

Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints

Volume 57
Number 1 *Chinese Filipinos and Citizenship*

Article 4

5-9-2012

Phases and Faces in the Filipino War Film: Images of the Japanese Invader and the Filipino in Contemporary Philippine Cinema

Gonzalo A. Campoamor II

Follow this and additional works at: <https://archium.ateneo.edu/phstudies>

Recommended Citation

Campoamor II, Gonzalo A. (2012) "Phases and Faces in the Filipino War Film: Images of the Japanese Invader and the Filipino in Contemporary Philippine Cinema," *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*: Vol. 57: No. 1, Article 4.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13185/2244-1638.3276>

Available at: <https://archium.ateneo.edu/phstudies/vol57/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Ateneo Journals at Archium Ateneo. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* by an authorized editor of Archium Ateneo.

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

Phases and Faces in the Filipino War Film: Images of the Japanese Invader and the Filipino in Contemporary Philippine Cinema

Gonzalo A. Campoamor II

***Philippine Studies* vol. 57, no. 1 (2009): 77–104**

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>

Phases and Faces in the Filipino War Film Images of the Japanese Invader and the Filipino in Contemporary Philippine Cinema

At least six movies about the wartime Japanese occupation were produced by the Philippine film industry since 2000. This article focuses on three: *Yamashita: The Tiger's Treasure* (2001), *Aishite Imasu 1941: Mahal Kita* (I Love You, 2004), and *Blue Moon* (2005). All were released as entries to a major local film festival and received numerous awards. This article looks at how the complexities of invasion and its historical significance are represented in these films, and it explores the possibility of contextual cyclical changes. It analyzes how representations of the Japanese soldier/invader and the Filipino subject/defender/guerilla have changed, and how they compare with images in films produced and shown during the war and the postwar periods. This article addresses how these representations are treated as historical reminders in the present.

KEYWORDS: WAR FILM · PHILIPPINE CINEMA · PROPAGANDA · JAPANESE OCCUPATION · SECOND WORLD WAR

Since 2000 the Philippine film industry has produced at least six movies that tackle issues brought by the wartime Japanese occupation of the Philippines. This article focuses on three of those films: *Yamashita: The Tiger's Treasure* (2001), *Aishite Imasu 1941: Mahal Kita* (I Love You, 2004), and *Blue Moon* (2005), all produced by Regal Films. It is difficult to overlook the three films' significance given that they were all released as entries to a major local film festival and all received numerous awards, including that of best film, from at least two other local award-giving bodies.¹ All three films, in bids to find a lost treasure, a lost identity, and a lost love, utilized a family-based recollection of the past through the eyes of the now grandfathers and grandmothers. This article looks at how the complexities of invasion and its historical significance are evaluated and represented in the films. It analyzes how, through recurring cinematic flashbacks and testimonies, representations of both the Japanese invader and the Filipino have changed in comparison to images in a number of films that emerged during and immediately after the war. The article then focuses on how these representations (faces) are treated as historical reminders for the present-day generation (phases). It is argued that (1) not much has changed in the portrayal of the Japanese invader and the Filipino subject in locally produced films about the war which first surfaced in 1946; (2) the films' deliberate attempt to displace several important issues about the war illustrates how the industry has yet to come to terms with handling those issues; and (3) these displacements are symptomatic of the postwar social and political inadequacies on the part of both the Japanese and the Philippine governments.

Historicity of the War Film

Historians' use of mass media in analyzing the past—often lumped together in a vague category referred to as “unconventional materials”—has received mixed reviews and interpretations in the academe. John Dower's (1986) use of movies, cartoons, songs, and popular writings in analyzing the Pacific War was lauded for his fresh methodology in reinterpreting societal relations during the war (Shillony 1988; Lu 1987). However, this very same methodology may have contributed much as to why other scholars, while praising Dower's imagination and enthusiasm, condemn his “unrepresentative” and “incomplete” sampling (Coox 1988, 387).

Still the significance of media's influence on the mass population is something that can never be easily ignored. Several serious studies (Koppes

and Black 1987; Horten 2002; Kushner 2006) have illustrated how movie, radio, and other forms of propaganda were utilized during the Second World War to systematically “shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior” (Jowett and O'Donnell 2006, 7). Focusing on movies produced during the Pacific War, Nornes and Fukushima's (1994) collection of essays is most significant for its recognition of the consequential role of representation in warfare. Films depicting the Second World War have also been analyzed to show how postwar societies reconstruct and in turn legitimize cinematic images of international conflicts (Basinger 1986; Stuid 2002). Others, particularly Herman and Chomsky's (1988) “propaganda model,” push even further by theorizing that contemporary states, particularly the United States, in collaboration with dominant private sectors or individuals utilize media to marginalize dissent and further their economic interests.

Films at the Time of War

The flourishing Philippine film industry briefly slowed down during the war years as film equipment was commandeered by the Japanese Propaganda Corps in early 1942 (Terami-Wada 1984; 1986).² Movies brought by the Japanese did not appeal much to the Filipinos especially since a lot of Hollywood films that passed the censorship of the Propaganda Corps were still allowed to be shown throughout the Japanese occupation (Lumbera 1994, 21). A detailed record³ by the Japanese Propaganda Corps shows that top-grossing films in Manila and in various provinces in 1943 were Hollywood-made ones (Eiga Haikyūsha Firipin Shisha 1944).

The major theaters in Manila that housed the most modern facilities, the largest audience capacity, and the biggest number of viewers included the Ideal, the Avenue, and the State in the cinema district of Rizal Avenue (Avenida Rizal) in Santa Cruz; the Lyric and the Capitol on the Escolta in Binondo; and the Times in Mulawen Boulevard (the name the Japanese Military Government used to replace Quezon Boulevard) in Quiapo. In 1943 more than 4.5 million tickets were sold in these theaters. Mainly attributing to the Christmas season, December had the largest viewer turnout as close to half a million tickets were sold in just these six major theaters. The number of theaters that were reopened by 1943 reached sixty in Manila, ninety-eight in other parts of Luzon, eleven in the Visayas region, and eight in Mindanao. Within the six major theaters, Ideal held the largest number of viewers (22.7 percent) in 1943, followed closely by Lyric (22.6 percent),

State (17.9 percent), Capitol (16.8 percent), Times (11.8 percent), and Avenue (8.1 percent).

In Ideal Theater, eight of the ten top-grossing films in 1943 were the American-made films *Honky Tonk*, *Chocolate Soldier*, *How Green Was My Valley*, *Charley's Aunt* (all released in 1941), *City Lights* (1931), *Appointment for Love* (1941), *Prison without Bars* (1938), and *As Good As Married* (1937).⁴ There were only two Japanese films in the top ten, *Shina no Yoru* (China Night, 1940), which ranked fourth, and *Nessa no Chikai* (Vow in the Desert, 1940), which ranked tenth. It was quite similar in Lyric where seven American films and only three Japanese ones made it to the top ten. The Avenue had two top-grossing Japanese films, State had one, while both Capitol and Times had none.

In 1944 two Japanese propaganda films emerged which envisaged the acquisition of Filipino support on the quickly dwindling Japanese domination in Southeast Asia. Abe Yutaka's *Dawn of Freedom*⁵ (Japanese title: *Ano Hata wo Utte*, 1944) aimed at eradicating evil America's influence on the Filipinos, emphasizing Japan's leading role in the so-called Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, and recovering the Asian character that the country had lost (Pareja 1994). Similarly Sawamura Tsutomu's *Tatlong Maria* (1944) showed an idealized image of the countryside as it was supposedly spared from inappropriate American influences.⁶ Both films can serve as important material, particularly to historians looking for movie images of Manila before it was devastated in February 1945.⁷ More importantly, these films can be used as a measure of how the Japanese may have failed to a significant extent in their propaganda endeavor.⁸ When the movie was still being filmed in August 1943, Abe, in an attempt at authentically reenacting the Japanese-led "Philippine liberation" at Bataan and Corregidor, insisted on using real Americans, whom Gen. Kuroda Shigemori, the head of the Japanese Military Administration, willingly made available. But when thousands⁹ of those prisoners (and, possibly, internees) arrived in Manila, Filipino onlookers cheered them and even attempted to hand them food and cigarettes (Connaughton et al. 1995, 60).

The Filipino War Film

The postwar Philippines saw the rise of the country's war movie genre. In fact, the very first film that was made after the war ended, *Orasang Ginto* (The Golden Watch), shown just seven months after the war (4 March 1946), delved

into the sufferings and heroism of the Filipino guerilla. More importantly, this film set a new aesthetic in the industry, which had been used to exhibiting gentle innocence and coyness. Instead this film began highlighting the cruel realities of criminality and the violence of the occupation (Sotto 1994, 36).

Illustrating the country's dissatisfaction with the Japanese occupation, most postwar movies not only celebrated the heroism of Filipino guerillas but also emphasized the significance of exacting vengeance against the Japanese invaders (Lumbera 1994, 22). Postwar patriotism in 1946 thrived in movies like *Garrison 13*, *Dugo ng Bayan* (English title: *I Remember Bataan*), and *Walang Kamatayan* (Deathless). Action film actors like Fernando Poe, Leopoldo Salcedo, Jose Padilla Jr., Efren Reyes, and Fred Montilla also made their mark by depicting brave soldiers or guerillas in postwar Philippine cinema.¹⁰ *Death March* (1946) and especially *Capas* (1949) were the first films to publicize the horrors of the Bataan Death March and the hardships in POW camps, while another war film, *Batalyon XIII* (1949), was the first full-color film ever produced by a Filipino studio. Other films such as *Victory Joe* (1946), *So Long America* (1946), *Magkaibang Lahi* (A Different Race, 1947), and *Sa Tokyo Ikinasal* (Tokyo Wedding, 1948), albeit attempting to celebrate the end of hostilities, at the same time highlighted America's role in ridding the Philippines of the Japanese. This "Victory Joe" image would be handed down to the present-day generation, reminiscent of the famous Carl Mydans' photo of MacArthur's return to the country.¹¹ In effect it "purges"—to borrow Ileo's (2001) terminology—Filipino memories of America's similarly dirty hand at the war.

The economic crisis in the late 1940s triggered political corruption and social unrest, which became the themes of several war films of the time. Common to films like *Backpay* (1947), *Palaboy ng Tadhana* (Destiny's Wanderer, 1947), *Mga Busabos ng Palad* (Slaves of Fate, 1948), and *Lupang Pangako* (Promised Land, 1949) were themes of former guerillas finding themselves in terrible cases of destitution after the war. As if to suggest the continuing cycle of discontent by Filipino war veterans, Lamberto Avellana's classic *Anak Dalita* (English title: *The Ruins*, 1956) utilized the same theme, this time centering on the postwar misfortunes of a Korean War veteran (Sotto 1994, 36).

Excluding Avellana's *Anak Dalita*, Eddie Romero's wartime epic *Manila: Open City* (1968), Mario O'Hara's *Tatlong Taong Walang Diyos* (Three Godless Years, 1976), and Peque Gallaga's *Oro, Plata, Mata* (Gold, Silver, Death, 1982), the scarcity of films related to the Pacific War since

the second half of the 1950s evidently indicated the loss of their appeal to the public. This happened despite the country's military participation in the wars in Korea (the Philippine Expeditionary Forces to Korea in 1950–1955) and in Indochina (the Philippine Contingent in Vietnam, and the Philippine Civic Action Group in Vietnam [PHILCAGV] in 1964–1970).¹² War films depicting intranational conflicts now most likely surpass the number of Pacific War films in the country. This pattern can be explained by the dominance of the so-called armament culture or the socialization of war, peace, and patriotism by the media (Luckham 1984), which is also the status quo in any reactionary state.

Locally produced films about the Japanese occupation would not resurface in Philippine theaters until controversies on the “comfort women” made headlines in the early 1990s. Celso Ad. Castillo's *Comfort Women: A Cry for Justice* (1994) dared to talk about this very diplomatically sensitive issue. Despite the seemingly urgent political intentions of the film, it turns out that it also had some negating intentions in casting a rising sexy starlet (Sharmaine Arnaiz) at a time when sexy films, known as “titillating films” or simply “TF” in the 1990s, were raking in big bucks. The Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) even categorizes it as “Comfort Women/Sexy Pinay/WWII” — “Pinay” being a derivative of “Filipina.”

At the turn of the millennium, the industry produced six films about the war: Gil M. Portes's *Markova: Comfort Gay* (2000) and *Gatas sa Dibdib ng Kaaway* (The Enemy's Breast Milk, 2001), Chito S. Roño's *Yamashita: The Tiger's Treasure* (2001), Cesar Montano's *Panagho sa Suba* (English title: *The Cry of the River*, 2004), and Joel Lamangan's *Aishite Imasu 1941: Mahal Kita* (2004), and *Blue Moon* (2005). This relative upturn may be explained conveniently by the sixtieth-year commemorations of either the beginning or end of the war. But such a proposition can be discredited by the scarcity of similar films during the previous fiftieth-year commemorations (1991 or 1995). Other explanations would point to the current remarkable Japanese domination in both trade and aid, especially through the Official Development Assistance (ODA) and later the controversial Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA).

Philippines-Japan Relations

Mainly due to its physical, cultural, and historical proximity to the country, Japan gradually increased its trade interests in the Philippines since the early

twentieth century. Before the Pacific War, Japan had gained territories like Manchuria, Formosa, Korea, and some strategic islands in the Pacific; had won key wars (against China in 1895 and Russia in 1905); and had entered the First World War and benefited from it. In 1936 “Advancement to the South Seas” became a national policy, at a time when the possibility of further victory against European and American enemies within Asia became an accomplishable reality. The “Southward Advance” school of thought was revived in Japan at around the time when the country was experiencing its worst financial crisis (the late 1920s). The objectives of this school of thought were partially achieved when, by 1940, almost 30,000 Japanese, were already residing and engaging in business in the islands, mostly in Davao. Politically and militarily, however, the great idea of a southward advance was to be fulfilled first by the advance of the imperial forces toward the south, and eventually through the invasion and administration of nations mainly in Southeast Asia.

Japan's imperial thrust would not have moved forward without the aid of a legitimate ideological counterbalance to that of the dominant Western thought, which remarkably permeated prewar Philippine urban society. As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, leading Japanese thinkers had already begun formulating what would later be called “Pan-Asianism.” This formidable ideology envisioned a united Asian front that was supposed to counter that of the West. Respected Japanese intellectuals and professors in the 1930s even honed this idea into what they conceived as the *shinchitsujo* or the “new order.” Some philosophers, most notably Miki Kiyoshi who was also to be drafted to the Philippines as a member of the Japanese Propaganda Corps, at the same time formulated the *tōakyōdōtai* or the “East Asia Co-operative Community” (Miki 1968).¹³ During his draft in the Philippines (March to December 1942), Miki encouraged both his compatriots and Filipinos to work together in ridding Asia of destructive Western influences and embrace traits indigenous to all Asians. Of course during that time the Pan-Asianist idea was already embraced, utilized, and propagated by the Japanese military through its ideological arm, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Japan indeed lost both the military and the ideological wars in 1945 but it was to benefit from the circumstances of the cold war that ensued. Its recovery, which remains unparalleled, was not only economic but political as well. For example, despite the Philippines having been one of

a few countries that severely suffered due to Japan's wartime adventures, at present almost 40 percent of the total foreign investments in the country (based on 2002 statistics) comes from Japan, making it its biggest investor. At the same time 142 (34 percent) of the 416 transnational corporations in the top 1,000 corporations in the country are Japanese (Del Rosario-Malonzo 2004). Mutual trade remains hugely unbalanced, as Japan's exports to the Philippines, which consist mainly of high-value industrial goods, are several billion dollars greater than the exports of the Philippines to Japan (mainly bananas, mangoes, and other agricultural, and farm and fisheries goods).

This economic condition transcends, though not as efficiently as that with which the United States does, into the media and cultural realm of the country. The relative upturn of films about the war can here be explained as proportional to the flow of Japanese commercial goods as well as other forms of media. At the same time, it can also be explained by the notion that, despite the war's official end in 1945, a certain degree of unfinished business between the two nations remains. And this is not limited to the nation that was devastated by the war and aggravated by the Japanese. Iwabuchi (2001) conveniently explains this phenomenon through the discourse of what he calls the Japanese "postcolonial desire" or the Japanese objective, conscious or otherwise, to regain through cultural means like the mass media the colonies that it lost after the war. But it would be surprising to see in these media, be they Japanese-made or locally-produced, references to the Japanese domination in trade, or to the so-called Japanese postcolonial desire.

Japan's ODA started out having direct links with war reparations when Japan signed a peace treaty and an agreement on reparations with Burma (now Myanmar) in 1954 and later with the Philippines. At present Japan's ODA makes it the biggest aid donor to the country. Historically as in any economically dominant nation, aid has become the Japanese way not only to open up other countries to further economic impositions—as in cases of strings attached to important trade agreements—but also to appease, in an unofficial way, the nations it once colonized.

Relations between the Philippines and Japan since the war, therefore, have developed from that of calculated "cooperation" and "co-prosperity" to that of unilaterally dependent companionship between two nations that are to some extent conscious of their past yet not easily shaken by it. The issue of "comfort women" can be taken as an example. Japan never clearly recognized the need to apologize for what the imperial army had committed

to thousands of women during the war. However, through unofficial and private channels, most notably the Asian Women's Fund, atonement is certainly being made. It appears that such level of atonement, which is considered by the women who were directly affected as lacking, is obviously enough for the Filipino statesmen who invite Japanese investors to the country out of the reactionary belief that foreign investment is the only key to rapid industrial growth. In such a national policy, coupled by the apparent tolerance of sexually-related abuse, little is left to wonder why Filipinas have been encouraged and forced to become entertainers and mail-order brides since the 1980s and, recently, wives to the Japanese. We now turn to the three recent Philippine movies on the war.

Tales of Love and Heroism

Yamashita: The Tiger's Treasure revolves around the story of Melo (Armando Goyena) who, after surviving the war, had chosen to live in the United States. Finding out that the family he had built abroad is suddenly knee-deep in financial crisis, he, accompanied by his grandson Jobert (Danilo Barrios), decides to go back to the Philippines to recover the legendary Yamashita treasure. Recurring flashbacks begin in October 1944, when imperial forces were attempting desperately to transfer billions worth of loot to Japan. No longer having control of the seas, the Japanese choose to bury the loot of gold and precious stones on site. The young Melo (Carlo Muñoz) was one among a number of plantation workers who get abducted by Japanese soldiers to transfer the treasures to hidden caves. After accomplishing their task the Filipino laborers were massacred by their Japanese captors. Melo would turn out to be the lone survivor. Sixty years later, Melo crosses paths with one of his former captors Naguchi (Vic Diaz), who had become a billionaire in search of more wealth. Naguchi and his band of goons coerce Melo to locate the treasure. Jobert tries to rescue Melo but, in the end, it is Melo's wit that foils Naguchi's plan. Melo, who does not survive the ordeal, becomes a catalyst for the townspeople to help retrieve the treasure, which then triggers the Philippine economy's sudden recovery. For this feat Melo is named a modern-day national hero.

As told by the old Inya (Anita Linda), *Aishite Imasu* tells the story of three friends: Ignacio (Dennis Trillo), who is constantly picked on by his contemporaries because of his sexual orientation; Inya (Judy Ann Santos), whose family adopted Ignacio to protect him from his abusive father; and Edil-

berto (Raymart Santiago), a member of a prewar peasant movement. When the invaders enter the town of San Nicholas, Ignacio, dressed as a woman, immediately becomes the Japanese Captain Ichiru's (Jay Manalo) love interest. Edilberto quickly encourages Ignacio to live with Captain Ichiru to spy for the anti-Japanese guerilla movement.¹⁴ Ignacio, who is secretly in love with Edilberto, agrees to do the dangerous task. Ignacio, however, eventually falls in love with the light-hearted Captain Ichiru, while Ichiru's men succeed in revealing Ignacio's true identity. Ichiru commits suicide after his subordinates relieve him of his duties. Meanwhile, Inya who is angered by Edilberto's death in a battle, leads the townsfolk to liberate the town from the Japanese. All three friends get recognized as the town's heroes on the sixtieth anniversary of its liberation.

Blue Moon (2005) revolves around the story of Manuel (Eddie Garcia) who, upon finding out that he has only a few months to live, desperately looks for the love he had lost after the war. An air force pilot, the young Manuel (Mark Herras) was captured by the Japanese after his plane was downed. He eventually survived both the war and the POW camp and got reunited with his long-time friend Cora (Jennylyn Mercado). Manuel soon found himself falling in love with Cora, who had been helping him recuperate from his injuries. The two built a family, but Cora ran away to "find herself." Now the 83-year-old Manuel, with his son Rod (Christopher de Leon) and his grandson Kyle (Dennis Trillo), travels hundreds of miles to different locations (Ilocos Norte, Baguio, Albay, and Cebu) in a desperate search for Cora. They get media attention and the romantic search affects the lives of so many people, including those of Rod and Kyle. In the end, Manuel gets reunited with Cora.

Historymaking and Efforts at Historical Education

These three films share some noticeable common attributes, aside from the fact that all three were entries to the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF). The MMFF is an annual event that runs from 25 December through the first week of January. During this time only locally made films are allowed to be shown in theaters in the heart of the country. Although the MMFF functions as an award-giving body, the idea that local films will not have to compete with Hollywood during the Christmas season makes the festival one of the most sought after occasions by various film outfits. This same profit-oriented drive has not only brought the MMFF embarrassing controversies, but it has

also made it an unreliable index of artistic excellence (PEP 2007). Even so, entries in this festival enjoy an expectedly bigger audience.

The plots of the three films revolve around elderly characters, *lolo* (grandfather) and *lola* (grandmother) as amiably referred to in the country, who survived the war. Stories take off from the octogenarian characters relating specific episodes in their wartime lives to their grandchildren. Most of the time, memories are retrieved with the aid of artifacts, which have been termed in the late 1990s as "popular historymaking" (Rosenzweig and Thelen 1998; Rosenzweig 2000). This is underscored by the fact that grandparents in the country retain exceptionally close relationships with their grandchildren (Domingo and Casterline 1992). This intergenerational relationship is reinforced by representations of reverence for grandparents in the films—they appear in shots as either elevated, in constant eye contact, and consistently aided by their grandchildren. *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) can be used here as cross-reference. In the film's first scene, descendants of the aged Ryan not only stayed at the background but appeared baffled by the emotional moment the grandfather figure was experiencing. In comparison, the grandchildren in all three Filipino films maintained a significant degree of interest in their grandparents' pasts.

This encompassing attempt by the filmmakers illustrates an effort at enforcing a certain level of consciousness about the war—a certain consciousness that is meant to be at par with the memories of those who had actually experienced it. This is not much different from wartime calculated attempts to bring the war closer to the sphere of civilian activity, or, as considered by wartime propagandists, to bring the war to the "home front." The main concern here of film critics is the danger of the films becoming "vicarious or anaesthetized" (Agee in Wetta and Novelli 2003, 863) or not having the same feel as the real thing, so to speak.

On the Films' Historicity

In this article "historicity" refers to fidelity to historical actuality or historical accuracy of events as portrayed in texts or, in the present case, in films.¹⁵ A war film in a sense is both fictional and real. Excluding extraterrestrial or alternate history films, a war movie portrays armed conflicts that actually occurred some time in history. However, most moviemakers, "dramatic licenses" in hand, deliberately alter events, sequences, emotions, and other aspects to improve on the cinematic drama that they presume the audience wants.

More recent war films have grown more cautious by employing military historians and military personnel—like Hollywood’s favorite Capt. Dale Dye—if not actually acquiring direct support from the armed forces. This is also the very reason why, for historians like Stephen Ambrose, his “citizen soldier”¹⁶ impulse has landed him a serious number of scholarship-related controversies. While serious military historians consider themselves infallible agents in highlighting the significance of historicity, movie directors maintain that capturing the essence of a historical event in war films is enough. Unwilling to compromise in any way, Suid (2002) establishes that the truth not only is often more interesting than the fiction that appears on the screen, but it also *does* matter. In a sense, Suid asserts that war film directors should be responsible as both cultural worker and historian.

The three films’ historical accounts are generally impressive. Names, dates, places, and events are consistent with written and oral accounts. However, a number of inaccuracies, although small or even trivial to some, actually dampen the films’ credibility. While the tropical fatigues worn by Japanese troops closely resemble those worn during the war, several insignias of military rank were grossly overlooked. In *Aishite Imasu* the main Japanese character Captain Ichiru’s rank insignia is incorrect in both proportion (about six times the standard)¹⁷ and appearance. A Japanese army captain’s (*tai-i*) insignia, based on the 1938 standard (Kōdansha 1989, 6), should have consisted of three metallic five-pointed stars on a gold-strip-gold-border red background. Worse, Captain Ichiru displays the same rank insignia as his supposed subordinate Hiroshi. Both characters appear to be bearing the same rank insignia closer to that of a second lieutenant (*shō-i*). Furthermore, Gen. Yamashita Tomoyuki’s insignia in the movie *Yamashita* is completely inaccurate. At the time of his surrender in September 1945, Yamashita was a general (*taishō* or equivalent to a three-star general in the contemporary Philippine Army) but the movie’s rank portrayal of the most significant figure in the film illustrates its half-hearted attempt at historical accuracy.

The computer-generated imagery (CGI) graphics of wartime aircrafts, like the Japanese Mitsubishi A6M (*Zero/Zeke*)¹⁸ and Aichi B7A (Ryūsei/Grace) as well as the American Curtiss P-40 (Warhawk), were accurate enough. This was made possible through postediting services of a Manila-based American-owned company known as Roadrunner Network Inc. But the company also showed a lack of research as the CGIs manifested a number of errors in detail. At one point, judging from the aircrafts’ national insig-

nia, Allied pilots appear to be shooting its own aircraft (then again, friendly fire was a fact of war). Also, the company’s use of an all-white five-pointed star insignia in designating Allied aircrafts is anachronistic. That insignia would be used only in May 1942, and dogfights in the film could not have transpired after that date.¹⁹

Blue Moon’s recognition of the Filipino wartime pilots’ gallantry²⁰ also has its own annoyances. For example, Manuel’s flight helmet being that of the Jet Age was nonexistent in 1942.²¹ His aircraft’s safety belts also resembled those used either in rollercoaster safety mechanisms or in electric cable networking. In the end, one could only presume that movie producers just had to make their main protagonist the excessively romanticized wartime ace.

Probably the greatest inaccuracy is *Blue Moon*’s portrayal of POW camp survivors. Filipino veterans of the Bataan Death March would most likely frown upon seeing Manuel who, by the end of his POW term, very much weighed as he did before the war. Filipino POWs suffered nutritional discrimination from both their Japanese captors and their American comrades alike (see Wainwright 1946).

Faces of the Japanese Invader

Faithful to the common conception orally handed down by survivors of the war, faces of the Japanese soldiers in the films were portrayed with seemingly irrelievable emotions of anger. Existing tropes of fear were further enforced by the ubiquitous and all-too-familiar bayonet, which appears to be permanently attached to Japanese rifles.²² *Yamashita* and *Aishite Imasu* show several scenes of Japanese violently thrusting their bayonets into helpless Filipinos. Officers use their samurai swords at the smallest infraction of rules—as what would befall Manuel’s best friend during the Bataan Death March scene in *Blue Moon*. The films also bring back memories of the invaders forcing Filipinos to bow at the presence of Japanese soldiers and military police, regardless of rank. Those who fail to do so get a hefty slap on the face, something that up to the present is humiliating in Filipino culture. In addition, the films contain images of Japanese bathing publicly and covered by skimpy loincloths only. Carmen Guerrero Nakpil (1973, 198) provides an account that resonates with such scenes in her collection of essays *A Question of Identity*, while Trudl Dubsy Zipper (1994, 26) renders a visual representation of this seemingly all-too-common Japanese troop behavior in her painting aptly titled “For Sidewalk Entertainment.”

Similar to portrayals in films made immediately after the war, the atrocity that the Japanese inflicted on Filipinos appears in all three recent films. Every encounter with the Japanese was accompanied by fear, as most such scenes show houses being burned and people being forcefully gathered, if not bayoneted or summarily executed. Cinematic images in the 1940s of the Japanese as rampaging killers are brought back by the three films. In one scene in *Aishite Imasu*, a group of soldiers, including Captain Ichiru, have their pictures taken with a line of cadavers of Filipinos in the foreground (fig. 1).

Along with the recurrent representations of the Japanese as the ultimate antagonists, movie outfits in the 1940s tended to stick with familiar faces that repeatedly took on the role of *kontravida* (antagonist). The LVN Studios, one of the biggest production companies of the time, regularly employed Eusebio Gomez as the main Japanese villain. More than half a century later, *Aishite Imasu* and *Blue Moon* would employ the same strategy in hiring Nakamura Tadashi, this time a Japanese actor, as the gruff villain (fig. 2).²³

The extent of Japanese atrocities generally has not disappeared from the mass population's collective memory. Along with other popular and intellectual media of the time, war films in the 1940s made sure that short-term



Fig. 1. Japanese soldiers (along with a Filipina translator) having their photograph taken with cadavers in the foreground, *Aishite Imasu* (2004)



Fig. 2. Nakamura Tadashi in *Blue Moon* (2005)

memories of Japanese cruelty evolve into the long-term. Extensive oral tradition, although not elaborately documented, sustains this collective memory despite the decrease of films that tell of wartime horrors.²⁴ But even without those stories, the devastation of the country's economy²⁵ was enough to put a bulk of the blame on the nation that was viewed in postwar times as both the belligerent and losing entity.

Moreover, Japanese reparations that would ease ideological tensions would come only after most of the reconstruction had already been achieved (Vellut 1963, 496). In the meantime, Philippine education—which tends to assign historical periods based on colonial regimes—made sure that the Japanese adventure would be remembered as the worst. In her analysis of textbooks, Yu-Jose (2002) concludes that “if the treatment of the Japanese occupation in Philippine books is compared to the treatment of the Spanish and American regimes . . . the Japanese would appear as the most undesirable, followed by the Spaniards and the Americans, respectively.”²⁶ Yoshida (2007, i), probably the foremost contemporary Pacific War historian in Japan, considers this war in Japanese history as one of the answers to the question “why is there no end to the ‘postwar?’” Yoshida was referring to what Gluck (in Embree and Gluck 1997, 586–87) calls Japan’s “long postwar” or

the idea that there still is no closure to this segment of global conflict on the part of the Japanese.

This very same nonclosure to the Japanese occupation, which is both sentimental and physical, can also be distinctly felt on the part of Filipinos. There exist several views as to why the distinct aspects of the Japanese occupation at the very least remain within the consciousness of Filipinos. One of the most salient intellectual discourses on this issue can very much be related to Dower's (1986) controversial "race war" configuration of the Pacific War in the mid-1980s. Of course, given the fascist undertone of the Second World War, race has always been considered by social scientists as a factor integral to the conflict. Actually Dower may have only delayed the more substantial debates as many historians felt that he mistranslated several times the Japanese term *minzoku* as "race," although most Japanese use the term to mean "nation" and "people."

Like Dower, the author has also been studying Japanese propaganda throughout the war. Indeed, the Japanese were using the race issue in persuading Filipinos to join the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which was the cultural arm of their war with America. Their wartime propaganda consisted of various themes, such as that of Japan as a small but strong nation triumphed in both Bataan and Corregidor; themes like hygiene, which meant to give an air of normalization; and finally the theme that could have been closest to the war-torn Filipinos, that which talked about compassion for Filipino prisoners-of-war. But none of the various themes of Japanese propaganda can be more glaring than those that touch on the liberation and independence of the Philippines. A certain Shigemura, the administrator on duty at the Bacolod Japanese Administration Office, stepped on a make-shift platform in front of a crowd of hundreds in the town center of Bacolod (in Negros Occidental), reminding everyone, Japanese and Filipinos alike, that:

Looking back in retrospection, Japan upon declaration of the Greater East Asia War has completely obliterated the joint forces of the *arrogant and rude Anglo-Americans*, who have been *treating us as an inferior race* and who for long have enslaved us *Asiatics* in the past. By means of powerful and strategic military operations . . . the Anglo-Americans were completely driven out of the continent of Asia and the Japanese had liberated the *Oriental*s. . . . Furthermore, Japan is exert-

ing her undivided efforts in the establishment of *Asia for the Asiatics*. As long as New Asia was born, we *Asiatics* must be reborn spiritually . . . if you do not, we shall feel very disappointed if your *independence* shall become a failure.²⁷

Race is not included in the extensional definition of independence, but several propaganda works by both Allies and Axis openly utilized it, especially in the latter episodes of the Pacific War. Because of this tendency of racial imposition, Dower hastily termed the global conflict as a "Race War." But the author does not totally agree with such formulation.²⁸ In propaganda studies, invocation of race can only be considered as a rational requisite to the wartime rhetoric and not the cause of it. Furthermore, it appears that both Tokyo and Washington had instructed their corresponding regional propaganda units to refrain from creating any racially oriented works. The Japanese Propaganda Corps was given an order in August 1942 to refrain from talking about issues related to race (Nihon no Firipin Senryō-ki 1994, 512). Hitomi Junsuke, a ranking propaganda officer during the war, thinks this was the case so as not to meddle with Tokyo's relations with Italy and Nazi Germany (ibid., 513) who after all were also Occidentals.²⁹ Meanwhile, the Corps' American counterpart was warned by the Office of War Information (OWI) on 15 April 1942 not to attack the emperor, not to address the Japanese in pidgin English, not to scold the Japanese or speak to them in patronizing fashion (as being talked down by Occidentals will only increase their fighting spirit), and to always remember that "face" is everything to the Oriental.³⁰

As it turns out, Japanese propagandists were compelled to exploit the racial issue as most of its target territories were colonies of America and of Western nations. Therefore, despite the imperial headquarters' order to refrain from using race as an element in their work, propagandists found it unavoidable. In addition, Japanese propagandists correctly sensed that Filipinos themselves, especially the nationalists within the oligarchy, felt Americans were racially discriminating against them. Even the discrimination of the fighting Filipinos of Bataan and Corregidor by their American comrades-in-arms was congruously portrayed in *Dawn of Freedom*. Japanese propagandists therefore found elevating such experiences to the national level of emancipation from American rule not only in line with the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere ideology but also in line with their imperial pursuits.



Fig. 3. The “smiling” Captain Ichiru, *Aishite Imasu* (2004)

However, as most historians would construe, Filipinos felt friendlier with the Americans than with the Japanese, despite their closer racial relations with the latter. Even so, much of the rejection of the Japanese alternative cannot easily be attributed to American wartime propaganda. Allied propaganda was actually almost nonexistent in the Philippines until September 1944, when American planes started raiding various Japanese military bases and establishments. But prewar American media, which was not as organized as that during the war, was able to plant in the Filipino mind exaggerated versions of Japanese atrocities in Manchuria and China, just before the invading force entered Manila in January 1942. The rejection of the Japanese alternative therefore had more to do with how Filipinos were treated by the Japanese military, which certainly appears to be the main determinant of how present-day Filipinos remember or imagine the events of the war years.

The Smiling Japanese Soldier

One of the most striking features of *Aishite Imasu* is its portrayal of the smiling Japanese soldier (fig. 3).³¹ Captain Ichiru’s light character, especially in the presence of Ignacio, reminds us of Sergeant Ikejima (Okawahei Hachiro) in 1944. In the wartime Japanese propaganda film *Dawn of Freedom*, Ikejima appears as the kind Japanese commander loved by children. His

blood donation, which eventually saves the life of a crippled Filipino boy, symbolizes the compassionate spirit of the common Japanese soldier—or so the propaganda went. Similarly, Ichiru, despite his fierce treatment of suspected guerrilla fighters, demonstrated benevolence in public.

An empirical approach to history would certainly yield a number of “unconventional” Japanese soldiers. Agoncillo (2001, 343–46) lists several in *The Fateful Years*, which first appeared in 1965. In 1978 a whole book was published which aimed to show that not all Japanese soldiers were brutes during the occupation (Santos 1978). It seems, however, that *Aishite Imasu* wanted to approach the issue of war in a different light. Audiences would find out at the end of the film that Captain Ichiru was all along gay and that he knew of Ignacio’s true identity. As a convenient solution to make the relationship with Ignacio work, this revelation poses a whole new set of inquiries. Was Ichiru’s kindness a product of his sexual orientation? Was Japan’s belligerence caused by hyperstimulated masculinity? The film’s sexual stance can be further deduced from several other characters. Two Filipino homosexuals, despite suffering torture and rape, refuse to divulge names of guerrillas. A woman leads guerrillas to battle after the death of their male commander. Another woman acts as the brutal Filipino collaborator and murders one of the homosexual protagonists.

Violence is of course the ugly byproduct of war. No war has ever occurred without the unnecessary loss of civilian lives and property. But even America had its hand in this devastation: it was actually responsible for the destruction in the major cities of Manila, Cebu, and Zamboanga during its initial attacks in late 1944. And although there appear to be proof of systematic killings by the Japanese during the Battle of Manila, the city’s physical destruction during the battle in February 1945 is attributed mainly to America’s indiscriminate shelling as well as its tactic to suffocate the defending Japanese stragglers (e.g., Connaughton et al. 1995). Nonetheless, after the war Japan would be remembered and blamed for most, if not all, the losses. Gen. Curtis Le May, the commander and designer of the systematic strategic bombing campaign that utilized indiscriminate incendiary bombs³² to destroy the property and morale of both the Japanese military and civilians, could not have said it better. After the war Le May, who was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians, was often quoted as saying “killing Japanese didn’t bother me much at that time . . . I suppose if I had lost the war, I would have been tried as a war criminal.” Evidently, it

will be easier to find Filipinos who can tell stories of Japanese atrocities that they heard from their grandparents, than a Japanese who even knows the name Le May.

Ileto discusses how the Filipino war against the Americans (1899–1902) and the Japanese (1941–1945) can be differentiated in terms of how these are remembered or forgotten. Although both wars manifested menacing atrocities by both occupying forces, the atrocities by the Japanese—although dwarfed by that of the Americans just two generations previously—seem to be exceptionally well remembered. According to Ileto (2001, 109), “unlike the analogous situation in 1942, when the Japanese army came to rule the town centers only to be booted out two to three years later, US occupation in 1900 was not followed by a ‘liberation’ phase, a forced withdrawal of the Americans, that would have led to a recovery of war memories and a celebration of guerrilla resistance.” Much of the memories sowed by this liberation phase would eventually be legitimized through popular oral forms, where war films, particularly those that emerged immediately after the war, can be included.

Faces of the Filipino

Given the roster of contemporary Pacific War films all over Asia, this article may appear more critical of the recent Philippine war movies than is intended. For example, in Japan the screening of *Ore wa, Kimi no tame ni koso Shini ni Iku* (English title: *For Those We Love*, 2007) harnessed critical reviews, although surprisingly small in number. Owing much to the antiwar movement among the intelligentsia, as distinctly represented by the Japanese historian Ienaga Saburō (1968, 1993–1994), the film was perceived as the glorification not only of the kamikaze pilots but also of the war. Ishihara Shintarō, the nationalist governor of Tokyo and the film’s producer and scriptwriter, graced the overly romanticized gala screening—the theater was said to have been adorned with Sakura petals, symbolic of the kamikaze. Maybe due to the film’s limited domestic release, Ishihara’s act was not as strongly criticized as the former Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō’s visits to the Yasukuni Shrine (a total of six yearly visits as prime minister starting in August 2001).

The three films’ attempt at looking at the war in a different light certainly can be perceived as a welcome change to the formula that has befallen the Second World War film genre. The celebration of the heroism of Filipino

soldiers and guerrillas has gone much farther than the Hollywood “Filipino Scout”—the local soldier who knows the terrain—which was started by the 1943 film *Bataan* (Basinger 1986). In *Bataan* the two Filipino characters played secondary roles only to American action stars (Lloyd Nolan and Robert Taylor). The iconic Alex Havier would continue to play the “Filipino Scout” role in several other Hollywood films in the 1940s (*Back to Bataan* and *They were Expendable*, both 1945). Locally produced war films in the 1940s and 1950s highlighted the Filipino role but often not without the dominant “Victory Joe” image of the Americans. In fact *Yamashita* pushes it even further by casting an African-American (another minority, as pointed out by Basinger) to play the role of a camp physician when there was actually no “black battalion” sent to the Philippines during the war. Also, as Melo was forced to reenter the cave where Yamashita’s treasure was stored for sixty years, he remarks “I can still smell the smell of imperialism.” The scene distinctly marks a deliberate, though faint, attempt of the filmmakers to poke at the idea of Philippine independence.

In the meantime, *Aishite Imasu*’s attempt at invoking sexuality tropes brings forth the fact that the woman’s (and even the homosexual’s) crucial role in the war does tend to get toned down in the annals of war history, where supposedly men fight it out in the battlefield. Apart from the role of Col. Yay Panlilio, the female guerrilla leader of Marking’s Guerrillas in southern Luzon, Filipino women’s role in the war is still not as well documented as the popular Women’s Army Corps or WAC and “Rosy the Riveter” representations in the U.S., or the female-led send-off parties and *sennin-bari* (thousand-stitch belt charm for soldiers) women as well as what Earhart (2008) calls the “Warrior Wives” in Japan. In its own way, *Aishite Imasu* therefore represented in a very indirect way the as yet unsettled plight of the “comfort women,” as well as the socioeconomic injustice committed against the present-day Filipina entertainers, mail-order brides, and wives displaced by Philippine poverty to Japan.

Conclusion

The films’ use of grandparents in historymaking marks the length of time that had passed since the end of the war. Elders throughout time have been considered one of the most effective conveyors of the past. But in representing the past through the eyes of the much-revered lolo and lola, all three films in effect present themselves as ninety-minute reviewers of the war.

Whether they know it or not, the filmmakers have presented their work to their “home front,” so to speak, or in this case to the generation that did not experience the war.

None of the three films chose to focus solely on the war. They did offer a contemporary outlook on the war by incorporating issues of the current generation into its retelling. However, noticeably similar to the formula used in the second half of the 1940s, contemporary films appear unable to resist interposing stories such as treasure hunting, love, and sexuality. As though the romance-within-violence theme is not enough, resolutions to complicated plots could almost testify to the notion that popular films just have to end on a happy note. The old man in *Blue Moon* finally finds his long lost love. All three friends in *Aishite Imasu* become the long lost heroes of their town. The famed treasure in *Yamashita* becomes the country’s unimaginable and ridiculous solution to poverty—not to mention the most famous street in Metro Manila, Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, getting renamed after Melo. A significant change in the formula nevertheless can be noticed in the softening of sorts of the brutal image of the Japanese and in bringing forth a fresh look at the roles played by nontraditional combatants.

The films’ vicarious imagination of the war only opens them up to several other criticisms. For one, while the films allow room for adventure, love, sexuality, and even an attempt at softening the villain, they also are undermined by their neglect of several equally significant issues. Most of these either have been unresolved or have only recently emerged—comfort women, reparation, massacres, and atrocities not only by Japanese but also by Americans and Filipinos, and veteran compensation, among others. These implications suggest that the movie industry has yet to come to terms with the war. It is as if the industry, and in a sense the Filipino, remains in a state of nonclosure, if not in a grieving emotional state. Indeed grief in all its psychoanalytic attraction has been an overused phenomenon. But then again, war reparation and other concrete concerns are yet to be fulfilled as manifested by Gluck and Yoshida’s notion of the Japanese long postwar. It is entirely possible that, owing to the continued economic and social imbalance that persists between Japan and the Philippines, most Filipinos have yet to see the fruition of the end of hostilities. If these films are any indication, then it can be said that we are all still in a protracted state of grief.

Notes

An earlier version of this paper was read by the author at the Eleventh Asian Studies Conference Japan held at Meiji Gakuin University, 23–24 June 2007. Permission for the use of photos from Aishite Imasu 1941: Mahal Kita and Blue Moon granted by Regal Entertainment Inc. and its executive producer Lily Monteverde is gratefully acknowledged.

- 1 *Yamashita*, Twenty-seventh Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) best picture; *Aishite Imasu*, Thirtieth MMFF third best picture; *Blue Moon*, Thirty-first MMFF best picture.
- 2 Mainly due to the negative connotations attached to the term “propaganda,” the Corps’ name would be changed to Hödöbu or Department of Information in either August or October 1942.
- 3 A copy of this record was handed down to the author by his dissertation adviser, Prof. Nakano Satoshi, at Hitotsubashi University. The record originally came from the personal archives of Hitomi Junsuke, a military officer of the Propaganda Corps during the war.
- 4 These American films are listed here in rank order.
- 5 *Dawn of Freedom* was first shown in Tokyo on 5 February 1944 with the title *Ano Hata wo Utte* (Tear Down the Stars and Stripes) and in Manila on 7 March 1944 (Pareja 1994, 153).
- 6 *Tatlong Maria*’s script written by Sawamura Tsutomu in adaptation of a novel by Jose Esperanza Cruz was published by Liwayway Publishing probably in 1944.
- 7 A film historian claims that *Dawn of Freedom*, along with showing images of Manila, used actual footages of the Bataan and Corregidor campaigns (Sotto 1994). Although a review of a surviving copy of the film seems to show otherwise, *Dawn* does appear to have utilized at the very least actual Japanese military tactics. This was confirmed by an interview Prof. Nakano Satoshi had with Hitomi (transcript in *Nihon no Firipin Senryō-ki ni kansuru Shiryō Chōsa Fooram* 1994, 481–538). A brief look at the making of *Dawn* can be found in a pamphlet entitled “Ajia no kotoba Nippongo” (Nihongo the Asian Language) (UP Library 1944?). *Tatlong Maria*, for its part, featured “grand musical numbers” (Sotto 1994, 36) staged at the Manila Hotel—the penthouse of which was used by MacArthur as prewar headquarters—and the *Jai Alai*.
- 8 Although historians, American, Filipino, and Japanese alike, maintain that Japanese propaganda was a failure, it should be noted here that the “success” (or “failure”) of propaganda is widely misunderstood as argued prominently by Ellul (1973) and demonstrated by Jowett and O’Donnell (2006).
- 9 The author, doubting the possibility of assembling such a large number of prisoners, had to watch the film again to verify it. Indeed, Connaughton et al.’s (1995) figure was quite close. Another way to verify this is through the Records of Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, particularly the document J-58 (“Use of American POWs and US Army Equipment in Making Japanese Propaganda Film Dawn of Freedom”), which according to its archival research catalog is available at the National Archives at College Park. The said document was missing from its container when the author went to Maryland to look for it.
- 10 These actors starred in the following films, respectively (cf. David and Pareja 1994): *Dugo ng Bayan* (English title: *I Remember Bataan*, 1946); *Kaaway ng Bayan* (Public Enemy, 1947); *Halik sa Bandila* (Kiss on the Flag, 1948); *Kumander Sundang* (Commander Sundang, 1949); and *Takasa sa Bataan* (Escape from Bataan, 1950). Fernando Poe’s son, Fernando Poe Jr., starred in the remake of *Dugo ng Bayan* in 1973.

- 11 Or even the Leyte Landing Memorial at Red Beach, Palo, Leyte.
- 12 Two of the more interesting portrayals of Filipino soldiers in the PHILCAGV can be seen in the film *Philcag in Vietnam* (Tagalog title: *Itindig ang Watawat* [Raise the Flag]) directed by Clemen T. Santiago in 1967, and very briefly in a recent television series in the Philippine channel ABS-CBN, *Vietnam Rose* (2005) directed by Joel Lamangan.
- 13 Miki started out referring to Japan and the nations close to it like Manchukoku (Manchuria) and China as *Tōa* or East Asia. By the time he was drafted to the Philippines (1942), he frequently used the term to mean "Asia" in general or, at the very least, Southeast Asia, which included the Philippines. Most of Miki's works (1968) regarding the Philippines are found in vols. 15, 19, and 20.
- 14 Probably alluding to the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon (Peoples' Army Against the Japanese or HUKBALAHAP) that was active in central Luzon.
- 15 The author's use of this term is in no way connected to the philosophical postmodern conception of history with which some readers may be familiar.
- 16 Hollywood's concept of the "citizen soldier" has been a constant theme of the more recent war films, especially after the Vietnam War when idealized (nationalized) socialization of war had become less popular—of which, John Wayne's *The Green Berets* (1968) is considered to be its last bastion (Suid 2002; Wetta and Novelli 2003). The concept itself can be traced back to American military and colonial policy at the turn of the twentieth century (Root 1916/1970).
- 17 The Japanese Army standard was 18mm x 40mm.
- 18 Japanese designation/Allied designation.
- 19 The standard Allied aircraft insignia before May 1942 was a red disk within a five-pointed white star on a circular blue field. The change can be traced back to a communication by Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, commander-in-chief of Pacific forces for the United States and Allied forces during the Second World War, to Adm. Ernest King, commander-in-chief of the U.S. fleet and chief of naval operations (COMINCH-CNO), to remove the red circle which "not only eliminates possible confusion with Japanese marking but makes insignia much more distinctive so that special tail markings to which there have been many objections become unnecessary." See dispatch #250136 on 25 Apr. 1942 (Leonard 2007).
- 20 Filipino pilots indeed were involved in dogfights over Manila and Batangas in December 1941.
- 21 Von Braun's rocket propulsion technology during this time would still be in its test stage! The flight helmet should have been much closer to the M-450 summer flight helmet used by American Navy pilots in Wake, Guadalcanal, and Coral Sea.
- 22 For the sake of clarification, aside from the Model 44 (1911) cavalry carbine, which had a bayonet that folds under and rests in a slot in the stock, rifles carried by the Japanese army soldiers—like the Model 38 (1905) 6.5-mm rifle and the Model 99 (1939) 7.7-mm rifle—had bayonets that were detachable.
- 23 Nakamura was also involved part-time as Japanese language consultant in both films.
- 24 Most accounts, in the form of wartime memoirs, come from an elite point of view.
- 25 Vellut (1963) lists the following damages to the economy based on the 1947 final report of the High Commissioner to the Philippines: coconut mills and sugar mills had been destroyed; interisland shipping was nonexistent; concrete highways had been broken up for use on military airports; railroads were gone; Manila was 80 percent destroyed, Cebu 90 percent, and Zamboanga 95 percent.
- 26 Quoted with permission via electronic mail (Yu-Jose 2007).
- 27 Retrieved from a pamphlet, italics are by the author. No date was indicated in this pamphlet but the author believes the speech was made around July 1943 (Shigemura 1943?).
- 28 The author's view on the causes of the war is more closely related to what Gluck (in Gluck and Graubard 1992, xx) refers to as the "view of progressives and mostly Leftists" from 1945 until the 1970s—i.e., the causes of the war as "thoroughly systematic, involving not only state but society, not only Showa but Meiji, imperialism not only reactive but aggressive, and an emperor system not only exempt from responsibility but exemplifying it." Unfortunately, the book where Gluck's article is used as an introduction, while attempting to plot the different points of view on the Pacific War, fail to expound or even represent this so-called "Leftist view." The book, however, correctly points to works of Ienaga (1968/1978) and Maruyama (1969).
- 29 Parameters of racism may be recognized from the mere citation of two different races (i.e., Orientals and Occidentals) to the denigration of a particular race. Both Japanese and American propagandists may be guilty on those extreme parameters especially after the brutal island battles and savage hand-to-hand combats. In fact it can be surmised that the rate of brutality was directly proportional to the rate of racism in both Allied and Axis propaganda.
- 30 This warning was clearly indicated in a plan outlined by the OWI (1942, 12). The War Department in Washington, D.C., through the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB), also issued on 23 May 1942 a policy to respect race in order "to avoid giving unwitting aid to the Japanese propaganda attempt to convert the Pacific war into a racialist, Pan-Asia war" (PWB 1942, 34).
- 31 Another recent film, *Panaghoy sa Suba* (The Call of the River), also an MMFF entry in 2004, portrays a Japanese commander, Fumio Okohara, as just and benevolent.
- 32 Model E-46 incendiary cluster bombs, magnesium bombs, white phosphorus bombs, and the highly flammable napalm bombs.

References

- Agoncillo, Teodoro A. 2001. *The fateful years: Japan's adventure in the Philippines 1941–1945*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- Aishite Imasu 1941: Mahal Kita*. 2004. Joel Lamangan, dir. 107 min. Regal Films.
- Basinger, Jeanine. 1986. *The World War II combat film: Anatomy of a genre*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Blue Moon*. 2005. Joel Lamangan, dir. 118 min. Regal Films.
- Connaughton, Richard, John Pimplott, and Duncan Anderson. 1995. *The battle for Manila*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Coox, Alvin D. 1988. Review of "War without mercy: Race and power in the Pacific War." *American Historical Review* 93(2): 387–88.
- David, Joel and Lena S. Pareja. 1994. Aksyon. In *CCP encyclopedia of Philippine art*, ed. Aurelio S. Alvero, 82–83. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines.
- Dawn of freedom*. 1944. Abe Yutaka, dir. 62 min. Tōhō Productions.

- Del Rosario-Malonzo, Jennifer. 2004. New Philippine-Japan trade pact harmful to local economy? *Bulatlat*, 17–23 Oct. Online version, <http://www.Bulatlat.com>, accessed 3 June 2007.
- Domingo, Lita J. and John B. Casterline. 1992. Living arrangements of the Filipino elderly. *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* 7(3): 63–88.
- Dower, John W. 1986. *War without mercy: Race and power in the Pacific War*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Earhart, David C. 2008. *Certain victory: Images of World War II in the Japanese media*. New York: M. E. Sharpe.
- Eiga Haikyūsha Firipin Shisha [Philippine Branch Office of the Film Distribution Company]. 1944. Eiga Tōkei-sho: Showa Jūhachi-nendo [Film statistical sheet for the year 1943], 8 May. Unpublished material originally from the private collection of Hitomi Junsuke, handed to the author by Prof. Nakano Satoshi, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo.
- Ellul, Jacques. 1973. *Propaganda: The formation of men's attitudes*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Embree, Ainslie T. and Carol Gluck, eds. 1997. *Asia in Western and world history: A guide for teaching*. New York: M. E. Sharpe.
- Gluck, Carol and Stephen R. Graubard, eds. 1992. *Showa: The Japan of Hirohito*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
- Herman, Edward S. and Noam Chomsky. 1988. *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Horten, Gerd. 2002. *Radio goes to war: The cultural politics of propaganda during World War II*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ienaga Saburō. 1968/1978. *Taiheiyō sensō*. [The Pacific War 1931–1945: A critical perspective on Japan's role in World War II], trans. Frank Baldwin. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten/New York: Pantheon Books.
- . 1993–1994. The glorification of war in Japanese education. *International Security* 18(3): 113–33.
- Ileto, Reynaldo. 2001. Colonial wars in southern Luzon: Remembering and forgetting. *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* 33(July): 103–18.
- Iwabuchi Koichi. 2001. Uses of Japanese popular culture: Trans/nationalism and postcolonial desire for "Asia." *Emergences: Journal for the Study of Media and Composite Cultures* 11(Nov.): 199–222.
- Jowett, Garth S. and Victoria O'Donnell, eds. 2006. *Propaganda and persuasion*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Kōdansha. 1989. *Ichi-oku no 'Shintaisei'* ['New Order' for a hundred million]. *Showa day by day*, vol. 5. Japan: Kōdansha.
- Koppes, Clayton R. and Gregory D. Black. 1987. *Hollywood goes to war*. New York: The Free Press.
- Kushner, Barak. 2006. *The thought war: Japanese imperial propaganda*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Leonard, R. 2007. Friend or foe identification at high speed. Internet post, <http://boards.historychannel.com/thread.jspa?threadID=800001918&messageID=800027684>, accessed 24 May.
- Lu, David J. 1987. Review of "War without mercy: Race and power in the Pacific War." *Journal of Asian Studies* 46(Nov.): 921–22.
- Luckham, Robin. 1984. Armament culture. *Alternatives: Journal of World Policy* 10 (Summer): 1–44.
- Lumbera, Bienvenido. 1994. Philippine film. In *CCP encyclopedia of Philippine art*, ed. Aurelio S. Alvero, 18–27. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines.
- Maruyama, Masao. 1969. *Thought and behavior in modern Japanese politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Miki Kiyoshi. 1968. *Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū* [Anthology of works by Miki Kiyoshi]. 20 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Nakpil, Carmen Guerrero. 1973. *A question of identity: Selected essays*. Quezon City: Vessel Books.
- Nihon no Firipin Senryō-ki ni kansuru Shiryō Chōsa Fooram [Documentary research forum on the Japanese occupation of the Philippines]. 1994. *Nihon no Firipin senryō: Intabyū kiroku* [Japanese occupation of the Philippines: A record of interviews]. Osaka: Kitamura Masamitsu.
- Nornes, Abé Mark and Fukushima Yukio, eds. 1994. *The Japan/America film wars: WWII propaganda and its cultural contexts*. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Office of War Information (OWI). 1942. Basic propaganda plan for Japan, 15 April. U.S. Record Group 208, Entry 6G, Box 5, Japan joint plan file. U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.
- Pareja, Lena S. 1994. Dawn of freedom. In *CCP encyclopedia of Philippine art*, ed. Aurelio S. Alvero, 152–53. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines.
- Philippine Entertainment Portal (PEP). 2007. Enteng as best pic shocks Romero. Internet document, <http://gmanews.tv/story/26253/Enteng-as-best-pic-shocks-Romero>, accessed 10 June 2007.
- Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB). 1942. Japan plan attached to letter from the War Department Psychological Warfare Branch, Military Intelligence Service, 23 May. U.S. Record Group 208, Entry 6G, Box 5, Japan joint plan file. U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.
- Regan, Patrick M. 1994. War toys, war movies, and the militarization of the United States 1900–85. *Journal of Peace Research* 31(Feb.): 45–58.
- Root, Elihu. 1916/1970. *Military and colonial policy of the United States: Addresses and reports*. Reprint, New York: AMS Press.
- Rosenzweig, Roy. 2000. Popular uses of history in the United States: Professional historians and popular historymakers. *Perspectives*. 20(May): 19–21.
- Rosenzweig, Roy and David P. Thelen. 1998. *Presence of the past: Popular uses of history in American life*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Santos, Alfonso P. 1978. *Philippine-Nippon tales*. Quezon City: Interlino Printing.
- Sawamura Tsutomu. [1944?] *Tatlong Maria*. Manila: Liwayway.
- Shigemura. [1943?] My earnest call. Pamphlet retrieved at the University of the Philippines Library Japanese Occupation Papers, box 20.
- Shillony, Ben-Ami. 1988. Review of "War without mercy: Race and power in the Pacific War." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 14(Winter): 200–205.

- Sotto, Agustin. 1994. Philippine film. In *CCP encyclopedia of Philippine art*, ed. Aurelio S. Alvero, 28–39. Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines.
- Storey, Moorfield and Marcial P. Lichauco. 1926. *The conquest of the Philippines by the United States 1898–1925*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Suid, Lawrence H. 2002. *Guts and glory: The making of the American military image in film*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.
- Terami-Wada, Motoe. 1986. Nihon senryō-ka no firipin eiga [Philippine films during the Japanese occupation]. In *Sensō to Nihon Eiga* [War and Japanese film], ed. Imamura Shōhei, Shinō Kento, Yamada Yoji, Sato Tadao, and Tsurumi Shunsuke, 290–98. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- . 1984. The cultural front in the Philippines 1941–1945: Japanese propaganda and Filipino resistance in mass media. M.A. thesis, University of the Philippines, Diliman.
- University of the Philippines (UP) Library. [1944?] *Ajia no kotoba Nippongo* [Nihongo the Asian Language], Japanese Occupation Papers, Box 17, Folder 100. University of the Philippines Library, Diliman, Quezon City.
- Vellut, J. L. 1963. Japanese reparations to the Philippines. *Asian Survey* 3(Oct.): 496–506.
- Wainwright, Jonathan M. 1946. *General Wainwright's story: The account of four years of humiliating defeat, surrender, and captivity*. New York: Doubleday.
- Wetta, Frank J. and Martin A. Novelli. 2003. "Now a major motion picture": War films and Hollywood's new patriotism. *Journal of Military History* 67(3): 861–82.
- Yamashita: The tiger's treasure*. 2001. Chito S. Roño, dir. 86 min. Regal Films.
- Yoshida Yutaka. 2007. *Ajia Taiheiyō Senso* [Asia Pacific War]. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Yu-Jose, Lydia. 2002. The treatment of the Japanese occupation in Philippine textbooks. Paper presented at the Sixth Asian Studies Conference Japan, Ichigaya Campus, Sophia University, Tokyo, 22–23 June.
- . 2007. E-mail to author, 5 June.
- Zipper, Trudl Dubsy. 1994. *Manila 1944–45: As Trudl saw it*. Santa Monica, CA: Crossroads School and Herbert Zipper.

Gonzalo A. Campoamor II is a doctoral candidate, History Department, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Hitotsubashi University, 2–1 Naka, Kunitachi-shi, Tokyo. He is assistant professor in the College of Arts and Letters and the Center for International Studies, University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. He is also a fellow of the Ateneo Center for Asian Studies. His dissertation focuses on the imperial Japanese propaganda in the Philippines during the Second World War. <gonzalo_ii.campoamor@up.edu.ph>