



WHITE LOVE

and Other Events in Filipino History

VICENTE L. RAFAEL

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Events in

Filipino

History

American Encounters/Global Interactions

A series edited by Gilbert M. Joseph and Emily S. Rosenberg

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AMERICAN ENCOUNTERS / GLOBAL INTERACTIONS

A series edited by Gilbert M. Joseph and Emily S. Rosenberg



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Filipino
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Vicente L. Rafael

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To the memory of Bayani S. Rafael

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5

Patronage, Pornography, and Youth

Ideology and Spectatorship during the Early Marcos Years

In the aftermath of the February 1986 revolt that forced Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos out of the Philippines, the government of Corazon Aquino turned the presidential palace, Malacañang, into a museum meant to put the Marcos's legacy of excess on display. A guidebook on the palace describes one instance of that extravagance, in which the doors leading to the grand staircase "depict the Philippine legend of 'Malakas' [Strong] and 'Maganda' [Beautiful], the first Filipino man and woman who emerged from a large bamboo stalk. Mrs. Marcos liked to think of President Marcos and herself in terms of these legendary Primordial Filipinos." Thus did they have portraits hung of themselves as Malakas and Maganda in the palace—seminude and emerging from a forest of bamboo stalks (fig. 33). In 1985, they even went so far as to commission a group of Filipino academics to rewrite the legend in terms that would culminate in the celebration of the Marcos regime.¹

As Malakas and Maganda, Ferdinand and Imelda imaged themselves not only as the father and mother of an extended Filipino family. They also conceived of their privileged position as allowing them to cross and redraw all boundaries: social, political, and cultural. To the extent that they were able to mythologize the progress of history, the First Couple could posit themselves not simply as an instance, albeit a privileged one, in the circulation of political and economic power; they could also conceive of themselves at the origin of circulation itself in the country.

In this chapter, I trace the genesis of this authoritarian wishfulness as



Fig. 33. Ferdinand Marcos as Malakas

it first emerged during the early period of the Marcos presidency. I am particularly concerned with asking how the Marcoses and their supporters produced and disseminated the couple's tendentious reconstruction of history—both in the sense of what happened and what was “new” and yet to happen—in relation to prevalent ideas about the circulation and display of power in postcolonial Philippine society. Such ideas, I argue, grew out of a crisis in existing notions of patronage within the logic of an expanding capitalist economy. At the same time, new images of female ambition and subjugation emerged in film and politics that would furnish a context for reworking the positions of leader and followers in terms of the relationship between spectacle and spectators, seers and seen. Finally, I ask about the limits and challenges to the Marcos's style of rule, focusing on the rise of the youth movement in the mid-1960s and the ways it momentarily disrupted the reigning logic and logistics of power.

A Man of Destiny, a Woman of Charm Appropriating the legend of Malakas and Maganda was but one way that the Marcos regime sought to set itself apart from its predecessors. The juxtaposition of images of primordial strength and eternal beauty was symptomatic of a dominant obsession of the Marcoses: the conversion of politics into spectacle. We can begin to see this at work by looking at the ways in which Ferdinand and Imelda's private and public careers were represented prior to 1970 in their respective biographies and the Philippine press.

In the presidential campaigns of 1965 and 1969, Ferdinand Marcos often referred to his wife as his "secret weapon." Imelda's presence was considered important at political rallies all over the country in attracting and holding onto the crowd, who waited for her to sing, which she did after routinely appearing to be coy. Her husband would invariably join her in a duet, much to the delight of the audience.²

Both were adept at working their audiences. Ferdinand's rhetorical style distinguished him from other politicians. The mere sound of his voice seemed to command attention. One account describes it as a "rich masculine boom . . . that invests him with power and authority. . . . The deep-toned voice, solemnly and slowly articulating words, where the other [speakers] choose to be just loud and strident, is the voice of authority, no doubt." Because of the immediate distinctiveness of his voice, rather than the specific content of his speech or elements of his oratory, Ferdinand was widely regarded as "one of the best performers among present-day politicians."³

For her part, Imelda forged a new style of political campaigning in a largely male-dominated field. She came across as a striking presence: tall and youthful in her formal gowns, generously granting requests for songs. According to writer Carmen Navarro-Pedrosa, "It did not matter whether her audience were urbanites or poor barrio folk: she was an actress putting on a stage appearance. She wore ternos [formal gowns with butterfly sleeves] even for appearance on small, rickety makeshift stages of rough wooden planks covered with nipa palms."⁴ Imelda made herself accessible to an audience, but this meant that the crowd at political rallies was placed in the position of spectators waiting to see and hear her. As spectators, they did not have to articulate their interests but only had to be alert for the appearance of something that would show and tell

them what they wanted yet till then had not thought of. Like voyeurs, they could thrill to the thought of seeing without having to be seen.

Because Ferdinand and Imelda worked so closely together in getting him elected to office, they could conceive of the public sphere of politics as coextensive with their private lives. Singing together at political rallies, they turned their private lives into public spectacles, staging a stylized version of their intimacy.⁵ That intimacy was formalized to a remarkable degree and made over into a staple element of the Marcos myth, particularly in their respective biographies, whether officially commissioned or not. Indeed, the interviews granted by them after their overthrow and exile invariably dwell on the events pertaining to the beginning of their romance with a kind of formulaic wistfulness.⁶

Prior to meeting Imelda in 1954, Ferdinand, then a congressman, is described in his biography as a sexually active bachelor: “The young Representative was immensely popular, especially with the ladies. . . . There were whispers that men introduced their sisters and daughters to him at their own risk, a reputation which caused him trouble.” Society pages in Manila daily newspapers referred to him as the “Number One Bachelor.”⁷ Ferdinand was often romantically linked to women from prominent families, including the daughter of former President Manuel Quezon. However potentially upsetting, Ferdinand’s libidinal energy was nonetheless regarded as an indubitable sign of his virility. But this also meant that a woman of special qualities, one specifically destined for him, was needed in order to sublimate his sexuality. “You remember how we used to tell you that the girls you went with were not right for you?” Ferdinand, then thirty-one years old and preparing to run for Congress, is asked by his neighbor, Mrs. Severa Verano. “You remember how we used to ask, ‘How would she be as First Lady?’ You must be even more careful now when you choose a bride, because a man’s wife is very important in politics; she can ruin him. You have a special mark. . . . Don’t scar yourself with the wrong woman.”⁸

Ferdinand seemed never to have entertained any doubts about Imelda. She had first come to his attention through newspaper photographs in connection with her involvement in a Manila beauty contest. Later, seeing her eating watermelon seeds at the cafeteria of the former Congress building, Ferdinand was seized by desire: “He stood motion-

less for a moment, an action which did not go unnoticed by canny politicians present, whose eyes miss nothing unusual. Other members of the House drifted in. Marcos asked to be introduced to the fair stranger.”⁹ He was convinced that she was the “archetypal woman,” the “wife that he had been waiting for all his life . . . who in this case appeared to have all in a woman to make [a] matrimonial alliance . . . simply ideal.”¹⁰ As Ferdinand would recall, meeting Imelda for the first time “made me feel as I never felt before. [It was as if] I had her in mind many times before, but who she was and where she was, I [didn’t] know—now, here she is.”¹¹

What is striking about the various narratives of the Marcos romance is the way in which they all indicate the presence of others watching the process of the “matrimonial alliance” develop. This includes Ferdinand himself, who initially sees Imelda’s photograph in the papers and then is stirred by her unexpected appearance in his midst. It is as if her appearance confirmed what he had in mind all along but could not quite articulate. Similarly, the “canny politicians” present in the cafeteria recognized the scene as “unusual”—something set apart from casual meetings. Throughout Ferdinand’s pursuit of Imelda, a third party invariably was present to witness the courtship. The position of this third party, however, was not occupied by the couple’s parents, as might be expected in lowland courtship rituals, but rather by other politicians, journalists, or the public. For example, the couple was introduced by another congressman, Jacobo Gonzalez, while Ferdinand’s journalist friend, Joe Guevarra, was seemingly at every single moment of the fabled eleven-day courtship in Baguio that led to the couple’s marriage. Indeed, Ferdinand’s mother never figured in the romance, and Imelda’s father was informed of the couple’s marriage only after the civil ceremony was performed by a local judge in Trinidad Valley. Just as Ferdinand had first discovered Imelda in the newspapers, Imelda’s father, Vicente Orestes Romualdez, first learned of Ferdinand from articles in old magazines that featured him as one of the outstanding congressional members of the year. Parental authority is thus marginalized, or more precisely, subsumed into a larger category that includes the public as it is constituted by newspaper readers. The relationship between Ferdinand and Imelda seemed from its inception to have been a part of their official

history. Rather than held back from view, it is exposed for all to see, an integral moment in the unfolding of his future as president and hers as First Lady.

The chronicling of the Marcos romance, like the identification with Malakas and Maganda, was a piece of their larger attempt to manufacture their pasts. The biographies of Imelda and Ferdinand rework their respective pasts to make it appear as if they were always meant to be the First Couple. Ferdinand's commissioned biography, for instance, opens with the sentence, "Ferdinand Edralin Marcos was in such a hurry to be born that his father, who was only eighteen years old himself, had to act as his mid-wife."¹² Having dispensed with the burden of paternal influence altogether, the narrative quickly focuses on the son's life. Its portrayal of Ferdinand's past is relentlessly and monotonously one-dimensional. His destiny is never in doubt. Every detail of his life—from schoolboy to law student, from guerrilla fighter to congressman, from lover to father—is seen from a single vantage point: his future as president of the Philippines. It is as if everything in his life was meant to happen. Accused of murdering his father's political rival in 1939, Marcos turns the trial into an opportunity to gain national attention. He defends himself while studying for the bar exam—which he inevitably passes with honors.¹³ "Ever since his escape from the youthful murder conviction, the Ilokanos had said . . . that this favorite son would one day be president," his biography claims.¹⁴ Even minor incidents are seen as auguries of greatness. As a young boy, Marcos, punished by his father for some mischief, is made to work in the mines. There, he learns how to use dynamite, a knowledge that becomes useful years later when Ferdinand battles the Japanese during the war.¹⁵

One gets the sense from reading about Ferdinand's life that biography merely confirms destiny. All outcomes are foretold from the start. Personal and public history converge predictably so that events occur in ways that could not have happened otherwise. The point here is not the accuracy of events or objectivity of the biography. Indeed, many details in the official accounts have been shown to be spurious, particularly the stories of Marcos's war record.¹⁶ Marcos's biography is yet another instance of his characteristic tendency to revise the past in the interest of projecting a spectacle of personal prowess. His notion of destiny, which

I take to mean a kind of transhistorical and thus natural right to rule, is made to function as the unassailable context determining not only his past but that of other Filipinos as well.

In contrast to accounts of Ferdinand's life, Imelda's biographies stress the element of luck and uncertainty in her climb to power. While his past is always and everywhere made to bear the marks of an inescapable future, hers seems to have left the future to chance. It is well known that Imelda's family, the Romualdezes of Leyte, was part of a class of landed elite whose privileges were largely sustained by the U.S. colonial machinery. Imelda's uncles rose to prominence in local and national politics after World War II. Her father, however, was weak and feckless in the care of his family, and for this reason, Imelda's childhood was spent in relative poverty. Educated in Leyte, she moved in with her rich uncle in Manila, working first as a music store clerk and later in the public relations department of the Central Bank of the Philippines. She initially came to the public's attention after being chosen Miss Manila in 1953 and appearing on the cover of a weekly newsmagazine. Her life was marked by a series of such transitions: from relative wealth to relative poverty, from countryside to city, from clerical obscurity to cover-girl prominence. Until she met Ferdinand, her involvements with other men seemed to have had no certain trajectory, least of all toward marriage. One reads of Imelda's past and gets a sense of how things could have been different.

The possibility of that difference is nevertheless figured by her biographers as the operation of fate. Carmen Navarro-Pedrosa is explicit: "Imelda Romualdez Marcos more than anything else is a child of fate. Her life . . . is a Cinderella story . . . for her fairy godmother visited her on the evening of April 6, 1954, and with the magic wand, brought her into the life of Ferdinand E. Marcos."¹⁷ She then quickly comes under his tutelage and works as his "secret weapon" to deliver the votes. Imelda becomes "The Other Marcos, [*sic*] beautiful, tender and appealing."¹⁸ "It was she who filled that gap—the need to make her husband more popular—because she was not just a woman but a special kind of woman whose natural charms were lethal," contends Navarro-Pedrosa.¹⁹

Imelda's potency is linked to her difference from Ferdinand. Whereas his claims are couched in the idiom of an irresistible destiny, her power consists of projecting certain kinds of "natural charms." What did these

charms consist of? As the “Other” Marcos, Imelda is also the other of Ferdinand. He takes over the direction of her life in the same way that she is said to “fill a gap” in his. Thus, Imelda provides Ferdinand with an occasion to display his mastery. He turns her into an avid campaigner and a good student of politics by teaching her to defer to his authority. “She adopted his ways. . . . She also took care not to make her husband’s mind up for him. ‘Even if he asked me,’ she once said, ‘I would never dare make a decision for him.’”²⁰ Through Ferdinand, Imelda discovers politics as a way of articulating her ambitions in ways that would not have been otherwise possible. In doing so, she came to see her power as the result of submitting to the destiny of her husband.

Still, mere submission to male ambition does not account for the potency of her charms. Charm suggests the ability to fascinate and compel the attention of others as if by magic. Its Latin root, *carm* (song or magical formula), points to the necessarily performative, even theatrical nature of that which is charming. Because of its association with ritual magic, the power to charm can be understood as the ability to present oneself as both the source and object of desire. As various accounts indicate, Imelda’s body and voice were compelling. They forced people to watch and listen to her in rapt expectation. A woman journalist and admirer of the Marcoses describes the workings of Imelda’s “lethal charms” during a political rally in 1965:

Led to the microphone, she touches it, and prepares to sing her winning repertoire: *Dahil sa Iyo, Waray, Dungdunguen can to la unay*. She has lost weight considerably, her bones show through her torso. It is a slight and vulnerable back that rises above the scoop of her neckline. But this is not the girl from Olot anymore, not this woman tonight; her face is drawn, fatigue sits on those shoulders, but she looks triumphantly at the scene. From the convention floor at the Manila Hotel nine months ago, to this stage tonight, stretch innumerable miles and countless lessons, and she has learned each one very well. . . . She knows the excitement of power. The crowd waits, like a trapped and unresisting prey, for Imelda to begin using that power; this is the secret they share, the crowd and Imelda, Imelda and the crowd. She will smile and flick those wrists and sing her little songs. . . . She bends and barely sways, beating time glancing at the guitar and then lifts her face to point with her chin at the night bright with neon lights and a moon—the old charisma, with

its look of suffering, potent tonight as never before, the brilliance of beauty commingling with the brilliance of pain, the haunted, agonized, tragic look encircling the plaza and holding her audience in thrall.²¹

This passage recalls the difference between Imelda and Ferdinand of which I spoke earlier. The juxtaposition of contrasting qualities—“fatigue” and “triumph,” naivete and cunning—in the person of Imelda evokes the transitions she has had to negotiate. Power excites her precisely because she did not always expect to possess it. In this case, her power comes less from her husband’s destiny than from her ability to turn herself into an image recalling a sense of shared “suffering” among those who watch her. The crowd willingly submits itself to her charms like an “unresisting prey.” Thus do audience members eagerly assume the position of spectators, sharing in the fantasy of loss that Imelda plays out. The secret she shares with them resides in her ability to stir a desire to see without being seen, to hear without being heard.

Imelda’s charms were lethal to the extent that they were provoked by and fed the wish for a kind of depoliticized community, one that would make the hierarchy between the leaders and followers seem thoroughly benign. Through a series of stylized gestures and a standard repertoire of love songs in the vernacular, she created an atmosphere of generalized melancholia. Yet, this aura of longing was but one of the effects that her charms were calculated to generate. Other sensations doubtlessly grew out of seeing her, for her charms compelled others to stop thinking and start looking. Ferdinand himself is said to have fallen prey to her allure. When he saw her for the first time in the flesh, he stood “motionless.” A journalist wrote that “Imelda was such a simple girl then and she had a way of making even the eloquent Congressman tongue-tied.”²² During the early stages of Marcos’s first run for the presidency in 1965, “the oft-heard remark about the prospect of a Marcos victory was ‘Well, whatever kind of president he will make it is certain that if he wins, we will have the most beautiful and the youngest First Lady.’”²³ During the first inauguration of Marcos, journalists reiterated this sentiment. The crowd, they wrote, seemed less concerned with the message of the speeches than the appearance of Imelda,

as if to say, “If there is anything the incoming administration can boast of it is having the fairest and youngest First Lady.” “Just to see, just to see!” they

screamed in mob fashion. It was very little they asked. . . . Most people who had gone to the Luneta grandstand that morning were merely there to see the celebrated beauty of the new First Lady of the land. . . . Even as they heard the President declare “This nation can be great again,” a marvelous slogan calculated to impress the public mind, they preferred the soft smile of the Lady by his side.²⁴

News reports made it seem as if the people viewed political gatherings as no more than an occasion for them to constitute themselves as an audience in a spectacle whose central figure was the First Lady.

It is, however, important to note that her visibility was thought to stand in relation to his destiny. The mythology of the Marcos romance underlined not only the lethal charms of Imelda but also Ferdinand’s conquest of those charms. He married her, taught her, drew her into his future, and in doing so, turned her into his secret weapon. Rather than disrupt his ambition, her charms worked as an instrument for its realization. Imelda’s difference became useful in depoliticizing the encounter between the candidate and crowd. Converted into voyeurs, the people took in her feminine charms, but at the price of acknowledging its masculine owner.

On one level, then, narratives of the Marcos romance are about the domestication and deployment of sexual and historical differences in the realization of one man’s ambition. Stories of Ferdinand’s eleven-day “coup-courtship” of Imelda reformulated her difference as an asset that redounded to his credit. Her charms made up the feminine surplus that she brought into their marriage alliance and that was put into circulation during political campaigns and throughout Marcos’s tenure as president. This surplus was constituted, as we have seen, by the power to elicit interest, setting the stage for the exchange between her husband and the public. Imelda’s striking presence thus allowed power to circulate between Ferdinand and the crowd. While she reduced the people to spectators, he overwhelmed them with slogans and speeches with his booming voice. They looked at her while he spoke to them. To employ Imelda, the “archetypal woman,” is to control the conditions of possibility for the circulation of authority, just as in the courtship stories such employment also requires a representation of the past from the perspective of a single, totalizing male ego. Imelda makes visible the

link between history and contingency. By domesticating her, Ferdinand could claim to establish symbolic dominance over both.

Film and Female Ambition Imelda Marcos's deference to her husband's ambitions was, in some ways, entirely traditional and expected. Previous First Ladies had done no less. Beginning with Aurora Quezon, First Ladies involved themselves in such ostensibly apolitical activities as the Red Cross, the Catholic Women's League, and various charities and civic projects. Others, like Esperanza Osmeña and Evangelina Macapagal, played active roles in redecorating the palace and beautifying national parks. Living largely in the shadows of their husbands, they seemed to have accepted their place without any qualms. As one writer put it, "All were out to be real helpmates to their husbands and each did it loyally and in the context of what their husbands set out to accomplish."²⁵

Imelda's spectacular difference lay in the degree of attention that she attracted and cultivated. Her cultural projects, such as they were, re-fashioned the landscape of metropolitan Manila. Her active participation in her husband's campaigns, her role in projecting an international image for the Philippines, the innumerable rumors of her extravagance, and her own political ambitions: all these placed her constantly in the public eye. Yet, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, that public eye had become accustomed to the spectacle of women acting out their ambitions. The rise of a new kind of First Lady coincided with the emergence of a new image of woman: the *bomba* star. Bomba, literally meaning bomb, was a popular way throughout the 1960s of characterizing impassioned political rhetoric. It was also a synecdoche for scandalous charges and countercharges of graft and corruption made by politicians in Congress or during political campaigns. As Philippine newspapers and magazines of this period make clear, for a politician to "hurl" or "explode" a bomba was to reveal something to the public about another politician that the latter would have preferred to keep secret. By exploding a bomba, one exposed what was once inaccessible to the public eye, thereby gaining for oneself a new visibility. The *bombero* or *bombera* is he or she who is able to stir public interest at the expense of his or her rival. That interest was directed as much to the nature of the other's crime as it was to the fact that it had come to light. What was once hidden is now exposed for everyone to see and hear.

Bomba thus referred to the sudden yet motivated emergence of scandal, that is, of that which is new by virtue of being out of place. In this way, it allowed for the imaging of scandal as spectacle not only in the domain of national politics but in other contexts as well. For example, bomba also came to refer to the wave of soft- and hard-core pornography in print media and movies that swept the Philippines during this period. The latter came with provocative titles such as *Uhaw (Thirsty)*, *Hayok (Hungry)*, *Saging ni Pacing (Pacing's Banana)*, and the like. In addition, bomba referred to the specific scenes in movies when women exposed their bodies to the camera for the audience to see as well as to lurid scenes of simulated or actual sexual intercourse. Such scenes were often tenuously related to the narrative of the film, and at times, were arbitrarily inserted (*singit*) or added on (as a bonus) in the middle or at the end of the movie.

Women who appeared in these movies achieved a degree of notoriety, guaranteeing further exposure on magazine covers, television talk shows, and in gossip columns. Indeed, most magazines in the Philippines, from the gossip sheets to the respectable weeklies, such as the *Philippine Free Press* and *Weekly Graphic*, often featured bomba stars on their covers to increase sales. Their photographs provoked others to look in expectation. One magazine that featured a bomba star on its cover printed the following caption under her photograph: "Besides the ability to peel off her clothes in a provocative manner, what other attributes should a bomba star possess? Annabelle Rama, our cover girl for this issue, and the rest of her kind come up with very startling and exciting revelations."²⁶

These "revelations" consisted of a kind of double exposure: that of the woman revealing her body to the camera and that of a largely male audience viewing scenes removed from everyday life. We can think of the audience in a bomba movie, in fact in any film, as being drawn to identify in the first place with the camera. As Walter Benjamin has remarked, part of the fascination of watching films involves having one's gaze joined to the mechanical facility of the cinematic apparatus. The camera provides us with a prosthesis for seeing, extending, and mobilizing our eyes. In this way, we come to see things that would otherwise be unobserved or inaccessible in various places and times where our bodies need not be present. Abstracting our sight from our physical circum-

stances, the camera comes to supplement our eyes in the double sense of standing in for and replacing them.²⁷ Herein lies one of the peculiar pleasures of watching movies: we seem capable of seeing everything on the screen without those on the screen seeing us.

Some of the pleasures of identifying with the camera, for example, come across in the following remarks of a movie reporter describing the bomba sequence in the film *Igorota*: “In the opening scene, a group of Ifugao [*sic*] maidens are shown bathing *au naturel* in a stream and every now and then, the camera zooms in on bosoms and behinds for intimate close-ups.”²⁸ Watching this scene, audiences are able to see what is usually hidden in ways both unexpected and, as the writer’s insertion of a foreign term for nudity implies, natural in an unnatural sort of way. Zooming in and out, the camera fragments and recomposes the images of women’s bodies on the screen even as it extends and expands the viewer’s capacities to apprehend them. Hence do bomba movies sustain the interests of a predominantly male audience by mechanically reproducing the “explosion” of female bodies on the screen.

Bomba movies were tremendous commercial successes. They often played to capacity crowds in Manila and the provincial cities. The Board of Censors occasionally banned such movies or cut some of their more lurid scenes. The effect of such government action, however, was to further incite people to see these movies, and the excised versions were either amended with bonus scenes or restored in prints that circulated in the provinces. As one movie producer put it, “Bomba is bombshell at the box office. Working on the proposition that sex almost always sells, local movies have more and more caught on to all the world’s sin-erama.”²⁹

But bomba movies sold images of women, not the women themselves. What viewers saw on the screen and read about in magazines were understood to be the simulation, not the actual occurrence, of violence and sex. For instance, it was common for bomba films to feature the rape of a woman. “The rape scene . . . became more and more realistic with the entry of such cuddly pussycats as Bessie Barredo, Gina Laforteza, and Menchu Morelli.”³⁰ The men who portrayed the rapists were usually typecast as *kontrabidas* (villains) or “bomba specialists” who were expected to give in to their urges. Here, the realism of rape had to do with the way in which it led to the fulfillment of an expectation. Indeed, audiences were prone to yell *harang* (foul, cheat) at

the screen when bomba scenes that were promised never emerged. Hence, the scandal surrounding the exposure of women was neutralized. More precisely, bomba movies generated both scandal and its containment insofar as what appeared on the screen were mechanically reproducible images existing in a space and time irreducibly separate from that of the viewers. Equally significant was the fact that they also seemed to be the product of the intentions of others. We get a sense of this in other more benign but no less tendentious versions of the “revelations” of women in bomba movies. “The sexpots in local movies showed appetizing glimpses of their superstructures in swimming pool scenes where they donned itzy-bitsy, teeny-weeny bikinis which often—oops—got detached in the water, or in the bathroom scenes where their only covering was a curtain of water.”³¹

Movies were invested here with the capacity to motivate accident and intend surprise. Shock was aestheticized as the product of a prior set of calculations. Perhaps this was the reason bomba movies could engage in the most graphic violence against women and yet project them as “reasonable” people seeking to realize their ambitions apart from their roles as victims. For example, the trajectory of one bomba star’s career was described as follows:

“It was only of late that I’ve consented to appear in bomba scenes,” Mila del Rosario, 23, admits. “In my first twelve pictures, I never thought I could be so daring.”

Mila started exploding in *Pussycat Strikes Again* when Bino Garcia, one of moviedom’s most hated villains, undressed and attacked her in one scene, kissing her torridly and pawing her. In *The Gunman*, she had a torrid love scene in bed with Van de Leon. In *Ligaw na Sawimpalad* [Wayward Unfortunate], she was one of several girls victimized in a brothel. She had another love scene with Henry Duval in *Vice Squad*. “I only consent to appear in a bomba scene if such a scene is extremely necessary to the plot and story. After all, European and Hollywood pictures have infinitely more salacious scenes.”

Before she entered the movies, Mila was an art model. She insists that all the bombas she explodes are done in good taste and with finesse.³²

Here, the bomba star is given a voice with which to speak rather than simply a body with which to act. She is depicted not as a passive victim of male intentions but as one who consents to and actively participates

in the making of bomba scenes. She comes across as reasonable: open to negotiation and able to express her opinions. It is as if her complicity in the explosion of her own body makes those scenes the product of a prior contract between the star, director, producer, and consumers of the films, a contract that also implicates the writers and readers of magazine articles about them. Framed in this way, the explosiveness and exploitativeness of bomba movies could be legitimized as part of a network of market transactions that include Europe and America. As such, viewing bombas in cinemas or reading about them in magazines was conventionalized and made part of a larger ethic of consumption correlated with female ambition. The scandal of male violence against women is reformulated in terms of the “bold” and “courageous” yet “tasteful” acts of women in exposing their bodies. In bomba movies, women acted out their ambitions within sight of the public gaze. Such movies, then, established a new context for articulating female desire as a function not only of male desire but also of the interests of an anonymous audience of movie viewers and magazine readers.³³

Imelda Marcos, in some ways, personified the notion of female ambition that the bomba movies seemed to project. She saw her own desire not simply as a function of her husband’s but also a matter for public display. As one biography observes, “She dressed to please Ferdinand . . . she lived she said to see him look at her. ‘I want to stand out in his eyes.’”³⁴ Just as his destiny validated her fate, it is through her husband’s eyes that her existence takes on a form for everyone to see. “Politics was his life and Marcos was hers—since she lived for Marcos, she would live for what Marcos lived. . . . Her days rose and fell by the Marcos sun,” this same biography continues. Driven by his destiny, she finds a way of expressing her ambition by responding to his desire “to revive national pride and curb national weakness.” So while he governed, “she would inspire” and “sow beauty where she could. . . . ‘Culture and art and a taste for the beautiful must lead to goodness,’ she said.”³⁵

This peculiar mix of ambition and deference on Imelda’s part recalls the coupling of boldness and vulnerability among bomba stars. The notion of bomba could furnish a means of conceptualizing what was new and potentially unsettling about the First Lady. It could do so, to some degree, because of the workings of mass circulation media, which brought together into sharp juxtaposition formerly disparate objects,

people, and events. For example, it was not uncommon for magazines to feature bomba stars on their cover with stories and photographs of Imelda Marcos on the inside one week, then to reverse this order of appearance the next. Since the problematic position of the First Lady could thereby be imagined in conjunction with the “explosive” appearance of women in the movies, the ambivalent representations of Imelda came to share in the conditions of reception of bomba films. Visualized beyond the public stage of electoral politics, her images, like those of bomba stars, created an audience that came to expect the political style of Ferdinand. For just as she appeared to move back and forth between traditional roles and unexpected prominence and accessibility, her husband sought to project a modern, postcolonial nationalist appeal that at the same time capitalized on an older ethos of clientage and factionalism.

What had allowed for this reconfiguration of sexual with political imagery in ways that anticipated and so constructed the terms of the Marcos’s popular reception in the 1960s? To answer this question, it is necessary to consider the larger historical context within which power was spectacularized: the breakdown of traditional patron-client ties in the face of an expanding capitalist market that characterized the dynamics of power in colonial and post–World War II Philippine politics.

The Simulation of Patronage Imelda’s numerous attempts to spread beauty and culture were of a piece with Ferdinand’s nationalist pretensions of “making this nation great again.” As recent studies have shown, Marcos succeeded in monopolizing the resources of the country by joining a modernizing nationalist pose to a parochial, factionalist-oriented politics. As with previous presidents, Marcos turned the state into an instrument for asserting his factional hegemony over the country’s competing elites. Yet he also scrupulously translated factionalist practices into the modernizing vocabulary of nation building. This language left its most visible marks on the country’s landscape by way of new schoolhouses, extensive roads, and expansive bridges, more of which were built under Marcos than any other previous president thanks largely to his ability to secure foreign loans.³⁶

Imelda’s cultural projects were logical extensions of Ferdinand’s attempts to leave traces of his power everywhere. He sought to instrumen-

talize nationalism by embarking on development projects that also served as occasions for the expansion of patronage and pork barrel. He appointed technocrats to his cabinet, thereby gaining control of a new elite with no prior base of influence. She sought to complement these moves by turning state power into a series of spectacles, such as cultural centers, film festivals, historically themed parks, five-star hotels, and glitzy international conferences. Mounted with great fanfare and publicity, these spectacles seemed to be everywhere even as their source was infinitely distant from those who viewed them. These spectacles cohered less around egalitarian notions of nationhood than the fact that they all originated from her and reflected her initiatives, which in turn had been sanctioned explicitly by the president. Whether on the campaign trail for Ferdinand or in her capacity as First Lady, Imelda was in a unique position to rework Philippine culture into the sum of the traces left by the regime's patronage. National culture was construed as so many gifts from above bestowed on those below.³⁷

Imelda's role in imaging culture as state munificence cannot be understood apart from the vicissitudes of a notion of patronage that pervades the history of Philippine political practice, a notion that assumes that power is synonymous with the ability to provide for all the discrete and multifaceted needs of *specific* others. Patronage implies not simply the possession of resources but, more significantly, the means with which to stimulate the desire for and circulation of such resources. In a political context ruled by a factional rather than class-based opposition, patronage becomes the most important means for projecting power. Resting on the assumption that the conservation of a benign hierarchy (usually measured along generational lines) guarantees the flow of benefits from above to those below, it also naturalizes the claims of those above over the labor and resources of those below. Patronage mystifies inequality to the point of making it seem both inescapable and morally desirable. In this way, it recasts power in familiar and familial terms: one is fated to be caught in a web of inequalities the way one is fated to be part of a family. The display of patronage, as such, is meant to drain the social hierarchy of its potential for conflict. Despite the fact that historically conflicts have erupted between patrons and clients, the ideology of patronage regards conflict ideally as that which occurs only among factions (rival patrons and their respective clients, as in elections when

only those with sufficient means may aspire to have purchase over others), and not between patrons and clients.³⁸

Given the neocolonial character of the state and society, the ideology of patronage (with its roots in the Spanish and U.S. colonial regimes) determined to a large extent the shape of postwar political discourse in the Philippines. The economic and social bases for realizing traditional patron-client ties as they had been conceived in the prewar era, however, had been eroding steadily since the 1930s. As Benedict Kerkvliet has so brilliantly shown, the intensified penetration of capitalist modes of production into the countryside around Manila, a long process that had its roots in the late eighteenth century, resulted in intensifying the trends toward wage labor, mechanization, and absentee landlordism on the eve of World War II. Such developments led to the subversion of the economic and social bases of patronage, while at the same time encouraging peasants to frame their demands ever more forcefully in terms of traditional reciprocal indebtedness. In the face of a shifting political economy, they demanded a return to the moral economy of patronage.

As we saw in chapter 4, the Japanese occupation had the effect of momentarily dislodging Filipino elites from their agricultural base of power, creating an opening for more militant resistance from peasant armies. The return of elite collaborators to political and economic power at the end of the war, coupled with the harassment and repression of peasant and workers' groups, pushed the newly independent nation to the edge of civil war in the form of the Huk Rebellion from the late 1940s through the mid-1950s. Though mostly concentrated in Central Luzon, the Huk rebellion was a flashpoint both in the geopolitics of the cold war and the reconstruction of the Filipino oligarchy's hold on power. With massive U.S. aid, and under the leadership of CIA-supported President Magsaysay, the rebellion was brutally quashed. As Kerkvliet argues, the rebellion and its suppression did nothing to restore real or imagined notions of a precapitalist mode of personal relationships. Rather, the very same impersonal contracts and money-based relations among peasants, landlords, and their local agents that had fueled unrest in the first place were further institutionalized. Under the sponsorship of the Philippine state, which in turn was heavily dependent on the military and financial support of the United States, the material and moral matrices of traditional notions of patronage rapidly unraveled.³⁹

These developments in the Philippines, of which Central Luzon and the Manila areas are the most notable examples, led to the consolidation of a capitalist economy by the mid-1960s. Nonetheless, there persisted a lag between a capitalist economy and national political culture. For the spread of the former did not, as one might expect, lead to the establishment of ideas and practices of class-based politics. With the defeat of the Huk rebellion, the specter of class conflict seemed to have been exorcised, at least for the time being. Instead, a generalized longing for traditional practices of patronage, never far from the surface even in the most militarized phases of the Huk rebellion, resurged. Such sentiments, however, were remarkably contradictory. The longing for hierarchy simultaneously relied on the circulation of money to forge and sustain what we might think of as instant patron-client ties. National and local elections under the newly independent republic became the privileged venues for playing out this desire for patronage, as vertical alliances reminiscent of traditional patron-client ties were contracted, consolidated, and redrawn.⁴⁰

Yet such ties were deeply problematic insofar as they tended to be determined less by the exchange of moral obligations than the circulation of money. Money had the effect of turning patronage into a commodity. Investing the ideal of patronage with money made it possible for a candidate running for national office to accumulate a clientage beyond any specific locality over a drastically shortened period of time. Moreover, these clients remained largely anonymous to the candidate. The exchange of money for votes, a practice almost universally commented on by those who have written about postwar Philippine politics, turned elections into markets.⁴¹ Elections were seen neither in the liberal-democratic sense of expressing one's will on matters of political representation nor as rituals for the reiteration of reciprocal indebtedness between leaders and led. Instead, in a society increasingly governed by commodity exchange, elections became moments for the simulation of patronage. The extremely common practice of buying votes recreated the sense and sensation of patronage as wealthy men (and a few women) distributed money through their agents, thereby giving the impression of being in control of circulation. Yet the treatment of votes, like patronage, as commodities undercut the moral and ethical bases of traditional patron-client ties as well. While money made it possible to

have instant access to a mass of anonymous clients, it also enabled such clients to switch patrons readily in order to evade their influence. In short, money attenuated the moral force of reciprocity by trading the desire for patronage with its calculated retailing.

Philippine politics in the 1960s was caught up in the profound contradictions between the ideology of patronage and the material and social conditions set forth by capitalism, between an apparently generalized wish for authority and hierarchy stabilized by traditional idioms of reciprocity, and a national state whose links with various localities were mediated by money. It was precisely at this historical juncture that the Marcoses emerged onto the national scene. Their success was a function of their ability to seize on, rather than resolve, the central contradictions of postwar Philippine politics. Ferdinand and Imelda played on them, seeking to utilize money and what it could buy in order to simulate patronage and the imaging of benevolent power (inexhaustible strength and eternal beauty) at the top of the national hierarchy. Herein lay one source of their early popularity: they seemed to be able to furnish a way of conceiving the “new” and alienating changes these contradictions implied in the familiar and familial terms of patronage.

The Marcoses deployed a varied repertoire ranging from the narrative of virility and romance to spectacles of nationalist vigor and feminine allure, appearing to evoke change while simultaneously eschewing the imperatives of social reform. They seized on the crisis of authority generated by the traumatic changes in colonial regimes and postcolonial upheavals; yet, they sought to project the aura of patronage precisely by resorting to the very means that guaranteed its disintegration, thereby calling forth its repeated simulation. Converted into grand public gestures and discrete forms of commodities, patronage could in this way blur the difference between popular and mass culture, between the ambitions of one couple and the history of the entire nation. Thus did the projection of state power in the early Marcos years also seek to dictate the ideological conditions under which the Marcoses were to be received.

Imelda’s biographies give an idea of how the couple simulated patronage. They depict her as the consummate patroness of the Philippines. As she tells one of her biographers, “People come to you for help. They want jobs . . . or roads or bridges. They think you’re some kind of

miracle worker and because of their faith, you try to do your best.” In this regard, she also saw herself as a privileged mediator between the rich and poor. Rather than reverse or abolish the difference between the two, she sought to drain it of its tension, “officiating at the marriage of public welfare and private wealth.” Her generosity is characterized as excessive. Constantly besieged by callers of all sorts, from mayors to fashion models, ambassadors to barrio folks, she comes across as a dynamo on the move:

Day after day, at the stroke of 9 a.m., undeterred by lack of sleep, fainting spells, miscarriages, low blood pressure, kidney trouble, bad teeth, the brutal barrage of newspapers, and the ire of Benigno Aquino, she sits upright in a French sofa, receiving callers. Forty callers on lean days; fifty on the average; a hundred when they come in delegations. . . .

She eats a late lunch. “I take no siesta,” she says. In the afternoons, before she goes out to “cut a ribbon, maybe,” inaugurating a hospital pavilion, attend the opening of a hotel, or launch a tanker, a book, or a painter, she has two or three free hours. “I sit down and am quiet.” No one disturbs her while she runs mentally through a list, checking and cross-checking what she could have done and failed to do.⁴²

Virtually impervious to adversity, Imelda is seen as the symbolic origin of all activity, from ribbon cuttings to book launchings. Nothing escapes her, for she keeps a running account of things that had been and are yet to be accomplished. We get the fantasy of a panoptic consciousness wedded to a body that, like money, is in constant circulation. This image of inexhaustible patronage stirred a great deal of interest.

Then before I go to sleep, I have to go through the correspondence I received during the day . . . usually 2,000 letters a day. This one asking for a job, that one telling about a child that had to be hospitalized, this one asking for a picture, that one for an autograph. It takes me one or two hours just signing letters: they all want your real signature.⁴³

Which is to say: “They all want a part of me. They cannot help but think of me.” They ask not only for favors but the marks of her person as well: her photograph and signature. The circulation of her patronage and, by extension, that of her husband was conjoined to the dissemination of their images.

Imelda was acutely conscious of the link between patronage and its imaging. For instance, it was common for palace visitors to be presented with souvenirs, including “pictures, small bottles of perfume, bound copies of a favorite Marcos speech. Who before her ever took the trouble and the thought to make each palace visit [into] An Occasion? [*sic*]”⁴⁴ In a country that has no precolonial tradition of royalty, the Marcoses were noted for giving guests the royal treatment. By converting such moments into occasions for the display of patronage, the giving of souvenirs was not only meant to commemorate the mere fact of having been in the presence of the Marcoses but also provided the means for memorializing the distance separating the benefactor from his or her client long after the visit had occurred. The status of such objects as souvenirs lay precisely in their ability to convey the aura of their source to the extent that they forged a relationship of indebtedness between the giver and receiver. In doing so, such objects ensured that the latter continued to keep the former in mind. Souvenirs as tokens of patronage prompted reciprocation and acknowledgment of the power of their source.

As fetish objects, however, images of patronage also invoked their character as commodities, especially when they appeared in mass-circulation newspapers and magazines. Mechanically reproduced images of patronage simultaneously denied and confirmed the workings of money at the basis of national politics. A focal point of this tension was the figure of Imelda herself. As suggested earlier, she shared a kind of spectacular visibility with bomba stars, whose public display was thought to be desirable as much as it was disempowering. The following example might illustrate Imelda’s “explosiveness”—in a sense, the real meaning of her lethal charms—which recalls patronage by evoking its breakdown *and* restoration. Shortly after the reelection of Marcos in late 1969, the *Philippine Free Press* published photographs of three oil portraits of Imelda.⁴⁵ These paintings were given to Imelda by the artists themselves and hung in the palace along with her other portraits, “above stairwells and along corridor walls where they startled.”⁴⁶ An anonymously written commentary in English accompanies the photographic reproductions and helps us anchor our reading of these portraits. Done by academically trained painters, the portraits were reproduced in an influential weekly usually purchased by educated readers inside and outside of Manila. Hence, both the paintings and the com-



Fig. 34. Imelda Marcos by Claudio Bravo

mentary on them are not necessarily representative of the mass response to the Marcoses. Notwithstanding, it is possible to see them as symptomatic of precisely the kind of reception that the Marcoses would have wanted to generate across class divides. They provide us, then, with a small but no less instructive moment in the history of the Marcoses' attempt to encourage and contain the complicity of those whose cultural and social influence was considerable.

The commentary explains that the artists were trying to express the "real" Imelda in a way that would adequately sum up her many roles as a "figure of state, a politician, a housewife, and mother, a fashion pacesetter, a civic worker, a connoisseur of good living, a patroness of the arts."⁴⁷ Both the artists and commentator were seeking to come to terms with what seemed to be a new dimension of Imelda: she exceeded the traditional categories associated with being a woman and First Lady. Imelda provoked attention because, as with bomba stars, she exposed herself in novel situations and made her body available for all to see. But while the bodies of bomba stars bore the signs of the marketplace, Imelda's served both to focus and mystify the history of patronage in the midst of the marketplace.

The first portrait, by Claudio Bravo (fig. 34), shows Imelda gliding past some mysterious landscape. The accompanying commentary is worth quoting at length for its attempt to match the allusiveness of the painting:

The figure moves in a light that never was on sea or land. The details are precise: the parasol tugs at the hand and is tugged by the wind blowing a skirt into rich folds. Yet the landscape is not so much seen as felt: a seaside, early in the morning, on a cool day. And the figure seems not to walk but to float on the stirred air. The expression on the face is remote; this is a woman beyond politics and palaces, a figure from dream or myth. It's the pale ivory color that makes the scene unearthly, as though this were a frieze from some classic ruin. Just beyond the frame will be sirens choiring, the swell of a striped sail, and across the perfumed seas, Troy's burning roof and tower. ("Three Images," 93–94)

The remoteness of the figure, combined with its "pale ivory color," gives this portrait an uncertain quality. One looks at it, feeling that although one can recognize Imelda's features, one cannot quite establish a context



Fig. 35. Imelda by Federico Aguilar Alcuaz

for them. Indeed, just as the figure seems “to float on the stirred air,” so the mind that contemplates this painting drifts outside the frame toward thoughts of a distant Greek epic. Because this portrait seems so removed from the world of politics and exists as if in a dream, its precise details cannot but take on a hallucinatory quality: they set the mind in motion, inducing it to think of that which is not there. This painting leads one to perceive not simply the likeness of Imelda but, as with bomba films, the possibility of seeing something that is out of place transformed into an object to be seen. At stake here is the imaging of patronage as something to which one can lay a claim, because it is shaped by one’s own gaze. The figure is compelling not only because one feels one can see through and past it but also because one is reminded of the unbridgeable distance that separates one from the source of power that the portrait represents. The viewer is haunted by the absence that the figure makes present.

This sense of being haunted is even more apparent in the second portrait, by Federico Aguilar Alcuaz (fig. 35), where

the scene is definite enough. Malacañang is in the background; so this must be the park across the river. . . . Nevertheless, it’s not the Palace or park, certainly not the city that we feel here. This is provincial verdure, pastoral ground. And the figure in old rose is a Country girl . . . of whom kundiman and balitaw sing. Indeed the melancholy tone of our folk music is in her wistful face. She has been sniffing at the white flower in her hand and it has stirred a memory. She herself stirs memories in us. . . . Her quiet dignity evokes a nostalgia for childhood’s vanished countryside and its lovely simple girl. (“Three Images,” 94)

Again, the painting evokes the sense of the familiar sliding into something strange. What looks like the presidential palace and its immediate surroundings is conflated with memories of pastoral grounds, folk music, and childhood’s “vanished” places. It thus summons the imaginary scene of patronage untainted by the complexities of the marketplace. Symbolic of this is the figure of the woman in deep reverie. What is curious is that although we are never told about the contents of her thoughts, we are nonetheless invited to reminisce with her. Recalling her childhood, the viewer may also be drawn to look back on another time and place in which women were simple and presumably knew their



Fig. 36. Imelda by Antonio Garcia Llamas

place. In this way, the figure calls forth something no longer present. The nostalgia-inducing effect of this second painting is not very different from the hallucinatory quality of the first: both lead the viewer to think of something absent and to expect its appearance.

A notable contrast with these two portraits of Imelda is the third painting, by Antonio Garcia Llamas (fig. 36). Here, the figure of Imelda is backlit in such a way as to completely obscure any sense of place. The background exists as mere shadings, serving to highlight the foreground. The figure is erect and so made to seem wholly autonomous, its sovereign presence underlined by the absence of details on the dress and the centering instead of distinctive features on the face. The effect of this composition is to lead one to focus on the figure's gaze:

A poised modern woman looks us over. It's not we who eye her, we can only respond to her glance. She is definitely of the city and of our day, as lustrous with nervous energy as the powerful cars she rides or the go-go committees she chairs. . . . The glance we respond to flashes across the muddled cityscape we must unravel to get to where the white-on blue decorum is, the promise of a civilized society. ("Three Images," 94)

In this portrait, we are confronted with a somewhat jarring reversal of the relationship between the subject and object of spectatorship. Unlike the other two, which exist as objects for our gaze, this figure "looks us over," causing us to take notice of her and reflect on the fact that we are doing so. Her glance "flashes across the muddled cityscape," opening up a path toward the "promise of a civilized society." What we see in her seeing is a kind of future to which we feel compelled to respond. It is that future that makes up the condition of possibility of our sight. We experience the painting as the presence of a powerful eye that sees all and, for that reason, can be apprehended only in flashes. Such is the experience of modernity—of a "now" that stretches indefinitely into the future and thus always feels like a promise—that this glance conveys.

Additionally, the power of Imelda's gaze grows out of an association with the nervous energy of cars and "go-go committees" that can operate at all times of the day and night. This is how we can account for what initially seems like a discrepancy between what we see of this gaze and what the commentator is led to see. Although Imelda does not, in fact, look directly at the viewer but off to the side, the commentator claims

that she looks at us. It is as if our position as viewers has been split into two: we are at once in front of the portrait, yet also at the margins of the frame—spectators to the extent that we have been incorporated into a prior and largely invisible spectacle. Just as the audience in bomba movies comes to sense its subjection to the staging of revelations intended by others, the viewer of the painting is made to realize his or her identity as one who sees to be the result of having been seen by someone else.

When taken together with the couple's biographies, these paintings suggest some of the ways in which assumptions about patronage can work to aestheticize and so dehistoricize politics. Since the relationship between ruler and ruled is converted into fantasies about seeing and being seen, the viewer then imagines him or herself as alternately the subject and object of the intentions of others. Imelda's privileged visibility resulted from her use of Ferdinand's name in carrying out projects meant to enhance their positions as national patrons concerned with the needs of the country. Her visibility, however, corresponded to a pervasive invisibility, as indicated by the third portrait. Constructing her role as patroness meant that she, like money, had to be in constant circulation. Her photographs in newspapers confirmed her ability to appear to be everywhere. Thus were they constructed as traces of a presence whose gaze, except for flashes, remained essentially hidden from our sight. This is perhaps why Ferdinand referred to Imelda over and over again as his secret weapon. Given the foregoing discussion, we might take this to mean that she served as his favored bomba, exploding her lethal charms for an audience grown habituated as much to the staging of scandal as the commodification of politics. In both politics and the movies, women were made to represent instances of larger intentions at work, galvanizing the interests of people while demarcating their position as mere viewers of spectacles.⁴⁸

Youth and the Destruction of Spectacle The politics of bomba and the aestheticization of patronage that it implied did not, however, remain unchallenged. Indeed, shortly after Marcos's reelection in 1969 in what was then considered by most Filipinos as the most corrupt and violent election of the postwar period, Marcos's rule came under increasing criticism. As one might expect, Imelda became a ready target. Rival elite

factions such as the Liberal Party accused her of undue political involvement and feared that she was using her position as First Lady to campaign for office.

As early as 1968 and throughout 1969–1972, rumors were rife that Imelda was being groomed to run for president and that her victory would amount to giving Ferdinand the third and possibly even fourth term barred to him by the current constitution. Such would set the stage for a Marcos dynasty and virtual dictatorship. At no point, then, did elite critics see an Imelda presidency as something that might be distinct from Ferdinand's. In a sense, their fears confirmed popular assumptions about her status as his secret weapon. Their criticisms unfolded along the same logic of patronage and spectatorship on which the Marcoses based their rule.

Several mass-circulation magazines ran highly critical articles about the possibility of Imelda running for president. The *Philippine Free Press*, for example, published retouched photographs of Imelda taking her oath of office with Ferdinand and her family blankly looking on.⁴⁹ What we see in these photographic fantasies is the visual equivalent of rumor. The self-generating persistence of Imelda-for-president rumors gave them a certain hallucinatory force. It is as if in hearing rumors of Imelda's designs, which were thought to originate from Ferdinand, we can see her actually realizing them. That is, we are led to anticipate the possibility of rumor coming to pass, and through these photographs, we assume the position of spectators to our worst fears. The criticism of the Marcoses' ambitions ends up retailing the very possibility of their actualization.

One of the most vigorous critics of the Marcoses was then Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino. His attacks on Imelda tended to spring from the belief that she was exceeding her place as Ferdinand's wife. Like the photographic fantasies above, such attacks were complicitous with the very terms with which the Marcoses put forth the nature of their relationship. "I am not maligning her," Aquino says in a 1969 interview.

I think she is a thing of beauty, a joy forever. . . . No amount of effort could deglamorize [*sic*] Imelda. I consider her the prettiest Filipina of our generation. . . . But a president should not use his wife for politics. The moment she comes down from the pedestal to the gutter she is bound to get mud. Ferdie

uses Imelda as a shield. She is a lovely woman but I think politics should not be for women. But if a woman indulges in politics, then she should share in the brickbats.⁵⁰

Aquino claims that Imelda does not act the way a woman, much less a First Lady, should. She allows herself to be used for political ends. The current of misogyny that runs through these comments is borne by a notion that politics ought to consist of strong men facing off against one another. Men should do their own fighting and leave women out of their contests. Imelda's move from "the pedestal to the gutter" adds to Ferdinand's influence and poses an impediment to Aquino's own ambitions. Aquino himself is taken in by her glamour. But because of his own desire for the presidency, he seeks to resist the depoliticizing hold of her charms. In this way, Aquino acknowledges, albeit in a negative mode, the novelty that Imelda had introduced into national politics. His criticisms of the Marcoses in effect reiterate the belief that Imelda's difference mattered to Ferdinand's plans.

Opposition to the Marcoses, however, came from quarters other than contending elite factions in the senate or press. One other significant source was the youth movement of the mid-1960s to early 1970s, which had a considerable impact on altering the terms of political discourse in the Philippines. A definitive account of the youth movement in postwar Philippine history has yet to be written. Complicating any such attempt would be the intractable difficulties involved in defining and historicizing the social type *youth*. As a sociologically ambiguous category in Philippine—and perhaps any modern—society, it tends to be negatively defined. That is, a youth is one who is not yet an adult but at the same time is no longer a child. Youth might also encompass both secondary and university students as well as nonstudents, male and female, middle class and working class. Indeed, it cuts across regional, gender, and class distinctions, supplementing though never wholly defining the qualities of certain groups. Hence its perpetual liminality. On the social map, *youth* can only exist as a highly unstable and transitory location: the embodiment of a history that is always yet to arrive from the future.⁵¹ Yet, it is the very elusiveness of *youth* in both the historical and sociological sense that allows us to understand the peculiarities of its political style as it emerged in the period leading up to martial law in 1972.

Most accounts trace the emergence of postwar youth activism to the early 1960s, focusing mostly on its institutional manifestations among small groups of university students on various Manila campuses such as the state-run University of the Philippines and the Lyceum as well as the Catholic, privately run Ateneo de Manila University and De La Salle College. For example, in 1961, students at the University of the Philippines formed the Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines (SCAUP), which called for greater academic freedom on campus in response to the anticommunist investigations that were then being held by the Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities. Under the leadership of Jose Maria Sison, SCAUP led the first in a series of small demonstrations in front of Congress, at one point barging into the halls and disrupting committee hearings. In 1964, the group held a larger demonstration in front of the presidential palace protesting the unequal trade treaties between the United States and the Philippines contained in the Laurel-Langley Agreement. The police forcibly broke up the protest, making this the first violent clash between youth and police in this era. Shortly after this incident, Sison, who had been recruited into the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP), formed a new organization designed to be the youth arm of the party open to students and nonstudents alike, the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) or Nationalist Youth. But ideological differences between Sison and the old party leaders eventually led to a split in 1967. Influenced by Maoism, Sison, along with some of his KM followers, then formed a new Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968.⁵²

The KM was far from the only youth organization of this time. Several other more “moderate” groups emerged, mostly in private Catholic schools, that called for reforms rather than revolution. With ties to an older generation of middle-class nationalists, they identified themselves as Christian humanists and social democrats—the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) led by Edgar Jopson, for example, or the Lakasdiwa—as against the more radical national democrats. Indeed, by the end of the 1960s, relations between these groups had become sharply antagonistic. Moderates hoped to alleviate social inequalities through legislation and by redrawing the constitution. Many of them were also anticommunists, fearing that revolution would bring about a state of Stalinist terror. Radicals, for their part, regarded moderates as

counterrevolutionary and, because of the latter's association with religious groups, "clerico-fascists." They adopted a political view that yoked nationalism with Marxist-Leninist-Maoist categories. Briefly, this consisted of seeing the Philippine state as a captive of elite interests in servile collusion with U.S. imperialism. Such resulted in the perpetuation of semifeudal conditions that condemned the country to supplying cash crops and cheaper labor to markets abroad and the intensification of social inequalities at home. What was needed was a social revolution with the Communist Party as its vanguard that would overthrow the sources of oppression, namely imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat capitalism. Its strategy would consist of a protracted armed struggle emanating from the countryside and a sustained propaganda campaign to enlighten people of all classes and bring about a national democracy.⁵³

This is not the appropriate place to assess the cogency of the political lines pursued by these different groups. Here, I simply want to indicate some of the complex institutional and ideological contexts that accompanied and shaped the rise of youth politics up to the point of the Marcos presidency. The emergence of the radical and reformist youth organizations historically paralleled the rise of the Marcoses. It is difficult to determine, however, the extent to which many of those who joined demonstrations or attended teach-ins and discussion groups held views that were consistent with those of the leadership in these organizations. Indeed, the views of leaders themselves were in flux and not yet rigidly codified, as they would be in the years after martial law. What mattered at this juncture was the fact that youth from all classes and genders were drawn to this movement; that their very identity as youth was, in large part, determined by their participation in it.⁵⁴ With teach-ins and demonstrations, they found new idioms for addressing the world. Whether keyed to revolution or reform, this movement spoke of change and thereby evoked a world separate from those above, whether parents, the church hierarchy, or the state. Its language, ripe with foreign borrowings and urgent appeals, seemed new. And in its newness, it impelled movement outside of institutional confines and into an uncertain arena of historical possibility that linked youth at home with other youths abroad. Despite, or perhaps because of, its fractious and contradictory tendencies, the youth politics of this time

was the shifting boundary against which dominant political conventions, particularly those pertaining to patronage, were constrained to reassert if not reconfigure themselves.

During this period, youth politics had a specific style. Consigned outside the structures of political institutions, youths took to the streets, articulating with their massed bodies, slogans, banners, and placards their marginalization and discontent. They presented to those in power the sight and sound of something different and out of place. Rather than stay in school or at home, where they traditionally belonged, youths moved out and occupied public spaces. Their presence was provocative, especially to the most visible representatives of state power, the police. At times, provocation spilled into violence as the police and military stepped in and forcibly dispersed demonstrators.⁵⁵

It was the demonstrations of January 26 and 30, 1970, however, that precipitated what were till then the most violent clashes between youth and police. What set these confrontations apart was the extraordinary rage with which the police set on the demonstrators, moderates and radicals alike, resulting in the injury of at least a couple hundred and the death of four students. So significant were these events that they have come to be known in Philippine historiography as the First Quarter Storm. The storm set in motion a wave of marches and rallies protesting the “fascist” behavior of the state, many of which resulted in further violent clashes. The First Quarter Storm was thus a kind of bomba that set off other bombas, but one whose explosion differed from those in the movies and conventional political practices. It is instructive to look more closely at these events and to ask about the difference they made to those who saw and became a part of them.

The January 26 rally was held in front of the congressional building in Manila primarily to call for a nonpartisan Constitutional Convention the following year. Organized by moderate student groups led by NUSP, the demonstration was swelled by the ranks of more radical youths such as the KM and Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK) along with allied labor groups and peasant unions. Inside the halls of Congress, President Marcos delivered his State of the Nation Address as other politicians, their spouses, and journalists listened. Outside, students held their own assembly, listening to a series of speakers. Toward the end of the rally, tensions arose between moderate and radical students over

who would be allowed to use the microphone to address the crowd. Leaders of the former were fearful of having the demonstration they had organized overtaken by the latter. But these differences would vanish once violence broke out and all the youths were indiscriminately targeted for attack by the police. Such violence began with a series of linguistic assaults. Radical groups chanted revolutionary slogans while baiting police and military security forces. In what is perhaps the most vivid account of the rally, journalist Jose Lacaba writes:

Their slogan (in Tagalog) was “Fight! Don’t be afraid!” and they made a powerful incantation of it: “Ma-ki-BAKA! H’wag ma-TAKOT!” They marched with arms linked together and faced the cops without flinching, baiting them, taunting them. “Pulis, pulis, titi mong matulis!” (Pigs, pigs, uncircumcised dicks!),⁵⁶ “Pulis, mukhang kwarta!” (Pigs, you’re only about money!), “Um-uwi na kayo, walang maglalagay sa inyo dito!” (Go home, no bribes to be had here!), “Takbo kayo ng takbo, baka lumiit ang tiyan niyo!” (You keep running, your pot bellies might shrink!), “Baka mag-rape pa kayo, lima-lima na ang asawa niyo!” (You might be thinking of raping someone, you already have so many wives!), “Mano-mano lang, o!” (Let’s have it out, one on one!). . . . The very sight of a uniformed policeman was enough to drive demonstrators into a frenzy.⁵⁷

Youth, particularly males, were angered by the mere presence of the police. They responded with obscenities, parodies, and dares, openly mocking the police’s claims to respect and deference. Refusing the logic of patronage, which entails regarding inequality as a guarantee of security, the demonstrators placed themselves at a remove from hierarchy. This began with the use of the vernacular, Tagalog, as a way of distinguishing themselves from the proceedings in Congress carried out in English. But the Tagalog they used drew its political charge precisely from its impolitic nature. Cusswords and obscenities were at once infuriating to the cops that they were directed to as much as they were a source of pleasure and solidarity among the youth. Rather than acknowledge authority as the giver of gifts, the language of the demonstrators negated the conventions of regulated exchange across social boundaries. Taunts replaced respect, opening a gap between the language of the state and that of the students. Concomitant with this negative moment of disruption was the affirmation of an alternative basis of identi-

fication. Again, this move had a linguistic aspect. Chanted slogans like “Makibaka! H’wag matakot!” (“Struggle! Fear not!”) figured prominently in all demonstrations. As with the sounding of other slogans, its collective voicing felt like it originated from one’s own body yet was drawn from outside of oneself. The rally itself created a context that made language seem coterminous with community. The power of slogans came from the sense that they gave adequate expression to individual impulses, indeed gave those impulses a form that one did not realize they had. Finding oneself possessed of and by the language of slogans—a language that given its formulaic nature could not have originated from oneself—one found a way of stepping out of a prior identity and assuming another in common with those who chanted the same words. Thus did slogans furnish the basis for collective action.

By contrast, the police stood by and looked on in silent rage. As Lacaba points out, most of them removed their nameplates, concealing their identity, during a riot so as to avoid detection and disavow blame. In this sense, they sought to become anonymous and invisible. Their truncheons and guns spoke for them, manifesting the content of state power to the youths. Standing at the outermost perimeter of the congressional building, the men in uniform formed a line separating the demonstrators from the politicians. That line, however, quickly collapsed at the appearance of President and Mrs. Marcos. Emerging from Congress, the First Couple was roundly booed. A papier-mâché coffin with the word *demokrasya* was hurled their way, then tossed back to the crowd by the president’s security guards, only to be tossed back again. Then another papier-mâché figure, a crocodile clutching fake dollar bills with Marcos’s initials and “\$\$” painted on its body, was also thrown toward the First Couple. Rocks, sticks, bottles, and placards followed. One of these barely missed the president and instead hit one of his body guards. Ferdinand and Imelda were quickly pushed into their car and spirited back to the presidential palace. With the First Couple gone, the police swiftly moved in. What ensued over the next few hours was a pitched battle between demonstrators and police.

Youth demonstrations clearly differed from the conventional political rallies of the elite-dominated Nacionalista and Liberal Parties. The latter were organized, as we have seen, as spectacles that staged bombas and displayed patronage. In so doing, they secured the boundary be-

tween viewer and viewed, client and patron. The former, however, literalized their nature as a movement, provoking others into action, spreading out and engulfing all those who looked on, including the watchful agents of the state. Exploding taunts and slogans, the demonstrators disrupted the link between patronage and spectatorship. The result was a contagious confusion. As one reporter remarks:

One emerged [from Congress] to find confusion outside. The President and his wife had sped away—"Binato si Marcos!" ["Marcos was stoned!"]—and the crowd milled in the lobby. A congress employee manfully paged cars through the loudspeaker, but the system was not working and no cars came. . . . Who was the enemy and who the friend was not clear at all. . . . Come and go, duck and dart.⁵⁸

The breakdown of the paging system for cars became a synecdoche for evoking the more generalized failure of conventions of communication precipitated by the clash of youths and cops. By the same token, friends and foes were difficult to distinguish as one lost a stable vantage point from which to tell things and persons apart.

As Lacaba strikingly notes, the loss of this stable perspective was reinforced by the radical detachment of images from their sources unleashed by the clash:

Thunder of feet, tumult of images and sounds. White smooth round crash helmets advancing like a fleet of flying saucers in the growing darkness. The tread of marching feet, the rat-tat-tat of fearful feet on the run, the shuffle of hesitant feet unable to decide whether to stand fast or flee. . . . And everywhere, a confusion of shouts: "Walang tatakbo!" "Walang uurong!" "Balik!" "Balik!" "Walang mambabato!" "Link arms! Link arms!" [*sic*], "Maki-Baka! H'wag Mata-KOT!" (Nobody run! Nobody retreat! Come back! Come back! Fight, Don't be afraid!). (45–46)

Caught in the middle of the clash, the writer finds himself confronted not with cops and youths but with the fleeting advance and retreat of images and sounds that are wholly removed from their putative origins. He thus finds himself in extreme intimacy with opposing forces at the very moment that he is unable to personalize those forces. His position, therefore, differs considerably from that of the viewer of Imelda's portraits. While the latter is the subject that receives and reciprocates a

pervasive and ever distant gaze, the former is one who loses himself in the swirl of disembodied voices that he is unable to respond to and the rush of sights that he can barely recognize. He is shocked out of his position as a spectator and finds himself contaminated by the confusion that he witnesses. As a result, he is cut off from his identity as a reporter. “It was impossible to remain detached and uninvolved now, to be a spectator forever,” Lacaba writes. “It was no longer safe to remain motionless. I had completely forgotten the press badge in my pocket” (46–47).

Hearing cries of pain, Lacaba recounts how he tried to help some students only to find himself being attacked by “crash helmet, khaki uniform and rattan stick.” He manages to grab the middle of the police officer’s stick with his hands as it is about to come down on him and screams at the cop, “Putanginamo!” (47). Putanginamo literally means “son of a bitch.” It is a common but no less highly charged cussword in the vernacular made up of the Spanish *puta* (bitch) and the Tagalog *ina mo* (your mother). Responding to the force of authority, the writer begins to assume a position allied with that of the students. He takes up the language of youth.

The violent encounters between youths and police on the night of January 26 were repeated during the rally of January 30 protesting police brutality in front of the presidential palace. In this latter rally, four students were killed. On both occasions, the clashes followed a similar pattern. The police would advance on the youth, swinging their clubs and firing their weapons. The demonstrators would then retreat into the darkness of the streets. A lull would follow as students regrouped. They would then proceed to advance on the police, hurling stones, placards, ripped bits of metal, and whatever else they could pick up off the streets. Molotov cocktails were also hurled during the January 30 demonstration. Caught by surprise, the cops would retreat. Another pause would follow while the police regrouped and the youths waited in expectation of another charge. This would come, and the cycle of retreat, regroup, and advance would begin all over again. The demonstrators seemed to have no set strategy other than evading and then challenging the police. They had no desire to win territory, occupy buildings, hold hostages, or engage in any other such action that might have improved their position relative to the police.

In the January 30 demonstration, fire trucks were called out to repel the students with water cannons. Youths responded by stoning the truck and forcing it to back away as some yelled, “‘Mahal ang tubig! Isauli n’yo na ‘yan sa NAWASA!’ (Water is expensive! You should return that to NAWASA [the National Water System Administration])” (Lacaba, 46). Some managed to take over a fire truck, which they then rammed against one of Malacañang’s gates. This act was done on the spur of the moment, however. As one student put it, “There was no plan at all to sack Malacañang.”⁵⁹ Again, it was as if the demonstrators were not interested in gaining strategic advantage over the forces of the state. They challenged state authority but did not see themselves taking the place of those on top of the hierarchy. They did not identify themselves with those in power in the way that Senator Ninoy Aquino, for example, had identified himself with Ferdinand Marcos as the latter’s potential successor. Neither were the students concerned with holding onto whatever property was seized in the course of the demonstrations. Stores were not looted. The cars of government officials were smashed and burned as with the lights and windows of palace offices. Rather than appropriate property, youths spurned it, pulling it out of circulation. They sought to evade the pull of power as patronage altogether, exposing the violence that sustained its operation.

Marcos responded by claiming that the demonstrators’ ranks were infiltrated by communist agents. He blamed these agents for inciting students to violence in order to set the stage for a coup.⁶⁰ Such would become the typical Marcos move to any and all challenges to his regime. He sought to tame the unsettling force of youth by ascribing to it the workings of hidden intentions. For him, the demonstrators were mere dupes of a powerful patron and so he read their actions in traditional political terms. In the wake of the First Quarter Storm, rumors floated that Marcos would declare martial law. Students storming the palace gates gave rise to specters of dictatorship. The president repeatedly denied such rumors even as he spread others regarding communist conspiracies that might make the imposition of martial law necessary. Provoked by the disconcerting politics of youth, Marcos sought to retake the political initiative by conditioning people to expect what he simultaneously told them would be unlikely to happen. In so doing, he clung to the prerogative of manufacturing alarm and its domestication.

The trajectory of Marcos's rule was thus determined, in part, by something that he could not wholly control much less comprehend: the politics of youth. During his first term, Marcos claimed to be different from past presidents. His own youthfulness and that of his wife seemed to confirm this assertion. Yet his claim of embodying the new hinged on his capacity to display his dominance over the appearance of differences. In this regard, as I have tried to argue, Imelda played a crucial role. She made her sexuality and concern with beauty a matter of public interest that invariably worked to her husband's advantage. The emergence of a youth movement and the radical politics it engendered pushed the protocols of domination into crisis. As the events of January 26 and 30 showed, the politics of youth, at least during its wild but short-lived moments, offered an alternative to existing conceptions of authority and submission. Rather than accede to the state's attempt to reify power, they sought to literalize politics, converting mass spectacles into a mass movement. By disordering the calculated disorder launched by the Marcos regime, they furnished a counterlegacy to the years of dictatorship that were to follow.

- with the Japanese military occupation in any way” (cited in Malay, *Occupied Philippines*, 6).
- 21 Recto, *Three Years*, 15–16. See also Renato Constantino and Letizia Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past* (Manila: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1978), 117.
 - 22 On Japanese notions of race and empire, see John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).
 - 23 Laurel, *Memoirs*, 57.
 - 24 Teodoro Agoncillo (1912–1985) also coauthored (along with Milagros C. Guerrero) what has become the standard college textbook in Philippine history and certainly one of the most influential books to have shaped nationalist historiography in the postwar period, *History of the Filipino People* (Quezon City, Philippines: R. P. Garcia Publishing Co., 1960). Born in Batangas to a family whose name is closely attached to the revolution, Agoncillo was educated at the University of the Philippines, established by the United States. He turned to writing and literary criticism before becoming a historian—at a time when the study of history was largely the province of amateurs and public intellectuals. After the war, he served on the faculty of the history department at the University of the Philippines, holding the chair for many years. For a series of telling interviews with Agoncillo, see Ambeth Ocampo, *Talking History: Conversations with Teodoro A. Agoncillo* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1995).
 - 25 Agoncillo, *Fateful Years*, vi–vii.
 - 26 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 213. I thank Jim Siegel for referring me to this source and many other ideas regarding the workings of rumor.
 - 27 *Rumor* is from the Latin for noise. It is also interesting to note in this connection the laws passed by the New Regime criminalizing the spread of rumors as an indication of rumors’ subversive potential (see Agoncillo, *Fateful Years*, 311–12).
 - 28 Agoncillo, *Fateful Years*, 51, 54.
 - 29 *Ibid.*, 297–98.
 - 30 *Ibid.*, viii.
 - 31 *Ibid.*, vii.
 - 32 *Ibid.*, 161.
 - 33 *Ibid.*, 160.
 - 34 *Ibid.*, 588–89.
 - 35 *Ibid.*, 310. See also Constantino, *The Philippines*, 57.
 - 36 Agoncillo, *Fateful Years*, 400.
 - 37 *Ibid.*, 584–85.

5 Patronage, Pornography, and Youth: Ideology and Spectatorship during the Early Marcos Years

- 1 *Malacañang: A Guidebook* (Quezon City, Philippines: Kayumangi Press, 1986), 13. For various lowland versions of this myth, see Francisco Demetrio, *Myths and*

- Symbols Philippines* (Manila: National Bookstore, 1978), 41–43. See also Remedios F. Ramos et al., *Si Malakas and Si Maganda* (Manila: Jorge Y. Ramos, 1980). I am grateful to Doreen Fernandez and Ambeth Ocampo for bringing the commissioned rewriting of the legend to my attention. For a recent study of the Marcos's political imaginary, surprisingly the first book-length treatment of the topic, see James Hamilton-Paterson, *America's Boy: The Marcoses and the Philippines* (London: Granta Books, 1998).
- 2 Numerous accounts of the Marcoses on the campaign trail can be found in various Philippine magazines and newspapers. For this chapter, I have relied on a series of essays by Kerima Polotan in the *Philippine Free Press* (hereafter *FP*): "Marcos '65: The Inside Story of How Marcos Captured the Presidency," 29 March 1969, 50–60; "The Men, the Method," 5 April 1969, 4, 54–62; and "The Package Deal," 12 April 1969, 2–3, 46–51. See also Carmen Navarro-Pedrosa, *The Untold Story of Imelda Marcos* (Manila: Bookmark, 1969), esp. chap. 15; Napoleon G. Rama and Quijano de Manila, "Campaigning with Marcos and Osmeña," *FP*, 30 August 1969, 2–4, 181–82; and Filemon V. Tutay, "Marcos vs. Osmeña: 'Nakakahiya,'" *FP*, 20 September 1969, 2–3, 64–72.
 - 3 Rama and de Manila, "Campaigning with Marcos," 2.
 - 4 Navarro-Pedrosa, *The Untold Story*, 216.
 - 5 I should note that the discussion that follows begs the question of the history of private life in the Philippines. How did such a divide between the private and public emerge? What is the history of notions of intimacy and their relationship to class and gender identities, on one hand, and colonial and nationalist discourses, on the other? Was there an architecture of privacy, a costuming of publicity, especially in bourgeois life? I have begun to signal these themes in my earlier discussion of women from the United States in the colonial Philippines (see chapter 2), but the task of systematically retracing a history of privacy in the Filipino middle classes has yet to be undertaken. Here, I can only offer some inferences and conjectures that hopefully will invite revisions from future scholars.
 - 6 For accounts of the Marcos romance, see Hartzell Spence, *Marcos of the Philippines* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1969), 237–67. Originally, this book appeared as *For Every Tear a Victory* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964). The publication of Spence's book occasioned considerable criticism from Filipino journalists, who claimed that his glorification of Ferdinand Marcos often came at the expense of racially tinged put-downs of his fellow Filipinos' capacities. See, for example, Quijano de Manila, *Reportage on Politics* (Manila: National Bookstore, 1981), 213–32. For biographies of Imelda Marcos, see Navarro-Pedrosa, *The Untold Story*, chapters 11–12; Kerima Polotan, *Imelda Romualdez Marcos* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1969), 79–82; Katherine Ellison, *Imelda: Steel Butterfly of the Philippines* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988); and Beatriz Romualdez Francia, *Imelda and the Clans: A Story of the Philippines* (Manila: Solar Publishing, 1988). For interviews with the Marcoses from their Hawaiian exile, see "Marcos Remembers," *Asia Week*, 5 July 1987, 28–33; and "Imelda and Ferdinand Marcos," *Playboy*, August 1987, 51–61. The romance

between Ferdinand and Imelda was also of central importance in the Marcos-commissioned campaign movies, *Iginuhit ng Tadhana* (*Drawn by Destiny*) in 1965 and *Pinagbuklod ng Langit* (*Joined by Heaven*) in 1969. I have not, unfortunately, been able to locate copies of these films, but see Napoleon Rama, "The Election Campaign in Review," *FP*, 15 November 1969, 5.

- 7 Spence, *Marcos*, 217.
- 8 Cited in *ibid.*, 207.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 240.
- 10 Navarro-Pedrosa, *The Untold Story*, 153.
- 11 Cited in *ibid.*, 154.
- 12 Spence, *Marcos*, 5.
- 13 *Ibid.*, chapters 3–6.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 194.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 28.
- 16 See, for example, Charles C. McDougal, *The Marcos File* (San Francisco, Calif.: San Francisco Publishers, 1987), 5–108.
- 17 Navarro-Pedrosa, *The Untold Story*, xv.
- 18 Polotan, "Marcos '65," 59.
- 19 Navarro-Pedrosa, *The Untold Story*, 203.
- 20 Polotan, "Marcos '65," 56.
- 21 Polotan, "The Men, The Method," 59–60.
- 22 Joe Guevarra, cited in Navarro-Pedrosa, *The Untold Story*, 156.
- 23 Navarro-Pedrosa, *The Untold Story*, 216.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 222–23.
- 25 Rosario Mencias Querol, "What Are First Ladies For?" *Weekly Graphic* (hereafter *WG*), February 1965, 87.
- 26 *WG*, 30 December 1970, 1.
- 27 See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 217–52.
- 28 Joe Quirino, "Another Kind of Bomba," *FP*, 6 December 1969, 18.
- 29 Petronilio Bn. Daroy, "The New Films, Sex, and the Law on Obscenity," *WG*, 30 December 1970, 7–9. The quote comes from Quirino, "Another Kind of Bomba," 16.
- 30 Quirino, "Another Kind of Bomba," 16.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 This is not to say that bombas met with no protest. The Catholic Church and various women's groups on both the Left and Right protested the ready availability of bombas and other forms of what they considered pornographic material. Periodic seizures of movies and raids of movie houses were made, and sidewalk cleanup campaigns were routinely ordered, especially during election time, by local officials to rid the cities of so-called smut. Nonetheless, the commercial profitability of pornography in the country meant that such materials were bound to return, calling

forth further campaigns of suppression and so on around the circle. There is as yet no study of the relationship between censorship and pornography in the Philippines, and like many other aspects of Philippine modernity, an examination of this relationship undoubtedly would deepen our understanding of postwar political culture.

34 Polotan, *Imelda*, 87.

35 *Ibid.*, 86, 184, 220.

36 The most succinct and perspicacious analysis of the Marcos regime can be found in Benedict Anderson, “Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams,” in *Discrepant Histories: Translocal Essays on Filipino Cultures*, ed. Vicente L. Rafael (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1995), 3–47. See also Primitivo Mojares, *The Conjugal Dictatorship of FerdinandImelda Marcos* (San Francisco, Calif.: Union Square Publishers, 1976); Gary Hawes, *The Philippine State and the Marcos Regime* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), esp. chapters 1–5; and John Bresnan, ed., *Crisis in the Philippines* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), chapters 4–7.

37 This sense of national culture as a series of gifts coming from above is arguably a legacy of the history of colonialism informed by the ideology of white love that I discussed in chapter 1. There is therefore nothing remotely “indigenous” about it. In this connection, it is worth noting that the practice of patronage that has long characterized contemporary Philippine politics—most recently under the rubric of cronyism—has never been a Filipino monopoly. Spanish and U.S. colonial offices were all appointive so that they were routinely obtained on the basis of patronage and, in at least the Spanish case, outright purchase. Hence it is historically inaccurate, if not ethnocentric, on the part of an earlier generation of North American scholarship to cite the putatively regressive practices of patronage in Philippine politics as the source of much corruption while conveniently forgetting that the overwhelming majority of officeholders under the U.S. colonial state—from governor-generals to ethnologists—owed their positions to powerful friends on top just as they used their positions to dispense favors and make friends among those below. For examples of these, see Paul A. Kramer, “The Pragmatic Empire: U.S. Anthropology and Colonial Politics in the Occupied Philippines, 1898–1916” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1998); and Michael Cullinane, “Ilustrado Politics: The Response of the Filipino Educated Elite to American Colonial Rule, 1898–1907” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1989). Thus was Philippine modernity under the Marcoses neocolonial in every way.

38 The literature on the history and structure of patronage in the Philippines is considerable and uneven. Most explorations written from the 1960s through the 1980s tend to treat the topic as part of a reified field of Filipino values. The more significant (and also symptomatic) works include Mary Hollnsteiner, *The Dynamics of Power in a Philippine Municipality* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1963); Theodore Friend, *Between Two Empires: Philippine Ordeal and Development from the Great Depression through the Pacific War, 1929–1946* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale

University Press, 1965); David Joel Steinberg, *Philippine Collaboration in World War II* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967); Carl Lande, *Leaders, Factions, and Parties: The Structure of Philippine Politics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Southeast Asian Studies, 1964); Onofre D. Corpuz, *The Philippines* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), esp. 93–140; Kit G. Machado, “From Traditional Faction to Machine: Changing Patterns of Political Leadership and Organization in Rural Philippines,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 33, no. 4 (August 1974): 523–47; and Amando Doronilla, “The Transformation of Patron-Client Relations and Its Political Consequences in Post-War Philippines,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 16, no. 1 (March 1985): 99–116.

The more astute attempts to critique culturalist analysis of patronage include Resil Mojares, *The Man Who Would Be President: Sergio Osmeña and Philippine Politics* (Cebu City, Philippines: Maria Cacao, 1986); Benedict Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); and Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840–1910* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979). The vicissitudes of patronage under U.S. colonial rule is thematized in Peter Stanley, ed., *Reappraising an Empire: New Perspectives on Philippine-American History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984); Ruby Paredes, ed., *Philippine Colonial Democracy* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1989); and Cullinane, “Ilustrado Politics.” For more contemporary accounts, see the essays in Alfred McCoy’s edited collection, which bears the unfortunately essentializing title *An Anarchy of Families: State and Family in the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994). For a discussion of patronage during the Spanish colonial period, see Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), esp. chapters 3 and 4.

39 Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, 1–25, 250–60, 266–69.

40 See Lande, *Leaders, Factions, and Parties*, 15–18, 24–25, 72–75, 62–68, 79–81, 111–14; and Machado, “From Traditional Faction to Machine.” One of the most useful guides to the economic and social processes that underpinned such a transition are the essays in Alfred McCoy and Ed. J. De Jesus, eds., *Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1982).

41 See especially Mojares, *The Man Who Would Be President*, 71–81, for a succinct summary of the importance of money in Philippine politics.

42 Polotan, *Imelda*, 195, 233–34.

43 *Ibid.*, 235.

44 *Ibid.*, 237.

45 “The Three Images of Imelda,” *FP*, 13 December 1969, 92–94. By the second half of the 1970s, however, the *Free Press* had become a strident critic of the Marcoses, who were rumored to be plotting to perpetuate their power indefinitely by running Imelda for president, changing constitutional provisions that barred Marcos from

- seeking a third term in office, and possibly even declaring martial law, which of course he did in 1972.
- 46 Polotan, *Imelda*, 212.
- 47 “Three Images,” 92–93. Subsequent references are cited in the text.
- 48 I indicate some of the more recent manifestations of the postwar, neocolonial aesthetic of patronage and the contradictions symptomatic of nationalist modernity in the chapters that follow. See also Vicente L. Rafael, “Fishing, Underwear, and Hunchbacks: Humor and Politics in the Philippines, 1886 and 1983,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 18, no. 3 (1986): 2–7.
- 49 See Quijano de Manila, “Woman of the Year,” *FP*, 11 January 1969, 33; Isabelo T. Crisostomo, “Imelda for President?” *FP*, 12 December 1970, 18–19, 141–44; Napoleon G. Rama, “Imelda, the Presidency, the Nacionalistas—and the People,” *FP*, 19 December 1970, 5, 52–54; and Ben Trio Rufin, “Is Imelda Really Running for President in 1972?” *FP*, 2 October 1971, 1.
- 50 Cited in Quijano de Manila, “Parthenon or Pantheon?” *FP*, 22 February 1969, 73.
- 51 My understanding of the liminal status of youth in society has benefited from the writings of Benedict Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944–1946* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972), chap. 1; and James T. Siegel, *Solo in the New Order: Language and Hierarchy in an Indonesian City* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), chap. 8.
- 52 For historical sketches of the Kabataang Makabayan and student activism of the 1960s, see Benjamin Pimentel, *Rebolusyon! A Generation of Struggle in the Philippines* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991), 45–62; William Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution: The New People’s Army and Its Struggle for Power* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 68–78; and Alex Magno, *A Nation Reborn*, vol. 9 of *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People* (Hong Kong: Asia Publishing Company, 1998), 82–83, 143–47, 227–37. See also Amadis Maria Guerrero, “Siege at Congress: A Sidelight,” *WG*, 11 February 1970, 10–11; and Roy H. Hizon, “The Left in the Sixties,” *WG*, 25 February 1970, 10–13. There is as yet no book-length treatment of the early days of the youth movement.
- 53 See Pimentel, *Rebolusyon!* 45–93; and Jose Maria Sison, *Philippine Society and Revolution* (Manila: Pulang Tala Publications, 1971). The intellectual groundwork for Sison’s understanding of Philippine conditions was laid out by such nationalist scholars as Renato Constantino, Lorenzo Tanada, and before them, Claro M. Recto.
- 54 See, for example, the interviews in Pimentel, *Rebolusyon!*
- 55 In 1966, for instance, violent clashes occurred as youth groups rallied against the war in Vietnam during the visit of President Lyndon Johnson and allied heads of state for the Manila Summit. See Magno, *A Nation Reborn*, 82–86; Hizon, “The Left in the Sixties”; and Quijano de Manila, “Anarchs in Academe,” *FP*, 7 September 1968, 68–71.
- 56 In Philippine societies, circumcision among males is a sign of maturity. It is therefore highly insulting to refer to an adult male as uncircumcised.
- 57 Jose F. Lacaba, “The January 26 Confrontation” and “And the January 30 Insurrection,” *FP*, 7 February 1970, 45. Subsequent references are cited in the text. These two

articles as well as other reports were later gathered by Lacaba in his book, *Days of Disquiet, Nights of Rage: The First Quarter Storm and Other Related Events* (Manila: Salinlahi Publications, 1982). For other accounts of the First Quarter Storm, see Pimentel, *Rebolusyon!*; and Magno, *A Nation Reborn*.

- 58 Kerima Polotan, "The Long Week," *FP*, 7 February 1970, 32A.
- 59 Cited in Quijano de Manila, "To Sir with Love and Irony," *FP*, 14 February 1970, 68.
- 60 See Quijano de Manila, "The President States His Side," *FP*, 7 March 1970, 2–3, 43–48. Marcos, of course, was not entirely wrong. Leaders of the KM and other radical student groups were, in fact, affiliated with the Communist Party of the Philippines headed by Jose Maria Sison. Many of them would join the CPP's armed wing, the New People's Army. With the increasing formalization and militarization of left-wing opposition, the earlier "wild" nature of the youth movement would come under party discipline. For critical accounts of the role of the Communist Party in recent Philippine history, see the essays in Patricio N. Abinales, ed., *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics after 1986* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University, 1996).

6 *Taglish, or the Phantom Power of the Lingua Franca*

- 1 Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 3–4. Subsequent references are cited in the text.
- 2 My remarks on the workings of classical notions of film spectatorship in the erasure of social differences for the sake of producing a "national" audience attuned to a culture of consuming images are indebted to Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), esp. chap. 3. I am also indebted to Walter Benjamin's essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 217–52.
- 3 See Edgar Wickberg, "The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 5 (March 1964): 62–100, and *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850–1898* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1965). See also the brilliant novels of Jose Rizal, *Noli me Tangere* (Berlin: Berliner Buchdruckerei-Aktion-Gesellschaft, 1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (Ghent: F. Meyer-Van Loo, 1891); and for a succinct historical overview of the formation of the mestizo elite, see Benedict Anderson, "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams," in *Discrepant Histories: Translocal Essays on Filipino Cultures*, ed. Vicente L. Rafael (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1995), 3–47.
- 4 For an elaboration of the question of envy and revenge, especially as it arises from a felt sense of exclusion from the upper reaches of colonial society among Filipino ilustrado men, see Vicente L. Rafael, "Translation and Revenge: Castilian and the Origins of Nationalism in the Philippines," in *The Places of History: Regionalism Revisited in Latin America*, ed. Doris Sommer (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), 214–35.
- 5 Here, it is important to note that the Filipino nation-state conjured by mestizos/as,

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