

Orientalism and the Study of Philippine Politics*

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From the very first lecture of this series, I have repeatedly stated that colonial knowledge was caught up in ideas of evolutionary development, racial difference and hierarchy, and superiority of "the West" vis-à-vis "the East." There is nothing new about this view. The complex interplay between knowledge and colonialism from the eighteenth century to the present has been recognized and explored in multifold ways since Edward Said's book *Orientalism* appeared some two decades ago. In Philippine studies, however, there lingers the assumption that colonial knowledge is a thing of the past, the break between colonial and "modern" scholarship having occurred with the transfer of sovereignty to the Philippines in 1946. Was there, indeed, a discursive transformation with the departure of American officials from the scene?

In my second lecture, I suggested that it was in the early interactions between the Schurmann Commission and the Manila ilustrados, together with the policies and practices of U.S. pacification, that an "indigenous social structure" and perhaps even a "Filipino identity" were constituted. I wish to turn now to how Philippine politics has been characterized in certain key texts from the 1960s on, how political behavior has been codified in ways that reflect the desires and fears of contemporary observers. Ultimately, the question I ask is whether elements of colonial discourse continue to inhabit, in suitably amended and updated terms, recent writing on Philippine politics. Mesmerized by the

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trappings of modern scholarship, have we failed to interrogate the conditions for positing what is "true" and "essential" about Filipino political behavior?

America's Orient

I was provoked into examining the persistence of American colonial discourse after reading Stanley Karnow's book *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1990. Writing in the aftermath of the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship, Karnow asks why America's democratic experiment had failed, allowing the likes of Marcos to take over. Though sympathetic to Cory Aquino's People Power revolution and wishing her new, democratic government well, there was an air of condescension about the book. I was bothered by the all too simplistic portrayal of the Spanish colonial period as the "dark age" of the Philippine past supplanted in this century by an enlightened American new age. Filipinos in Karnow's drama seemed to be portrayed as juveniles, dominated by their emotions and untrammled personal ambitions. But I was even more bothered by the immense popularity of Karnow's book in the United States. Even here in Hawaii, well-meaning individuals recommend Karnow's book to me as a "must-reading" on the Philippines. What was it about the book, I asked myself, that readily connected with the American national imaginary, the dominant ways in which "others" – in this case, Filipinos – are perceived?

Karnow identifies the root of the Philippine problem as the decision, at the very outset (1899), to accommodate to tradition, meaning "the customs and social life of the islanders." American administrators expected that the system of mass education to be simultaneously instituted with U.S. rule would spawn future generations with truly democratic sentiments. Unfortunately, writes Karnow, echoing other contemporary American writers, traditional values prevailed.

What were these values? And who are the other American writers or scholars subsumed under the Karnow signature? Philippine society, he claims, is based on a "complicated and often

baffling web of real and ritual kinship ties – the antithesis of the American ideal of a nation of citizens united in their devotion to the welfare of all.”(1989:20) The crucial term here is “antithesis,” the notion that the Filipinos are the negative opposite of what Americans are supposed to be. But the word “antithesis” also suggests to me that the so-called “American ideal” is the *prior* term of the relationship; that the Filipino tradition Karnow speaks of is already an effect of the positing of an American tradition. This is not what Karnow means, however: for him, the Filipino tradition is an “already there” and “always there” – an essence. He speaks of the obsession among Filipinos with “shame” (*hiya*), with saving face; importance is placed on respect for elders and deference to superiors. “Filipinos are absorbed into alliances from infancy” and later on their political behavior is conditioned by the fact of being “enmeshed in coils of mutual loyalties.”(1989:230)

Karnow’s point is that the U.S. involvement was apparently flawed from the start since, in contrast to America where authority “reposed on impersonal institutions,” power in the Philippines revolved around the complex kinship networks of the *compadrazgo* system.”(1989:228) Therefore the tragedies and problems of the present are the consequence not so much of American intervention as of the tenacity of Philippine traditions. This is what earned Karnow the Pulitzer Prize, I think: the idea that America had always dealt with Filipinos in good faith, but that somehow the resilience of Filipino culture had managed to frustrate the grand scenario of democratization or “benevolent assimilation,” to use an older term.

As Karnow commences his narration of the American colonial period, the various themes fall neatly into place. America, like Spain centuries earlier, attempts to export its political and social values. The islands are deluged by American teachers, surgeons, and social engineers of all kinds. And in a relatively short time Filipinos begin to speak English, worship George Washington, and dream of white Christmases. But have they been reconstituted in America’s image? No, insists Karnow. Americanism was, and still is, a thin veneer. Karnow revels in narrating the “things American” that Filipinos admire and display, while reminding the reader that the Filipino value system never really changed – neither under Spain nor under the US.

Absolute difference characterizes the relationship between East and West, the Philippines and America.

The strategy of highlighting cultural difference enables Karnow to argue that America's democratizing mission largely failed because of the strength of Filipino traditions. American colonial officials became enmeshed in the same sorts of patronage relationships Filipinos "naturally" formed among themselves. Manuel Quezon, the most vibrant and bombastic of the Filipino politicians, was really a client of the Americans while such a dominating figure as General Douglas MacArthur became entangled in the Filipino web through his role of godfather to Quezon's son. Because Americans in the Philippines tended to become part of the ruling Mafia, they let the oligarchs remain in power. Thus, nothing was done to solve fundamental social problems. In the end, argues Karnow, Americans *cannot be blamed* for the failures of their ex-colony. No matter how much advice and support they gave to such political stalwarts as Magsaysay and Marcos, all this came largely to naught thanks to the enduring Philippine value system, and the tenacity of the ruling oligarchy.

The sense of negative otherness is reinforced by Karnow's descriptions of his frequent trips to the Philippines. Instead of order, he saw and experienced chaos: "The disarray was visible, widespread and, after a while, monotonous. The port of Manila was a hive of graft, with gangs protected by politicians working with customs officials to smuggle in everything . . . Violence had reached epidemic proportions . . . Ninoy Aquino . . . cruised around town in a bulletproof limousine, its upholstery fitted with slots for machine guns . . . [President] Macapagal concocted nationalist issues as a distraction." (1989:364) Not even the Communists are exempted from this picture of chaos: "[The Communists were] scarcely Robin Hoods, they murdered, plundered and feuded among themselves. But they were far better disciplined than the police and the army, whose abuses drove numbers of normally passive peasants into the Communist ranks . . ." (1989:386). All this endemic chaos, tyranny, and abuse "left [Karnow] doubting whether American institutions, implanted there at the turn of the century, could really take root in its soil." (1989:360)

What I find intriguing is this so-called Filipino tradition that had always been there, that survived centuries of colonialism and now supposedly underpins a flawed democracy. The Filipino actors in Karnow's text are doomed from the start because they are ruled by their passions, kinship ties, debts of gratitude and personal loyalties, and even exhibit such petty defects as vanity and the propensity to lie. In order to give his view of culture some structure and authority Karnow harnesses highly contentious and often outdated social values and personality studies from the 1960s. There is much to be explored in, say, Tagalog notions of *utang na loob* ("inner debt") and *hiya* ("shame") upon which reciprocal social relationships are constructed. Karnow, however, ignores more recent and non-essentializing studies of Filipino culture and politics. His aim is to establish a binary opposition between positive "American" and negative "Filipino" values and this resonates well with his audience, for much of what he claims to lie beneath Filipino exteriors conforms by and large to Euro-American myths of backward, undeveloped peoples.

Karnow, in effect, constructs Filipinos in terms of a variant of America's classic image of their Pacific wards. Images of the Filipino elite (oppressive *caciques*, bosses, patrons) and masses (blindly loyal and manipulated *tao*, clients of the bosses) constructed by James Le Roy, Fred Atkinson, David Barrows and many other American writers a century or so ago reappear in modern journalistic garb. But just as these older images are complicit with the colonial project to pacify and tutor the Filipinos, Karnow's portrayal of a starkly different Filipino tradition has its political implications. In the book, though the physical setting is the Philippines, the Filipino actors in the drama are outnumbered at least two to one by Americans. The Filipinos are nevertheless crucial to the narrative, as the negative "others" of the Americans whose story the book is really about. The American national imaginary is established and continually reinforced in writings about its cultural "others," and the Filipinos have occupied this position since the so-called imperial "blunder" of 1899.

A careful look at Karnow's sources will reveal an intertextual relationship with predominantly American writings on the Philippines. The building blocks of Karnow's book are, in fact, what these scholarly texts tell us about the Philippine-American war, the special (or should I say, exceptional) colonial relationship, collaboration and resistance under Japanese occupation, the U.S.-inspired political party system, and the family politics that hijacked it. Not surprisingly, these texts subscribe to the notion that, somehow, "tradition" has prevailed in the Philippines, and that American colonial officials, although partly to blame for having enmeshed themselves in this mode of politics rather than living up to its democratizing claims, had no choice as benign rulers but to allow "tradition" or the "essence" of the Filipino character to survive and eventually to reassert itself.

Compadre Colonialism

The earliest work of modern scholarship that can be said to have "enabled" Karnow's book is *Compadre Colonialism: Philippine-American Relations: 1898-1946*, published in 1971 by the University of Michigan's Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies and subsequently by Solidaridad Publishing House in Manila. The blurb on the back cover states the book's central concern: "Colonialism, by its nature, is one-sided, arrogant, exploitative; *compadrazgo* is bilateral, amicable, helpful. Could the United States rule the Filipinos against their will and still claim to be benevolent? Could the Filipinos resist American imperialism and still cooperate with it for the benefit of the country?"

The basic theme developed by the five authors, all students of David Steinberg, is that American colonial officials in the Philippines had often to compromise or even put aside their ideals of transforming the Philippines in accordance with American ideals, because of resistance from Filipino leaders, or the practical need to govern the masses through these local leaders. Americans constantly bewailed the so-called *caciquism* that demonstrated the Filipinos' unpreparedness for self-rule, while at the same time running the colony in conjunction with the educated subgroup of these *caciques*, called *ilustrados*. Because Americans allowed themselves

to be enmeshed in clientelist relationships with the *caciques*, they ended up running the colony in harmony with traditional Filipino customs and values. What the book *Compadre Colonialism* did was to highlight the uniqueness of the Philippine colonial experiment, and also the problems faced by "giving in" to supposedly feudal-minded Filipino nationalist leaders. We can see here where Karnow got his basic ideas about the force of Filipino traditions undermining the idealism of the Americans.

Compadre Colonialism's strength is that it is meticulously researched, the authors exploiting the advantage of being in a place, Ann Arbor, where libraries and archival holdings are particularly rich on the American colonial period. But faithfully representing what American officials thought and said about their Filipino wards can lead to a reproduction of colonial images and discourses, and this, I think, is one effect of the book. When Taft complained about the *caciques* and their traditional values being a hindrance to Americanization, he was writing in the context of an ongoing pacification of the populace and continued American efforts to get these *caciques* (many of whom were leading nationalists) to cooperate by rewarding some and punishing others. The "problem" of *caciquism* was, in fact, originally articulated by the U.S. Army in various war zones. Positing a stark divide between *cacique* agitators and blind, passive *tao* or commoners justified harsh measures on behalf of the army, which now functioned to free the commoners from their feudal leaders. The imperial policy of "benevolent assimilation" now had a firmer, sociological basis for its implementation. By being uncritical or even probably unaware of what we now can identify as an American colonial discourse on their Filipino subjects, the authors of *Compadre Colonialism* helped to reify or essentialize certain features of Philippine social relationships that Karnow would later pick up.

Compadre Colonialism's silence about the the Philippine-American War (1899-1902) is certainly not a feature of Karnow's book, which details the various stages of the conflict, cruel atrocities on both sides included. Karnow's interpretative framework on the war is derived from another American historian of the Philippines: Glenn Anthony May. In 1984, May aggressively challenged Filipino

historians' often weakly-documented assertions that the "masses" were enthusiastic supporters of the war, by insisting that the rank-and-file were just loyal followers of their officers who came from the local gentry and were often landlords as well. These cacique officers themselves were generally not fighting for grand ideals but on behalf of more powerful patrons and factions. May offers as evidence the statements of a few survivors of the 1899-1902 war whom he managed to locate in 1976. One of his star witnesses, Emilio Vergara, a mere boy of thirteen when drafted to fight the Spaniards in 1896, is quoted as saying that he joined the war against the Americans because he was drafted and feared punishment from his commanding officer if he refused to fight. May goes on to reconstruct Vergara's world from the interviews (conducted through an interpreter).

What emerges is a classic picture of premodern existence in rural Philippines, probably derived from his Yale Professor Harry Benda's essay on the evolution of popular movements in Southeast Asia. May depicts Vergara's world as entirely local (his village) and his only goal to return to it after the war. Vergara had no real feelings about the country's independence or the American enemy; "he had no concept of, or loyalty to, a nation-state; his only loyalty was to local authority figures." May is careful to note that other soldiers may have had other reasons for fighting, but these dimensions are not pursued at all. He concludes:

Here was a man who was not interested in fighting, who was not especially interested in Philippine independence, but who fought all the same. Why? The answer lies in *the nature of his society*. He fought because he was a client and his patrons asked him to fight. Many peasants, no doubt, fought for different reasons; but it should be emphasized that others too fought because of patron pressure. In a sense, the patron-client link was the real "underside" of the Philippine-American War.

If it was in the very nature of Vergara's society to be somehow bound to his officer or "patron," what were the precise meanings.

and dimensions of this relationship? May is silent on this; nowhere is there a textual explication of Vergara's language of clientelism. Instead, the relationship between Vergara and his officer is simply encoded into functionalist social science theory, or specifically into a definition of the patron-client tie as "the dyadic relationship between superordinate and subordinate in which each provides services for the others." Clientelism is reduced to a personal (or particularistic) relationship pervaded by loyalty or fear. This, May emphasizes, has no connection whatsoever with revolutionary impulses and visions. For him, Filipino "motives" for fighting a war against the U.S. rest on a notion of tradition that is practically conflated with patron-client ties. Karnow, of course, picks up this idea in framing his account of the war. It allows him to make that difficult transition from the narrative of a brutal imperialist conquest to that of benevolent colonialism.

Karnow is equally indebted to May for revisionist interpretations concerning the main goal of colonial tutelage – the implantation of American democratic institutions – and how this was frustrated by Filipino traditions. In his study of elections during the late Spanish period, May discovers "perhaps the greatest curiosity about political power in late nineteenth-century Philippine communities." Power, it seems, "resided neither in the electorate – who could be, and generally were, bribed, cajoled, threatened, and otherwise influenced – nor even in the elected – who may have been surrogates – but rather in the men who often took no official part in municipal political life." May locates power in a handful of local bigwigs at the top, and this repressive, manipulative but hidden power from above prevents everyone else in the community from engaging meaningfully in politics. The municipal election was, May concludes, "a marionette play, where the puppets on the stage performed according to a script and the men behind the scenes pulled the strings."

When the Americans took over, continues May, they transformed the election rituals, expanding the electorate, sanctioning political campaigns, and introducing a new system of electoral supervision. But "the reality of municipal politics proved to be far more resistant to change." The Americans blamed this on "corruption," failing

which they tended to blame it on “racial deficiency” and “political inexperience.” None of these, argues May, identified the real cause of the problem. Rather, it was that “under Spanish rule, the leaders of Philippine communities had learned not how to serve government, but rather how to use it. The holding of office was seen to be not an end in itself, but rather a means to the end of promoting particular interests. Finally, the process by which those officials were chosen – the election – was seen to be “not a ritual worthy of respect but rather a charade, silly and laughable.”

So on the eve of the American takeover Filipinos were already participating in elections, but these were basically flawed. They weren’t authentic (in the American liberal, democratic sense), asserts May, because they were driven by personal grievances, factional contests for dominance, and repressive power from above. And notwithstanding the claims of Filipinos, including some participants, the well-known revolutionary showdown in Tejeros in early 1897 was just a grubby and corrupt election involving factions and patronage, because – May reminds us in his latest book on the nationalist invention of heroes – that was the *nature* of local politics in the 19th century Philippines, and still is.

It is easy to see how May’s account feeds into Karnow’s central theme of a Filipino tradition that not only resists U.S. tutelage but is actually liberal America’s opposite. May reduces the complex relationships among townspeople, and between colonized and colonizer, into a contest of despotisms. The municipal puppeteers are also the big patrons, the sources of repressive power that turns the masses into mere electoral puppets. But a close reading of May’s own study, which is based almost exclusively on Spanish records, reveals other municipal scenarios which May recognizes but casts to the margins. Furthermore, my research on the war in Southern Luzon which makes use of Tagalog manifestos and letters, suggests a municipal community in which power flows from the bottom up, as well, and in which indebtedness is not simply a one-way, oppressive, relationship but rather a reciprocal one. Tagalog metrical romances just as readily offer this alternative picture. May’s paradigm fails to explain why, during the revolution, many of the big local patrons leading guerrilla armies behaved quite unlike the

selfish and rapacious bosses they are made out to be in the colonial records.

Glenn May's revisionist interpretations of nineteenth and early-twentieth century Philippines are echoed in Alfred McCoy's work on the Japanese occupation and later periods. In his study of Western Visayas during World War II, McCoy claims to have identified the most basic driving force of elite political behavior: factional loyalties. Take the following statement:

Deprived of any clear ideological or legal guidelines, members of the Ilongo elite determined their wartime political affiliation primarily on the basis of pre-war factional loyalties. ...With their moral compasses spinning, Iloilo's political leaders generally chose factional loyalties as their political touchstone and let personal circumstance determine their affiliations with either the resistance or collaborating government. (McCoy, 1980:205)

McCoy concludes that, "[o]nce the importance of factional alignments is recognized as the *determining factor* in wartime conflicts, nominally ideological issues, such as the collaboration conflict, can be understood as an extension of the continuing elite contest for political dominance." (1980:206)

There is a pattern in McCoy's rhetoric. First of all, he seems to contrast "factional loyalties" with ideology (reason), legality, and moral rectitude. Factional man is thus the negative opposite of, or at least the precursor to Enlightenment man. Then he argues, as does May with clientelism, that factionalism is the "determining factor" or the essential driving force in Philippine politics. The drive to protect, consolidate, or expand factional power is the essence of Filipino politics; everything else is empty rhetoric and posturing. For example, the guerrilla hero Tomas Confesor is said to have attacked puppets and collaborators for having "refused to bear the cross to redeem our people," and "having joined the Japanese in inflicting terror on the civil population for refusing to cooperate with the puppet government." McCoy claims to have uncovered

the reality of things: this was all hype, Confesor's clever way of tapping religious rhetoric to criticize the rival Zulueta-Roxas faction.(1980:219)

On a more general vein, McCoy claims that historians of Southeast Asia have become less concerned with the traditional approach to questions of colonialism and nationalism. Emphasis has shifted from "the ephemera of an external anticolonial conflict to the continuity of internal development – social, economic and political." "Continuity" in the socio-political realm here refers to the patron-client tie, the supposedly *fundamental mode* in which Filipinos relate vertically. The Philippine-American relationship itself became caught up in patron-client networks. Karnow builds on McCoy's conclusion that while reciprocity, fictive kinship, factionalism and the like may be inborn in Filipinos, Americans soon learned to play the game. They got caught up in clientelist networks and thus contributed to subverting the democratic political system they introduced.

McCoy, May, and others from the Philippine social history group emanating largely from the universities of Michigan and Yale in the late 60s and early 70s, press the view that vertical, patron-client ties link politically passive villagers to municipal and national politicians. However, they acknowledge, because the evidence is overwhelming, that there were aspirations for change, even "independence" (whatever that meant) coming from below. Elite patrons somehow had to address and appropriate such demands. At these critical junctions, rhetoric is seen as the lubricant. Politicians learned to say what the masses wanted to hear. But what was this rhetoric all about? There isn't much examination of rhetoric, in fact, the assumption being that behind all that talk Filipinos behaved as Filipinos "traditionally" did: in terms of personal loyalties, alliances, and so forth. Opposition groups, including their mass constituents, are constructed along the same lines: they are factional entities. Thus McCoy depicts Pedro Abad Santos, the charismatic leader of the peasant-based Socialist Party in the 1930s, as still, despite the socialist ideological rhetoric, typically Filipino and therefore entangled in personal relationships. McCoy claims to have found evidence that Santos acted as a patron to his party members

and that he in turn sought the patronage of sympathetic American officials. The constant, unchanging element in all this is the patron-client-faction network, or clientelist politics. Karnow calls it "tradition."

Leaders, Factions, and Parties

One of the reasons for such bold assertions on the part of the historians May and McCoy is that social science research – political science in particular – was providing empirically-derived models of Philippine political behavior. One book which they never fail to cite is Carl Lande's classic work, *Leaders, Factions, and Parties: the Structure of Philippine Politics*, based on his Harvard Ph.D. dissertation and published in 1965. Norman Owen, editor of *Compadre Colonialism*, acknowledges, as well, that his elaboration of the special relationship between American and Filipino *compadres* is derived mainly from the work of David Steinberg, Bonifacio Salamanca, and Carl Lande. Because Lande's work has enjoyed hegemonic status in the field of studies on Philippine politics, it deserves a detailed examination of its claims, the circumstances underwriting such claims, and the silences in the text itself.

In his preface to this Yale-sponsored publication, Harry Benda – then the guru of Southeast Asian Studies at Yale – announces Lande's "pioneering contribution" to the field. Philippine democracy, he says, "emerges clearly as a rare example of successful adaptation to an Asian environment of imported Western institutions." Benda identifies the underlying narrative of the work as "modernization," through whose processes Asian environments become plugged into the universal, humanist project of democracy in their own way, shaped by their own pasts. The overt question raised by the book is: How does the Philippines emerge as a "rare example of successful adaptation"? To put it in Karnow's terms, what kind of politics arises out of the interaction between Filipino tradition and American liberal democratic models?

There is nothing unusual about a book that focuses on political elites, political parties, and elections. The American political science tradition, as many have pointed out, has tended to associate

"politics" with "good government," "rational administration" and the practices of nation-building. It has focused on political elites and the institutions that they control. But I want to reorient the whole problematique: rather than seeing Lande as someone who has documented and theorized how Filipinos have adapted to imported or colonial models of nation building, I want to look into how he reads the Philippine data in order to encode it in terms of the modernization model. In his mind he has an image of what the ideal ought to be; it mirrors what is found in "advanced Western democracies." In his fieldwork, however, he is confronted by difference. Lande's theory of Philippine politics is what comes out of his own struggle to accommodate difference to his image of the ideal, smoothly-functioning party-based democracy which presumably is to be found in the U.S.

If we pay close attention to Lande's language, the images he employs, and his imagined audience, the play of sameness and difference can be delineated. Philippine politics is built on the American model; it is the politics of the same. But there are key differences and these are put in terms of "peculiarities" in the sense of quirks, oddities, and (to use a further synonym) abnormalities. The word *peculiarity* is a key word in Lande's text, in both a substantive and performative sense. The first peculiarity he notes is that the two political parties are really one. This is to him "the single most distinctive feature of Philippine politics." He spends a lot of time trying to figure this out, for in his mind there ought to be two discrete identities, two choices, two platforms, two programs of government. Sometimes, he says, there appear to be two distinct parties and so on, but upon closer look the two are indistinguishable from each other!

Another peculiarity Lande finds is the phenomenon of "switching" affiliations. People move in and out of parties instead of staying firm and loyal, as it should ideally be. Thus party identity is "unstable." Because there is a lot of movement and switching, power therefore cannot be concentrated in any party center. Rather, Lande observes, power is widely dispersed among local leaders. The loci of power are not to be found in the nationwide political parties, but in local factions and alliances based on personal ties.

And so the system is seen to revolve around personal ties (dyads) rather than collective organization. Philippine parties fall far short of being "proper" political parties; they don't function to enable the work of government to be conducted "with a minimum of disorder." Here we find Lande associating clientelism with disorder. This probably reflects, more than anything else, his Hobbesian view that personal relationships are basically founded upon domination and fear. Individuals being selfish and greedy by nature, dyadic ties can only lead to oppressive, feudal relations. Collective organization and, particularly, good government (a basic function of the state) are needed to regulate social relationships and implement the rule of law. These Lande finds weak and immature in the Philippines; most political observers today in fact attribute the country's political problems to a "weak state."

Lande seems particularly disturbed by his observation that the private and public domains are not kept separate. A patron-client relationship is a private (in the sense of personal rather than communitarian) relationship, assigned to the category of "nonpolitical." Such ties, which constituted the private, nonpolitical mode of relationships antedating the election system (and, by implication, American colonial rule), had infected, been carried over into, the U.S.-introduced political system operating in the public mode. This confounds the private versus public, personal versus impersonal binary divide that underpins the ideal mode of politics. Lande bemoans the "entanglement" of local, private, personal concerns, with conflicts in the national scene. Putting it another way, he states that local factions, built on patron-client ties, have been brought over into the sphere of the political. The problem is that factions have "a range of concern and activity far *exceeding* the sphere of politics proper." The notion of "excess" appears at several places in his work. It is this "excess" that keeps the Philippine system from being identical to the American model from which it derives, the "excess" that upsets the perfect ordering of the system.

From "peculiarities" let us move to another idiom which Lande employs in the text: "fluidity." Philippine politics is composed of a system of "fluid" parties, he says, and this is related to the notions of "switching" affiliations and unstable factional alignments. The

inability to “think categorically,” to plan for the long haul, and the ease with which changing public “moods” are reflected in voting patterns, all make for a political system that is extremely fluid and unpredictable. Lande’s language merits close examination, particularly his feminization of Philippine politics in the use of the terms “moods,” “unpredictable,” and even “fluid.” All of these attributes are paired with their opposites: rigidity, permanence, stability, rationality – which are identified with some aspect or other of “modern” systems operating either in Europe or the U.S. and which are also “masculine.” Naturally, the former attributes, associated with the feminized Philippine system, occupy a position of negativity and lack in relation to the masculine Western and American ideal.

If the Philippine political system consists of pale imitations, distortions, or outright contradictions of the ideal, why doesn’t Lande just dismiss it? Far from it, Lande has a stake in the system. For one thing, it is the product of decades of “American tutelage” – it has come to resemble the American “self” while persisting in being different. To resolve this seeming contradiction, Lande locates the Philippine system in the archaic past of a universal history of progress. In that way it can still be accommodated to a universal project: the development of the “modern state.” Specifically, the Philippines is compared to early 18th century England, and to a few backward spots in America like the Deep South. We associate this, not just with a certain feudal stage of development, but also with pre-Enlightenment politics, before a certain idea of political rationality emerged and proceeded to subsume differences into it.

In one of his many sweeping statements, Lande says that the “great mass of [Filipino] political actors” from voters to a large proportion of the political elite, “are but dimly aware of the major policy decisions a modern state must make” or if they are aware, do not see that the choices government must make are categorical and not to be confused with “primary ties.” But “some distance in the future,” he hopes, Filipino politicians will be “converted” into “power-shy ideologues or docile public servants devoted to the task of ‘aggregating interests’.” From being “dimly aware” of what a modern state must be, presumably they will be come to know better.

The "taming of the politicians" will only come when the electorate itself has learned to "think programmatically" and to force its leaders to do the same.

The language of "conversion" and "taming" is familiar. It resonates with the story of Philippine history from the "conversion" to Christianity onward. It resonates with the story of an emergence into the light – thinking "programmatically" means thinking "rationally." Writing in the late 1950s, Lande still speaks like the history textbook writer Barrows and his army of American teachers or "tutors of democracy." Filipino subjectivities were to be transformed through education in order to prepare them for citizenship in a modern state. Lande's discourse fits in perfectly with that of conversion and tutelage, except of course that (as a presumably passive, academic observer) he merely "hopes" for this change rather than actively intervening as the former colonialists or "tutors" had done. But is this so – is Lande merely being a passive observer? Or can we see his work as performative, a text that exerts some force in the political scene? Certainly the facility with which his work has been harnessed into overtly political tracts like Glenn May's polemics against Filipino nationalist and Marxist scholars, suggests that the book itself is one more node of power in the Philippine political scene.

Let us go back to Lande's text. Aside from resembling early 18th century England, the Philippine system, he says, also resembles politics in many other "developing countries" of today. This is provided, however, that their peoples haven't been subjected to "massive doses of indoctrination by modern-minded leaders, whether Marxists or others, who want to reform their habits and teach them to think and act categorically." (Lande, 1965:107) So change is possible, or can be accelerated, through massive indoctrination by Marxists – the named competitor – and others (there are allusions to Sukarno). One wonders, though, if Lande's work isn't in fact an attempt to shore up a construction of a "normal" Philippine politics that is already under threat. Radical political parties, he says, have appeared and partly succeeded, but their "impermanence" or "brief periods of existence" cannot be explained away by charges of persecution or the use of superior force against

peasants. He repeatedly states that class-based appeals haven't and won't succeed because of the essentially particularistic nature of Philippine politics – that is, the primacy of relations of patrons, clients and factions that negate “class feelings” that, he admits, do emerge from time to time.

All this does not necessarily imply that Lande was wrong while his shadowy rivals offering class-based paradigms were correct. It is enough to point out that Lande's construction of Philippine politics, through repetition or intertextual citation, or even its Yale Southeast Asia Council/ Harry Benda endorsement, came to be regarded as a more faithful representation of Philippine political behavior. This “truth,” however, was in fact established against competing interpretations. It emerged at a time when the “showcase of democracy” was beginning to reveal its cracks and a new intervention was needed. Allusions are made to changes taking place in Lande's time. Towards the end of the book he warns that “new Filipino industrialists,” “nationalistic intellectuals,” and “a welfare-minded peasantry” are having a “growing influence” on the administration of the two political parties. This spells danger, a threat. Denied access, these new forces might “suddenly make their presence known through extra-constitutional outbursts of mass violence.” Lande fears that the American-style party system will end up *not* being the sole vehicle of politics. Thus far, he says, the “frustration of the deprived reveals itself mainly in a widespread but directionless undercurrent of dissatisfaction with ‘politics’ among the electorate at large.” Or this frustration is expressed through a disposition to “throw out” the current holders of office at frequent intervals and to “give a chance” to other politicians and their followers. He consoles himself with the thought that “practically no one thinks of remedies in categorical terms” – that all this is emotional and “directionless.” Nonetheless, the “danger” clearly exists that some person or party will really get to overturn the system.

A couple of pages later, in the final chapter of the book, Lande makes his strongest allusions to what his clientelist model of Philippine politics is being established against. “Thoughtful Filipinos,” he says, are among the first to see the shortcomings in their party

system. They can see as well as he can that there is no real choice, that there are no coherent programs, and so forth. But Filipino critics, he bemoans, tend to overlook the advantages of this system. It minimizes hostility and conflict between various sectors of the public, between diverse regions and social classes. And this is an asset Filipinos should exploit. We are in an age and in a part of the world, Lande says, where "the rivalry of classes, regions and communal groups has often played into the hands of those who would abandon attempts to create institutions of constitutional democracy in favor of the institution of dictatorial rule either by a single strong party or by a strong individual leader."

So, in Lande's view, no matter how flawed it is, the Philippine party system should be the sole vehicle of politics: first of all because it is posited as being *naturally* "Filipino," a political expression of basic cultural traits; and secondly, because adopting the increasingly available alternatives spells disaster, a total break with the American tutor. The implication is that the kind of politics offered by totalitarian rivals is unFilipino, and not the fruit of a historical process, i.e., the period of American colonial tutelage. Lande's paradigm of Philippine political behavior can thus be situated within an arena of competing assertions about history, social structure and political change.

The critical decade that Lande speaks of, roughly 1955 (when he was researching the thesis) to 1965 (the publication of the book), saw the confluence of several developments in politics and the academe. The defeat of the Huk rebellion in the early fifties and the outlawing of the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) in 1957 saw a number of talented intellectuals – either former members of the PKP or sympathizers of the Huks – take the struggle for what they called "true independence" into the classrooms and the pages of newspapers and weekly magazines. There was also a significant group of civil libertarians and nationalists who, without necessarily embracing Marxist ideas, were critical of the continued American military and economic presence in the country. In an international environment of assertive nationalisms and the Cold War, it was felt by an increasing number of Filipinos that the independence granted

to them by the U.S. in 1946 was quite meaningless. This view, however, was not shared by the vast majority. The state and its educational system, both offspring of the American colonial period, seemed committed to reproducing an evolutionary view of change with both Spain and America (and their native wards) as key actors. A re-education process, it was felt, had to be undertaken.

At the very core of this struggle to “de-colonize” the Filipino mentality was the dissemination of alternative histories and biographies. The party politics of the time contributed to these intellectual changes. From the late 1950s, competition among top politicians required them to hire the best writers, bankroll publications, and even sponsor meetings and organizations. As long as a “freewheeling democracy” existed – a function of belonging to the “Free World” – political patronage guaranteed a space for radical intellectuals. For example, they rallied around President Diosdado Macapagal who was fond of using the term “unfinished revolution” in his writings and speeches. Macapagal attached limited and rather evolutionary meanings to this slogan; nevertheless, it could be read and recycled in a variety of ways. In magazine articles, conferences and colloquia, it came to have anti-imperialist, neutralist and socialist meanings. From this period originated the radical student movement that was to confront Macapagal’s successor, Marcos, especially from 1969 on.

Philippine politics, then, in Lande’s time was a site of anxiety about the threat of Communism. The perception that there was a threat from the region enabled certain images and metaphors to gain influence. The so-called “domino theory” is well known. But I suggest that “patron-client-factions” is another. Lande’s work ought to be seen in the context of mainly Marxist-nationalist challenges to the postwar construction of history and politics. There are other matrices of power within which Lande’s research was done and his book published: the “special” Philippine-American relationship, his academic training, his close friendship with senators and congressmen, his race, even his gender. All of these have to be considered critically in discussing the birth, or should I say rebirth, of the clientelist paradigm in the 1960s.

An Anarchy of Families

Lest we think that the problems in Lande's 1960s text have been surmounted in more recent scholarship, let me jump to 1993 and the appearance of an enormous, 541-page volume titled *An Anarchy of Families: State and Society in the Philippines*. This book project was envisioned in the light of Marcos's downfall and the need to explain the swift restoration of the old oligarchy under Cory Aquino's purportedly revolutionary (i.e., "people power") government. According to editor Alfred McCoy, the book responds to the crying need for detailed empirical studies of political families and their exemplary (or notorious) leaders, in order to offset the tendency of most Filipino accounts to be "more hagiography than history." The almost blanket criticism of Filipino writings is striking. McCoy, as the impartial, impassionate outsider looking in, presumes to be getting at the reality beneath the heroic claims or pretensions of nationalist historiography. This "reality" is the familism, localism, corruption, and violence that essentially underlie Filipino political behavior.

McCoy draws on Latin American Studies to provide him with a suitable template for understanding the Philippines: the "weak state and powerful political oligarchs" combining to make the familial perspective on national history relevant. By "family", McCoy does not mean household. Rather, it is the kinship network that is mobilized in politics and feeds into the "paradoxical relationship between weak state and strong society" that one finds rampant in the "Third World." In the extreme, families even turned the state into their own "fiefdoms." Latin American Studies notwithstanding, there is something familiar in all this. These are Lande's views employing slightly different jargon.

In McCoy's introduction we get the image of the rational, modernizing, disciplinary state/center – originating in colonial rule – being resisted, challenged and eventually corrupted by provincial forces exhibiting feudal characteristics such as despotism, family-centeredness, and the routine use of violence (warlordism, thuggery). The state/center signifies the workings of enlightened reason democracy, capitalism, order and the public sphere. The provincial

countryside, on the other hand, signifies a premodern condition where particularistic interests of family, clan and faction prevail. McCoy depicts the Philippines as persisting in a kind of historical time warp, unable to make that leap into the fully modern. That is why it could produce the grotesque figure of Ferdinand Marcos, "a politician who combined a statesman's vision with the violence of a provincial politician." The net result has been "anarchy," a lack of order, perhaps even a state of irrationality. Anarchy implies violence because contending forces are let loose among themselves. The front-cover photo is of a "warlord" surrounded by bodyguards. This is what "family" signifies in the book. Against it is posited the order and rationality of the state, which in the Philippines has been hijacked by disorderly families. What this image boils down to is that of the "prepolitical" in the liberal, enlightenment sense.

Perhaps we need to be reminded at this point that one justification for the U.S. conquest of the Philippines was the claim that the First Republic was not a modern state, that it was led by a warlord (Aguinaldo), and that the revolutionary armies were nothing but *cacique*-led gangs. Is it surprising, then, that McCoy sees American colonial rule as a positive, modernizing project? He stresses that through the police and other colonial state mechanisms the Americans were able to keep at bay predatory provincial politicians. This harks back to the U.S. military argument, ca. 1900, that they were rescuing the masses from domination by their local strongmen. Why so many resisted the U.S. takeover, to the loss of nearly half million lives, is not the sort of question the book addresses, although there is a hint of another perspective in Resil Mojares' chapter which I will discuss later. Just like Karnow, McCoy repeatedly points out that "cunning" Filipino politicians, who combined landed wealth and local office, managed to frustrate the ideals of the American colonial state and later on plundered the independent Philippine state. He insists that the Lopez brothers, for example, could have been nothing else but "master manipulators of the state, operators without peer within their respective realms." Other works (coincidentally, perhaps, written by Filipinos) that have something positive to say about the character and personality of some of these elite politicians are dismissed by McCoy as hagiography. History is made to demonstrate how the naturally base instincts of man

prevail without a strong state or a modern form of rationality to tame them.

Michael Cullinane's chapter on the Durano family pretty much adheres to McCoy's paradigm. The warlord whose photo graces the book's cover could very well have been Ramon Durano, who used violence to establish political control over Danao City and deliver votes to national politicians. Cullinane seeks to analyze "the mechanisms [the family] uses to maintain political and economic control." The story that emerges is a perfect example of the politics of "guns, goons and gold." Durano is depicted as holding total power over his "fiefdom." Only his "national patron" Marcos could keep him in check. "People power" was certainly ineffective against this "entrenched and distant warlord."

Like McCoy, Cullinane is dismissive of the native's rhetoric. He brands as lies Durano's claims about caring for his people and constituency. The "truth" about the people of Danao is that they are helpless victims of warlord power; at best they are portrayed as hopelessly mired in "a culture of dependency." But what are the dimensions of this "culture of dependency"? Does it offer an alternative view of human behavior and social relationships from Hobbes's and Locke's? Can it reveal a form of power that circulates within society – limiting, localizing or even enabling the warlord's power? No further explanations are offered. And what is gained by simply heaping scorn upon Durano's later embracement of religion, his "awkward identification with Christ," his philanthropy? Cullinane brushes aside the "rhetoric" and from his social science standpoint claims to uncover the "real" reason for the native's retirement gestures: here, he says, was the ex-warlord, in a typical Filipino manner, making a deal with God (the "final patron") to ensure passage to heaven. Here the tropes of Oriental despotism and clientelism are interwoven. (This reification of family politics, however, makes it difficult for Cullinane to explain why Durano's son, Deo, turned against his father, accusing the family of abusing its power.)

John Sidel's study of the Montanos of Cavite is another variation on the McCoy theme. Lopez-types the Montanos aren't; there are limits to their rise because they lack a solid base in proprietary

wealth to fall back on. Sidel proposes a comparison not with royalty (they don't form a "dynasty") but with the "big man" phenomenon in precolonial Southeast Asia, particularly the "man of prowess" explored by Oliver Wolters. "Prowess" to Wolters signifies the spiritual and leadership resources of those responsible for mobilizing settlements and circles of power (mandalas) in pre- and protohistoric mainland Southeast Asia, and no doubt elsewhere in the region. What makes Wolters' "man of prowess" so productive of other insights is its inseparability from a whole cluster of features and qualities which appear to characterize a "different kind" of politics and social formation. Thus one finds associated with "man of prowess" terms like "entourage," "networks of loyalty," "present-mindedness," "switching of roles," "fluidity of relationships," and "improvisation." In Sidel's work, however, the "man of prowess" merely serves to register the negative "other" of the ideal modern politician.

Specifically, the big man or man of prowess is embodied in Justiniano Montano, a provincial warlord who exploited opportunities in the postwar political situation. The Montanos are located within a generalized situation of small-town clans dominating Cavite since the late Spanish period. Sidel paints a fairly detailed nineteenth-century scene of competing clans and chiefs – a picture which deliberately undermines the nationalist portrayal of Aguinaldo and his officials. Instead of revolutionaries they appear as "big men" spearheading local political machines, precursors of the "nationalist" politicians of later eras who really were warlords. In another assault on mainstream Filipino historiography, Sidel sees the "watchful friars" functioning just like the U.S. police in the next century: as a check on the disorderly activities of the "big men." The continued lawlessness in the region in the early years of U.S. occupation is attributed to "banditry" under the aegis of powerful clans, rather than continuations of resistance against American occupation. So for Sidel, Macario Sakay *was* a bandit, not a hero. One wonders, however, why the bandits bothered to wear smart uniforms and proclaim revolutionary Republican ideals. Again, in the manner of McCoy and Cullinane such rhetoric is dismissed in favor of Sidel's apparent knowledge of the "hard realities" behind them.

What Sidel shares intimately with McCoy and Cullinane is the propensity to spot a particularistic, familial, tie in just about every Filipino political relationship they encounter. It is not difficult to detect their essentializing strategies. They work through paired opposites: family versus state, particularistic versus nationalistic, violence versus law, clientelism versus genuine democracy, where the former is the negative pole. The nationalist agenda is made to look plain silly in the avalanche of classmates, friends, relatives, bodyguards, protégés, and patrons all out to further their narrow, selfish, Hobbesian agendas. One cannot, in the view of McCoy, Cullinane, and Sidel, simultaneously occupy, or oscillate between, the public (i.e. nationalist) and private (local, familial) spheres. And there appears no other meaning to the "dyadic" or personal relationships engendered by this politics except a kind of political backwardness, sometimes called feudalism.

The book, *An Anarchy of Families*, is not, however, a seamless whole. Among the eight chapters are a few which resist the essentializing strategies of the editor. One of them stands out, in my view, as a model for future scholarship: Resil Mojares's chapter on the Osmeña family of Cebu. In his introduction, one senses a distancing move exemplified by such passages as, "[the Osmeñas] don't conform to certain stereotypes about political kingpins, or 'warlords,' in the Philippines." Based in Cebu City, Mojares expresses concern about the preoccupation with why Philippine politics fails to conform to ideal patterns, the focus on "rulers, leaders, and big men," on their practice of terrorism and fraud, their "subordination of issues to particularistic concerns," and so forth. In fact, he notes, these kinds of activities fall within the perceived category of *pulitika*, the politics of strategems and spoils – electoral battles included – dominated by the elite. This field of action certainly dominates politics but it is also constantly changing in scope and meaning, and by no means does it exhaust the multifold ways in which politics is practiced.

Despite their dominance, elite families and the unusual men who publicly lead them are not in total control of the field of *pulitika*. Political families do not move in a void, Mojares reminds us; they are also *made* by the community. Rhetoric *is* to be taken seriously

because (here Mojares cites Gramsci), "parties and politicians propagate conceptions of the world and organize the spontaneous consent of the ruled." Hegemonic domination, nevertheless, "is far from total." Followers and audiences "can reinterpret and negate," and that's why there is political instability. Mojares avoids the trap of subsuming the politics of the Osmeña family into the family (private) versus state (public) binary with the hierarchies this suggests. The Osmeñas negotiate the divide and render it meaningless. They "skillfully combine public benefit with private gain." They "are not only instrumentalists but true believers in the precepts of liberal democracy and free enterprise." Yes, they can engage in the politics of thuggery and bribery, but they also speak and act in ways that animate their audiences and evoke consent. Political power is not just a repressive force emanating from above; it circulates throughout the social body and in fact enables the rule of the big men.

Mojares's chapter points towards alternatives to the Orientalist construction of Philippine politics. But the discursive hold of Lande's "clientelism and Philippine party politics" or McCoy's "anarchy of Filipino families," based as it is on a tradition of scholarship dating from the pacification era, is going to be hard to break away from. An example of how scholarship can be caught in this discursive net, despite the best of intentions, is Benedict Anderson's "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines." His first sentence is, ". . . President Aquino told a most instructive lie . . . that her great-grandfather had been a poor immigrant from southeast China's Fukien province." The truth, Anderson reveals, is that she "is a member of one of the wealthiest and most powerful dynasties within the Filipino oligarchy."

In fact, great grandfather Cojuangco was a relatively poor immigrant who made it rich. Anderson needs to begin his essay with an image of a dissimulating oriental, and his subsequent procedure is to reduce the history of the Filipino elite to the formation and development of a "Chinese mestizo," "cacique," "dynastic," "nationalist," "collaborationist," "corrupt," "feudal" oligarchy. Writing in the aftermath of the fall of Marcos ("the Supreme Cacique"), there is in Anderson, as in Karnow, a desire to construct

a history and a Filipino "tradition" that will explain the present. Anderson identifies that tradition in "political dynasties" which are precisely what "make Filipino politics so spectacularly different from those of any other country in Southeast Asia."

Anderson's essay depends heavily not just on the work of the social historians (e.g. Wickberg, Owen, McCoy, May, Cullinane, Sidel) but also on Latin American models. The paradigm of world historical stages is applied to the Philippines, with the Chinese mestizo social and political behavior falling all too neatly into the category of a backward feudalism. We see shades of Sidel in Anderson's depiction of the Philippine revolution as led by mestizos and *caudillos* (cf. *caudillaje*: leadership, tyranny, bossism) who, he imagines, would have set themselves up as independent warlords had not the American forces arrived. Literally at the stroke of a pen, the revolution and resistance to U.S. occupation cease to exist, becoming instead an anarchical scene dominated by ambitious families. Anderson's attempt to racialize and "feudalize" the Filipino leadership sounds in fact like the efforts at representation by American observers and pacification authorities at the turn of the century. U.S. conquest became, at that time, a matter of civilizing need. Anderson carries the argument further: indigenous politics during the American colonial regime is reduced to juvenile cacique contests in what he calls "a civilized 'ring' sternly refereed by the Americans." Independence in 1946 restores the country to a state of premodern disorder, a condition of warlord domination of national politics that makes inevitable renewed American intervention in the 1950s (e.g., their backing of a non-oligarchic President Magsaysay), and the appearance of a Marcos in the 1960s.

The problem is not so much that the saga of socio-political development presented by Anderson is a total misrepresentation, but that this narrative is derivative of the research produced by scholars I mentioned earlier, and has its roots in colonial writing itself. Curiously, unlike in Anderson's study of Javanese and even Thai politics, there is no attempt to describe Filipino elite politics in terms of its own categories. No study of language or "rhetoric" is attempted. Anderson tries to emulate Jose Rizal and Nick Joaquin

in their relentless criticism of the Filipino ruling class, but his efforts are hampered by the lack of complexity in his depiction of the elite, his reductionism, his subsuming of the elite into a race-and-class category. Rizal's sensitive pen, in contrast, brought out the variety of positions and experiences produced by this elite.

I have tried in this lecture to show how a certain kind of politics, which is never really understood from within, gets to be constructed as a negative "other" of the Euro-American post-Enlightenment political tradition. The mind/body, reason/passion, public/private and other related dichotomies that we have uncovered in the foregoing texts point to deeper problems in the way that political rationality, images of the "body politic," and the very idea of the "political" itself, have been constructed and understood since the late 18th century. Moira Gatens, in her study of European political philosophy, points out that whether pre-political society is conceived as a primitive social state or as a state of isolated individuals in nature, "the passage to political society is consistently represented as a passage undertaken by men only." The political body, the "triumph of reason, foresight and deferral" is one of men coming together. Women are incorporated and controlled, but her contributions are neither acknowledged nor visible as socio-political contributions. The same views were applied by liberal philosophers to "barbarous Indians," the objects of colonization and conquest, who were incorporated into the body politic without their difference being acknowledged.

My reading of Karnow's book and the scholarly works that buttress it suggests that Filipino political actors, to the extent that their thinking and behavior are admitted into the "political," are subjected to the same discursive operations that have served to marginalize women and "barbarous Indians" in classical political theory. According to John Stuart Mill, "[Woman] neither knows nor cares which is the right side in politics, but she knows what will bring in money or invitations, give her husband a title, her son a place, or her daughter a good marriage." This male, liberal depiction of women in politics could very well be a modern political science description of "traditional" Filipino political behavior. Freedom from narrow or particularistic views and affiliations is something Mill's

"women," and Lande's "Filipinos" (read here the feminized oriental), have a tough time achieving, because both are analytically tied to the "private" sphere, and when thrust into the "public" continue to confuse the two.

In rethinking the clientelist paradigm, we need to understand why binary oppositions are constructed and how to conceive of a politics that subverts such oppositions. We need to understand more fully the implications of the liberal European construction of a "proper" and "rational" politics that in fact excluded women and Indians; and how this is replicated in the depiction of Filipino politics as infantile and anarchic. Lande's essentialist definition of the Filipino "self" led to his initial puzzlement concerning the "switching" of identities and the fluidity of socio-political relationships. Somehow, lurking at the back of his analysis – as well as the others I have examined in this paper with the exception of Mojares's – is the assumption that personal identities ought "naturally" to be fixed, bounded, stable. If the "self", even the "Western" self, is seen as the site of contradictions, multiplicity, disunity, though caught up in various disciplinary regimes that limit or mask such displacements, then what Lande observed and then relegated to the status of quirks, oddities and abnormalities, can be seen as operations of a more fluid and socially-constructed "self." From here we can then begin to analyze and critique Philippine politics on its terms.

An Overview

I have tried in my three lectures to show how a certain kind of politics, which has not really been understood (and therefore critiqued) on its own terms by American observers, initially was constructed as a "problem" that needed fixing up by the US pacification forces. In my first lecture I spoke of how colonial textbooks wrote about the revolution of 1896 in order to contain its dangerous implications, to reduce it to lack and failure. I spoke of how Filipinos were represented as a juvenile race unable to distinguish between the private and public domains, thus the need for American fathering. In my second lecture, I focused on the disciplinary strategies that accompanied pacification. Filipinos were to be known and reconstituted in the light of American and ilustrado

desires and fears. Physical movement and the switching of identities were to be contained and arrested. A proper and modern citizenry was to be developed, fitted for future independence in a democratic state. Throughout the process of “re-forming” and interacting with their colonial wards, American officials encoded the behavior they encountered in terms of their ideas of what modern subjects (epitomized by an idealized “American people”) should be.

More recent studies have since been largely attached to the preoccupations of these colonial officials, since the English-language archive is dominated by their voices. The key questions still are: how has Philippine politics been the same yet the other of the universal – read American – norm? Where to locate it within the Manichean extremes of private versus public, family versus state, anarchy versus order, warlords versus statesmen? Philippine history and politics encoded in terms of such binaries only reproduces colonial discourse, and will forever continue to represent lack and failure.

Let me end by quoting once more from the blurb on the cover of *Compadre Colonialism*: “The authors individually analyze specific historical problems in factual terms, yet they all return to the great central questions of cooperation and conflict that haunted not only the ‘American period’ in the Philippines, but also the post-war years.” True, but even beyond those “great central questions,” I would suggest, is the question of America itself, how it defines itself, which has haunted representations of its colonial “other” – the Philippines – from 1898 on. This is the ghost that haunted those “five young scholars from the University of Michigan” who sought to strike out on a new course in 1971. It continues to haunt every page of Karnow’s book, and it subtly bedevils even current scholarship on the Philippines. ❖

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