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The Lost City: Carmen Guerrero Nakpil and the Battle for Manila 1945

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Introduction

Last year I started to organize the group of scholars for the research project titled *The Truths and Memories of the Battle for Manila 1945: Area Studies for Peace*, which endeavors to restore and reconstruct the memories of the Battle for Manila 1945 among Japanese public as well as to start further dialogue between the three peoples on the truths and the memories of the battle. The project will be financially supported by the Japan Society for Promotion of Science up until March 2011. An unexpectedly early achievement of our project was the collaboration with making of an award-winning documentary film titled “Remembering the Battle for Manila,” which was aired last October in Japan. Last March we had the opportunity to show its trial version in English exactly here at the Escaler Hall of the Ateneo de Manila University, holding a workshop titled “Truths

and Memories of World War II: The Nanjing Massacre and the Battle for Manila,” thanks to the co-sponsorship of the Ateneo Center for Asian Studies.¹

I know it will be much more exciting for all of you to see the 110 minutes film but today I want to present another topic in order to show the significance of the issue, without going into the factual details of the battle itself, focusing on the very strange and seemingly unrelated text published in 1976 by Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, the writer who says she herself is suffering PTSD from the battle’s experiences.²

Lollobrigida’s Manila 1976

It was in 1975 Gina Lollobrigida, an Italian and Hollywood superstar actress then turning-to-be a professional photographer was commissioned by First Lady Mrs. Imelda Romualdez Marcos to visit the Philippines and shoot photographs for a couple of coffee table books, *The Philippines* (1976) and *Manila* (1976)³. By then, people had already started grumbling about the broken promises Marcos made when he declared martial law in September 1972. The couple’s masculine regime, however, seemed invincible. Taking advantage of the enforced calm prevailing over the metropolis and chosen tropical resorts, Malacañang Palace was promoting tourism with a craze. For this purpose Imelda Marcos invited Gina Lollobrigida, whose trip to the Philippines and book projects were to be financed by the Philippine National Bank.

The two titles were printed in Florence, Italy to be published in

¹ Satoshi Nakano, "Battle for Manila: A Japanese View," TRUTHS AND MEMORIES OF WORLD WAR II: THE NANJING MASSACRE AND THE BATTLE FOR MANILA, March 18, 2008, Escaler Hall, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights campus, Quezon City, the Philippines.

² Carmen Guerrero Nakpil. *Legends & Adventures*. San Juan, Metro Manila, Philippines: Published and exclusively distributed by Circe Communications, Inc. (Nakpil Pub.), 2007, 145.

³ Gina Lollobrigida and Carmen Guerrero Nakpil. *The Philippines*. Liechtenstein: Sarima, 1976.; Gina Lollobrigida and Carmen Guerrero Nakpil. *Manila*. Liechtenstein: Sarima, 1976.

1976 from an obscure publisher in the microstate Liechtenstein “for the world.” Actual distribution was very limited. Copies of *The Philippines* can be found in several libraries, while *Manila* could hardly be found in any libraries except Columbia University in New York where I had a chance to see the volume, which had a stamp of Philippine Consulate General Library on the front page.

Manila was full of regrettably unimpressive photographs, which were most possibly taken by the two young German photographers embedded with the actress, showing clichéd tourist subjects as well as facets of modern metropolitan lives such as the UP students not rioting but playing cards or cheerfully playing the guitar, Makati Medical Center and rising skyscrapers, joyful workplaces of clean factories, and of course Mrs. Imelda Marcos posing in front of the brand new Philippine Cultural Center. Certainly they are in accord with the official representations of the New Society in a state of euphoria. The postscript by the actress titled “My Manila” only confirms stereotyped self-image of foreign visitors as tempted by “a carefree and relaxed atmosphere” of the metropolis under martial law:

In Manila, even the policemen played the guitar and sang and the people stayed up very late, talking and laughing and simply being themselves... Talk of *la dolce vita*, that's what they have in Manila --- the good life.⁴

The Philippines and *Manila* each opens with an introductory essay, which was very opposite to Lollobrigida's boring postscript in its rhetoric, energy, and intensity. The author was Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, who was born in 1922 into the Guerreros of Ermita, undisputedly one of the most outstanding ilustrado families that have produced such prominent scholars, artists, doctors, journalists, and even a bishop.⁵ Nakpil herself has long been the leading Filipino female journalist and columnist whose recently published second memoir *Legends & Adventures* (2007),⁶ a sequel to the

⁴ Lollobrigida and Nakpil. *Manila*, n.p..

⁵ Wilfrido Maria Guerreros. *The Guerreros of Ermita: Family History and Personal Memoirs*. Quezon City: New Day, 1988.

⁶ Nakpil. *Legends & Adventures*.

first one *Myself, Elsewhere* (2006),⁷ gives us her detailed account on the tense and troublesome making of these two coffee table books.

Though having been a personal friend of Ferdinand Marcos and supported his presidency during the first term (1965-69), the second term political storm convinced Nakpil to join the ranks of dissident journalists. After its declaration (September 21, 1972), however, Nakpil decided to make a deal with Marcos to secure the release of her son-in-law, or her daughter (former Miss International) Gemma's husband Antonio Araneta. Then she had no choice but to accept whatever assignments commissioned by Malacañang such as the secretary-general of the Writers Union of the Philippines, the UNESCO representative, the director-general of Technology Resource Center, and so on. Writing introductory essays to *The Philippines* and *Manila* was but a tiny addition to these assignments in Nakpil's "peonage under Marcos."⁸

According to Nakpil, Lollobrigida and the party came back to Manila after touring around the country with a bunch of photographs "mostly of beaches, forests, palm trees and waterfalls⁹... [t]he great majority of the photos were of the Tasaday, a tiny tribe then recently discovered and patronized by Manda Elizalde [Manuel Elizalde Jr.]"¹⁰ Nakpil was furious while Lollobrigida complained Nakpil's text, written separately without even seeing the photos, did not match her photos, arguing Nakpil did not "know what Europeans are interested in," that the book was for the European market and that Europeans were not interested in Filipinos living modern lives. As a staunch nationalist Nakpil insisted the book should be about not "a Stone Age tribe in the jungles of Mindanao" but the "45 million people who don't live in trees."¹¹

Split was so deep and the women loudly disputed every time they

⁷ Carmen Guerrero Nakpil. *Myself, Elsewhere*. San Juan, Metro Manila: Nakpil Publishing, 2006.

⁸ Nakpil. *Legends & Adventures*, 170.

⁹ Ibid., 171.

¹⁰ Ibid., 173.

¹¹ Ibid., 171.

met. Nakpil went as far as Florence, Italy to fight and persuade Lollobrigida to include modern Filipino lives in the pictorials. In the end *Manila* was given a certain balance between the tourist's cliché and cosmopolitan modernity. Even Lollobrigida seemed to yield a little bid to Nakpil, admitting in the postscript "Manila was a complete surprise to me. I had expected a city full of Oriental music, quiet, mysterious... But it was a familiar place with a lot of rhythm, fast and modern."¹² A small victory over the Italian actress' Orientalism and an opportunity to visit Italy were narrated by Nakpil as a comic relief in the gray days of her "peonage."¹³

Nakpil's Manila 1976

Nakpil proudly claimed she refused any revisions of the introductory essays and not a single word was changed. Victorious as she is, today's readers may not miss the text was but a victim of the enforced euphoria of the New Society: self-hypnotized, manic, and jazzy, but something is missing, giving readers even a feeling of hollowness. The essay begins with the mantra of enchanted city, which is not very far from Lollobrigida's above quoted praise for the city:

Nobody who has been to Manila is ever the same again. The rest of one's life is affected by that ardent urban clutter, the millions of smiling, cheerful people milling about in a roar of music and raised consciousness, the psychedelic little buses, the infinite variety of the bright green, pink, and white houses.¹⁴

Here is a question. If readers would feel any hollowness in her text, does it stem solely from the martial law culture of the 1970s? Certainly there are praises to the city projects under Imelda Marcos as the Metro Manila's first Governor: air-conditioned buses, slum relocation projects, the Cultural Center Complex, and so on. Nakpil's carefully worded compliments to Imelda were unlikely for the woman known for her sharp tongue, while the growing

¹² Lollobrigida and Nakpil. *Manila*, n.p.

¹³ Nakpil. *Legends & Adventures*, 173-175.

¹⁴ Lollobrigida and Nakpil. *Manila*, n.p.

mass poverty, the lost freedom of press, corruption, and more evils of martial law society were ignored. Though it might be too much to expect for any writers to address the evil of the society in the pictorial book for promoting tourism, self-censorship apparently cast a shadow over the whole text. It seems, however, not to be the single reason of the essay's hollowness.

As if the author had wanted to compensate the readers for not telling about the lost democracy, the essay repeatedly celebrates the city's diversity. It goes like this:

[T]he city is a plural personality, with multiple functions and many faces, each one more colorful than the other. At one end is Tahiti, then it turns into the New York waterfront, changes into Las Vegas and fades out at Long Island and Miami. Manila is H.G. Wells' Time Machine, a film by Fellini and the National Geographic Magazine. In it one moves through time and space --- reckoned by centuries and continents – in a celebration of anachronisms and geographic delusions...¹⁵

One may notice that the above celebration for the Manila's diversity does not contain a single proper noun of the Philippines and the Filipinos. In the other paragraphs Nakpil carries readers on the Time Machine to “a 13th century graveyard in Santa Ana,” “a baroque Spanish church of the 18th century with ikons, monks, and censer,” and “Fort Santiago in Intramuros.” Monks, however, are the only living inhabitants and the past is dead silent in those places. On the other hand, the author's words are most smooth and cheerful when she replaces Manila's present scenes with the American ones:

The most obvious thing in some part of Greater Manila is that the city is Little New York, [sic] specially so in the new exurbia of Makati where handsome, high-rise buildings, supermarkets, apartment-hotels and shopping centers flourish in a setting that could well be Palm Beach or Beverly Hills. Here the house look like stage sets for the Great Gatsby and people lead lives out of a play by Neil Simon or Edward Albee.¹⁶

What was behind the combination of the dead past and the present

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

“geographic delusions” in which the author seems so comfortable with substituting New York, Palm Beach, and Beverly Hills for the vernacular place names? The author’s recent memoirs will answer this question. It was the irreplaceable memories attached to the irreplaceable places that were so vividly and tenderly narrated in the memoirs while absent in the essay for *Manila*, among which Ermita was the single most precious jewel in her memories but was never to be mentioned in the essay in spite of already being a major tourist attraction in the 1970s. Ermita’s absence and America’s over-presence in Nakpil’s text may require several layers of explanation.

Leon Ma. Guerrero’s Manila in *Noli* 1961

Nakpil’s 1976 essay, which de-individualizes (thus Americanizes) the city in “the geographical delusion,” cannot but remind one of an intriguing chapter in Benedict Anderson’s *The Spectre of Comparisons* (1998) titled “Hard to Imagine,”¹⁷ in which Anderson scrutinized English translation of Jose Rizal’s *Noli Me Tangere* originally written in Spanish done by a Nakpil’s sibling Leon Ma. Guerrero (1961).¹⁸ Leon Ma. Guerrero, born in 1915 as Carmen’s eldest brother, was not only a writer and a journalist but the lawyer who became the pioneering diplomat in the postwar Philippines.

Examining Guerrero’s translation against Rizal’s original at great length, Anderson finds Guerrero deliberately adopted series of “translation strategy” including *de-modernization* of the Rizal’s world by dominantly using past tense, *de-localization* by eliminating “as much as 80 per cent of these still-recognizable placenames” as well as names of real persons in the 19th century, and *de-Europeanization* by eliminating the Latin and other European vocabularies and quotes, and so on. All in all the translation loses much of the original’s color, contrast, humor, satire, obscenity, irony, and

¹⁷ Benedict Anderson, “Hard to Imagine.” In Benedict R. O’G Anderson. *The Spectre of Comparisons : Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World*. London ; New York: Verso, 1998, 235-262.

¹⁸ Jose Rizal and Leon M. Guerrero. *Noli Me Tangere: A Completely New Translation for the Contemporary Reader*. [London]: Longmans, 1961.

other traits which made the novel so fascinating.

Anderson argues one reason Guerrero adopted this “translation strategy” was to make the Rizal’s world remote and irrelevant for the present generation and conceal the original novel’s taste of anti-establishment radicalism and actuality, which elite feared would encourage criticism on the current Republic dominated by elite.¹⁹ Anderson, however, adds that mere elite’s “bad conscience” and the official nationalism’s requirements cannot fully explain Guerrero’s strategy. It was fundamental transformation, Anderson concludes, under American regime such as the substitution of American for Spanish as a lingua franca as well as a fundamental reshaping of Filipinos’ conception of themselves that made the colorful “creole-mestizo” world of Rizal’s novels “so hard to imagine --- and impossible to translate.”²⁰

Certainly Rizal’s Manila, its cosmopolitanism and “creole-mestizo” atmosphere had been made possible and nurtured only through its placement within the late 19th century Asian trade network largely controlled by the British Empire in which colonial seaport cities such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Manila deeply connected with each other and beyond with Europe. Since 1909, however, colonial bilateral free trade between the Philippines and the United States gradually but steadily transformed the economic geography and thus reshaped the Filipino mindsets and mental maps, in which Manila and Manilan elite were to be absorbed into the enclosure of material culture of the American Empire while losing contacts with the neighboring colonial port cities. The void was thus to be filled with things All-American.²¹

It is not difficult to see the similarity and connection between the siblings’ works published in 1961 and 1976. Both authors were the public servants at the time of writing/translating these pieces and they were in

¹⁹ Anderson. *The Spectre of Comparisons : Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World*, 252-254.

²⁰ Ibid., 254-259.

²¹ This paragraph’s discussion largely relies on Yoshiko Nagano’s argument in the following work in Japanese: 永野善子 『フィリピン銀行史研究——植民地体制と金融——』 御茶の水書房、2003年。

such positions to know the requirements of the nation state or the rulers. Both pieces consciously or unconsciously resulted in elimination of lively features of the city's past by substituting monotonous American modernity for Eurasian or "creole-mestizo" diversity.

Ironies of the Ilustrado's Nationalism

What was so ironical for the siblings is the fact that, unlikely for the generation (born in 1915 and 1922) usually labeled as "America's Boys," they grew up in the family who were so proud of Spanish/European heritage and the lost cause of the Philippine Revolution and that they never concealed their antagonism with the Americans. One of the two lullabies Carmen was sung to sleep by her mother Filomena Francisco, the first Filipino female Pharmacologist, were Jose Rizal's "El Ultimo Adios" and another one was a remarkable song in pidgin English to the tune of "There'll Be Hot Time in the Old Town, Tonight," a popular American campaign song during the Philippine-American War.

One, two, t'ree, Americanong na sawi;

Four, Fie, Americanong namatay;

Mini-hot tie, hot-tie, tonigh'²²

Carmen Nakpil noted Filomena became a huge fun of Ho Chi Minh in her last years.²³ Most possibly sharing with Carmen the lullabies sung by a mother who embraced the Filipino version of the republican motherhood deep in her heart with pride and disdain against Americans, it is no wonder Leon grew up to be labeled as anti-American diplomat in the age of "special relationship," whose remarks of "Asia for the Asians" in 1954 as the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs and subsequent his "rude" attitudes towards American officials ultimately ruined his once promised career

²² Nakpil. *Myself, Elsewhere*, 21-22.

²³ *Ibid.*, 19.

because of the U.S. opposition. Leon died an alcoholic in 1982.²⁴

The Guerrero clan might have been eccentric or, in more sober term, exceptional. For the majority of Filipino local and metropolitan elite under the American rule the choice was to suppress their memories of the Revolution and the War against Americans, accept the conditions set by the United States for the national prosperity and independence, and pursue their individual careers. For many of the post-Philippine-American War generation of Filipino people, forgetting was a necessary survival strategy to succeed in “the new era,” then they had to forget “there ever was a war.”²⁵

I discussed elsewhere that the suppressing memories and inhibition of mourning for the lost revolution could touch off a revolt as an angry expression of the melancholic frustration over the mainstream society’s inability to remember and mourn, pointing out that such might have been the case of Colorum’s uprisings including Tayug uprising led by Pedro Calosa in 1931, the Sakdal revolt in 1935, and even the Lapiang Malaya movement resulting in the massacre in 1967. The revolts had mobilized largely the less privileged people who could not see themselves as the beneficiary of American occupation, turning their anger toward the mainstream elite who seemed to monopolize the material advantage under the American colonial and postcolonial rule.²⁶

The Guerreros of Ermita in this sense could be placed at the other end of spectrum from these popular revolts across the mainstream, since

²⁴ Anderson. *The Spectre of Comparisons : Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World*, 249-250.

²⁵ This was the case of Reynaldo Iletto’s father General Rafael Iletto, who was born in 1920 and grew up as a typical “America’s boy” without being told anything by his father Ysco (Iletto’s grandfather) about his involvement in the revolution. Iletto infers Lolo Ysco had kept silence since 1904 when he was recruited as a school teacher by Americans. Reynaldo C. Iletto. "Colonial Wars in Southern Luzon: Remembering and Forgetting." *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies* 33, no. 1 (July, 2001): 103-118: 103.

²⁶ "Memory and Mourning: Six Decades after the Two Wars," Paper presented for the Plenary Session "Philippines and Japan under U.S. Shadow" at the First Philippine Studies Conference of Japan (PSCJ 2006), November 4-5, 2006 at the Tokyo Green Palace Hotel (organized by the Organizing Committee of PSCJ 2006 and Kanagawa University)

they did not revolt but could maintain their anti-American memories because they were affluent and secure enough not to accommodate, at least psychologically, the American desire for the Filipinos to collaborate with as well as be grateful for Americans.

Nakpil's first memoir, however, could not hide it was after all the American Era that filled her with joyful memories in the lap of luxury in Ermita, which reached the pinnacle of material as well as cultural prosperity under the American rule. One of her fondest memories, as she narrated in the memoir is "of being taken for drives around Ermita in my father's car":

[F]rom our house in *Calle Mabini*...a street that was like a bower, a long, shady, flowery tunnel, Isaac Peral (now United Nations Avenue), and moving on to "Dehwee," Dewey Boulevard, its imposing buildings surrounded by lawns, the American clubs and the Manila Hotel on the Luneta. Then came sweeping, mammoth boulevards, huge buildings with rows of Greek columns, flanked by trees and lawns, down to Taft Avenue and the Post Office, and more new buildings of a different style, lower, with tile roofs and arcades which turned out to be the Normal School and the Philippine General Hospital. As children everywhere do, I thought that all that had always been there.²⁷

Of course it was then a brand new urban landscape created under the American rule. In this way the Guerreros of Ermita like any other elite were coping with the American material culture. It was certainly comfortable to live with only if they could afford it, while dark memories of the American imperial oppression of the Philippine Revolution stayed. The ironies and ambivalence they had to endure were thus painful. It would not be, however, so fatal and traumatic if there had not been another war. Whatever steady and irreversible change it brought about, it may be too much to say Americanization of the Philippines up until 1941 had constituted "cultural genocide"; at most it was an early state of euthanasia that the Filipino "creole-mestizo" culture was put under those days. In other words, such people as Guerreros joyfully living the Ermita's prewar social lives had not been prepared for such abrupt and brutal end as it really happened.

²⁷ Nakpil. *Myself, Elsewhere*, 37.

Death of Manila 1945 and After

As stated in the beginning, this paper will not go into the details of Japanese Occupation years and the Battle for Manila 1945 but only pick up a few lines from the text of Nakpil --- then Carmen Guerrero Cruz (married to the first husband), who survived the battle as a pregnant woman with a baby Gemma. She actually was one of the first writers who wrote about unspeakable experiences of Manilans including not only Japanese atrocities but U.S. indiscriminate shelling during the battle. The followings are from the well known article first published in 1967.

I had seen the head of the aunt who had taught me to read and write roll under the kitchen stove, the face of a friend who had been crawling next to me on the pavement as we tried to reach the shelter under the Ermita church obliterated by a bullet, a legless cousin dragging himself out of a shallow trench in the churchyard and a young mother carrying a baby, plucking at my father's sleeve [her father was a doctor] ---- "Doctor, can you help me? I think I'm wounded" --- and the shreds of her ribs and her lungs as she turned around.

I had heard the screams of the girls I had grown up with as they were dragged by Japanese soldiers towards the Bayview Hotel (to be raped, as we later found out) and the mindless groans of the men, tied together by the elbows and machinegunned by stony-faced Japanese. I had seen all the unforgettable, indescribable carnage caused by the detonation of bombs and land mines on the barricaded streets of Ermita and the carpet-shelling by the Americans which went relentlessly on, long after the last Japanese sniper was a carcass on the rubble.²⁸

In November 1944, during the air raid, a U.S. bomber had been hit by Japanese anti-aircraft and had released a bomb on Ermita as it exploded. The Guerrero's quarters were hit hard, leaving Carmen's three maiden aunts and their father all dead (and dismembered). Then in the evening of February 5, 1945, a platoon of Japanese soldiers broke into the Cruz house

²⁸ Carmen Guerrero Nakpil. *A Question of Identity: Selected Essays*. Manila: Vessel Books, 1973, 204-205.

on General Luna and California St., bounding all the men including Carmen's husband and even a cook, taking them away, to be executed elsewhere. Carmen decided to return to Ermita where she would spend about ten days of horror with a baby Gemma, trapped between Japanese atrocities and U.S. shelling "both were equally deadly."²⁹ The constant carpet-shelling made her hate the Americans "for their ruthlessness and callous disregard for human, civilian, non-combatant lives"³⁰ and she "spat on the very first American soldier" she saw on the day of her liberation, but she "was dry-throated and he was not aware of my scorn."³¹ Thus was made an anti-American woman whose PTSD through decades would make it impossible for her to say a single word to Japanese, mere presence of whom "would bring on a dizzy spell."³²

When the Battle for Manila ended in March 3, 1945, there was nothing left in Ermita but piles of dead bodies and the smell of death. Despite not being air-raided, Ermita/Malate district had been reduced to the ashes by U.S. carpet-shelling. A year later, Carmen, now a widow of 23 years old, was taken out to dinner in a U.S. army jeep by an American lieutenant who was working for the U.S. army paper.

We crossed a bridge I did not recognize, and before I knew it, we were in Ermita, on Isaac Peral, in front of a restaurant called New Europe... I stood beside the jeep gazing in the direction of the chain-link fence, trying to make out the space that had been occupied by our house, the third house from the corner of Mabini and Isaac Peral..

When she was asked "what is it?" she simply did not want to tell him that she "was looking for a town called Ermita and the house where I was born, and turned away to walk into the restaurant. I needed a drink badly." Nakpil's first memoir ended here.³³

The ending suggests that we may add one thing to Benedict

²⁹ Ibid., 206.

³⁰ Nakpil. *Myself, Elsewhere*, 186.

³¹ ----- . *A Question of Identity : Selected Essays*, 204.

³² ----- . *Legends & Adventures*, 145.

³³ ----- . *Myself, Elsewhere*, 190-191.

Anderson's analysis on the Leon Ma. Guerrero's translation strategy: the grave consequence "the Death of Manila" brought about to the Filipino elite's imagination. Battle for Manila not only physically destroyed the metropolis and indiscriminately slaughtered hundred thousands of civilians by atrocities and shelling, but ruined the culture and way of life, which certainly had been on the decline but still colorfully alive, to the extent for the following generations hardly to imagine what it was all like. Though postwar physical reconstruction was quick thanks to the U.S. rehabilitation money pouring into the Philippines, prewar culture and society was never to be restored without the people bearing it. Even survivors did not have enthusiasm to rebuild their lives on the very site of their traumatic experiences, which would soon evacuate elite families from Ermita/Malate district to Forbes Park and the newly fortified gated communities around "Little New York" Makati. What was left in Ermita was but one of the Asia's largest night-time pleasure zone and the center of prostitution which attracts Japanese and other foreign tourists for the "sex tour." Elimination of place names in Leon Ma. Guerrero's *Noli* might represent the depth of despair he had of the postwar Manila, or even a Manilan's desire to suppress the memories attached to the place names. So was the case of Carmen Nakpil in 1976. It was during the height of Japanese sex tours to the district. How could she possibly utter the word, Ermita, which would invoke dearest and worst traumatic memories at the same time? It was simply too disturbing for her to utter the word even in the text she wrote at the request of the dictator's wife.

Nakpil's second memoir vividly depicts the postwar Philippine society during the late 1940s to the 50s in a manic state, in which she was working as a widow journalist, going to work late morning and returning close to dawn, loving dances, drinking, and bar-hopping with a gun like any other Manilans. Americans were everywhere as these were the days Cold War brought more Americans to the Filipino elite's social lives than ever as government supervisors, foreign assistance officials, JUSMAG and other intelligence officers, and businessmen and carpetbaggers who benefited from the parity amendment of 1946. As U.S. War Damage checks and other money

pouring into the devastated country, everyone's life was dependent on the former suzerain. The U. S. government was determined to restore every public building and rehabilitation money from the U.S. quickly made Manila "to rise from its ashes, tragically different and enormously challenged, to live again."³⁴ Then she writes in her most recent memoir:

Ermita of the 21st century is indistinguishable from the disorderly, efferscent ugliness of most of the rest of Manila.³⁵

It seems Nakpil's mourning of the lost city finally have been through several stages of grief and finally come to the last, acceptance, after more than six decades after the battle.

Conclusion

Since when I was studying the Philippine-US-Japan relations as a more or less conventional diplomatic historian, I have always wondered if it is necessary and scholastically feasible to look at the mindsets of Filipinos in the 20th century, especially during the post World War II / Cold War years, as a nation suffering PTSD with great troubles in dealing with their memories and mourning of the lost past. I could feel it in reading diplomatic correspondence, newspaper columns, and other source materials, as well as listening to the stories of my friends, colleagues, and interviewees.

Of course it is not difficult to relate the postcolonial Philippine "special relations" with the United States to the grave consequences of Japanese Occupation and the subsequent atrocities, mass killings, and total destruction of the country. I think, however, we need to go deeper into the psyche of the Filipino people as the war survivors in order to understand their postcolonial cosmology in which politics, diplomacy, and business could all of the sudden be intertwined with the strong emotions. It is also very important for the three peoples (Japanese, Filipinos, and Americans) to

³⁴ -----, *Legends & Adventures*, 10.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

share the understandings how grave the consequences of the two “colonial wars³⁶” were in order to achieve more meaningful reconciliation, or healing, about what the wars have brought about to *us* since 1898, via 1945, to this date.

In this sense, Carmen Guerrero Nakpil’s texts represent all the ironies and ambivalence a certain generation of the Filipino elite had to embrace, in which the United States played a myriad of contradicting and even schizophrenic rolls. Sometimes the enforced ties with the United States caused the great loss and sacrifice of the Filipinos. In the end, however, every loss and void had to be filled up with things All-American to the extent that an anti-American woman writer poured the comfort of American place names into her strange essay for *Manila*. What prolonged and even defined this fateful relationship of the 20th century was the Japanese violent intervention to this relationship in the World War II. If the memories of the battle will stay in the psyche of the Filipino people as a defining moment of their history, it means the Philippine-U.S. “special relationship” will continue and continue to be under the Japanese shadow.

³⁶ Iletto. "Colonial Wars in Southern Luzon: Remembering and Forgetting."