

Sexuality, Gender, and US Imperialism after Philippine Independence:  
An Examination of Gender and Sexual Stereotypes of  
Pilipina Entertainment Workers and US Servicemen

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Crossing Borders: International and Transnational Histories  
Professor Julie Weise  
June 10, 2015

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the continuation of US imperialism in the Philippines after Philippine Independence in 1946 through the gendered and sexual stereotypes of US men and Philippine women. These perceptions of the women as submissive and dependent were constructed through women's interactions with US military men, who were seen as powerful and wealthy. The Philippine presidencies of Ferdinand Marcos and Corazon Aquino also transformed identities particularly of Philippine women. This paper illuminates instances of Pilipina agency that show many Pilipinas were not simply victims to US power, but also sought employment opportunities in order to provide for themselves, their families, and their country. This paper then connects the events around US military bases at that time to present-day stereotypes associated with Asian-born women married to US men in the United States, as well as the current discussions of reopening of the US military bases in the Philippines.

## **Introduction**

With the end of the Spanish-American War, the 1898 Treaty of Paris officially started the legacy of United States imperialism in the Philippines. Prior to US colonial rule, Spain controlled the islands for approximately 300 years. Despite the establishment of a government by Philippine nationalist Emilio Aguinaldo after the United States and Philippine military forces defeated the Spanish, US presence remained in the Philippines. Although a small population of Pilipino elites saw the personal socioeconomic benefits of working with US officials in the colonial government, Pilipino nationalists were once more disheartened by the inability to determine their

own destiny through self-governing.<sup>1</sup> When US politicians discussed whether the United States should continue its possession over the Philippines in 1903, President William McKinley supported the US presence by stating that God himself told him that it was the role of the US “to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them.”<sup>2</sup> Although Christianity was already prevalent in the Philippines because of Spanish rule, this attitude led to continued US involvement in the Philippines that would heavily impact Pilipino culture and the perception of the Philippine people, even after the country achieved independence in 1946.

Despite the Philippines attaining sovereignty in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, a new form of US imperialism emerged with the passage of the Military Bases Agreement on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1947. To the dismay of Philippine nationalists who pushed for complete separation from the United States, many Philippine officials and even some US politicians desired a connection between the two nations for economic and political reasons. A struggling agricultural-centric Philippine economy and the US-envisioned growing threat of communism in Asia were both critical factors that justified the passage of the agreement.<sup>3</sup> Officials from both sides saw a potential symbiotic relationship between the two countries. However, it was a relationship where the United States was dominant, wealthy, and played the role of the protector, while the Philippines were weak, dependent and in need of support. The bases agreement between the two nations permitted the presence of US military bases in the Philippines with a tenure of approximately one hundred

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<sup>1</sup> Glenn May, “Philippine-American War 1899-1902” (lecture, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, April 22, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> General James Rusling, “Interview with President William McKinley,” *The Christian Advocate* 22 January 1903, 17. Reprinted in Daniel Schirmer and Stephen Roskamm Shalom, eds., *The Philippines Reader* (Boston: South End Press, 1987), 22-23.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander R. Magno, “Cornucopia or Curse: The Internal Debate on the US Bases in the Philippines,” *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, no. 3 (1988): 8.

years, which added to the already existing Philippine military bases.<sup>4</sup> Rather than the direct rule previously enforced over the Philippines by the United States, the presence of US servicemen stationed at US military bases such as Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base inadvertently shifted social and economic spheres of Philippine society, especially in regard to the lives of Philippine women.

During their time in the Philippines, US servicemen would enter surrounding cities such as Angeles and Olongapo for leisure in “rest and recreation” (R&R) establishments, places which changed over time to cater to their evolving social and sexual needs. These developments included hotels, bars, brothels, gambling dens, and other nightlife venues.<sup>5</sup> Many of these spaces offered alternative employment options to Pilipinas that would otherwise be faced with limited lower paying agricultural jobs.<sup>6</sup> According to sociologist Kathleen Barry, the underdevelopment of the Philippine economy was due to its exposure to warfare, which pushed women to the life of prostitution and other jobs.<sup>7</sup> Although an “underdeveloped” Philippine economy and warfare may have caused many women to labor as sex workers, it was not the primary form of work for most women. Jobs ranged from sexual services such as prostitution and exotic dancing to gender-oriented services that resembled traditional United States notions of women’s roles. For example, Pilipinas working as waitresses and bar girls acted in a demeanor that was stereotypically feminine: subservient and dependent, qualities that were displayed in order to fulfill the desires of servicemen and make money. Although popularly seen as exploitive, these jobs did enable them to better provide for themselves through the opportunity created by the

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<sup>4</sup> Setsu Shigematsu, Keith L. Camacho, and Cynthia Enloe, *Militarized Currents: Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 65.

<sup>5</sup> Kathleen Barry, *The Prostitution of Sexuality* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 123.

<sup>6</sup> Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 86.

<sup>7</sup> Barry, *The Prostitution*, 52.

presence of US servicemen. The relationship between US servicemen and Pilipinas was one that cannot simply be defined as US men taking advantage of a poor Philippine economic situation, but rather was a form of symbiotic exploitation. In other words, both groups found benefits from the situation, despite each of them being taken advantage of in some way. These relationships created and perpetuated stereotypes based on gender, sexuality, and even nationality, that created power imbalances between the two countries.

Despite US power over the Philippine population, to say Pilipinas were simply victims of US influence risks omitting part of their history. Pilipina agency also contributed to the molding of these gender and sexual stereotypes. To make a living in these industries, a Pilipina abided by these US-preferred female characteristics in order to financially provide for herself and her family. Although the new form of United States imperialism heavily influenced these actions, Pilipinas also sought out the opportunities that arose from growing R&R industries for their own personal benefit.

Scholars who have studied the rest and recreation industries around US military bases have primarily focused on the colonization of Philippine women through prostitution and sexual violence by US servicemen. *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* by Cynthia Enloe, *The Prostitution of Sexuality* by Kathleen Barry, and *Sex, Money, and Morality* by Trinh-Dam Truong are prime examples. Although they provide insight to an understudied subject, there is still a lack of examination into the everyday and intimate relations between US servicemen and Pilipinas around United States military bases outside of prostitution. Fortunately, a rising consciousness among the suppressed groups of the world and the scholars within these factions continue to

unearth and analyze the stories of Philippine women working in these industries.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, to contribute to existing knowledge, I provide specific examples of continued US imperialism after Philippine Independence in 1946 in the form of the gendered and sexual associations between US servicemen and Pilipinas. By examining the early development of servicemen's perspectives of Pilipinas and vice versa after World War Two, the Vietnam War period, and the Philippine presidencies of Ferdinand Marcos and Corazon Aquino, it can be observed that interactions both intimate and casual between US servicemen and Pilipinas portrayed servicemen as powerful, dominant, and wealthy—the embodiment of the United States— and Pilipinas reflected the Philippines as submissive, controllable, and dependent on US power.

### **The Power of the Exotic: Early Development of the Pilipina Image**

Before the Military Bases Agreement in 1947, United States involvement in the Philippines during World War Two helped form US perceptions of Pilipinas that continued even after Philippine independence. These views of Pilipinas stemmed from US servicemen's fascination with the "exotic". Former professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University Edward Said argues that Americans generally did not view Asia or the "Orient" the same way as Europeans, who saw it as "a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, [and] remarkable experiences."<sup>9</sup> However, many US servicemen found Philippine women sexually attractive because they possessed a sense of otherness— a culture different from their own. The oriental exoticism of Pilipinas by US servicemen after

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<sup>8</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 371.

<sup>9</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 28-29.

World War Two was facilitated by US music and through photographs taken in the Philippines that were shared amongst servicemen.

Furthermore, music written about US servicemen and Pilipina interactions reflected the relationship between the imperial US and the Philippine colony: Pilipinas were dependent, beautiful, and possessable, while US servicemen became the caretakers and dominant figures in the relationship. For example, on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1946, US country singer Ernest Tubb released the song *Filipino Baby*. This song communicated the sadness among US servicemen as they left their Pilipina sweethearts to return to the United States after World War Two. When describing the Pilipinas, Tubb sang:

[Chorus]  
 She's my Filipino baby  
 She's my treasure and my pet  
 Her teeth are bright and pearly  
 And her hair is black as jet  
 Oh, her lips are sweet as honey  
 And her heart is true I know  
 She's my darlin' little Filipino Baby.<sup>10</sup>

This song by Ernest Tubb spread these objectifying images of Pilipinas through servicemen and prompted a focus on the physical qualities of the women. In another portion of the song, Tubb sang, “When up steps a little sailor with his bright eyes all aglow, sayin’ ‘Take a look at my gal’s photograph.’ Then the sailors gathered round him just to look upon her face and he said, ‘I love my Filipino baby.’”<sup>11</sup> The sailor showing off a photo of his Pilipina sweetheart reinforced notions of patriarchy and the infatuation with the exotic. The repetitive use of the word “my” indicates possession of Pilipinas, for they were objects to be had. The line “gathered round him just to

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<sup>10</sup> Ernest Tubb, *Filipino Baby*, (Decca, 1946), vinyl, from authentichistory.com, *WWII In American Music: Wartime Romance*, MP3 sound, 2 minutes and fifty-one sec., [http://www.authentichistory.com/1939-1945/3-music/12-Wartime\\_Romance/19460917\\_Filipino\\_Baby-Ernest\\_Tubb.html](http://www.authentichistory.com/1939-1945/3-music/12-Wartime_Romance/19460917_Filipino_Baby-Ernest_Tubb.html).

<sup>11</sup> Ernest Tubb, *Filipino Baby*.

look upon her face” suggests the men primarily desire to see a beautiful and attractive woman, neglecting to learn this woman’s character. This song demonstrates how servicemen were eager to discuss their experiences in the Philippines and encounters with Philippine women, and it is this open dialogue which further spread a patriarchal exotic fantasy revolved around Philippine woman.

After the passage of the Military Bases Agreement and the evolution of the gendered and sexual stereotypes associated with Pilipinas through music, word of mouth, and photographs, new waves of servicemen entered the islands with this sexualized, exotic fantasy in mind. An online gallery composed of photographs submitted by former US servicemen who spent some period of time in and around the Subic Bay Naval base before the closure of all US bases in 1991 displays a trend that portrays Pilipinas as submissive to US servicemen. The website is designed and managed by former US Marine Sgt. Howard James Holub. One particular photograph titled, “Beach Party at Subic Bay 1954” (Fig. 1) conveys the romanticized life similar to the one portrayed in Tubb’s song.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Sgt. Howard James Holub, “Nothing More Beautiful, Nothing More Fine,” Subic Bay PI, accessed May 21, 2015, [http://www.subicbaypi.com/town\\_photo\\_girls.htm](http://www.subicbaypi.com/town_photo_girls.htm).



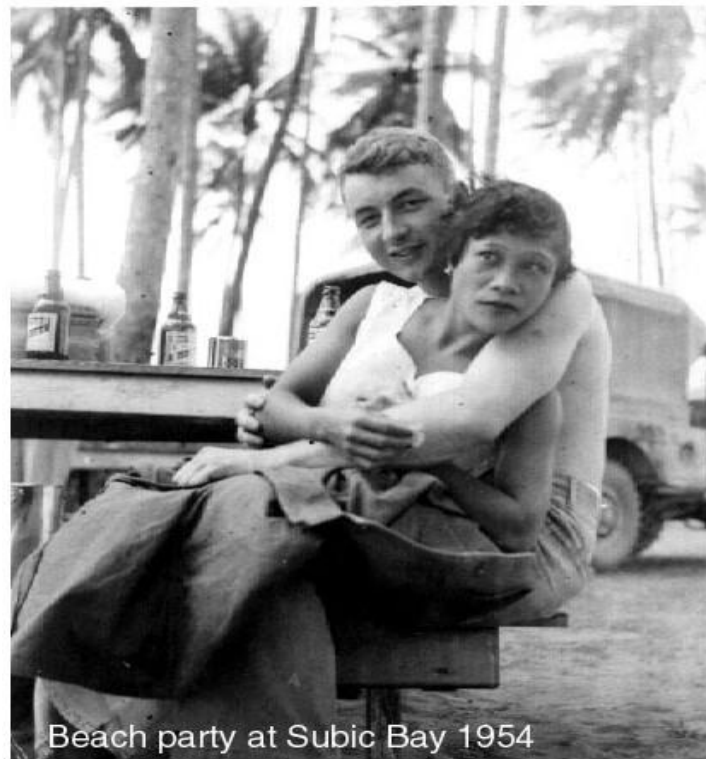


Fig. 1. Sgt. Howard James Holub, “Beach Party at Subic Bay 1954,” *Nothing More Beautiful, Nothing More Fine*, [http://www.subicbaypi.com/town\\_photo\\_girls50.htm](http://www.subicbaypi.com/town_photo_girls50.htm).

The body language within the photograph reveals the power dynamics between the US servicemen and Pilipinas as well as US-Philippine relations. As the title indicates, the serviceman sits at a beach picnic table with a grin on his face while holding a Pilipina close. He appears to be enjoying himself as the dominant person in the situation with a “Filipino baby” on his lap and in his arms. At the same time, the woman appears to express discomfort. One could argue that she may have been unprepared for the photo, but her absent smile and strained facial expression suggests otherwise. Furthermore, her gaze is off to the side, which could stem from a resistance to participate and indicates a level of overall dissatisfaction with the situation. The Pilipina’s body looks awkward and tense and is supported by the serviceman’s embrace, suggesting her comfort was not a priority. This photograph gives insight into the everyday interactions between US servicemen and Pilipinas, which exhibit US imperialism over the Philippines at a personal level.

The dissemination of the Pilipina exotic fantasy through music, photographs and word of mouth between US servicemen reinforced prior notions of the submissiveness and helplessness of Pilipinas that developed during the colonial era and gained strength during the second World War. These forms of communication contributed to the already-present perceptions US servicemen held of Philippine women in R&R industries. These perceptions were based on dominant-submissive power dynamics, which were a reflection of the traditional heteronormative narrative between US men and Pilipinas. These power dichotomies prompted the early transformation of US imperialism in the post-independence Philippines to one of intercultural dominance over the Pilipinas at a community level.

### **The Vietnam War and Heightened Demand for Recreational Services**

The increase of US servicemen in the Philippines during the Vietnam War period (1964-1973) catalyzed the rapid growth of R&R districts, which perpetuated the exotic fantasy among servicemen by exposing larger numbers of servicemen to the image of Pilipina submission. The increase of US military in the Philippines was caused by the United States' fear of growing communist sentiments in Southeast Asia, and the Philippines provided strategic positioning if conflicts arose in the region.<sup>13</sup> Sociologist Leopoldo M. Moselina stated that in 1964, there were approximately 98 US ships that entered Subic Bay for maintenance and to provide rest for sailors. In 1966, the number of ships arriving in Subic Bay grew to 193.<sup>14</sup> With this rapid increase of military personnel in US bases, it is unsurprising that the number of R&R establishments in entertainment districts rapidly increased to keep pace with the demands of the

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<sup>13</sup> Leopoldo M. Moselina, "Olongapo's Rest and Recreation Industry: A Sociological Analysis of Institutionalized Prostitution—With Implications for a Grassroots-Oriented Sociology," *Philippine Sociological Review* 27 (1979): 183.

<sup>14</sup> Leopoldo M. Moselina, "Olongapo's Rest and Recreation Industry," 183.

increasing population of US servicemen who were eager to spend their wages.<sup>15</sup> R&R development further supported perceptions of the United States' dominance and wealth through the US servicemen's consumerism and the profit Pilipinas received by catering to servicemen's needs through gender-oriented labor.

Throughout rest and recreation districts, US consumerism dictated what services were to be provided. While examining another online photo gallery titled, "Olongapo 1965", one can see the numerous comments left by former US servicemen. A majority of the comments consist of these men reminiscing about their time in Olongapo. One specific post stated:

Hostesses populated every club providing drinks and companionship to sailors whose diet had been deficient in both...The American sailors found what they wanted in this combination of rock and roll, women, and San Miguel.<sup>16</sup>

There is an endearing tone in his poetic comment, which bears fond memories of his life in Olongapo. It was not only the food and drinks that the Pilipina waitresses provided, but also companionship that fulfilled US servicemen's social and sexual "diets." US servicemen sought Pilipinas, music, and alcohol to fulfill their needs, and Philippine businesses found profits in providing these "commodities".

Many Pilipinas who worked in these bars portrayed themselves in ways that would persuade US servicemen to spend more of their money. Women incorporated various strategies such as dressing in very little clothing, performing in musical groups (Fig. 2), and acting in a flirty demeanor.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Barry, *The Prostitution*, 138.

<sup>16</sup> Ron, September 25, 2014 (5:16 p.m.), comment on Carl Harstad, "Olongapo 1965," *pbase.com*, accessed May 21, 2015. <http://www.pbase.com/charstad/olongapo&page=1>.

<sup>17</sup> Sgt. Howard James Holub, "Nothing More Beautiful, Nothing More Fine," Subic Bay PI, accessed May 21, 2015, [http://www.subicbaypi.com/sub\\_girls60\\_003.htm](http://www.subicbaypi.com/sub_girls60_003.htm).



Fig. 2. Sgt. Howard James Holub, "Girl Band," *Nothing More Beautiful, Nothing More Fine*, [http://www.subicbaypi.com/town\\_photo\\_girls60.htm](http://www.subicbaypi.com/town_photo_girls60.htm).

These strategies may be viewed in various ways. One may see Filipinas controlled by US power, put on display for the pleasure of servicemen. A different interpretation is that Pilipina agency led these women to embrace their jobs and sexuality to deceive servicemen for their money. In other words, the US servicemen with obvious power were actually the victims of subtle manipulation by the seemingly powerless Pilipinas. Among the photographs on *subicbaypi.com* are numerous images of Pilipinas proudly posing while as they work. Discussions of embraced sexuality tend to be silenced and covered by the stories of exploitation of Pilipinas. The latter is a critical factor in the history of many women who worked in R&R industries after the Military Bases Agreement because it exposes the injustices that many Filipinas faced while working within these districts. However, the stories of triumph and success of the women who worked the system for their own benefit should also be acknowledged because they provide a more complete history of the experiences of these women.

The growing number of US servicemen during the Vietnam period ultimately broadened the exotic fantasy before and shortly after World War Two, which contributed to the rapidly increasing number of entertainment businesses, along with the volume of employment opportunities for Pilipinas. Given the struggling agricultural-centric economy throughout the majority of the Philippines during this time, Pilipinas made the most of these employment opportunities by profiting monetarily and, in some cases, embracing their sexualities, even though their jobs catered to the needs of their former colonizers, therefore extending US imperialism past its officially recognized end.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, United States' power to create a booming job market illuminated the continued dependency of the Philippine people in their time of need.

### **Philippine Presidents and the Pilipina Image**

The Philippine presidencies of Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1986) and Corazon Aquino (1986-1992) respectively portrayed representations of Pilipina entertainment workers as national breadwinners of the Philippine economy or as threats to the Philippine national identity. According to Trinh-Dam Truong, Marcos' presidency encouraged Philippine sex-industries to utilize Pilipina sexuality to advance their national economy.<sup>19</sup> Tourism, specifically sex-tourism, allowed higher valued foreign currency to enter the Philippines, despite continuing to place the Philippine people in a subservient position to the US. However, this economic ideology changed when Corazon Aquino entered office following Marcos in 1986. According to feminist scholar Cynthia Enloe, Aquino was not considered a feminist and found the prostitution of Pilipinas a

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<sup>18</sup> Barry, *The Prostitution*, 52.

<sup>19</sup> Thanh-Dam Truong, *Sex, Money, and Morality: Prostitution and Tourism in South-east Asia* (London: Zed Books, 1990), 128.

deterioration of Philippine dignity.<sup>20</sup> Rather than viewing prostitution as a potentially regulated and profitable profession, she sought to end it because of its perceived immorality. Ultimately, R&R businesses responded to Marcos' pro- sex tourism stance by implementing business strategies such as live music and business cards that highlighted Pilipina sexuality and upheld the exotic fantasy. However, with her stance on prostitution as well as the introduction of AIDS and HIV in the Philippines, Aquino mandated police raids of entertainment establishments, which stigmatized Pilipina entertainment workers as criminals instead of national breadwinners and provoked backlash from Philippine feminist organizations who sought to better the conditions of Pilipina workers, especially when AIDS and HIV entered the Philippines. Both presidential positions were influenced by the results of US military presence— another example of how the US continued to influence the minds and bodies of the Philippine people.

With the support of the Marcos government, R&R businesses on the ground level implemented various business strategies such as live music containing sexual representations of Pilipinas in order to encourage profits. Music played within entertainment establishments not only created welcoming atmospheres for clients, but also reinforced notions of the exotic Pilipina fantasy already circulating the US bases. Similar to Tubb's *Filipino Baby* in 1946, *Ballad of Subic Bay* by the late 1960's-created Philippine band Eddie Tallada and Company, contains themes of US servicemen masculinity and sexuality.<sup>21</sup> Tallada and Company sung:

Horny sailors, all are we  
for we must sail the seven seas.  
One thousand miles we steamed today  
to see our girls in Subic Bay.

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<sup>20</sup> Enloe, *Bananas*, 39.

<sup>21</sup> Eddie Tallada and Company, *Ballad of Subic Bay*, (OG's Records, late 1960s), record, from La Salle University Special Archives, *Vietnam on Record Discography* and youtube.com, audio, 3 minutes and 20 sec., <http://speccoll.lasalle.edu/items/show/553>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ca4FHwsLr4>.

Silver dollar on my girl's breast,  
 she's gone short time with America's best.  
 One hundred men she laid today,  
 but only three in a normal way.<sup>22</sup>

The song is a parody of US singer Barry Sadler's *Ballad of the Green Berets*, which lauded the masculine, heroic and patriotic lives of servicemen from the US Special Forces, the Green Berets.<sup>23</sup> *Ballad of Subic Bay*, set to the melody of widely popular *Ballad of the Green Berets*, reminded US servicemen of themes that were conveyed in the latter song. The song's melody added a familiar aspect to entertainment establishments aimed to attract servicemen to a space that appeared welcoming. The imagery of sailing "the seven seas" and travelling "one thousand miles" in one day for the sake of seeing the women in Subic Bay conveyed messages of romanticized perceptions of foreign adventure and virile masculinity.<sup>24</sup> The second stanza objectifies Pilipinas. The lyrics connect masculinity with sexual prowess while promoting Pilipinas as commodities in the entertainment districts marketed toward US servicemen. Placing a silver dollar on the breast of a Pilipina signified the simplicity of acquiring whatever one desired, as if to say that if you have money to spend, you could purchase a wide range of services from the bars, restaurants, and especially from the women of the Philippines. This is further supported with the lyrics stating "One hundred men she laid today, but only three in a normal way."<sup>25</sup> The Pilipina's sexual services were touted as highly accessible and serviced, to the extent that a hundred men were able to pay for them daily. Other music similar to the *Ballad of Subic Bay* conveyed messages of bravery and manliness associated with control over Pilipinas;

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<sup>22</sup> Tallada, *Ballad of Subic Bay*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ca4FHwsLr4>.

<sup>23</sup> Barry Sadler and Robin Monroe, *Ballad of the Green Berets*, (RCA Victor Records, 1963), sheet music, from University of Illinois Archives, *The Sousa Archives and Center for American Music*, paper, <http://archives.library.illinois.edu/archon/?p=digitallibrary/digitalcontent&id=7801>.

<sup>24</sup> Tallada, *Ballad of Subic Bay*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ca4FHwsLr4>.

<sup>25</sup> Tallada, *Ballad of Subic Bay*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ca4FHwsLr4>.

this in turn heightened the appeal of R&R establishments to US servicemen as they raced to fulfil this view, at the same time reinforcing the subservient characteristics of Pilipinas to US power.

Business cards distributed by R&R businesses reveal the Pilipina services that made them servile to US servicemen. Although business cards were used prior to the Marcos period, Marcos' pro-tourism platform increased support for business strategies such as business cards that advertised Pilipina sexuality and would result in more revenue for the Philippine economy. The sexual services advertised on the business cards suggested a separation between women and their bodies.<sup>26</sup> A Pilipina's body, as advertised, was not her own, but a sex toy ready for purchase by a US serviceman. A business card posted by an ex-serviceman in an online archive within a firearm club website reveals the various services Pilipina workers were expected to perform at "Marilyn's Super Inn" (Fig. 3) near Subic Naval Base.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Kathleen Barry, *The Prostitution*, 30.

<sup>27</sup> Member HD357, "House of Repute III. How Many Remember This Place," *Archives*, [http://www.ar15.com/forums/t\\_1\\_5/1647810\\_House\\_of\\_III\\_Repute\\_How\\_many\\_remember\\_this\\_place\\_.html&page=1](http://www.ar15.com/forums/t_1_5/1647810_House_of_III_Repute_How_many_remember_this_place_.html&page=1).



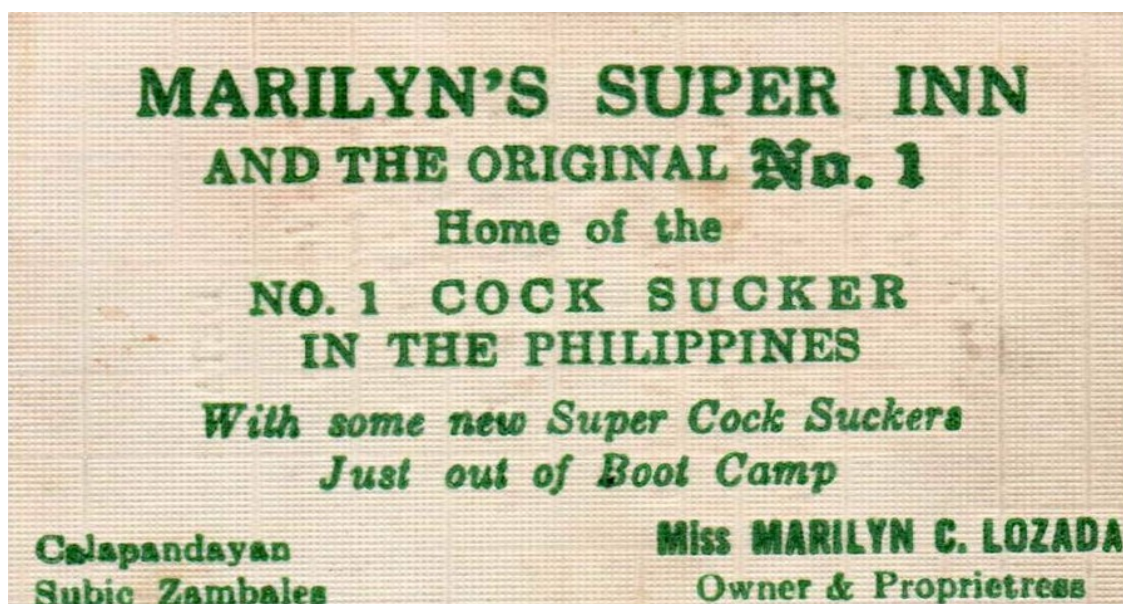


Fig. 3. Member HD357, “House of Repute III. How Many Remember This Place,” *Archives*, [http://www.ar15.com/forums/t\\_1\\_5/1647810\\_House\\_of\\_III\\_Repute\\_How\\_many\\_remember\\_this\\_place.html&page=1](http://www.ar15.com/forums/t_1_5/1647810_House_of_III_Repute_How_many_remember_this_place.html&page=1).

Figure 3 reveals the front of the business card. It advertises the “No. 1 Cock Sucker in the Philippines” as well as “some new Super Cock Suckers Just out of Boot Camp.” The first claim dehumanizes the Pilipina and places her in the same category as a sex toy. The second line draws a connection between the Pilipina and the US servicemen. Like servicemen, these “cock suckers” right out of training are eager and willing to serve their commanders to the fullest, mimicking military command structure and appealing to the naval culture that the servicemen participated in. Marcos’ pro-tourism economic strategy resulted in a recorded 150,000 foreign tourists in 1971, and nine years later that number was over one million. From 1974 to 1980, there was also an increase from 93 to 225 cocktail lounges in the Philippines.<sup>28</sup> Under the presidency of

<sup>28</sup> Daniel B. Schirmer and Stephen Rosskam Shalom, *The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship, and Resistance* (USA: South End Press, 1987), 182-183.

Marcos, many Pilipinas were serving their country with their bodies while neglecting their inherent humanity.

Despite the growing amounts of revenue from tourism, President Corazon Aquino mandated police raids that transformed the Pilipina entertainment image from national provider to criminal. As stated earlier, Aquino was not a feminist, and primarily concentrated on the betterment of the Philippine national image rather than the well-being of Pilipinas. Despite this vision, her raids, most notably the raids that were conducted on dance-halls in Manila's entertainment district Ermita, stigmatized Pilipina women within the Philippines and even the United States. In 1988, Aquino permitted a two-week long raid on the district, which resulted in the arrest of many Pilipina entertainment workers, but rarely were any male pimps or clients arrested.<sup>29</sup> Pilipinas, as the majority of individuals arrested, showed that their sexual and gendered associations were also tied to crime. This situation was noticed by US news sources. A *Los Angeles Times* article conveyed:

“The purpose of the two-week long police operation is to shut down the district forever—flowers, women, bars and all— an unprecedented effort to destroy Manila's international image as the “sin capital” of the Orient.”<sup>30</sup>

In this US article, Pilipina entertainment workers were to be “shut down.” They were viewed as criminals and needed to be eradicated with everything else associated with the Ermita entertainment district and other entertainment districts in the Philippines. Under the Aquino administration, these women were no longer viewed as economic assets by the Philippine government and were left with even fewer options to make a living.

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<sup>29</sup> Enloe, *Bananas*, 39.

<sup>30</sup> Mark Fineman, “Manila Tries to Shed Its Image as Sin City,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 1988, [http://articles.latimes.com/1988-04-11/news/mn-631\\_1\\_sin-city](http://articles.latimes.com/1988-04-11/news/mn-631_1_sin-city).

Aquino's primary concentration on the Philippine national image instead of the well being of Pilipinas prompted Pilipina Feminist organizations' attempts to better the lives of Pilipinas on the ground level. As examples of Pilipina agency, women took it upon themselves to create women's groups such as Gabriela, Women's Education, Development, Productivity and Research Organization (WEDPRO), and Katipunan ng Kababaihan para sa Kalayaan (KALAYAAN), which advocated for programs that would allow Pilipinas to gain skills and resources to pursue alternative employment.<sup>31</sup> Rather than advocating for the incarceration of Pilipina entertainment workers in hopes of changing their ways, the organizations aimed to better the lives of these women by advocating for services that could better their lives. A survey report conducted by WEDPRO and KALAYAAN stated:

Prostituted women have been denied so many things rightfully due them such as education, parental care and attention, justice for when she was abandoned with a child, battered or raped, health facilities, living wages, humane working conditions, dignity— the list is long and seemingly endless.<sup>32</sup>

The women in the two organizations argued that the well being and dignity of Pilipina entertainment workers, not the nation, were most important when improving the image of the Philippines.

The introduction of AIDS and HIV into the Philippine islands in 1987 also added to the activism of these organizations and put the US presence in the spotlight among many Pilipinos. Philippine nationalists who desired the expulsion of the US bases blamed US servicemen presence as the cause of Philippine exposure to AIDS/HIV. The arrival of AIDS and HIV gave further reason to fight for complete separation from their former colonizer and attain Philippine

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<sup>31</sup> Enloe, Bananas, 39.; Virginia A. Miralao, Celia O. Carlos, and Aida Fulleros Santos, "Women Entertainers in Angeles and Olongapo: A Survey Report," *Women's Education, Development, Productivity and Research Organization (WEDPRO) and Katipunan ng Kababaihan para sa Kalayaan (KALAYAAN)*, August 1990, 52.

<sup>32</sup> Miralao, "Women's Entertainers in Angeles and Olongapo: A Survey Report," 51.

sovereignty.<sup>33</sup> This brought a change to the US servicemen image that perceived them as unclean and dangerous. Although Pilipinas were always at risk of sexual violence, objectification, and sexually transmitted diseases, the introduction of AIDS/HIV presented another threat— one’s permanent inability to financially provide for herself and for family members, since an infected individual would often be denied work. In an interview with a former bargirl, who is referred to as “Rose,” She states: “It’s just you know, my parents are just farmers. I’m sorry [apologizing for beginning to cry], it’s a very very hard life...I know my parents could not afford to send me to college...So I tried to move hoping that one of these days I could have a better life.”<sup>34</sup> Many of the individuals who worked as entertainers in these districts came from rural and economically depressed regions with few local opportunities for employment, and the contraction of HIV/AIDS eliminated one of their only hopes for a steady wage.

The presidencies of Ferdinand Marcos and Corazon Aquino provided two different political environments that affected the status of Pilipina entertainment workers. Whereas Marcos lifted up these women as the ultimate patriots and brought them to the forefront of Philippine economic development, Aquino denounced their economic and cultural contributions to the Philippines as immoral, indecent, and illegal, taking the steps she saw appropriate to dismantle the entire industry. The introduction of AIDS and HIV further stigmatized Pilipina sex workers, prompting many non-profit feminist organizations to step in and provide aid to these women. Philippine nationalists pushed for the separation of their country from such heavy US influence, after realizing the devastating effects of this continued form of US imperialism and the gendered and sexual stereotypes it brought along with it.

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<sup>33</sup> Enloe, *Bananas*, 86.

<sup>34</sup> Rose, in person interview by author, May 2, 2015.

## Recent Imperialism

The transformation of US imperialism in relation to Philippine people continues today. While examining the various exhibits at the Wing Luke Museum within the Chinatown International District of Seattle, one can find a long, white dress with large red postal stamps reading “fragile” and “return to sender” along the dress.<sup>35</sup> It is a Wal-Mart mail order bride Halloween costume that sold in the early 2000s. It is a reminder of the legacy of power dichotomies between US men and Philippine women, epitomizing relationships with imperialistic qualities. “Fragile” upholds the belief that Asian women are weak, submissive, and in need of a protector. “Return to sender” signifies the women as commodities that are easily accessible and disposable when one is no longer satisfied with them. Further research needs to examine current marriages between Pilipinas and US men to understand how the aforementioned imperialistic power dynamics in the past have affected their daily lives in the United States.

Although the Military Bases Agreement ended in 1991, there are currently discussions between the United States and Philippine officials that would permit three to five US bases in the Philippines because of rising tensions with China’s expansionist policies. Most notably, Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base could potentially be reestablished.<sup>36</sup> With the continued struggle of the Philippine economy and a quarter of the Philippine population in poverty from overpopulation and the lack of resources to support the impoverished, it would not be surprising to see the reemergence of the bustling rest and recreation districts.<sup>37</sup> The potential rebirth of the

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<sup>35</sup> Athima, Chansanchai, “Shedding Light on Exploitation,” from Seattle Post Intelligencer in *Wing Luke Museum Online Library* (2005): <http://db.wingluke.org/document.php?cat=library&id=1900.4807>.

<sup>36</sup> Manuel Mogato, “Philippines to Give US Forces Access to up to Five Military Bases,” Reuters, May 2, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/02/us-philippines-usa-idUSBREA4107020140502>.

<sup>37</sup> Philippine Statistics Authority-National Statistical Coordination Board, *Poverty Incidence among Filipinos Registered at 25.8%, as of First Semester of 2014–PSA*, March 6, 2015, <http://www.nscb.gov.ph/poverty/>.

R&R districts could possibly revive the exotic fantasy and colonization of the minds and bodies of the Philippine people, especially those of Pilipinas.

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### **Library Research Strategies & Personal Scholarly Growth Essay**

As a first-generation college student from a low-income background, I have learned how to take advantage of resources available to me at the University of Oregon. Since my parents and extended family were not able to provide me with academic advice or much financial support, I had to create my own network of resources and advisors to achieve academic success. As a history student, I have found the library to be an invaluable, critical source that proved essential along my journey as an undergraduate. Not only has it helped me to fine-tune my research skills, it has also made me a more ambitious and confident scholar.

During my freshman year at the University of Oregon, I encountered lower division classes that simply proposed a writing prompt that I had to address by using the sources provided in the class. While this learning style was valuable for acquisition of course knowledge, it did not stimulate much independent research using the university's resources to the fullest extent. After my first year, I had to leave the UO because of a financial hold on my student account. I worked at a Safeway Deli for two years in order to repay my debt and continue my education. When I finally returned to the University of Oregon, I possessed a new vigor for my education and sought independent research opportunities to expand my knowledge base and pursue my personal research interests. In doing so, I became more familiar with the resources that the UO Libraries website and the Knight Library had to offer.

Over the course of my undergraduate career, I have encountered a wide spectrum of writing tasks, and my first place to begin research is on the UO Libraries Website. For example, during the early stages of my independent research project in the McNair Scholars Program (which is also doubling as my history honors thesis), I had to create my own research question to guide me through the process. I knew I wanted to examine the phenomenon of transnational

marriages between Pilipinas and US men and was aware of the US military's significant role in many of these marriages. Rather than being given a prompt, I had to critically examine my topic of interest and formulate my own research question. I initiated my thesis/McNair Project in a history 407 seminar with Professor Julie Weise. During that seminar, Professor Weise brought us to the Knight Library to meet with David Woken, who shared with us the various research resources the Knight Library and the UO Libraries website have to offer. From there I was able to search specific keywords for primary and secondary sources related to my topic of interest, which led me to other sources. I would then "star" those that I found beneficial for quick reference. From there, I imported all valuable sources into my Zotero program in order to save the source for future examination. When arguing a certain point in my writing, I incorporated supporting sources that also provided a different angle of understanding. Lastly, I always cited my sources correctly by using the Chicago Manual of Style citations to give credit where it is due, and to give future researchers the ability to examine the material beyond my work.

Although I understand its function, I never used Summit because the McNair Program provides funding for necessary research materials. As a Program Coordinator for the Intercultural Mentoring Program Advancing Community Ties (IMPACT), I also recommend the service to other first generation college students from underrepresented populations.

As the student research assistant to Jennifer O'Neal in the University of Oregon Special Collections and University Archives, I depend on the easily accessible information provided by the UO Libraries website and the different collections online and within the archives. My main task as the student research assistant is to work on the "Documenting UO History Project" that includes writing blogs that share the lesser known histories at the University of Oregon, such as the histories of people of color or organizations that serve these populations on campus. My

familiarity of the UO Libraries research resources that I acquired through my independent research for my 407 course contributes to my success in this position.

Not only do I appreciate the knowledge that the UO Libraries hold, I also utilized the quiet, 24-hour space they offer. While this may seem like a minute detail, it makes it possible for me to concentrate on my studies without the distractions of roommates and pets. It also creates a welcoming, collaborative meeting space for group projects or study sessions, contributing to Duck spirit and strengthening community ties. The Libraries' provision of free technology such as the university wifi or a myriad of electronic devices provides access to a high quality of professional equipment that I, as a low-income college student, would not otherwise have access to. This creates an environment where I have everything I need to perform my research, such as using recording devices to conduct the interviews I utilized in my work.

In addition to developing as a scholar, I grew into my Pilipina-American identity. I am the child of a Pilipina and a US man, and have been able to come to terms that my parents did not marry for love, but rather for symbiotic purposes. My father wanted to become a husband and a father and my mother married him to help support her six siblings in the Philippines. The UO Libraries system has given me access to sources that have made sense of my life through the histories of the relationship between the Philippines and the United States. Through this research, I gained self-acceptance of my culture. I am still working on my history honors thesis, but the 407 paper became my writing sample when applying to Ph.D programs these past few months. I am proud to say that I have been accepted to my dream program - the Ph.D program in Gender and Women's History at the University of Wisconsin- Madison - as well as the Ph.D history program at UC Irvine, both offering fully funded support. I would not be where I am today, as either a scholar or a person, if not for the resources that the UO Libraries provided.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to give thanks to my mentor Dr. Julie Weise who assisted me throughout the researching and writing of this project. I have truly valued her guidance and suggestions. I would also like to thank Dr. April Haynes for introducing me to the study of sexuality and its importance in our understanding of our past. Thank you to my girlfriend Kim for your intellectual conversations and edits that have made this work what it is today. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents for being the inspiration for this project and for my future academic career.