

**Images of Japanese Men in Post-Colonial Philippine Literature  
and Films**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**IN**

**ASIAN STUDIES**

**AUGUST 2007**

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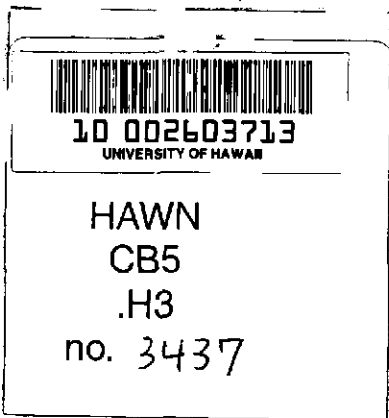
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## PREFACE

My interest in the Philippines and its literature and films began seriously in 2000 when, as a freshman at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, I took Tagalog 101 and a couple of Filipino-related courses offered by the Asian Studies program, the Filipino Programs and the Indo Pacific Language and Literature program. First, I would like to explain my own views regarding Philippine literature and films, and why I chose this topic for my thesis. Actually, as I wrote this thesis, I struggled with certain emotions or feelings that will have to be overcome if I continue to study this topic. In all honesty, it is not easy to confront my feelings which could probably be seen as a kind of self-condemnation or sense of guilt as a Japanese national because of Japan's actions towards the Philippines and its people. As I studied the history of World War II and what our countrymen did to the people of Asia and Pacific, I was really depressed (if I am allowed to use this term), and whenever I try to face this emotion, I feel as if I am falling into an endless loop without exit. I understand, of course, that nobody can change Japan's past history, and the things that our countrymen did during the war should be regarded as historical occurrences, but I am still struggling about how to accept and use these "facts" in my thesis. My biggest challenge is to be objective without any masochistic or arrogant views and to sincerely analyze the images of the Japanese in Philippine literature and films. As a Japanese national, I believe that studying this topic is very meaningful and I hope that I can obtain a totally new perspective toward our past through this research.

My first encounter with Filipino people was in the 1980s. At that time, many Filipina women were coming to Japan to work as entertainers in nightclubs. Some Filipina women married Japanese men and, as a result, many Japanese-Filipina Children (JFCs) were born. But at that time, I myself was ignorant of the background of Filipina entertainers and knew nothing

about the circumstances which had drawn them to work in Japan as entertainers. Unfortunately, most Japanese people in my generation or the younger as post-war generation, had few opportunities to be taught about what our countrymen did in Southeast Asia and Pacific during the War. I would not like to generalize or stereotype people, but at that time, many Japanese people, including myself, certainly categorized Filipina women simply as entertainers, which in Japanese culture has often been associated with the exchange of sexual favors for some kind of payment.

As time passed, in the late 1990s, I obtained a position working for “the International House Osaka”, a governmental agency for foreigners who are living in Osaka. As a staff member, I was responsible for helping to support international conferences or concerts. One day, I was asked by representatives of SOFA (Society of Filipinos Abroad), to help organize their concert. SOFA comprises a group of Osaka-based Filipina women, most of whom are wives of Japanese men. Together, we planned their Christmas concert. They booked two famous Filipino singers, Martin Nievera and Manilyn Reynes from Manila. More than one thousand Filipinas came to see these two singers, regarded as the concert king and queen of the Philippines, forming a long line around the hall on the day of the concert. Meanwhile, the stage staff and I, as a person in charge of this concert, were nervously waiting backstage for the singers and dancers. To our relief, the singers arrived – just ten minutes before the curtain was due to go up! Immediately, they changed and put on make-up, checked sounds and lights, then shot out of their dressing rooms to the stage without any rehearsal. But the concert was totally amazing, even miraculous! Sweet fragrance from flowers and perfumes of women spread all over the hall and their voices were dreamily beautiful. I did not know anything about the “showbiz” world of the Philippines, and I did not realize how influential American musical culture had been. In addition, I did not

know the reason why Filipinos were apparently so “Americanized.” Although I was still ignorant, this concert became a trigger for me to think about the differences between Filipino culture and my own, even though both Japanese and Filipinos categorized as Asians.

Subsequently, I had another opportunity to work with Filipino people. I joined a NGO-related conference as a representative of Japan, and spent five days with about thirty people from ASEAN countries in a small village in Japan. At the conference, the Japanese team found that it lacked an understanding of world history, especially war history, and we felt ashamed at our ignorance. Other Asian participants helped us to add some relevant facts into our historical knowledge and then we could rebuild our historical worldviews. Actually, it was a very hard and disturbing process, even though all the other people were very nice to the Japanese participants. There were six people from the Philippines, including a professor, NGO/ NPO leaders, and an engineer. I worked and got along with them throughout the conference. We talked all through the nights about various topics, drank, sang, and danced together. I certainly acquired some confidence about my understanding of Asia’s new century; in other words, I began to see myself at this point as an Asian who has to contribute to the future Asia, and finally decided to go back to school to study Asian-related areas.

Then, I entered the Asian Studies department of University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I took almost all Philippine-related classes -- Tagalog language, literature, history, political science, sociology, economics, music, and even a course on textiles. When I encountered the world of Filipino literature through a couple of literary classes, I felt that I reached a new world that was vast, beautiful and rich. I explored this new world and tasted its complex and profound flavors with indigenous or folk beliefs mixed with concepts brought by outsiders or colonizers, Spanish,

American, and Japanese. I enjoyed reading Filipino novels, poems and short stories, as well as watching films. I was totally charmed by the literature and inclined to focus on it.

However, at the same time, I always felt something like a thorn in my mind. I am not a Filipino; therefore, I sometimes felt my limitations as an outsider. I really love Filipino literature, its beauty and passion, but I realized that I have to limit my interests and focus on the specific area where I can contribute, given my background as Japanese.

After I studied “Tanabata’s Wife,” one of my favorite short stories, written by Sinai Hamada, the Philippine-born son of a migrant Japanese engineer, I decided that I would focus on images of the Japanese, especially Japanese men, in Philippine literature and films. You might ask why men, not women? I would answer that this is because virtually all Japanese characters in Philippine literature and films are represented by men as soldiers and businessmen. Japanese women are almost invisible in novels and films. An investigation of Filipino perceptions of Japanese inevitably meant that I should focus on men.

As a Japanese national, I believed that I could analyze the images of Japanese men from various angles, and that this would be one area where I could contribute into the world of Philippine literature as a Japanese. This would provide a niche for me. When this idea came to me, I almost trembled with excitement, but now, as I come to the last stage of writing this thesis, I am often loaded down with negative thoughts, and have been very much depressed by the burden of knowing historical facts that were difficult for me to accept. The very process of writing the thesis is like a confession, a confession for the Japanese soldiers, businessmen, lovers as well as for my inner self. I believe that when I finally submit this thesis, I will be able to break fresh ground and personally enjoy Filipino literature more.

Throughout this thesis I use “Philippine literature” in some cases instead of “Filipino literature,” and therefore need to clarify the distinction, since “Filipino” also means the national language of the Philippines as laid down in the 1987 constitution. I use “Philippine literature” when I talk about a Filipino writer’s works written in English. On the other hand, I use “Filipino” as a general referent for the literature of the Philippines (e.g. – He represents the world of Filipino literature...), or works written in Filipino official languages, such as Tagalog, Ilokano, etc.

In this thesis, I will analyze the images of Japanese men in post-colonial Philippine literature written in English, Filipino Films, short stories and a poem and consider why and how these images were created and still maintained by Filipinos in the context of the Philippine/Japan historical and social relationship. I address this more specifically in section 2, but as a context I need first to provide a historical overview of Japan and the Philippines.

## 1. JAPAN-PHILIPPINES RELATIONS: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Japan's interest toward the Philippines started in the sixteenth century. At that time, the Tokugawa Shogunate prohibited the Japanese from leaving the country. Harada Magoshiro, a Japanese trader who looked towards the Philippines as a potential territory for expansion, suggested to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the Shogun, that it be conquered. At that that time, this suggestion was set aside. However, it is said that about 3,000 to 4,000 Japanese people settled in the Philippines during the Spanish regime.<sup>1</sup>

By contrast, the connection between the Philippines and the United States is much briefer, though more deep-rooted. At the end of the nineteenth century Andres Bonifacio, the local revolutionary, and his rebel group Katipunan, fought for independence against the Spanish colonizers who had ruled the Philippines over the 330 years, inflicting Filipino people with high taxation and unfair treatment.<sup>2</sup> Emilio Aguinaldo, who overcame Bonifacio, also tried to win independence from the Spain. He won a couple of significant battles against Spanish troops, and became a local hero. During this period, Spain was also fighting against Cuba. Miguel Primo de Rivera, the Spanish governor, was worried that he lacked the power to fight against the national liberation movement. He contacted Aguinaldo and discussed terms. As a result, Aguinaldo received 800 thousand pesos and left the Philippines for Hong Kong, where he tried to buy arms.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, America intervened in the Cuban independence movement, and then declared war against Spain. Although the United States President McKinley and his officials did not know much about the Philippines, they saw its imperial value in annexation, as they had done

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<sup>1</sup> Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *The Fateful Years: Japan's Adventure in the Philippines, 1941-45* (vol.1), (Quezon City, Philippines: R.P. Garcia Publishing Co., 1965), 43-44.

<sup>2</sup> David J. Steinberg, *The Philippines: A Singular and a Plural Place* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), 63.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 64-65.

in Hawai'i, and sometimes justified their action by reference to the "white men's burden." Indeed, President McKinley announced that the American takeover in the Philippines was intended "to educate Filipinos, and uplift, civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them." Admiral Dewey accepted the surrender of the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, after which the US returned Aguinaldo to the Philippines, and allowed him to reorganize his government in central Luzon. The Americans and Aguinaldo's government secretly teamed up to fight against the remaining Spanish garrisons. The Americans spoke of their intended colonial policy as "benevolent assimilation, substituting the mild sway of justice for arbitrary rule." Although this was not compatible with Aguinaldo's policy, and in many cases led to Filipino resistance, he eventually allowed himself to be used by the Americans in the colonizing process.<sup>4</sup>

After the United States assumed control of the Philippines, Filipino people had to become accustomed to a restructuring of priorities, a reformulation of authorities, and to new types of acculturation and change. The Americans brought their language, English, as a medium of communication and linguistically and religiously educated the Filipinos. It is perhaps ironic that most Filipinos educated in colonial schools learned more about the geography of the United States than they did of their own country, or indeed, of any of their Asian neighbors, including Japan. The kind of prominence given to education under the American regime had never happened during the Spanish period. Accordingly, the Filipino elite, the so-called *ilustrado*, were impressed with the Americans' benevolence and enjoyed American style education and a wealthy lifestyle.<sup>5</sup> Also, many young American teachers known as Thomasites came to the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 74.

Philippines and shared their values. During this period, American mentoring and patronage and the promotion of “American values” helped ensure the Filipinos’ pro-Americanism.

This process was to cast a long shadow in terms of Philippine attitudes towards its Asian neighbor, Japan. When American acquired the Philippines in 1898 there was already a sizeable Japanese population. One American, Major L.W.V. Kennon, had investigated the efficiency of Japanese laborers by studying Japanese immigrant plantation workers in Hawai‘i and California. He then proposed to the Philippine Commission that Japanese workers be brought to the Philippines. Initially, the Philippine Commission opposed this proposal at first, but Kennon was persuasive and the Commission agreed. Kennon then contacted a Japanese agent to recruit laborers, most of whom came from Okinawa prefecture. Kennon also hired Japanese workers in Manila and in the provinces to work for the zigzag Benguet Road connecting the mountain resort of Baguio to lowland towns. This was subsequently known also called “Kennon Road.”<sup>6</sup>

The planning to construct the Benguet road started in early 1900s. The Americans produced a recruitment movie and began hiring Japanese workers to come to the Philippines. The first 125 Japanese workers arrived in the Philippines on October 19, 1903, and were followed by waves of Japanese laborers. During the peak time of the work on the Benguet Road, Kennon hired about 1,500 Japanese laborers (known as “Benguet immigrants”), so that the total number of Japanese laborers was more than 2,500.<sup>7</sup> However, more than 700 Japanese laborers died before the road was finished in 1905 because of epidemic diseases like malaria and dysentery, and accidents in the construction.<sup>8</sup> In the years after 1905, Japanese workers who migrated to the area around Baguio to look for better opportunities turned to farming, settling

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>7</sup> Shun Ohno, *Kankou Course de nai Philippines; Rekishi to Genzai, Nihon tonu Kankeishi* (Another Philippines; its history and now, relationship with Japan) (Tokyo, Japan: Kobunken, 1997), 171-172.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 172;

mostly in La Trinidad. Many Japanese brought the technique of highland agriculture to cultivate vegetables, such as tomatoes, eggplant, and cucumbers, from Japan. Most immigrants were men, and many of them intermarried into Filipina women, and assimilated into the Philippine societies.<sup>9</sup> As a result, before World War II, there were already large numbers of Japanese immigrants in the Philippines, and they increased until 1941, when they numbered about 30,000.<sup>10</sup> In Manila, and in other towns and villages, they owned small businesses, such as *halo-halo* parlor, *sari-sari* stores, shoe repair shops, barber shops, etc.; they also worked as gardeners or traveling salesmen.<sup>11</sup> Large numbers of Japanese immigrants worked as planters for abaca plantations in Davao, Mindanao.<sup>12</sup>

The relationship between Japan and the Philippines changed drastically with the outbreak of the Pacific war in 1941. Even prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, people in the Philippines felt that the war clouds are coming to their country. The majority, however, firmly believed that American bombers would defeat the Japanese. The Filipino people relied completely on the power of the US during the colonial period.<sup>13</sup> The Americans, in return, patronized the Filipinos as their “little brown brothers.” These strong ties with the Americans also affected Filipino relationships with the Japanese and led to long-lasting feelings of animosity towards them.

In December 8, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and declared war against the US. In contrast to other colonized countries in Southeast Asia, such as the Netherlands Indies, many Filipinos fought against the Japanese and suffered and died in all over the Philippines. Filipinos

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<sup>9</sup> Anna Christie Villarba-Torres, “Fas-Ang: Cross Cultural Currents in the Literature of Sinai C. Hamada” *Philippine Studies*, vol. 39, second quarter (1991), 135.

<sup>10</sup> Agoncillo, 41.

<sup>11</sup> Motoe Wada and Yoshiko Wakayama, “The Japanese Image,” in *Conversations with F. Sionil Jose*, ed. Miguel A. Bernad (Quezon City, Philippines: Vera-Reyes Inc, 1991), 112.

<sup>12</sup> Ohno, 281-282.

<sup>13</sup> Agoncillo, 41

resisted the Japanese because they felt that they would be independent soon and, indeed, had earlier been promised independence in 1946 by the Americans. Filipinos had been attacked and threatened by outsiders since the Spanish arrival and now their opportunity to become independent was jeopardized due to the attack by the Japanese. Thus, Filipino people felt they had to fight against the Japanese for their independence.<sup>14</sup>

General Douglas MacArthur, allied commander in the Philippines, evacuated Manila at the end of December 1941 and declared it to be an open city. He moved his headquarter to Corregidor island and awaited the arrival of the United States relief fleet. Then MacArthur and Filipino government officials, Quezon and Osmena, evacuated from the Philippines. At that time, MacArthur promised the Filipinos that he would return and liberate them from the Japanese.<sup>15</sup>

The Japanese army entered and occupied Manila on January 2 1942. Several politicians in Manila decided to collaborate with Japan, but many people there saw the Japanese as brutal conquerors, rather than liberators for the fellow Asians. The Japanese claimed that they came to the Philippines to liberate the Filipinos from the wicked white rulers and establish a true relationship with Filipinos, but actually the Japanese beat, abducted, and raped Filipino people, seized their property and livestock, tortured Filipinos and Americans during the *Bataan* Death March (when the Japanese forced captive soldiers to walk without any food and water), and so on. Thus, any positive images attached to the Japanese faded and were replaced by others that represented them as cruel enemies of the Filipinos.<sup>16</sup>

During this period, the anti-Japanese guerrilla movement began to spread all over the country, supported by many Filipinos.<sup>17</sup> These guerrillas were mostly peasants, including some

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

who had been involved in previous peasant movements, and their motivation to fight against the Japanese were similar to those that fueled their grievances toward their land owners. They were called the *Hukbalahap* (*Hukbo ng Bayan laban sa Hapon*/ People's Anti-Japanese Army).<sup>18</sup> They were organized to protect themselves and their families from the Japanese and to stop banditry.<sup>19</sup> People joined the guerrillas for various reasons, including poverty, misery, greed, adventure, political opportunity, etc. But their will fight against the Japanese was pure and genuine; to fight for a more democratic future.<sup>20</sup>

As mentioned before, Douglas MacArthur promised to relieve the Filipino people. Therefore, when he finally came back and landed ashore at Layte Island, claiming that “the guidance of divine God points the way”, the Filipinos were almost all moved to follow him.<sup>21</sup> Douglas MacArthur became the icon of Filipinos' pro-Americanism.

Nonetheless, the war and the Japanese invasion fundamentally undermined the harmonious relationship between the Philippines and their brother-like colonizer. Japan suggested a new sense of identity as Asians to the Filipinos. During the War, the Japanese tried to generate new pride as Asians among the Filipinos by using Tagalog and by glorifying indigenous institutions.<sup>22</sup> The Japanese were hated by the Filipinos because of their brutality, but ironically, this pride, or “pan-Asianism” planted by the Japanese became a core notion of the post-war decolonization process. Because of Japan's defeat, the Philippines finally became independent. The Americans, the older brother of the Filipinos, left when their little brown brother “grew up” and became independent. Because of the notion of reciprocity, “*utang-na-*

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<sup>18</sup> Benedict J. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1977), 67.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>20</sup> Steinberg, 103.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

*loob*,” most Filipinos expected the Americans’ to offer substantial post-war support for the Philippines but as time went on most Filipinos felt that the United States was quite insensitive to this expectation.<sup>23</sup>

The war created a bitter-sweet relationship between the Philippines and the United States. Even now, although the U.S. is a special region for most of the Filipinos, at the same time some, like Francisco Sionil Jose, harbor resentment about their unequal relationship with the US and their experience of colonization. On the other hand, the Japanese were still emotionally considered as an enemy in literature and films as well as popular thinking. Nonetheless, some people recognize (perhaps unwillingly) that the Japanese and their ideas and deeds during the war became a turning point for the Filipinos in thinking about their identity as Filipino nationals.

The following section lays out the main argument of my thesis and sets the stage for the discussion..

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid 108.

## **2. SETTING THE STAGE**

### ***Images of Japanese Men in Post-Colonial Philippine Literature***

As noted earlier, in this thesis I explore the images of Japanese men in post-colonial Philippine literature written in English and films, and analyze why and how these images were created and maintained by Filipinos in the context of the Philippine/Japan historical and social relationship.

The treatment of Japanese men in Philippine literature and films is interesting because to a large extent Japan and the Japanese, as enemies of America and its allies, were an “alien element” for most Filipinos, who had lived in a political and cultural order developed by the Spanish and Americans. There were no stereotypes or existing literary images on which Filipino writers and film directors could draw, so in a sense they were creating a new category, that of “Japanese men” whose characteristics were rather different from “Filipino men” or “American men.” I found that these images were divided into three main categories: 1) soldiers, 2) businessmen and 3) lovers. Of course, these images sometimes overlapped with each other. In introducing my argument, I will provide examples of each category from Philippine literature and films, and review the background, meaning and significance of each image.

The dominant image of Japanese men is that of brutal soldiers. Filipinos still believe that Japanese soldiers were very brutal and militaristic because many Filipinos themselves experienced violence by Japanese soldiers during the Pacific War. In the context of this image, and by researching Filipino war history as depicted in films and literature, I would like to consider the trauma to Filipinos caused by Japanese soldiers. Why were Japanese soldiers so brutal in the Philippines?

In exploring this question, I also tried to research the “reality” of Japanese soldiers in the Philippines from a Japanese perspective by analyzing two Japanese novelists and their works.

Using Japanese as well as Filipino novels permits me to compare the differences in their perspectives, backgrounds, and philosophies. There were many different types of Japanese soldiers, and they ranged from militaristically-educated officers to ignorant young peasants. All of them, supposedly, supported the Japanese militarism and imperialism during the War, and shared a collective solidarity because of their common wish to win. Because of this ambition and their collective belief (faith) in "Pan-Asianism," Japanese soldiers behaved in a very militaristic fashion. However, at times when their common assumptions were shattered by a greater power like the United States, or when they suffered from starvation and severe fatigue, then, their collective solidarity might be weakened and their group loyalty could be replaced by self-centered behavior. I believe this self-centered behavior was one of the causes for the disordered brutality of so many Japanese soldiers. At the same time, however, it could be argued that the Japanese were selectively brutal, since they treated other Southeast Asians more leniently and actively courted anti-colonial leaders, as in Burma and Indonesia. On the other hand, Christians like the Karens in Burma were likely to be victimized, and the treatment of the Chinese in Southeast Asia was especially bad because of the conflicts with Japan in China itself and the opposition of the Chinese Communist Party. The Filipinos were Christian, there was not a strong anti-colonial nationalist group, and the Japanese faced continual harassment from left-wing guerilla groups.

From the Filipino perspective, it seems evident that Japanese soldiers were awkward aliens who intruded into a cosmos that had been shaped by their indigenous lifestyles, with some elements added by the Spanish and Americans. Beside the trauma caused by the brutality of the Japanese, I assume that the other reason why Filipino people have very negative images toward the Japanese is because of differing notions of "Asia." On the one hand, "Pan-Asianism" had

sentimental and nationalistic resonances for the Japanese during this period; on the other, people in the Philippines did not have a strong emotional attachment to Asia, especially around the time when war broke out. As a consequence, this slogan had little appeal

As time passed and memories of the war faded somewhat, the images of Japanese men in Philippine literature gradually shifted from “brutal soldiers” to “rich businessmen.” Japan’s defeat and Emperor Hirohito’s surrender to the U.S. and its allies was definitely a turning point for the Japanese citizenry and, after that, its imperialism was reformed by the U.S. in the name of democracy. Thus, post-war Japan focused on economic progress in an effort to regain its power and Japanese businessmen appear in Philippine literature as alternative images to brutal soldiers.

Although there are many images of Japanese men as lovers in Philippine literature, most of these are closely associated with economic activities and the exercise of power. Love, a universal sentiment is a very popular literary theme. In the Philippine literature, however, “lust” is the major characteristic of Japanese lovers toward Filipina women, and it is often associated with money. As I will suggest later, underlying this tendency is the part played by Filipino politics that exports workers to other countries as OCWs (Overseas Contract Workers), at the same time that Japan’s economic development is reaching all over Asia.

What do I discover through these images? It is assumed that the most significant element of post-colonial Philippine literature is a complex mixture of “nationalistic feelings as Filipinos” and passive or hidden “pro-Americanism,” an inevitable result of their longtime struggle as well as feelings of security within the systems created by the United States and earlier, by Spain, as well. In the Philippines, American influences exist everywhere and people still retain bitter-sweet, ambivalent feelings toward their former colonizer and its people. However, Japan did not have any experience of colonization by outsiders before the War. Thus, these two countries came

from totally different starting points. Japan's pan-Asianism was largely irrelevant to the feelings of Filipino people, while the Japanese blindly believed that their mission was to liberate Asian countries from arrogant Western powers.

I now introduce the sources I used, the stories, authors, and background of the novels, short stories and films. Then, I will analyze the images of Japanese men by using these sources. Finally, I will consider why Filipinos are so preoccupied by these images even now, more than sixty years after the war.

### **3. SOURCES: AN INTERVIEW, NOVELS, SHORT STORIES, AND FILMS**

#### *Interview with F. Sionil Jose*

F. Sionil Jose, a national artist of the Philippines is a most important source for understanding Philippine-Japan relations. I discuss my interview with him and refer to selections from his essays and critiques. I refer first to him because I believe that Sionil Jose has the most profound and honest view toward the Japanese, and is one of very few Filipino novelists who has seriously and objectively faced the roots of the Philippines- Japan relationship. I also believe that he is the leading novelist of Filipino post-colonial literature and that he represents Filipino intellectuals who have cosmopolitan views. For these reasons I use his work as a central source for my thesis.

In July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006, I had an opportunity to interview F. Sionil Jose in Solidaridad Bookstore that he owns in Ermita, Manila. Professor Ruth Mabanglo, one of my advisors of University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and herself a poet, introduced us.

Sionil Jose was selected as the Filipino national artist in 2001 because of his long time contribution to the world of Filipino literature. He wrote many novels which contain various images of Japanese men, and has visited Japan many times since the war. He has traveled not only to Japan; but has been traveling all over the world and built intimate friendships with various novelists, poets, journalists, and scholars in many countries. For instance, in *Conversation with F. Sionil Jose*,<sup>24</sup> a compilation of his interviews with various writers and scholars, he talks to Michael P. Onorato, a professor of Southeast Asian history at the California State University, Fullerton, Muhammad Haji Salleh, head of the department of Malay Letters of the National University of Malaysia, Roger J. Bresnahan, a professor in the Department of American Thought and Languages at the Michigan State University at East Lansing, Igor

<sup>24</sup> Miguel A. Bernad et al. *Conversation with F. Sionil Jose* (Quezon City, Philippines: Vera-Reyes Inc., 1991)

Podeberezsky, a Russian philologist, Motoe Terami Wada, a Japanese scholar in University of the Philippines, Yoshiko Wakayama, program officer of the Toyota foundation in Tokyo, Japan, Mochtar Lubis, an Indonesian writer, Sulak Sivalaska, a Thai social critic, Edwin Thumboo, a Singapore poet and professor at the National University of Singapore, Laurence D. Stifel, a scientist in Nigeria, and Mauro R. Avena, a Filipino writer and critic. These people are from various regions, Southeast Asia, Japan, Russia, the U.S. and Africa: Sionil Jose is a cosmopolitan who has a strong perception of a globalized world.

In his latest essay *Soba Senbei and Sibuya*,<sup>25</sup> Sionil Jose writes about his trips to Japan, the first in 1955 and the most recent in 1999. He stayed in Tokyo and Kyoto for a couple of months each and associated with many Japanese people, writers, critics, scholars, and so on. Through these trips, he cultivated his understanding of the Japanese, contemplated and analyzed his ambivalent feelings toward the Japanese, and towards the post-colonial relationship between the Philippines and Japan.

The following excerpt from *Soba, Senbei and Shibuya* provides a clear indication of Sionil Jose's post-war feelings:

... The fact is whenever I have a Japanese visitor, I always take him to Fort Santiago, to the American Cemetery and to Intramuros where the reminders of World war II are ever fresh. I do this not with malice or ill will; I do this because I feel deeply about the past and the continuum that we must build; without knowledge of the past, we are doomed to repeat its tragedies.

My Japanese friends ask me if I am bitter: there are profuse apologies. Once in a taxi in Shinjuku, the cab driver – upon accepting our tip – said in perfect Tagalog, “Thank you and I hope you have a good time.”

I wanted to know more about him but he seemed in a hurry to have and his smile was both apologetic and warm. He was middle-aged and I could only conclude that he, perhaps, had lived in the Philippines once and could even have been a soldier in the Occupation army.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> F. Sionil Jose, *Soba Senbei and Sibuya: A Memoir of Post-war Japan* (Manila, Philippines: Solidaridad Publishing House, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

Like his friends who ask Sionil Jose if he is bitter, my feelings toward the Philippines, even though I was born long after the War, have been moving back and forth. I have affection for many Filipino friends and teachers whom I met in school and other organizations, and the many beautiful literary works and films. Yet I encountered some tough realities in the Philippines, especially in Manila, such as poverty, the gap between the rich and the poor, endless traffic, etc. Coming from Kansai International Airport in Osaka, Japan, I flew over the approach to Manila. In July, 2006, I finally landed in the Philippines where many beautiful literary works were born, and which I was very excited to research. The most important and proudest moment of this trip was my interview with Mr. Francisco Sionil Jose.<sup>27</sup>

Francisco Sionil Jose has been called a Philippine national treasure. Born on December 4, 1924 in Rosales, Philippines, as a son of Antonio Jose, an Aglipayan minister, and Sofia Sionil, he worked as a farm laborer from a young age to support his family. He was introduced to literature in public school (Rosales elementary school and Far Eastern University) and later at the University of Santo Tomas (UST), where he enrolled after World War II

At the UST, Sionil Jose was editor-in-chief of the university paper, *The Varsitarian*, and this became the first step in his brilliant career as a journalist. While working in Manila, he secretly started writing short stories and eventually novels. He founded the Philippine branch of PEN, an international organization of poets, playwrights, and novelists, in the late fifties. Then, in 1965 he started his own bookstore and publishing house *Solidaridad* in Manila with his wife, and a year later he began publishing *Solidarity*, a journal of current affairs, ideas, and arts, which is still going strong today.

In 1962 he published his first novel *The Pretenders*. Today his publications include ten novels, five books of short stories, and a book of verse. In fact, he is the most translated Filipino

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<sup>27</sup> Prof. Ruth Mabanglo set up this interview for me.

author of fiction. He has been awarded numerous fellowships and awards, the most notable being the 1980 *Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication Arts*, the most prestigious award of its kind in Asia. He has been a Filipino national artist for literature since 2001.<sup>28</sup> Sionil Jose's works now are translated into 24 languages.<sup>29</sup>

When I went to see F. Sionil Jose, he was sitting in his office on the third floor of the Solidaridad Bookstore in Ermita. In his latest essay, *Soba Senbei and Shibuya* (2000), he mentions his interest in Japan and the Japanese-Filipino relationship after the war. I therefore started my interview by asking about his own images of Japan and the Japanese. Sionil Jose had other memories of the Japanese besides that of soldiers. He told me he remembered the traders or merchants who came regularly to a store in Rosales, his hometown in northern Luzon, to stock bubble gum, school supplies, and dolls. In addition, he saw many Japanese who owned small shops and refreshment parlors in Manila.<sup>30</sup> His first war time encounter with the Japanese was in 1942 in Rosales. Sionil Jose was a teenager at that time, and watched the Japanese soldiers from a distance.

Sionil Jose wrote about encounters with the Japanese in his books. His image of Japanese soldiers for him was like part of a horror story; for the teenagers of Rosales, they were a completely terrifying enemy. The younger women of Rosales put grime on their faces so that they would not be attracted and raped by the Japanese soldiers, while the younger men set up a defense line along the Agno River with their bolos.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> R.C. Lucero and M. Plan, "Francisco Sionil Jose" *The National Artists for Literature* (University of the Philippines, Diliman, 2005) < <http://www.panitikan.com.ph/nationalartistsforliterature/fsjose.htm> > (December 1, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Gonzales, "F. Sionil Jose's Language of Fiction: Setting the Standards for a Philippine Variety of English," in *Frankie Sionil Jose, a Tribute*, ed. Edwin Thumboo (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International, 2005), 83.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Personal interview by Akiko Mori, July 12<sup>th</sup> at Solidaridad Bookstore, Manila, Philippines.

After the War, he became a journalist and met numerous Japanese through his work. He visited Japan many times, and built up personal and human relationships with many Japanese scholars, journalists and novelists. Through his visits, he was impressed with the advanced technology and craftsmanship of Japan, and especially enjoyed his trips to various regions in Japan.<sup>32</sup> He was particularly impressed with Japanese craftsmanship, which was so different from the cheap trade products he had encountered at home. He wrote about this contrast in his novel *Ermita* (1988), a fiction novel about life adventure of Ermita, a prostitute whose father is a Japanese soldier who raped her mother. This excerpt is an impression of Japan by a character, Joselito, a Filipino elite businessman, and uncle of Ermita:

...And as for the Japanese, they were defeated – which was what it should be. There prewar manufactures were shoddy, their technology imitative. As an intelligence officer, he had often wondered how they could wage war for so long and manage as they did to build occasional marvels like the Zero fighter, or a first-rate navy.

Then, on his first visit to Japan, he witnessed those beautiful cigarette lighters manufactured in cubbyholes. He saw the supreme craftsmanship of the Japanese artisan, though the zaibatsus were dismantled, he was absolutely certain the Japanese would soon recover and be the great nation they had every right to be...<sup>33</sup>

In an earlier interview with Japanese scholars, Motoe Terami Wada and Yoshiko

Wakayama, Sionil Jose mentions his motivation for including this episode in *Ermita*:

Having studied a little bit of history, I already knew what Japanese power was and what it could be. I mention this in *Ermita*. That was when I first got to appreciate Japanese craftsmanship and creativity. I visited a very small shop where they manufactured beautiful cigarette lighters. My God, to produce all these things in such a small place, that really gave me a proper perspective of Japan. Then, of course, I saw the *mingei*<sup>34</sup>. Even from way, way back, I was already interested in folk crafts. Remember, this was in the '50s. Early enough, I already understood how Japanese society has prospered.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> F Sionil Jose, *Ermita* (Manila, Philippines: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1988), 39.

<sup>34</sup> Japanese folk craft

<sup>35</sup> Wada and Wakayama, 115.

With his critical and cosmopolitan perspectives, Sionil Jose's experiences meant that he acquired alternative views of Japan and its people. Nonetheless, despite his new admiration, he mentions that he still has some ambivalent feelings toward the Japanese soldiers whom he met when he was young.<sup>36</sup>

Then, I asked him about the American presence in the Philippines. According to Sionil Jose, most Filipinos (including himself) were raised under the strong influence of invincible America; he therefore wondered why it was that such a small country like Japan could challenge such a strong power. This question triggered his strong interest toward Japan and its people.<sup>37</sup>

Although many Filipino people undoubtedly retain their pro-Americanism, Sionil Jose (like a number of intellectuals) has more complicated, critical perspectives toward the American influence in the Philippines. He mentions that Filipinos often have been harsh in their criticism of the American presence in the Philippines because it has penetrated and discourages the growth of Filipino national identity. Moreover, American influence has molded the relationship between two nations to be like a teacher-pupil relationship. Sionil Jose also mentioned that Filipinos, however, have been obsessed with the American presence and as a result have ignored other influences like that of Japan, which operated as a shackle to erode Philippine independence around the wartime.<sup>38</sup>

Before World war II, Japan was internationally regarded as a relatively minor Asian country despite its victory over Russia in 1904, but it challenged American power in the Philippines. Sionil Jose mentioned that since most Filipinos were raised with the myth of American invincibility, what is "Asia" for them? He answered this question by explaining that apart from Mindanao, the Philippines was little influenced by the main religions of Asia,

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<sup>36</sup> Personal interview by Akiko Mori.

<sup>37</sup> Personal interview by Akiko Mori.

<sup>38</sup> Jose, *Soba Senbei and Shibuya*, 24-25.

Buddhism, Confucianism and Islam. Instead, they had adopted the Catholicism brought by the Spanish, mixed it with their indigenous practices and developed their folk Catholicism. That is why Filipino people do not have a strong sense that they are Asian.<sup>39</sup> This difference produced a “gap” between the Japanese and Filipinos, and helped foster different levels of perception of their identity, where they belong to, or their future direction. This is perhaps the difference between a colonized country and a country that is never colonized by outside powers.

My next question was about the language in which Sionil Jose writes his novels, short stories and essays. All of his works are written in English instead of his native language, Ilokano,<sup>40</sup> or Tagalog, the Filipino national language.

Sionil Jose answered that he writes in English rather than in Tagalog or Ilokano to appeal to a wider range of readers.<sup>41</sup> Supporting this, one can cite Sionil Jose’s conversation with a Malaysian scholar, Muhammad Haji Salleh, who also writes in both English and Malay. They are talking about language usage as Asian writers;

F. Sionil Jose (FSJ): ... There must be something wrong somewhere because I can still write in Ilokano if I tried to, except that I don’t write in Ilokano because I can’t make a living out of it.

Muhammad Haji Salleh (MHS): Are you writing in Tagalog?

FSJ: No, it’s too late. Maybe, if I were younger. And besides, I’m convince that English will stay in my country for a long time – as a cultural language, a literary language, the language of commerce and government. But we are going into the national language now. Maybe there is a reason why Malays do not regard the non-Malay languages as part of Malaysian who didn’t grow up in the Malay tradition, because after all, you are a multicultural society. I’m speaking of the Tamils and the Chinese. If there’s any criticism at all which I will level at your country’s language policy, it is the fact that these literatures are not considered national literatures.

MHS: This problem has been discussed for quite a while now, it has a history...<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Personal interview by Akiko Mori.

<sup>40</sup> One of the main Filipino languages mostly used in northern Luzon

<sup>41</sup> Personal interview by Akiko Mori.

<sup>42</sup> Muhammad Haji Salleh, “The Writer as Asian,” in *Conversation with F. Sionil Jose*, ed. Miguel A. Bernad (Quezon City, Philippines: Vera-Reyes Inc, 1991), 49.

The first language of Sionil Jose is Ilokano, but he was educated in English. For him, writing in English is more natural than using Tagalog, even though it is the Filipino national language. However, his usage of English is full of originality, localized with a lot of Filipino phrases, including untranslated Spanish phrases. English usage is a significant topic in Philippine post-colonial studies. Studying or using English has been politically and culturally inevitable in Filipino post colonial literature. However, this literature in English is localized with their native languages, such as Tagalog, Ilokano, etc. and Spanish, which then intersect with each other. Syncreticism is a more appropriate for the language, religion, and culture of the Philippines as a colonized country, rather than an essentialism that aims to maintain a pure culture. Thus, English localization in Filipino is a more appropriate form to explain what is essentially a post-colonial culture.<sup>43</sup>

In his own words, Sionil Jose also mentions the localization of English;

...There's a word for that in Ilokano which you cannot find in English...Of course, there is also the contention that when you write in your own language you can communicate with your countrymen. Fortunately, there are many people now in this country who can read English. But I think what has happened is that we have developed a kind of syntax in English that is neither American English nor British English, in the same way that some of these Indian writers have developed a strain of English that is neither British nor American but Indian. And I think that in the future, as long as we keep developing these skills, we will eventually develop a Philippine literature in English that is as different from American English as American writing is from British...<sup>44</sup>

The interview with F. Sionil Jose was very intimate and amiable. However, when I finally ask him to talk about his own memories of Japanese soldiers during World War II and the brutality he may have witnessed, Sionil Jose briefly kept silent and smiled, "Yes, now, I have a

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<sup>43</sup> Consolacion R. Alaras, "The Concept of English Studies in the Philippines," in *Philippine Post-Colonial Studies* ed. Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo and Priscelina Patajo-Legasto (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippine Press, 1993), 17-24.

<sup>44</sup> Roger J. Bresnahan, "Memory and the Writer," in *Conversation with F. Sionil Jose*, ed. Miguel A. Bernad (Quezon City, Philippines: Vera-Reyes Inc, 1991), 69.

lot of Japanese friends, and I have a strong interest toward Japan, but my experience with Japanese soldiers...I do not want to remember it.”<sup>45</sup> The Japanese soldiers were particularly harsh towards Filipinos during World War II, but Sionil Jose calmly analyzed the post-war Philippine-Japan relationship, and mentions;

I have recalled WW2 several times and I intend it to be a recurrent theme underlying Philippine-Japanese relations. I would like to assure my Japanese acquaintances, however, that although Japan lost WW2, there are certain victories that Japan won not only for herself but for all the peoples of Asia. Earlier, in 1905, when she defeated Russia, she showed how an Asian country can modernize after centuries of isolation and feudalism.

In WW2, when she took on the United States in a test of strength, Japan demolished once and for all the myth of white Superiority and by this single act banished one of the most profound impediments to Asian modernization: our being beholden to the West, our nagging feelings of inadequacy before the White Man.

This, to me, is the beginning of growth, the killing of the Western Father, the realization that, indeed, here in Asia it is possible for men of vision to create great societies.<sup>46</sup>

At the end of the interview, he suggested that I read his *Ermita*, which contains strong images of Japanese men, and Filipino people’s deep emotion toward the Japanese. Immediately after that, I bought *Ermita* at Solidaridad. After reading it, I also decided to use this novel as one of the main sources for my thesis.

### ***Filipino Sources: Novels and Short Stories***

This section provides further details about the novels and short stories that I used for this thesis. To locate images of Japanese men, I explore the following novels, as well as a short story and a poem: *Without Seeing the Dawn* by Stevan Javellana, *When the Rainbow Goddess Wept* (1991)<sup>47</sup> by Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, *When Invaders Come* (1964)<sup>48</sup> by Augusto H. Piedad,

<sup>45</sup> Personal interview by Akiko Mori.

<sup>46</sup> Jose, *Soba Senbei and Shibuya* (2000), 33.

<sup>47</sup> Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, *When the Rainbow Goddess Wept* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1991)

*This Barangay* (1954)<sup>49</sup> by Juan C. Laya, *More than Conquerors* (1964)<sup>50</sup> By Edilberto K. Tiempo, *When the Elephants Dance* (2002)<sup>51</sup> by Tess Uriza Holthe, *Ben Singkol* (2001)<sup>52</sup>, *Ermita* (1988), *Viajero* (1993)<sup>53</sup>, and *Gagamba* (1991)<sup>54</sup> by F. Sionil Jose, “*Tanabata’s Wife*” (1975)<sup>55</sup> and *Balada ni Lola Amonita* (2000)<sup>56</sup> by Elynia S. Mabanglo.

As noted earlier, F. Sionil Jose, the most important author in this list, was born before the War but his first novel was not published until 1962 because he was working as a journalist. *Ermita*, *Gagamba*, *Viajero*, and *Ben Singkol* were written in the 1980s, 90s and 2000s. *Viajero* is a people’s story that continues through Filipino history, but others are stories about people in Manila, and many characters in them are highly educated, unlike other novels about villagers. *Ermita* will be my primary focus because it represents the voices of urban and well-educated, modern Filipinos. In addition to *Ermita*, Stevan Javellana’s *Without Seeing the Dawn* has been selected as one of the main novels for discussion because it takes place in a rural setting, and the peasants are actually representative of the common Filipino in the post-war era. Furthermore, this novel was written in 1956, just ten years after the War, which suggests that Javellana directly experienced the Japanese attack and that the depictions about the Japanese in this novel are based on real experiences.

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<sup>48</sup> Augusto H. Piedad, *When Invaders Come* (Manila, Philippines: Bookmark, 1964)

<sup>49</sup> Juan C. Laya, *This Barangay* (Manila, Philippines: Inang Wika Publishing, 1954)

<sup>50</sup> Edilberto K. Tiempo, *More than Conquerors* (Manila, Philippines: Pedro B. Ayuda & Company, 1964)

<sup>51</sup> Tess Uriza Holthe, *When the Elephants Dance* (New York: Crown, 2002)

<sup>52</sup> F. Sionil Jose, *Ben Singkol, a Novel* (Manila, Philippines: Solidaridad Publishing House, 2001)

<sup>53</sup> F. Sionil Jose, *Viajero* (Manila, Philippines: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1993)

<sup>54</sup> F. Sionil Jose, *Gagamba, the Spider Man* (Manila, Philippines: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1991)

<sup>55</sup> Sinai C. Hamada, “*Tanabata’s Wife*” in *Collected Short Stories* (Baguio, Philippines: Baguio Printing & Publishing Company, 1975)

<sup>56</sup> Elynia S. Mabanglo, *Balada ni Lola Amonita*, in *Babaylan*, ed. Nick Carbo and Eileen Tabios (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2000), 305-313.

Stevan Javellana was born in San Mateo, Rizal, Philippines in 1918. He was a former guerrilla, and fought against the Japanese during the War.<sup>57</sup> This is his only novel and very little information about him or his writing is available. However, I believe that this work is definitely one of the historical masterpieces of post-war Philippine literature because Javellana depicts villagers, guerrillas, and the Japanese soldiers in a very calm and controlled manner, and his background as a guerrilla adds a profound reality.

*When the Rainbow Goddess Wept*, by Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, tells the story of Yvonne, a nine-year old girl, and her family's survival during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. Her father joins the resistance movement and the family decides to move out of their upper-class home in Udec, Mindanao to a guerrilla camp in the jungles. Brainard is a Filipina author who is born in Cebu, but is currently living in the United States. She was born in 1947; therefore, she did not directly experience the Japanese soldiers' violent deeds as did Stevan Javellana.

*When Invaders Came* by Augusto H. Piedad, *This Barangay* by Juan C. Laya, *More than Conquerors* by Edilberto K. Tiempo, and *When the Elephants Dance* by Tess Uriza Holthe are all novels written in a rather similar setting relating the Japanese invasion of rural areas and Japanese soldiers' brutal acts toward the innocent villagers. As Stevan Javellana mentions in his author's note in *Without Seeing the Dawn*, innocent villagers were representatives of the Philippines during the war period,<sup>58</sup> so that, this setting is common. But, one notable thing about these works is the years in which they were published. About fifty years separates *This Barangay* (1954) and *When the Elephants Dance* (2002). This suggests that the Japanese Occupation and the brutality of Japanese soldiers is still a telling theme in Philippine literature, even in 2000s.

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<sup>57</sup> Stevan Javellana, *Without Seeing the Dawn* (Quezon City, Philippines: Alemar-Phoenix Publishing House, Inc, 1976).

<sup>58</sup> Javellana, author's note.

Tess Uriza Holthe is a Filipina-American writer from San Francisco. *When the Elephants Dance*, her first novel is based on her father's experience in the Philippines during the War. In the author's note, she wrote "Both of my parents and their families experienced so much during the war,"<sup>59</sup> and "researching this time period for the backdrop of my novel was like opening a treasure trove of memories. The images and voices of the people in the accounts and personal interviews that I have read paralleled many of the stories I heard growing up."<sup>60</sup> Thus, this novel is based on the memories of older Filipino generations, and like Holthe, younger generations who are born in 1970s or later, now, rediscover and relive them as their parents' agony and hate.<sup>61</sup>

"*Tanabata's Wife*" is a short story about Tanabata, a Japanese immigrant who settled in the Cordillera region of northern Luzon, and his wife Fas-Ang, a tribal woman. Sinai C. Hamada is himself a mestizo, the son of a Japanese man and Filipina woman from one of the mountain tribes. This short story offers a realistic description of the lifestyle of a Japanese immigrant in the Philippines, and a rather different perspective of the relationship between the Japanese and Filipinos. Hamada is not considered to be in the mainstream of Filipino literature, but this is a significant source in considering the images of Japanese outside the realm of the military.

*Balada ni Lola Amonita* by Elynia S. Mabanglo is a poem about a former comfort woman who was forced to work as a sex slave for the Japanese soldiers. This work was first written in Tagalog, and then translated into English. Elynia S. Mabanglo is a professor of Filipino language

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<sup>59</sup> Holthe, author's note.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> I believe that Holthe tries to perpetuate her ancestors' agony and hate toward the Japanese as an American-born Filipina.

and literature in University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and also one of my advisors. This work was inspired by the story of a Filipino comfort woman who spoke at a forum in Hawai'i in 1992.<sup>62</sup>

### *Filipino Sources: Films*

Elynia S. Mabanglo's *Balada ni Lola Amonita* can be linked to a film, *Markova: Comfort Gay* (2000)<sup>63</sup> directed by Gil M. Portes. This film is based on the story of Walterina Markova, a gay man who was forced to work as a 'comfort man' by the Japanese during the War. The director, Gil M. Portes is an independent filmmaker whose films are unfortunately rarely distributed in the United States, although they are sometimes seen at film festivals in Europe and Asia. Because he challenges some historical taboos and holds socialist views, Portes is often termed the Filipino Oliver Stone. Actually, I do not think Oliver Stone is considered to be a socialist, but some his creation of many historical masterpieces, such as *Platoon*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *World Trade Center*, etc. does demonstrate an alternative and humane viewpoint..

*Comfort Women: a Cry for Justice* (1994),<sup>64</sup> directed by Celso Ad Castillo is another film about Filipina comfort women during the war period. It is a story of young village women who are forced to become sex slaves for Japanese Imperial Army soldiers. It depicts barbaric acts of the soldiers and the desperate resistance of the Filipino people. This is especially evident in the last scene, when the comfort women and resistance guerrillas join together to attack the Japanese.

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<sup>62</sup> Mabanglo, 309.

<sup>63</sup> *Markova: Comfort Gay*, Prod. Rodolfo Quizon, Dir. Gil Portes, 97 minutes., Vagrant Films, 2000, DVD.

<sup>64</sup> *Comfort Women: a Cry for Justice*, Prod. Rodelo Garcia Poltan, Alice "Lissa" Poltan, Joel Torre, Ricard Cepeda, Shirley Tesoro, Sharmain Aranaiz, Dir. Celso Ad Castillo, Regal Home Entertainment, 1994, V

I also analyze Gil M. Portes' work, *Gatas sa Dibdib ng Kaaway*, a sad love story of the affair between a Japanese captain and a Filipina. In this film Portes challenges the social taboo that insisted a Filipina could not have an intimate relationship with her *kaaway* (enemy). Like *Markova*, this film contains the image of Japanese men as brutal soldiers but, at the same time, there are alternative images, like those that depict the Japanese captain as a businessman and lover.

*Yamashita: the Tiger's Treasure* (2002)<sup>65</sup> is a story of an old man who as a youth had been involved in burying the legendary "Yamashita's treasure," allegedly a huge amount of gold that the Japanese looted and hid in the Philippines during the War. The old man and his teenage grandson emigrate from the Philippines to the United States. When the old man is kidnapped in America and taken to the Philippines, his grandson goes back to Manila in order to find the hidden treasure. But the grandson and his friends are caught by a former Japanese military officer, Noguchi, now a crime syndicate boss, who is also looking for the loot. In this film, flashbacks to World War II show the brutality of Japanese soldier, while Noguchi is depicted a wealthy but unethical businessman, and essentially a yakuza.

The final film I analyze is *Japayuki: Maricris Sioson Story* (1993) directed by Joey Romero and based on the true story of Maricris Sioson, a Filipina entertainer who was killed by a Japanese yakuza.<sup>66</sup> This film contains a strong image of Japanese as businessmen as well as lovers, but also points up the unequal relationship between Japan and the Philippines during the 1980s and 1990s, when Japan's economy was still very strong.

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<sup>65</sup> *Yamashita: the Tiger's Treasure*, Prod. Unknown, Dir. Chito S Rono, Regal Home Entertainment, 2002, DVD

<sup>66</sup> *Maricris Sioson Story – Japayuki*, Prod. JoAnn Cabalda Banaga and Lily Y. Monteverde, dir. Joey Romero, Regal Home Entertainment, Video recording.

*Japanese Sources: Two Novels*

When I began research for this thesis, I assumed that the main reason for Filipino preoccupation with negative images of the Japanese was caused by memories of the brutality of Japanese soldiers. In trying to understand the cultural reasons that might explain what are often termed atrocities, I would like to introduce two memorable Japanese novelists and their works. They are particularly relevant to this thesis because both had a relationship with F. Sionil Jose, who wrote about them in his essay, *Soba, Senbei and Shibuya*.

The first is Mishima Yukio,<sup>67</sup> who himself represented “samurai spirit” in the post-war Japan. I refer particularly to his short story “Patriotism,” a story of the double suicide of Lieutenant Takayama and his wife, in order to consider what is an “honorable death” for the Japanese. If Mishima is on the right, the second author, Ooka Shohei, is positioned slightly left of middle. While Mishima was a very militaristic idealist, Ooka was a calm, critical realist. Ooka enlisted as a soldier and was stationed in the Philippines. He was a businessman, translator, and critique of French literature, and lived far from the militaristic world inhabited by Mishima. Ironically, Mishima did not go to the Philippines to fight, but Ooka did.

In the Philippines, Ooka experienced severe disease and chronic starvation and witnessed many egoistical acts by soldiers. Drawing on his unique experiences, he wrote a non-fiction work, *Taken Captive*, and another fictional work, *Fires on the Plain*. In this thesis I have made use of the latter work in order to discover something of the reasons behind Japanese egoism and the causes of their brutality and to think about the conceptual gap between Japanese and Filipinos in their understanding of the military action.

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<sup>67</sup> I will use the Japanese traditional name order for Japanese people, with the family name followed by the first name.

#### **4. IMAGES OF JAPANESE MEN**

##### ***Brutal Soldiers***

Because the most prevailing image of Japanese men among Filipino people is probably that of brutal soldier, individuals themselves are rarely represented with a personal identity. Instead, they are seen simply as members of a collective or group that happens to have one special occupation with certain characteristics. These could be exemplified by “positive” attributes, such as patriotism, courage, and a sense of duty, or negative ones, like brutality, heartlessness, violence, and so on. Since each Japanese soldier in the Philippines was recognized as being “one of them” by Filipinos, the personal character of each soldier was hidden behind their “realistic” collective presence.

Such perceptions, prevalent in wartime, have (perhaps predictably) flowed over into literature. In consequence, many episodes of violence, torture, and rape by brutal Japanese soldiers are depicted in Filipino novels, short stories, and films. Most of them, however, do not provide the personal information or background of individual soldiers such as name, title, hometown or make any serious attempt to explore their personalities. By contrast, war novels written by Japanese that are staged in the Philippines or other Asian-Pacific regions almost invariably depict the personal aspects of individual Japanese soldiers. Japanese novelists recognize Japanese soldiers as insiders, and of course, Filipino authors view them as outsiders. Thus, literature is always subjective, and the images of one subject are easily changeable depending on the authors’ position and whether the characters are seen as insiders or outsiders, enemies or allies.

I analyze the images of Japanese men in Philippine novels with a central focus on two works. The first, *Without Seeing the Dawn*, is the story of a typical Filipino peasant, Carding,

and his village, and thus represents a rural perspective toward the Japanese. Carding's principles in life are simple; just to work hard, and love his family and friends. The narrative is divided into two parts: Book 1, "Day" and Book 2, "Night." In Book I, Javellana deliberately depicts Carding, the main character, and his life as a farmer. This part provides an affectionate account of the small pleasures of Carding and the village people, their traditional courtships, strong family ties, the laughter of children, etc. In his author's note, Javellana mentions that the characters of this story are unsophisticated folk who think and speak in a straightforward manner and who live close to soil. When they love, they love wholeheartedly but also humbly; by the same token, their hates are deep and undying. Javellana mentions that these characters represent true Filipino values.<sup>68</sup> Accordingly, Javellana's writing style is direct, almost "folksy," with numerous local (mostly Tagalog) terms and phrases. However, this simple style, in fact, emphasizes the novel's tragic ending, and makes it a very realistic story.

In contrast to Book 1, the second part, "Night," is dark and tense. It starts with a night when disaster comes to Carding's village, as well as to other villages; the coming of Japanese soldiers. It tells of death in his village, the suffering of survivors, and their hatred toward the Japanese. Javellana says that this is not the story of soldiers or battles, but the story of a "son of misfortune," a farmer-turned-soldier who had to fight against enemies for his barrio and for his own pride. Thus, this is the story of one farmer's misfortunate life and death.<sup>69</sup>

*Without Seeing the Dawn* provides very forceful images of Japanese soldiers, as the following excerpt shows:

"Listen" he said, lowering his voice, but the irony in it was like a whiplash. "Listen all of you. I will tell you what kind of enemy we have. Tatay, do you remember the toy man you once bought for Nongnong? You turned the key and the toy man would walk on and on until the spring was all unwound. Then the toy man would stop and fall. Well, the

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<sup>68</sup> Javellana, in author's note.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

Japanese are like that. They move on and on until a bullet stops them. They are not like human beings at all...<sup>70</sup>

In this and other novels the most prominent emotions felt in relation to the Japanese could be described as “agony and anger” and a corresponding hatred. Stemming from the Japanese soldiers’ wartime brutality – the massacres, tortures, rapes – these emotions are very evident in the fear-inspiring representations of Japanese soldiers. Once again I quote from *Before Seeing the Dawn*:

“What is it, Bastian?” she whispered, trembling.

“The Japanese!” he choked with a groan.

“Mother of God!” she whimpered.

Already the Japanese soldiers were crowding at the foot of the stairs and one of them was pounding loudly at the door with the butt of his rifle. The terror-stricken mother roused Alicia and Poncing as Tatay Bastian pulled open the door. A weak ray of moonlight streamed in through the open doorway which was blocked by the huge figure of Japanese soldier.

“Good evening,” Tatay Bastian murmured weakly.

The Japanese brushed him aside roughly and stepped into the house.

“Light!” he growled in the dialect, His voice, deep and harsh, almost prostrated the two women and the boy with fear...

...The eyes of the Japanese corporal gleamed when he saw the beautiful daughter. He glanced negligently at her mother, then fixed a scowl upon Poncing.

“Soldier,” said the Japanese, pointing at the trembling boy. “Indian”

“No! No!” Nanay Tona cried, hugging her son closer to her breast. “He is too young. He is only sixteen years old. I tell you he is not a soldier.”

Six other Japanese came up from behind the first one, their bayonet points catching wicked gleams from the light. Without a word they snatched the boy from his mother’s embrace...<sup>71</sup>

Javellana created the character of Carding as an idealistic farmer, strong, handsome, and loveable. He marries Lucing, a charming young girl in the same village, and has a baby boy. Their humble but happy life is suddenly disrupted when the Japanese come. Carding is recruited and trained as a soldier at the concentration camp. After a while, when he comes back to his village, he notices that the situation has changed and that the atmosphere is different:

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>71</sup> Javellana, 228-229.

... "Look at Carding's beard. He looks like an old man with it, older than Tatay, no?" "He does not," Nongnong said, narrowing his eyes and studying Carding's face. After a while the boy said, "He looks like a Japanese, that bearded Japanese from whom we fled."

"Did the Japanese ever come to Manhayang?" Carding asked in surprise, because nobody had told him.

"Yes, they did – once," said Teniente Paul slowly.

"Yes, indeed," Nongnong cried, interrupting. "Tatay and Nanay and we fled to the bamboo clumps. But Manang..."

"Your father and the boy and I," Lucing said quickly, "fled in another direction. That was before...they died."<sup>72</sup>

After realizing what has happened to his family, Carding develops a deep and grim anger towards the Japanese, and decides to join the anti-Japanese guerrilla movement. Javellana's depiction of the Japanese soldier is bitter and inflexible, and cumulates in a description of violent episodes that transport readers to the novel's tragic ending;

The Japanese slugged his fist into the boy's belly. Poncing writhed and fell forward without a sound. They slapped him smartly to bring him to consciousness. But the boy lay as one dead. The Japanese chattered earnestly among themselves for a while and then they all lent a hand in tearing off his clothes until he was completely naked. The one who had thought of the idea grinned as he took a live charcoal from under the mango tree and laid it on the boy's genitals. Poncing came to consciousness with a loud, anguished cry...<sup>73</sup>

... They turned the broken body over with their boots and trampled on the face to see if life was left. They laid more live coals on in until the nauseous and acrid smell of burning flesh reeked the air, But Poncing was already dead.

Their cruelty satisfied, they went upstairs to Alicia. Later they dragged her down, bruised and hardly conscious, and it took two Japanese to guide her along on her wobbling feet.

After they had set fire to the house they left, The flames shot higher than even the topmost branches of the mango tree, but it soon died down and the frightened mongrel dog returned to howl over ashes.<sup>74</sup>

Later, the Japanese built their headquarters in this barrio, and ordered villagers to enter the Japanese collective barrio. However, the guerillas considered such an action tantamount to being a Japanese sympathizer and would shot the individual. Struggling with this situation, the

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 230-231.

villagers decide to flee from the barrio. Meanwhile, Carding is tortured by the Japanese, then, miraculously escapes and becomes a leader of the bolo battalion, a rebel group. In the ending, Carding attempts to launch a frenzied attack on the Japanese, while his wife Lucing refuses to evacuate, and stays in their house, where she desperately prays for Carding's safety.

Written in 1947, *Without Seeing the Dawn* is a completely straightforward, anti-Japanese novel, and because it was written shortly after the war, the images of Japanese soldiers are still very realistic. At the same time, the author did not have sufficient emotional distance from the subject to digest and analyze the meaning and significance of the Japanese invasion and its long-term effects. In this novel, the Japanese are just depicted as a cruel enemy, and as still incomprehensible aliens.

It is important to note, however, that the passing of time has not necessarily made such images more nuanced. Javellana is far from being alone in suggesting that the Japanese soldiers' peremptory attitudes and brutality were seen everywhere during this period and that innocent people were traumatized by the violence. As we shall see, the approach of F. Sionil Jose is more subtle, but even so something of the older attitudes can be seen in his 1993 novel, *Viajero*:

... Towards the light visions of the past recurred in flashes again and again: running, always running; war, shooting, hiding. Blurred images, his mother's face, all forgotten, his father's face as well; his mother telling his father: *take him, you can run faster*. Narrow streets, still narrower alleys, the shouts *Hapon, Hapon* – he clung to his father's head, propped as he was on his shoulders; his father's heavy breathing, running, his father putting him down in a corner under the awning of a huge building, *do not leave this place, I will come back for you. DO NOT LEAVE!* Then a mass of people swallowed him and he was lost to them, merged with half-naked men swaying and holding above their heads – through mists, shouts, heaving and pushing – this gaunt figure of a black man with a beard, agony disfiguring his face, blood from a crown of thorns oozing down his forehead, and on his shoulder as if it had weighted him down to his knees, this huge black cross.

Then men in uniform with guns, shouting, foreign in visage and language – they were shooting at the crowd and men were falling and rushing about and that was when he was pushed inside this huge building...<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Jose, *Viajero*, 8.

The reference to Sionil Jose leads on to the second novel I wish to discuss, *Ermita*, the setting of which is rather different from that in *Before Seeing the Dawn*.. Not only does it depict a more complicated situation in Manila among upper-middle class people, but the author also tries to explain the process by which the anger toward the Japanese might be overcome. *Ermita* is a story of a prostitute, whose mother is Conchita Rojo, a wealthy society beauty of Manila, and whose father is a Japanese soldier. Ermita is the product of her mother's rape by this soldier during the days of the Japanese invasion of Manila.

Above the din, the creak of machines up Taft, perhaps, reached out them, harried and those guttural shouts; Kura! Kura! Japanese voices, sharp, staccato – and fearsome. All the images that Titong Velasquez had painted sprang vividly in her mind, the brutality, the meaningless violence. They were now in the street, shooting. What was that? A scream? They were shooting helpless residents of Ermita, More shouts, more explosions, and the pit-bong crack of their rifles.<sup>76</sup>

It was then, that the bathroom door was flung open and he stood there, unkempt and huge and bearded, his eyes red with frenzy, a pistol in one hand and a bayonet in the other. The crazed eyes blinked with disbelief, perhaps, then animal hunger. He advanced and Conchita cringed, back against the wall...<sup>77</sup>

As a result of this incident, Conchita gives birth to a baby girl. However, she neglects the baby because of her bad memories and then moves to the United States. The baby is named Ermita after the place where they live and sent to an orphanage by Conchita's sister, Fely, a socialite. Ermita grows up to be a beautiful and intelligent young woman.. Fely takes her out of the orphanage, and sends her to a private school, but does not give her any financial assistance. In the contrary, Ermita is forced to live with Fely's servants in a garage attached to the Rojo residence in Ermita. Ermita lives with Arturo, the driver, Orang, the cook, and their son Mac. Besides going to school, she worked with Mac, cleaning the Rojo's vacant house. Because they

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<sup>76</sup> Jose, *Ermita*, 18.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

are suffering from financial difficulties, Ermita decides to become a prostitute to save her adoptive family.

From this perspective, *Ermita* is not a war novel at all, but a story about Ermita's journey through life to find her real love in the Filipino post-war, or post-colonial period. As a well-known courtesan, Ermita is surrounded by admirers: the Great Man, head of an Asian country; Eduardo Dantes, a publisher; senator Andrez Bravo; General Bombilla, and Roland Cruz, Ph.D. in history, also a former guerrilla and public relation specialist. Roland Cruz is probably Sionil Jose's alter ego, and the long monologue put into the mouth of Cruz probably represents the ideas of Sionil Jose himself.;

... Then we went down the broad stone steps to where this solitary cross stood, a marker for the hundreds of Filipinos who were killed by the Japanese in the fort. You read the inscription intently and for a time seemed engrossed in your own thoughts. Then you asked, "Were the Japanese really all that bad during the war?" Your question startled me. I thought all along that Japanese brutality in World War II was taken for granted. But you were not old enough to know the Occupation so I told you how it was, my own experiences, the campaign against Yamashita. Quickly, it came hurtling back, those iron cold rainy nights in the mountains beyond Kiangang, the ribbons of mist which clung to the floor of the valleys in the mornings, and the Japanese – cornered, starved, demoralized – but still fighting viciously where we found them.

It is now thirty years after Yamashita had surrendered but the Japanese never really lost that war. They are now back in full force, with their transistors, their lusts. And what has happened to the brave men who stood up to them once upon a time? They have all become obsequious clerks, and I am among them. I almost did not get out of that valley: one night, they came down the mountain slithering on the grass and tossing grenades all over the place, "I was lucky," I said aloud. "Thanks to an old .45 which I still keep..."<sup>78</sup>

"Ah, the Japanese! I have always admired your father's people although I fought them bitterly, doggedly, and even hated them so much to wish in 1945 that the whole of Japan – not just Hiroshima and Nagasaki – be atomized... We Filipinos seeking commercial sex went to Tokyo. Now we send thousands of our women to work everywhere as prostitutes, housemaids, and so I ask the same tired question: what has become of us?"<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.; 270.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

*Ermita* was written in 1988, and unlike Javellana's *Without Seeing the Dawn*, Japan and the Japanese are depicted with a more complicated and profound analysis. As mentioned before, Filipino perspectives toward Japan changed from anger-hatred to admiration, depression and self-hate. In the same mode, Sionil Jose's view toward Japanese is also changing as his earlier hatred is overcome. For him, and consequently in his works, Japanese men are not represented simply by soldiers, but can also be visualized as businessmen and lovers.

### ***Depictions of Brutality***

Depictions of the brutality of the Japanese often focused on their treatment of women, especially the comfort women forced to serve in the brothels set up for the Japanese soldiers. It is sometimes forgotten, however, that the victims of Japanese rape were not necessarily women. *Markova: Comfort Gay* (2000),<sup>80</sup> features as its main character Dolphy, a popular comedian, as Walterina Markova, a 72 year old former transvestite performer. He coaches aspiring entertainers and gives "beauty lessons" for younger Japayukis<sup>81</sup>, who was a "comfort gay" for the Japanese soldiers during World War II. This film is based on the true story of Walter Dempster Jr., whose stage name was Markova. After watching a TV program about comfort women who had been forced to work as prostitutes by the Japanese, Markova decided to reveal his painful past to Loren Legarda, an actual television reporter, because he was still suffering from nightmares about his bitter memories as a comfort gay.

Escaping from an abusive brother, Markova and his transvestite friends are working as performers in a nightclub for Japanese soldiers during the Occupation period. They were at first mistaken for women by Japanese soldiers, and then, sexually brutalized by a couple of Japanese

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<sup>80</sup> *Markova: Comfort Gay*, 2000.

<sup>81</sup> Filipina entertainers who work in Japan

soldiers as a punishment. Some of them are killed by the Japanese, but after the War, Markova and friends are finally liberated. Markova then becomes a stage make-up artist and subsequently a beauty coach, but he still suffers from his bitter past.

Because of its careful research, this film successfully depicts the Japanese era. Although Filipino actors acted as Japanese – which means Japanese translations and pronunciation are not perfectly correct – the cinematography and music is realistic and frequently quite beautiful. Given Markova's personal memories, it is not surprising that the images of Japanese soldiers in this film are brutal, lustful, and essentially one-sided. Yet whether brutal, lustful or simply repellent; these are the common images of Japanese men in all Philippine literature and films. In addition, this film provides an example of the shallow image of Japanese soldiers and their lack of individuality. It means that Filipino people see the Japanese soldier simply as a collective group, not as individuals. Indeed, no Japanese characters are given an individual name. They wear khaki military uniforms, with shaven head, and do not have expressive faces. Due to the lack of any personal development, all Japanese soldiers appearing in this film are depicted as "one of them."

At a late point I will present a an analysis of images of Japanese as businessmen and lovers, but in *Gatas sa Dibdib ng Kaaway (In the Bosom of the Enemy)*, Gil M. Portes, who also directed *Markova*, tries to create more nuanced Japanese characters with a personal side. In particular, the Captain, Hiroshi Sugimoto is depicted as a man whose emotions run deep. Also, Portes implies that the brutality of Japanese soldiers was primarily due to their collective hysteria in the turbulent war period. Pirar, a Filipina woman, is the lover of Hiroshi, but the relationship between them is totally different from the relationship between Markova and the Japanese soldiers who used Markova and his friends as sex slaves. After Hiroshi's wife dies

following a difficult delivery, Pilar, who has also recently given birth, is hired as a wet nurse due to the lack of powdered milk. Initially their relationship resembles that of an employee and employer, but it gradually shifts to become deeper and more compassionate. I will return to this topic later in the section about images of businessmen and lovers.

Like Walterina Markova, many Filipina women were forced to be sex slaves for Japanese soldiers during the war. *Markova* is a story of an aging former comfort girl and his post-war life. The director carefully depicts Markova's trauma and the processes by which he overcame his past and acquired new post-war perspectives. *Comfort Women: a Cry for Justice*, directed by Celso Ad Castillo, on the other hand, focuses only on the war period. Consequently, the brutality of Japanese soldiers and the tragedy of Filipinas as comfort women are depicted as present, ongoing events. In the film, the depiction of Japanese soldiers' brutal acts is very realistic but at the same time it is somewhat superficial. This film was made in 1994, almost fifty years after the end of the war. Even though it is true that most of the Japanese soldiers during the war period actually acted like heartless, animal-like enemies, wonder why this kind of collective image of the Japanese still persists in many Filipino contemporary films. Here, I propose two reasons that may explain why filmmakers still depict the Japanese in this manner. First, the trauma created by the Japanese may be too deep for Filipino people to overcome, and many still suffer from their bad memories; second, and perhaps more controversial, because the brutality of the Japanese is a popular theme that can stimulate nationalistic feelings.

In *Comfort Women: a Cry for Justice*, Sergeant Tanaka is depicted as a totally evil, brutal villain. Because of his compelling desire to acquire sex slaves, many young Filipina women were abducted, raped, and forced to work as comfort women. The film shows their deep agony and desperation because of their treatment by the Japanese and traces individual fates, but in contrast,

it does not reveal anything about the personal emotions of these Japanese soldiers. The latter just become a group of nameless enemies.

The climax of this film is a scene in which the comfort women obtain guns and carry out a desperate resistance against their Japanese oppressors. While the women are killing the Japanese soldiers, other Filipino guerillas and townsmen come up to the Japanese Headquarters and join the resistance. This cathartic scene supports the audience's message about the strength of the human spirit in the face of extreme distress and presumably is intended to help a Filipino to create or rediscover their nationalistic feelings as Filipinos. The director makes an effective appeal to his audience by invoking memories their once common enemy, the Japanese.

As the film closes, the following sentences are presented on the screen: "Pages of history are closed but our eyes remain open to the agonizing fact that there is a story of untold bitterness and injustice. And we all must feel and share this tragic memory until history vindicates them."<sup>82</sup> This message is written for the people in the Philippines who share the same history, although it could also be directed towards an international audience for whom "comfort women" usually refers to Chinese or Korean. The words chosen, "untold bitterness" and "injustice", encapsulate the depth of their agony; and convey the idea that it has been extremely difficult to overcome their trauma. Over time, and through different forms of media, the bitter past of the comfort women has come to light in stories gradually told by the women themselves. It is not hard to imagine that for them the Japanese are the source of all evil, unforgivable enemies. Japanese soldiers deprived many Filipina women's not merely of their chastity, but of their opportunities for future happiness. Their lives were changed completely after the Japanese arrived in their towns or villages. The bitter feelings underlying this inescapable fact have inspired many writers and filmmakers.

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<sup>82</sup> *Comfort Women: Cry for Justice*

Elynia S Mabanglo<sup>83</sup> has given us another literary example of Japanese brutality.

Her poem, *Balada ni Lola Amonita (The Ballad of Lola Amonita)*,<sup>84</sup> was inspired by the story of Lola Amonita, a Filipina comfort woman who told her story at a forum in Hawai'i in 1992. Like her, many women were raped and forced to work as comfort women by the Japanese during the World War II.<sup>85</sup>

In this poem, the story of Lola Amonita, a fourteen-year-old girl is raped by a Japanese soldier in front of her family. The images of Japanese men are expressed in short but strong words; "Men wearing caps, soiled"<sup>86</sup>, "A stench of fish in their perspiration, *Singkit*, Tanned like their shadows...",<sup>87</sup> "Poisoning the air with their breath,"<sup>88</sup> "Rough and callused hand, Balding man, With very dark eyes,"<sup>89</sup> "Like a mad dog,"<sup>90</sup> "Evil spirits of the night, *Aswang*, *Tikbalang*, *Duwende*, *Manduduro*..."<sup>91</sup> Such images are understandable in view of the fact that this Japanese soldier permanently changed Lola's life; he precipitated her into the endless despair, when he consummated his lust by using power and violence. From that time, she suffered from a feeling of endless trauma. Mabanglo concludes her poem with the following words;

That was the beginning of a cycle—  
The search for a tomb  
That can defeat my pains.  
Even now,  
They have not found a resting place.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> She is one of the committee members of this thesis.

<sup>84</sup> Mabanglo, 305-313.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 312.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 313.

We are left with a simply but immensely forceful message; throughout much of Asia, untold numbers of people who were forced to be comfort women and men are still suffering from their painful pasts. For them, as for so many common people, war produces nothing productive but only agony and long-lasting hatred.

### ***Why Brutality? Two Japanese Novels***

Although this thesis is about the images of Japanese men in Philippine literature, I would like to introduce two memorable Japanese writers and their works in order to explain Japanese notions toward the War, and also to help understand the reasons behind the gap between the Philippines and Japan.

In *Soba, Senbei and Shibuya*, F. Sionil Jose refers to his interaction with some Japanese novelists. In conversations with them, Sionil Jose tried to find the key to Japanese perspectives on the war period. It is sometimes assumed that the brutal behavior and collective discipline of Japanese soldiers were based on their militaristic ethos of *Bushido*, or the samurai code. Yukio Mishima, a Japanese novelist himself embodied the beliefs of bushido throughout his life, ultimately committing hara-kiri as a personal lament and protest against the fading bushido spirit among post-war Japanese. Sionil Jose speaks of Mishima thus:

And sometime ago, Yukio Mishima – the famous novelist and Nobel Prize candidate – committed hara-kiri in a gesture that most certainly affirmed Japanese xenophobia and militarism. Mishima's death was a tragic loss to literature for he was one of Japan's greatest second generation (in the sense that Kawabata<sup>93</sup> is first generation) writers. But his act was no stifled cry in the wilderness; the very style of his death that brought back to mind the Bushido code was, I am sure, applauded by the majority of the Japanese. It is in this sense that the Mishima hara-kiri is significant because it is an obvious portent of what Japan will be within the next few years.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Yasunari Kawabata

<sup>94</sup> Jose, *Soba, Senbei and Shibuya*, 35.

The samurai spirit is the Japanese traditional warrior ethic in which its warriors stressed frugality, loyalty, mastery of martial arts, and honor to death. Since Japan's feudal era, this has been most significant ethic for the Japanese warriors. In many ways, Mishima's works and his life help to understand the reason behind the Filipino people's feelings of "otherness" toward Japanese soldiers,.

Mishima was born on January 14, 1925, as the eldest son of an upper-middle class family in Tokyo. Jotaro and Azusa, Mishima's grandfather and father both were government officials. At that time, the position of government official was considered the most honorable employment within a Confucian tradition.<sup>95</sup> Although born into a wealthy family, Mishima was a frail and very introverted child, who was uninterested in "male" activities. His choice in literature was also unusual for a Japanese boy, for he preferred to read writings by individuals such as Oscar Wilde, Rainer Maria Rilke, Raymond Radiguet, and Tanizaki Junichiro. He was a romanticist and mentally extremely precocious; indeed, he began to write his first stories at the age of twelve.<sup>96</sup>

Mishima was educated at a *Gakusyuin* school. Gakusyuin schools were established for children of the imperial family and the former nobility and provided students with a very militaristic and Spartan education.<sup>97</sup> Mishima sense of heroism and the military ethic developed through a combination of the education he received from Gakusyuin and the influence of romanticism from European literature. He longed for an honorable death on the battlefield.

When Japan joined the conflict of World war II, Mishima was still a student. In those days, all students were forced to work for military arsenals instead of studying. Mishima worked

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<sup>95</sup> Henry Scott-Stokes, *The Life and Death of Yukio Mishima* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), 57.

<sup>96</sup> Ibuki Agata, *Mishima Yukio Ron: Tenno no Kamen no Nihirizumu* (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1974), 28.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

for a couple of factories, and then applied for acceptance into the Japanese imperial army.<sup>98</sup> In 1944, Mishima took part in military training exercises at the Maizuru Navy Engineering School. After he graduated from Gakusyuin as an honor student, he went to the Koizumi plant of Nakajima Aircraft for labor mobilization. However, he was sent back home due to his poor health.<sup>99</sup>

Mishima wanted to be a member of the suicide attack unit,<sup>100</sup> but was rejected. He could not be a soldier; hence he could not sacrifice himself in honorable death for his country. Despite his strong desire, he could not become involved in the War. His consequent feelings of desperation created a new “pathos” in his work that came from his longing for “death,” which at least one biographer has seen as linked to his feelings of narcissism.<sup>101</sup> Mishima looked for the ecstasy that would be caused by death. For him, death was the only way to achieve ecstasy and to become a genuine samurai. Mishima almost reveled in the pathos produced by his alienated feelings, which seems to have combined a complex mix of destructive attitudes, narcissism, and sadomasochism. Driven by all these emotions, Mishima tried to remain a samurai in post-war Japan.

In a sense, then, Mishima Yukio was torn between two worlds; the world of the traditional samurai and that of democratic post-war Japan. Although he did not go to the Philippines as a soldier due to his ill-health, he represented the samurai spirit that the Japanese soldiers idealized in their hopes of victory. “Honor to the death,” is probably the most significant concept in bushido. Today Mishima is considered to be a rightist political activist, who

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>100</sup> This unit is called *Shinpu Tokubetsu Kogekitai*. *Shinpu* (or *kamikaze*) usually refers to suicide attacks carried out by Japanese aircrews against Allied shipping towards the end of the Pacific campaign of World War II. To be the member of this unit was extremely honorable thing for the Japanese men.

<sup>101</sup> Agata, 32.

persistently pursued these concepts not merely through his writings but through his personal life. His romantic and heroic works are respected all over the world, but for many Japanese he is still revered as a modern samurai.

*Yukoku (Patriotism)*<sup>102</sup> is one of Mishima's most well known works. It centers on the death (and, for Mishima, the emotional joy and release) of a young couple who committed seppuku, or ritual suicide, in order to display their loyalty toward the Emperor. In writing this story, Mishima was inspired by the February 26 Incident, an uprising by military officers against the Japanese government in 1936. These rebels attempted to eliminate the pro-Western and anti-military leaders in the Japanese government in the name of the Emperor. After the rebellion, Emperor Hirohito ordered the army and navy to suppress the rebel activity, and all the rebels were captured. They were executed, or ordered to commit *seppuku*.

The main character of *Patriotism*, Lieutenant Takeyama Shinji is a young and handsome man who married Reiko six months previously. Takeyama is now facing a dilemma: he was ordered to join the imperial army and move against the rebels who are his best friends. The rebels, young idealists are his co-workers, but they did not invite Takeyama to join their rebellion because he was newly-wed. Takeyama does not want to be a traitor, and he therefore chooses the honorable death, *seppuku*.

In this context it is important to stress that suicide can be considered a noble and beautiful death in Japanese society, rather than a coward's escape.<sup>103</sup> Takeyama decides to commit seppuku, and then his wife, Reiko follows. Reiko is a paragon of virtue as a samurai's wife. On their wedding night, Takeyama instructed her about the samurai way of life:

Before going to bed, Shinji, sitting erect on the floor with his sword laid before him, had bestowed upon his wife a solidarity lecture. A woman who had become the wife of a

<sup>102</sup> Yukio Mishima, *Death in Midsummer and Other Stories* (Canada: Penguin Books Canada, 1966) 93-119.

<sup>103</sup> Jerry S. Piven, *The Madness and Perversion of Yukio Mishima* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2004), 99.

soldier should know and resolutely accept that her husband's death might come at any moment. It could be the day after. But, no matter when it came—he asked—was she steadfast in her resolve to accept it? Reiko rose to her feet, pulled open a drawer of the cabinet, and took out what was the most prized of her new possessions, the dagger her mother had given her.<sup>104</sup>

The story details their preparations for the suicide, including their last act of physical love, Takeyama's bloody but honorably seppuku and Reiko's own suicide, which involved plunging a knife into her neck in the manner of a religious ritual. According to the journalist Henry Scott-Stokes, "this is probably the most elaborate account of the samurai rite in the whole of Japanese literature."<sup>105</sup> Mishima justified this double suicide into a samurai rite that represented the most spiritual and noble demonstration of devotion toward the Emperor. Though an idealist and romanticist, Mishima's portrayal of this idealistic and "honorable death" provides a significant insight into the essence of bushido and is a key point in explaining the physical courage of the Japanese imperial army in so many instances.

Nonetheless, while Mishima may be a role model for those who believe in the ethos of Japanese bushido, it would seem far too extreme for most non-Japanese. The elevation of suicide into a noble act is especially problematic in the Philippines, with its strong Catholic background and view of suicide as self-murder. Indeed, recent research suggests that even in pre Christian society suicide was extremely rare in Philippine societies.<sup>106</sup> The Philippines provides no equivalent to the attitudes expressed by Mishima and the bushido-inspired commitment to the emperor that inspired so many Japanese soldiers (even, from their perspective, justifying brutal acts) has therefore been difficult for Filipinos to understand or accept.

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<sup>104</sup> Mishima, 94-95.

<sup>105</sup> Scott-Stokes. 233.

<sup>106</sup> Charles J.H. MacDonald, *Uncultural behavior: an anthropological investigation of suicide in the southern Philippines* (Honolulu : University of Hawaii Press, 2007).

The other Japanese novelist to whom F. Sionil Jose refers is Ooka Shohei (1909-1988). I quote the following excerpt:

At one today, Ooka Shohei came to the Dominican monastery in Shibuya where I stay... He is in his early sixties and his eyes are misty; his hair is lined with grey and he brought one of those leather bags that the Japanese do not seem to be without... He was, of course, in Leyte and is known for his fictionalized account on the horrors of war and its cannibalism in his classic, *Fires on the Plain*.

He said he was also stationed in Mindoro and one of the first comments he made was that he was sorry for everything, but that he did not commit any atrocities towards the Filipinos. In 1966, he went to Manila for a look-see and in the places where he was stationed. In one of those inevitable forays to a nightclub in Manila, when the hostess learned that he was in the Philippines during the Occupation, she was immediately incensed and asked what atrocities he had committed.

Ooka san is a specialist in French literature but is now interested in Asia; he has written another book, *An epilogue to Leyte*, describing his postwar journey of the body and spirit. There are, he confirmed, very few Japanese, particularly, among the young, who are really interested in the Philippines, and he expects more tensions in the future because Japanese leaders do not know how to handle the Filipinos.<sup>107</sup>

Stationed in the Philippines as a soldier, Ooka later wrote about his wartime experiences and is a significant Japanese writer in post-war Japan. His war memories of himself as a soldier are projected in his two memorable works about the Pacific War, *Furyoki (Taken Captive)* and *Nobi (Fires on the Plain)*.<sup>108</sup> Although Ooka and his works are not yet popular in the United States, these two books have been translated into English and are used at some institutions as a textbook in Asian Studies or history,<sup>109</sup> In addition, *Fires on the Plain* has also been made into a film, and is now available in DVD.<sup>110</sup> I focus on his novel *Fires on the Plain* as a representative of the perspectives of Japanese soldiers.

<sup>107</sup> Jose, *Soba, Senbei and Shibuya*, 67-68.

<sup>108</sup> Hiroshi Matsumoto, *Shosetsu ka Ooka Shohei (Novelist Ooka Shohei)* (Tokyo: Sogensha, 1994). 139.

<sup>109</sup> Ohio State University, University of California Los Angeles, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, University of Oregon, William Paterson University, etc.

<sup>110</sup> *Fires on the Plain*. 1959. Directed by Kon Ichikawa. Eiji Funakoshi, Osamu Takizawa, Mickey Curtis. Edward Harrison (US, 1962)

In drawing on his own experience as a soldier and a prisoner of war (POW) in the Philippines, Ooka depicted the extreme circumstances in which captured or fugitive Japanese found themselves. Such circumstances include severe fatigue, semi-starvation, the contraction of diseases like malaria, and the ever-present possibility of suffering from violence and their own violence. In exploring the mentality of the defeated Japanese soldiers in the battlefield and the POW camp in Leyte Island, Ooka even found instances where cannibalism occurred. In the difficult and often hostile environment of the Philippines, cannibalism becomes the most extreme consequence of a soldier's desire simply to survive, a concentration on his own ego rather than sacrificing himself in honorable death, as Mishima would have it.

A Japanese literary critic, Matsumoto Hiroshi, has pointed out that Ooka kept his cool viewpoint toward his battlefield experiences throughout these works. Matsumoto mentions that Ooka regarded himself as a piece of stone on a *go*<sup>111</sup> board. Ooka considers war like *go*; the black and white stones fight each other to expand their territories.<sup>112</sup> Consistently, Ooka's view toward his experiences as reflected in his writings is quite objective and even critical. It is precisely because of his objective, calm and philosophical writing style that the shocking story lines make these works vivid and memorable and have also made Ooka the most significant and influential writer in post-war Japan.

As in the case of Mishima, it is useful to review Ooka's background in order to understand his attitudes towards the experience of being a soldier and facing the enemy. Ooka was born in Tokyo in 1909 as a son of a wealthy stock trader. He attended a private high school owned by a Methodist missionary, and was attracted to Christianity as a young man. Through his early life, he enjoyed French literature and attended Kyoto Imperial University majoring in

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<sup>111</sup> *Go* (or *igo*) is a Japanese board game. Two people use white and black stones and compete with each other to expand their territories.

<sup>112</sup> Matsumoto, 17.

French. He devoted himself to reading French novelists and poets, such as Stendhal, one of the most original and complex French writers of nineteenth century. After graduating from the Kyoto Imperial University, Ooka worked for a foreign-affiliated company in Kobe. During the same period, he translated some Stendhal's works and published literary criticism about them. This American-style education and his inclination toward Romanticists meant that he was outside the intellectual mainstream of the time, similar to a black sheep in the society. However, this marginalized position meant he could retain critical and cool viewpoints toward the Japanese militarism independently of the views supported by the majority.<sup>113</sup>

Although many Japanese were proud of the strength and spirit of the Japanese military and believed that Japan would be victorious in the Pacific War, even at the time Ooka calmly predicted Japan's defeat.<sup>114</sup> He believed the differences in the national strength of the United States and Japan were obvious, even though most of the Japanese people were still proud of the strength and spirit of the Japanese military and thought that their country would be victorious.<sup>115</sup>

As a cosmopolitan intellectual, Ooka calmly spent his days as a businessman, literary critic and father of two until he was called to serve in the Japanese Imperial Army as a private soldier in 1944. His subsequent war experience changed his life drastically and became his inspiration to write his memorable work, *Fires on the Plain*. Ooka was thirty-five years old when the Japanese Imperial Army summoned him to fight in Mindoro, the Philippines.<sup>116</sup> Due to an overwhelming attack by Americans' forces, Ooka and his company were forced back into the mountains, and were without enough supplies or support. Many Japanese soldiers died of malaria due to their lack of medicines, while malnutrition and starvation took the lives of others. After

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<sup>113</sup> Shohei Ooka, *Watakushi Jishin Heno Shogen (Confession to Myself)* (Tokyo: Chuo Koron sha, 1972), 39.

<sup>114</sup> Kenzaburo Oe et al., *Ooka Shohei no Sekai (The World of Ooka Shohei)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989), 2.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>116</sup> Shohei Ooka, *Taken Captive*, trans. Wayne P. Lammers. (New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1996), 11.

wandering in the mountains without any food, and with severe malaria, Ooka was captured and sent to an American army hospital, and was then moved to an American-run POW camp on Leyte Island. Here he was imprisoned until he was repatriated to Japan at the end of 1945.<sup>117</sup>

Ooka's battlefield experience and the experiences he had undergone tested him, changed his life. From being an educated businessmen from the upper class Ooka had become a soldier in the highly militaristic and disciplined Japanese army. In the Philippines, this meant that soldiers must accept that they would live under the most adverse possible conditions. No questioning was permitted, and intelligence was virtually useless on the battlefield. The military hierarchy was the inverse of his former world. In the pyramidal military structure, "intellectuals", middle-aged reservists, and sick soldiers formed the lowest class. Whereas he had been respected in his former life, Ooka was considered an inept and useless soldier.<sup>118</sup>

However, in the American-run POW camp, Ooka was able to use his intelligence to recover his privileged position. As an interpreter, he came into direct contact with a rich new world by communicating with American officers, reading American books and magazines, and eating American food, like corned beef and chocolate. He enjoyed these privileges, but he did so with a guilty conscience. He felt guilty because, as a survivor, he felt he had betrayed other Japanese comrades who had continued to fight.<sup>119</sup>

Ooka's profound ambivalence motivated him to write *Fires on the Plain* in 1957. This is also about the grueling experiences of a Japanese soldier, but it is a fictional piece based on a story that he heard from a Japanese soldier in the prisoner-of-war camp. Nonetheless, while this story is categorized as fiction, it borders on being a documentary. It concerns the destiny of one Japanese soldier, Tamura, who was evicted from his troop because he had contracted

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<sup>117</sup> David C. Stahl, *Ooka Shohei's Writings on the Pacific war* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI, 1995), 2.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

tuberculosis. Because he was suffering from severe starvation in the jungle, eventually Tamura was forced to struggle between starvation and cannibalism. Through reliving Tamura's experience, Ooka focuses on the battlefield confusion and inner struggles which he himself and his comrades had experienced. In the process, he delves deeply into his own motivations and attitudes and the extent to which the boundaries of moral values can be crossed. In another work, the essay *Nobi no Ito (Intention for Nobi)*, Ooka points out that cannibalism is the extreme form of a starving soldier's protection of his own ego. While Ooka did not himself resort to cannibalism, some Japanese soldiers did.<sup>120</sup> Ooka felt that cannibalism could be a very powerful and compelling topic for a novel and believed that this theme could even open up a new avenue for discussion among international writers.<sup>121</sup>

Although some of these ideas had been expressed in Ooka's non-fiction work, *Taken Captive*, he felt the objective writing style he had used limited the exploration of his conflicting emotions with regard to individualism and psychological struggle. Therefore he started to write fiction, using the first person but with Tamura as an alter ego.<sup>122</sup> The story begins with Tamura wandering along the forest path to the Army hospital after a diagnosis of tuberculosis had caused him to be evicted from his troop. However, the hospital was full of wounded soldiers, so he had to return to the troop. His boss slapped him, and evicted him once again. Since he was a sick and therefore useless as a soldier, Tamura's only option (from the bushido viewpoint) was to commit suicide or die in the jungle.

Initially, however, Tamura stays with other sick soldiers outside the hospital. However, when the hospital was attacked by the Americans, these sick soldiers scattered and fled into the mountains. Tamura (i.e. Ooka) wanders alone in the jungle. Because he had lost any desire to

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 46.

live, an attack by Americans did not frighten him. Although he had one grenade in order to commit suicide, he had lost his desire to die as well. These are just some of the places in the novel where Ooka, through Tamura, explains his feelings toward his life and death:

A strange force drove me on. I knew full well that only calamity and extinction awaited me at the end of my journey; yet a murky curiosity impelled me to continue plumbing the depth of my own loneliness and despair until the moment when I was to find death in the corner of some unknown tropical field.<sup>123</sup>

I was utterly free—free to live these days as I wanted, and free also, thanks to my hand grenade, to choose the exact moment of my death.<sup>124</sup>

Death was no longer an abstract notion, but a physical image.<sup>125</sup>

The yearning in which the moonlit sky had engulfed me was like the craving that I had felt for some women whose body and spirit were unattainable. And I now perceived that it was just because the sky was likewise unattainable that I so yearned for it. It was not because I was still alive that I clung to the notion of life, but because I was already dead.<sup>126</sup>

Haniya Yutaka, a Japanese critic, argues that Tamura's intention toward his life is closely related to nature.<sup>127</sup> Tamura is put into an exotic but hostile natural environment without any company. In the wild jungle, he has to overcome his loneliness and anxiety by meditating and searching his own soul. Nature, human, and God—these three elements, says Haniya, created this story. Before death, Tamura feels that he is a part of the nature. Tamura is an atheist; therefore he understands that his body is an assembly of organic matters.<sup>128</sup> He thinks that if he dies, his body would return to the earth.

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<sup>123</sup> Shohei Ooka, *Nobi (Fires on the Plain)*, trans. Ivan Morris. (Boston: Tuttle publishing, 1957). 59.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>127</sup> Oe, 41.

<sup>128</sup> Ooka, *Fires on the Plain*, 169.

As the inverse side of nature, Ooka also represents his alter-ego as thinking about God and of humanity, using a cross as a symbol of both.<sup>129</sup> While wandering in the jungle, Tamura finds an object above the forest. He immediately recognizes it as a cross, a reminder of the Christianity that is the dominant religion in the Philippines. Tamura's sudden desire to go to church is explained by Ooka as caused by his instinct for gregariousness.<sup>130</sup> Previously, Tamura had to fight against nature by himself, but now he has found a way to help his lonely soul. The cross was a link between life and death for Tamura. Tamura is alive, but at the same time he was spiritually dead. When he reaches the church, he finds that the village is empty except for a couple of dead Japanese soldiers, apparently killed by the villagers who had then all fled. A Filipina stops by the church to pick up some food. Seeing Tamura, she screams, and this startles Tamura because he has not heard a human voice for a long time. He accidentally shoots the woman.

His accidental killing of the Filipina becomes a turning point for Tamura, who through this act is mentally and emotionally brought back to the human world. One day he meets other Japanese soldiers on the mountain. When he sees them, he realizes that he is still a part of the Japanese Imperial Army. He salutes them, and talks to them. According to Haniya, this reflects the fact that that soldiers always belong to their own world and have their own hierarchy. Therefore, their way of thinking and their attitudes will always follow the standards set by the military.<sup>131</sup> From this moment on, Tamura belongs to the real world. Like other soldiers, he had also experienced loneliness and starvation, but unlike others, he did not resort to cannibalism when he came across dead bodies. The dead bodies are also a part of nature, but he could not eat

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<sup>129</sup> Ooka, *Watakushi Jishin heno Shogen*, 49.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid* 49.

<sup>131</sup> *Oe*. 41.

them. Even though, he was an atheist, there was one overwhelming power that stopped him.

Ooka sees this power as something emanating from God:

With my right hand I drew my bayonet from its scabbard. Once more I glanced round to make sure no one was watching me.

Then a strange thing took place: I found that my left hand was firmly grasping the wrist of my right hand, the wrist that held my bayonet.<sup>132</sup>

“Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth!”

This voice, when it came, did not particularly surprise me. After all, I had known all along that someone was watching me. Why should not this unseen person engage me in conversation?<sup>133</sup>

As I slowly moved away from the body my left hand loosened its grip—first the middle finger, then the ring finger, then the little finger, finally the thumb and the index finger together.<sup>134</sup>

For Ooka, who was not a Christian, this supernatural power probably symbolizes Tamura’s own conscience as a human being. In *Fires on the Plain* Tamura is eventually driven insane by his extreme experiences and is taken to the hospital by the Americans. Although Ooka himself retained his sanity, he was also taken to the hospital by Americans and he puts himself and the battlefield experiences of other soldiers into his depiction of Tamura. Like Ooka, Tamura also experienced the collapse of Japanese militarism and the chaos that followed. Hence, one could say that Tamura represents the composite Japanese soldier who starved and suffered in the jungles of the Philippines.

In the following section, I consider the images of non-military Japanese men.

### ***Non-Soldiers: Businessmen and Lovers***

“Tanabata’s Wife” by Sinai C. Hamada is a remarkable short story of a Japanese immigrant who works as a farmer and businessman. Hamada is a Japanese mestizo. He was born in 1912 in Baguio. His father, Ryukichi Hamada, one of the first Japanese to arrive during the

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<sup>132</sup> Ooka, *Fires on the Plain*, 186.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

founding of Baguio city, died when Sinai was only one month old from an accident in the saw mill where he worked as a foreman. Sinai's mother, Josefa Carino was an *Ibaloi*, a mountain tribe woman belonging to the famous *Igorot* Carino family in Benguet. Influences from his mother's side heavily influenced Hamada and his works.<sup>135</sup>

Born in 1912, Hamada was educated at local public schools, and then entered the University of the Philippines, Baguio. He majored in law and journalism, and graduated in 1937 with high honors. He then practiced law in the city of Baguio and in the mountain province from whence his mother came. He also established "the Baguio Midland Courier", a newspaper, and displayed considerable ability as a journalist in writing about the people of Baguio. Hamada was subsequently appointed provincial director of Agricultural Credit and Cooperative Financing Administration (ACCFA) during 1954 to 1957. He promoted the growing of highland vegetables of Benguet, such as tomatoes, eggplants and cucumbers, which were cultivated by many of Japanese immigrants. During the term of President Diosdado Macapagal and Ferdinand Marcos, 1965 to 1973, Hamada was a chairman and general manager of the Mountain Province Development Authority, the MPDA. While he is one of local heroes of Baguio, remembered as a prominent businessman, he also wrote numerous beautiful stories like "Tanabata's Wife."

"Tanabata's Wife" is the account of the one of those Japanese immigrants, Tanabata, who turned farmer after the completion of the Benguet Road that connected the mountain resort of Baguio to lowland towns, and of his intermarriage with Fas-ang, an Ibaloi woman. Tanabata enters the story as a rather successful but unmarried middle-aged gardener and farmer.

...For a long time now, he had been looking for one among the native women, hoping he would find one who might consent to marry him. But none he did ever find, until Fas-ang, guided by fate, came. He had almost sent for a Japanese wife from his homeland. He had her picture. But it would have cost him much.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>136</sup> Hamada, 5.

Tanabata encounters Fas-ang who is on the way to Baguio to work for one of construction sites. Tanabata offers her a position to work at his place, and she agrees. Tanabata is just a humble Japanese farmer, but he runs his business honestly and just sells small products to make a living..

... Well-dressed, Tanabata-san would walk on Sundays to the market fair. Close behind him follow one of his laborers, carrying two heavy baskets over his shoulder. The baskets overflowed with the minor produce of the garden: strawberries, celery, tomatoes, spinach, radishes, and “everlasting” flowers. Fas-ang, in her gayest Sunday dress would trail in the rear. She was to sell garden products at the market.<sup>137</sup>

...”Good.” And Tanabata would break into a happy smile. He always said *gracias* after that, showing full trust in Fas-ang. He would pick out two half-peso pieces and give them to her. “Here, take this. They are for you. Buy yourself whatever you like with them.” For he was a prosperous, generous gardener.<sup>138</sup>

This humble image is a significant theme in depictions of Japanese businessmen before the war. Most are represented as owning small business, scrimping and saving to send money back to their families in Japan. They are polite and quiet and retain their customs as Japanese even if they are living in the Philippines that is quite Americanized.

In time, Fas-ang was introduced to Japanese customs. Thus she learned to use chopsticks after being prevailed upon by Tanabata; he had a zinc tub outside their hut in which they heated water and took a bath in the evening; Fas-ang pickled radishes after the Japanese fashion, salting them in a barrel; she began to use wooden shoes, though of the Filipino variety, and left them outside their bedroom before she retired; she became used to drinking tea and pouring much *toyo* sauce on their food; mattresses too, and no longer a plain mat, formed her bedding.<sup>139</sup>

...He gave a baptismal party to which were invited his Japanese friends. They drank saki, ate Japanese seaweeds, pickles, canned fish and many other dainties...<sup>140</sup>

...Tanabata, alone, would stay at home. He sat up late reading his books of Japanese novels. When Fas-ang arrived, she would be garrulous with what she had seen. Tanabata

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 7.

would tuck her under the thick blankets to warm her cold feet. She would then easily fall asleep, and after she had dozed off, he would himself retire.

Tanabata allows Fas-ang to see English-language movies in town, and she becomes fascinated with the brilliant world of cinema. Due to the language barrier and his inability to understand English, Tanabata does not attend the movie theater, and gradually the couple grow apart. In the movie theater, Fas-ang meets a man from the same province and decides to run away from Tanabata. After Fas-ang leaves, Tanabata falls into deep depression. He shuts everything away from him and just thinks that he will go back to Japan to die.

Meanwhile, Fas-ang discovers that her new lover has taken her money and left. She comes back with her baby to Tanabata, hesitating to enter the house because of her feelings of shame. Suddenly, the baby cries...; looking out of the window, Tanabata sees mother and son. He rushes outside, exultant, takes her hands and leads them into the house.

This is a story of a lonely Japanese immigrant, and his profound affection toward a native woman, but at the same time, this is a story of one immigrant's acquisition of a new culture, or a story of cross-cultural process between a Japanese man and a Filipina. Adopting a new culture means cooperation and communication with people in a new environment in order to survive socially. In this sense, cross-cultural communication entails both comparison and integration of different cultures.<sup>141</sup>

Hamada himself is a mestizo, which means he is a man who has different cultural backgrounds. This has provided significant material for the creation of his novels. As Anna Christine Villarba Torres points out, Hamada's intention in writing this story relates to his efforts to show the situation in Baguio around the 1930s when Japanese nationals dominated the small

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<sup>141</sup> Villarba-Torres, 135.

business scene. "Tanabata's Wife" is thus based on an actual situation.<sup>142</sup> In this story Fas-ang is the name of Tanabata's wife, but at the same time it is a *Bontoc* term meaning "to cross over a boundary" or "to jump over to the other side."<sup>143</sup> Thus, this is an account of one Japanese immigrant's efforts to overcome his loneliness in a foreign country. The last scene, with Fas-ang's return and her acceptance by, suggests a relationship of accommodation between Filipino natives and Japanese immigrants.

When the setting for a novel or short story predates World War II, the depiction of Japanese immigrants in Filipino literature are basically written favorable, as is the case with Tanabata. This applies to women as well as men. Cecilia Manguerra Brainard's *When the Rainbow Goddess Wept*, for instance, presents a Japanese woman, Sanny, who owns a small sari-sari store in Mindanao.

...Sanny's sari-sari store was a delightful place with everything any one could imagine. Sanny kept it well stocked with standard supplies like rice, corn, coarse salt, mungo beans, agar-agar, and spices...She was Japanese, around twenty-five years old, with a six-month-old baby girl called Sumi. Sanny had difficulty pronouncing some words. She was beautiful, with a lovely oval face and petal-smooth skin...<sup>144</sup>

People liked Sunny and her husband, a Japanese traveling salesman, and welcomed them in their society before the war. However, the situation changes when conflict breaks out.

...The fire grew stronger still, and the smoke remained thick and fine ash fell on our faces...There was much commotion and shouting – Sanny's store...impossible...too hot..." "Sanny and Sumi are dead!"... "But Why Nando? Why?" Mama asked. Shaking his head, he replied, "There's been talk that Sanny's husband is a Japanese spy."<sup>145</sup>

As this episode indicates, in the 1920s and 1930s many Japanese people were well-established in the Filipino society as small business owners; however, the war completely eliminated the basis of their position. After the war, their position could never return to what it

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>144</sup> Brainards, 12.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 23.

had been even when the Japanese are friendly shop owners, they are also remembered as representing the people's enemies.

A film that tracks this transition, from businessman to a brutal soldier, is *Gatas: sa dibdib ng Kaway* (In the bosom of the enemy) (2001)<sup>146</sup> This is a wartime love story of a kind Japanese officer, Hiroshi, and Pilar, the beautiful Filipina wet-nurse of his new-born son. In this context of this thesis, the most significant thing to emphasize is his difference from other Japanese soldiers. Almost all Japanese soldiers came to the Philippines just to fight; however, Hiroshi is an exception. He has been in the Philippines for ten years as a businessman, and speaks fluent Tagalog. He has a Filipina wife. This film illustrates patriotism (of both Filipinos and Japanese), and the possible birth of a new race, or people whose cultures bridge two worlds, even in the midst of war. Hiroshi's son becomes a symbol of this new type of person, and possibly a symbol of peace.

This story begins with the scene of the torture of Diego, Pilar's husband, who is suspected of being a guerrilla. Pilar begs the head of the garrison, Captain Sugimoto Hiroshi, to release her husband. Diego is released by Hiroshi; meanwhile, Pilar is asked to be a wet nurse for Hiroshi's new born son whose Filipina mother, Carmen, died because of a difficult delivery. Pilar agrees to this request because of her maternal instinct, but her husband Diego does not understand her willingness to assist an enemy, and suspects her of infidelity. Pilar is struggling between patriotism toward her country and her maternal instinct, and between her feelings for Hiroshi and Diego.

Hiroshi's gentle and affectionate manner makes him a virtual outcast in the Spartan environment of the Japanese military; however, he is also a patriot fighting for his own country, Japan. He is in a dilemma, torn between two perspectives as a cosmopolitan, or a businessman

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<sup>146</sup> *Gatas sa Dibdib ng Kaaway*, prod. and dir. By Gil Portes., Regal Home Entertainment, 2001, video recording.

who assimilates well into the Filipino society, and as a patriot Japanese national. Ultimately, although he chose to fight for his country, he cannot live with this dilemma and commits hara-kiri. In this regard, Hiroshi's character and his cultural marginalization is reminiscent of the situation faced by Ooka Shohei as an intellectual black sheep and his alter-ego, Tanabata, as an affectionate, humble Japanese immigrant, and also of the extremism of Mishima Yukio as a pure samurai.

There are many examples of Filipino literary works that just depict the brutality of Japanese soldiers. Indeed, one could say that for the most part the Japanese military is regarded as a collection of nameless monsters. In *Gatas sa Dibdib ng Kaaway*, however, the director, Gil Portes, created Hiroshi as a flesh-and-blood character and made him a symbol of a bridge between two countries. Hence, Hiroshi's character itself becomes another manifestation of "fas-ang," "someone who crosses over a boundary."

Hiroshi, however, is something of an exception. There are certainly numerous images of Japanese lovers in various novels, short stories, and films, presumably because love itself is a universal sentiment and an indispensable notion in Filipino literature. Yet it appears that memories of sexual exploitation die hard, and that in the commercial world "love" can be recast as predatory and exploitative sex. As an example, I use the 1993 film, *Maricris Sioson Story – Japayuki*, the production of which was promoted by the murder of Maricris Sioson, a Filipina entertainer, by a yakuza, a Japanese gangster.<sup>147</sup> Women who go to Japan are called a "Japayuki", literary, *Japa* means Japan, *yuki* means go, Initially, the word contained no negative meaning. However, because the word was created using an analogy from "*Karayu,i*" meaning a Japanese prostitute who went to work in China or Southeast Asia, the term "Japayuki"

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<sup>147</sup> *Maricris Sioson Story – Japayuki*.

automatically imply that they are prostitutes. Hence, this word is very offensive and deemed discriminatory.

This film revolves around the story of Maricris Sioson, a common Filipina woman, her experiences as a Japayuki in Japan, and the violence she faces in Japan's underworld. As her situation shows, most relationships between Japanese men and Filipina entertainers are totally unequal, because money is the most essential dynamics in this kind of relationship, or violent power. For instance, in the film, Maricris's older sister, also a Japayuki, visited the family with her husband Hiroshi. Hiroshi is depicted or caricatured as a stereotypical Japanese businessman, carrying an expensive camera all the time. Maricris asks her sister if she is happy with Hiroshi, but her sister avoids the question directly and responds by saying that she needs some financial stability. The other unequal relationship in this film is the relationship between Maricris and a yakuza who controls her by using violence and drug addiction. As a result, Maricris gradually loses control over her inner self. These post-war images of Japanese men are totally negative.

Although this film could be seen as propaganda, a kind of requiem for Maricris Sioson, who was killed by the yakuza, it does have parallels. As noted earlier, the portrayal of Noguchi in *Yamashita: the Tiger's Treasure* captures the memories of both Japanese soldiers and their stereotypes as businessmen. Unlike Tanabata or Hiroshi of *Gatas sa Dibdib ng Kaawai*, Noguchi represents the heartless yakuza-type. From the 1970s to the 1990s when Japan's economy was still strong, many promoters who were strongly associated with the yakuza moved to the Philippines and began to control the nightclub business and all Japayuki-related business.<sup>148</sup> Thus, the yakuza as a kind of representative of Japanese businessmen is quite prevalent in the Philippines. Needless to say, these post-war "business-men" are totally different from those who came before the War. Furthermore, the contemporary scene is less easily characterized in terms

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<sup>148</sup> Ono, 41-42.

of a binary division between victims and victimizers. For example, Walterina Markova, whose former life as a comfort gay for Japanese soldiers is depicted in *Markova: Comfort Gay*, is now working as a beauty coach for Japayukis. In this contradictory situation, Markova probably does not realize that he is incorporated into the system, as part of an endless loop of exploitation.

## **5. ANALYSIS**

In this section, I analyze the images of Japanese men by using the sources previously introduced in order to consider why these images were created and have been maintained by the Filipinos. I am also interested in asking why Filipino people are still preoccupied with the war, more than sixty years later. Is this a result of the depth of trauma created by the Japanese men during the war or are other factors at play?

In this context, I elucidate my thesis by reference to Ronald D. Klein's ideas about the images of Japanese men. Klein, a professor of literature at Hiroshima Jogakuin University in Japan, specialized in the study of post-colonial Filipino literature. Drawing attention to Sionil Jose's profound ambivalence toward Japan, he argues that this represents a cycle of hate, love and self-hate, or four elements of psycho-social dynamics: 1) negative feelings of anger-hate, 2) admiration, 3) disappointment, and 4) self-hate.

In Sionil Jose's case, the first stage of anger-hate refers to his negative feelings toward the brutal soldiers who tormented, tortured and raped Filipino people. Secondly, he displays admiration for the Japanese revival after the defeat and also for Japanese craftsmanship and high technology. A third feeling of disappointment comes from the reality of Japanese leadership in Asia with the marked differential in power balance between the Philippines and Japan. Because Japan gained power, the Japanese felt superior to all Asians, including Filipinos. Finally self-hate, bitter feelings, can be equated with self-pity or regret due to Filipino collaboration with Japan, their former enemy. This is especially pronounced in the field of entertainment for the Japanese tourists. Japan corrupted his country with its money and power.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ronald D. Klein, "Frankie Jose and Japan," in *Frankie Sionil Jose, a Tribute*, ed. Edwin Thumboo (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International, 2005), 45-51.

Klein mentions that these four feelings underlie the dynamics of Sionil Jose's attitudes toward Japan, but it is also noteworthy that this pattern exactly fits the pattern or transition of Japanese men's images in Filipino post-colonial literature; 1) anger-hate images of brutal soldiers, 2) admiration and disappointment in regard to businessmen and 3) ambivalent feelings, with some "lovers" like Tanabata represented sympathetically as opposed to "lustful lovers" who have use their power and money to seek pleasure in the Philippines. Nonetheless, the strongest image of Japanese men in Filipino literature is definitely that embodied in the "anger-hate" images. This raises the question as to why Japanese soldiers behaved so brutally in the Philippines.

Japan's competition with the outside world began in 1853, when the American naval officer, Commodore Matthew Perry, forced the gates of Japan to open. During the long isolation period, the Japanese had stubbornly kept themselves from foreign "contamination," and developed their nationalistic perspectives. But after the opening of Japan to the outside and the realities of world power, western cultural influences poured into Japan like a flood, with many Japanese acquiring foreign ways even as the country itself progressed economically.<sup>150</sup> Japanese industrialization was so rapid and one result was explosive population growth. Japan, then, tried to expand its territory in order to move its excess population, as well as to obtain raw materials for its manufacturing enterprises. At first, Japan tried to expand its territory in mainland Asia, China and Korea, and then in the late 1930s it began to look towards Southeast Asia and the Pacific areas. From the late nineteenth century, therefore, Japan had joined the territorial expansion race with the Western powers.<sup>151</sup> This was a significant competition because before the nineteenth century was out, the Western powers had completely divided Southeast Asia

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<sup>150</sup> Agoncillo,, 1-2.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

(except Thailand), and had reshaped the administration and economies in terms of colonial capitalism.<sup>152</sup> In the Philippines, at that time, the Filipino elite most of whom were mestizos, challenged Spanish rule. However, the failure of the 1896 revolution, but subsequent the “sale” of the Philippines to the United States meant that the Philippines passed from one colonial power to another.<sup>153</sup>

F. Sionil Jose says that the Philippines has inherited much from the United States – the public school system, a strengthening of the democratic ethos, and great social mobility.<sup>154</sup> But he is also alarmed that America was able to control the Filipino psychology and to establish a relationship between two countries that resembled that between a teacher and pupil.<sup>155</sup> Like other intellectuals, Sionil Jose remarked on the effects of this imbalanced relationship and the problems that developed from it. However, most Filipinos maintained feelings of strong affection toward the Americans as their older brother. Japan’s sudden attack on Pearl Harbor totally shocked Americans and by extension, the Filipinos. On the morning of December 8, Japan time, the Japanese Imperial Rescript declared war against the United States, In return, America declared war on Japan.<sup>156</sup> Unlike other Southeast Asians, Filipinos saw the Japanese invaders not as liberators but as their enemy, and as alien and incomprehensible elements.

As I note previously, Steven Javellana’s *Without Seeing the Dawn*, and F. Sionil Jose’s *Ermita*, are two contrasting works; the former is written with a great deal of “anger-hate,” the first stage in Klein’s conceptualization. On the other hand, the latter contains more nuanced and ambivalent emotions toward the Japanese. The ambivalences proposed by Sionil Jose of course

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<sup>152</sup> Takashi Shiraishi, *Umi no Teikoku: Asia wo Dou Kangaeruka* (The Sea Empire: How we Grasp Asia) (Tokyo, Japan: Chuo Koron sha, 2000), 106-107.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>154</sup> Edwin Thumboo, “The Challenge of Modernity,” in *Conversation with F. Sionil Jose*, ed. Miguel A. Bernad (Quezon City, Philippines: Vera-Reyes Inc, 1991), 231.

<sup>155</sup> Jose, *Soba Senbei and Shibuya*, 24-25.

<sup>156</sup> Agoncillo, 35-40.

contain elements of “anger-hate,” but they also display some admiration for the Japanese business acumen and craftsmanship, and even some sense of self-hate or self-pity.

*Without Seeing the Dawn* is a relatively straight-forward story written immediately at the war’s end, and the sense of realism almost makes it appear like reporting. The characters, simple-minded and uneducated villagers, honest, and humble are considered by Javellana to be representative of Filipino during the period. Thus, in terms of Klein’s structure, this novel can be positioned in the first stage.

On the other hand, *Ermita* was written in 1988. At that time, Japan’s economy was flourishing and, as a result, many Japanese businessmen were living in the Philippines, especially in Manila, and had a rather wealthy lifestyle. Many nightclubs and bars were built in Ermita, Manila to cater to the needs of Japanese customers, while many young Filipina women also traveled to Japan as entertainers. From his office in Ermita and during his many trips to Japan Sionil Jose observed the transition in the occupations of Japanese men in the Philippines from soldiers to wealthy businessmen. He was therefore able to add new perspectives toward the Japanese men in *Ermita*, which explains why this work has a deeper analysis toward the presence of the Japanese than does Javellana’s work.

Sionil Jose created the character, Roland Cruz, as his alter ego. At the end of *Ermita*, Roland commits suicide. Although Sionil Jose does not explain the reasons behind this, I assume it is because of Roland’s desperation as a still-colonized Filipino in the postwar period. His suicide can be traced to cumulative and imbalanced feelings, a mixture of agony, hate, admiration, disappointment, and self-hate toward the Japanese and the other former colonizers, the Spanish and Americans. Thus, *Ermita* is not only a beautiful melodrama, but also has a strong sense of nationalism. The character of Roland Cruz represents the “new” Filipinos who

are cosmopolitan, well educated and nationalistic, but who are citizens of a country that has been repeatedly raped by foreigners.

Like these two novels, *Markova: Comfort Gay* also raises the question of the motives behind the Japanese devastation of the Philippines and the traumatization of its people. As a former comfort gay, Markova's memories of the Japanese soldiers were overwhelmingly horrific; however, he has not extended these attitudes towards non-military Japanese and even works as a beauty coach for Japayuki women. If the film had been produced right after the war, the images of Japanese men might have been depicted in a more straight-forward manner but like, Sionil Jose, Gil Portes, the director, seems to adopt a wider and deeper standpoint in evaluating the bitter history of Philippine-Japanese relations. Though demonstrate his strong sense of nationalism, he has maintained an objective and even somewhat comical style.

In an effort to place Philippine literature in a broader framework, I chose two novels intended to show Japanese perspectives on the war. Before the defeat, the Japanese Imperial Army was known for its strength and ruthlessness. As the only non-white colonizer, Japan had expanded its territory into other Asian countries. Although Japan was a small country and relatively poor in comparison to the Western powers, its collective solidarity was strong. It had a common aim - to force the West to accept it on a level of equality. Thus, Japan continued to challenge Western Powers with its samurai spirit. America, however, was much wealthier and more powerful than Japan. In the Philippines, Pacific Islands, and other Asian countries, the Japanese were completely defeated. Emperor Hirohito surrendered in August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1945, and America occupied Japan.<sup>157</sup>

When the two Japanese pieces, *Patriotism* and *Fires on the Plain*, are juxtaposed with the Filipino works such as *Without Seeing the Dawn*, *Ermita*, *Balada ni Lola Amonita* and, *Markova*,

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<sup>157</sup> Oe, 12.

*Comfort Gay*, it is obvious that each group represents a different perspective, ideology, cultural background and philosophy. *Without Seeing the Dawn*, *Balada ni Lola Amonita* and *Markova* are written from the viewpoint of the victims, with the Japanese shown as cruel and heartless enemies. In contrast, *Patriotism* provides the ideal perspective of Japanese soldiers, their patriotism toward Japan and its emperor as well as the samurai spirit. Because such ideas were a complete contrast to the notions of American-style democracy that the United States had promoted in the Philippines, the perspectives of Japanese soldiers exemplified “otherness” to the Philippines. This goes a long way in explaining the anger and resentment felt by Filipinos towards the occupying force that they saw as cruel and incomprehensible.

Although more than sixty years have passed since World War II, many Filipinos cannot forget the traumas it produced. In the Philippines, there are many war victims like Markova, who were tortured, raped, and forced to be comfort women and men and who were physically injured and psychologically hurt by the Japanese.<sup>158</sup> After the war, the Japanese themselves underwent a strong feeling of self-hate and although most former soldiers have now passed away, many like Ooka sustained feelings of bitter repentance and self-reproach toward what they did in the Philippines and other areas during the war.

Yet the novels and films I have described here represent other facets of “Japanese-ness.” During the American regime, the Japanese were considered to be a good labor force for their construction projects and were encouraged to migrate to the Philippines. Further, before the war, Japan was not as prosperous as it is today. Because of their poverty, many people seized the opportunities to migrate to the Philippines. Like Tanabata, Sunny, or Hiroshi, they tried to assimilate into the Filipino society, worked hard, and sent money to their families in Japan. Some

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<sup>158</sup> One might add that in Japan, many people were killed by two atomic bombs, and also raped, injured, hurt by the US soldiers.

of them married Filipinas, raise their mestizo children, and tried to pursue simple and small happiness. Tanabata in “Tanabata’s Wife” by Sinai C. Hamada represents this kind of Japanese immigrant. Also, Hiroshi in *Gatas sa Dibdib ng Kaarway* by Gil Portes, is also depicted as a soldier who is a former immigrant businessman. Both of them are affectionate and humble, unlike the images of brutal soldiers. In contrast to the dominant representation of Japanese brutality and the depersonalization of Japanese soldiers as nameless monsters, Gil Portes created Hiroshi as a flesh-and-blood character, and made him into a symbol of a bridge between two countries, with the very name of his wife, “Fas-ang” meaning a person who crosses over a boundary. Here, Japanese immigrants are often depicted as their “insider” not “outsider” like soldiers. But war destroyed everything, their friendship, credit, dreams, even their reputation in the society. Then, images of Japanese men turned to the brutal Japanese soldiers.” However, not all the soldiers were brutal, and I believe there are many exceptions like Hiroshi. *Gatas sa Dibdib ng Kawaay* is a well researched and profound film. Its Japanese lines are perfect, and translation is generally good.

After its defeat, all over the Japan was totally burnt by air-raids, with nothing remaining. Japanese businessmen, however, brought about an economic recovery in the wake of wartime devastation. They began to invest money all over the world, including the Philippines. Today, in places like Makati and Ermita in Manila, Japanese businessman walk around as if they own the world and sometimes in their treatment of others convey a sense of their own crass commercialization to others. In consequence, images of Japanese businessmen are also changing in Philippine literature and films. It is hard to find personable and noble images of Japanese men as businessmen, like Tanabata or Hiroshi in Philippine literature and films set in after 1970s because of the tainted images of Japan money and lustful tourists.

By the same token, it is also difficult to locate images of Japanese men as lovers in Philippine literature and films, even though love is believed to be a universal sentiment. Due to their shy and awkward characteristics or probably problems in communication, it appears to be rather difficult for Japanese men to have an “equal” relationship with Filipina women. Of course, there are exceptions, such as Tanabata and Fas-ang in “Tanabata’s Wife”, or Hiroshi and Pilar in *Gatas sa Dibdib ng Kaaway*. The main theme of “*Tanabata’s Wife*” is Tanabata’s supreme devotion toward Fas-ang which includes mercy, patience, and humanity. Tanabata’s lonely soul as an immigrant, is gradually warmed by the presence of Fas-ang, but after she betrays him he shuts down his mind. Yet he accepts Fas-ang again when she returns to him. Tanabata is shy and sometimes awkward, but honest, hard working, and affectionate. Similarly, Hiroshi of *Gatas sa Dibdib ng Kaaway* is also depicted as an affectionate, gentle, and kind man. After all, Pilar chose Hiroshi, and made love to him. Their love making scene is very artistic and quite beautiful; there is no hint of violence, but rather an atmosphere of affection and benevolence. After Hiroshi dies, Pilar leaves the village with their son. Probably Pilar’s choice would have been controversial, but it is also motivated by true motherly love. The role of Hiroshi and his characteristics definitely makes this film more beautiful and stronger than those where Japanese characters are presented one-dimensionally. It is also worth emphasizing that (despite the more common stereotype of “samurai-spirit” and bushido”) an affectionate and gentle husband is completely compatible with the ideal of the traditional Japanese man.

By contrast, images of Japanese men in literature and films staged today, at least after the 1970s, do not project the delicate beauty of these two examples. It is possible that changes in the political and social environment of the Philippines may offer a reason. In 1972, former President Marcos promulgated martial law. During this period, Japan’s economy accelerated quite

markedly, and many people started enjoying overseas travel. Travel agencies in Japan considered Philippines to be an ideal destination for sightseeing because it is geographically close with just one hour time difference, and it was assumed that the implementation of martial law would make the Philippines safer for tourists. From the 1960s many nightclubs and go-go bars had also been built in Manila in order to entertain Japanese customers, as well as American soldiers and then foreign tourists.<sup>159</sup>

Many Japanese men traveled to the Philippines, especially to Manila, for adventure and investment, sometimes in shady businesses. Because they spent a lot on entertainment, Japanese travel agencies and Filipino promoters identified a substantial business opportunity. As a result, from the 1970s to the beginning of 1990s Filipina women flew to Japan to work as Japayuki, entertainers or barmaids.<sup>160</sup> As we have seen, the story of Maricris Sioson, tells how a Filipina entertainer is murdered by a yakuza, a Japanese gangster. It remains to be seen whether the images of Japanese men in Japanese literature, especially as lovers, will reflect these changing gender relationships.

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<sup>159</sup> Ohno, 41-42.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

## **CONCLUSION**

As Klein points out, the feelings of Filipino people towards Japanese men have changed gradually from “agony-hate” images generated by the war experience to admiration for businessmen, mostly in the earlier postwar period, and then to disappointment because of lustful or dirty businessmen or yakuza in the later period. The most remarkable feeling is their unstable feelings as a colonized society throughout the postwar period. Through this research, I realized the depth of the trauma of Filipino people created by the Japanese even now and, at the same time, I also understood that the Japanese were likewise traumatized by their nightmare-like past.

When I began this thesis, I assumed that ideas of “pan-Asianism” should have promoted shared feelings of community between Japan and the Philippines that had experienced colonization by Spain and the United States. Throughout this research, I was convinced that the most significant reason why Filipino people still retain negative images of the Japanese, mostly as brutal soldiers, is their experience of Japanese colonization, even though it was brief. Conversely, Japanese were inconsiderate toward Filipinos because they failed to appreciate their attitudes towards the Americans. The Japanese assumed that Americans would be the object of Filipino hatred, but this was not the case. I mentioned that Filipino perspectives toward the Japanese shifted from “anger-hate”, “admiration”, “profound ambivalence, or love-hate or self-pity.” In the future, I sincerely hope, this perspective will shift to “equal friendship.”

As I explained in my preface, writing this thesis has been a long and difficult task because I was beset by feelings of deep depression about the topic. Many times, I turned my back on the thesis and almost abandoned the project, trying to forget all the terrible things that the Japanese, my countrymen, did to Filipino people during the war and even in the post-war

period. But ultimately, I realized that I could not escape from the facts because I am the person who opened this Pandora's Box. I therefore have a responsibility to clean up this mess in my mind.

Many Japanese would probably feel that some Filipino books and films dealing with the war are too offensive, since the Japanese (mostly men) are depicted as totally heartless and brutal. Many times, I too fell into a trap that we could term self-pity, feeling that the Japanese had been unfairly represented. But at the same time, my emotions oscillated between self-hate or masochism as a Japanese national and my frustration and impatience with what I sometimes felt was a Filipino preoccupation with themselves as victims. Yet I sometimes thought that being seen as victimizers is much harder than seeing oneself as a victim.

To overcome this kind of oscillation in my thinking, I had to face my own ignorance. Although I am still ignorant and naïve in regard to many matters, the research for this thesis has been a deep learning opportunity, evaluating me to find my own position with regard to what I should believe and the ideas that I will support in the future. I learned many things from the books, poems, short stories and films that I researched for this thesis, but for me, the greatest pleasure was reading F. Sionil Jose's works and watching Gil M. Portes's two films. The profound ambivalences in these works gave me an opportunity to think about myself as a Japanese national and how I myself may contribute, even in a small way, to the history of our society as it moves forward to the future. Although this thesis marks the academic conclusion of my master's program, for me it is just a starting-point. Now, I feel I can enjoy Filipino (or Philippine) literature more than before. I also hope that more positive images of both Filipinos and the Japanese will appear in Filipino and Japanese literature in the years to come. It is

appropriate, therefore, to close with a prediction made seven years ago by F. Sionil Jose, who was such a formative influence in my work.

Japan will continue to be Asia's most powerful nation and maintain the world's second largest economy with China breathing at its neck. By the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan, too shall have gained wide spread acceptance in the region. The Filipinos who experienced the brutality of Japanese Occupation in World War 2 shall have dwindled, their influence on events as well as on the generations that succeeded them shall have diminished considerably...

It is very unlikely that Japan will embark again on a militarist adventure as had happened in the Thirties. There is no assurance that it will not, but the Japanese and their leaders have also changed. Many have traveled and studied abroad; furthermore, the Japanese are perhaps the best informed about the cultures and the attitudes of people everywhere—their vast media have done this. They have always had a sense of history as their motion pictures, literature and museums abundantly show. More than anything they will want to preserve the comforts they have today.

There is one caveat, however. The Japanese do not always behave rationally like they did in 1941. As a people, they act on the basis of mood which can change overnight. It was the mood for war in 1941 that got them into deep trouble. Hopefully, it is the mood for peace that will guide them well through the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Jose, *Soba, Senbei and Shibuya*, 154-155.

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