed against idealized Filipina femininity in postwar Philippine nationalist discourse. Then, I examine Filipino masculinity through the trope of the *forgotten soldier*. I show how these gendered tropes about the nation became triangulated in postwar Philippine literature depicting GI-Filipina relationships. The last two sections explore how discourses of gender and nation operated on the ground in encounters between ordinary people and US authorities in Cavite, a city located outside of the Sangley Point US Naval Base. These final sections demonstrate the material impact of gender and nationalist discourses in the everyday experiences of Filipinas.

Sexual Deviancy and the Nation: Co-eds, Jeep girls, and “Money crazy women”

José Rizal, known as the Philippine national hero, published the novel *Noli Me Tangere* in 1887 sparking the country's revolution against Spanish colonialism.³⁹⁰ Notwithstanding Rizal's intentions, the novel's female protagonist, Maria Clara, came to represent the feminine ideal in Philippine culture many decades after its publication. Maria Clara is a beautiful mestiza [mixed-race woman] with a delicate and submissive disposition. She faints easily and becomes weak when she is without her love, Crisostomo Ibarra, the male protagonist who challenges Spanish authority. Maria Clara is also described as virtuous and chaste. She insists that she would prefer to die or else go to the convent if she cannot be with Ibarra. In the 1930s during the Philippine suffrage movement, anti-suffragists deployed the image of Maria Clara to reinforce gender norms and challenge the work of women's rights groups who advocated for the political and social inclusion of women in the

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014).

³⁹⁰ Jose Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere*, ed. Harold Augenbraum (New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 2006).

public sphere.³⁹¹ What made Maria Clara the feminine ideal for anti-suffragists was her submission to male authority, her virtue, and her sacrificial dedication to her love/the nation.³⁹²

Negative tropes of Filipina femininity emerged in the postwar period constructed against this idealized image of the Maria Clara. The figure of the Filipina prostitute linked various tropes of female sexual deviancy to describe individuals and behaviors that were considered immoral and also threatening to the nation. heteropatriarchal nationalists equated individual choices that harmed the nation with an imagined female sexual agency. In contrast to the Filipina prostitute figure, the Maria Clara represented *sacrifice*, or the act of ignoring one's own desires in the interest of national development. While female deviancy in this context was associated with the Philippine state, and Filipino elites who defended US benevolence, sacrifice involved working towards a national future without the presumed security of the US government and military.

An article in *Light*, a Philippine nationalist magazine created during the Japanese occupation, exemplifies this contrast between deviance and sacrifice³⁹³. The article mimics the style of Plato's *Symposium* wherein multiple characters speak on the theme of "love."³⁹⁴ Several Filipino characters (a "co-ed", a scholar, a newspaper man, and a lawyer) and one white American character ("another GI") give speeches providing their opinion on "the average GI." The first to speak is the co-ed, a woman who is described as the most "young" and "naive" of the group. The co-ed's speech is filled with flirtatious language and explicit sexual references. She opens by stating, "The most enthusiastic man on earth when it comes to having a good time is the GI." This opening suggests prior experience with US servicemen based on intimate encounters. The sexual innuendo becomes more

³⁹¹ See Denise Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

³⁹² The assertion of gendered norms in the context of the "women's question" emerged in other contexts of anti-colonial nationalist formations. See Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 51.

³⁹³ n.a., "A Symposium: The GI in the Philippines," *Light*, January 15, 1946, 16. The article does not disclose the author's name, perhaps to protect their privacy.

³⁹⁴ Benjamin Jowett, *The Symposium of Plato* (Wellesley, MA: Branden Books, 1996).

explicit a few lines later when she states, "...he is not selfish, however, where there is a question of pleasure, he sees to it that he gives (and how!!) as well as takes specially [sic] where the weaker sex is concerned." Through the use of the exclamation point, the author emphasizes the co-ed's enjoyment of the GI as a lover. Moreover, the co-ed references her inferior position to the GI as "the weaker sex." The theme of inferiority continues in her final statement, "A girl feels she can lean on [the GI] for support both physically and spiritually." Through the character of the co-ed, this version of *Symposium* represented dependency on the US as a form of female sexual deviancy.

The fact that the female lover of the GI is described as a "co-ed" is significant. The term originates in American English and is short for "co-educational." It first became used to describe institutions that accepted both male and female students. The term entered Filipino English through the US colonial education system, and because very few women attended college in general before the US colonial government established co-educational public universities, the large increase in female college graduates by the 1930s conflated the term with college-educated woman.³⁹⁵ As Denise Cruz argues, debates regarding Filipina womanhood in the 1930s lead to the figure of the *co-ed* as a symbol of the nation's future. Also called "modern girl," the co-ed represented a new era of independence and gender equality for some. For others she symbolized "the evils of American modernity and its threat to proper Filipino bourgeois heterosexual femininity."³⁹⁶ During the suffrage debates, Filipino bourgeois anti-suffragists pitted the co-ed against the idealized figure of Filipina femininity: the Maria Clara. They argued that through the presence of US servicemen, Americans taught young Filipinas values that were incompatible with Philippine society.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Denise Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 245.

³⁹⁶ Denise Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities*, 89.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

One such anti-suffragist, a Filipino author named Perfecto Laguio, wrote in 1931 that the co-ed was "a menace to [the Philippine] social structure just as dangerous as the Communists."³⁹⁸ He claimed that co-eds enticed men to sin and destroyed national values. Laguio's writing reveals that the figure of the co-ed was about more than just women becoming college educated and advocating for an equal place in Philippine society. Gender equality was one of many social, economic and political changes of this era that threatened Filipino bourgeois security and power. In 1930, labor and peasant leaders organized the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* [Communist Party of the Philippines], or PKP, electing its first Political Bureau and secretary general.³⁹⁹ In Manila's working class district of Plaza Moriones in November of 1930, 5,000 people gathered to attend the launch of the PKP.⁴⁰⁰ For Laguio, the growing influence of co-eds and "communists" were equivalent threats to the Philippine establishment.

Postwar nationalist representations of the co-ed, such as in *Light's* "Symposium," drew on previous iterations of the figure but placed it within the context of US imperialism. After the war, she became conflated with military prostitution. The article in *Light* alluded to this image through the speech of the final character, the lawyer:

The Filipinas have not read [the American GIs] rightly, not read rightly their duties towards them. There is no duty to cheapen themselves in accepting action now which they would not have accepted before the war...The Filipina's duty, if it may be considered one, is to show herself in the light that glowed before the war. There is no duty to associate with people with whom she would not then associate. There's no debt which requires so great a payment, which requires lessening in any way of one's self-respect.⁴⁰¹

Through the figure of the lawyer, *Light* argued that educated women made the mistake of "accepting action" from US servicemen out of a misplaced sense of obligation.⁴⁰² Filipinas purportedly felt

³⁹⁸ Perfecto E. Laguio, *Our Modern Woman: A National Problem*, (Manila, Philippines: Pilaw Book Supply 1931).

³⁹⁹ Vina A. Lanzona, *Amazons of the Huk Rebellion: Gender, Sex, and Revolution in the Philippines* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 28.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰¹ n.a., "A Symposium: The G.I. in the Philippines," *Light*, January 15, 1946, 16. Much like Plato is thought to use the character of Socrates as a mouthpiece, the author of this article appears to speak through the character of the lawyer.

⁴⁰² The concept of obligation and debt, or "Utang na loob," is a Filipino cultural value that anthropologists of the

indebted to US servicemen for “saving” them during the war, and were now unable to see the exploitation and immorality of their doing. Through a metaphor that conflated co-eds, deviant women, and prostitutes, the lawyer argued that the nation's relationship to US militarism was nothing more than a sexual transaction.

The lawyer goes on to make a more provocative statement about US servicemen: “The average GI is not a hero--the majority of GIs. He is not a superman.” This statement critiqued the way that Filipinos tended to exalt the average Joe after the war while forgetting their nationalist duties and antebellum aspirations of independence. While targeting sexually immoral Filipinas, the argument was more broadly applicable to others whom the author implied contributed to Philippine underdevelopment. In this story, GI-Filipina relationships are symbolic of the unequal relationship between the two nations. Deviant women represent those who feel gratitude despite glaring exploitation.

Light magazine participated in a broader national political debate regarding US imperialism that emerged after the war. The Philippine state projected the image of US postwar alliances and rehabilitation efforts as mutually beneficial and indicative of US-Philippine friendship. Others, including the PKP and some prominent Philippine intellectuals and politicians, became critical of US neocolonialism and the negative effects of US militarism.⁴⁰³ Issues such as the Bell Trade Act of 1946, which gave US citizens equal access to Philippine natural resources and allowed US goods free entry into the Philippines, came to light as examples of a neocolonial relationship that benefitted the

Philippines have long studied to understand local power dynamics and the relation between individuals, families, and communities. See, for example, Fenella Cannell, *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines* (Manila: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁴⁰³ As Andrew Yeo discusses, the anti-US bases movement has its roots in the nationalist criticism of American neocolonialism. The most vocal group was the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP), though there were many important politicians such as Claro Recto, Jose Laurel, Jose Diokno, and Lorenzo Tañada who challenged the “neocolonial mentality” of postwar Philippine society. Andrew Yeo, *Activists, Alliances, and Anti-US Base Protests* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 41.

US at the expense of Philippine economic development.⁴⁰⁴ Leaders of the postwar Philippine state compromised Philippine sovereignty by allowing the US to further exploit the country and expand military power over the broader Asia-Pacific region. In 1947, the Military Bases Agreement was established providing the US rights over Clark Air Base, Subic Naval Base, and a number of other facilities rent free for 99 years.⁴⁰⁵ In their stories, Philippine heteropatriarchal nationalists referenced these political and economic issues expressing anti-Americanism and anti-capitalism through critiques of women's sexuality and changing social roles.

In their critiques of the corrupting US influence, luxury and pleasure emerged as common themes. In the *Philippine Collegian*, a student newspaper of the University of the Philippines, several editorials written by male students explored the harm of uncontrolled physical temptations in Philippine society. Teodocio Lansang, a student author and communist activist, wrote an article advocating for "new values" in the Philippines.⁴⁰⁶ In the article, he reflected on bodily pleasures that for him the Americans represented:

But when the Americans came back, after almost four years of Japanese domination, which meant the whittling away of all human freedoms and the starvation of many, the population closed its eyes and drank deep into the sudden return of chocolate bars, chewing gum, American cigarettes, dehydrated goods, given graciously by blond giants.

Lansang associated American servicemen with junk food and items that were considered luxury or not essential to survival. He referred to the Japanese "domination" as a period of starvation, claiming that what the nation needed was not American chocolate bars and chewing gum but something more substantive. Moreover, the image of Filipinos with "closed eyes" suggested that the

⁴⁰⁴ Anne E. Lacsamana, *Revolutionizing Feminism: The Philippine Women's Movement in the Age of Terror* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 27.

⁴⁰⁵ For more on the history of US bases in the Philippines, see Roland Simbulan, *The Bases of Our Insecurity: A Study of the US Military Bases in the Philippines*, 2nd edition (Metro Manila, Philippines, 1985); and Roland Simbulan, ed., *Forging a Nationalist Foreign Policy: Essays on US Military Presence and the Challenges to Philippine Foreign Policy* (Quezon City, Philippines, 2009).

⁴⁰⁶ Teodosio Lansang, "The Need for New Values," *Philippine Collegian*, November 1946, 11. The *Philippine Collegian* was published monthly.

country was unable to recognize the extent of its dependency on gifts "given graciously" rather than earned. Lansang made subtle reference to the lack of Philippine consciousness regarding the country's fraught political and economic relationship to the US.

The source of Lansang's frustration became more apparent in his discussion of freedom. He stated:

Finally a mutual disgust between the American GI and the Filipino boy began to form when both discovered that the other is not what he is thought or regarded to be. And when we were given our republic as was promised us long time ago, the sensitive and sentimental Filipino does not like the Parity Rights which seems to be the price for our freedom. And then, too, the stern truth has begun to show its head: that we are poor, that the first burst of dollars in our midst during the early days of liberation was just an artificial prosperity.⁴⁰⁷

Lansang described freedom not as the absence of starvation, which it once was during the Japanese occupation, but as economic equality between nations. He implied that the postwar relationship between the US and Philippines had reproduced a form of dependence ("the price of our freedom") that reinstated a colonial relationship. His mention of the Parity Rights Agreement, another term for the Bell Trade Act, echoed the arguments of the Philippine Left.

Lansang built on his critique of political and economic relations through the concept of bodily pleasure. Consuming junk food and other luxury goods might provide immediate satisfaction and a temporary break from starvation. Lansang argued, however, that these items prevented the nation from seeing beyond the here and now, as

Bars of all sizes and morals started to mushroom wherever there was a GI to slake his thirst for drinks and women...Then the simple *dalaga* [single woman], who was either a college student at the outbreak of the war or a *tindera* [saleswoman] in one of the city markets, found it more lucrative to entertain the lonely GI than to go to office work or attend diligently to studies.

Lansang's hyperbolic speech sensationalized the issue of prostitution in the postwar Philippines. He suggested that all women, from college students to saleswomen, were susceptible to becoming

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

"entertainers" of American servicemen. In his claim that women "found it more lucrative" to become "bar girls," he emphasized women's agency in choosing money and personal ambition over moral principles. In this narrative, women were unable to control their sexualities and desire for material goods. Such opportunism, expressed through the figure of the Filipina prostitute, was associated with the nation's moral and economic decline due to the Philippine-US postwar alliance.

Lansang further emphasized that women were the problem. He argued that "women all over the city" were "reluctant to go back to old decent ways of earning a livelihood" and that women in particular had become "money crazy" deceivers who lacked "qualms of conscious when the talk concern[ed] money." Lansang suggested that the desperation of women to earn money motivated them to turn their backs on their morals and their country. Even more provocative was his statement that the actions of women were beginning to "affect the attitude of the men--naturally." His fixation on "money crazy" women reflected broader anxieties about the future of the country. It called into question the decision of some Filipinos who migrated to the US after the war in search of better economic opportunities. As another article in the same issue of the *Philippine Collegian* critically examined, doctors and nurses left the Philippines to work in the US leaving ill-trained students to run entire medical wards.⁴⁰⁸ For Lansang, the ideal nationalist was one who remained in the Philippines and sacrificed their individual ambitions for the betterment of the nation and its values. He defined "new values" as control over women's sexuality and a selfless commitment to the country's development. Threats to this ideal included bodily pleasures and ambitions originating in American capitalism and imperialism.

⁴⁰⁸ Prospero Sanidad Jr., "Ward War," *Philippine Collegian*, September 1946.



Figure 12: Nenita and Charlie get married. *Magkaibang Labi* 1947
IMDb photo gallery

Another trope that associated selfish women with prostitution was the "jeep girl." In the 1947 hit Philippine film *Magkaibang Labi* [Of Different Races], a US serviceman naively asks a Filipina named Nenita if he could give her a ride to work.⁴⁰⁹ Nenita retorts, "No thank you. I wouldn't want to be called a Jeep girl." Nenita's sister Cora then asks Charlie if he respects Nenita, explaining that he cannot ride with her in a jeep if he does. This scene alludes to the social stigma of Filipinas riding in jeeps with Americans after the war and its association with immorality. Popular films during this period made frequent reference to the jeep girl trope, associating women who rode in jeeps with the immoral and corrupt influence of Americans. Women who rode in jeeps were assumed to be engaged in deviant sexual behavior as a result of their "liberated" lifestyles and it was up to them to choose the right path. In *Magkaibang Labi*, Charlie and Nenita attempt to overcome this stereotype by getting married, however, because they are "of different races," they continually face problems related to racism and cultural misunderstanding throughout the film.

⁴⁰⁹ *Magkaibang Labi* [Of Different Races], Directed by Ramon Estella and Nardo Vercudia, Quezon City, Philippines: LVN Pictures, 1947. For an analysis of the film through the lens of "postcolonial fantasy" see José B. Capino, *Dream Factories of a Former Colony: American Fantasies, Philippine Cinema* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).



Figure 13: Cartoon of a Filipina leaving a jeep with an American soldier
Ilang-Ilang, April 13, 1946. Ateneo de Manila Rizal Library Microfilms

The jeep girl trope appeared not only in films but in novels and short stories. Often printed in popular magazines, these stories provided a popular form of entertainment. One story, published in the Tagalog magazine *Ilang-Ilang*, was about a Filipino man who was so deeply in love with his Filipina girlfriend, he could not wait to see her again after being away fighting in battle. One day, he happens to see her on the street, riding in a jeep with an American soldier. A cartoon from the story (Figure 13) includes the caption “*Gaano ang aking pagtataka nang ikaw ay makita kong umibis sa ‘jeep’ na kasama ng isang kawal*” [How surprised I was to see you leaving a jeep with a soldier]. The Filipino soldier thought that his girlfriend would be faithful when he was gone, but instead she assumed that he was never coming back. The title of the story, “*Buhay Pa Rin Ako*” [I’m still alive!], suggests the betrayal that the Filipino man felt after returning home to realize that his sacrifice left him forgotten.

This story does not make an overt political or ideological critique. It does not explicitly mention free trade agreements, such as the Bell Trade Act, that put the Philippines at an economic disadvantage. It also does not mention the Military Bases Agreement, or other ongoing political debates. However, the characters, plot, and perspective of this story reproduced the erotic triangle of many other postwar narratives critiquing the alliance between the Philippine state and US government. The Filipino man, while betrayed by both the Filipina and the US serviceman, expresses self-pity and bitterness as he processes his loss.



Figure 14: Cartoon of a Filipina riding in a jeep. *Light* magazine, 1946.
Lopez Memorial Museum Library, Pasig, Philippines

The *jeep girl* trope was also a common stereotype. An editorial published by M. Trinidad in *Light* magazine entitled "Torments of a Jeep Girl" sarcastically explained the "torments" that women

who rode in jeeps with US servicemen experienced.⁴¹⁰ Allegedly, jeep girls chose to ride in uncomfortable seats where they were vulnerable to the assaults of indecent men while riding. Moreover, these women endured intense social judgement through “the cynic’s scowl” and the “slurs” of “loud mouths.” These insults included Tagalog phrases such as “*hanggang pier*” [you’re only until the pier], “*pam pam*,” [prostitute], and “*isang balik, isang lata*” [one kiss, one canned good]. Each of these slurs implied military prostitution.

In the cartoon image that accompanied the editorial (Figure 14), a Filipina rides in a jeep dressed in American-style clothing, wearing lipstick, and holding her purse. She represents the “modern girl” stereotype of Filipinas who have adapted to American culture and, like the co-ed figure, stray from traditional gender roles. In the lower right corner of the cartoon are four figures. The jeep girl is in the center covering her ears with her hands while overwhelmed with the shouting around her. She experiences judgement from traditional Filipinos who criticize her for riding in a jeep. The figure to the left of the jeep girl is a Filipina dressed in *Filipiniana* (Filipino national dress), specifically a Maria Clara gown (also known as *traje de mestiza* or *terno*). This woman shouts at the jeep girl. Perhaps she is her mother giving the girl a lecture on riding in jeeps. To the left of the traditional Filipina is a young boy wearing a baseball cap, further representing US cultural influence on Filipino youth. On the far right is an older Filipino man with his finger pointing at the jeep girl. This man, perhaps he is her father, also appears to be giving the girl a lecture. This image satirized the jeep girl by pointing to the shame that she brings on the Filipino family.

Through the image of the family, Trinidad’s editorial sheds light on the jeep girl stereotype in Philippine society and its association with female sexual deviancy. The article reinforced the dominant view of women as selfish and deviant in explaining the main reasons why women chose to ride in jeeps. These reasons included a “liberated” lifestyle, “safety,” “luxury,” and the potential for a

⁴¹⁰ M. Trinidad, “Torments of a Jeep Girl,” *Light*, January 5, 1946, 13, 25.

future relationship with a serviceman. This argument echoed other articles in postwar, nationalist magazines, which denigrated the so-called modern woman who strayed from gender norms. While the issue of women riding in jeeps to sell sex was also a concern for Filipino allies in the US military anti-VD campaign (as discussed in Chapter 1), for heteropatriarchal nationalists this figure served as a critique of US imperialism. The figure of the Filipina prostitute emerged in these texts not as a threat to US society and white spaces, but as a symbol of the corruption of the Philippine nation.

Filipino Masculinity and the Figure of the Forgotten Soldier



Figure 15: The Oblasyon statue at the University of the Philippines-Diliman⁴¹¹

⁴¹¹ Photo source: <http://kontedstories.blogspot.com/2013/07/the-oblation-at-university-of.html>

The writing of the nation's hero, José Rizal, influenced postwar constructions of Filipino masculinity. The second verse of Rizal's renowned poem *Mi Último Adiós* [My Final Farewell], which was written on the eve of his execution in 1896, contained an influential passage about sacrifice to the nation against colonial oppression.⁴¹² In this verse, Rizal referred to the soldiers of the Philippine Revolution having given their lives “without any doubts” and “without thinking” because of their love of country. [“*Otros te dan sus vidas sin dudas, sin pensar...si lo piden la patria y el bogar*”].⁴¹³ In 1935, the Philippine government commissioned Guillermo E. Tolentino, sculptor and fine arts professor of the University of the Philippines, to create a statue commemorating the second verse of Rizal's poem. Named *Oblasyon* [oblation] in Tagalog and erected at the University of the Philippines main campus, the statue came to symbolize anti-colonial nationalism through the Filipino male soldier (see Figure 15).⁴¹⁴

The *Oblasyon* symbolizes national sacrifice through the promotion of idealized Filipino masculinity. It features a naked man who stands on a tall pile of rocks. He stretches his arms out and looks up at the sky. The fact that he is naked signifies the offering of the male body to the nation. His able body and physique point to his strength in times of war. In contrast to the figure of the Filipina prostitute, the Filipino soldier sacrifices his flesh not for personal gain but to save the country. The Filipino soldier stands tall and is rooted in the earth, but he gazes above himself. While symbolizing national freedom, his position also maintains religious significance. Placed in-between heaven and hearth with his arms outstretched, the *Oblasyon* resembles Christ on the cross. Within this Catholic metaphor, the Filipino male soldier appears as the ideal savior of the nation. The

⁴¹² Spanish authorities executed Jose Rizal by firing squad, making him a martyr for Philippine independence.

⁴¹³ Jose Rizal, *Mi Último Adiós*, (Manila, Philippines: National Institute 1999). Originally published in 1897.

⁴¹⁴ Reuben Ramas Cañete, *Masculinity, Media, and their Publics in the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press, 2014), 140.

placement of a strong, tall male figure located centrally at the nation's public university is the epitome heteropatriarchal nationalism.

Religious symbolism, which is evident in the *Oblation*, is not insignificant within the history of Philippine nationalist movements. Within the Catholic tradition, an “oblation” is an offering to God. During Catholic mass, the eucharistic oblation involves an offering of bread and wine to symbolize the congregation’s sacrifice in union with Christ. As Deirdre de la Cruz argues, Christian narratives, symbols, and practices such as prayer have long been central dimensions in acts of revolt in the Philippines.⁴¹⁵ In tracing the history of prayer from the beginnings of the Philippine Revolution against Spanish colonialism to the People Power Revolution of 1986, de la Cruz points to the ways that the “act” of prayer has “mediat[ed] the recurrence of particular social and political imaginaries of collective transformation and revolt.”⁴¹⁶ The act of praying throughout Philippine history presents an intriguing paradox. That is, Filipinos have not understood themselves as “instruments of divine agency,” but instead have asserted the “power” of prayer to bring about imagined social change.⁴¹⁷ The establishment of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente in 1902 as the Philippine national church, for example, represented a schism with the Catholic church in Rome, brought on not by ideological differences but rather anti-colonial sentiment.⁴¹⁸ The act of asserting religious freedom, and the freedom to pray, has been imagined as a powerful step towards developing the national family. In other words, religiosity has served as a primary medium through which Filipinos articulate the sacrifices of “the people” within various movements for popular sovereignty.

⁴¹⁵ Deirdre de la Cruz, “From the Power of Prayer to Prayer Power: On Religion and Revolt in the Modern Philippines,” in *Southeast Asian Perspectives on Power*, (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012).

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid*, 179.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid*, 170.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid*, 171.

In the postwar period, Philippine heteropatriarchal nationalists replicated this practice of religiosity and national sacrifice in their construction of the figure of the forgotten soldier. Yet unlike the *Oblasyon* which represents idealized masculinity, the forgotten soldier is a fractured figure whose victimization occurs as a result of his triangulated relationship with the US serviceman and the Filipina prostitute. In the University of the Philippines (UP) periodical the *Philippine Collegian*, numerous articles written by male students after the war argued that Philippine society, alongside the US government, had neglected to take care of Filipino veterans.⁴¹⁹

In September of 1946, a UP writer named Juan Hagad published an editorial comparing the situation of World War II veterans to those who died during the Philippine revolution.⁴²⁰ In his editorial, Hagad used the statue *Oblasyon* to draw this nationalist comparison. He claimed that the idea of "sacrifice was too remote, even unimaginable" for the students who "shuttled to and fro as they hurried between classes and spared [the statue] maybe a passing glance. When the statue was erected in the 1930s, he argued, the "intensity of feeling" that it generated in representing the nation's struggle for independence no longer translated to Filipinos after the war. Hagad lamented, "the Filipino fighter had survived war's nightmare to awaken into disillusionment. Everyone seemed to have forgotten him." By "everyone" Hagad meant not only the US government—which did not honor the promise of granting Filipino veterans benefits and US citizenship following their US military service—but also the Philippine nation, whose commitments to US alliances betrayed the sacrifices of Filipino servicemen.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁹ The September 1946 edition of the *Philippine Collegian* focused on the Filipino War Veteran, with many pieces discussing the "forgotten" soldier. Some titles in this publication include "Let Us Not Begrudge Them Our Aid," "University Joins Drive for Disabled Veterans," "The Unknown Soldier," "To a Brother Who Failed to Return," "The Tragedy of the Veteran," and "Art for the War Veteran."

⁴²⁰ Juan H. Hagad, "Oblation," *Philippine Collegian*, September 1946. The newspaper was published monthly.

⁴²¹ The scholarly literature on Filipino World War II veterans is virtually non-existent. See Jimiliz Maramba Valiente-Neighbours, "Racialized Bodies and Phantom Limb Citizenship: The Case of the Filipino World War II Veterans" (PhD, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2016).

Hagad's argument drew on the notion of heteropatriarchal sacrifice. Despite being promised many things at the start of the war, including a GI Bill from America, health coverage, and a future family, the Filipino soldier was left uncompensated and unable to provide. He stated that "his wife and children, and the orphaned ones of his luckless comrades are languishing in want." Hagad used the metaphor of the Filipino soldier's emasculation to articulate his critique of US imperialism and Philippine society. The position of the Filipino veteran as a failed breadwinner stemmed from the unfulfilled promises of the US government, and the betrayal of his own family to keep them together through times of hardship.

Through gender, specifically the unjust victimization of the Filipino male, Hagad expressed what he saw as the subversion of Philippine nationalism. He used sarcasm and guilt to argue for his vision. For example, he exclaimed that perhaps it was the soldier's "fault" for having lost his arm, for not "being more careful out there in the battlefield." The cruel irony of the soldier's experience was that he risked his life fighting for the nation's future, yet it was his very strength and resiliency that rendered him unable to take on the masculine role required of him to perform his duties as a productive, male citizen. That is, to be an able-bodied, physically fit provider. The soldier's trauma and disability foreclosed the possibility of respectable citizenship because he could no longer live up to these socially defined ideals of masculinity. Hagad's sarcasm expressed a bitterness towards those who misunderstood Rizal's call for national sacrifice. In a way guiltting the reader into identifying with the forgotten soldier, Hagad emphasized that the soldier did what he was asked. He gave his physical body to the nation and acted as a hero of the country alongside US servicemen.

Hagad continued to sarcastically compare the physicality of the statue to the postwar Filipino veteran. He wrote,

They will erect a monument to you next, my veteran. After all, that is what you deserve—to be immortalized in stone and plaster. And they will need to do just that if only to salve their consciences for having neglected you for so long. Just in case they do, tell them they need

not spend anew. Out here at the UP is just the monument for you. It need not be repaired if it is to be properly symbolic of you. Tell them that we have here the defaced, deformed, the right-armless statue of the "Oblation."

For Hagad, the 1935 statue acquired new meaning after the bombing of Manila during World War II. The war damaged the *Oblasyon's* figure, requiring the statue to undergo renovation for several months before being re-erected at the University of the Philippines-Diliman campus. As a result of this damage, he implied, both the statue and the Filipino soldier became isolated from Philippine society. Hagad suggested that the deformity in the statue and the Filipino soldier were misunderstood as weaknesses. In reality they represented the idealized masculinity of Rizal's poem. For Hagad, the nation owed these men acknowledgement as the "true" heroes and saviors of the Philippines.

Heteropatriarchal nationalist writers questioned why their countrymen and women lauded the average Joe while neglecting to honor the sacrifices of their own men. The erotic triangle in their stories positioned the Filipino male soldier as neglected, but loyal and deserving, in relation to the US serviceman and the Filipina lover. At stake for these bitter men was recognition for their service by the US government, Philippine leaders, and Philippine society. The forgotten soldier in these stories paralleled the experiences of the leaders of the Hukbalahap who, after fighting alongside the US military during the war, became the target of postwar counterinsurgency. While expecting to be rewarded for their service to the nation and their wartime alliances with the US, they instead transformed into a threat to US democracy and the interests of Philippine elites.

In many representations of this erotic triangle, the fractured figures of Filipino masculinity and femininity emerge in a single narrative. These stories emphasize the victimization of the forgotten soldier and use emotion to persuade the reader to identify with his marginalization. In the short story "Sayang na Sayang," published in *Malaya* magazine on November 14, 1945, fiction writer

Carlos Aleurizo explores war and heartbreak centering the tragic tale of the Filipino soldier.⁴²²

Referencing the sacrifice of Christ, the soldier is described as a “humble carpenter” [*“isang hamak na anluwage lamang”*] who falls in love with the woman of his dreams [*aking pananaginip ng tunay na ganda...inibig pala kita*]. She is so beautiful he wonders what brought them together. He wonders if it was possibly because he helped her find shelter during the war. Most likely, he concludes, it was hearing his stories about assisting the *guerillas* in their fight against the Japanese that had bonded them. He remembers her excitement the day they found out that the Americans were coming to save them [*“kay sarap ng iyong balakbake dahil sa tuwa nang magpagusapan natin ang pagpasok ng mga ‘Kano’*"]. Once the war ended, he decided that he was going to marry her and that he would take her away from the *jeeps*, the Americans, and the “temptations” of Manila [*“Doon kita itatanghal sa ating magiging tabanan—malayo sa mga jeep ng mga ‘Kano’ at sa mga tukso ng Maynila”*]. One day, after he was saying goodbye to her on the street, a young man asks if he “knows” her, stating that he “knows” her too [*“kakilala ko rin ang babaing ‘iyan’*"]. Implying that he had sex with “that girl” [*“ang babaing iyan”*], the young man disrespects the man’s girlfriend and provokes a fight. The young man says that if he needs proof, he should visit *Kalye X* at night where she works. [*dalawin mo sa Kalye X...kung gabi ay doon*]. He warns that his supposed girlfriend “got around” and brings the naive boyfriend to realize that he was being deceived. She told him she got a job working for the US Army as a typist. He later realizes that this was unrealistic considering her low level of education. In reality she was working with soldiers, but not in the respectable way that she had claimed.

⁴²² Carlos Aleurizo, “Sayang na Sayang,” *Malaya*, November 14, 1945, 10.

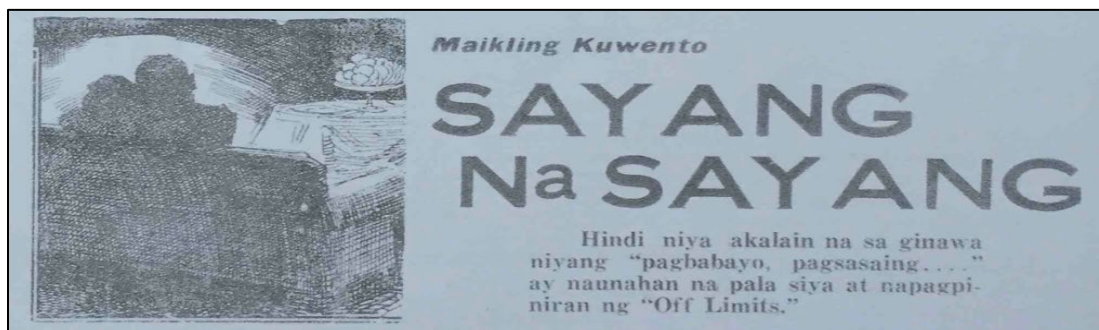


Figure 16: *Sayang na Sayang* illustration, November 14, 1945
Lopez Memorial Museum and Library, Pasig, Philippines

Aleurizo's story centers the Filipino soldier's experience of deceit. Despite recognizing her "sweet laughter" ["*halakbak*"] and "happiness" ["*tawa*"] at the idea of the Americans returning, he assumed that she wanted to go away with him, away from the Americans and what he considered to be corrupting influences. Yet, even with the option to live a respectable, but humble, life, the Filipina chooses to work the street on *Kalye X*. As an opportunist, she used the man to help her survive the war, but then quickly moved on to the next best opportunity. Even while he risked his life supporting the *guerillas*, he was not enough for her as she sells herself for her own survival. The Filipina prostitute of this story betrays their former nationalist bond and follows her own ambitions.

The story concludes with an emphasis on the emotional state of the Filipino man as a forgotten hero. He exclaims, "*Oh sayang na sayang, sayang na pagibig, sayang na pagsintang natapon...natapon sa 'off limits.'*" [Oh, what a shame, a wasted love, a shame that this passion is thrown away...for being "off limits"]. The forgotten soldier laments the fact that his great love is "thrown away" not only because she does not reciprocate his feelings but because she chooses the US military. In his lamentation, the man uses the English words "off limits" (see Figure 14). In a story written in Tagalog, Aleurizo uses the US military's language originally referring to physical spaces considered "contaminated" by venereal disease (as discussed in Chapter 1). Off limits meant that these places were deemed unsafe for US military personnel. Aleurizo refers to the Filipina in the

story as off limits to convey that her love is unavailable while also associating her with immorality and disease. The emotional cries of the forgotten soldier prioritize the feelings of the Filipino male as a victim of both US imperialism and the Philippine state.

Hanggang Pier Ka Lang: Filipino Postcolonial Desire

Published in 1946, Mateo Cruz Cornelio's novel *Hanggang Pier* told a popular story of a love triangle between a Filipina named Leonor, her Filipino soldier boyfriend Delfin, and an American soldier named Bert. Leonor and Delfin were preparing for their wedding when suddenly Delfin was called into battle. Leonor became depressed and worried about Delfin's safety, spending months in her room without talking to anyone. Out on the battlefield, Delfin thought that he was going to die, but Bert, the American soldier, saved him. The two soldiers become close as they spend time in recovery together. Meanwhile, Leonor assumes that Delfin has died because she had not heard from him in a while. She finally leaves her room and opens up a small fruit stand, where she meets Bert, one of her customers. Forgetting about Delfin, Leonor falls quickly in love with Bert but is heartbroken once again when he is shipped off to Tokyo. Only after Bert leaves her behind at the pier does Leonor realize that Delfin was her one true love. Then miraculously, Delfin's injuries heal and he finds Leonor on the pier just as Bert's ship sails away. He forgives Leonor and the two embrace as though nothing had ever come between them.

Cornelio's novel became a popular film with the same title shown throughout theaters in Manila in late 1946. Alongside other films, novels, and short stories with nearly identical plots, the story of *Hanggang Pier* popularized the term that stigmatized Filipinas who dated US servicemen after World War II. The phrase "*hanggang pier ka lamang*" [you're only up to the pier] was used to mock women left behind by their sailor lovers. Stereotypically, such a woman was a mistress who developed "instant affairs" with US sailors and produced his "love children." Neighbors would

gossip that she was a loose woman behind her back. The only way to redeem herself—to prove that she was not a prostitute—was through marriage.⁴²³ As *Filipinas* magazine explained, terms such as “*asawa ng kanò*” [spouse of an American] were similarly derogatory yet they were “a step above *hanggang pier lang*.”⁴²⁴

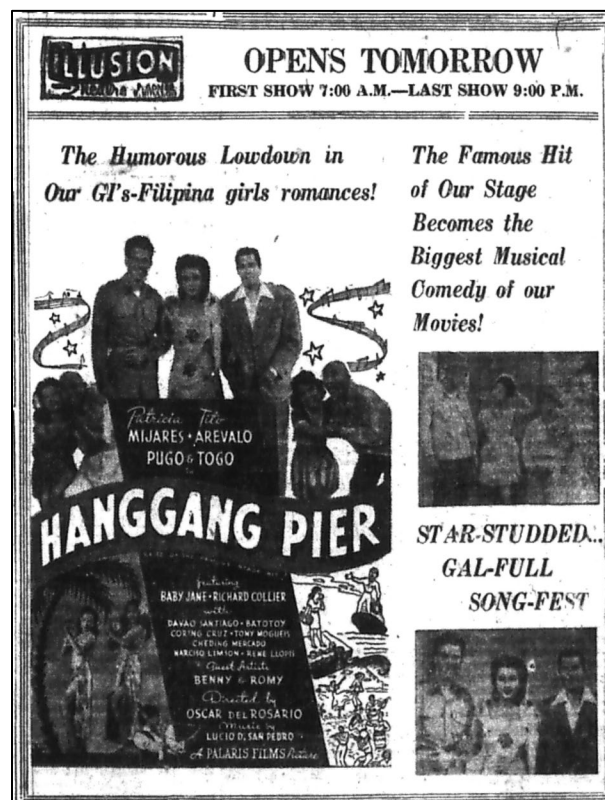


Figure 17: *Hanggang Pier* Film Advertisement. *Manila Times*, September 13, 1946, 13. Ateneo de Manila Rizal Library Microfilms

⁴²³ See summary of the film *Victory Joe* at University of Michigan Libraries. Originally taken from *Kabayan Central*.

⁴²⁴ “A Fil-Am love story,” *Manila Bulletin*, July 6, 2014.



Figure 18: Cover of *Hanggang Pier* by Mateo Cruz Cornelio, 1946
Library of Congress, Asian Reading Room

In Cornelio’s novel, Leonor breaks her promise to Delfín after only a few months and dreams about a new future with Bert. In the end, she finds herself left at the pier realizing that it was never meant to be. Despite her failings, Delfín rises above and extends forgiveness. In this narrative, both Leonor and Delfín experience shame that they are only able to overcome through “true love.” Following conventions of the romantic comedy genre, *Hanggang Pier* provides audiences a happy ending by reuniting the Filipino couple. In the tragic version of this story, the Filipina’s disloyal ambition would have resulted in her abandonment. However, in this novel’s postcolonial fantasy, the Filipino male protagonist, is able to mend his relationship with the Filipina and take control where the white soldier fell short.

Embedded in the meaning of the phrase *hanggang pier* is the notion that a woman’s success hinges on being accepted by the man with whom she is involved. This is not to say that women who

married US servicemen were not stigmatized, as *asawa ng kano* was also a derogatory term. Even married women were sometimes taunted with the phrase *hanggang pier*, reflecting the cynical view that married women would eventually be abandoned. Yet, considering the value of marriage, the logic of *hanggang pier* does not *entirely* disparage intimacies with Americans. While used to shame women for their sexual immorality, the phrase also contained the assumption that if a woman were ever taken beyond the pier—outside of the Philippines and into a better life—she would succeed in obtaining the social capital to mitigate her shame. This single phrase, in other words, epitomized the way in which GI–Filipina relations were, on the one hand, stigmatized yet, on the other hand, recognized for their potential for social mobility.

The mockery of women as *hanggang pier* can also be interpreted through the lens of Filipino male jealousy. Postwar films, novels, and short stories such as Cornelio’s novel addressed Filipina sexuality through a misogynist perspective that victimized Filipino men. Within these narratives, the forgotten soldier was not only rejected by Filipinas, but had no other opportunities to escape the Philippines for “better” opportunities. Through the love triangle between a Filipina lover, the Filipino boyfriend, and the American soldier, these stories stigmatized the Filipina’s sexual capital and opportunities for social mobility in compensating for male insecurities. In Cornelio’s novel, not only is Delfín betrayed by his unfaithful fiancé, Leonor. He is also abandoned by the man who saves his life and stays by his bedside when he is wounded. Since the Filipino soldier cannot obtain the American (an illicit intimacy), the rejection of the American by the Filipina allows the forgotten soldier to regain control. The story therefore plays out a postcolonial fantasy of Philippine sovereignty where the Filipina sees *her* mistake in abandoning her own kind, thereby reframing the Filipino male’s rejection as resilience and strength. Within this narrative, the Filipina’s emotional weakness and conditional love of country are forgivable, representing the Filipino male’s ultimate sacrifice.

Cornelio's narrative would have been relatable to the postwar audience. When poverty and destruction were everywhere, the white savior was imagined to provide an easy solution to one's problems. In this way, *Hanggang Pier*, alongside many similar stories, perpetuated the notion that relations with white Americans could be beneficial but also came at a personal cost. In the end, Leonor escaping the Philippines with Bert would have meant regret for giving up on "true love," the sacred, moral, and respectable future that heteromasculine nationalists imagined for the country.

In other postwar stories such as the popular film *Victory Joe!* (1947) and the short story "Bubay Pa Rin Ako" by Ariston C. Ambrosio, the female protagonist is also pardoned by her Filipino soldier boyfriend after leaving him for a white American soldier. In *Victory Joe!*, the Filipino boyfriend and American soldier get into a physical altercation once they find out that they are in love with the same woman. In this story as well, the white soldier leaves the Filipina behind, and she eventually realizes that she never actually desired to leave the Philippines. These fictional tales offered a means to sympathize with her survival instinct in pursuing an escape yet moralized through the metaphor of prostitution. As a form of processing postwar trauma, shame, and resentment, these stories suggested the nation move forward by forgiving the Filipina who engaged in illicit intimacies. The love triangle narrative reflects the ways that Filipino heteromasculine authors attempted to negotiate their lack of sexual capital through notions of sacrifice and honor that would ultimately recuperate their position of victimization.

Nonetheless, these cultural productions reproduced stigmas, not only of illicit sexuality, but also of racial hierarchy. In contrast to the depictions of white servicemen, black servicemen were represented not as saviors but as swindlers who made women crazy for not repaying their debts. In a dramatic goodbye scene in Cruz's *Hanggang Pier*, a black sailor emerges to provide comic relief.⁴²⁵ Five women chase a short Black American ["*maliit na Amerikanong negro*"] to the edge of the pier,

⁴²⁵ Mateo Cruz Cornelio, *Hanggang Pier: Nobela*, (Manila, Philippines: Palimbagang Tagumpay, 1946), 65.

alongside droves of women chasing their white sailor-lovers. Yet these five women chased after the sailor not because they were in love with him, but because he owed them money: "*limang babae ang nag-aaway-away sa isang maliit na Amerikanong negro. Ang mga babaing nagkakagulo sa kanya, ay mga labandera niya at siya'y sinisingil sa kanyang malaking utang sa kanila*" [Five women were fighting over a tiny Black American man. The women who were causing the disturbance were his washerwomen, as they came to collect the large debt that he owed them]. "Shorty," the Black sailor, would find a new washerwoman [*labandera*] each week and avoided paying each of them. Unlike Bert, Leonor's well-respected, wealthy white American love interest, Shorty is depicted as scheming, poor, and physically unattractive.

Itsay, the one Filipina who did catch feelings for Shorty, clearly vocalizes her disgust in falling for him once she finds out he is poor. "*Walang hiya kang negro ka!*" [You shameless negro!], Itsay yells at Shorty after she witnesses his exchange with the *labanderas*. Shorty responds in English, "But I got no money, Itsy! When I come [sic] back, I give you much dough!"⁴²⁶ Itsay, in disbelief, expresses that she will settle for the nice native boy (named Porong) who had been courting her, "*Oh! Yeah ... at namaywang si Itsay.—Mabuti pang di hamak sa iyo si Porong. Ako'y babalik na sa kanya ngayon din*" [Oh! Yeah ... and Itsay put her hands on her hips—good thing Porong isn't as vile as you. I'm going back to him now].⁴²⁷ Just like Leonor, Itsay gave up on an American lover to return to a man at home. Even while both Itsay and Leonor were better off forgetting their American lovers, there was a clear racial hierarchy. Bert, the white soldier was depicted as the most respectable and acceptable option.

"House Girls" in the Dark Alleys of Sangley Point

⁴²⁶ Ibid, 65.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

The emergence of the Filipina prostitute figure in postwar Philippine literature and film corresponded with the US military and Philippine government's joint anti-VD control campaign, which heightened public concern that prostitution was literally happening everywhere. Expressing their support of these anti-prostitution efforts, some disgruntled Filipino civilians from the city of Cavite wrote letters to US military authorities and provided clues that might assist with the campaign. Caviteños wrote to the commander of the Sangley Point US Naval base providing local knowledge about areas of prostitution and vice. In their letters, townspeople warned that women seduced US servicemen into illicit activities and also defrauded them. These townspeople reproduced the figure of the Filipina prostitute in order to provoke action from US authorities. In many cases these letters justified investigations against women to the detriment of their livelihood.

In September of 1954, an anonymous letter from a man who described himself as “a Filipino Enlisted Navy Personnel” and a “pro-American at heart” suggested that a certain hotel, the Gay Spot Inn, be investigated.⁴²⁸ The sailor focused on the “tricks” that female employees played against US sailors at this location.⁴²⁹ He began by arguing that the entire place was merely a prostitution joint: “Sailors either take the girls out or do the business with the girls in one of the rooms upstairs of the club. Of course, this happens after the owner has already received the money for the services.”⁴³⁰ He then explained the most egregious offense:

The owner who is a lady works with it very effectively. When she sees that the poor gobs get drunk, she approached them very very friendly attitude and asked them whether they have American Dollar Money. And when she found out the sailors are already drunk, she courts them and get the bill, paid only equivalent to its face value. I mean to say that if the dollar bill is valued at \$10.00 she only pays P10.00 for it and the poor sailors who are already under the influence of liquor succumbed to her trick. Poor sailors.⁴³¹

⁴²⁸ “A Filipino Enlisted Navy Personnel” to Commander Sangley Point Naval Base, Cavite City, September 1954 [exact day unknown], RG 313, Industrial and Social Relations, Box 9, NARA San Francisco, CA. The author indicates his gender by describing himself as a “Navy man” in the letter.

⁴²⁹ “A Filipino Enlisted Navy Personnel” to Commander Sangley Point Naval Base, Cavite City, September 1954 [exact date undisclosed], RG 313, Industrial and Social Relations, Box 9, NARA San Francisco, CA. The author indicates his gender by describing himself as a “Navy man” in the letter.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

In specifying the gender of the bar owner, a “lady,” he suggested that she was able to use her looks and coquettish, “friendly attitude” to “court” the men. His final comment "poor sailors" victimized the US servicemen at the hands of a deceitful woman. Moreover, referring to her scam as a "trick" connected it to prostitution. Trick was a word that the US military used to describe a variety of sexual transactions between US servicemen and women in the Philippines.⁴³² Making sure to emphasize his anti-nationalist orientation from the start, this "pro-American" Filipino sailor used the threat of prostitution in his attempt to provoke action against the Gay Spot Inn.

As a result of the sailor's letter, the Sangley Point Disciplinary Board began an investigation of the Gay Spot Inn and the woman in question. The disciplinary board worked to determine if the place should be placed off limits to US military personnel and if the woman's business would be reported to local authorities. Regardless of whether the Gay Spot Inn was a front for prostitution or other illegal dealings, the response of US naval officers suggests that anyone could write an anonymous note that would lead to an official investigation affecting the establishment and its workers. The assumption that US enlisted men were the ones vulnerable to the exploitation of women, and not the other way around, validated the claims of this Filipino sailor even if he did not identify himself by name.

In April of 1957, Sangley Point US Naval Station received another complaint letter. This time it was from a civilian woman from Cavite City named Donata Paras. Paras was concerned about Filipinas "dating" American GIs near the naval base. She wrote:

You could hardly see how bad they are because they pretend to be real decent. But when nightfall came they start their prey. I mean they start their “businesslike” some of these girl [sic] are really what we call “whores.” They loiter around the area. From the movie theater to the dark alleys I heard sometimes they met boys I mean sailors under the swimming pool after the base theater ends at night. Some house girls are dating sailors there. At the bus stop by the C.P.O. club. I can see some house girls are picking up sailors by the bus that goes back

⁴³² See venereal disease bulletin: Capt. Jessie G. Wright, Staff Medical Officer, ComNavPhil to Senior Medical Officer, Leyte-Samar, December 4, 1946, RG 313, Subic Bay, No 17-37377, Box 7, NARA San Francisco, CA.

and forth. Some are picking up by the theater sometimes you see them in off limits area for girls. They act like they own the Sangley Point Base.⁴³³

This paragraph from Paras's letter read similarly to the reports written by US servicemen that portrayed women as threats to naive enlisted men (discussed in Chapter 1). She focused on "house girls," referring to domestic workers for military families, suggesting that they used their position within the base to take advantage of sailors. Paras emphasized the deceit of these women who she said "pretend" to be decent and hide in "dark alleys" to avoid getting caught. She described them as "loitering" in "off limits area[s]" implying that they were most likely diseased. Moreover, Paras placed the blame on women by using active verbs to describe their behaviors ("loiter," "meeting boys," "picking up," and "start their business") and ignored the agency of enlisted men. Paras also conflated "dating" with sexual transactions. Her letter stoked the main fear of US officials that prostitution was happening everywhere and that they were losing control over the "whores." Paras's final point that these women "act like they own" Sangley Point fed into the biases of US military officers as well, which assumed Filipinas to be the perpetrators who unjustly took what did not belong to them.

Perhaps the most powerful statement in Paras's letter was the suggestion that Filipinas working inside the base needed to be checked for venereal disease. As I discuss in Chapter 1, US military officials had already begun an intensive anti-VD campaign in other areas of the Philippines. Paras wrote, "If I were to suggest I would clean up everything I mean have everybody smear [sic] once a week let us see who is clean and got sickness after all there are some real decent people outside the Base who are willing to work for a decent job. If they think their job is worth deserving so they must have a better conduct."⁴³⁴ According to Paras's suggestion, checking for disease would

⁴³³ Donata Paras to Captain Miller, US Naval Station Sangley Point, April 1, 1957, RG 313 Sangley Point General Correspondence, 313-62-0048, Box 7, NARA San Francisco, CA.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

weed out those who were “indecent” and provide jobs for those with good moral character. Paras appealed to the US military in her argument that women who were "unclean" were not worthy. This pointed to the possible motivation of Paras's letter in attempting to persuade the military against "loitering" women. Perhaps she was in competition with other women who had jobs on the base. Maybe she wanted revenge on a group of women due to personal reasons. Whatever her motivations for writing, the gendered language that she reproduced reveals the power of the discourse of illicit intimacies, and the ways that individuals exploited this for their own objectives.

Regarding the letters of Paras and the Filipino sailor, there is insufficient evidence to prove what their personal or political motivations were for writing to the US military. If we take their words at face value, they appeared dedicated to improving society and concerned about public health. However, we can speculate that there may have been other motivating factors such as on-the-ground rivalries or loyalties stemming from competition with other people or businesses. What these letters do tell us is that Caviteños were cognizant of what concerned US authorities and were aware of the power that local information could yield.

A complaint letter held even more weight when written by a US serviceman. In one case, a series of inaccurate assumptions about a Filipina domestic worker named Marciana Abong lead to her loss of employment. Abong was on the Sangley Point job referral list in 1957 and was called in for a job interview at the home of a US Navy couple. The husband was a white, Italian-American non-commissioned officer named Vincent Avvenire.⁴³⁵ The wife was a Filipina named Agapita Avvenire. The husband and wife each wrote separate letters regarding a single comment that the domestic worker made during her interview. The letters do not provide the perspective of Abong but can be read against the grain to piece together the couple's different versions of events and how they affected Abong's future job prospects.

⁴³⁵ A non-commissioned officer is an enlisted sailor with specific training and leadership skills.

The husband, Vincent Avvenire, sent his letter of complaint first.⁴³⁶ He explained that he and his wife had been trying to hire a "house girl" through the naval station when Abong arrived at the house. According to his letter, "[Abong] was happy about the chance to go to work until she found that my wife is a Filipina, when she became insulting, stated that she would not work for a Filipina, that if she had known that Mrs. Avvenire was a Filipina she would not have applied, etc."⁴³⁷ Mr. Avvenire implied that Abong's strong reaction to his wife being Filipina was not only inappropriate but also suspicious. He continued, "I feel that such conduct on her part indicates that she is not sincerely in search of a job...It is therefore requested that this applicant be investigated as to possible background deficiencies or other faults which would indicate an ulterior motive in applying for employment by Americans."⁴³⁸ Mr. Avvenire's vague statement that Abong had an "ulterior motive" without further explanation left the interpretation of Abong's intentions open. In this context, US military officers were particularly concerned with "house girls" who engaged in illicit affairs or prostitution on base, especially laundry women.⁴³⁹ They were also concerned with women who worked on base and used their access to US goods to buy and then resell outside of the post for a profit. Whatever her "ulterior motive" might have been, Abong's reaction to "working for a Filipina" led to the assumption that she was definitely a threat to the military establishment.

Avvenire's asked W.T. Sutherland, the commanding officer of Sangley, to order an investigation of "the alleged misconduct" of Abong. Sutherland's directive was entitled "Subject: report of misconduct of job applicant, and request for debarment from station."⁴⁴⁰ Instead of

⁴³⁶ Vincent Avvenire, BM2, USN, to Security Officer US Naval Station Sangley Point, April 23, 1957, RG 313, Sangley Point, 313-62-0048, Box 7, NARA San Francisco, CA.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Concerns about domestic workers on base resulted in restrictions on the entrance of female workers to US military facilities in the Philippines. See Lt. Col. Paul H. Baker, President VD Council Philrycom Ordinance Depot, to General Headquarters, Far East Command, August 4, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 241, NARA College Park, MD.

⁴⁴⁰ W. T. Sutherland, Commanding Officer US Naval Station, Sangley Point, to Security Officer, May 1, 1957, RG 313, Sangley Point, 313-62-0048, Box 7, NARA San Francisco, CA.

investigating the case, Sutherland submitted a report of the incident and ordered Abong's immediate debarment from the base. Mr. Avvenire's word as a sailor had the power to cost Abong her job without hearing her side of the story. As a result of Sutherland's directive, Abong's entry to the base was blocked and her name removed from the referral list. Sutherland's decision was reaffirmed when other US navy personnel endorsed his directive. They did so despite the fact that, as they admitted in their letters, they lacked knowledge of the incident and the person in question. One naval officer, N. N. Julian wrote, "I have not personally investigated the complaint mentioned in the basic correspondence. However, I strongly feel that the domestic help who do not meet the standards by the Naval Station should not be recommended to any naval personnel for household help."⁴⁴¹ The multiple support letters for Abong's debarment ended her prospects of challenging Mr. Avvenire's claim of misconduct.

Mrs. Avvenire volunteered her side of the story two weeks after her husband's initial complaint.⁴⁴² She wrote to the security officer of Sangley Point in the attempt to reduce the impact of her husband's letter about Abong. Mrs. Avvenire's letter conveyed a different tone than her husbands, expressing guilt and remorse for what happened. She explained the context behind Abong's comment and also how it made her feel. She wrote, "[Abong] ask my girl friend what I was, and she was told that was Philipina [sic] and [then she exclaimed] 'oh! I thought she was an American' and I said, 'What is the different [sic] who am I, American or Philippine and she said, 'I would rather work only for American' and I said, 'why did you come for?'" Mrs. Avvenire then explained her emotional reaction to what was said, "The reason I told my husband was that [Abong] was asking other person [sic] about my personal affairs and also hurt me to think that I was not

⁴⁴¹ N.N. Julian, Air Operations Officer, to Industrial Relations Officer, April 23, 1957, RG 313, Sangley Point, 313-62-0048, Box 7, NARA San Francisco, CA.

⁴⁴² English was not Mrs. Avvenire's native language. See Mrs. Agapita Avvenire to Security Officer US Naval Station Sangley Point, May 7, 1957, RG 313, Sangley Point, 313-62-0048, Box 7, NARA San Francisco, CA.

good enough for her to be her employer. I am sorry to cause any trouble.” She stated that it was her reaction to what was said, and her retelling of the event to her husband, that brought him to write his initial letter of complaint. Her emphasis on her emotional reaction as the origin of her husband's concern retracted the suggestion that Abong was a threat to the base. Mrs. Avvenire suggested that she overreacted to Abong's comment and that she felt guilty that her hurt feelings led to official action against Abong. By then, however, the damage was already done.

Mrs. Avvenire's letter provides a rare glimpse of the experience of a Filipina in an interracial relationship with a US serviceman in the Philippines in the 1950s. Her overreaction to Abong's comment reveals her insecurity about being the Filipina wife of a US serviceman. She was offended at the idea that she was "not good enough" compared to a white woman but she did not explain what exactly this meant to her. It is possible that she interpreted Abong's comments as prejudice against interracial couples. The implication that she was a bar girl or the like is a strong possibility. It is also possible that she thought Abong was biased against white servicemen due to a nationalist viewpoint. Or perhaps she feared that working for a Filipina was a step down in terms of pay and status.⁴⁴³

The Avvenire's letters cannot speak for how Abong felt about the incident, but they do reveal multiple layers of anxiety about illicit relationships from both husband and wife. The mixed-race couple responded strongly to a single verbal insult, interpreting the worst from what was said. Their letters alluded to stereotypes about deviant women and, even in their vagueness, held power when placed in the hands of US military officials. Moreover, if Abong indeed reacted negatively to

⁴⁴³ For a contemporary example of this phenomenon, see Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration and Domestic Work* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001). Since the early twentieth century, white American women have asserted themselves as moral and spiritual authorities over Filipinas through their work as teachers, missionaries, and political activists. As Catherine Ceniza Choy argues, white female nurses were expected to serve as tutors to Filipina nurses, and lived and worked in segregated quarters from them. While nursing education was a part of colonial tutelage, white women were punished when they attempted to soften the color line. This history led some Filipinas to internalize the status of white women as superior. See Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003), 31.

working for a Filipina married to a US sailor, then her own assumptions about deviancy contributed to her debarment. She was ironically judged based on the same gendered criteria. In this case, the figure of the Filipina prostitute turned what might have been a small misunderstanding into a life-changing event for Abong.

Gender Double Standard: The Case of Josepha Carlos

In some cases, Filipinas were unsuccessful in their attempts to provoke action from US military authorities even when pointing to illicit intimacies. On December 15, 1954, Josepha Carlos, a bar owner of Cavite city, sent a handwritten note to the commanding officer of the US Naval Station at Sangley Point, Capt. Frank Bills. She informed him of the incompetency of US shore patrolmen, military police armed with batons who were responsible for observing and protecting enlisted men in the local area. Carlos stated that shore patrolmen in Cavite had developed illicit relationships with Filipinas that they used to manage their own bars and clubs in the area. She referred to the phenomenon of US servicemen operating local businesses in the Philippines in the names of their girlfriends or wives. According to Carlos, the patrolmen were attempting to “control the bars” by shutting down establishments they perceived as competition. Carlos stated that these men abused their power by writing fraudulent citations against her establishment.

Carlos's letter of complaint against the patrolmen pointed to their immoral sexual behaviors in an attempt to prompt the intervention of US naval officers. She suggested that the immorality of patrolmen in one arena resulted in the poor performance of their military duties. In her mention that the men were "dating" Filipinas, Carlos attempted to taint their character by implying they were engaging in prostitution. She also described an incident in which a patrolman asked her “to produce” his girlfriend, who used to hang out at her bar. When Carlos refused, she claimed he became "angry" and sexually inappropriate. “He gets mad about it and tells me his dirty physical

feelings that he needs a girl very badly,” Carlos explained. She interpreted this scene as an intentional act to sabotage her business by shooing away her customers and giving her bar a bad reputation. Her letter attempted to stoke fears about the illicit behaviors of patrolmen, who she claimed did not live up to shore patrol standards. These men, she argued, used their illicit relationships "being the boy friends of the owners and waitresses of the bars" to assert power over those like her who followed the law.

Carlos's identity as a Filipina and a bar owner played a role in the response of naval officers to her complaint letter. Commanding officer Capt. Bills ordered an investigation into Carlos's case. He asked all on-duty shore patrolmen to submit character statements and descriptions of their interactions with Carlos. The men who Capt. Bills asked, however, were not the same men that Carlos accused of misconduct. This was because patrolmen's hours of duty shifted routinely with different men serving after a certain period. Nonetheless, their collective statements insisted that Carlos's bar was not up to standard and that her motivations for submitting a complaint were suspicious.⁴⁴⁴ Two of the shore patrol letters indicated that she was caught serving “minors” in her bar.⁴⁴⁵ The final statement also claimed that Carlos was the type of person to be “excitable,” meaning that her letter was exaggerated and emotional.⁴⁴⁶ Rather than look into the character of the patrolmen and interrogate the actual claims that Carlos made, the approach of these officers was to interrogate Carlos's moral character.

⁴⁴⁴ Walter N. Denton, AD3 USN, Statement, December 23, 1954, RG 313, Sangley Point, 1957, No. 17-37377, Box 5, NARA—Pacific, San Francisco, CA; J.W. Van de Genachte, AT3 USN, Statement, December 23, 1954, RG 313, Sangley Point, 1957, No. 17-37377, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA.

⁴⁴⁵ William M. Park, Armed Forces Police, Statement of Park, [Date undisclosed], RG 313, Sangley Point, 1957, No. 17-37377, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA; J.W. Van de Genachte, AT3 USN, Statement, December 23, 1954, RG 313, Sangley Point, 1957, No. 17-37377, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA.

⁴⁴⁶ E.A. Stevens, BMC [Boatswain's Mate Chief Petty Officer], USN from Legal-Investigation Office to Legal Officer, US Naval Station, Sangley Point, December 24, 1954, RG 313, Sangley Point, 1957, No. 17-37377, Box 5, NARA, San Francisco, CA.

US officials at Sangley Point ultimately dismissed Carlos's credibility and concluded that what she experienced was simply "normal" in local bar culture.⁴⁴⁷ BMC Stevens, the naval officer charged with evaluating Carlos's case, disclosed an "off the record" remark by a Cavite police officer that Carlos was the "estranged wife of a Commander of the Philippine Navy." This became evidence used against her claims that intimacies with military personnel gave certain bar owners power.⁴⁴⁸ Including this offhand remark in Carlos's file added to the evidence against her character. Her previous intimacy with a naval officer and their subsequent estrangement undermined her ability to make an objective claim about the biases she was experiencing against her establishment. The fact that she was not on good terms with her husband became a means to discredit her by suggesting it as a slight against her character. While Carlos attempted to use sexual immorality to critique the abuses of shore patrol, assumptions made about her own intimate relationships discredited her and caused officials to drop her case.

The case of Josepha Carlos reveals a gender double standard regarding what was considered deviant behavior for US military officials. As a woman making an accusation against US servicemen, Carlos's claims held no power despite the detailed examples of inappropriate sexual behavior that she provided. In other cases, such as that of the *Avvenire* couple, letters written by US servicemen held weight to take action against Filipinas despite vague language. The same held true in other cases where the accused was a woman. Ultimately, Josepha Carlos's experience demonstrates that the policing of morality was meant to protect interests defined by men and the military establishment.

Conclusion

⁴⁴⁷ E.A. Stevens, BMC, USN from Legal-Investigation Office to Legal Officer, US Naval Station, Sangley Point, December 24, 1954, RG 313, Sangley Point, 1957, No. 17-37377, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA.

⁴⁴⁸ E.A. Stevens, BMC, USN from Legal-Investigation Office to Legal Officer, US Naval Station, Sangley Point, December 24, 1954, RG 313, Sangley Point, 1957, No. 17-37377, Box 5, NARA San Francisco, CA.

Throughout the postwar period in the Philippines, Filipino nationalist authors, filmmakers, business owners, and ordinary citizens mobilized the figure of the Filipina prostitute for their own political and economic advantages. For heteropatriarchal nationalists, the figure of the Filipina as a military prostitute served as a symbol of complicity with US imperialism, postwar underdevelopment, and moral decline. The threat of Filipino emasculation by women's sexual immorality supported anti-imperial and anti-capitalist arguments that used gender to reassert power. Through films, novels, and short stories, these nationalists imagined postwar politics involving Philippine elites, the US government, and the people through an erotic triangle. While the Philippine state approved of treaties and agreements that perpetuated economic inequality and a neocolonial relationship between the US and Philippines, elites in power selfishly prostituted the nation at the expense of the people.

Adapted from the language of the US military, and previous constructions of Filipina femininity, the figure of the prostitute acquired different meanings for those who lived near US military bases. The writing of Caviteños reveals that many who worked on or near Sangley Point US Naval Base saw the US military as an important source of economic support and opportunity. Even if they viewed American servicemen as a corrupting influence in Philippine society, their letters strategically treated the US military as an ally for local development and individual gain. Some, such as Josepha Carlos, ultimately found that there were limits to this strategic alliance. Filipinas who attempted to reproduce the language of deviancy against US servicemen found that power only flowed in one direction.

Despite the fact that anti-colonial nationalists, business owners, and civilians worked from different vantage points, they each reproduced a gendered language of deviancy to achieve their goals. Each weighed the threat of indecency in relation to the US military presence advocating for what they believed to be best for their community, or themselves. Nonetheless, their actions

reinforced the stigma against Filipinas in intimate relationships with US servicemen. As a result, women were subjected to increased policing and profiled in their places of work. At times, the vague threat of deviancy lead to the loss of one's livelihood. As the next chapter discusses, even for women who were able to legitimate their relationships through marriage struggled to overcome social stigma and deep feelings of shame.

PART THREE

Reparative Intimacies

Chapter 4

“She was innocent”: Filipina War Brides and the Women Left Behind

Many Filipina War Brides remembered how quickly their husbands proposed marriage and how little time they had to consider whether or not to marry. Carmen Mapano described meeting her husband in her hometown of Agne, Pangasinan, and recalled that he went there specifically “to find someone he could marry.”⁴⁴⁹ He was working at a nearby US naval facility at the time. Although a complete stranger, Mapano’s husband went to introduce himself at the school where she was teaching. “It did not take long,” she recalled. “After three days,” she said, “he talked to my parents about marrying me... there was no mention of love.” Another woman named Carmen Valerio described meeting her husband while in line for rations in San Juan, Rizal.⁴⁵⁰ His unit was in charge of distributing rice, pork, and beans. When Valerio went up to the front of the line to complain about people cutting ahead of her, she explained, “[he] gave me the rations as well as other goods.” The very next day, the serviceman went to Valerio’s house to visit and a week later he proposed. For many Filipinas, the opportunity to meet a serviceman, marry, and migrate to the US appeared unexpectedly and in the middle of their daily routines. Some, such as Sixto Vinluan, claimed that their meetings lacked traditional romance.⁴⁵¹ Vinluan explained, “Actually, there was no courtship...His people and my parents talked about the marriage. I had no part of the talks at all.”

⁴⁴⁹ Vince Reyes, “Second Wave Immigrants: Enter the War Brides,” *Ang Katipunan*, April 1984, 11.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

In many of their stories, Filipinas made impulsive decisions to marry, yet these decisions significantly changed the course of their lives.

The fact that so many Filipina War Brides recalled hasty marriage arrangements raises questions of agency, desire, and intimacy. What social, familial, economic, or personal factors influenced the engagements of Filipinas to US servicemen? How did prospective brides feel about marriage and possibly migrating to America? Did they trust the men who wanted to marry them? In some cases, Filipinas claimed that they had little say in the matter. Their parents or other family members claimed to know what was best for them and as obedient daughters they followed what they were told. Others expressed indifference about marriage or said that they were too young to accurately recall what they wanted at the time. The majority of Filipina War Brides married Filipino men in the US military, many of whom were living and working in the US prior to the war.⁴⁵² Most of these men were considerably older; in some cases, they were double the age of their fiancés. Interracial couples met in the Philippines under similar circumstances, but often felt pressure from the US military and Philippine society to reconsider their decisions to marry (as discussed in Part One). While many of these men left their Filipina fiancés and children behind, sometimes they did not intend to. Sometimes couples lost each other and would spend years searching for one another in the hope of one day being reunited.⁴⁵³

This chapter focuses on the experiences and subjectivities of Filipinas who developed intimate relationships with US servicemen from 1946-1965. The voices of Filipinas are nearly absent from official archives such as the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), which houses US military records. Despite the fact that the US military meticulously documented the

⁴⁵² See “Filipino Migrants in San Diego, 1900-1946” by Adelaida Castillo, San Diego History Center, San Diego, CA.

⁴⁵³ The American World War II Orphans Network (AWON) website includes a bulletin where families left behind search for their loved ones. Some posts are from Filipinos looking for US servicemen that they lost touch with after the war. <http://www.awon.org/discus/messages/board-topics.html>

management of Filipina bodies, behaviors, and marriages in the Philippines, their records leave little trace of what Filipinas themselves thought or felt. The community archive of the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHHS) maintains a handful of oral history transcripts. FANHHS leaders interviewed Filipino community members in Seattle in the 1970s and '80s, some of whom immigrated under the War Brides Act of 1945. Yet even within these sources, the stories of Filipinas reveal silences, gaps, and many details unanswered. In 2017 after obtaining IRB approval, I prepared to conduct oral interviews with Filipinas in Olongapo, Philippines. I located women who worked in establishments catering to the US servicemen in the 1960s in Subic Bay, the former US naval base. Some of the women I spoke with developed intimate relationships with American men. In my interviews, women's stories sometimes revealed inconsistencies. At times their stories changed, or they did not want to have on record details that they had previously told me before the interview started. Other times, they preferred not to answer questions about their past relationships. Women perhaps felt uncomfortable sharing personal details with someone they did not know very well. It is also very possible that feelings of pain, regret, and shame influenced their ability to talk openly about the past.

Despite the absences, silences, and overall difficulty of finding source material, this chapter attempts to make sense of women's experiences and subjectivities. I assume that one can never have a "complete" archive and that one's emotions and memories of events shift in different contexts and change over time. Patterns emerge even from fractured sources. Many of the narratives of Filipinas emphasized their youth and naiveté when deciding to marry and expressed indifference towards the US and migrating to America. These narratives conveyed innocence, passivity, and a lack of desire for courtship with Americans. In contrast with the trope of *hanggang pier* (discussed in Chapter 3), which characterizes Filipinas as ambitious, manipulative, and lascivious, the oral histories of Filipinas reveal an effort to counter gender and sexual stereotypes. This chapter argues that the trope of

hanggang pier influenced the ways that Filipina fiancés and War Brides narrated their experiences, shedding light on their subjectivities. Filipinas who developed relationships with US servicemen, married and unmarried, discussed the ways that they felt judged by Filipinos who blamed them for society's problems as well as the ambivalence that they felt about leaving. The social stigmas of being *asawa ng kano* [the wife of an American] or *naiwan* [left behind] weighed heavily on these women, shaping how they talked about themselves and their lives many years later.

Archival absences and silences account for the research methods I pursued in writing this chapter and the types of sources that I gathered. These include archived oral histories, published interviews, articles from newspapers and magazines, oral interviews, ethnographic notes, and conversations with women in Olongapo, Philippines. Additionally, I incorporate letters written by Filipino parents to their daughters found in the US military's archive of marriages in the Philippines. These letters provide a rare glimpse of how Filipino families felt about their children marrying US servicemen. The archival limitations of this project reflect the difficulty of obtaining knowledge about the lives and desires of Filipinas in the postwar Philippines, but they also allow us to tell a different story.

Not surprisingly, the experiences of Filipina War Brides are understudied in the historical scholarship. Historians have focused mainly on the experiences of War Brides from Japan, Korea, Germany, and other parts of Europe.⁴⁵⁴ When Filipina War Brides are mentioned, it is within a celebratory narrative of Filipino American community development.⁴⁵⁵ Due to the absence of

⁴⁵⁴ Although there is a lot of scholarship on Filipina migration, gender, and labor, there is little on War Brides. One exception is Emily Lawsins's, *"Beyond Hanggang Pier Only": Filipina American War Brides of Seattle, 1945-1965*, (MA Thesis, University of California Los Angeles), UCLA special collections. For histories of other War Brides, see Friedman, Barbara. *From the Battlefield to the Bridal Suite: Media Coverage of British War Brides, 1942-1946*. University of Missouri Press, 2007; Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. *Issei, Nisei, War Bride*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986; Rabson, Steve., *Okinawa's GI Brides Their Lives in America*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2017; Zeiger, Susan. *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.

⁴⁵⁵ FANHS estimates that between 1945-1965, 16,000 Filipina women immigrated as "War Brides." See FANHS, *In Our Auntie's Words: The Filipino Spirit of Hampton Roads*, (San Francisco: T'Boli Publishing, 2004), 135.

Filipino women in the US before the war, the migration of Filipinas represented an important shift for historians of Filipino America marking the ability of Filipinos to plant roots in the US.⁴⁵⁶ Before the war, Filipino immigrants were mainly male laborers and students who were unable to bring their families with them. Moreover, anti-miscegenation laws in the early twentieth century attempted to limit the access of Filipino men to white women and other women of color.⁴⁵⁷ Concerns about the sexual threat of Filipino men fueled white nativist racism leading to Filipino repatriation.⁴⁵⁸ Very few histories consider the experiences of War Brides alongside those of women who ultimately did not marry despite the shared experiences between these two groups. In fact, histories of marriage and prostitution in the Philippines tend to be treated separately in the historiography. This chapter challenges the false binary between legitimate wives and illicit women, documenting the ways that social stigma connected Filipinas in the Philippines and in America.

I begin this chapter with an overview of the theoretical and methodological frameworks that inform my research and analysis. These frameworks draw from debates in feminist studies concerning oral history methods, researching women in postcolonial contexts, and working with affect. In the sections that follow, I analyze the oral history transcripts of Filipina War Brides and the letters that parents wrote to their children in the 1940s and '50s to grant them approval to marry. These sections brings us closer to understanding the range of perspectives that influenced Filipinas' decisions to marry at the time they were being courted. The final section examines the oral interviews I conducted with Filipinas in 2017 in Olongapo City, Philippines. In these interviews,

⁴⁵⁶ Zeiger, Susan. *Entangling Alliances: Foreign War Brides and American Soldiers in the Twentieth Century*. New York: New York University Press, 109; Emily Lawsin, "Beyond Hanggang Pier Only": *Filipina American War Brides of Seattle, 1945-1965*, (MA Thesis, University of California Los Angeles), UCLA special collections.

⁴⁵⁷ For a history of anti-miscegenation in the US, see Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford, England; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁴⁵⁸ See Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Migration and Empire in Filipino America, 1898-1946* (New York: NYU Press, 2011).

women reflect on their past experiences and share some of their memories of the US military presence in the Philippines.

A Feminist Approach to Oral History and Subjectivity

Feminist scholarship on oral history, postcolonial histories, and theories of affect inform my methods and analysis in this chapter. Oral history has long been an important feminist practice. Since the 1970s, feminist oral historians have turned to oral testimony as a method to counter institutional histories that have excluded the voices of women and other marginalized people.⁴⁵⁹ The feminist approach to oral history emphasizes that women have the power to tell their own stories. The experience of narrating affords the interviewee the opportunity to self-reflect and have their perspectives validated.

Feminist oral historians have argued that gendered patterns of speech influence the ability of researchers to elicit the voices of women. Gluck and Patai remind us that oral history privileges masculine forms of communication, particularly when interviews focus on “activities and facts” rather than on “feelings, attitudes, values, and meaning.”⁴⁶⁰ Studies of gender in educational settings have shown that girls are taught to use speech to create intimacy and equality, and that they tend to talk more about issues that reflect “who they are” rather than “what they do.”⁴⁶¹ By contrast, boys learn to use speech to assert dominance and attract an audience while focusing on their own roles in activities.⁴⁶² Feminist oral historians bring awareness to the ways that women communicate and how their forms of communication shape their life narratives. Gluck and Patai assert, “We will not hear

⁴⁵⁹ See Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, (New York: Routledge, 1991).

⁴⁶⁰ Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, *Women's Words*, 30, 35.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, 30. Other scholars such as Anderson et al argue that the “subordinate” social position of women also influences their life narratives. Women “vacillate between ‘me’ and the ‘not me’”. See Kathryn Anderson et al., “Beginning Where We Are: Feminist Methodology in Oral History,” *The Oral History Review* 15, no. 1 (April 1, 1987), 103.

⁴⁶² Ibid, 30.

what women deem essential to their lives unless we legitimate a female socio-communication context.”⁴⁶³ In the Philippines, the intersection between gender, language, and class is also important for understanding how one’s narrative might be affected. I draw from these feminist insights regarding communication patterns to think about how power dynamics shape how conversations are structured between interviewees and myself.

Yet my approach diverges from that of feminist oral historians in terms of conceptualizing silences. Many feminist oral historians treat oral histories as testimonies. They are a means to overcome silence and are meant to stand alone as legitimate historical narratives. My experience, however, has taught me that conducting oral histories tends to introduce more silences. As Alessandro Portelli put it, “The most precious information may lie in what the informants *hide* and in the fact that they *do* hide it, rather than in what they *tell*.”⁴⁶⁴ In my analysis of both oral interviews and archival documents, I consider the perspectives represented as partial, artificial, and performative. Following oral historians Boyd and Ramirez, I look for meaning in the gaps between what is said “beyond forgetfulness or deliberate falsification.”⁴⁶⁵

Queer oral historians have pointed the ways that oral history, especially when involving trauma, leads to interviewees creating “cleaner” narratives. Boyd and Ramirez state that in practice oral histories are

often subject to the desire (on the parts of both the interviewer and narrator) to tell a neater, cleaner, less shameful version of one’s life. Sex is one location that makes it clear that what we get out of oral history is not *the* truth but *a* truth that is tailored by both the story the narrator tells and the countless stories she chooses to forget.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶³ Ibid, 31.

⁴⁶⁴ Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 53. Italics are in the original text. Thank you to Melissa Borja for pointing me to Portelli and lending me this text.

⁴⁶⁵ Nan Alamilla Boyd and Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 29.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid, 122. Italics are in the original text.

By considering oral history not as testimony but as a practice that exposes shifts in memory, individual interpretation, and the influence of emotions on narrative, oral histories shed light on women's subjectivities. The "tailored" truths that might be spoken or unspoken communicate how individuals come to understand themselves through the experiences that define their lives, and in ways that are different from how they might comprehend their identities. In this sense, subjectivity emerges through the act of storytelling.

My approach to oral history as a feminist process of subjectivity raises the issue of validation. While feminist oral history emerged as a practice that would validate women's stories, what happens when a woman's narrative is anti-feminist? As feminist scholars Kitzinger and Wilkinson have asked, "What does it mean to 'validate' the experience of a woman who says she's never been sexually harassed?...How are we to address the experience of such women, which does not fit our (feminist) theoretical frameworks?"⁴⁶⁷ Kitzinger and Wilkinson point to the problematic ways that feminist scholars have avoided the problem of validating "anti-feminist" perspectives, either by omitting data, describing women as "brainwashed," or over-interpreting anti-feminist views as a form of feminism.⁴⁶⁸ Kitzinger and Wilkinson present a critique of feminist oral historical approaches that allow data to "speak for itself."⁴⁶⁹ In other words, to be a feminist oral historian is not to validate, but to listen. Doing so leaves open the possibility for interpreting the ways that women's narratives can also be harmful to other women.

Agency in Postcolonial Feminist Scholarship

⁴⁶⁷ Celia Kitzinger and Sue Wilkinson, "Validating Women's Experience? Dilemmas in Feminist Research," *Feminism & Psychology* 7, no. 4 (1997): 556–74.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid, 568.

My analysis of women's subjectivity draws from postcolonial feminist scholarship on the question of *agency*. Questions of agency have surfaced in many fields in the humanities, including oral history and gender history. Scholars of the history of American slavery, for example, have attempted to "give" agency to the enslaved, affording them power within narratives that tend to dehumanize them.⁴⁷⁰ In feminist scholarship, agency has also been an important concept to challenge narratives that depict women as victims without the ability to control their own bodies, have sexual desires, and experience physical pleasure. Postcolonial feminist scholarship has argued that these liberal notions of "agency" tend to romanticize resistance without considering that Third World women might define agency differently.

Since Chandra Talpade Mohanty's intervention in "Under Western Eyes," which called out Western feminist treatment of "women" as homogenous victims, postcolonial feminist scholarship has elaborated on the ways that feminist approaches continue to reproduce savior narratives.⁴⁷¹ As Saba Mahmood argues, a liberal discourse of freedom and individual autonomy has been naturalized in gender scholarship, based primarily on the assumption that women in Third World nations are unfree.⁴⁷² For Mahmood, subjects are created through power, meaning that agency cannot simply be defined as resistance to domination or repression. Instead, agency is a capacity for action that subordination creates and also enables.⁴⁷³ Mahmood examines Western feminist scholarship on the veil, which has understood its reemergence in Egypt since the 1970s as a form of resistance to Western hegemony, or as a political, economic, or utilitarian move. Mahmood argues that many of

⁴⁷⁰ See, for example, Saidiya Hartman, "Redressing the Pained Body," *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America*, (Oxford UP, 1997).

⁴⁷¹ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, 1991.

⁴⁷² Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 13.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid*, 18.

the women in her research who wear the veil have claimed that rather than liberal values of resistance, piety and modesty are main reasons they choose to wear the veil.⁴⁷⁴

Similarly, in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving*, Lila Abu-Lughod argues that the trope of the oppressed Muslim woman dominates Western discourse as a result of “gendered orientalism.”⁴⁷⁵ Western feminists understand religion and culture as reasons for Muslim women’s subordination. Central to Abu-Lughod’s argument is the grammar of “choice” “consent” and “freedom”—liberal agency—that Western feminists use to argue that Muslim women need to be saved. The perspectives of Mahmood and Abu-Lughod complicate the conceptualization of agency as resistance and align with recent critiques of historians of slavery.⁴⁷⁶ Postcolonial feminist perspectives demonstrate the dangers of agency as a concept motivated by a politics of resistance, and the potential for romanticizing the experiences of the oppressed or producing Orientalist analyses.

Other feminist scholars have argued for a middle ground that exists somewhere in between agency and resistance. Minjeong Kim’s concept of “embedded agency” provides an alternative lens to think about choices and actions that challenge structural constraints without romanticizing resistance.⁴⁷⁷ Kim argues that by focusing on questions about the workings of power, we might see the “interconnectedness of agency and victimization.” Moving away from a binary framework of victim/agent, embedded agency emphasizes the structural constraints that shape one’s life. In the context of examining the lives of “marriage migrants” from the Philippines to South Korea, Kim focuses on the “societal, cultural, and material pressures, especially from patriarchal ideology and practices embedded in heterosexual marriage.”⁴⁷⁸ Embedded agency therefore refers to

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid, 17.

⁴⁷⁵ Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁴⁷⁶ See Walter Johnson, “On Agency,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 113–24.

⁴⁷⁷ Minjeong Kim, “Weaving Women’s Agency into Representations of Marriage Migrants: Narrative Strategies with Reflective Practice,” *Asian Journal of Women’s Studies* 19, no. 3 (January 1, 2013).

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid, 5.

understanding women's actions as rooted in socially and culturally constructed patterns. This concept disconnects the subject and agent from liberal progressive analyses that center on individualism. Instead of labeling the research subject an "agent" or a "victim" this approach emphasizes the vulnerability of women within structures of power. In addition to Kim, other scholars of Asian marriage migrants have taken on this "in-between" agency and victimization position.⁴⁷⁹

Yet another approach is to examine the ways that feminist movements have strategically depended on narratives of agency or victimization for political purposes. As Mina Roces argues, Philippine feminists have deployed the "victim" narrative to advocate for the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act in 2003 to decriminalize prostitutes, yet at the same time advocate for women's "agency" in order to recruit new activists.⁴⁸⁰ Roces proposes a "double narrative" concept that considers the ways that discourses of agency can be both fruitful and detrimental to the causes of feminist activists in the Philippines. She states, "I prefer the term "double narrative" because these representations of women reflect two sides of the same coin; although they are contradictory, women's movements have tapped on both opposing discourses for feminist ends."⁴⁸¹ Roces proposes that rather than assess feminist discourses as either "good" or "bad" we can consider these contradictions as useful towards feminist objectives.

Moving closer to Roces's approach of examining the usages of "agency," my method throughout this chapter considers agency as a historical category of analysis. This means examining how women conceptualized agency themselves, and how they discuss the individual choices they made in the past. Instead of classifying women's actions or behaviors as resistance or agency, I think

⁴⁷⁹ See Katharine H. S Moon, *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in US-Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) and Sarah Kovner, *Occupying Power: Sex Workers and Servicemen in Postwar Japan* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013).

⁴⁸⁰ Mina Roces, *Women's Movements and the Filipina, 1986-2008*, (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 3.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid*, 3.

about how women made meaning of the actions and events that affected them. I ask, how do Philippine gender roles influence how women understand their own actions? How do gendered expectations structure women's narratives and influence their subjectivities? Importantly, I do not assume to know how women feel about their ability to make decisions, but understand their actions as embedded within larger social, economic, and political structures.

Theories of Affect

One of the reasons why the concept of agency is significant within the history of Filipina War Brides is the fact that Filipinas have been characterized as gold diggers, opportunists, and manipulators within the US military archive. Women in relationships with US servicemen are stereotypically assumed to lack emotion and treat romantic and sexual relationships as transactions that either provide money or a visa. Attention to affect in the narratives of women, and in the archives that describe women's experiences, therefore complicates our understanding of subjectivity. By considering not only what is stated, but what is felt, we might be able to reconsider the binary of victim or agent. Through the methods of feminist oral history we can ask women directly how they experienced certain events in their lives, and what it meant for them.⁴⁸² Moreover, an ethnographic approach to reading text that focuses on affect can bring us closer to understanding subjectivity.

Scholars of colonialism such as Ann Stoler have theorized about affect in the archive by challenging historians to think about the "uncertainty" and "anxiety" within imperial archival material. Stoler's concept of reading "along the grain" involves close reading of the affects of those in power, which, she argues, reveals the disorderliness and chaos of an archive that projects order and logic. Instead of reading "against the grain," a common strategy for locating traces of those

⁴⁸² Kathryn Anderson et al., "Beginning Where We Are: Feminist Methodology in Oral History," *The Oral History Review* 15, no. 1 (April 1, 1987), 98.

excluded from colonial archives, reading “along” the grain focuses on re-examining the feelings, tone, and mood of colonial administrators. In treating archival research as an ethnographic project, Stoler’s approach humanizes the subjects of colonial archives—kings, governor generals, regional officers, social engineers, etc.—and asserts that there is more to be learned from an analysis that centers affect.⁴⁸³

Close readings of affect in the archive can potentially shift our understanding of dominant historical narratives. In Stoler’s research, affect allows her to see “the state” not as an orderly and rational body, but as insecure and irrational.⁴⁸⁴ This calls for a reconsideration of whose historical actions are read as “structure” and whose are read as “agency.”⁴⁸⁵ Moreover, attending to affect, or locating “the pulse” of the archive, provides a method for understanding the logics and illogics of empire beyond what the archive is “officially designated” to contain. Stoler’s method centers on “what defines [the archive’s] interior ridges and porous seams, what closures are transgressed by unanticipated exposition and writerly forms.”⁴⁸⁶ In other words, such a method is not merely concerned with inclusions and exclusions, but with the “surplus” meanings that exist beyond the space of the text, often found in “shadowed places,” that can reconfigure our understandings of imperial power.

My attention to affect in reading archival documents such as parent letters complicates the narrative of parental approval. While official documents required parents of Filipinas to submit letters and affidavits attesting that they “had no objections” to the marriage of their daughters, their language at times reveals hesitation and anxiety. Moreover, within archival material women were required to sign documents confirming their desire to marry. In interviews women repeat that they

⁴⁸³ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 6.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

“have no regrets” about their marriages, yet also express contradictory emotions when describing their decisions to marry as “the saddest moment” of their lives. Attention to affect highlights tension and contradiction.

Another approach to affect in both archival and oral history work considers the role of the researcher and their relationship to the object of study. Feminist scholars such as Sara McClelland have argued that the bodies of researchers produce a vulnerability that can potentially point to new insights. In “Vulnerable Listening,” Sara McClelland describes how listening to interviews with research subjects who discuss a difficult topic (in her case, their sexual quality of life when diagnosed with Stage IV breast cancer) produced unanticipated emotional reactions. According to McClelland, the researcher experiences “pain, violence, and sadness” that often haunts them “long after the interviews end.”⁴⁸⁷ Rather than deny or “bracket” one’s emotion by creating psychological distance, she insists that researchers embrace vulnerability in order to glean new knowledge from affect.⁴⁸⁸

For example, McClelland felt “outrage” while listening to women’s concerns about their bodies when they were dying of breast cancer. According to their stories, women’s sex lives were not impacted necessarily because of cancer, but because of their insecurities about being fat. McClelland described how thinking about her outrage lead to new questions: “Why was I outraged for these women and not for the ‘fat talk’ I heard circulating around me every day—in classrooms, family and friends, and my own head?” She also explains that thinking about her emotional reaction was “generative” as it allowed her to “see something new about [her] own adaptation to injustice.”⁴⁸⁹ Her outrage pointed out the normalization of women being burdened by fat shame even at the end of

⁴⁸⁷ Sara McClelland, “Vulnerable Listening: Possibilities and Challenges of Doing Qualitative Research,” *Qualitative Psychology* 4, no. 3 (2017): 4.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

life. By allowing herself to feel and to think through emotion rather than against it, McClelland found productive ways to engage with her subjects.

In practicing vulnerable listening I attempt to make sense of my own outrage about women's stories. I listened to times when I felt discomfort and how my own feelings of awkwardness were present during the interview. I realized that I also felt angry, but not with the fact that the women I spoke with were left behind or missed out on the opportunity for love. Instead, I was outraged about the present economic situation of women who worked all day in the hot sun for less than \$10 a day. Most women's narratives went back to how economic survival shaped their lives. My outrage pointed to connections between women's economic exploitation and their histories with US military personnel. It brought me to think not only about the cultural context of intimate relationships, but also the intersection of political economy and the materiality of neocolonialism.

Beyond conducting interviews and interacting with research subjects, reading transcripts and archival material presents another challenge regarding the affect of the researcher. In *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Eve Sedgwick argues that suspicion and paranoia are central affects of critique that present certain limitations in readers' interpretations.⁴⁹⁰ The critical reader exposes, reveals, and diagnoses problems that are hidden beneath the surface of a text. While the critic's knowledge masquerades as "truth," a critic produces a reality that they already knew existed. In other words, paranoia is a form of anxiety about a future that is already defined, which limits the critic's capacity for curiosity. My critique of US military violence against women influenced what I thought my interviewees would feel about the US presence in the Philippines. I had to reflect on my own anti-militarist viewpoint when speaking with women whose perspectives were the opposite. Women of Olongapo were adamant that the US military return to the Philippines in order to "improve"

⁴⁹⁰ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2003), 125.

their lives. I had to find a way to maintain my critique while also remaining aware of how my emotions about the subject might limit my ability to listen.

Given the archival limitations of this project, the sections that follow bring together scraps of sources with their own deficiencies. The oral histories I draw from are based on memories from decades before. Some material I collected from magazine excerpts. At times I read the reactions of my interviewees without being able to know for sure what they meant. While reading “reparatively,” I attempt to make sense of the silences and inconsistencies by pulling together patterns that cut across women’s experiences. This approach requires an embrace of affect and a dedication to vulnerability in order to notice the complexity of women’s stories.

“Victims of Circumstance”: Creating New Lives in America

Norma Vega Castillo of Bicol, Philippines was seventeen years old when Wallace (Wally) Castillo, a twenty-five year old Filipino American in the US Army proposed marriage.⁴⁹¹ She met Wally during the postwar liberation of the Philippines, a time when Filipinos were overjoyed with the return of US troops and the end of the war. But even while everyone around her was excited by the idea that she might marry an American, Ms. Castillo was not sure of what to do. She did not say “yes” right away because Wally had received orders to go back home to Hawaii. She wondered if he would return and if he really wanted to marry her. To his proposal she responded, “When you come back, we’ll see when you come back. I’m not gonna say yes now. And, you know, you’re going on a faraway land.” Ms. Castillo did not know Wally well enough to know if he would follow through with his promise to marry her. She also did not know how she felt about him romantically. Her mother asked her directly if she was “in love” with him. She said, “Hmmm. I think so? I think so.”

⁴⁹¹ “Strange Land: My Mother’s War Bride Story,” directed by Stephanie J. Castillo. Privately Published, 2006. Alexander Street, <https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/watch/strange-land-my-mother-s-war-bride-story>.

Her mother said, “Well, you’re not. You sound—you don’t sound too sure.” Despite not knowing how she felt, Norma Castillo married Wally Castillo on February 6, 1946 when he returned to the Philippines. In her oral interview, Ms. Castillo jokingly referred to her wedding day as “the saddest day of her life.”

In the documentary *Strange Land: My Mother’s War Bride Story* (2006), Norma Castillo described the multiple social and familial pressures she faced when deciding to marry. These pressures at times conflicted with what she desired for herself. When Ms. Castillo befriended Wally, she was dating a Filipino soldier of the Philippine army. According to Ms. Castillo, this former boyfriend was so jealous and insecure that he ended up leaving her because he thought she was “falling in love with [Wally].” Wally was spending more and more time at her house getting to know her family. He would play cards and games with her relatives, and they genuinely liked him. Because he was a “Hawaiian boy,” Wally was considered a “good catch” and Ms. Castillo’s family wanted them to get married. Ms. Castillo explained,

With the advice of my sisters and relatives, I’m much better off [marrying Wally] considering the Philippines is all, you know, ruined, and there’s no future. You’re not gonna have any future like this in the Philippines. This is your break. Your chance. You know not everybody get the same chance like you. You’re one of the fortunate.⁴⁹²

While explaining that she really did not know how she felt about Wally or marriage, Ms. Castillo emphasized that her parents and siblings’ advice meant a lot to her. Her family warned her that she might not have anything left in the Philippines to look forward to, and Wally represented an escape from a war-torn country whose future was uncertain. Ms. Castillo’s close relatives were telling her how she should feel: happy, lucky, appreciative of the opportunity Wally presented. To reject his proposal would be ungrateful and incomprehensible to her relatives. Even Ms. Castillo’s boyfriend removed himself from the picture. Like other Filipina War Brides, Ms. Castillo recalled the

⁴⁹² Ibid.

disconnect between how those around her felt about her opportunity to marry an American, and how she remembered feeling.

Ms. Castillo described that the most difficult part of being a War Bride was having to leave the Philippines. As she prepared for her departure to the US, Ms. Castillo attended a three-week training course alongside other War Brides that taught her how to “act” in America. Prospective War Brides learned how to dress, wear make-up, and “look presentable.” These training sessions conveyed that women “in America” were more respectable and superior to those who stayed behind in the Philippines. Yet, even while excited about the possibility of becoming American, Ms. Castillo described how leaving brought up mixed emotions. She explained,

My family all took me to the pier, and that was the hardest thing to get up on that plank, to get up on the boat. I cried all through the trip to United States, and I'd been doing nothing but feeling sad, standing by the boat deck, and looking out and the Philippine island disappearing from view...and it was hard for me.⁴⁹³

Ms. Castillo had to leave her family, country, and culture behind. She recalled how the process of becoming a War Bride meant distancing herself from the Philippines and what it meant to be a Filipino. Doing so, she was told, meant that she would be able to live a “better life.” Everyone around her reinforced that staying in the Philippines would deprive her of opportunity. Yet for Ms. Castillo, leaving and staying did not have opposing meanings.

Like many other War Brides who migrated to the US after World War II, Ms. Castillo's experience in America did not match up with her expectations. She faced major depression in her first few years in the US. She explained, “I couldn't cope. I was always crying.” There were many things she did not know about her husband including his temper, immaturity, and his expectations of her as a wife and mother. Like her family back in the Philippines, Wally pressured her to feel

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

grateful about being able to immigrate to America. Whenever he noticed that she was sad or it seemed that she regretted their marriage, he would tell her,

You would be selling *bangus* [milk fish] if you had not married me, you would've married somebody that is plowing the rice field. You would be harvesting corn and rice and you'd be selling in the market⁴⁹⁴

Wally's response not only invalidated Ms. Castillo's depression, but it also presented a false binary of prosperity and happiness in America and poverty and depression in the Philippines. He told Ms. Castillo that she should have felt grateful for her opportunity to migrate, assuming that she would have ended up poor if she had not married him. Wally's response aligned with those of Ms. Castillo's family, which communicated to her that being a War Bride "saved" her. These value judgements left no room for other ways of imagining a satisfying life in the Philippines. Ms. Castillo's retelling of Wally's response communicated the feeling of being trapped. There was no real choice for Ms. Castillo because those around her only saw two options and nothing in between.

The narratives of Filipina War Brides such as Ms. Castillo reveal the feeling of being torn between one's own desires and the expectations of others. Considering her feelings of isolation and the lack of understanding of those around her, Ms. Castillo described herself as a "victim of circumstances."⁴⁹⁵ She questioned whether she made the right decision to marry given that she was unsure of what she wanted. Yet, she felt the social pressure to believe that marriage and living in the US were her only options. In her oral interview, Ms. Castillo stated that she no longer regrets living in the US because she had "grown accustomed to life" in America. However, her story revealed moments of ambivalence that significantly impacted her emotional well-being.

For other fiancés of US servicemen, the stigma of being *hanggang pier* added to social and familial pressures. Women's narratives reveal that they actively distinguished themselves from the

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

stereotype by emphasizing their innocence, youth, and inexperience. In an oral history interview, Rosalina Castillo Regala remembered fearing the judgement of family members and neighbors when it came to being seen with a US serviceman.⁴⁹⁶ When asked in the interview how she met her husband, she talked about how she had to be careful about appearing indecent. She mentioned that when approached by a serviceman as a young girl, she felt that she could not respond to him. Ms. Regala explained, “they think when you are too much, like you are flirting, they think you are a whore or you are a slut.” She continued, “So that is why it’s hard. So when I got married, well, that’s it. I was only seventeen years old.”⁴⁹⁷ In her oral history, Ms. Regala revealed how stereotypes about women being sexually aggressive with US servicemen influenced her decision to marry. Even if she was not sure about her feelings, she knew she did not want to be thought of as indecent.

When Ms. Regala’s husband asked her to marry him, she responded “Love? What are you talking about this love? You know, you are in the service... Pretty soon, you will go to the war and you will feel sorry you have somebody that is left, you know.” In her narrative, Ms. Regala explained how she felt anxious not knowing if her husband was going to leave her behind. The fact that he was in the military signaled to her that she should be on her guard. She went on to explain that she felt too young for marriage and that she did not love Mr. Regala at the time he proposed. Throughout her retelling of the story, Ms. Regala emphasized her physical and emotional detachment from her husband and her distrust of his promise of commitment.

Ms. Regala’s story about being kissed on the cheek in public illustrated her innocence. One day out of the blue, Mr. Regala kissed her on the cheek right outside of her house. She reacted with surprise and disappointment: “I could not—when he kissed me, I started crying and I told myself, ‘How did he do that? He tricks me,’ you know.” She explained,

⁴⁹⁶ Joseph Galura and Emily Lawsin, *Filipino Women in Detroit, 1945-1955: Oral Histories from the Filipino American Oral History Project of Michigan* (Ann Arbor: OCSL Press, University of Michigan, 2002).

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

I told him, 'You did that bad thing. My uncle was just living across the street, maybe they have seen us and he will tell my mother that I am meeting somebody on the street. And—my mother—I will surely get it.' My brothers would get him, you know. I told him, 'If you do not go to my parents and tell them about what you did, then I will jump in this river and I will kill myself.'

After that, Mr. Regala went straight to her parents and asked for her hand in marriage. They got married shortly after. Ms. Regala described herself as reserved and hesitant when it came to love, displays of affection, and deciding to marry. She needed her husband and parents to agree that it was the right thing to do even though she also acted in ways that showed approval of his courtship. Mr. and Ms. Regala had been writing friendly letters to each other for two years without informing their parents. Ms. Regala explained, "We are writing each other. But we don't go together, he comes to my house and talk to me, but we don't, you know, go out." She expressed multiple concerns about being judged as a "slut" or a "whore." She was also unsure about Mr. Regala's intentions. Would he leave her? Would her family accept him? Maintaining a secret correspondence was the only way to safely find out for herself how she felt about Mr. Regala. Yet once he kissed her on the cheek, she no longer had the luxury of finding out how she felt. They needed to get married to preserve her innocence.

Filipina War Brides such as Ms. Regala conveyed how social judgments about women's virtue and innocence influenced their decisions to marry. In some cases, this meant that women could not express their own desires. In an oral history, one Filipina recalled, "He proposed to my mom and my dad that he wants to marry me, then all this process...it's a big meeting, you know...They agreed, so they set up the wedding."⁴⁹⁸ She remembered going along with what her family and husband had "agreed." Another Filipina, Ms. Tomasa Parinasan Balberona, described how life was difficult due to the war, and how so many students dropped out of school. Young

⁴⁹⁸ Emily Porcincula Lawsin, "Beyond 'Hanggang Pier Only': Filipina American War Brides of Seattle, 1945-1965" (2000), 19.

women in the sixth or seventh grade were preparing for marriage.⁴⁹⁹ Children were compelled to grow up much faster than normal, and their childhood innocence became a thing of the past. For some of these young girls, marrying a foreigner who promised to provide them a good life was the best their families could do for them.

Ms. Balberona herself was in her fourth year of high school when the war broke out and she had to figure out a way to make money for her family. The idea came to her one day to do laundry for soldiers in Cebu city. She said to her sister and cousin, “[w]e should go to the camp, there are soldiers out there who just came from New Guinea. And they may have some laundry to, you know, wash.”⁵⁰⁰ She remembered going from being a student to having to work with her hands to make ends meet, which was a significant life change. But while she was washing laundry she met her future husband, Homer Sheppard. Ms. Balberona explained that he was the one who chose her. “Homer Sheppard, that was his name, had just kind of liking for me,” she said. Homer told her “she’s the one,” but at the time she did not comprehend the meaning of this phrase. She found out what he meant once Homer began to send her love notes in secret. Because Ms. Balberona had resumed school by the time he began courting her, Homer would send notes through the pile of laundry that her sister would bring home to wash. Her sister would surprise her with these notes.

‘Sis, Mr. Sheppard has a little note in his shirt pocket and it is for you.’ So I used to read that and it would just say friendly things. And it somehow blossomed to something that he was interested in me, but I didn’t have that in my mind because I wanted to finish school.

In her narrative, Ms. Balberona presented her role as a passive one. It was Homer who chose her, Homer who developed a “liking” for her and Homer who pursued her. He was the one who wanted them to marry. Ms. Balberona’s narrative focused on how Homer felt about her instead of her own feelings about marriage. In the quote above, she explained how the relationship “blossomed to

⁴⁹⁹ Joseph Galura and Emily Lawsin, *Filipino Women in Detroit*, 14.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 14.

something that he was interested in me,” revealing the active role of Homer in pursuing her. In fact, she explained that love, romance, and marriage were not even on her mind at the time because she was so focused on obtaining her degree and finding work in the Philippines.

When Homer suggested that she marry him and go with him to the US, Ms. Balberona responded, “Oh no, how am I going to that?” In the first place, they wanted me to teach, in fact, I really taught school. Grade school, you know, there are not many teachers. Many of them died during the war.” She felt an obligation to remain in the Philippines because she had a whole life at home, plus a job and her family. Unlike the narrative that Filipina women only married US servicemen to escape the Philippines, Ms. Balberona explained how she felt the pressure to stay and help her country improve after the war. The idea of marriage took her by surprise because she was not yet ready to think about herself. In fact, she felt that her parents would not approve of her leaving the Philippines. When she eventually did decide to marry, she did not tell her parents of her plans. One day she eloped with Homer and set off for the States.⁵⁰¹

Many oral histories of Filipina war brides emphasized themes of innocence, youth, and passivity. Their stories reveal character traits of respectable Filipinas who desired to remain loyal to their countries and who viewed marrying a US serviceman as a risk to their reputations. The stigma of *hanggang pier* shaped the ways that they narrated their decisions to marry, and even how they distinguished themselves from other women. Rosario Rosell Mendoza recalled seeing some women literally abandoned at the pier. In an oral history interview, Mendoza explained that she arrived in America via US military transport following the War Brides Act, and that other women who were on the ship were never “claimed” by their husbands upon arrival.

There are several War Brides that came and some were not claimed by their husbands. Those Filipina girls who are married to whites, colored and they came here. And their husbands did not meet them, they just some did not go back some were put back some were

⁵⁰¹ Ibid, 16-17.

put in one place [pause] Because they did not know where their husbands, you know, they got their marriage license and some of them they got married to other Filipinos. So that is what happens. Some of them were sent back.⁵⁰²

Ms. Mendoza discussed “those Filipina girls” who were “married to whites, colored” servicemen. As she discussed her own experience of traveling and obtaining “free passage” to America, Ms.

Mendoza recalled meeting many women who were not “claimed.” Ms. Mendoza connects her immigration story to those who were left behind by thinking about what could have happened to her if she had not met her husband at the pier that day. Although her interview transcript indicated that she was asked about her own experience, the fact that she talked about what happened to other women suggested that the fear of being left behind was significant in her own memory three decades later. Ms. Mendoza reflected on a moment that could have gone a different way for her. It was a defining moment that distinguished her from the group of women who were “sent back.”

In another oral history, a Filipina named Epifania A. Sumaong remembered how hurtful the words *hanggap pier* were for her. She explained that she received criticism from her ex-boyfriend and “people back home” who assumed that she would be abandoned:

[My ex-boyfriend] wanted to get married, even though I was [already] married, because he said, ‘They will never come back.’ Yeah, because they call us ‘*hanggap pier lamang*’... You are “just up to the pier”, you know, they will never come back... Well, what can we do if they don’t come back, I said. But, it was not that way. Well, for about, maybe two to three months, we don’t hear from them. And people back home, they try to think that, you know, ‘Oh you’—you know, they’re more like they—how you say that? They tried to make fun of you because you got married and then he just left you. We got bad reputation for a while in there. We thought it’s true what they said... Quite a few of us got married in the Philippines, in our hometown. Then when we go to the post office and then no letter, naturally you feel bad. And those young adults, they will holler at you... I’m not going to repeat it. I’m not going to repeat, it’s not good.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰² Oral history interview by Cynthia Mejia, January 13, 1976, Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) Archives, Seattle, WA.

⁵⁰³ Emily Porcincula Lawsin, “Beyond ‘Hanggang Pier Only’: Filipina American War Brides of Seattle, 1945-1965” (2000), 22.

Sumaong reflected on the harsh words of people in her hometown who made women “feel bad” when they did not immediately receive letters from their husbands in the US. She mentioned the intensity of the stereotype, because not only would family members and neighbors “gossip” but people would “holler” at women on the streets. Nearly forty years after immigrating to the US, her memory of being teased was so intense that she could not say the words out loud. This was an emotionally significant part of her experience of being a War Bride.

Social and familial expectations, which were also influenced by stereotypes of women being abandoned, put pressure on Filipinas who made decisions about marriage to Americans. Women who married and became War Brides described themselves as “victims of circumstance.” They struggled with weighing their own feelings and desires against the expectations of others. They may have chosen to leave home and make new lives for themselves in America, but for many women who reflected on their decisions to marry leaving was not easy and it may not have been the only good choice. For them, leaving did not guarantee happiness and an escape from the stigmas associated with marrying a US serviceman. The narratives of Filipinas revealed mixed emotions about marriage and migration, but also a sense of peace that came from the passage of time. Despite the moments of sadness, shame, and pain in their narratives, women insisted that they lived without regrets. Their stories add nuance to dominant narratives about War Brides and women left behind that have treated women’s affective experiences as black and white.

Sacrificial Love: Parents Support GI-Filipina Marriages

As required by US military policy, parents and family members in the US and the Philippines wrote letters in support of their child’s marriage. Like the narratives of War Brides, these letters revealed ambivalent feelings. Parents in the US expressed concern about what marriage in the Philippines would mean for their child’s citizenship. They emphasized their acceptance of a Filipina

daughter-in-law, however, they made clear that they did not want their children to live permanently in the Philippines. By contrast, letters from Filipino parents expressed anxiety about their daughters leaving home and marrying an American. Even while offering support, these often heartfelt letters conveyed mixed emotions. Parents were hesitant about how marrying foreigners would change their family dynamics although they also wanted to see their children find happiness and security. If their daughters seemed secure in their decisions, parents were willing to give up what they desired for them. The tone and mood of these letters expressed what I am calling *sacrificial love*, an emotion that links the experiences of diasporic subjects and their families. Sacrificial love entailed making personal sacrifices such as the loss of intimacy and connection in order to support the emotional and economic well-being of their children. Migration affected not only the identity of the one who traveled, but also had an emotional impact on those who were left behind.

The US military's archive of parent letters is uneven. The application process required US servicemen in the Philippines to submit letters of support from their families, if they were between the ages of 18-21, following Philippine marriage laws. Those aged 21-25 were required to submit letters of advice. These policies were not consistently enforced within the US Army and Navy, and the archive does not always include parent letters in the applications of servicemen. Some files included parent letters even though both parties were over the age of 25, and some files with underaged applicants did not include letters.⁵⁰⁴ My analysis here is limited to 67 letters I gathered supporting the applications of 48 couples. Out of the 48 couples, the race of the US servicemen were as follows: 6 Filipino, 4 Mexican American, 17 Black, and 13 white. For 8 of the couples, the race of the serviceman is unknown.⁵⁰⁵ The letters analyzed here do not represent the viewpoints of

⁵⁰⁴ It is also possible that letters were destroyed or simply lost.

⁵⁰⁵ More research is necessary to verify the race of these US servicemen.

all parents, but rather provide a glimpse into how some felt about their sons or daughters' marriage. The dates of these letters range from 1947-1949.

When daughters were engaged to other Philippine nationals, either Philippine Scouts or US Army soldiers, parents were less hesitant about the marriage.⁵⁰⁶ Most of the letters written by parents of brides marrying Filipinos concerned the immediate future, especially finances and logistical issues involved with wedding planning.⁵⁰⁷ One mother of the bride, Rosa Dolores, wrote to her future son-in-law Eulegio Aca-Ac, a Philippine Scout, discussing expenses: "I will not go beyond the present high sky [sic] prices of things needed for [her wedding]."⁵⁰⁸ Rosa's letter focused on costs, and was written to establish an agreement between Eulegio and his mother, Benita, that they have a "simple wedding." In Benita's letter to Eugelio, she expressed that she was concerned not with costs but where the wedding would take place. She wrote, "In regards to your plan to marry there in the city, we have no objections as long as the girl you choose is of good reputation. You know the life in the city as I was with you, full of temptations around..."⁵⁰⁹ She pointed to the fact that a city wedding might raise eyebrows as to the morality of the bride, associating her with the "temptations" and sinful lifestyle that stigmatized urban areas near US military posts. Yet, Benita was more concerned with how her son's choice of location might shape how the bride was perceived. She ultimately trusted that her son had found a respectable girl and was not concerned about the marriage itself. The letters of Rosa Dolores and Benita Aca-Ac reveal how Filipino families negotiated and worked together to plan "successful" weddings in the Philippines.

⁵⁰⁶ Philippine Scouts were a military organization created in the Philippines to serve under the US Army. They were first created during the Philippine-American War to fight against the Philippine Revolutionaries. For more on the origin of the Philippine Scouts, see Allan Marple, *The Philippine Scouts: The Use of Indigenous Soldiers during the Philippine Insurrection, 1899*, (US Army Command and General Staff College, 2016).

⁵⁰⁷ In my archive, the 7 application files of Filipino Americans (with US citizenship) do not contain letters from parents, perhaps due to the fact that these men were above the age of 25 except for one who was 23. I am unable to make a comparison between Filipino American and Filipino parent letters due to this lack of documentation.

⁵⁰⁸ Rosa Dolores to "Ely," July 19, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵⁰⁹ Benita Villamor y Tamayo, July 19, 1947, Letter to Eugelio, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 76, NARA College Park, MD.

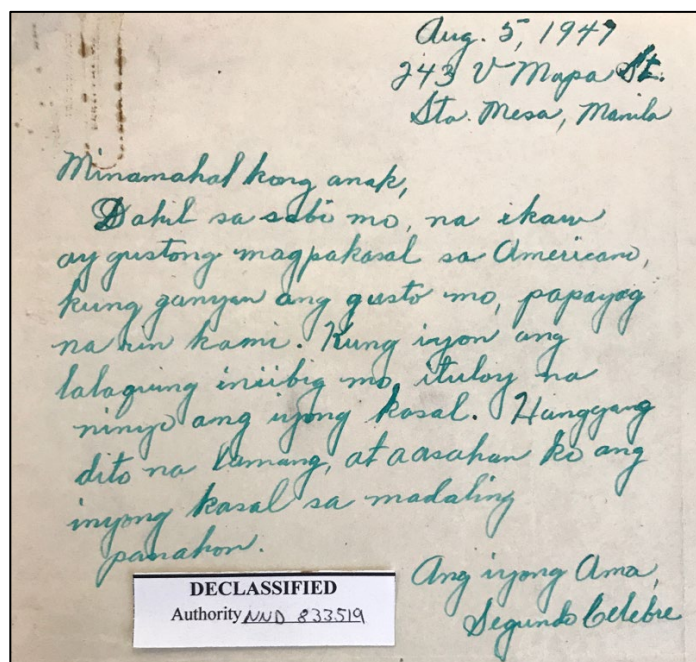


Figure 19: Handwritten letter from Segundo Celebre to his daughter, August 5, 1947
 RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78, NARA College Park, MD

Filipino parents expressed much more hesitation and doubt about their daughters who were in interracial relationships. Segundo Celebre, the father of twenty-four-year-old Matilde Celebre carefully worded his letter to his daughter in Tagalog. He wrote, “*Dabil sa sabi mo, na ikaw ay gustong magpakasal sa Americano [sic], kung ganyan ang gusto mo, papayag na rin kami. Kung iyon ang lalaking iniibig mo, ituloy na ninyo ang inyong kasal*” [Because of what you said, that *you* want to marry an American, if that is what you want, we will allow it. If that is the man that you love, we will move forward with your wedding.]⁵¹⁰ Segundo wrote that he was willing to go along with what his daughter wanted, explaining that he listened to what she told him (“*dabil sa sabi mo*”) and would be willing to support her if she had already made up her mind (“*kung ganyan ang gusto mo*”). Notably, Segundo referred to the prospective groom, Jake Breedlove, as “an American” (“*Americano*”) without using his name. His letter was focused on his daughter’s *decision* to marry rather than on wedding plans. Not using the

⁵¹⁰ Segundo Celebre, Letter to Matilde, August 5, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78. My translation.

prospective son-in-law's name, calling him "an American" and not including a congratulations or a blessing in the letter, which was typical of other parent letters, suggested that Segundo had doubts about the marriage. His wording implied that he was still grappling with his daughter's decision to marry.

Other Filipino parents expressed similar doubts about their daughters marrying foreigners.

F.T. de la Paz wrote to his daughter Aurora (Pora) de la Paz in English:

Pora, pertaining to what you have said that you want me to come there in your place due to the fact that your are going to married [sic], well, its up to you for I'm still under uncertainties. If you think that its for your own benefit you could go along. Whatever you wish, any way you are old enough and I think you could tackle a living only if your place is quite near, perhaps I can go, but I'll be coming to pay you my extra visit. Please tell Kenneth that I accepted him with my whole heart that he shall be my son in law.⁵¹¹

Pora's father, like Segundo Celebre, also centered on his daughter's decision to marry. He made a clear statement about his doubts ("I'm still under uncertainties") even though he did not explain what these were. In the end, de la Paz wrote that he would accept his future son-in-law, Kenneth Ransom, but his letter did not read as strongly as others who expressed enthusiasm about wedding planning. De la Paz mentioned that he would be able to attend the wedding if their place was "quite near." His support of their marriage was contingent upon his daughter's "benefit," indicating that he would overlook his concerns if the decision was the best one for his daughter's future. De la Paz further stated, "I think you could tackle a living," indicating the importance of Pora's economic security. Parents such as de la Paz and Segundo Celebre found it difficult to support marriages if they knew it meant losing their daughters. Many of these women came from poor families who would find it difficult if not impossible to visit after their daughters immigrated to the US.

⁵¹¹ F.T. de la Paz, Letter to Pora, April 26, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 85, NARA College Park. While he signed with the initials F.T., the full name of Aurora's father is unknown. De la Paz most probably spoke English as his second or third language.

In lieu of submitting personal letters to their daughters, some Filipino parents sent affidavits that formally declared their support. It is impossible to know from these notes how the family felt about their daughters' decision to marry foreigners, since most included only a sentence declaring parental approval. Perhaps parents preferred to submit formal notes to conceal their opinions about their daughters' relationships. Those that wrote personal notes made their feelings more visible. For example, a mother named Celina wrote to her daughter, "If you are asking me about married [sic] by the GI...If you like it well, be okay with me."⁵¹² The mother expressed that she was "okay" with the marriage but did not express enthusiasm. Another mother wrote, "[This engagement] is quite a news to me, but, well, you are of age now, so you can do what is best for both of you."⁵¹³ Rosie Gonzales's mother was surprised that her daughter had gotten engaged, and her support of the marriage was subdued.

Other parents were more expressive about their emotions. The father of a Filipina named Dolores wrote, "We cannot express our feeling of getting married to an American. That is a very long way, and we can't dare you to be far away from us. But if you do loves him [sic] and he to loves you [sic], then be always sweet, good and loving wife for him."⁵¹⁴ Dolores's father accepted that his daughter wanted to marry, but he expressed sadness and disapproval of her leaving the Philippines. As these examples suggest, parents either revealed mixed emotions in personal letters or submitted formal notes of approval. Marriage to American men was not something Filipino parents wholeheartedly trusted, yet they ultimately they signed the papers. They made loving sacrifices in accepting their daughters' decisions.

Filipino parents who strongly supported their daughters' interracial marriages were typically concerned with virtue. For example, Francisca Quason wrote that her daughter Dorothy had

⁵¹² Letter to Celina, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 82, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵¹³ Ms. Gonzales to William Bostick, May 15, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵¹⁴ Mr. and Ms. Dayaganon to Dolores, February 15, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 79, NARA College Park, MD.

become pregnant and that it was “not right to bring a child into the world without a legal father.”⁵¹⁵ For Ms. Quason, her daughters’ pregnancy made legal marriage a more pressing issue. In another case, the sister of the bride wrote, “glad to know that Johnnie Carter is going to marry you. I know you are in the family way and I hope you will be married soon.” Marriage was seen as the only option to recover a Filipina’s reputation and ensure that her child was taken care of. Yet it was not only pregnancy that raised moral concerns. The parents of Josephine Lamos gave their consent for their daughter to marry because she had been living “in sin” with a soldier named Roosevelt Gray “for two years.”⁵¹⁶ When her parents found out about their living arrangement, they wanted them married right away. As these letters demonstrated, morality played a role in how parents and family members assessed the sacrifices involved in supporting their daughters’ marriages.

The parents of soldiers writing from the US also expressed hesitation about their sons’ marriages to Filipinas. Many letters from US-based parents were brief, stating that they were “okay” with marriage but that they did not want their sons to live in the Philippines. US parents welcomed prospective daughters-in-law, viewing their upcoming marriages as an opportunity for their sons to return home. Many offered money and other forms of support such as finding a place for the new couple to live. In these letters, there was not much difference in tone or mood based on the race of the serviceman. Families of Mexican American, Black, and white soldiers discussed themes of family reunification, connection, and anxiety in their letters. Most parents were supportive yet raised concerns about the couple’s future if they did not return to the US.

The mother of Rudy Frausto, a Mexican American soldier in the Army, wrote her son about the family’s recent trip to visit relatives in Mexico.⁵¹⁷ She also responded to Rudy’s request for a letter

⁵¹⁵ Francisca Quason to Whom it May Concern, January 7, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 81, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵¹⁶ Apolina Lamos and Milquiado Geron to “Sir”, February 29, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 81, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵¹⁷ Rudolph Frausto, undated, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 80, NARA College Park, MD.

of support. She stated, “Well here I am sending you the papers you ask me to get for you. I hope they are alright. I hope now you can come home so Please [sic] do it right away.”⁵¹⁸ Rudy’s mother drew a connection between sending Rudy’s official documentation required for his marriage and him coming home. Another mother wrote directly to her prospective daughter-in-law offering her support, “dont be ashamed [sic] to tell me every thing, I am your mom too.”⁵¹⁹ These mothers longed for greater connection with their sons and their future families. Antonio Gomez’s mother stated, “all the boys ask about you. want to know when are you coming home. you will be home this year wont you. I hope so any way.”⁵²⁰ Again, parents made a connection between their son’s engagement and the possibility of him leaving the Army. Jessie Gonzalez’s parents made a similar statement: “I have no objections to the marriage of my son S/Sgt. Jessie Gonzalez to Severa Haber of 830 Herran, Malate, Manila, I only wish for him to come to the states again. I don’t wish for him to be away from home all the time.”⁵²¹ The structure of this letter emphasized that the most important thing the Gonzalezes cared about was that their son return home.

Black families were just as expressive about their sons not settling in the Philippines. Willie Bostick Jr.’s father wrote, “So Son if you want to marry her. You have our permission to do so. But I am not in favor of you living over there you can marry the girl and send her home with us and we will take care of her until you come.”⁵²² Mr. Bostick was clear that his son’s decision to marry was not an issue but that he did not want his son to be away from home. The mother of Charles Brooks expressed a similar sentiment: “To my opinion, I think she is very nice. I wish he will be lucky enough to marry her and reach my home safely.”⁵²³ For parents such as Bostick and Brooks,

⁵¹⁸ Letter to Rudy, date unknown, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 80, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵¹⁹ Victoria Ross (Gomez), date unknown, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 80, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Mr. and Mrs. Felipe Gonzalez to Jessie, May 2, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 80, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵²² Mr. Bostick to Willie Bostick, September 10, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵²³ Alice Brooks to Charles Brooks, February 9, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78, NARA College Park, MD.

marriage represented an opportunity to imagine their sons returning to civilian life and raising a family. This image would have seemed more abstract if their sons remained single.

Mothers of Black soldiers also indicated that they would welcome their prospective daughters-in-law with open arms. Edith Brownlow asked her son, “When she is sent home will you be with her. The reason why I asked is I would liked [sic] to know how she will get home.”⁵²⁴ Even in cases where parents knew that their sons would not be able to go home due to their deployment, they were enthusiastic about the possibility of their daughters-in-law being sent “home” to be with them. Gertrude V. Hunter gave her son James enthusiastic approval: “We only hope that he will bring her here with us to live and not stay away so long.”⁵²⁵ Joseph Briggs’s mother, Morisda, wrote, “Send your wife home. She would be so much company and help to me. Please send her if she wants to come. Tell her she will be treated right. She will never want to go back over there to stay any more.”⁵²⁶ Morisda welcomed her son’s wife into her home, emphasizing that she would not regret her decision to leave the Philippines.

Notably, many families of white servicemen offered support in terms of money and sending the new couple American goods. They also requested that their sons contact them more regularly, communicating their desire for increased connection. Joe De Rusa wrote to his son, “You certainly have my permission to get married and I wish you all the happiness in the world... Now Don, please write me a long letter by return mail and tell me all about it. Give my love to Carina, Dad.”⁵²⁷ De Rusa expressed enthusiasm to be included in the events of his son’s married life. In exchange for granting his support, he asked his son to write him so that they could build a stronger relationship.

⁵²⁴ Edith Brownlow to James H. Brownlow, February 5, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵²⁵ Gertrude V. Hunter to James J. Hunter, December 29, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 81.

⁵²⁶ Morisda Briggs to Joseph Briggs, August 23, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 78, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵²⁷ Joe DeRusha to Donald DeRusha, February 2, 1949, RG 554, Entry A1 1464, Box 343, NARA College Park, MD.

White parents often requested greater contact with their sons and wanted to be in touch with their prospective daughters-in-law. Gordon A. Hale's mother wrote:

Now Gordie, we are only asking a favor in return, and that is for you and Emalia to write us a weekly letter telling us what you are doing and how you are getting along...Now the only other thing I am going to ask of you is to have you and Emalia go and have a nice Photograph taken right away. I want to have it framed and put on the piano, so please do that right away and send it back Air Mail—First Class as I want it right away. I will have it framed here if you want, but anyway I want one to put on the piano right away.⁵²⁸

Gordon's mother asked for two things in return for her letter of support for his marriage application. The first that he write weekly, which may have been out of the norm for Gordon at the time, and the second, that he and his fiancé Emalia send a photo for their family piano. Gordon's mother also wrote a letter to Emalia personally, stating that she accepted her as her daughter and that Emalia would be considered "one of us."⁵²⁹ She also reiterated that she wanted frequent written communication and a photograph for the piano. The fact that Gordon's mother repeated twice in her letter to Gordon and once in her letter to Emalia that she wanted a photograph taken for their household suggested that she was not only excited about her son's marriage and wanted a greater connection to him, but she was ready to show off the marriage. Displaying a photograph in one's home, especially as a centerpiece on living room furniture, indicated that this mother was more than okay with guests and extended relatives becoming aware of Gordon's interracial relationship.

Compared to parents of Latino and Black soldiers, parents of white soldiers discussed more often how their prospective daughters-in-law would fit into their American family. They either explicitly stated that their daughters-in-law would be "accepted" or they made it clear that they held reservations about their son's decision to marry in the Philippines. Interracial marriages were still outlawed in some states in the late 1940s, creating fear and anxiety for some parents about the Filipinas' ability to adjust into American society. White parents in particular were concerned with the

⁵²⁸ "Mother" to Gordon A. Hale, April 6, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 81, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵²⁹ "Mother" to Emalia, April 6, 1948, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 81, NARA College Park, MD.

assimilability of Filipinas and the difficulties that their sons might face when returning with an Asian wife.

Edward W. Hurst's mother wrote a letter directly to her future daughter-in-law, Pilar, stating, "I guess you will be surprised to see this letter from Edward's mother. He asked me to write you. He said he was going back to merry [sic] you. If you marry, you will be welcome here and we want you over here."⁵³⁰ This quote was the entirety of Edward's mother's letter. Her note was straight to the point, clarifying that Pilar would be "welcome" and wanted in the Hurst family's home. Not all white parents were as welcoming as Edward's mother, however. The mother of Jessie Wescott spent four whole pages detailing family dramas, including the details of a female relative's domestic abuse by her husband. The only part of the letter that mentioned his prospective marriage was the last sentence in which Ms. Wescott wrote: "well you wanted to know what would I say if you brought your girl home well I prolly wouldn't say any thing it is your privilege if you think you like her enough I think she is quite nice looking."⁵³¹ Ms. Wescott mentioned her son's marriage in an afterthought, communicating indifference about his decision to marry.

The kinds of things that parents in the US wrote tell us something about their previous and current relationship with their sons. They expressed approval and support in a variety of ways. Some were indifferent while others enthusiastic, and some parents were willing to share homes and economic support. These letters point to the issues that American and Filipino families were most concerned about. Would the marriage provide their child an opportunity to return or remain at home? Would their interracial relationship be accepted by society? Even when read within an institutional procedure, these letters shed light on the feelings of both American and Filipino families regarding GI-Filipina marriages, and the difficult decisions that couples made about their

⁵³⁰ "Edward's mother" to Pilar, December 7, 1947, RG 554 A1 1457, Box 81, NARA College Park, MD.

⁵³¹ Ms. Wescott to Jessie Wescott, October 26, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 87, NARA College Park, MD.

futures. While American families put pressure on their sons to return home, Filipino families grappled with the sacrifices that came along with permitting their daughters to leave.

While parents in the Philippines and US both expressed support of their children, their letters represent distinct vantage points. American parents conveyed inflexibility in the vision they had for their son's future family. Their sons would not "go native" and become Filipino, but instead their Filipina daughters-in-law were expected to assimilate to American culture. These parents were explicit that they believed Filipinas would not want to go back to the Philippines, and that they would be better off in America. In their letters, they remained adamant about developing their relationships with their sons and their future families and could not imagine their sons leaving home. Yet in the Philippines, Filipino families assumed that they would lose their daughters. Filipino parents prioritized the security of their daughters' futures, sacrificing their own desires for her opportunity to find happiness and economic stability. Marriage to an American was also a means to protect their daughters' virtue and prevent her from being labeled *naiman* or left behind.

Very few parents mentioned love. Most framed their child's decision to marry in practical terms, expressing both anxiety and hope. They questioned what marriage would mean for future opportunities, economic stability, and respectability. Despite coming from different vantage points, American and Filipino parents communicated that immigration to the US offered Filipinas opportunities that were difficult to ignore. The letters of Filipino parents reveal the ways that sacrificial love became normalized. They expected that their daughters needed to leave, and although they did not want to lose them they also hoped that their engagements would bring them security and a better life. While these letters were performative, they also reveal a genuine attempt to do what they believed was best for their daughters' futures. Parents made loving sacrifices, which meant grappling with their biases and anxieties to think about the emotional and economic well-being of their children.

Sweepers, Street Vendors, and Tsismis [gossip] in Subic Bay

Even with parental support and a completed application, in some cases interracial couples did not obtain permission to marry. Hellen Manalo, the prospective bride of Calvin Gregory, wrote to her fiancé's commanding officer explaining that they had been waiting more than two years to get married.⁵³² According to her letter, Gregory proposed in 1945 after the war, but then he was taken out of active duty after he became hospitalized. Manalo and Gregory were prevented from marrying because he was "not on active duty." Then, when he reenlisted, Gregory was sent to Korea. The couple continued to wait until they were granted permission to see each other again. What happened to Manalo also happened to many other Filipinas who were engaged to marry US servicemen. Even while their applications for marriage were not officially rejected, US military officials found other ways to delay or postpone their marriages. In some cases, servicemen were never able to return to the Philippines. Sometimes, servicemen would spend years attempting to reconnect with the women and children they left behind.

In 2017, I set out for Subic Bay, Philippines to interview Filipinas about their relationships with US servicemen who never returned. I used multiple methods to find interviewees, including contacting women's organizations such as Gabriela, visiting the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization (VFW), handing out flyers in malls, and talking to workers inside of the Subic Bay Freeport Zone (SBFZ). Locating a specific population (Filipinas who lived in Olongapo and developed relationships with Americans during the 1950s and 1960s) was difficult for multiple reasons. I was asking women to talk about memories that were taboo and that made them feel judged.

Although I speak Tagalog, I have an American accent and am a student at the University of Michigan. My positionality and the perception of Filipinos that I am wealthy because of my ties to

⁵³² Hellen Manalo, August 30, 1947, RG 554, Entry A1 1457, Box 81, NARA College Park, MD.

the US led some to distrust how I would represent them. On a few occasions, a potential interviewee agreed to an interview, and after scheduling a visit to meet in Olongapo they never showed up. Sometimes interviewees would change details of memories during the interview, revealing inconsistencies in their narratives. In my experience, asking questions about women's relationships with Americans in Olongapo put interviewees on the defensive. Overwhelmingly, the women I interviewed attempted to convince me that Filipinas who worked in bars were innocent, that they weren't "sinners," and that they had the best intentions for their families. The assumption that I might believe that bar girls and hostesses were "sinners" revealed that the trope of *hanggang pier* continued to shape how women told their stories.

I was most successful finding interviewees at SBFZ. Workers at SBFZ informed me that many of the women who worked in bars, clubs, and restaurants in Olongapo during the time of the US military bases now "volunteered" as sweepers, cleaners, and gate keepers within SBFZ. Some of these women developed romantic and sexual relationships with US servicemen. After the Americans left, women who worked in the entertainment and restaurant industries had to find other work. They were left vulnerable because they had depended on the presence of American customers in the area for job opportunities. Many ended up working for SBFZ because the mayor of Olongapo, Richard Gordon, created a program that allowed locals to volunteer as workers for one or two years, with the possibility of eventually securing a paid position. Volunteers did not receive a salary but their transportation costs [*pamasabe*] and meals [*pagkain*] were included on workdays.

One woman who I will call "Teresita" was a worker in Gordon's program who swept and cleaned a park inside of Subic Bay Freeport Zone every morning. Teresita was originally from Florida Blanca, Pampanga and moved to Olongapo city with her mother in 1965 when she was in the third grade. Her mother decided to relocate for work, and she found a job doing manicures and laundry for hostesses, women who worked inside of the bars and clubs that catered to US

servicemen. I asked Teresita to tell me about the women that she and her mother worked for.

Teresita assumed that I was referring to prostitution, and in her response began by defending bar girls:

nalalaman ko na hindi naman labat, hindi labat ginagawa [pause] ganoon. Kaya maayos naman. Hindi labat ng tao may kasalanan na [pause] ang ano lang nila, nagtatrabaho para kumita. Yung iba naman, kaya sila nagkakatragtraabo ng ganon na pagpasok ng club, para sa mga anak nila. maraming naging kaibigan ng mga naging hostess. Na naging asawa ng kano. Ayos!

[I remember that not everyone, not everyone was doing [pause] like that. So [Olongapo] was decent. Not every person sinned [pause] they just worked in order to make money. Others, the reason why they had to work like that, to work inside the clubs, it was for their children. Many became “friendly” with those who became hostesses. Many also married Americans. Fine!]

Teresita’s memory of bar girls and hostesses brought up the negative stereotypes that many of these women faced. She revealed that bar girls were often misunderstood by the rest of Philippine society and by foreigners who did not understand the financial constraints and sacrifices that they had to make to care for their children. Teresita insisted that they were good people, not sinners like they have been stereotyped to be. Highlighting the fact that she was friends with hostesses represented an attempt to reduce the stigma of women who worked in bars. Her expression at the end [*Ayos!*] indicated that she was enthusiastically in favor of interracial relationships, particularly ones that were most judged in Philippine society due to their origin in the bar setting.

Teresita also reflected on what life was like during the time of the Americans. She focused on the economy and she mentioned memories of Americans crowding the streets.

Ab noon, maraming ano rito. Maraming mga Kano na nagtatrabaho, at ang mga Pilipino na...ano rito sa loob ng base noong, Naval base noong kapanahon na noon. At saka parang nag madali ang bubay noong. Kasi nga, parang ano yung mga ano, over yung ano overflow ang tao na madaling kumita, madaling ano. Kabit maliliit ng sabod noon, maliit ang value ng dollar pa noon. Pero, maganda ang ano ng Olongapo noon

Ah, back then, there were many *ano* here. There were many ‘Kano that were working, and Filipinos that... *ano* here inside of the base back then, Naval base back then. And it was like life was faster back then. Because, it was like an overflow of people that made good money, it was easy to [make money]. Even if salaries were small then, so was the value of the dollar. But, Olongapo was nice back then

This conversation with Teresita was similar to my informal conversations with townspeople in Olongapo, men and women, young and old. The people of Olongapo remembered the American period very fondly, and strongly expressed that Americans should return. People told me about how easy it was to find work when there were sailors in the city and how they did not have to worry about finding food to eat. Life was happier back then from this perspective. Teresita's memory of the "overflow" of people who made good money aligned with this narrative. In contrast to views of Olongapo as a "sin city," a reputation that the city gained in other parts of the Philippines due to prostitution and the American military presence, people of Olongapo had a different narrative. They remembered having good jobs, less stress, and happier times.

At the end of our conversation, Teresita told me that if I wanted to meet women who worked in the bars, I would just need to return to Subic a few hours later when another sweeper worked in SBFZ. She said, "*meron naging asawa ng 'kano, nagkaroon ng anak, mamaya mga alas ocho nandiyan. pero humag sasabihin na... ano...may anak siyang negra*" [there's one woman who became the wife of an American, had a child, later at 8 o'clock she'll be there. But don't say that... I mean, don't say that she has a Black child."] Teresita said in hushed tones that this co-worker of hers—let's call her Luz—would be able to tell me about the American period because she really got to "know" the Americans. I knew that Teresita was in support of women such as Luz, and that revealing information about her was not out of malice. At the same time, Teresita was quick to offer details about her romantic relationship and status being *naiwan* [left behind] by her husband. Moreover, she specified that her daughter was Black. Teresita's *tsismis* [gossip] while in an attempt to help me with my research, was reminiscent of how neighbors would whisper about women in relationships with US servicemen when they walked down the street. She spoke in a whisper and was careful not to reveal too much, yet she was also not shy about speaking about something considered taboo.

Teresita's description of Luz as a bar girl revealed how the stereotype affected women's narratives in Olongapo. The language that Teresita used also reflected passivity and an intention to represent these women as innocent. Teresita stated that "*meron naging asawa ng kano*" [there was someone who became the wife of a 'Kano']. Being the wife of an American was something that happened to her, not something that she chose for herself. Moreover, Teresita's insistence that I not reveal what I learned about Luz (that she has a Black child) suggested what Teresita found to be possibly offensive. She did not want her friend and coworker to know that she was telling others about her personal affairs. The fact that Teresita mentioned Luz's daughter made me connect back to her previous statement about women who would do anything for their children. Women who worked in bars did so "*para sa mga anak nila*" [for their children]. She defended women like Luz from potential judgement by foreigners like me while at the same time revealing that Luz had a secret that she might be ashamed of.

I found Luz sweeping in the base at around 8am. She was wearing a Pearl S. Buck Foundation t-shirt over long sleeves and a large hat to protect her from the hot sun. Although it was still morning, it was already very hot and humid. Luz swept as I introduced myself and told her that Teresita had mentioned her to me. I gave Luz my one-minute explanation about my project, stating that I was interested in interviewing women in Olongapo about relationships between Filipinas and US servicemen during the time of the American military bases. She said that I could interview her, but that she would need to keep sweeping since she had more work to do. I let her read and sign my IRB forms in Tagalog, which she did. I started by asking open-ended questions about her background and life in the Philippines. Luz talked about growing up in Samar, Leyte, one of the poorest provinces in the Philippines. Life in Samar was hard. When I asked her what brought her to Olongapo she said she had some family in the area and she moved to find work when she was 26 years old. When I then asked what kind of work she did, she paused before saying that she had no

work. Luz then shifted the conversation to talk about her sister who was now living in the US and who sent her money to pay for her living expenses. Luz brought the conversation to her present situation and did not answer my question about the time she first moved to Olongapo. I asked her again what she remembered about her early days in Olongapo, during the time of the Americans. That was when the conversation shut down. She said she could not remember anything. She said she had no memory of that time, suggesting that she did not want to talk about it.

Despite initially agreeing to be interviewed about the topic, Luz grew more uncomfortable with our conversation once I asked about her life in Olongapo and her interactions with Americans. Luz gave short answers and denied knowing any Americans. She kept repeating, “*wala lang, wala akong naalala. Basta yung alala ko maraming ‘Kano ganon lang.’*” [Nothing really. I don’t remember anything. I just remember that there were a lot of ‘Kano that’s all.] I regretfully did not ask her to describe how she was feeling in that moment, and if she wanted to stop the interview. I simply assumed based on her short responses that she felt uncomfortable. I took the fact that she was no longer making eye contact and that she was more vigorously sweeping to mean that she did not want to continue our conversation about that time period in her life. To change the subject, I asked Luz about the Pearl S. Buck foundation t-shirt she was wearing, hoping that maybe that would be an ice breaker. She mentioned that she had a daughter who received a scholarship from the foundation. She seemed proud of that fact. I did not ask any further questions about her daughter being Amerasian, because I could sense that she was uncomfortable with the topic of Americans. If what Teresita told me about Luz was true, that she had a child with an American serviceman and that he left them, this was the kind of information that would be considered shameful in Philippine society. I thanked Luz for speaking with me, and she continued to sweep.

My interview with Luz did not go the way that I expected it to. It occurred to me later that in Filipino culture, it is rude to say “no.” It is more acceptable to make an excuse rather than to tell

someone directly that you do not want to do something that they ask of you. This is especially true when there is a power dynamic involved, where one feels indebted to the one making the request, or when one feels inferior. It is possible that as someone who is middle class and speaks English, some interviewees felt a sense of obligation to talk to me even if they did not really want to. This was very difficult for me to decipher because women said “yes” to an interview even after I went through “informed consent” forms. In one case, I found an interviewee through the women’s organization, Gabriela, and the woman agreed to meet me in Olongapo. When I attempted to confirm the time we were meeting, the response I received was “we will see.” She then mentioned that there was a lot of traffic where she was staying and it would be hard to reach me that day. When I tried working around these concerns, she kept offering more reasons why she could not meet. In this case, because we were communicating via text and not face-to-face, it was perhaps easier to avoid my request for an interview even if she did so indirectly. When meeting women face-to-face, and in their place of work, I learned to read tone, body language, and shifts in the conversation to gauge women’s discomfort with the interview.

I returned to SBFZ the next day and ended up running into Luz again. Around lunch time I found her and her co-worker “Carmen” taking a break in a nearby shed that they used as a lunchroom. I stopped in to say “hi” and they both seemed to be in a good mood. They were very chatty, and Carmen agreed to be interviewed by me with Luz in the next room eating her lunch. Carmen echoed many of the same things as other women in Olongapo in our conversation. The presence of Americans brought work opportunities that were never fully replaced after the US naval base closed in 1992. Carmen was born in 1955, one year after Luz, and moved to Olongapo from Zambales in her twenties in search of work. When she got to Olongapo she said she made money as a *labandera* [laundry woman] and that her main customers were “hostesses,” women who worked in bars. She described how profitable this work was.

Kasi malakas pa noon dahil may mga Kano 'kano nga. At mga hostess hostess dito sa Olongapo may kilala kami kinukuba namin yung damit nila dito doon kami naglalaba sa amin, sa Subic, dahil may ilog. Ngayon, ang trabaho ko noon dalaga hanggang sa asawa ko nanganak, yun din ang trabaho ko pa, wala maka...mahanap buhay yun lang. nakaraos kami sa paglalaba lang.

Business was still booming because there were many Americans then. The many hostesses here in Olongapo, we would take their clothes and we would wash them there in our place in Subic because there was a river. Now, my work from when I was still single until I got married and had kids, that was still what I did for work, there wasn't [another] way to... a way to make a living...

Carmen made a living washing clothes, which she attributed to the large presence of Americans. She recalled how they were able to make it by back then, when businesses were booming, compared to after the Americans left when she was barely making enough money to eat. Like many others I spoke with in Olongapo, Carmen felt that for people without a formal education [*"bindi ako naka eskuwela"*] there were not many opportunities for employment except for when foreigners were present. After the US bases were closed in 1992, Carmen faced financial hardship much like others who depended on the presence of Americans in Olongapo.

My conversations with women in Olongapo about the American period always went back to stereotypes about bar girls or hostesses. After Carmen explained her financial situation and how she felt Olongapo depended on the presence of the US military, I asked her a broad question about what she remembered of US servicemen in Olongapo at the time. She responded, saying that she did not really leave the house much, and that they (her family) did not go into town to watch movies or go around [*parang steady lang kami sa lugar namin dahil, bihira, siyempre, ang kwan ko noon, walang pasyal pasyal na ponooran ng cine, bindi pa namin naman--*]. Carmen's speech was then suddenly interrupted. Luz entered the room with her lunch and said, *in English*, "She was innocent." Carmen agreed and continued, "*ignorante kami noon...*" [we were ignorant] because they did not have many interactions with US servicemen or know of what was going on in town. She continued to tell me that she lived very far from the barrio where Americans would frequent bars and clubs. It would have cost her 10

posito to get there, which she did not have. Meanwhile, Luz stayed silent and continued to eat her lunch.

The moment when Luz interrupted Carmen to claim “she was innocent” gave me another clue to help me understand Luz’s reaction to our conversation the previous day. The conversation was entirely in Tagalog. Yet, Luz’s declaration was firmly in English. The relationship that Filipinos have to the English language has always been subject to controversy. Some believe that English is a superior language, and that those who speak it hold more power, privilege, and wealth. Sometimes when English is spoken with Tagalog, the parts in English are the ones that Filipinos wish to emphasize. Luz used English to make a statement and to make sure that I understood what she meant. What she said was important. From Luz’s standpoint, my question for Carmen suggested that I may have thought that having relationships with Americans made Filipinas indecent. She seemed to think that I was judging them.

Luz and Carmen made perfectly clear how they felt about US servicemen. The conversation turned to how they felt about American men dating Filipinas. Carmen explained that if she had a daughter, she would not allow her to date anyone in the US military. She said,

...hindi ako papayagan, kasi ang military puro mga ano, alam mo na ang mga kwan. Minsan iiwanan lang ang mga asawa nila...hindi mo alam kung ano ang kalagayan ng [pause] mamaya, ang anak mo lalo kung isang anak na babae di hanggat medyo lasu lasunin mo ng, yun lang, hindi mo ma alis kung mahal din noon

I would not allow her [to date], because the military is all, you know what I mean. Sometimes they leave their wives... you don’t know what the situation is [pause] later on, your child, especially if it’s your daughter, it’s not until you poison them little by little, you can’t get it out of them if they’re in love

Carmen especially feared for women in relationships with US servicemen, arguing that they had a reputation for leaving Filipinas behind. She would attempt to prevent this from happening from the start by banning her daughter from being near any US servicemen. The idea of being *naiman* or left behind was a realistic concern for women like Carmen and Luz who knew of so many who were

abandoned. Their knowledge of abandonment was based on stories they heard from many other women they knew. From Carmen's perspective, it was the servicemen who could not be trusted. You never knew what their situation was. Were they married? Did they already have children in the states? Carmen challenged stereotypes of women as aggressive and ambitious by talking about the broken promises and lies that she believed US servicemen committed.

Another woman I met in Olongapo challenged stereotypes of *banggang pier* in talking about her personal history. I met Imelda outside of the SBFZ as she was selling snacks. She carried around bags of *chichirija* [snacks] such as chips, peanuts, corn nuts, and other junk food. We became acquainted after I bought a bag of chips and she noticed my accent. Often times people I met were curious about me because of how I spoke Tagalog with an American accent and would ask questions about why I was in Olongapo. I told her about my project and she said that she used to be engaged to a US serviceman named Jim. Imelda agreed to be interviewed and we found a place to sit under the shade while she told me her story. She was very animated. She smiled and laughed a lot throughout the interview. Although many unfortunate things happened in her life, Imelda said that she was happy with how things turned out even though she lost communication with her fiancé, Jim.

Imelda grew up in a very poor area of Southern Leyte. She moved to Zambales, an area close to Olongapo, when she was young to live with her "*tiyabin*" [aunt] who was married to a US serviceman [*"may asawang Kano"*]. Her aunt took care of her because she had the means, and life in Leyte was too difficult. Imelda could not remember her exact age when she moved to Olongapo, but she remembered the year was 1977 and that she was around 20 years old. At that time, she met Jim, a white American sailor who became her fiancé. She told me his full name and asked if I could search for him on the internet because she did not know how to. She was not sure if he was even alive. She said, "*buhay o patay, kung may asawa ok lang! masaya ako!*" [living or dead, if he has a wife, that's ok! I'm happy!] Imelda was curious to know what happened to Jim, because he left the

Philippines in the early 1980s and she had lost contact with him. Just as Imelda expressed curiosity about what happened to him, she also assured me that she was fine. She attempted to reassure me that Jim leaving did not negatively impact her emotional state.

Imelda's descriptions of her relationship centered on care. When I asked if Jim was in the US Navy or Marines, she responded, "*Basta, pumupunta siya dito, naghabatid ng pera, pambayad ng babay, ilaw, tubig, at pagkain ko. kasi nagw-waitress ako noon sa bayan dito. Dito rin.*" [No matter, he would come here, he would send me money. Money for rent, for lights, for water, and food. Because I worked as a waitress in the city here. Right here.]⁵³³ When remembering her relationship, Imelda talked about being supported financially. She described her relationship as mutually beneficial. When I asked her if she wanted to move to the US she stated in a sweet tone, "*Oo naman, para maalagaan ko siya, ganon*" [Of course, so that I could take care of him, like that]. Imelda explained that she did not need to be with him to be happy, but that they cared for one another.

Despite the fact that Imelda was engaged to be married, Imelda did not tell her family about Jim. She was in a committed relationship, but because of how she met Jim she knew that her family would never approve. She explained,

bindi nya nameet. wala naman silang na ganyan eh. yung nanay namin. wala. gagalit niya nag-ago-go- ng club eh. sinasabi ko lang na eh nag-w-waitress. pero i-isa lang ang papel. di ba? isa lang ang licensia. waitress, ago-go, entertainer. isa lang.

[My mother] never met him. [My family] doesn't have anyone who did "something like that." Our mother, no one. She would get mad if she knew I became an "ago-go" dancer of the club. I would just tell them that I was a "waitress." But it's just one paper. Right? It's just one license whether you're a waitress, ago-go, entertainer. Just one.

Imelda explained that her parents never met Jim because they would not approve of her being an ago-go dancer. For Imelda, her lie to her parents about what she did for work was connected to why they had not met her fiancé, Jim. She feared that they would become suspicious of what she did for

⁵³³ "Basta" is difficult to translate into English. It has a connotation that what was previously stated is irrelevant.

a living, and they might find out the truth. Imelda did not want to anger her parents, so a lie was justified. At the same time, she wished for this lie to be true. She mentioned the fact that female employees had to be licensed locally in different types of jobs if you were a waitress, a dancer, or an entertainer. It did not matter if one job was more associated with prostitution or not. All women were required to submit health records and pay a fee for licensing that ensured they were free from sexually transmitted infections. Imelda used the regulation's conflation of different forms of female labor, and assumptions about female sexuality, to cover up the fact that she was an ago-go dancer. For Imelda, being a dancer in a club was shameful even if she knew she did nothing wrong.

Imelda's narrative evaded the stereotype of *banggang pier*. She changed her profession to be a "waitress" in order to disassociate her relationship with Jim from illicit affairs. She also confessed that she changed her profession when talking to US embassy employees who interviewed her for a US visa.

naka-pasa ako sa embassy, sabi niya ganyan, "why are you like this you like the money?" o di, nagtrabaho ako. babysitter, katulong. sabi niya, sabi yung ano, pinapadala ng fiance mo? konti lang, basta may tiraban. di ba?

I passed at the [US] embassy. They said to me, "why are you like this you like the money?" Well, then I got a job. Babysitter, household help. They said, the person said, "your fiancé sends you money?" A little bit, just to have a place to live. Right?

According to Imelda, the US embassy interviewers insinuated that she had ulterior motives for marriage and migrating to the US. Their questioning revolved around the money she received from Jim, with the suggestion that their relationship was a lie. To dodge these accusations, Imelda said she had a job. She was a babysitter and worked as a domestic. She also understated how much she received from Jim by stating that she only received "a little." Imelda was not a prostitute and was not a criminal, yet she knew that in order to pass the embassy interview for a visa, she had to change her story because her relationship with Jim was suspicious to US authorities. Imelda's lies to the

embassy and to her own family center around the attempt to absolve her from the stigma of being an indecent woman.

The rest of our conversation focused on how Imelda became separated from Jim. When explaining what happened, Imelda continued to evade the *hanggang pier* stereotype. She explained,

Yung huling tawag yung 1988. hindi na ako naisip. yung binili kong plane ticket, na nakawan na ako ng labandera ko. pero nagulaw yun, noon noon. mga anak niya na hostess. ok lang sa akin. hindi ko naisip na pinabalik ko kasi mabayaran na lang ako ulit. yung sa passport. kasi nasunog...naka pasa ako, nasunog ang passport ko. 1994 nasunog. kasi yung tirahan ko doon sa Neptune, sa... yung caretaker maraming apo. pito, naglaro siguro ng posporo, o nawalansa, naluto, ininawan.

The last time he called me was in 1988. I couldn't believe it. The plane ticket I bought, it got stolen from my laundry woman. She was very angry back then. Her hostess children. But it's fine. I didn't think that she would give it back to me because she left me again. And then the passport. It burned...I passed [with the embassy interview] but then my passport was burned. That was in 1994. It's because my house over at Neptune, at the... the caretaker who has a lot of grandchildren. She has seven, and they were playing with matches. So, it burned. Cooked. Got left behind.

Imelda started out talking about how Jim had last called her in 1988, then she went on to explain that the reason why they were not together was because her plane ticket was stolen. She had passed the embassy interview, obtained a visa and a plane ticket, but then her ticket was taken from her by her laundry woman. Four years later, the house where she was living burned down and a fire destroyed her passport. She saw this fire as yet another reason why she was not in the US with Jim. It was not that Jim stopped calling or that he never visited again, but that these disasters kept occurring to prevent her from traveling. When I asked if they ever communicated again, Imelda responded, "*Hindi ako marunong eb*" [I don't know how to]. Imelda explained that their lack of communication was due to her lack of knowledge of how to reach Jim, not on their lack of desire to speak with one another.

Women from Olongapo who told me their life stories were careful to present themselves as decent, and in many cases were suspicious of how I might have been judging them. Some did not show up to interviews and others did not want to talk about their pasts. The interviews and informal

conversations that I had with women suggested that the topics I was asking about were *taboo* and sometimes made them feel ashamed. Luz insisted that her friend Carmen was “innocent” even when I attempted to be neutral. Other women changed the details of their stories in order to avoid admitting to situations or descriptions that might have associated them with indecent work or living. By closely observing the body language, tone, and affect of women, their reactions can be understood as forms of resistance to being stereotyped as *hanggang pier*. Filipinas in Olongapo wanted to convince me that they were not who society thought they were. Filipina bar girls were good mothers. Ago-go dancers wanted to care for the ones they loved. Even if they lied—to their parents or to the authorities— they deceived only to avoid unfair judgement from those who they knew would never accept them as they were. Their actions were based on resisting inaccurate judgement, discrimination, and shame.

Conclusion

The trope of *hanggang pier*, which first emerged in novels and films after World War II (discussed in Chapter 3), characterized Filipinas in relationships with US servicemen as unworthy of marriage. According to the trope, these women would eventually be abandoned by their US serviceman lovers once he realized their relationship was only temporary. Such a woman was portrayed as manipulative and motivated by greed, lust, and self-improvement. In contrast to the serviceman’s legitimate wife, the woman left behind was an anti-nationalist character who cared more about her own survival than that of her countrymen. Decades later, the *hanggang pier* trope and the stigma of being *asawa ng kano* has continued to influence the ways that Filipina War Brides narrate their experiences. Themes of innocence, passivity, and lack of desire surface in their narratives, which present their experiences as respectable and decent. As some recall, even Filipinas

who got married were never “claimed” by their husbands. These stories reinforced women’s fears of abandonment and the importance of distancing themselves from such hurtful stereotypes.

The meaning of *haggang pier* in Philippine society allows us to contextualize the role of agency in women’s narratives. The stories of Filipinas reveal an association between agency—or having choice and taking action—and improper femininity. Women’s resistance emerges in their persistent denial of playing an active role in determining their own futures. Often, expressions of proper femininity manifest in descriptions of events that happened *to* them. By emphasizing their own lack of agency, women convey innocence and respectability. The false binary of innocent War Bride and illicit woman shaped the ways that Filipinas in the Philippines and in the US responded to the discrimination and harsh judgement they faced over the years.

Some women living in Olongapo today feel that Filipino mentalities have changed regarding the *haggang pier* stereotype. According one Filipina spouse of a US sailor in her late 40s,

kung sabihin mo asawa ka ng Americano ibig sabihin nagtrabaho ka sa ganito, ganyan, pero yung kasi ang mentality ang mga Pilipino before. Pero ngayon parang ano na siya eh. Parang iba ngayon ang pag-iisip nila kasi na naman, hindi lang sa bars nakikilala ang American kundi sa online na rin, di ba? There's so many ways na-memeet mo ang mga foreigners. So ngayon mas open.

If you said you were the “wife of an American” it meant that you worked in [a bar], but that was the mentality of Filipinos before. But now it’s like it’s, you know. It’s like it’s different, the way that people think about it now. It’s not only bars where you can meet an American. You could meet online now, right? There’s so many ways that you can meet foreigners. So now it’s more open.

In an oral interview, this woman talked about her own experience being perceived as a bargirl when she first met her white American husband in Olongapo. But now she claims that the harsh judgement has faded over time. For her, meeting Americans online does not carry the same meaning as dating a US serviceman. In the 1950s, ‘60s, and ‘70s, when Filipinas stereotypically encountered US servicemen in the context of illicit sex, prostitution, and bar culture, Filipino perceptions were much more negative of interracial relationships with Americans.

Stereotypes appear to be changing in small pockets of Filipino communities. Yet Filipinas both in Olongapo and the US recall how the stigma of *banggang pier* has persisted in their memories of the past. Ideas about decency and gender from older generations of Filipinos remain present in the ways that Filipinas feel judged, even if discrimination is perceived as minimal. Many of the women I interviewed who currently live and work near Subic Bay emphasized economic hardship after the closure of the US bases, and the difficulty of providing for their children. What kind of opportunities were possible for women whose reputations were affected by their relationships with US servicemen? As the next chapter discusses, the children that US servicemen also left behind attest to the ways that racism and colorism have impacted their lives in a culture that is often perceived to be more “open” and less hostile to Amerasians.

Chapter 5

Filipino Amerasians in Olongapo: Social Stigmas and Creating Community

“*Negative yung tingin ng tao, negative labat*” [People see us negatively, it’s completely negative], Angelo explained regarding the term *Amerasian*.⁵³⁴ While recognizing that the meanings are not equivalent, Angelo made a comparison between *Amerasian* and the n-word. For Angelo, a thirty-seven year old Black *Amerasian* from Olongapo, both terms have denigrated him throughout his entire life. Because of the color of his skin, he has felt like a second-class citizen in Philippine society. Not only stigmatized as the “abandoned” child of a US serviceman and a sex worker, Angelo deals with colorism in Philippine society which discriminates against darker-skinned people. Yet, Angelo believes that by changing the meaning of these words, society will also change. He explained, “*Gumagawa kami ng positive things so that hindi naging negative lagi yung tingin ng tao sa amin. We change the words, the term they uses on us, para ano, para maging maganda*” [We are doing positive things so that the way that people look at us isn’t always so negative. We change the words, the term they use on us, so that they become beautiful]. Angelo sees a connection between the term *Amerasian* and how some African Americans in the US have transformed the meaning of the n-word to use it endearingly to connect with their own community. For Angelo, *Amerasians* in Olongapo are working towards a similar goal in order to eradicate social stigma, uplift each other, and take pride in being *Amerasian*.

⁵³⁴ Oral history interview, August 2, 2019, Olongapo, Philippines. Following IRB protocol, all individual names in this chapter are pseudonyms to protect the identities of interviewees.

In 2011, a group of Amerasians in Olongapo began to form the Olongapo Amerasian Organization (OAO) to fulfill the vision that Angelo describes. Group members also refer to the organization as the “Amerasians Movement of Olongapo.” According to the mission statement of the organization, the group aims to address issues of social stigma, discrimination, and exclusion that the Amerasian community in Olongapo faces today. The OAO hopes to empower its members to gain self-confidence, become active in their community, and to find ways to advocate for Amerasian people throughout the Philippines. Today, there are nearly 200 members in the organization lead by a team of elected officers. While the OAO is independent from other Amerasian organizations across the Philippines, they often collaborate to host events and programs together and remain in dialogue with one another regarding the social and political issues affecting Amerasians throughout the country.

The Olongapo Amerasian Organization takes on the name “Amerasian” with pride. By making the term “beautiful” and more positive, Amerasians in Olongapo challenge the relations of power and the social processes that have given the term a negative meaning. While exploring this movement’s vision and efforts to create community, this chapter centers the experiences, subjectivities, and activism of Amerasians in Olongapo. I examine the ways that Olongapo Amerasians have actively resisted and negotiated the histories that have long defined them in negative terms. By focusing on their stories, this chapter situates Amerasians within the conversation and highlights the ways that they have worked to develop their own voice. I argue that by listening to Amerasians themselves, we find that Amerasian is not merely a descriptive term—which was originally applied to the child of an American soldier and an Asian mother—but has become an identity developed through resistance and *healing*. Their narratives reveal the significance of healing to the well-being of the broader Amerasian community, even while Amerasians in the Philippines continue to fight for acceptance, inclusion, and belonging.

The literature on Amerasians in the Philippines, and other parts of Asia, is scarce. Those who have written about Amerasians in other parts of Asia have focused on issues of representation, considering that most of what we do know about this group comes from popular culture and problematic media representations. Feminist scholars have argued that dominant discourses stemming from the US government, non-profits, and documentaries obscure the agency of Amerasians. As Kyo Maclear argues, Amerasians “are more often seen through, overseen, analyzed—as problems to be solved—or, when all else fails, adopted and assimilated by the “land of their fathers.”⁵³⁵ Within the dominant discourse, Amerasians are victims saved by a “benevolent” US. Maclear further argues that media representations reproduce a discourse of “aid” rather than “rights,” thereby reinforcing what she calls “dividing lines.”⁵³⁶ Other feminist scholars have approached this problem by focusing their research on the context of imperialism, sexism, and racism that have contributed to the “plight” of Amerasians. This approach challenges simplistic narratives that obscure colonialism and give justice to the narrative of inequality. More recent scholarship has argued that the term Amerasian is a product of Cold War policies, programs, and discourses that also reinforce US imperial power.⁵³⁷

Philippine scholars have also focused mainly on issues of representation. As Jose Capino argues, Amerasians, also called “GI babies,” often represent the evils of US colonialism and militarism in film and literature.⁵³⁸ Scholars such as Capino have critiqued the ways that Amerasians have symbolized the nation’s future in cultural productions, pointing to the absence of Amerasian voices. This chapter contributes to this literature, taking the critique of problematic narratives as a

⁵³⁵ Kyo Maclear, “Drawing Dividing Lines: An Analysis of Discursive Representations of Amerasian “Occupation Babies,” *Resources for Feminist Research*, Vol. 23, Issue 4, 1994/1995, 3.

⁵³⁶ Ibid. “Dividing lines” refers to the inequality between the US as “savior” and Asia as “poor victims”

⁵³⁷ See Emily Cheng, “Pearl S. Buck’s ‘American Children’: US Democracy, Adoption of the Amerasian Child, and the Occupation of Japan in *The Hidden Flower*,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 35, no. 1 (2014): 181–210.

⁵³⁸ See Jose Capino, *Dream Factories of a Former Colony*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

starting point. I move the conversation further by engaging with the stories, experiences, and community building of Filipino Amerasians in the Philippines today. I consider how issues of representation, narrative, and agency are reflected in the narratives of Amerasians themselves and how these issues continue to affect their daily lives. Going beyond a critique of empire and anti-colonial nationalism, this chapter brings the voices of Amerasians into the conversation to tell a different story.

This chapter is based on oral histories conducted with members of the Olongapo Amerasian Organization in the summer of 2019. I located the Olongapo Amerasian Organization through a Facebook search, knowing that many Filipinos use Facebook in both personal and professional contexts as a form of communication.⁵³⁹ After messaging the organizers of the OAO's Facebook group to request volunteers to interview, I learned that the president of the organization was interested in speaking with me and learning about my research. We had a brief video call in which I explained my interest in interviewing Amerasians in Olongapo, and he expressed that he could help. He also emphasized that reciprocity was important to the organization, and that Amerasians did not want to be abandoned after the interviews were over. Maintaining an ongoing dialogue was important to the group, and they also wanted to discuss the outcome and impact of the research once it was completed.

On August 2, 2019, I met with a group of six members of the Olongapo Amerasian Organization, two of whom are leaders of the organization.⁵⁴⁰ These six individuals shared with me their personal histories, stories about their families, and their goals in life. The perspectives presented in this chapter stem from one group conversation with the six members, and individual in-depth

⁵³⁹ The name of the organization has since changed on Facebook and is no longer searchable on the site. I use the older organization name throughout this chapter to protect the group's privacy.

⁵⁴⁰ Interviewees were volunteers and were not given any compensation for participating in this project. They were reimbursed for transportation expenses to and from the cafe where we met for our interviews in Barrio Barretto, Olongapo.

interviews. The group conversation occurred over an hour of lunch and was an informal event to get to know each other. Individual interviews lasted an hour to an hour-and-a-half each. In keeping with oral history methodology, I asked open-ended questions to allow the interviewees to tell their own stories and to focus on what was important to them. I asked more specific follow-up questions for clarification on terms and meanings, however, I generally allowed the conversation to flow naturally. Four of the interviewees were women and two were men, however I did not specify a specific target gender when inviting interviewees to participate. Three participants are Black and three are White. Three participants are in their mid-to-late forties and three are in their late thirties. This means that those interviewed were born in the 1970s and early 1980s in the Philippines during Martial Law.⁵⁴¹

One of the key differences I noticed when conducting interviews with Amerasians in Olongapo was that they were open and willing to discuss their personal lives with me. This was in stark contrast to my experience with interviewing Filipinas about their relationships with US servicemen. Despite the fact that Amerasians are also stigmatized for their association with prostitution, they were much more willing to talk about their pasts. This may be in part due to the Amerasian community's experience with participating in interviews throughout their lives. During our group conversation, the members present explained that they had each been interviewed several times since they were young for reporters, filmmakers, photographers, and scholars interested in documenting the lives of the "forgotten" children in the Philippines. As several interviewees explained to me, they wanted to share their stories because they had hope that continued dialogue might bring about social change. If more people were aware of what happened to their families and

⁵⁴¹ President Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law in 1972. For more on martial law in the Philippines, see Vincent Boudreau, "The Philippine New Society and State Repression," *Resisting Dictatorship: Repression and Protest in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

how they have treated in Philippine society and by the US government, maybe advocacy could improve the situation of Amerasians in the Philippines and in other parts of the world.

In listening and re-listening to my interviews, I focus on language—what it reveals and what it obscures—through attention to word choice, grammar, repetition, and speed of speech. Most interviews were conducted in Tagalog/Taglish, however, sometimes interviewees spoke in English. Moments when there were shifts in language are not insignificant. Moreover, my analysis considers the affect, mood, and tone throughout each interview, noting the way that each individual regarded particular topics, themes, and stories. Attention to affect highlights moments in each individual's story that offer unique insights into subjectivity. The details that they include or exclude and the performance of each story adds nuance to their narratives, as each individual's unique story at times reaffirms, contradicts, or rejects popular accounts of what it means to be Amerasian in the Philippines. This analysis revealed three main themes: stereotypes, identity, and community. Each interview touched on each of these themes multiple times, moving on to another topic but then often returning.

Even while each individual has had unique life experiences considering their intersecting identities of race, gender, and class (and presumably sexuality, though we did not discuss this in the interviews) their narratives converged in their discussion of Amerasian identity and community. Exploring these themes, this chapter begins by examining stereotypes that Amerasians in Olongapo regularly face and the strategies that they have developed throughout their lives to address them. The next section explores questions of identity and community, and focuses on what these terms mean to Amerasians who often feel out of place. The final section analyzes the meaning of service within the Olongapo Amerasian Organization, and what the group intends to achieve through civic activism.

Stereotypes, Stigma, and Healing

In Philippine society today, Amerasians remain a stigmatized group that have faced many social challenges. During oral history interviews, many remembered the racist and sexist names they were called growing up, which affected their self-image, identity, and sense of belonging in the broader Filipino community. Filipino Amerasians in Olongapo discussed their experiences of being treated differently in school and at work due to their skin color. The stereotype of Amerasians as poor and in need of charity greatly influenced how they were perceived by their peers. Many also remembered how neighbors would talk about their mothers behind their back because they had an Amerasian child. Even friends, relatives, and neighbors who were supportive were influenced by stereotypical understandings of Amerasians as unwanted, abandoned, and in need of charity. This only reinforced the predominant belief of Filipino Amerasians as incapable and unwilling to make change for themselves. In dealing with these stereotypes and stigmas, Amerasians in Olongapo have developed personal coping mechanisms and have become active in changing the ways that they are perceived within the local community.

What many interviewees had in common was the experience of feeling angry and frustrated with not being able to control the treatment they received throughout their lives. Stereotypical images influence not only how Amerasians are perceived in the Philippines, but especially in the US. Bea became emotional just thinking about how her family in the United States would not even give her a chance. She repeated several times that her stepmother, a white American woman her father later married, blocked her from contacting her father. Bea recalled, "*Inisip ng asawa niya, pera lang ang kailangan ko. Yung "back pay" ba? Hindi ko kailangan ng back pay...Gusto ko lang mayakap siya.*" [His wife thought that I just needed money. Is it called "back pay"? I don't need back pay...I just want to hug

him.]⁵⁴² Bea's story reveals how stereotypes about Amerasians continued to affect her relationship with her father after being recently reunited with him. She became separated from her father because when his ship left the Philippines her mother assumed that the white sailor would never return for them. Bea's mother then moved out of their house and did not leave him their contact information, which made it impossible for her father to find them when he returned. Knowing that miscommunications and assumptions about intent contributed to her separation from her father, Bea wants to make up for lost time. Yet, distrust based on stereotypes about Amerasian poverty continue to prevent her from reconnecting with her American side of the family.

Stereotypes not only come from white Americans, but also Filipinos living in the United States. Gerald recalled that his father also remarried, but to another Filipina that he met in the Philippines and then brought to the US. His Filipina stepmother looks down on him as if he were different from her own mixed-race sons because Gerald was left behind. Even though his father had relations with his mother and stepmother at the same time, his mother is considered the mistress because she never married his father. Gerald explained how this has affected him emotionally: "That's making me angry, sometimes. That kind of situation. People will look down on you as Amerasian because of our situation, and they also have the same situation. They just in a better situation right now." For Gerald, there is nothing that distinguishes Amerasians in the Philippines from mixed-race Filipino Americans except the fact that Filipino Americans were able to immigrate to the US. Getting angry is something that many like Gerald cannot help but feel due to the lack of control that they have over the stereotypes that have long defined them.

Each individual develops their own personal coping mechanisms to deal with the stigma. Jasmine explained that over time she just had to get used to it [*"nasanay ako"*]. Growing up, the kids at school would call her names such as "*kesong puti*" [white cheese] or "*anak-araw*" [albino]. She

⁵⁴² Oral history interview, Olongapo, Philippines, August 2, 2019.

explained, “*Iba kasi kulay ko eh. Parang ano sila, labat sila maitim. Kayumanggi. Tapos ako, medyo maputi puti...Iba ang kulay nila. Tapos sasabihin ‘Ay, anak ng ‘kano yan!’* [Because my skin color is different. It’s like, they’re all dark. They’re brown. Then there’s me, a little lighter skinned. Their color is different. And then they would say, “That one is the child of a ‘kano!” Jasmine was very affected by these kinds of comments as a child, but now she does not let it get to her. Others expressed similar thoughts. Riza explained, “*Ako kasi yung type ng person hindi sinisiksik sa utak yun, no*” [Because I’m the type of person who doesn’t let those comments stick in my head, no]. For Riza, dealing with prejudice helped her to develop a thicker skin.

Many Amerasians in Olongapo expressed that part of the process of healing from the psychological effects of stigma involved recognizing their own emotional reactions to the suffering they endured. When reflecting on her childhood and teenage years, Veronica, a Black Amerasian, described herself as “*maldita*” [rude/mean]. She explained that if there was anything in her life she would change, that would be it.

Babaguhin sa sarili ko yung ano eh, yung nagiging ako, magiging "maldita." Hindi naman masyadong maldita, yung magiging magalitin ko. Na, nakakasala sa kapwa ko. Yun ang gusto kong maalisin. Hindi ko maalis sa sarili ko na, "Bakit sila ganto?" Kaya, nagiging ganito ako na magiging magalitin sa sarili ko. Kasi, sila ang umaano sa akin eh. Parang, binabalik yung karaan namin. Parang, "heheeehe" sila ganon sila. Kaya hindi ko tinanggap sa sarili ko, "bakit sila ganon?" di ba? kaya hindi ko minsan natatanggal yung galit sa dib dib ko. kasi nga, ganon sila sa amin. "Galing kayo sa mga ano!" "Galing kayo sa mga ano!" Ganon. Yung mga— mura mura ba? Doon ako na-a-ano eh. Kaya, hindi ko ma tanggap sa sarili ko na ganon.

I would change about myself the *ano*,⁵⁴³ the becoming— me becoming “*maldita*” [rude/mean]. I wasn’t super *maldita*, it was that I had become an angry person. I sinned against my neighbors. That’s what I would change. I couldn’t get over thinking, “Why are they like this?” That’s why I became like that, I became angry at myself. It’s because they were the ones that were treating me like that. It was like they were bringing back the past. They were like “heheeehe” (teasing). That’s what they were like. That’s why I never accepted it, “Why were they like that?” Right? That’s why sometimes I couldn’t remove the anger from my chest. Because that’s how they treated us. “You came from ****!” “You came from ****!” Like that. It was— profanity, right? That’s where I would get emotional. That’s why I struggled to overcome being like that.

⁵⁴³ “ano” means “what” and is often a filler word in conversational Tagalog that replaces a noun or verb.

The one thing that Veronica, now forty eight years old, regrets about her life is how she reacted emotionally as a child and teenager to the harsh words and exclusion she felt from other children and neighbors within her community. In her speech, Veronica cannot verbalize some of the words that people would call her. She says, “*Galing kayo sa mga ano*” implying that they came from prostitution, however, she does not say the words. It is too hurtful for her to repeat. Telling this story brings back some of the emotions from her childhood memories and Veronica starts to cry during the interview. Yet now as an adult, rather than become angry, she feels sadness and regret that the harshness of others hardened her and influenced her personality. While having compassion for herself in her younger years, Veronica is still upset by the years of happiness that others took from her.

Yet finding compassion took time. Veronica explains, “*naubos yung galit ko*” [I ran out of anger]. She became so angry for so much of her life but eventually she got over it. Veronica attributes this change to her attempts to understand her mother’s situation. While others would say things like “*negra, puta kayo*” [Black women, you whores], she would remind herself of how her mother did what she could to care for her and her siblings. She explained,

Natangap namin kasi alam namin na yun ang trabaho ng mother namin...Para sa amin, para mabubay kami. Walang choice ng magulang namin kundi magtrabaho sa ganiyan. Kung hindi siya nagtatrabaho ng ganiyan, wala kami kakainin.

We accepted [the verbal abuse] because we knew that that was what kind of work our mother did...She did it for us, so that we could live. Our parents didn’t have a choice except to work at the ***. If she didn’t work there, we wouldn’t have anything to eat.

Veronica validated her mother’s decision to find work in a bar by understanding her limited resources and focusing on her commitment to her children. Doing so reframes the derogatory comments of her neighbors and classmates. Those who continued to tease her were incapable of understanding their situation. Veronica now sees that they were the ones who were in the wrong.

While each individual has their own personal method of coping with stigma, issues of low self-esteem, discrimination, and exclusion, some have turned to action. Angelo explained that after feeling hurt for a long time, which made him depressed, he had to do something with his life. He turned to drinking and smoking marijuana to deal with the pain, but it was becoming a barber and finding joy in his career when things started to turn around. Bea reiterated this action-oriented solution by stating, “*Bubay ko to eh...Kasi kung hindi ka ipakita sa kanila na kaya mo, tatapatapakan ka lang nila*” [This is my life. Because if you don’t show them that you can make it, they will just trample all over you]. For Bea and Angelo it was not enough to just ignore what others said about them. They were inspired to challenge stereotypes by being proud of their resilience and drive to support themselves financially and find meaning in what they do.

Creativity has been an important outlet for many to express their feelings. Several of the group members that I interviewed discussed how writing and performing music changed their lives. Gerald performs in rap battles throughout the Philippines, which is one way that he meets other Amerasians and invites them into the organization. For Angelo, it is the thrill of being on stage and being able to put his negative feelings and energy out into the world that has helped him get through rough times. He explained that when performing onstage he would tell himself, “*burt mo* [your hurt], your burden inside, you can scream all your hate to the world. *Labat ng galit mo* [all of your anger], “*rarr!*” Performing in a band allowed him to find a release from the depression that he was feeling, and it inspired him to do more with his life. Both Gerald and Angelo continue to create and perform music that they share on YouTube and Facebook.

For many Amerasians, overcoming the psychological impact of stigma and discrimination is better achieved through community support. Recognizing this, outreach has become a primary goal for the leaders of the Olongapo Amerasian community including Gerald and Bea. As Gerald explained,

I think I have a responsibility, as an Amerasian, na ipush-through ang issue namin. [to push our issue through]. Just not—I know I don't have the resources and everything. But, I know in my little way, I can uplift Amerasians

Gerald became one of the founding members of the Olongapo Amerasian Organization because of his passion for inspiring other Amerasians in his hometown and across the Philippines. Even if Amerasians are unable to secure the legal rights in the US that they deserve as children of American servicemen, Gerald's focus in his work is to inspire. His identity as an Amerasian motivates him to continue to challenge stereotypes and stigmas that his community faces day-to-day. By bringing the group together, Gerald inspires hope in his community of a better future while also improving upon their present-day lives.

Amerasian Identity and Community Building

The group decided to call themselves the Olongapo Amerasian Organization to embrace a term that has long been used to oppress them. Embracing the term has meant applying their own meaning to the word to make it positive. Angelo explained that this was a philosophy of the group: “*negative yung tingin ng tao...so kami, as na ganito, yung nasa isip namin, yung stay positive, everything that we do*” [people's perspective of us is negative...so what we do in this position, what we try to think, is to stay positive in everything that we do]. Yet, why would the group want to reclaim a term that still has such a negative connotation instead of insisting on another term? The question of identity clarifies why it is that Amerasians have developed their own community apart from Philippine society.

Many Amerasians do not feel like they fully belong in the Philippines, and while excluded from the US they often feel unsupported and uneasy about their place. From Angelo's experience, “*Pagkabata ko, parang yun, you're treated like you don't belong here. You have to be in your place. That's why, parang, nararamdaman na, I want to feel the American dream to be there*” [My childhood, it was like, you're

treated like you don't belong here. You have to be in your place. That's why, it was like, I was feeling that I want to feel the American dream to be there]. Riza had a similar experience. She stated, "*Pwede ka sabihin Pilipino ako, kasi dito ako lumaki. Pero hindi na pa rin. You cannot deny the fact na I still have the blood of American, di ba?*" [You could say that I'm Filipino, because this is where I grew up. But it's also not true. You cannot deny the fact that I still have the blood of an American, right?]

Amerasians in Olongapo describe very clearly how they are made to feel different from a young age, mainly based on how they look. While stereotyped as abandoned by their fathers, mixed-race people in Olongapo are made to feel judged for being "illegitimate."

Part of the tension about identity revolved around the disconnect between how Amerasians view themselves and how others see them. They might feel completely Filipino—a nationalist category of identity that is not based on race or ethnicity—and yet feel unable to claim this identity for themselves. Often, the language that Amerasians used to describe this tension distinguished themselves from the category "Filipino." Veronica made this clear in her explanation of the relationships between Amerasians and Filipinos.

Veronica: *Yung mga Amerasian, kami ang inaapi. Mga Pilipino, sila ang inaapi sa amin. Kasi, ganon nga kami.* [The Amerasians, we are oppressed. The Filipinos are the ones who oppress us. Because that's what we are]

Fajardo: Hindi fully Pilipino? Totoo ba? [You're not fully Filipino? Is that accurate?]

Veronica: YES

Veronica verifies that she does not feel "fully Pilipino" because of the way that Filipinos "oppress" Amerasians. She emphasizes this by including herself in the category Amerasian with the word "*kami*" [we] and then separates herself from Filipinos with the word "*sila*" [they/them].

Jasmine also speaks of Filipinos as separate from Amerasians. She does this by questioning why Amerasians are singled out and condemned in Philippine society for being "abandoned."

Pati naman Pilipino meron din eh. Pati yung Pilipino meron din nangyayari yan. Naiiwanan din yung mga Pilipino. Halimbawa nabuntis yung babae. Nainiwanan lang yung lalaki na Pilipino. Nangyayari. Wala rin tatay yung bata. Parang yun din ako.

Well, there are even cases among Filipinos. Even among Filipinos it also happens. Filipinos also abandon [their wives and children]. For example, a woman gets pregnant. The Filipino man leaves. It happens. Now the child doesn't have a father. That's like what happened to me.

Jasmine makes a comparison between Filipinos and Amerasians like herself by pointing out how children are also abandoned by Filipinos. She insinuates that Filipinos are hypocritical for not recognizing that what makes Amerasians “deplorable” also exists within Filipino families where both parents are of the same race. In doing so, Jasmine uses the term “Filipino” as a category from which she, and other Amerasians, are excluded.

The creation of the Amerasian organization in Olongapo in 2011 became a space where Amerasians could feel a sense of belonging. Amerasians in Olongapo describe this community as a “family.” As many mentioned in oral history interviews, there were many practical reasons that drew them to attending Amerasian community events. The organization offered support and resources for locating and initiating contact with their fathers in the US. The organization also had ties to the Pearl S. Buck foundation, which has long provided scholarships for Amerasians in high school and college. Scholarships cover tuition and other necessary expenses. Yet aside from these incentives to be a part of this community, many mention the importance of acceptance and trust that makes the Olongapo Amerasian Organization so important in their lives.

Amerasians in Olongapo explain what “family” means to them, mentioning both the good and the bad. According to Angelo,

Parang naging family namin. Like the others, minsan, meron sila, natagal sila nagkakasama, 2011 or 10 like that. That's why, yan, ano, nakikita kita. Sila, meron silang nagaaway ganyan, nagaaral sila ng problema. Ako, parang wala sa akin mga ganon. Kasi, yun nga, parang family ang feeling ko sa kanila. Halimbawa, meron problema dito, tatanungin ko. Dito sila masayadong, meron [pause] Hindi ako tatampo.

It's like we've become a family. Like the others, sometimes, they have, they have been together for a while, since 2011 or 2010. That's why, the thing is, they get together. They sometimes fight, and they learn from their problems. For me, I don't have those issues. That's because I feel like they are my family. For example, if there's a problem here I will bring it up. Here, there are a lot of, they have [pause]. I don't complain about it.

Angelo does not explain exactly what the “problems” are that tend to come up within the group, but he does mention several times that the group is his “family.” He is hesitant with his words, and does not want to mischaracterize their relationship, but he also reveals that there are sometimes struggles that they face within the group. This imperfection is highlighted in other interviews as well. Bea talks about the group as a family, but also comments on the “struggle” that they experience. As Bea put it, “*may saya, may lungkot, may struggle...pero, parang ano, parang anak na lang din ako...minsan pagsasama sama kami, alam mo yun, nawawala yung problema pare parebo*” [there's happiness, there's sadness, there's struggle...but, it's like, it's like I'm also just a child...sometimes when we are together, you know what, the problems go away the same]. For Bea, a grown woman, being a part of the group makes her feel like a child in a family that is imperfect but always present. At times they have disagreements, but she understands the togetherness and completeness that the group provides as more important than the problems they encounter.

Others emphasized what made them feel comfortable with the Amerasian group. Jasmine discussed how being a part of the group meant never feeling alone (“*hindi ako nag-so-solo*”) and that she had developed another family (“*may another kong kapamilya*”). She explains that the racial mixture of the group was important for her feeling of belonging: “*Mga kapwa kong Amerasian. Black siya, Chinese... Kaya yun. Naka tuwa. Hindi lang ako nag-iisa ngayon.*” [My fellow Amerasians. There are some that are Black, Chinese... that's why. I'm happy. I am no longer alone.] As Filipino psychologists have examined, the concept of *kapwa*, the term that Jasmine uses to describe her relationship with other Amerasians, does not have a direct English translation. Although I have translated it as “my fellow Amerasians” the meaning of *kapwa* goes deeper. According to Virgilio Enriquez,

In Filipino, *kapwa* is the unity of the ‘self’ and ‘others.’ The English ‘others’ is actually used in opposition to the ‘self,’ and implies the recognition of the self as a separate identity. In contrast, *kapwa* is a recognition of shared identity, an inner self shared with others.⁵⁴⁴

Jasmine’s use of the term *kapwa* reveals how she sees herself and her identity as tied to the Amerasian community. Her feeling of “shared identity” centers around the group’s acceptance of racial mixtures, including white, Black, Filipino, and Chinese.

Many repeated throughout their interviews how the Olongapo Amerasian Organization offered opportunities for bonding and enjoying life together. These group events also included Amerasians in other parts in the Philippines such as Angeles. Veronica explains,

Pagka meron kaming okasyon, sama sama, masaya kami. Nag-iimbita yung taga-Angeles na Amerasian din. Masaya ako. Masayang masaya kami. Kain kami, nagliligo kami sa beach, inuman inuman konti, jaming jaming. Kasi pare parehas kami na wala ng ama. Kaya yun, nageenjoy kaming sarili namin.

Whenever we have an occasion, a get together, we are happy. We invite the Amerasians from Angeles as well. I am happy. We are very happy. We eat, we swim at the beach, we drink a little, we jam. Because all of us are the same in that we don’t have fathers. So yeah, we enjoy ourselves.

The Amerasian group that formed in Olongapo sees itself in solidarity with those in Angeles and other parts of the Philippines. While much of the fight for the political rights of Amerasians centers around resistance to the exclusion of US laws and policies, the narratives of Amerasians in Olongapo reveal how important local community has been for finding security and happiness in their everyday lives.

The Amerasian Olongapo Organization’s mission statement outlines the goals of the organization. The main objective that they have for organizing “is to eradicate the stigma for Amerasians and promote awareness.” Another goal that they promote is to allow for “personal growth” of individuals within the Amerasian community who suffer as a result of stigma and discrimination. While supporting Amerasians who wish to find their fathers and fight for inclusion

⁵⁴⁴ Quoted from Jeremiah Reyes, “Loob and Kapwa: An Introduction to a Filipino Value Ethics,” *Asian Philosophy*, Vol. 25, Issue 2, 2015.

within the US, much of what the group aims to achieve is healing within the local community.

Amerasians in Olongapo have grown more resilient over time, and in finding community many have come to accept themselves. This confidence in being Amerasian is clear in Bea's story.

I'm proud to be Amerasian. Wala akong pakialam sa kanila [to other Filipinos]. Kabit ano sabihin nila, kabit ano gawin nila, wala akong pakialam. I don't care. Yes. Ito ako eh. Hindi naman binigyan ng pagkain noong lumaki ako eh. Hindi na ako nagpaaral eh, nanay ko eh. Kaya wala akong pakialam sa iyo. Yun ako. Yun akong walang hiya.

I'm proud to be Amerasian. I don't care about them [other Filipinos]. Whatever they say, whatever they do, I don't care. I don't care. Yes. This is who I am. They never fed me while I was growing up. They didn't put me through school, that was my mom. So, I don't care about you. That's how I am. That's how shameless I am.

For Bea, being Amerasian is not something to be ashamed of. Accepting herself and finding peace involves ignoring those who are not significant in her life, those whose approval she does not need. Bea's comments echo that of Angelo's, where being Amerasian is something positive. Instead of feeling ashamed, Bea finds confidence and pride in who she is and where she comes from. These stories reveal how Amerasians in Olongapo have lifted each other up and refused to feel bad about themselves.

Healing Through Community Service

In oral history interviews, Amerasians in Olongapo repeatedly mention the feeling of powerlessness and their own lack of agency within discussions about their lives. While Amerasians are viewed as victims of US militarism and poverty, dominant narratives that intend to communicate sympathy ultimately strip away their agency and misrepresent how many Amerasians feel. The Olongapo Amerasian Organization's focus on community development allows Amerasians to find community, support one another, and actively engage in ways that make them feel empowered rather than passive victims. This message reverberated throughout the oral history interviews with

Olongapo Amerasians, and also in the community events that they organized during my research trip.

For many, being a part of the community offered both a sense of belonging but also a chance to combat the feeling of powerlessness. Gerald explains how this manifests for him as one of the leaders of the organization:

Noong bata ako, what I am doing lang, I want to join it for fun. For belonging. Because there's a lot of Black, there's a lot of white. It's like feeling we're in the US. Because there's no discrimination for us within the circle, within the Amerasian group. Isa sa mga reason before. At saka, may foundation kami. They're giving something to us. Scholarship, allowances. That's why sinasabi ko na, kung pera lang ibibigay sa amin, hindi yun sasapat. Money will never be enough. We need the closure sa pinaglalaman namin. We need something na nakuba yung rights namin. Pinatataka namin bakit hindi naibigay. We are wondering, baka nandito sa pinagtatakan. It's wondering. Up to now, we are wondering, why we are not included to the law?

When I was a child, what I was doing [being a part of the Amerasian group] I just wanted to join for fun. For belonging. Because there's no discrimination for us within the circle, within the Amerasian group. That was one of the reasons before [why I joined]. And, we had a foundation. They're giving something to us. Scholarships, allowances. That's why I saying that if money is the only thing they give us, that won't be enough. Money will never be enough. We need closure from what we're fighting for. We need something that will give us our rights. We are wondering, why didn't they give it to us? We are wondering, why are we here wondering? It's wondering. Up to now, we are wondering, why are we not included to the law?

Gerald expresses a confusion about what happened to Filipino Amerasians in the 1982 Amerasian Act. Why were Filipinos excluded? His questioning serves to critique the illogic of US legislation while reframing the narrative of Amerasians as recipients of charity. He argues that Amerasians are not passive, and they do not simply want to take from the government because many are poor. Instead, Amerasians understand that they have been excluded by a law that denies them their rights, which they deserve. Gerald's comments emphasize that what Amerasians in the Philippines need is not to be treated as objects of American or Filipino good will, but spaces and opportunities to exist and be given equal treatment under the law.

While not all Filipino Amerasians express the drive to fight for US citizenship or civil rights in the Philippines, many have become active participants in community service in Olongapo. The

feeling of powerlessness moves many to action, whether that is helping other Amerasians or the broader community. Leaders such as Gerald make these opportunities for collective action possible.

Gerald explains why he chooses to volunteer as an Amerasian leader:

My main reason is to inspire people. I don't know why. I have this passion on organizing things. Just like my dad. So when I know my dad, now I know why. We have this similar things that we are doing. He loves doing community services. He's active in the community. He's reaching out. And that's what I'm also doing.

In the last year, Gerald was able to make contact with his father in the US. His father left when he was just two years old, but many years later did not forget about him. After reconnecting with his father through the help of the OAO, Gerald realized that one thing they had in common was that they were both passionate about issues of social justice and were active in local community service.

Gerald's father, an African American veteran who lives in the Los Angeles area, shares the same vision as Gerald for a more racially inclusive society. Gerald is also curious about race relations in the US, asking several questions during my interview with him about racism against Asians and Blacks living in America. Gerald sees his community work as important on a local level, but also connected to anti-racist movements in the US. Amerasians like Gerald have turned to community engagement as a means to transform their own lives and connect with others experiencing similar struggles.

This aspect of the Amerasian organization became especially clear in the group's planning of a community event during my research trip to Olongapo last summer. The OAO regularly plans and organizes events for Amerasians that include local community members. On August 10, 2019, the group invited over eighty children to attend a luncheon, though only around thirty were present due to the intense rain that day. The families that were invited were mainly living in a compound area outside of a Catholic church, a rural area "*sa bundok*" [in the mountains], of poor residents.⁵⁴⁵ The purpose of the event was to bring people of the community together around a shared meal, to chat,

⁵⁴⁵ To protect the privacy of the residents, I avoid revealing the name of the compound and the church.

and to enjoy time together. For many of the attendees, this would be their only full and nutritious meal of the day.

The choice of meal was a “boodle fight.” In Filipino culture, a boodle fight involves laying large pieces of banana leaves on a long table and arranging rice, fish, other meat and vegetables on top of the leaves. Guests stand around the table and eat *kamayan* or with their hands. The name “boodle” originates in US military lingo referring to contraband sweets or other foods. Filipinos call the meal a “boodle fight” to represent the challenge of eating a large amount of food. Yet, the boodle fight also has additional meaning as an exciting activity that promotes intimacy among those who participate. Boodle fights are special because they do not happen very often; it takes a lot of work to prepare all of the food that goes into it, and it involves extensive cleanup. However, the benefits of having a boodle fight for a community event is that it brings people together in an intimate space. While sharing the same banana leaf as your neighbor, the food that you eat is so close it is touching your neighbor’s food. If you add sauce to your rice, the sauce sometimes runs into your neighbor’s rice. Eating in a boodle style means trusting the people around the table. Everyone enjoys the same food and feels a sense of togetherness through the meal.

In my interviews with Amerasians, food emerged as an important topic in their lives both for survival and finding community. Riza discussed how difficult it is for her to make ends meet with two children at home and without any support from a husband or family. She explained, “*Sa food, diskarte lang ako. Sometimes we don’t eat*” [When it comes to food, I have to be resourceful. Sometimes we don’t eat]. Others discussed how working in the bar setting was the only way for their family to feed themselves. Despite not having enough to eat for themselves, Amerasian community members emphasize how they still “share their blessings” with one another. Being a “family” has meant that they have other members of the Amerasian community to turn to when they need help. Sometimes, this means asking for *pamasabe* [money for travel], and often it means money for basic needs such as

food. Bea explained that this value of sharing comes from Catholicism. She explained, "*Shinishare ko rin sa kanila, di ba sabi ng Lord, share mo yung blessings? Ganon kami talaga...kung ano ang pwede kong ishare, sshare ko*" [I also share with them, didn't the Lord say share your blessings? That's how we really are...whatever I have to share, I share it]. Giving even when they have little, whether it is money, food, or their time, comes from a belief that what they do can make a difference.

During the boodle event, the OAO members welcomed me into their community. When I arrived, Veronica and her partner, who is also Amerasian, gave me a walking tour of their compound. I saw where they lived in the mountains and they explained that their lifestyle was "simple" [*simple lang*] and "peaceful" [*mapayapa*]. I also met other community members on our walking tour, including an older woman in her sixties who is the mother of an Amerasian. I stopped to chat with her while she was pumping water to be used during the boodle fight. She told me about how different life was there from what I would be used to. She explained that they did not have running water or electricity. They lived a simple life, but she loved living there. In our short, ten minute conversation, this woman explained to me that she did not have enough food to eat before. Now, living in the compound, they have enough to get by because everyone cares for one another.

The way that Amerasians describe the support they receive and provide others struggling with basic needs is through a language of togetherness rather than charity. While charity is understood as giving, usually in the form of money, to those in need, charity produces an unequal relationship between those who give and those who take. For Amerasians in Olongapo, the discourse of charity reproduces the distance between those with resources and power and those without. The work that Amerasians in Olongapo do to support one another contrasts this notion of charity and instead is better understood as mutual support. As Bea put it,

Kontento kami kung ano meron kami. Hindi katulad sa ibang grupo na, mahabangad pa ng hindi na nga kaya niyayakap ng puno na hindi naman kayang yakapin. Yun ang kasabihan noong araw. Kami, malaki man yung puno, nayayakapin namin sama sama kami hawak hawak kami para mayakap namin. Sila,

ginagawa nila, hindi nila kaya mag isa. Yung eh, yakap pa rin nila yung puno. Kasi wala silang give and take. Kasi kami, may mga give and take kami.

We are satisfied with what we have. We're not like other groups that want to hug a tree that cannot be hugged. This is an old saying. For us, the tree is very big, and we hug it together holding each other in order to hug it. For others, they try but they can't do it alone. Yet they try to hug the tree, even if they can't. Because they don't have 'give and take.' But us, we have give and take.

The image that Bea uses of a community supporting each other "*sama sama*" [together] supports this notion of service as integrated with one's identity as a part of a family. Bea's use of "give and take" expresses the importance of reciprocity, cooperation, and togetherness as opposed to individuality. Mutual support is a value that defines the Amerasian community in Olongapo.

Amerasians understand themselves not primarily in terms of a national identity or their relationship to the US, but through their relationship with the local community in Olongapo. Amerasians in Olongapo see themselves in connection with each other based not only on a racial identity or shared hardship. Their narratives suggest an understanding of community rooted in a commitment to equality and togetherness. The group has taken the term, "Amerasian," which was born with a negative connotation, and transformed it into an identity that they are proud of. Being Amerasian is to relate to others in ways that are uplifting. As they communicate in oral history interviews, Amerasians in Olongapo do not see themselves through an individualistic lens of identity, but through the lens of belonging to a family.

Conclusion

Amerasians in Olongapo, and in Angeles, Philippines, have been interviewed multiple times throughout their lives. News reporters, documentarians, artists, and scholars have for decades taken an interest in the "forgotten children" of US military personnel in the Philippines. In the 1980s, the Philippine government sponsored an in-depth sociological study to learn about the psychological

and social risk factors of the Amerasian population in Olongapo. My interviewees for this chapter recall being a part of this study when they were young. Some remember participating in the popular 2010 documentary called *Left By the Ship* by Italian filmmakers. Yet despite having many opportunities to tell their story, many still feel that their voices are not heard. While excluded from the analysis of many projects, Amerasians feel powerless to control how they are represented. Some have developed a distrust of scholars whose work requires an intrusion into their personal lives for very little benefit.

The frustration of Amerasians in Olongapo is valid. There is a long history that continues to repeat itself. As Bea commented during a group interview, Amerasians feel “exploited” because they give their time and energy to researchers and reporters but do not get to see the results. It is not only that nothing has changed in the political situation of Amerasians, but Amerasians are left out of the research process and wonder what becomes of the interviews in which they participated. Some feel that by opening themselves up again they may be disappointed with how their story is told. As Gerald emphasized in an interview, “For me, only Amerasians can tell the full story.”

The concerns of Amerasians in Olongapo raise the question of why they continue to agree to participate in interviews, and what they hope to get out of sharing their time and their personal histories. Gerald explained, “By giving a chance, I hope it's giving us a chance. At least, there's someone in the US that know our stories here, and hopefully some day you can share it to your friends, to your family there, to your Filipino family here.” Gerald believes that even if he does not directly benefit from being interviewed and opening himself up, he does it because raising awareness is worth the risk.

From this standpoint, maintaining an open dialogue with those both in the US and the Philippines might eventually change the conditions of Amerasians. These interviews emphasize that the relationship should not only be about money. As Bea put it, “*Hindi lang money. Advocacy, kinukuba*

ng stories namin, open namin sa inyo” [It is not only about the money. It’s for advocacy, we’re open to share our stories with you]. Without the resources to make the changes that they wish to see on their own, Amerasians seek support through dialogue that can spread their message to a wider world. They seek advocates that might be able to invest in the changes that they wish to see for their community, and who are willing to include them in the conversation.

The Olongapo Amerasian Organization made clear that advocacy is not just a one-way transaction. The problem with some researchers in recent years is that they take the time and energy of Amerasians without giving anything in return. The group commented that those who interviewed them never followed up to share their work once it was published. Members of the organization are understandably wary of researchers who have not considered the importance of reciprocity. Research may not be able to make policy changes to give Filipino Amerasians their political rights, or alleviate social stigmas they face in the Philippines, however, continuing to engage in dialogue and include Amerasians in the conversation makes a world of difference.

By focusing on how Amerasians in Olongapo tell their story, this chapter has examined some overlooked aspects in the history of Filipino Amerasians. The stories discussed here complicate the dominant Western narrative of Amerasians as abandoned and passive victims, which figures the US as savior. The stories of Amerasians in Olongapo challenge the Orientalist divide by focusing on individual and community efforts to find closure, healing, and a sense of belonging. Within this framework, the stories of Amerasians are not simply ones of resistance to US hegemony but focused around the growth of personal relationships at home and abroad. The personal stories and community building of Filipino Amerasians reveal a strong desire for reciprocal engagements centered on equality and mutual benefit. While also challenging Filipino nationalist depictions of Amerasians, these stories promote a vision of local community formed through resilience and healing.

Conclusion

In the immediate post-World War II period, the US government and Philippine state invested in global displays of friendship in the attempt to prove to an international community the “success” of American democracy.⁵⁴⁶ Following Philippine independence in 1946, the US-Philippine alliance became a primary example of US exceptionalism and decolonization for the world to see. This discourse of friendship obscured neocolonial aspects of the US-Philippine relationship including unequal economic treaties and US military expansion in the country. This friendship also served to invalidate the arguments of anti-colonial nationalists in their fight for social equality and Philippine sovereignty. In the context of the Cold War, Philippine government elites depended on US alliances to secure power against their critics—namely members of the Hukbalahap—figured as a communist threat to the nation.

As this dissertation has argued, threats to US hegemony, the Philippine establishment, and the goals of Philippine nationalists did not revolve solely around the economic order. The management of intimacies figured centrally within these contestations for power. In the postwar period, as gender norms and ideas about sexual morality began to shift in both US and Philippine society, national stability and order appeared to unravel. The figure of the Filipina prostitute therefore reflected anxieties about indecency as much as she served to symbolize broader economic and political threats to US imperialism and the Philippine nation. The increased visibility of interracial relationships between US servicemen and Filipinas—relationships considered illicit due to

⁵⁴⁶ See Colleen Woods, *Freedom Incorporated: Anti-communism and Philippine Independence in the Age of Decolonization* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020).

their association with prostitution—heightened US military fears about the inability to maintain imaginative geographies in order to “protect” white families. For Philippine nationalists, illicit intimacies represented the corrupting influence of US imperialism on traditional Philippine society. Within these competing discourses, local knowledge of indecent women and illicit places became a source of power that Filipinos mobilized whether for political or personal economic gain.

By highlighting the various ways in which this gendered and sexualized figure reverberated throughout Philippine culture, I show how local actors not only reproduced the language of the US military but adapted it within existing tropes of Filipina femininity. These discourses reinforced control over women’s bodies and movements. The policing of illicit intimacies affected on the ground relationships between US military personnel and Filipinas, increasing violence against women in the streets. This particularly impacted Filipinas living and working near US military base towns, and at times limited their opportunities to find employment. By considering the legacies of postwar intimate management, I highlight the interconnections between Cold War imperial discourses and the physical, material, and emotional struggles of Filipinas and their Amerasian children. As I have documented in this dissertation, this history continues to affect those living in base towns today.

Since the 1970s, the Philippine government has supported liberal economic policies through the management of illicit intimacies in base towns. During Martial Law in 1974, President Ferdinand Marcos signed a bill into law officially regulating “hospitality girls” in order to facilitate sexual tourism for foreigners despite the fact that prostitution remained illegal.⁵⁴⁷ Women who worked in bars catering to US troops were given legal status and required to pass health inspections and wear ID cards authenticating their status as free from disease at all times.⁵⁴⁸ Marcos’s push towards

⁵⁴⁷ Sylvia H. Chant and Cathy McIlwaine, *Women of a Lesser Cost: Female Labour, Foreign Exchange, and Philippine Development* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 1995).

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

managing disease promoted the sex industry by announcing to the international community that Filipinas were clean and therefore ready for sexual consumption. His language reinforced the stereotype of the Filipina as prostitute, which stigmatized women in relationships with US servicemen yet also recognized their economic value for the nation. Undergirding the Marcos administration's determination to control the spread of disease was an interest in the continued political and economic aid of the US government.

Throughout the Cold War era in the Philippines, the figure of the prostitute was politicized both in support of and against US militarism. Critics of US military bases in the Philippines centered their arguments around the exploitation of "prostituted women." Social issues related to intimate management again emphasized sexual immorality in order to bolster anti-imperialist claims to remove the US bases from the country. Yet their arguments often conflicted with the views of Filipinas who lived and worked in the bar setting whose main concerns were not economic policies or national sovereignty. In 1991, when the Philippine senate (during the presidency of Corazon Aquino) unanimously voted for the removal of the US bases, Filipinas who worked in base towns wondered how they would make a living. Melanie Gonzales, a 24-year-old working in Olongapo stated, "I don't know what I'll do when the base goes... Maybe I'll just go back to the province if I can't catch an American to marry before the base closes down."⁵⁴⁹ Gonzales, a poor woman from Oriental Mindoro, shared that her options for work were slim and that marriage to a US citizen could provide her with security. A 40-year-old fish vendor, Pilato Ronquillo, exclaimed, "Come now, come buy my fish while the base is still here... When Subic goes, prices will be so high you can't afford my fish any more."⁵⁵⁰ Nationalist critiques of the US military presence have often ignored the

⁵⁴⁹ n.a., "Bar Lights Dim: RP Moves to Close Subic," *People's Journal Tonight*, September 14, 1991, Ortigas Foundation Library, Zaide Papers, Series 5, Folder 256.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

fact that the complete withdrawal of the bases without structures in place to replace local sources of income is detrimental to the thousands of Filipinos who moved to base towns for their livelihood.

Nonetheless, the figure of the Filipina prostitute has continued to influence how Filipinos perceive intimacies between US servicemen and Filipinas today. In the 2015 murder case of transgender woman Jennifer Laude, discussions of Laude's sexual history and perceived respectability surfaced in the Philippine media influencing how some have understood her culpability. Filipinos I interviewed in Olongapo claimed that even while US Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton was guilty of murder, Laude was ultimately responsible for attempting to deceive him.⁵⁵¹ Some expressed anger, rooted in transphobia and misogyny, that Laude was to blame for the economic hardship that the town has faced due to the fact that US servicemen since 2015 have been more severely restricted from entering the city. While watching US naval ships dock from Subic, townspeople in Olongapo lament the restricted intimacies between US military personnel and local businesses that they believe Laude's case generated. As this research has revealed, the perspectives that Filipinos have about US militarism and illicit intimacies reflect local concerns that do not always align with the views of Philippine elites or nationalists in Manila.

The postwar history of intimate management in the Philippines also has broader implications for the history of US imperialism and the place of Asian Americans in the US. While the central strategy of maintaining the international image of US benevolence after World War II began with reconstructing the US-Philippine friendship, this history extends well beyond the Philippines. In fact, many of the practices of controlling illicit intimacies that emerged in the Philippines during this period expanded into other countries in Asia where the US military continued to defend its liberal

⁵⁵¹ This was the sentiment of locals in Olongapo that I interviewed and casually spoke with while conducting research. Every person I talked to when I asked about their thoughts on the Laude case became very passionate about the fact that Laude and others like her continued to get Marines in trouble and negatively affected the relationship between the military and Olongapo City.

democracy. The selective incorporation of War Brides from the Philippines, China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam defined these marriage migrants as worthy of migration and US citizenship, thus contributing to the notion of Asian assimilability into US culture. The transformation of diseased prostitutes into “non-threatening” Asians in this context supported Cold War racial politics and the US image of benevolence and inclusion. This selective incorporation contributed to a model minority discourse that would assuage Cold War anxieties about racial mixture, non-normative sexuality, and the threat of communism. Yet the legacies of this racial transformation remains today in the ways that the model minority myth continues to conceal American racism, particularly against Black Americans, as well as the ongoing struggle for racial justice within Asian American communities.

The history of intimate management in the Philippines also sheds light on the interconnected histories of US militarism in Asia that have racialized Asian women in the US as a “sexual model minority.”⁵⁵² Today, popular US reality television series, such as *90 Day Fiancé*, reproduce Orientalist myths about Asian women as both alluring yet threatening. Nearly every season of this series includes a white-Filipina couple who struggle to overcome issues of race, gender, and cultural difference that can be traced back to the colonial tropes discussed throughout this dissertation. Many other contemporary productions featuring Asian women maintain imaginative geographies that have developed through the Cold War histories of US militarism in the Philippines and other parts of Asia. These racial and sexual discourses maintain a colonial present, which continues to affect the lives of women and Amerasians in the Philippines and beyond.

⁵⁵² This term comes from Susan Koshy, *Sexual Naturalization: Asian Americans and Miscegenation*, Asian America (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

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