

Masculinity reborn: Chivalry, misogyny, potency and violence in the Philippines' Muslim South, 1899–1913

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This article offers an examination of the gendering of the Philippines' Muslim South under American military rule (1899–1913) through discourses of violence against women. It explores the exposition and discussion of cases involving abuse, murder, enslavement, and violence in both official and unofficial reports, which revealed a critical discourse of gender construction for both coloniser and colonised in Moro Province.

Introduction

In many ways the American colonial project in the Philippines was an experiment in changing performative roles. The advent of new technologies, the closing of the western frontier, the secularising effects of scientific discovery, and other hallmarks of modernity both contorted and problematised bourgeois Americans' self-image at the dawn of the twentieth century. These anxieties and unsettling changes produced intense efforts to redefine the foundational building blocks of both individual and national identities among America's intellectual and ruling elite.¹ No facet of modern American culture received more scrutiny, concern, and renovation than gender.

Recent years have witnessed a substantial increase in scholarly attention to changing notions of American masculinity at the turn of the century and its bearing on subsequent imperial projects. Gail Bederman's work, *Manliness and civilization: A cultural history of gender and race in the United States, 1880–1917*, for example, traces the trajectory of male gender from 'manliness' to 'masculinity' and examines its

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1 For excellent discussions of the anxieties of the time, see T.J. Jackson Lears, *No place of grace: Antimodernism and the transformation of American culture, 1880–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) and 'From salvation to self-realization: Advertising and the therapeutic roots of the consumer culture, 1880–1930', in *The culture of consumption: Critical essays in American history, 1880–1980*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983); Goran Blix, 'Charting the "transitional period": The emergence of modern time in the nineteenth century', *History and Theory*, 45 (2006): 51–71; Richard Hofstadter, 'Cuba, the Philippines, and manifest destiny', in *The paranoid style in American politics, and other essays* (New York: Knopf, 1965).

profound influence on the ‘discourse of civilization’. Bederman concludes that American masculinity ultimately served as the transcendent and defining feature confirming white, middle-class male evolutionary dominance and its status as the bearer of civilisation.² Kristin Hoganson, pursuing similar theories of modern gender anxiety, argues that in the late nineteenth century, the ‘renegotiation of male and female roles . . . helped push the nation into [the Spanish–American War] by fostering a desire for martial challenges,’ and ultimately ‘affected the rise and fall of the nation’s imperial impulse.’³ Jingoistic images of a feminised Cuba held hostage and abused by an old, aristocratic, and villainous Spain called forth a romantic and chivalrous response from Americans. Such images similarly engrossed Americans in their debate over the annexation of the Philippines. Anti-imperialists were routinely smeared as unmanly and lacking in the chivalrous virtues that defined true manhood. Advocates of imperialism also sought to instil similar masculine virtues among the feminised natives of the Philippines. As an extension of Bederman’s and Hoganson’s arguments, the imperial project in the Philippines turned into a philosophical battleground in which femininity, masculinity, and civilisation became inexorably linked and mutually contingent.

While such arguments risk a critique of perpetual Ameri-centrism or ‘a meditation on [the American] self rather than a window into cultural exchange and the bound-together entanglements of colonial relations’, examinations of gender, chivalry, and civilisation as topics of an interactive discourse do provide a window into the colonial experience beyond the exclusive production of metropolitan identities.⁴ A great deal of what has been termed ‘new imperial history’ has made significant strides in challenging narratives of resolute imperial projection and negligible indigenous agency. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, for example, offer a profound critique of mutually exclusive and/or dominant and subordinate colonial spheres. ‘Europe’s [or America’s] colonies were never empty spaces to be made over in Europe’s image or fashioned in its interests,’ they argue, ‘nor, indeed, were European states self-contained entities that at one point projected themselves overseas. Europe was made by its imperial projects, as much as colonial encounters were shaped by conflicts within Europe itself.’⁵ In an effort to eradicate these notions, the authors advocate including ‘metropole and colony in a single analytic field, addressing the weight one gives to causal connections and the primacy of agency in its different parts’, rather than casting coloniser and colonised as antagonistic binaries.⁶ Other scholars, such as Paul Kramer, Nicholas Thomas, Craig Reynolds, Tony

2 Gail Bederman, *Manliness and civilization: A cultural history of gender and race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

3 Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American manhood: How gender politics provoked the Spanish–American and Philippine–American wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 14, 200.

4 Paul Lyons, *American pacificism: Oceania in the U.S. imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 207–8.

5 Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, ‘Between metropole and colony: Rethinking a research agenda’, in *Tensions of empire: Colonial cultures in a bourgeois world*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 1.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 4. See also, Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Rethinking colonial categories: European communities and the boundaries of rule’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31, 1 (1989): 134–61 and *Carnal knowledge and imperial power: Race and the intimate in colonial rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

Day and many more, have advocated similar views in their work and created a radically different conceptualisation of colonial discourse.⁷

It is within this context that I present the following examination of the gendering of the Philippines' Muslim South under American military rule (1899–1913) through a prism of gender-based violence, and specifically violence against women. Cases of abuse, murder, enslavement, and violence against women and children in Moro Province provided critical discourses of gender construction. They also reiterated and affirmed notions of masculinity, chivalry, civilisation, and purpose among the colonisers. While such themes have been explored previously, military rule in Moro Province offers a particularly lucid example of the colonial dimensions of this gendered discourse and its effects on state building and social engineering in the Philippines' Muslim South. This study proposes to build on Hoganson's and Bederman's work by demonstrating vivid colonial encounters on the periphery — where such ideologies were put into practice — as opposed to focusing on broader representations of the Philippines in the metropole. Similarly, by focusing on the exclusivity of military rule on Moro Province, this study is able to make a targeted contribution to Donald Mrozek's examination of the 'cult of manliness' in the US military.⁸ It also attempts to make a gendered contribution to the elaborate works of Paul Kramer and Michael Salman, which examine race-making and bondage in the Philippines.⁹

While a great deal of preliminary colonial gendering took place in official reports to the Philippine Commission, the Census, and other state surveillance modalities, much of the discourse involving gender and colonialism in Moro Province is found in the local American press, and in the *Mindanao Herald* specifically. As the paper of record in the province, the *Herald* served as an important outlet for the American military regime. Fiercely loyal to the unique and independent nature of military colonisation in Mindanao and Sulu, the *Herald* printed reports, offered editorials, and provided an open forum for military administrators to disseminate information, craft narratives, and control conversations on a variety of topics. In this sense, the *Herald* offers an intimate and vastly more detailed look at gender and violence in Moro Province than do official reports in many cases. However, when put together, official and unofficial sources present a unique and compelling case for intersections

2002); as well as Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in question: Theory, knowledge, history* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

7 Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's culture: Anthropology, travel and government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Paul A. Kramer, *The blood of government: Race, empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Craig J. Reynolds, 'A new look at old Southeast Asia', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 54, 2 (1995): 419–46; Tony Day, *Fluid iron: State formation in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002); as well as, Tony Day and Craig J. Reynolds, 'Cosmologies, truth regimes, and the state in Southeast Asia', *Modern Asian Studies*, 34, 1 (2000): 1–55.

8 See Donald J. Mrozek, 'The habit of victory: The American military and the cult of manliness', in *Manliness and morality: Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America, 1800–1940*, ed. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), pp. 220–41.

9 Kramer, *The blood of government*; Michael Salman, *The embarrassment of slavery: Controversies over bondage and nationalism in the American colonial Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

of gender and violence as they pertain to gender-making and colonial tutelage in the Philippines' Muslim South.

Gender in Moro Province: An official view

While women were not a primary focus per se of early ethnological profiles of Moro Province, they did provide a ubiquitous backdrop that implicitly informed and guided the conceptual creation of both the physical and metaphysical realms of colonial space. That is, indigenous women served as a sort of barometer of civilisation and savagery while simultaneously providing a malleable subject that could be contorted and fitted into various contexts to affirm and reaffirm the nature of the colonial relationship. The initial establishment and typecasting of indigenous women in Moro Province is found primarily in Reports to the Philippine Commission, the colonial Census, and testimonies before senate committee hearings regarding the acquisition and pacification of the colony. Among these sources we find an overarching narrative of victimisation, but one that is not hegemonic. The colonial discourse of native misogyny and gender oppression in Moro Province is carefully mediated by other subtexts, including notions of feminine empowerment and a certain fluidity to gender identities that allowed Americans to remake gender as needed.

When imposing civilisation through colonial occupation, justifications are paramount. For Americans in the Philippines' Muslim South, the scourge of barbaric misogyny provided an apt validation for colonial tutelage. In 1902 the military Governor-General of the Philippines, Arthur MacArthur, declared to American legislators that the 'Moros are a Mohammedan people; they are a patriarchal people'.¹⁰ While patriarchal societies were not to be condemned necessarily, patriarchal power in the hands of barbarians was a particularly oppressive form of tyranny. Only when patriarchy could be tempered with chivalry, benevolence, and modernity could one ostensibly achieve 'the continuance of a kind, strong, paternal government'.¹¹

No practices raised more indignation among Americans than polygamy and slavery, which were often considered to be synonymous in Moro Province. 'Polygamy is universal among them,' reported the Philippine Census of 1903. 'The Koran permits four legal wives, but frequently all except one are slaves Wives are practically bought, the suitor paying an amount agreed upon to the family of the bride.'¹² Similar findings were reported to the Philippine Commission in 1900:

As for their marriages, the fathers or owners of the young girls rather sell them than turn them over as wives, only granting them to those who wish them on the payment of certain sums, greater or smaller, according to whether the family is more or less important and the girl more or less good looking. In general they demand \$30 to \$50 or more, besides the cost of the banquet.¹³

10 Affairs of the Philippine Islands, Hearings before the Committee on the Philippines of the United States Senate, 57th Congress, 1st Session, Doc. No. 331, Pt. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Press, 1902), pp. 1963.

11 Report of the Philippines Commission (hereafter cited as RPC), 1904, pt. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1905), p. 11.

12 Census of the Philippine Islands, vol. II (Washington, D.C.: United States Bureau of the Census, 1905), p. 565.

13 RPC, 1900, vol. III, p. 376.

In the minds of colonial officials such practices very quickly equated to slavery and human trafficking, which were the most repugnant of societal ills for a socially conscious bourgeois American. Officials in Moro Province established a connection between gender oppression and slavery conclusively by 1904. 'The Moros [are] proud, suspicious, and fanatical,' stated a report to the Philippines Commission. 'From time immemorial they had practiced polygamy; they had been accustomed to make raids upon other non-Christian tribes for the purpose of replenishing their stock of slaves.'¹⁴ Even courtship among them was a form of simulated or actual slave raiding, accompanied by a ceremonial 'carrying off of the bride' to the husband's village.¹⁵

As a consequence of this perceived commodification and objectification of women, Americans interpreted the Moros' domestic spaces as woefully inadequate:

Children wear little or no clothing in their homes . . . [though it was] not unusual to see the Moro women ornamented with rings and bracelets, the work of the native smiths who are skillful in molding brass and precious metals . . . they cannot be said to be cleanly. Their houses and surroundings are often in a filthy condition. The people fall far short of the standard of Mohammed, with whom cleanliness was said to be the foundation of religion . . . The food is prepared by the women in an exceedingly simple kitchen, which consists of little more than a diminutive fire over which one or two pots are placed. Cooking is frequently done beneath the house, or upon a small mound of earth on the floor of the living room.¹⁶

The perceived degradation of their domestic spaces infiltrated more than their surroundings, however, and also appeared to take a terrible toll on their physical bodies. 'Moro women spend much of their time indoors,' continued the Census, 'and are consequently more or less anemic, their lives averaging less than those of the men. They marry young, give birth to large families, and age rapidly.'¹⁷ Such observations are consistent with American Orientalist tendencies to probe and exhibit the domestic and interior spaces of the colonised. Inadequate sanitation, insufficient nutrition, poorly constructed housing and possessions, and other forms of non-modern living contained both the rationales supporting paternalist colonialism and the inherent terrors of biological and racial pathogens that threatened the white masculinity underpinning such paternalism.¹⁸

This discourse of victimisation was not totalising, however. Americans did insert at least two implicit caveats into their ethnological narratives that provided a certain amount of latitude to the making of gender in Moro Province. The first was to allow for particular manifestations of the matrifocal tendencies that frame many cultures in Southeast Asia.¹⁹ Despite the statements above, the Census of 1903 was also careful to

14 RPC, 1904, pt. 1, p. 9.

15 RPC, 1901, vol. III, p. 372.

16 Census, 1903, vol. II, pp. 563–4.

17 Ibid., p. 572.

18 See David Brody, *Visualizing American empire: Orientalism and imperialism in the Philippines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Warwick Anderson, *Colonial pathologies: American tropical medicine, race, and hygiene in the Philippines* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

19 See Suzanne A. Brenner, 'Why women rule the roost: Rethinking Javanese ideologies of gender and self-control', in *Bewitching women, pious men: Gender and body politics in Southeast Asia*, ed. Aihwa Ong and Michael G. Peletz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 19–50.

point out that among some tribes, 'divorce is easy. Husband and wife separate on mutual agreement, the woman returning to her people, taking with her all presents received from her husband during the wedded life.' In fact, 'the position of the women among Moros is rather high, in that they received kindly treatment and often affection from their husbands, and are consulted in matters pertaining to the family. Both parents appear to be fond of their children.'²⁰ This status even carried over into institutionalised legal practices. The Census similarly found that, while a 'woman cannot secure divorce on the ground of her husband's adultery. A man convicted of adultery is subject to a fine twice as heavy as that exacted from a woman,' and 'for the crime of fornication the man is punished twice as heavily as the girl ... Incest and carnal assault upon a young girl are punished with death.'²¹ Reports to the Philippine Commission offered similar findings, commenting on the ease of divorce and the extension of political rights and powers to both sexes.²² There was also a current of unease found in these sources regarding the possibility that Moro women might, through avenues of empowerment, be able to shed their femininity and assume a militant and androgynous form of savagery, thus upsetting gendered social categories and eroding peace in the colony.²³ However, institutional rights and the actual oppression of the subject are often two separate things, as Americans knew very well from their own history of slavery.

The second caveat to the Americans' narrative of gender oppression in Moro Province was a conspicuous non-recognition of potent sexuality among Moro men. While Moro women were certainly cast as victims of institutionalised polygamy and economic commodification, very rarely was this associated explicitly with vigorous or systematic sexual imposition on the part of Moro men. In fact, throughout the records Moro men appear rather asexual in terms of explicitly rapacious or virulent sexuality. Their particular forms of masculinity were rather expressed (and indeed celebrated) in the records in a variety of outwardly asexual contexts — militant acts of war, conquest of local environments, physique, etc.²⁴ This downplay of overt indigenous sexuality contrasted sharply with the Americans' bold pronouncements of their own boundless virility in the colony. This juxtaposition seems to strongly confirm Bederman's conclusions regarding the displacement of 'manliness' (character, discipline, sexual forbearance) with 'masculinity' (competitive, aggressive, sexual) during the Progressive Era.

This tendency to highlight American virility is particularly evident during the early years of the imperial encounter, when military officials were busy piecing together a coherent discourse of justified colonial rule to civilian authorities. Bold

20 Census, 1903, vol II, p. 565.

21 Ibid., p. 569.

22 RPC, 1900, v. III, pp. 372, 375.

23 See Michael Hawkins, 'Managing a massacre: Savagery, civility and gender in Moro Province in the wake of Bud Dajo', *Philippine Studies*, 58, 1 (2011): 81–103.

24 The 1903 Census, for example, took great care in describing the Moros' 'physical characteristics' including 'complexion', 'hair', and physical build. 'They are somewhat taller than the average Filipino,' recorded the Census, 'straight and well formed, and often strong and stockily built, with well-developed calves.' See, RPC, 1903, Pt. I, p. 81; RPC, 1901, v. III, p. 371; Census, 1903, v. I, p. 563; Hugh L. Scott, *Some memories of a soldier* (New York: Century Company, 1928), pp. 312, 283; Col. Owen J. Sweet, 'The Moro, the fighting-man of the Philippines', *Harper's Weekly*, 9 June 1906, p. 0808d; etc.

allusions to American sexual desire were of course buried in more polished and revised records such as the colonial Census or Reports to the Philippine Commission. However, such revelations did emerge prominently in less structured venues. The quick back-and-forth of senate committee hearings on 'Affairs in the Philippine Islands' elicited a number of revealing admissions that bespoke a particularly virulent strain of American sexuality in Moro Province.

Perhaps the boldest among them were reports by Cpt. Celwyn E. Hampton of the 21st Infantry and Cpt. Samuel Seay Jr., 23rd Infantry, Commanding Officer of Native Affairs in Siassi (Sulu archipelago). Captain Hampton was asked by the committee to clear up some ambiguities concerning the practice of prostitution in Siassi. He admitted that there were indeed such women present, but emphasised the fact that they came and practised their trade by their own accord and were not compelled in any way by colonial authorities. Their 'houses were the property of private citizens and were rented by the women themselves,' he stated. 'These women came . . . from Borneo, and entirely upon their own initiative and responsibility. No American, to the best of my knowledge, had anything to do with bringing them . . . [A]uthorities did not rent houses nor bring girls from anywhere to stock them.'²⁵ Hampton's repeated emphasis on the women's agency was certainly meant to draw a distinction between the Moro's alleged practice of forced concubinage and the supposedly freer, healthier expressions of American sexuality. Hampton pushed this point further by providing a sense of racial exclusivity to the sexual encounters:

An effort was made to prevent the operation of prostitutes in other parts of the town because no supervision could be had over these free lances in the business. . . . I believe only soldiers were allowed access to the houses. Natives, Chinese, and casual visitors were excluded as a necessary sanitary precaution The entrance of the natives was very properly prevented, but the sentinels were certainly not there to prevent the escape of the women. These came, apparently, of their own free will, and, so far as ever I knew, they remained for the same reason.²⁶

Implicit in Hampton's testimony is an abiding assumption that these women naturally preferred sexual encounters with Americans, given their decision to stay despite being cordoned off from other patrons, and that sexual encounters with Americans were naturally more 'sanitary'. In this sense, consent, pleasure, and health served to define the acceptability of illicit sexuality in Moro Province according to Hampton's testimony.²⁷

Given the historical setting of these records, one would expect to find some kind of moral compunction regarding such scandalous issues. Hampton, however, displays none. In fact, he goes on to construe the Moros' collective sexual morality as prudish or fanatical and a hindrance to effective colonial rule. He stated:

25 Affairs of the Philippine Islands, pp. 1872.

26 Ibid., pp. 1872–3.

27 Warwick Anderson provides a wonderful examination of American fears of white degeneracy and 'colonial breakdown' in his piece, 'The trespass speaks: White masculinity and colonial breakdown', *American Historical Review*, 102, 5 (1997): 1343–70.

Owing to the customs and the religion of the people, prostitution is practically unknown among them, and any interference, however slight, with their women is resented in the hottest and most savage manner. Their views are almost unbelievable to an American who has not had the opportunity to observe them, so accustomed are we to the greatest latitude in this as in other matters.

In one or two instances in my knowledge the report was made by Sulu women that some of the soldiers had made improper advances to them. The facts showed that the men had not contemplated anything very serious, at least in our view of the matter, but the result was to set the whole community in an uproar. I have not the least doubt that a few serious attempts would have been sufficient provocation for war. Having, among such a peculiar people, a garrison of 700 or 800 men, accustomed to unlimited liberty at home, it should be easy to imagine that a well-controlled body of professional prostitutes might be received with satisfaction as a most necessary safety valve and remain to be the recipients of consideration as public benefactors.²⁸

In Hampton's view, American sexual freedom, with its 'the greatest latitude' and 'unlimited liberty', stood as a stalwart sign of progressive civilisation, while the Moros 'hottest and most savage' reaction to it was simply indicative of their relative civilisational lag. In this sense, Hampton did not regard the Moros' protection of women as a sign of virtuous chivalry, but rather as evidence of a defensive sexual inadequacy relative to American potency — an inadequacy that caused them to oppress women under the guise of chivalry, but without its nobler intentions or healthy sexual expression.

Hampton's assessments were confirmed by Cpt. Samuel Seay, Jr. in the same hearing. Though somewhat more matter-of-factly, Seay offered an identical evaluation:

In order to prevent the spread of venereal diseases among the men and to avoid armed conflict with the natives (who being Mohammedans fiercely resented any tampering with their women by Christians) five Japanese women were permitted under rigid sanitary regulations to ply their vocation. No native was permitted to enter their house.²⁹

Seay offered the same themes: Moro religious fanaticism, agency on the part of the prostitutes, the inevitability of American sexuality, the sanitary nature of the encounter, and a sense of racial exclusivity, thus preserving the potency and sexual spheres of American civilisation and colonial rule. Both men exuded a sense of overtly sexual masculinity rather than a moralistically restrained sense of classical manliness.

Perhaps even more explicit yet was an exchange among Senators Charles H. Dietrich, Albert J. Beveridge, David B. Culberson, and an unidentified witness regarding the mixed gender incarceration of insurgents during pacification operations in the Philippines. Though somewhat lengthy, the following exchange is remarkable in its candid display of the Americans' fascination with native sexuality and its juxtaposition with American potency.

28 Affairs of the Philippine Islands, pp. 1872–3.

29 Ibid., p. 1873.

By Senator Dietrich:

Q. Filipino people love to go in bathing a great deal, do they not? – A. Yes, sir.

Q. And a great many go in together, do they not? – A. The native women have a skirt that is, well, 40 or – I do not know what the length of it is – but they wrap it around them, and they take it here on one side and they go in to bathe in that way. They go right in and wash their skirt and bathe at the same time. They do that most every morning.

Q. But the men, women, and children all bathe together? – A. Yes, sir; with clothes over them. The men wear kind of a G string over them; the same thing they wear all day long.

Q. What I want to get at is this: Men and women mingle more promiscuously together, in bathing and at other places, than they do in this country? – A. Yes, sir.

Q. So this confining of a woman among men could not have been as much of a punishment as such a thing would be over here in this country? – A. I consider that that woman being put in the guardhouse with these men was as bad as any of the water-cure cases that I saw; any of the water cures I ever saw.

By Senator Beveridge:

Q. Did you, during your considerable stay in the Philippine Islands, ever observe a number of men and one or two women together in the same house? I am talking about perfectly proper homes. Did you not see such things in houses, and did you not see men and women together in boats and going long distances away together? Is not that a very common sight in the Philippines? – A. For men and women to go together in that way?

Q. To be together; yes. – A. Yes, sir.

Senator Culberson. But you would regard putting a woman in a guardhouse with a lot of men for three weeks as a different thing?

The Witness. Yes, sir.

By Senator Dietrich:

Q. But she was with native prisoners? – Yes, sir.

Q. Not with Americans? – A. No, sir.

Senator Beveridge. Did the woman make any complaint?

The Witness. No, I don't think she had grit enough to. She was frightened to death all the time she was in there.

Senator Dietrich. How do you know she was frightened to death?

The Witness. She appeared to be every time I went in there. She would move way over in the corner, and appeared to be frightened to death.

By Senator Beveridge:

Q. She did not appear to be frightened to death at her fellow-countrymen? – A. No, sir.

Q. She was frightened at you? – A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did she make any objection to being with her fellow-countrymen? – A. No, sir.

Witness excused.

The concerted effort to establish a narrative of benign indigenous sexuality and the immense and even terrifying potential sexuality of Americans is plainly manifest. While these senators were certainly attempting to downplay or excuse improprieties committed during the pacification of the islands, their queries and intentions were not so provincial in scope. This exchange demonstrates a carefully crafted discourse much more profound and transcendent than the gender-specific incarceration of insurgents. It speaks of a particular American masculinity, articulated and manifested through the asymmetrical power relations of colonial rule. It creates masculinities deeply intertwined with notions of civility and savagery, modernity and archaism, global dynamism and stagnant locality. As Vicente Rafael has pointed out:

The Tropics opened up a terrain for the testing and validation of white masculinity at a moment of fantasised crisis stemming from the proximity of ‘contaminating’ nonwhite and nonmale others. The romance of empire was thus a means for shoring up an endangered white masculinity at home by spectacularising the aura of its sovereign virility abroad.³⁰

In this way, the American fascination with violence against women in Moro Province must be analysed through two related concepts. While Moro women were cast as victims of a capricious and oppressive form of indigenous patriarchal despotism, their subjugation had to be carefully circumscribed as typically asexual to allow space for American masculinity and sexual potency. Americans, therefore, could be the chivalrous protectors of womanhood in Moro Province, thus justifying their colonial occupation and tutelage, while simultaneously exercising a virile form of masculinity that redefined American exceptionalism at a time of severe identity crisis. This two-sided narrative manifested with remarkable clarity in the local press in Moro Province, where unofficial discourses of masculinity, savagery, misogyny, and civility informed colonial rule in profound ways.

Violence, chivalry, potency and inadequacy in the local press

American portrayals and discussions of violence against women in the popular press in Moro Province had remarkably similar themes to those found in governmental reports, but with a flair and level of detail not found in the official records. The local press seemed to be the literary stage upon which narratives of savagery, civility, chivalry and misogyny played themselves out for a mass audience. As the primary, and indeed only, significant news periodical during military rule in Moro Province, the *Mindanao Herald* became an invaluable outlet for disseminating extra-governmental knowledge about the social dynamics of the colony and their correlation with an overarching colonial narrative. Unlike the official records, the *Herald* extended very little recognition to matrifocal elements in Moro culture, but rather opted for a narrative of overwhelming victimisation. This victimisation manifested primarily within two overarching themes. The first, like that found in the official records discussed above, was a cold commodification of women by indigenous men as objects of seizure and exchange. The second theme cast indigenous misogyny as

30 Vicente L. Rafael, *White love and other events in Filipino history* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 55.

the unfortunate result of a strong virile American masculine presence, and the inevitable inadequacy by comparison. This theme was much more complex in its articulation, but one that principally derived from a sense of colonial narcissism and a need to bolster and redefine American masculinity.

The commodification of women in Moro Province was perhaps the most sensationalised aspect of gender oppression investigated by Americans. This was due in part to an American fascination with slavery.³¹ Stories of slave raiding, kidnapping, piracy, damsels in distress, heroes, and justice on the high seas provided fertile ground for mythic recreations of both chivalrous and villainous manifestations of manhood that were no longer evident or possible in modern America.

Perhaps the best example of the Americans' fascination with misogyny, slavery, and chivalry is found in a 1904 case of slave raiding. According to reports in the *Mindanao Herald*, on 5 March 1904 three Moros sailed from Jolo to the village of Piacan on Mindanao's Zamboanga peninsula. While yet a little way out the Moros called to a local man named Butus with his two children and inquired about buying some betel nut. Butus agreed and the Moros came ashore. However, upon disembarking 'two of their number rushed upon Butus and held him while the third member of the party seized the two children and forced them to get into the vinta [native boat]'. Eventually released, Butus ran to his home and retrieved a spear. By the time he returned, however, the Moros were too far away; though 'his arrival had the effect of diverting their attention from their two captives, and the little boy, taking advantage of his opportunity, jumped over-board and swam ashore. The little girl, being too young to help herself in this manner, was forced to remain in the vinta.'

Butus immediately reported the incident to Rajah Muda Mandi, a well-respected Muslim authority and close ally of the Americans. His involvement was quickly capitalised upon as an object lesson illustrating the boundaries and qualifications of civility and savagery. According to the paper, 'Rajah Muda was highly indignant about the matter.' This was to be expected, of course, since the Rajah was 'well known' as a 'highly civilised and enlightened Moro [who] prohibited slavery throughout his dominions'. His righteous indignation and immediate cooperation were welcome and encouraging signs to colonial authorities in Moro Province. The Rajah promptly reported the matter to American Governor John Finley, who 'at once instituted a search for the missing child'.³²

31 As early as March 1899 the *Chicago Daily Tribune* (*CDT*) and *New York Times* (*NYT*) began printing articles eagerly anticipating the declaration of 'Another Emancipation Proclamation' in the Philippines. William McKinley was compared to Abraham Lincoln with his 'opportunity to be entered in history as a slave liberator'. (See, for instance, 'Conditions in Sulu Islands', *NYT*, 26 May 1901, p. 5; 'Plans for abolishing Philippine slavery', *NYT*, 21 Dec. 1901, p. 8; 'America abrogates treaty with Moros', *NYT*, 15 Mar. 1904, p. 5; 'Slavery in the Philippines', *CDT*, 5 Mar. 1899, p. 50). However, despite their righteous indignation and frequent condemnations, Americans demonstrated a kind of morbid curiosity and fascination with slavery. Colonial officials and ethnographers spent a great deal of time observing, documenting, examining, and classifying Moro servitude. The United States public was similarly entranced. Americans in St. Louis flocked in anticipation to see 'for the first time . . . human being[s] held in slavery' at the 1904 World's Fair ('Slaves at St. Louis Fair', *NYT*, 5 May 1904, p. 3). For a deeper discussion of the subject, see Salman, *The embarrassment of slavery*.

32 'Kidnapped', *Mindanao Herald* (*MH*), 12 Mar. 1904, pp. 1–2.

The girl's eventual recovery was much celebrated in the *Mindanao Herald*, which seized the rescue as an opportunity to reinforce at least three fundamental points regarding American masculinity and tutelary colonialism in Moro Province. The first was a firm assertion of American chivalry and its power to protect womanhood. The article's first line declared: 'The prompt and vigorous methods that are being taken to suppress slavery and child stealing in this Province are well illustrated by the arrest of the three Moros who stole a little girl from the village of Piacan.' Despite the relative insignificance of the child in terms of familial influence or economic standing, Americans spared neither expense nor effort to secure her recovery. According to the article, Governor Hugh L. Scott even 'went personally to the island of Pata' in search of the maiden.³³ Governor Finley's vigorous actions similarly impressed the paper's writers, who declared, 'Governor Finley, to judge by the manner in which he prosecutes the search for slaves and their captors, has made up his mind to make slavery a thing of the past in this province.'³⁴ By casting American military officials and the powerful colonial apparatuses at their disposal as enforcers of a chivalric code, the local press attempted to create images of a righteous, paternalistic masculinity — a masculinity that could be trusted, emulated, and used as a template for colonial tutelage.

Of course righteous American masculinity was difficult to define or quantify without a clear and disturbing alternative. On this second point, the paper excelled. Articles concerning the capture and prosecution of the slave raiders provided abundant and vivid details of abuse, commodification, and warped notions of masculine potency. The slave raiders were portrayed as brutish misogynists, diluted in their manhood with a sense of false potency. In two separate articles the paper related the child's harrowing experience in which 'the Moros tied her by the arms, feet and neck and threw her in the bottom of the boat'. She further testified that her captor 'had beaten her whenever he spoke to her' though 'she did not understand him'.³⁵ Americans initially felt that this was a clear case of slave raiding. The paper even provided a small chart of 'the ruling prices in the slave market' to demonstrate the industry's cold commodification of human beings. The kidnappers, however, recoiled at the accusation of base slave raiding, and argued that there was much greater significance to the abduction than simple human trafficking. The paper reported that the leader of the band, one Alam, had 'stolen the girl in order to marry her and that he was looking for a chief to take her before so that he could get married. That this was a Moro custom'.³⁶ 'I did not steal this girl,' Alam insisted to the Court of First Instance in Zamboanga, 'I merely ordered my men to bring her into my vinta that she might look upon me and be inspired with love for me.' His accomplices, Milajam and Tangigi, corroborated his testimony, 'stating that Alam had told them he wanted to marry the girl'.³⁷

At the conclusion of the trial Judge Powell stated flatly 'the impossibility of believing the testimony of the accused in regard to Alam's intention to marry the

33 'Kidnappers captured', *MH*, 2 Apr. 1904, pp. 1–2.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 1.

35 *Ibid.*; 'Prompt justice', *MH*, 23 Apr. 1904, pp. 1–2.

36 'Kidnappers captured', *MH*, 2 Apr. 1904, p. 2.

37 'Prompt justice', *MH*, 23 Apr. 1904, p. 1.

girl — she not being of marriageable age, even for a people given to early marriage'. Rather, it 'was evident that these men were engaged in the business of capturing people and selling them into slavery'. Alam received 12 years at hard labour and a 500-dollar fine; Milajam and Tangigi each received 10 years' hard labour and a 100-dollar fine.³⁸

Given the circumstances of the case, it seems strangely counter-intuitive that the colonial courts and the media wing of the colonial regime would forego such an ample opportunity to characterise Moro savagery as sexually deviant, with hints of paedophilia, abuse, and innocence lost. While the paper may have hinted at these things, the definitive closure of the case solidly debunked such notions, opting instead for a narrative of cold, asexual commodification. When viewed within a larger discourse of reborn American masculinity with particularly exclusive claims on potent modern sexuality, however, the framing of the story begins to make sense. American courts determined that Alam's abduction of the girl was a business decision rather than a sexual impulse. This portrayal fit well with the Americans' notions of themselves and their colonial wards — Americans as masculine and sexually potent paternal figures, and Moros as shrewd potential capitalists, whose evolution into modernity was tied to their integration with market economies.³⁹

The third point emphasised by the paper was one of noble but ultimately inadequate Moro attempts at chivalry. This point was much subtler, but certainly just as pervasive. All three articles reporting on the case made careful mention of Moro cooperation in the investigation and apprehension of the kidnappers; however, all Moro contributions were portrayed as ultimately inadequate. When recounting the initial abduction, for example, the paper wrote eloquently of the father's mighty '[struggle] with his captor' and how he 'tried to draw his bolo'. Yet, when the 'Moros held him tight and threatened to kill him if he did not drop his weapon ... he finally did.' In the end, his most effective move, as discussed by the paper, was to report the incident to the colonial authorities, which ultimately recovered his lost child.⁴⁰

Similarly, much was made of Rajah Muda Mandi's outrage over the incident and his righteous efforts to recover the child. The paper described his use of contacts and access to information networks with glowing approval, but always mingled with the inevitable spectre of inadequacy: 'Mandi entered diligently upon the search, sending messengers or going personally to every place at which the kidnappers would be likely to put in for food or water on their way to Jolo, and after many disappointments he was finally able to report to the Governor . . . that the child had been kidnapped by a Moro named Alam, and taken to the Island of Pata, near Jolo.' Acting on this information, Governor Hugh L. Scott 'went personally to the island . . . but was unable to find anyone named Alam.' At that point Governor Scott took control of the operation and 'transferred the search to the Commanding Officer' at Siassi, who later found the girl 'in the mountains of the Island of Lapac' and '[captured] the kidnappers on the island of Banaran'.⁴¹ While it can be inferred from the article that Rajah Mandi's

38 Ibid., p. 2.

39 See, Michael Hawkins, 'Imperial historicism and American military rule in the Philippines' Muslim South', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 39, 3 (2008): 411–29.

40 'Kidnapped', *MH*, 12 Mar. 1904, pp. 1–2.

41 'Kidnappers captured', *MH*, 2 Apr. 1904, pp. 1–2.

efforts were almost certainly indispensable in narrowing the search and ultimately recovering the child, the narrative of events presented suggests a larger and much more profound statement — indigenous effort, inadequacy, failure, followed by American chivalry, power/potency, and success.

This narrative of failed or inadequate indigenous masculinity is ubiquitous throughout the *Mindanao Herald's* coverage. Typically it took on two forms. The first form involved cases of stinging rejection by women and subsequent irrational violence against them. Take, for example, a 1904 case near Davao in which a local man 'found his wife in a very compromising position with another native; [and] maddened by the sight, he drew his bolo and slew them both and then went to Davao and surrendered himself to the authorities'.⁴² Or perhaps a 1905 case, where a 'Moro Constabulary man' in Zamboanga suspected his wife 'of undue intimacy with an American soldier'. Rather than confronting the soldier, the man beat his wife, who then reported it to colonial authorities. 'Crazed by jealousy,' the man then 'murdered ... his wife, shooting her through the body with a .45 calibre revolver, and then turned the weapon upon himself'.⁴³

There was also the 1908 case of Geroncio Enriquez, which was perhaps more typical of such cases reported, in which he accosted his sister-in-law and another woman 'in a banana grove as the women were returning from their daily bath in the river, making improper advances'. The women resisted and 'he thereupon slashed [his sister-in-law's] arm with a bolo'. She managed to run 'some distance [but] he followed her up and dealt her another blow on the back of the neck, almost severing her head from her body'. The other woman 'ran screaming for help but was overtaken by the murderer and fearfully hacked, one blow severing the right hand at the wrist'. Such was his shame and humiliation, however, that Enriquez was not satisfied with his violence against the two women, but rather 'ran to his own house and meeting his four-year-old boy on the way cut his head off with one slash of the bolo'. In the end, Enriquez took his own life as well when he 'drew the bolo across his own throat'.⁴⁴ Irrational savagery as a result of inadequate masculinity provides the overarching narrative of the piece. Such incidents are of course highly subjective and open to interpretation and inquiry in a variety of contexts — mental illness, indigenous forms of retributive justice, substance abuse, reactions to new forms of colonial power, etc. However, none of these other forms of inquiry made their way into the article. Rather, this, and other similar articles, chose to put forth a starkly differentiated narrative of inadequate native masculinity and the need for a strong paternal presence to control it.

The second overarching way in which inadequate indigenous masculinity was conveyed in the *Mindanao Herald* was through stories of noble but ultimately failed attempts at chivalry. Such accounts were particularly useful in their ability to show certain forms of encouraging colonial mimesis while maintaining the asymmetry of colonial rule. In 1905, for example, there was the case of Private Maximo Alberto, a member of the 49th Company, Philippine Scouts, in Cotabato who 'entered the

42 'Murder at Davao', *MH*, 6 Feb. 1904, p. 1.

43 'Murder and suicide in Magay', *MH*, 9 Dec. 1905, p. 2.

44 'Triple tragedy at Caldera Bay', *MH*, 13 June 1908, p. 1.

house of a native about six o'clock on the evening of April 19th and demanded that one of the women there go with him. The woman refused, whereupon the soldier drew his revolver and threatened to kill her'. The local indigenous police were summoned and they attempted to arrest the suspect. However, the man 'refused to surrender and in the struggle which ensued both policemen were shot, one receiving a dangerous wound in the head and his companion a bullet in the right leg which shattered the bone'. Alberto then proceeded 'through the town, shooting at every person he met. The people ran in all directions and he soon had the streets to himself'. That is, until 'he ran in the direction of the post' where a Private Morse had received 'orders to stop him'. 'Alberto approached, firing as he advanced,' but his audacity was undone by Private Morse, who 'took careful aim and fired at him, killing him instantly.' Morse then called for the 'corporal of the guard and reported: "By order of the commanding officer, I have stopped that native soldier."⁴⁵ In this case, Morse's chivalric defence of the woman was almost certainly inadvertent. He did not kill Alberto to avenge the woman's slighted honour, yet the reported details of the event provided a sort of symbolic rendering of gendered American colonialism in Moro Province. The fact that the indigenous members of the local police force, who actually witnessed the gendered nature of the assault, ultimately failed to exact justice spoke deeply concerning a sense of inadequate masculinity. Similarly, though Private Morse did not witness the gendered dynamics of the assault, he was, by virtue of his potent masculinity, compelled to exact lethal justice nonetheless. A similar case was reported in 1905 in which a Moro 'had recently murdered his wife' and attempted to attack a Private A.B. Payne of the American Troop K in Jolo. Though Payne was ignorant of the Moro's crime, in the course of their altercation he killed his assailant, thus exacting justice and providing another profound metaphor for the panoptic nature of American colonialism.⁴⁶

Even in rarely reported cases where Americans committed acts of misogyny and violence in Moro Province, the reports were still inundated with an overarching narrative of inadequate indigenous masculinity. Take, for example, the remarkable case of Private Fay Riley of K Company, 6th Infantry in Magay. According to the paper, on the night of 26 September 1906 Private Riley 'entered the house of Halima, a young Moro woman, and made an indecent proposition to her'. The woman, a former public school teacher, 'indignantly rejected his offer and ordered him from the house'. Infuriated, Riley 'grabbed hold of her and attempted to accomplish his purpose by force'. She 'stoutly resisted, but was no match for her assailant who seized her by the hair and dragged her down stairs and out of the house. Upon reaching the ground Riley drew his revolver and threatened to kill her if she did not submit to his desires'. Soon a crowd gathered to watch the altercation. 'Riley thereupon released hold of the woman and turning upon the crowd deliberately fired three shots from his revolver,' one of which struck an onlooker. As he attempted to flee from the scene Riley was pursued by a local policeman named Juan Francisco. He managed to escape, however, because, as the paper wryly reported, Francisco 'apparently did not permit his courage to outstrip his feet, and several citizens'. A similar failed apprehension took place only

45 'Private Morse stopped him', *MH*, 29 Apr. 1905, pp. 1–2.

46 'Moro attacks sentinel', *MH*, 7 Oct. 1905, p. 1.

seconds later when another local policeman named Jacinto Marquez ‘rushed to intercept the flying desperado’. According to the report, ‘Riley fired a shot at him and the policeman dropped to the ground.’ His action was misplaced, however, since ‘he was not shot, but having a vivid imagination thought he was’. Riley was later apprehended on the ‘military reservation’ and confined to a guard house.⁴⁷ He later received a paltry sentence of 18 months for ‘illegal use of firearms’ and the wounding of the bystander.

Though Riley’s actions, by any consistent American standard at the time, could be considered savage and misogynistic in the extreme, the coverage in the *Mindanao Herald* was much more concerned with the failure of indigenous masculinity and native cowardice than the actual crime. In fact, the levity with which the paper poked fun at perceived indigenous cowardice gave the article a light, almost unserious tone. Even when discussing the gravity of Riley’s crime, it was ultimately passed off as anomalous. The paper pointed out that the ‘officers and men of the 6th infantry strongly condemn Riley’s crime,’ and that the ‘behavior of this regiment has been a matter of favorable comment throughout the community, and it is particularly unfortunate that its brilliant record should be marred by the misdeeds of one man.’⁴⁸ Again, the paper’s purpose was not to report the details of a particular incident in Moro Province, but rather to convey and confirm a particular discourse of inadequate indigenous masculinity; one which, even in the course of righteous acts, could not stand before American potency.

Conclusion

Though military rule in Moro Province lasted for only fourteen years before transitioning to civilian government and ‘Filipinisation’ in 1913, politico-military colonialism in the Philippines’ Muslim South was much more significant than its temporal duration might suggest. Moro Province served as a sort of uniquely focused laboratory wherein changing discourses of Americanism could be experimented with on a small scale. As the periphery of a distant colonial periphery, and governed by a set of virtually autonomous military administrators with atypical wards (‘non-Christian’ or ‘savage’), Moro Province allowed for a controlled setting wherein performative gender roles could be created, played out, manipulated, and established or remade as circumstances dictated. The relatively direct coherence of colonial rule allowed rather candid and lucid manifestations of the Americans’ evolving discourses on themselves and their colonial wards. This is certainly not to say that Moros and others did not resist these efforts; in fact, resistance and counter-narratives were often so subtly clever that it became difficult to determine who was remaking whom, and for what purpose. However, as this study attempts to demonstrate, the conversations American imperialists had about and with their colonial wards in Moro Province manifest a remarkably transparent gendering of a circumscribed colonial realm. Masculinity, femininity, chivalry, misogyny, civilisation, and savagery were all indicative of a much more protracted process of reinvention of self among Americans at a critical period in their national self-consciousness.

47 ‘Shooting affray in Magay’, *MH*, 29 Sept. 1906, pp. 1–2.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 2.