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# Philippine Commonwealth and Cult of Masculinity

*Alfred W. McCoy*

In the imperial age, the military shaped society to suit its peculiar needs. Modern armies are complex, costly institutions that must ramify widely to mobilize the vast human and material resources their operations require. Since the armed forces demand the absolute obedience and, at times, the lives of ordinary males, the state often forms, or reforms, society's culture and ideology to make military service a moral imperative. In the cultural encounter that was empire, colonial armies proved as surprisingly potent agents of social change, introducing a major Western institution, with imbedded values, in a forceful, almost irresistible, manner. As powerful, intrusive institutions, modern armies transformed cultures and shaped gender identities, fostering rhetoric and imagery whose influence has persisted long after colonial rule. Above all, these armies, colonial and national, propagated a culture, nay a cult of masculinity.

Recent historical research has explored the ways that rising European states reconstructed gender roles to support military mobilization. To prepare males for military service, European nations constructed a stereotype of men as courageous and women as affirming, worthy prizes of manly males. In its genius, the modern state—through its powerful propaganda tools of education, literature, and media—appropriated the near-universal folk ritual of male initiation to make military service synonymous with the passage to manhood. Not only did mass conscription produce soldiers, it also shaped gender roles in the whole of society. Modern warfare, as it developed in Europe, was the mother of a new masculinity propagated globally in an age of empire through colonial armies, boys' schools, and youth movements.

As a colony of Spain and America, the Philippines felt these global cultural currents and provides an apt terrain for exploration of this

militarized masculinity. Like the other colonial states of Asia and Africa, both powers controlled their Philippine colony with native troops led by European officers, an implicit denigration of the manliness of elite Filipino males. For the all-male electorate of the American era, Filipino nationalism thus came to mean not only independence but, of equal importance, liberation from colonial emasculation. Over time, a cultural dialectic of the colonial and national produced a synthesis with symbolism and social roles marked by an extreme gender dimorphism.

When Filipino leaders finally began building a national army in the 1930s, they borrowed the European standard of military masculinity with all its inbuilt biases. By exempting women from conscription and barring them from officer's training at the Philippine Military Academy, the Commonwealth exaggerated the society's male/female polarities. Once set in 1936, these military regulations and their social influence would prove surprisingly persistent and pervasive. It would be nearly thirty years until the armed forces recruited their first women soldiers in 1963; and another thirty years after that before the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) admitted its first female cadets in 1993 (Hilsdon 1995, 48, 51, 89; Duque 1981, vii).

If we accept what one historian has called "the emancipated status of Filipino women in the 19th century," then the prewar nationalist movement, with its rhetoric of militarism and male empowerment, may have skewed the gender balance within the Philippine polity. In a Malay society with a legacy of gender equality—bilateral kinship, matrilineal marriage, and gender-neutral pronouns—this aspect of nationalism seems socially retrogressive.<sup>1</sup> Understandably, postwar historians have overlooked this glorification of masculinity and military valor in their sympathetic studies of prewar Filipino nationalism.

Nonetheless, mass conscription shaped gender roles in the first half of the 20th century and fostered a rhetoric that pervaded Philippine politics in its second half. In deploying Europe's cult of masculinity to support mass conscription, the Commonwealth introduced a new element into the country's political culture. Indeed, this engendered social order—propagated through conscription, education, and mass media—fostered imagery that would shape Philippine politics at key transitional moments in the latter decades of the 20th century. For well over half the fifty plus years since independence, the Philippines has been ruled by presidents who won office with claims of martial valor and then governed in a military manner.

The Philippine acceptance of this Euro-American model of masculinity provides strong evidence of the paradigm's power. The successful imposition of this Westernized masculinity, with its extreme gender dimorphism, upon a Malay society with a long history of more balanced roles, makes the Philippines a revealing instance of this global process. Within twenty years, the span of a single generation, mobilization and its propaganda, convinced a people without a tradition of military service to accept conscription and internalize a new standard of manhood. When tested in battle during World War II, the generation of Filipino officers formed in this mobilization proved willing to fight and die with exceptional courage.

### Models of Masculinity

During the two decades of this extraordinary social experiment, prewar Philippine institutions used two complementary cultural devices to indoctrinate the young into a new gender identity: a mass propaganda of gender dimorphism and a militarized form of male initiation. Among the many schools that participated in this experiment, two—the University of the Philippines (UP) and, a decade later, the Philippine Military Academy (PMA)—would play a central role as cultural mediators in constructing this new national standard for manhood. To translate a foreign masculine form into a Filipino cultural idiom, the cadet corps at UP and the PMA appropriated local traditions of male initiation, using them as a powerfully effective indoctrination into modern military service.

Scholars of the Philippine military have often noted how the ordeal of the first or “plebe” year serves to bind the PMA’s graduates into a class or “batch” with an extraordinary solidarity. The half-dozen doctoral dissertations on the Philippine military argue, in the words of a Chicago psychologist who observed the PMA in the mid-1960s, that cadets form “lifetime bonds. . . in the crucible of the hazing process.”<sup>2</sup>

What is the meaning of this ritual with its extreme violence? Hazing, seemingly a small issue, has embedded within it larger problems of masculinity central to armies everywhere. In fieldwork around the world, anthropologists have discovered the near universality of male initiation.<sup>3</sup> Around the globe and across time, many societies view manhood as something that must be earned and thus create rituals to

test and train their adolescent males. Observing these rituals in the remote Highlands of Papua-New Guinea, anthropologist Roger Keesing offers a single, succinct explanation for the prevalence of harsh male initiation: warfare (Keesing 1982, 32–34; Herdt 1982, 57–61).

Similarly, at the margins of the modern Philippine state, young men have long been initiated into manhood through ritual testing of their martial valor. In the 20th century, Muslim groups in the south have formed all-male “minimal alliance groups” to engage in ritualized warfare, while the Ilongot highlanders of northern Luzon require boys to pass “severe tests of manhood” by taking “at least one head” in combat (Kiefer 1972; Rosaldo 1980, 139–40). From an anthropological perspective, hazing becomes the central rite in a passage from boyhood to manhood, civilian to soldier. Filipino plebe and New Guinea adolescent pass through similar initiations to emerge as warriors hardened for battle and bound together for defense of their communities (Gennep 1960, vii, 11).

Recent historical research has explored the ways that rising European states reconstructed gender roles to support mobilization of modern armies. By marrying anthropologists’ universals to the historian’s time-bounded specifics, we can see how European nation-states, by making military service an initiation ritual, primed their males for mass slaughter on the modern battlefield. After Britain’s dismal performance in the Crimean War of the 1850s, headmasters at its elite “public schools” began hardening boys for future command through sports. Indeed, Harrow’s head proclaimed that “the esprit de corps, which merit success in cricket or football, are the very qualities which win the day in . . . war.” A half-century later in South Africa, British troops faced difficulties subduing Boer farmers, raising questions about the military “fitness” of ordinary Englishmen. Responding to this perceived crisis, Lord Baden-Powell organized the Boy Scouts in 1908 “to pass as many boys through our character factory as we possibly can (Mangan 1987, 150–53; 1981, 22–41; 1986, 33–36; Rosenthal 1986, 1–6).

In his study of the cult of war in nineteenth-century Europe, historian George Mosse asks: “Why did young men in great numbers rush to the colors, eager to face death and acquit themselves in battle?” Simply put, they volunteered because the modern nation-state, through its poets and propagandists, made the passage to manhood synonymous with military service. To become a man in Victoria’s England or Bismarck’s Germany, a young male had to serve. In the first months of World War I, this cult of war achieved a virtual florescence

as young idealists hurled themselves into the slaughter. After 145,000 German soldiers died at Langemarck in 1914, one poet wrote: "Here I stand, proud and all alone, ecstatic that I have become a man." Recalling this battle in *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler said: "Seventeen year old boys now looked like men." Similarly, during World War II, U.S. Army researchers found that American soldiers fought hard to avoid "being branded a 'woman,' a dangerous threat to the contemporary male personality" (Mosse 1990, 15, 72; Stouffer, et al. 1949, 131–32).

Not only did mass conscription produce soldiers, it also shaped gender roles in the wider society. To prepare every male for military service, European nations constructed a stereotype of men as courageous, honorable, and physically formed on "borrowed Greek standards of male beauty." By the 1920s, women were, through this century-long process, "transformed into static immutable symbols in order to command the attention of truly masculine men."<sup>4</sup>

### Rhetoric of Colonial Masculinity

Although the American colonial regime eventually played a central role in the formation of a Filipino officer corps, the US Army was initially hostile to the idea. During its first decade in the islands, the US Army was absorbed in a massive counterinsurgency campaign, and, like colonial armies elsewhere, denigrated the masculinity of its subject society.

In little more than two years after their landing in 1898, the U.S. Army learned the same colonial lessons that the British and Dutch had distilled from two centuries of using "native troops" in India and Indonesia. Asian soldiers were, from an imperial point of view, well-adapted to withstand the rigors of service in their own country. But only a European had the character required of an officer. As the editor of England's *Statesman* wrote in 1885, educated Indians were "wanting in the courageous and manly behavior to which we justly attach so high an importance in the culture of our own youth." Colonials often found dominant lowland groups both "effeminate" and insubordinate. But certain "martial races"—such as the Gurkhas, Ambonese, or Karens—were thought capable of great courage under fire and fierce loyalty to their white officers.<sup>5</sup> In effect, there was an imperial consensus that certain native troops, when drilled and disciplined by European officers of good character, made ideal colonial forces.

From the outset, the American commander in the islands, General Elwell S. Otis, felt, like most Americans of his day, that elite Filipinos were unfit for command. In an essay for a U.S. military journal in 1900, one American officer dismissed the typical officer in General Emilio Aguinaldo's revolutionary army as "a half-breed, a small dealer, a hanger-on of the Spaniards." Thus, when the US Army formed its colonial forces, the Philippine Scouts, the soldiers would all be Filipinos, but their officers were to be white Americans selected from "the line of the Regular Army" (Woolard 1975, 13, 225; Franklin 1935). In sum, America's high colonial rhetoric celebrated the special bond between American officers and their Filipino troops, and, by implication, denigrated elite Filipino character and capacity for command.

Writing from retirement at the end of the US rule, one American veteran, Constabulary Captain Harold H. Elarth, offered a succinct version of this rhetoric. "By fair dealing, unusual sagacity and confirmed courage," young American officers, "pacified and controlled tribes that for 300 years had continuously warred with the Spaniards." This success, he explained, came from "the psychology of the Malay" which inspired Filipino soldiers to follow their American lieutenants with "adoration" (Hurley 1938, 298-99; Elarth 1949, 14-15).

### Nationalist Response

In the early years of American rule, Filipino nationalists rejected this emasculating colonial rhetoric and made the training of native officers a central plank in their campaign for independence. By demanding officer training, the all-male nationalist movement challenged colonial assumptions that native men were, by racial character, unsuited for command. In the political rhetoric of the day, military drill would advance the nationalist cause by training officers for a future army and hardening the fiber of the country's youth. To assert their manhood, nationalist leaders seized upon any pretext for military drill, even service under the colonial flag.

Only a few years after the Philippine-American War, certain colonials and nationalists began to cooperate in building a Filipino officer corps. In 1907, the fledgling Constabulary School at Manila graduated its first Filipino officers from a short, three-month training course and then moved to permanent quarters in the mountain city of

Baguio for a more rigorous six-month curriculum. A year later, the U.S. Congress authorized the admission of Filipinos to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. In 1914, the first Filipino cadet, Vicente P. Lim, graduated with an academic rank of seventy-seven among 107 cadets—an event of such significance that the Philippine Resident Commissioner, Manuel Quezon, made a special trip from Washington, DC.<sup>6</sup>

When America entered World War I, the Philippine Legislature voted overwhelmingly to raise a Philippine National Guard division and Senate President Quezon crossed the Pacific to lobby personally for Washington's authorization. Even the War Department's determined effort to block its mobilization until 11 November 1918, the very last day of war, could not dampen the Filipino enthusiasm for military service. Over 28,000 men volunteered. With bands playing and banners flying, the Philippine National Guard drilled for three months until it was disbanded in February 1919 (Woolard 1975, 170–84, 196).

During the 1920s, the American colonial regime, in fundamental change of policy, began training Filipinos for command. After taking office as governor-general in 1921, General Leonard Wood, a career officer, mobilized the resources of the US Army to open officer training programs (Hayden 1955, 734–35). To train a first generation of Filipino officers, the US Army loaned instructors, rifles, and bayonets to the newly-formed military science departments at Manila's colleges and universities. Along with the weapons, these programs also borrowed an American model of the military male. Though the program spread to many schools, the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at the University of the Philippines (UP) remained, for over a decade, the largest and most influential.

### UP Cadet Corps

Drill began at UP in 1922 when its Regents funded a Department of Military Science and Tactics, retained an active-duty U.S. Army captain as its chairman, and authorized an armory. Five years later, UP President Rafael Palma, a prominent nationalist, praised the Department for establishing “the nucleus of a future national military organization” (Panis 1925, 14–15; Palma 1924; Peña 1953, 1–2). As Palma predicted, the ROTC program grew rapidly, adding field artillery in 1929 and machine guns six years later. After passage of the National Defense Act in 1935, the university acquired another 2,000 Springfield rifles and doubled its cadet corps to 3,304 trainee officers by 1938.



Beyond drill and marksmanship, the program indoctrinated its cadets into nationalism. "We need to make . . . our youth . . . so proud of their race and their democracy that they will die fighting for it," President Quezon told the UP cadets in 1937. "We have all been trained," wrote the Corps' cadet colonel a year later, "with patriotism ever so carefully engraved in our hearts by our military instructors, we are proud to say, as they would have us say, *we are ready*."<sup>7</sup>

Other Manila universities followed these leads. While the publicly-funded UP had the largest cadet program, the elite, Jesuit-run Ateneo de Manila was proud home to the country's top drill corps. The 1923 Manila Carnival featured a drill competition by cadets from San Beda, the National University, and, of course, Ateneo and the UP. Along with basketball and baseball, close-order drill contests would remain a high point of inter-collegiate competition until the war. These parades, featuring what one UP cadet called "thousands of virile young blood[s]...rifles on their shoulders, gallantly marching to the time of their music," drew large crowds and sparked school spirit.<sup>8</sup>

By the early 1930s, a decade of reserve-officer training had encouraged an ideal of military masculinity among cadets at Manila's universities. At the UP, trainee officers articulated an ideology that equated masculine strength with national defense. "A nation stands or falls, succeeds or fails, just in proportion to the . . . manliness of each succeeding generation," wrote a cadet in the 1931 yearbook (Viardo 1931, 381). Cadet sergeant Fred Ruiz Castro, a future Supreme Court chief justice, explained that military training helps "engender the proper citizenship"—notably "courtesy to all especially to the old and to the weaker sex." In the 1935 UP yearbook, Castro and his comrade Macario Peralta, Jr., a future defense secretary, co-authored an essay arguing that drill molded the masculine virtues necessary to build the nation: "From the Corps, graduate men steeped in patriotism . . . men who know their duties both to country and to God . . . men who are sound thinkers, strong hearted...These are the men the country needs to cope with new problems" (Castro and Peralta, Jr. 1935, 345).

Reinforcing this gender dimorphism, UP's all-male cadet companies barred women from drill but recruited them as "sponsors" to appear in formal, frilly gowns at full-dress parades. Illustrative of this imbalance, in the late 1920s one of these sponsors gave the Corps a "colorful oration" titled "The Woman Behind the Man Behind the Gun" (Castro 1932; 355; Quirino 1930, 427).

By 1936, the UP cadets had expanded their Corps of Sponsors to

forty coeds such as Miss Eva Estrada, the muse of the Second Artillery Battalion and a future senator. On National Heroes Day, the UP cadets staged a mock battle in the city's main park, the Luneta. "Planes sweep down from the clouds to drop their deadly bombs," wrote the college yearbook, "men shoot, advance, fall . . . beneath the smoke the unseen drama of war with its horrors and victories." As male cadets littered Luneta's smoking battlefield, "the Nurses' Corps recruited from the ranks of the Sponsors rush to the field to give aid to the wounded and the dying."

Among these all-male cadets, appeal to women, the defining opposite within this dimorphism, was deemed an essential attribute of future military leadership. "The girls go for him in a big way (very big way)," said the 1937 UP yearbook of cadet Major Ferdinand Marcos, "so much so that most of the time he has to put up the sign 'Standing Room Only.' Claims his heart is impregnable to feminine allure, and insists on calling guys who fall in love inebriated weaklings." Marcos himself internalized this gendered duality to write, after the war, of sacrificing his manhood to defend a feminized nation he calls Filipinas. "We cursed ourselves . . . for having given up our arms and with them our manhood. . .," Marcos wrote of their wartime surrender to Japan on Bataan. "Filipinas had welcomed us in spite of the disgrace of our defeat in Bataan. But it seemed that although she had smiled at us through her tears, she would not bind up our wounds."<sup>9</sup>

Harsh male initiation also became part of officer training at UP. Cadet Sergeant Macario Peralta, Jr., the future defense secretary, noted in the 1932 yearbook that the Corps had faced difficulties in "breaking in the new cadets," but made sure that troublesome plebes "receive sundry other polite attentions" (Peralta 1932, 358). Peralta's yearbook biography, published two years later when he was cadet colonel, revealed the meaning of this euphemism. "One year after the Colonel sprouted in the University campus, he commenced hazing the plebes and beasts with unrelenting inhumanity. He is still at it" (*Philippinensian* 1934, 396).

### Commonwealth Army

In 1935, national defense suddenly became the most critical issue facing the Filipino people. In Washington, President Franklin Roosevelt approved the creation of the Philippine Commonwealth as an autonomous, transitional government with a ten-year timetable to full inde-

pendence. Under the National Defense Act, President Quezon made mobilization his top priority and committed a quarter of the budget to building a national army that would, by independence in 1945, have 10,000 regular soldiers backed by reserves of 400,000. In April 1936, some 150,000 Filipino men registered for the country's first draft and, nine months later, 40,000 reported for training. Within three years, over a million schoolboys were marching.<sup>10</sup>

From its foundation in 1935, the Commonwealth, through military mobilization, intensified this process of gender reconstruction—encouraging a reinforcing array of national symbols, militarized masculinity, and domestic roles. With only a decade to prepare for independence and the burden of defense, the Commonwealth tried to fashion a masculinity that would sustain mass conscription. As it mobilized in the 1930s, the Philippines imported a Euro-American form of manhood along with the howitzer and the pursuit plane.

To build popular support for a citizens' army, the neophyte Philippine state deployed a gendered propaganda with men strong, women weak; men the defenders, women the defended. Just as the new nation was personified as the feminine "Filipinas" in currency and propaganda, so young men were conscripted to defend her and her defenseless womankind. The government, in this transition to independence, skillfully manipulated public rituals and symbols to make a polarized gender dimorphism central to a new national self-image. We do not have to read against the grain to tease gender out of the Philippine Army, as if from some recondite cultural text. The key actors—Quezon, Army Headquarters, and the cadets themselves—were quite self-conscious in their use of such imagery.

The impact of militarization upon gender roles was most evident at the Manila Carnival—a grand, pre-war festival celebrating the fecundity of the land and the glories of its people. Like other pre-Lenten festivals across the Hispanic world, Carnival was a mix of the serious and frivolous, of celebration and reflection. Located at the heart of Manila, the sprawling Carnival enclosure held elaborate displays of provincial products such as rope or coconut. The two-week whirl of spectacle, society, and sport culminated in the crowning of the queen and her court at an elaborate formal ball. With the Philippines on parade, elite actors gained a stage to project images of nation and society before a mass audience.

Before conscription, the queen's coronation had been a lavish, high-society affair—with eligible bachelors as escorts, whimsical Roman or

Egyptian themes, and matching costumes for court and consorts. Since the city's elites selected the carnival queen by jury or press ballots, winners were women of wealth, prestige, and intellect. At the 1922 Carnival, for example, Queen Virginia Llamas was escorted by her future husband Carlos P. Romulo, later president of the UN General Assembly. The queen's consort at the 1923 Carnival was Eugenio Lopez, later the county's most powerful entrepreneur, just as 1931 queen was Maria Kalaw, the future Philippine senator and UN delegate (Nuyda 1980, 1920, 1922, 1931).

With the launching of the Commonwealth's army only months away, the 1935 Carnival saw revelry and whimsy giving way to military symbolism and a serious debate about gender roles. To accommodate its greatly expanded display, the US Army occupied "an entire section of the Manila Carnival Grounds" for 400 linear feet of military exhibits and a replica of a World War I trench warfare complex (*Tribune*, 3, 9 February 1935). The cadets of Manila's universities were honored with a large military parade, treated to guided tours of the military exhibit, and featured as the queen's escorts.

In this martial spirit, gender was on the march. At her coronation ceremony, the Constabulary band played a march while Queen Conchita I-walked between "two files of University of the Philippines cadets with drawn sabers" to a throne where the US Governor General placed a crown of diamonds on her head and the "admiring throng applauds" (*Tribune*, 16, 21, 22 February 1935).

On their night in this Carnival Auditorium, Far Eastern University students staged a spectacular revue called "Daughters of Bathala," with males forming an outer, protective circle while women in gowns whirled about in a "grand finale . . . symbolizing the types of modern Filipino women from the suffragettes and debutantes to the thrill-girls of the cabarets and the boulevards" (*Tribune*, 3 March 1945).

Instead of the usual frivolous rhetoric about feminine beauty, the 1935 Carnival launched a national debate on women's rights. Speaking before the convention of the Federation of Women's Clubs, Senate President Quezon announced that the Constitutional Convention had just approved compulsory military service. He urged the nation's women to assume "the duty to mould the character of . . . youth that we may build up here a citizenry of virile manhood capable of shouldering the burdens of our future independent existence." And how was such a radical social reconstruction to be accomplished? Men would be called away for "training in patriotism," but women,

Quezon said, should stay home to "bring up upstanding, courageous and patriotic youngsters." Instead of being lulled by the "sentimental glow" of his oratory, the Federation's president, Mrs. Pilar H. Lim, the wife of General Vicente Lim (USMA '14), confronted Quezon, demanding that he redress "the injustice done . . . through the failure of the constitutional convention to insert a provision . . . granting the women . . . the right to vote." Quezon assured Mrs. Lim that he has "always been in favor of granting this right to women." Indeed, two years later, under his presidency and through Mrs. Lim's leadership, a plebiscite on women's suffrage passed by an overwhelming margin.<sup>11</sup>

Over the next three years as mobilization intensified, each carnival accentuated the military symbolism and its supporting gender dimorphism. When President Quezon opened the towering gateway to the 1936 Carnival city, a full battalion of Philippine Army troops formed an honor guard while he "severed" the ribbons with a specially-made native sword. In its Carnival coverage, the *Sunday Tribune Magazine* juxtaposed photo-essays of the military review ("the steel helmets of the U.P. cadets glaring in the afternoon sun") and the 1936 Fashion Revue ("models resplendent in shining silver and satin.") For their night at the Carnival, the UP students presented a richly engendered historical pageant, written by Dr. Carlos P. Romulo, featuring a cast of one thousand students ("including seven hundred girls") and starring a woman student as "Filipinas," the feminized symbol of the nation (*Tribune*, 15 February, 1 March 1936).

#### PAGEANT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Theme: After the establishment of the Republic, the nation will meet with difficulties and dangers, but it will overcome them all and thereby become stronger . . .

- I. Book of Time Revealed.
- II. Spirit of History ascends the stage from stage right and writes "Commonwealth."
- III. Trumpets. Filipinas enters from stage left followed by people, including agencies, soldiers, dancers . . .
- IV. Spirit of Prophecy ascends from stage left . . . and . . . writes "Republic."
- V. People cheer, bells ring, salute of guns . . .
- VIII. Invasion—call to arms. Battle.
- XI. Mourning dance. Filipina rises from the center of the floor, flag over her. National hymn is sung by all.

Despite such military inroads, the coronation of Queen Mercedes I featured the usual "fantasy numbers" such as "Parisian Lace" and the "exotic South Sea Wastes." Her escorts were still society bachelors in white-tie and tails.

A year later, the military symbolism was triumphant. At the 1937 Carnival, the queen's escorts were now uniformed ROTC cadets. The queen now became "Miss Philippines" and her coronation, as its libretto indicates, was a martial drama of male soldiers rising to her defense as the engendered symbol of the nation.<sup>12</sup>

#### CORONATION OF MISS PHILIPPINES OF 1937

##### Scene I

Triumphal entrance of the Army of Miss Philippines, sovereign of our cultural and economic progress, composed of officers and soldiers who will stage a military exhibition.

##### Scene II

Entrance of the Drum and Bugle Corps which will go through some military evolutions.

##### Scene III

The Drum and Bugle Corps will announce the arrival of Miss Philippines and her Court of Honor . . . Miss Philippines will be preceded by a group of pages carrying the crown and other presents, and another group of pages carrying her train . . .

##### Scene IV

The Drum and Bugle Corps announces that all is ready for the coronation of Miss Philippines.

##### Scene V

Ceremonies of the coronation of Miss Philippines, placing of the crown by His Honor, The Mayor of Manila . . .

##### Scene VI

Gun salute to Miss Philippines by her Army. Entrance of Foreign Envoys—Royal offering, etc.

##### Scene VII

Military evolutions by the Army of Miss Philippines and the Drum and Bugle Corps.

Beyond the ballroom, the Carnival's sporting contests and the ROTC drill competitions proliferated in celebration of a physical, martial masculinity. Before a crowd of 40,000, for example, the Schools Parade featured girls in gowns riding on flower-covered floats while high school boys stepped past in "uniforms and snappy marching [that] thrilled the watching thousands."<sup>13</sup>

By the 1938 Carnival, the military parade had been transformed from a procession of students in their toy-soldier uniforms into an awesome spectacle of military might. With thousands of spectators packed along the boulevards, armed columns of Philippine Army, Philippine Scouts, and college cadets tramped past the Legislative Building as tight formations of bombers and pursuit planes "roared overhead" (*Tribune*, 15, 16 February 1938).

After its establishment in 1936, the Philippine Army deployed a similar dualism to build support for conscription among a people without a tradition of military service. As the date for draft registration approached, the Commonwealth plastered public spaces with recruiting posters. One depicted a statuesque Filipina, neckline cut low and bare arms outstretched for the embrace, calling on "Young Men" to "Heed Your Country's Call!" Another asked, "Which Would You Rather Be . . . this or that?"—and then showed a snappy soldier smiling at two admiring women while a civilian male skulks in the rear, hands in pockets—a universal signifier.<sup>14</sup>

Then, at 8:30 A.M. on 15 May 1936, each provincial governor supervised an elaborate ritual to select the first conscripts for basic training. Before the public, the governor, flanked by military guards, placed the registration cards for all twenty-year old men in two large jars. "Two young ladies, not over eighteen years of age, shall . . . make the drawing," read the Philippine Army regulations. "These young ladies shall be blind-folded and shall wear dresses with short sleeves—not reaching beyond elbow" (Commonwealth, Bulletin No. 17; Meixsel 1993, 301).

So strong was the appeal of military training that four of the country's leading legislators, including presidential aspirant Manuel Roxas, volunteered for the first Reserve Officers' Service School (ROSS) in mid-1936. In this commencement address to this class in September, President Quezon explained that officers were to serve as the nation's models for patriotism and new, virile form of citizenry (*The Bayonet* 1936, 94, 98).

The good officer. . . , wherever he is, . . . spreads the doctrine of loyalty, of respect for law and order, of patriotism, of self-discipline and education, and of national preparation to defend our country. . . . Our whole nation will become more firmly solidified, more virile, more unselfishly devoted to promotion of the general welfare, as our officer corps grows in quality and strength, and the results of its efforts permeate to the remotest hamlet of our country.

## Philippine Military Academy

Forming such an officer corps was the most difficult part of this mobilization. As Quezon put it, "the heart of an army is its officers." Along with buying rifles and building camps, the creation of this army required, as the president was well aware, the construction of officers as exemplars for a new image of the Filipino as warrior. To form such leaders, the Defense Act provided for the establishment of a Philippine Military Academy at Baguio for the education of career officers. This academy was, in the words of the Commonwealth's vice-president, "the foundation stone of the entire military establishment," providing "the leadership necessary to knit together a scattered and loosely connected citizen army into one whole, living, pulsating, homogenous machine that can fight with courage" (*Scribe* 50; Osmeña 7-8, 10). In establishing his new academy, Quezon, through his military advisers Douglas MacArthur and Dwight Eisenhower, chose the US Military Academy at West Point as its model.

Transporting the West Point system, with all of its peculiarities, from the bluffs of the Hudson to the mountains of Baguio entailed cultural adaptation. From the perspective of the PMA staff, the new academy would socialize the cadets through its formal curriculum and a four-year progression from neophyte to command. To succeed, however, these formal processes rested upon rituals and symbols that would make the academy's abstractions meaningful to teen-aged Filipinos. Drawing upon the country's culture of masculinity, cadets used rituals of male initiation and group solidarity to reinforce the PMA's institutional imperatives. Through a fusion of the West Point curriculum, faithfully reproduced by the PMA's staff, and informal innovations by these Filipino cadets, an American academy became a viable model for a Philippine institution (Lovell 1955, 316-21; Wamsley 1972, 399-417).

To ensure that its cadets would be archetypes of masculine beauty, the academy barred applicants with "any deformity which is repulsive" or any who suffered from "extreme ugliness." Medical examiners had to insure, moreover, that an applicant's face was free from any "lack of symmetrical development" or "unsightly deformities such as large birthmarks, large hairy moles, . . . mutilations due to injuries or surgical operation" (Commonwealth of the Philippines 1937).

To mould these exemplary males, the PMA became a total institution that would, like West Point, leave a lasting imprint upon every



graduate (Janowitz 138; Goffman 1961). The PMA's 1938 yearbook thus described the Tactical Department and its drill instructors as "a veritable forging shop in which the raw and crude materials are . . . purified of their undesirable qualities." In their song *P.M.A. Forever*, cadets celebrated their academy's capacity to make men (Sword 1938, 46–48, 104).

Within the walls of old and glorious P.M.A.  
They're molded to the real men that they should be—  
Men who can face the bitter realities of life  
With courage even in the midst of bloody strife.

As centerpiece in the nation's gender reconstruction, the PMA indoctrinated its Filipino cadets into a Euro-American ideal of military manhood. With its alien curriculum, the PMA, more than any Philippine institution of its era, aspired to a cultural transformation, a re-making of its cadets on a European model of masculinity. The academy made its imprint through a program of moral formation through body movement, incessant supervision, and formal indoctrination. In its own words, the PMA taught "soldierly movements to inculcate prompt obedience" in daily marching; "knowledge of ballroom ethics" with weekly waltz lessons; and "self-reliance, poise, initiative, judgment, enthusiasm, and discipline" in gymnastics (Commonwealth 1938, 16–19).

Filipino cadets reshaped imported values through their own culture of masculinity, making hazing the PMA's central rite of passage—from civilian to soldier, from plebe to cadet. Entering plebes arrived at the academy from communities with their own rituals of male initiation and expectations for manhood (Rosaldo 1980, 35–37). In many lowland villages of the 1930s, adolescent males passed through an initiation, such as circumcision, and had elaborate codes for masculine friendship epitomized in peer groups called *barkada*. In the villages of Central Luzon, for example, Tagalog males who joined tenancy unions during this decade were tested in an elaborate midnight ritual that branded each on the upper arm with a poker plucked white-hot from a raging bonfire (Fegan 1995; See also Blanc-Szanton 1990, 350).

Growing up in such poor communities, many future members of PMA's Class of 1940, the first products of this new school, were familiar with these masculine rites of testing and bonding. One classmate, Francisco del Castillo, recalled in his autobiography for the class's 50th reunion *Golden Book*, that he often missed class in high school to join "youth who did nothing but form gangs to fight other gangs for su-

premacy in the municipality of Vigan." In a later interview, he added that his reputation as "a local champion" in ritualized knife fights, attacking with the right hand and defending with a towel wrapped tightly about the left, made him the "leader" of the town's west-side gang. Asked if his gang practiced any sort of initiation, del Castillo replied that "you let him do a certain errand and see how brave he is" (Mendoza 1986, 178; del Castillo 1995).

For PMA cadets, hazing and the broader experience of plebe initiation served as a transformative trauma—coloring the subsequent academy experience for individuals and uniting a new class through shared suffering. During their first months, plebes were subjected to an unbroken regimen of running, recitations, and drill under nameless, powerful upperclassmen. Arriving during summer recess when the main activity was their initiation, incoming plebes faced the harsh, unwavering attentions of the second-year cadets, or "yearlings"—still aching from their own humiliations that had ended only weeks before. After the initial "beast barracks," the hazing subsided into a constant, low-level harassment that continued for another eight months until the upperclass "recognized" them as full members of the Corps. Surviving this abuse left cadets with a strong sense of personal pride and class identity. Writing in the *Golden Book*, Class '40's Cesar Montemayor recalled their plebe year as "a one-year initiation period full of rites, rules and requirements" that instilled "desirable manly and military qualities" (*Batch 36 Golden Book*, 110–11).

In showing how the Commonwealth constructed a new masculinity at the PMA, we cannot ignore the impact that this mobilization and its propaganda had upon "the whole order" of gender roles in an emerging nation (Morgan 1994, 169–70). Despite its isolation in the mountains of Baguio, the PMA's training of these young males had lasting implications for the whole of Philippine society. The school served, in effect, as a social laboratory, a crucible for casting a new form of Filipino masculinity. Through hazing, study, and drill, the academy pounded young males into a foreign mold of military manhood.

By parading before the masses in Manila and acting in Tagalog films, these prewar PMA cadets projected this image of masculinity into an emerging national consciousness. Only a year after the PMA opened, a Manila film crew shot a two-reel documentary, titled *The West Point of the Philippines*, which, the cadet yearbook reported, was "now being featured at the Ideal Theatre" and was "taking Manila by storm."

In 1938–39, the Philippine Army authorized two Filipino production companies to shoot feature films at the PMA with polarized imagery—muscular males as cadets in hyper-masculine uniforms and attractive women as their “dates” in feminine fashions. Inspired by *Flirtation Walk*, the 1934 Hollywood musical starring Dick Powell, the Filipino film *Madaling Araw* (The Dawn) drew “a record crowd” at its 1938 Manila premiere, filling seven screenings daily for two weeks. A year later, *Punit na Bandila* (Torn Flag) opened with the entire Cadet Corps in mass formation moving through precision drills that spelled out its title letter by letter. Press coverage for the premiere spoke of the “lovely” Lucita Goyena, the “virile” Fernando Poe, Sr., and the story of “a brilliant cadet of the Philippine Military Academy who gets kicked out . . . for defending the honor of his mother.”

When these films were shown at a Baguio cinema, the PMA Cadet Corps marched into town, two abreast and a hundred deep. “The cadets were projected as somebody,” recalled classmate Manuel Acosta, “something upright and all the desirable qualities of manhood.”<sup>15</sup>

As the new academy’s first graduates under the full, four-year curriculum, the Class of 1940 became public exhibits of this new militarized masculinity. At the end of their plebe year, Class ‘40 ended their confinement within the academy and entered society in uniform for the first time to discover the centrality of women to their identity as model officers.<sup>16</sup> By filling their dances and visitors’ room with admiring women, the cadets affirmed the gender division that inspired the new army—they were the defenders and they had the attentions of the defended.

Unlike officers elsewhere who often distinguished themselves from the feminine, prewar PMA cadets constructed a military masculinity that incorporated women as affirmation of identity (Theweleit 1987). Their stereotypical manhood of athleticism, camaraderie, and integrity somehow coexisted with a more supple sense of gender roles.

Indeed, Class ‘40 showed a playful transvestitism by dressing women in their cadet caps for photographs and donning female dress for plays and musicales (*The Sword* 1938, 158, 161; Navarro 1994). At one level, juxtaposing feminine smiles with the cadet’s dress uniform tried to show just how unsuited women were for military service. At another, incorporating women through rituals and military regalia softened the institution’s ingrained gender polarities.

The ultimate exercise in gender inversion came in their last months. Following the West Point tradition, Class ‘40 marked the countdown

to their graduation by presenting a "100th Nite Show" titled "Love Pirates of Hawaii" with classmates forming a chorus of *wahines* dressed in *mumus* that, in the words of the *Golden Book*, "literally stole the show" (Mendoza 1986, 61).

At the apex of their cadet careers, when the class was about to step before the nation as models of a new masculinity, they donned the guise of women to sing and dance.

Though they tempered its extremes, these cadets still internalized this gender polarity to emerge from the PMA with a sense of empowerment that would sustain them through four traumatic years of combat, captivity, and guerrilla warfare. Hardened by their ritual passage to manhood and inspired by the attentions of the country's women, the class entered active duty determined to defend Filipinas and her defenseless daughters.

### **Marcos the Maharlika**

The history of World War II in the Philippines could be written as the history of a gender and a generation. Inspired by the complementary quests for nationhood and manhood, the generation of young officers that emerged from the Commonwealth's mobilization fought courageously, at times fearlessly, in the opening battles of World War II and the years of anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare that followed.

By war's end, the prewar generation of reserve officers had been hardened in a guerrilla warfare that thrust them forward as soldier-politicians. Many reservists, like Ramon Magsaysay and Ferdinand Marcos, used their guerrilla comrades as constituencies to win political office. With twenty-eight medals to attest to his valor, Senator Marcos launched a successful campaign for president in 1965. His campaign biography, *For Every Tear a Victory* claimed that "without Ferdinand's exploits Bataan would have fallen three months sooner." With a sacred talisman buried in his back and the "intervention of magical forces," Marcos emerged from the bloodiest battles of World War II unharmed: a clear sign of his heroic destiny. A film version of the biography, *Iginuhit ng Tadhana* (Marked for Destiny), was released just weeks before the elections to win him "at least 300,000 non-intellectual votes" (Spence 1969, 7-10, 123; Polotan 1969, 126-27).

In his first term, President Marcos made battlefields into national shrines and war commemorations into civic rituals. As leader of the

country's veterans, he commissioned plans for the *Dambana ng Kagitingan* (Altar of Courage)—a shrine capped by a soaring cross atop Mt. Samat at the heart of the Bataan battlefield. In April 1969, the twenty-sixth anniversary of Bataan, the president led a crowd of 15,000 to inaugurate this 300-foot, marble-clad cross. Years later, when Pope John Paul II visited Manila, Marcos would prevail upon him to fly over Mount Samat and bless the monument.<sup>17</sup>

After martial-law in 1972, Marcos's wartime heroism became the ideological foundation for his authoritarian regime. Remembrance became a national cult, celebrated every year on the anniversaries of the battles at Bataan and Bessang Pass (*Bulletin Today*, 11 March 1977). Under his dictatorship, the myth of Marcos as the reincarnation of ancient *datu* warrior chiefs merged with his larger vision of social reconstruction. Just as the *datu* had ruled a community, or *barangay*, before the Spanish conquest, so Marcos would, through constitutional authoritarianism, govern directly through local units now called *barangay*, thereby liberating the nation from its colonial past. In 1976, the peak of his martial-law powers, Marcos articulated these ideals when he led his generals to Mt. Samat for the annual wreath-laying. "In Bataan, something emerged within the nation which none of us had seen before in our four centuries of colonial subjugation." Marcos said. "Bataan is a symbol of national unity. . . . Yes, not even the revolution of 1896 . . . gave us such a vision of ourselves as a nation" (Marcos 1976, 4–17).

In the dictatorship's ninth year in 1980, First Lady Imelda Marcos celebrated their wedding anniversary by commissioning a lavishly bound, four hundred-page epic poem by leading academics—the anthropologist E. Arsenio Manuel and literary critic Florentino Hornedo. Through luminous illustrations of Imelda as the reincarnation of Egyptian Queen Nefertiti and Marcos as the spirit of an ancient Malay warrior *datu*, the epic juxtaposes the country's mythical past with its political present to reveal a Marcosian conception of gender and nation.

The imagery of gender dimorphism, transported almost unaltered from the 1930s, appears in opening stanzas with Marcos near death on a Bataan battlefield and Imelda singing to him of history, of warrior *datus* who fought invaders past (Ramos et al. 1980, 5–9). Illustrated with a plate of an Imelda-like goddess hovering protectively above a uniformed Ferdinand on the battlefield, this passage portrays him fus-

ing past and future by heroism under fire (5–9). These stanzas begin with Marcos near death on the battlefield:

The ray of the sun from the other side of mountain  
 Seems to be empathizing with him  
 With the weak and voiceless  
 In the west, setting and waving good-bye  
 To a land that is clearly disappearing  
 Bataan is falling,  
 Corregidor, the bastion of heroism.

As Marcos's life force fades, the vision of a great beauty, Imelda, sings to him of history, of warrior datus who fought invaders past. Slowly, he revives, pulling back from death.

Beauty from the heavens who awakened  
 The discriminating heart of one who was oblivious  
 To the call of love.  
 A maiden who possessed all of beauty,  
 A girl who is the goddess of all goddesses;  
 Attractive, lovable, desirable.  
 Singing to him, and energizing him  
 Through the core of strength and beauty of our past. . . .

Courage has returned to the wounded,  
 His passion has revived him  
 From the blood veins from his courageous ancestors  
 Facing up to any attacking conquerors.

Inspired by this vision of the feminine, Marcos rises up on the slopes of Mt. Samat at the heart of the Bataan battlefield to sing a song of history that inspires his fellow soldiers.

He gained consciousness, his essence awakened  
 In front of his confused countrymen  
 At the top of Mount Samat. . . .  
 He sang the meaningful history  
 Which was strengthened by our ancestors,  
 Where each syllable is a source of strength,  
 Even in a darkness with no light  
 Except from the bursting of bombs  
 And the bullets speeding like meteors.

## Rebel Officers

Even after Marcos's fall from power in February 1986, the rhetoric of military masculinity and the imagery of gender dimorphism continued to play a central, if subliminal, role in the country's political discourse. When Marcos fled into exile, President Corazon "Cory" Aquino took office determined to restrain a military grown powerful under martial rule. With seven leading human-rights lawyers in her administration, she moved aggressively to investigate the military's abuses in her first months—sparking a succession of coups by dissident officers.<sup>18</sup>

Not only were senior military faced with the threat of investigation, but they now answered to a commander-in-chief who challenged their perception of the military as masculine. "The ascension of a woman Commander-in-Chief . . . must have required a major adjustment in the . . . psychological world of the military," commented the Davide Commission, an official inquiry into the causes of these coups (Republic of the Philippines 1990, 476).

In the ensuing struggle between the military and civil authorities, a group of dissident PMA trained officers, the Reform the Armed Forces Movement, or RAM, moved from dissent to revolt. In their initial phase of open political opposition to Aquino, RAM's most powerful weapon was Colonel Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan—leader of an abortive coup against Marcos who attained super-hero stature in the post-Marcos media. In his rise to prominence, Colonel Honasan provided eloquent testimony to the impact of global culture and its changing construction of the masculine upon Philippine politics. His "Gringo" image had originally been inspired by director Sergio Leone's 1966 Western, *A Fistful of Dollars*, starring Clint Eastwood as a drifter known only as "the Gringo"—a hired gun whose cool violence and quiet morality saves a metaphoric Virgin Mary and her Holy Family from Mexican villains. As the film and its three sequels were shown and reshown during their cadet years at the PMA, Honasan's Class '71 attached Eastwood's persona to him and he, in turn, cultivated the *machismo* and martial skills to fill the role.<sup>19</sup>

In the aftermath of Marcos's fall, the celebration of the Gringo myth and its hyper-masculinity cannot be understood within the narrow confines of political debate. Something less literal was transpiring, something in the realm of political mythology.

During his twenty years in the palace, Marcos had used state propaganda to portray himself as the country's greatest war hero, the reincarnation of ancient Malay warriors, effectively playing upon the nation's need for heroes to assuage centuries of colonial subjugation. With the full resources of state power, he created a political space for a myth of the leader as warrior hero. When Marcos's face faded from television screens during the "people power" revolution of February 1986, his aura dissolved but the mythic frame remained. In the terms of Marcos's own mythology, the ancient warrior had fallen to the hero Honasan in epic combat before the palace. Seeking, like Marcos had once done, to replace democracy with martial rule, Honasan would use myth to reorient reality in ways that would allow him to suspend, even transcend, the legal foundations of legitimacy. While the Marcos aura drew upon folklore and nationalist history of the 1930s, Honasan's RAM rebels would use Filipino and foreign film, the metatexts of his own age.

In constructing their "Gringo" collage, RAM's psy-war experts seemed to splice together fragments from masculine images, indigenous and imported, that fill Manila's movie screens—the Filipino "action genre" of gunman-heroes who take up arms against injustice; the early Clint Eastwood persona as cool Western killer of quiet moral authority; and Hollywood's Rambo rebel as high-tech, death-delivery system. During people power, Honasan wore a flak jacket covered with a brace of high-tech pistols, ammo belts, and Uzi automatic rifle—a human weapon encrusted in armament. Afterwards, he displayed a menagerie signifying command over nature—python about the neck, tank of pet piranhas outside his office. All these fragments merged into a media bricolage: karate black belt, quick-draw champion, academy baron, Mindanao war hero, coup commander (Enloe 1989, 123; Reyes 1989, 52).

So constructed, Gringo radiated an aura of power as destroyer of a corrupt regime, progenitor of a new social order.

When their political opposition failed RAM planned to seize state power with an unconventional coup. Rather than a conventional assault, the RAM leaders, inspired by their experience in unconventional warfare, crafted a first coup in late 1986 that fused psychological warfare, terror, and feint (Arillo 1986, 130; Robles 1986).

As an opening tactic, RAM's leaders began claiming credit for Marcos's overthrow, a clear signal, within the rhetoric of the day, for



President Aquino to concede some power. In October 1986, she refused.<sup>20</sup> In response, RAM responded with an eerily evocative terror. In the weeks that followed, three bombs exploded around Manila, a grenade was shot into Aquino's campaign headquarters, gunmen fired into a crowded Wendy's Restaurant, and the country's top labor leader was found brutally murdered.<sup>21</sup>

As these blasts reverberated, RAM revived the memory of the Plaza Miranda bombing, seeking to implicate President Aquino's martyred husband Ninoy in an act of terror that still resonated within collective consciousness. Fifteen years before, in August 1971, grenades had exploded during an election-eve rally at Plaza Miranda, the symbolic center of popular democracy, killing nine and wounding eighty five. With the exception of Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, Jr., who was still *en route*, all opposition senate candidates were injured, several seriously (Martinez 1987, 277–79). In the emotionally-charged aftermath, rumor blamed President Marcos and he, in turn, denounced the communists publicly and accused Senator Aquino privately, giving his tardiness a sinister cast. If the bombing was not, as most Filipinos thought, done by Marcos to prepare for martial law, might it not have been a plot by Ninoy Aquino and the communists? In one blow, RAM's propaganda could both destroy Ninoy's martyrdom and Cory's image as the martyr's grieving widow, the ideological foundation of her revolutionary government, and thereby justify an anti-communist coup.

Though this coup attempt and the next five all failed, RAM emerged from the rebel underground in 1992 to win amnesty and place their leader, Gringo Honasan, in the Senate—a stepping stone for a future presidential race. In his 1995 campaign for the Senate and his subsequent media image, Honasan has continued to project a military masculinity—powerful, violent, and threatening.

Honasan's first rally was an extraordinary event, even in this nation with a century-long history of flamboyant campaigns. In March 1995, Honasan's ally, Miriam Defensor Santiago, led her People's Reform Party senatorial slate in barnstorming across her native Panay Island at a grueling pace of seventy-one rallies in just six days before crowds of 2,000 to 50,000. When her road show reached Bacolod City, Honasan made his appearance, arousing the crowd of 30,000 to near frenzy. After Miriam's fiery rhetoric "kept her audience in awe," Honasan's speech was lackluster. But, as he finished and moved to-

wards his car, the crowd erupted in excitement captured in this dispatch by the *Manila Chronicle's* (1995) local correspondent:<sup>22</sup>

Honasan was swamped with "love notes" or short personal messages from residents here, mostly young women. . . . His own speech was interrupted several times by loud screams of "I Love You" from women and, of course, from the third sex . . .

Even Honasan's battle-tested security personnel, all members of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan (RAM) which Honasan led, were helpless before the hordes of people that flocked the candidate.

It took the leader of seven failed coup attempts a full 20 minutes to reach his waiting vehicle from the stage because of the enormity of the crowd that wanted to kiss or just hold him . . . effects "They just keep on coming from everywhere. This is a security nightmare for us," an unidentified Honasan aide said.

How can we explain the intensity of this response? It seems far more complex than a matter of mere physical appeal. Though fit and handsome, Honasan was approaching fifty and lacked the youthful glow that commands box-office in the Filipino film industry. With looks and manner shining with power and violence, Honasan seemed to project a seductive aura of masculine threat. Whatever the appeal, thousands lost control in his presence and yielded to collective ecstasy. Though large and enthusiastic, these campaign crowds were not, however, representative of women voters who, on election day, rejected him in overwhelming numbers, producing a marked gender gap of ten percent (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 16 May 1995).

## Conclusion

Through a long alliance with the United States, the Philippines opened itself to a global culture that influenced both its identity and politics. In building an army on the American model, the Commonwealth imported a foreign model of masculinity and then, through mass mobilization, drilled Filipino males to its standards.

Juxtaposing two Filipino film posters separated by half a century gives us before-and-after snapshots of this change in masculine ideals. In advertisements for the 1939 Filipino film *Punit na Bandila* (The Torn Flag), leading man Fernando Poe, Sr. stands tall and handsome in the PMA's dress-gray uniform—powerful but disciplined in the manner of

a dapper Dick Powell. In 1995, his own son, the “action star” Fernando Poe, Jr., is an image of insurgent masculinity erupting from Manila’s billboards for *Kahit Butas ng Karayom Papasukin Ko* (Even Through the Eye of a Needle I Will Pass)—gripping an assault rifle, torso dripping with ammunition belts á la RAM or Rambo. This latter image of the country’s leading star, the embodiment of the ideal Filipino male, in the costume of a rebel officer, the personification of military violence, seems to represent an apotheosis of this masculine paradigm.

For nearly half a century, these images sustained the military, influenced gender roles, and informed national politics. At the most elementary level, presidents who campaigned with some claim to military prowess have ruled the Philippines for thirty-two of the fifty-three years since independence. Judging from Senator Honasan’s unprecedented victory as an independent candidate for senator in 1995, the image of the warrior male still commands strong mass appeal.

Persistent though these images have been, there are some slender signs that the influence of this militarized masculinity might be fading. During the 1990s, the social laboratories that first refined this masculine paradigm, the University of the Philippines and the Philippine Military Academy, began an experiment that may prove its subversion. In 1993, the PMA admitted its first women and six years later, in March 1999, Cadet Arlene de la Cruz graduated at the top of her class. In media interviews splashed across the front pages of the Manila press, Cadet de la Cruz expressed an interest in a Navy career that may take her into combat and up the echelons to command.

Three months later, the UP Cadet Corps appointed Cadet Ma. Regina Corazon P. Sevilla as its new commander—the first woman to lead the unit in its seventy-seven year history. In media interviews, the UP tactical officers explained that Sevilla excelled in military skills, leadership, and physical toughness. “Well, she can outrun the rest of them. She also holds the record of the most number of sit-ups in the corps; ninety-seven sit-ups in two minutes,” said tactical officer Solomon Lumba. “None of us can do that.”

Together, these two women cadets have displayed all the military virtues that had once been deemed quintessentially masculine—skilled marksmanship, confident leadership, martial-arts mastery, and, of course, superior academics.<sup>23</sup> As future UP and PMA classes produce a generation of outstanding female officers, the militarized masculinity of the colonial age, and its engendered political rhetoric, may begin to fade from Philippine political discourse.

## Notes

1. Camagay 1995, 119; Blanc-Szanton 1990, 344–83; Errington 1990, 1–58; Stoler 1991, 51–101.
2. Hernandez 1979, 178; Bauer 1973; Berlin 1982; Maynard 1976, 423; Newman 1989, 541–42; Selochan 1990.
3. Rosaldo 1974, 4, 25; Gilmore 1990, 14; Carnes 1990, 38–40; 1989, 3, 14.
4. Mosse 1985, 31–32, 100; Benjamin and Rabinbach 1989, xvi; Ralston 1990, 179.
5. Sinha 1995, 69–95; Peers 1991, 545–69; Haron 1990, 275–95; Echenberg 1991, 28–29; Enloe 1980, 26–27.
6. Cadet Corps 1988, 19–23, 526; H. J. Res. 123, 31 January 1908, RG-350, E-5, Box 647, No. 11, 685, NARA; Woolard 1975, 229–30; Coffman 1978, 75; Franklin 1935, Table F-4; Assistant Chief, Bureau of Insular Affairs, To: The Adjutant General, U.S. Army, 10 December 1912, RG-350, E-5, Box 647, No. 11, 685, NARA; Adjutant General, To: Chief, Bureau of Insular Affairs, 15 February 1923, RG-350, E-5, Box 647, No. 11, 685, NARA; Meixsel 1993, 137; Endy, Jr. 1983, 10–11.
7. Perlas 1930, 407; *The Philippinensian* 1937, 256, 276; Benitez 1938, 294–96; Martinez 1938, 313.
8. Panis 1925, 14–15; del Rosario 1931, 359; Meixsel 1993, 163; Lim 1980, 63.
9. *The Philippinensian* 1937, 237, 257–59, 268–69; Marcos 1946, 18–20.
10. Magsino and Lumabas 1978, 69–70; Carswell 1941, 122; Osmeña 1940, 7; Ferrell 1981, 8–10. For contemporary reports of the plan, see *New York Times*, 20 November 1934, 25 November 1934, 30 May 1936, 20 June 1936.
11. *The Tribune*, 17, 19 February, 3 March 1935; 24 January, 5 February 1937; Hayden 1955, 203–4.
12. *The Tribune*, 21, 23 February 1936; 30 January, 9 February 1937.
13. *The Tribune*, 25 January 1936; 30 January 1937, 3 February 1937.
14. *The Tribune*, 25 March 1936; *The Philippines Herald*, 25 March 1936; Meixsel 1993, 295–96.
15. *The Tribune*, 2, 11 October 1939; Gonzalez 1991, 138; interview with Colonel Manuel Acosta (ret.), Quezon City, 18 March 1995; Castro and Peralta 1935, 119, 124.
16. Mendoza 1986, 41–42, 164, 234; interviews with Colonel Francisco Jimenez, North Hollywood, California, 4 January 1995, and Colonel Eduardo Soliman, Quezon City, 20 January 1989; Castro and Peralta 1935, 207.
17. *Sunday Times Magazine*, 10 April 1966; 9 April 1967; *Manila Daily Bulletin*, 9 May 1966; *Variety*, 2 April 1967; *Manila Times*, 8 April 1967; Acosta 1976, 231–36; *Manila Times*, 9, 10 April 1969; *Bulletin Today*, 22 February 1981.
18. Diokno 1995, 92; International Commission of Jurists 1991, 144–47; Aquino 1995, 231–36.
19. *PC Journal*, July 1986. Despite centuries of Spanish rule, the term “Gringo,” common in Mexico, was never used in the Philippines. During the late 1960s, the term first appeared in the Philippines when Sergio Leone’s Italian Westerns were shown.
20. Aquino 1995, 26; Coronel 1990, 73; *Daily Express*, 13 November 1986.
21. *National Midweek*, 26 November 1986; *Observer*, 10 November 1986.
22. *Manila Chronicle*, 13, 14, 15 March 1995; *Malaya*, 14 March 1995.
23. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 13 March, 21 June 1999; *Manila Times*, 29 March, 24 April 1999.

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