

In the Court of the Sultan: Orientalism, Nationalism, and Modernity in Philippine and Filipino American Dance

"Culture and the arts are potent forces in national development. With its colors and contrasts, our cultural heritage unifies our race, and gives it a national identity that lends pride and dignity to every Filipino."

- Philippine President Corazon C. Aquino, 1991 ¹

Introduction

Inspired largely by the excitement of Edward Said's work, much of the focus of post-colonial discourse has been on the role and effect of colonialism in the metropole. ² But as the agency of post-colonial subjects increasingly comes under scrutiny, Benedict Anderson's insights ³ about the complex "mimicry" ⁴ of colonialism in post-colonial states seems to me to be increasingly relevant. For example, in his penetrating analysis of colonialism and nationalism in the Philippines, Michael Salman comments that "when Benedict Anderson's work on the generalization of nationalism is put alongside Edward Said's writings on the pervasiveness of colonial culture, it does suggest the outlines of a parallel transformation of consciousness, and its containment in conservative [End Page 251] ideology, neo-colonialism, and the repressive authoritarianism of so many post-colonial states." ⁵ Vicente L. Rafael, in describing the United States' colonial "tutelage" of the Philippines says, "[t]he culmination of colonial rule, self-government, can . . . be achieved only when the subject has learned to colonize itself." ⁶ This disturbing notion deserves attention from admirers of Said. The Philippines gained independence in 1946. After a half-century of independence its experience of the complexity of post-colonial nationalism can be extremely useful in understanding the legacy of colonialism and the powerful lure of modernity.

This article examines post-colonial nationalism in the Philippines via the appropriation of a multiplicity of indigenous dance and music forms and their representation in a folkloric dance troupe as the cultural expression of the Philippine nation state. As a corollary it looks at the unanticipated impact of those representations on the Filipinos living in the diaspora-- most notably those who have grown up in the metropole itself: Filipino Americans. The interaction of those forces raises challenging issues of agency and ideology in a post-colonial world.

Filipino Cultural Nights

Thoughtful Filipino Americans have begun to comment on this issue of identity and freedom. For example, Allan Benamer, frustrated by the narrow nationalist orientation of numerous commemorations of the centennials of the Philippine Revolution and the Philippine-American war, wrote to the Filipino Arts e-mail list, "we can't stop thinking of an essential Filipino self that is oppositional to American hegemony when that is so obviously far from the truth." ⁷ Benamer's frustration with Philippine nationalism, however, merely poses a reverse opposition, suggesting that American democracy embodied in the Bill of Rights is the unacknowledged attraction pulling Filipino immigrants to move to the former oppressor and settle in the U.S.

An examination of folkloric dance in both the Philippines and the United States reveals a more subtle intermingling of nationalism, Orientalism, and a pursuit of modernity which articulate the complex historical heritage and aspirations of Filipinos and Filipino Americans [End Page 252] alike. An initial case study is the phenomenon of the Pilipino Cultural Night (PCN) on American college and high school campuses. ****The intermingling/interface between Filipino and American cultural citizenships****

On March 27, 1992, Samahang Pilipino, the large Filipino American student group at UCLA, presented its annual Pilipino Cultural Night in Los Angeles. PCNs have become popular at West Coast campuses which have seen large influxes of Filipino American students since the early 1980s. ⁸ This particular event involved over 200 student performers who had been practicing regularly for the entire six months since the opening of school. The intensity of the PCN experience bonded the students into a tight-knit community and aided their sense of identity -- the entire 2,000-seat auditorium was packed with their screaming friends and relatives. The program also was

designed to support Filipino student and community empowerment: it was entitled "Makibaka [Struggle]⁹ : Celebrating Twenty Years of Pilipino Student Activism," and took place just as UCLA students were gearing up for a powerful campaign which elected Mark Pulido the first Filipino American UCLA undergraduate student body president.

The **PCN genre** that developed during this time was built around folkloric dance. Typically the bulk of the program (and that which accommodated an almost unlimited number of participants) was a series of dances grouped by ethnic and/or religious heritage in the Philippines. The four most popular groupings included: "Muslim" dances from Mindanao and Sulu, "Igorot" dances from highland northern Luzon, elegant "Maria Clara" urban elite Spanish-influenced dances of the nineteenth century, and "Rural" Christian peasant lowland dances, usually presented in a playful "barrio fiesta" setting. The expressed rationale for the relevance of this type of program was that it taught Philippine history and culture -- topics ignored in the American educational system -- which were viewed by the students as important to their own continuing community identity and involvement. The intensity of the PCN experience also approximated the family or clan feelings that might have existed in rural villages in the Philippines whose dances the students study and perform.¹⁰

Because of the perceived link between Philippine history and Filipino American identity and activism, in this article I examine the origins **[End Page 253]** of one part of the program, the Muslim (also sometimes called "Moro") dance suite.¹¹ The Moro dance suite in the PCN was particularly striking because of its remarkable Orientalist flavor--something I was surprised to witness coming from an otherwise progressive and activist Filipino American student body. Instead of reinforcing their progressive goal, the PCN's Muslim dance suite reminded me very intensely of Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, a practice whereby so-called European "experts" of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries distorted in particularly oppressive, imperialistic ways Islamic and other Asian societies and cultures. **Orientalism, according to Said, is a method for outsiders to objectify a particular culture, in order to gain control over it.** It was one of the effective tools used by colonialists to justify their conquest of Africa and Asia, and was precisely a disempowering device. Clearly complex factors were at work which would make this format not only palatable but desirable to the students.

In line with their theme of empowerment, the students' stated rationale for the inclusion of the Moro suite in the PCN was the claim that Moros have never been conquered, and so represent a kind of "golden age" of Philippine independence on which Filipinos everywhere can look back with pride. A striking feature of the PCN's Moro suite was the enthronement of a student sultan dressed sumptuously in gold cloth and a turban, surrounded by attendants. The PCN's written program explained: "The setting of tonight's presentation is in the sultan's palace where festivities are underway in preparation, in prayer, and in celebration for the upcoming voyage of two of the sultan's many children. First, the slaves of the court perform [the dance] *Mangalay* in prayer for a safe voyage."¹²

The suite proceeded with the students performing four dances presumably for the sultan's entertainment, culminating with the dramatic pole dance, *Singkil*. The visual and printed imagery of this dance presentation was totally different from anything I had ever witnessed during the two years I lived in Mindanao's Lanao province, home of the Maranao, one of the three major Philippine Muslim groups. But the representation was remarkably similar to performances of the **highly stylized folkloric format of the Bayanihan Philippine Dance** Company **[End Page 254]** based in Manila. And this was no accident. The PCN genre had been copied very substantially from the dance of the Bayanihan. Former dancers and musicians of the Bayanihan now live in the United States and have served as consultants and choreographers for the students. A former UCLA student also provided me with a copy of a **film from a 1962 performance of the Bayanihan** which they had studied when designing their performances. This film includes a Moro dance suite complete with sultan and slaves.¹³

Beginning in the late 1950s, the Bayanihan popularized this particular style of elegant, energetic, dramatic Philippine "folk" dance which featured suites from different areas of the Philippines, including Muslim Mindanao and Sulu. Because the troupe had sprung from the physical education

program at Philippine Women's University, it had an academic imprimatur attractive both to middle-class Filipinos and to college groups in the United States. It also embodied a modern theatricality extremely appealing not only to twentieth-century audiences in general but to Filipino American students living in Los Angeles, the home of Hollywood, in particular.

However, while purporting to embody an ancient Filipino heritage, the Bayanihan's image of innocent, happy villagers or proud sultans and princesses was a cultural artifact of a different type. **The Bayanihan's primary purpose over the past forty years has been to represent the Philippine nation-state to foreigners both in Manila and abroad.** In fact the Bayanihan has been an important source of international prominence for the Philippine state. According to dance historian Reynaldo G. Alejandro, "One may say with justification that dance, above all other arts, has gained international acclaim for the Philippines."¹⁴ For this reason dance suites of this type have evolved into re-presentations of Philippine reality with particular if subtle messages about the nature of the country as seen through the eyes of the Manila-based national leadership and presented for its own purposes. Thus although the Philippine government is dominated by the Manila-based elite, many of the Bayanihan's dances have been adapted from the indigenous dances of "other" Filipinos--most notably those of the Muslims. These, then, are the cultural artifacts presented to Filipinos in the United States as "authentic" depictions **[End Page 255]** of indigenous Philippine culture. But in fact they represented the particular vision of the cultural agents of the modern Philippine state.

Unabashed boosters of Philippine modernity such as Nick Joaquin take every opportunity to acknowledge just such phenomena. In his introduction to a large, glossy coffee-table book on ethnographic dance authored by dancer/choreographer Leonor Orosa Goquingco and published in 1980, he says:

Leonor has since been followed by those troupes whose modern stagings of our *comparsas* have made Philippine dance world-famous. But let us not forget that, before them, forerunners, were all those [Filipino] vaudeville high-steppers who first created a fame for our nimble toes abroad. Leonor, who was the first to bring the blues into ballet . . . would be the first to acknowledge the debt owed by Philippine dance to the national experience in pop steps. She knows that Philippine dance (and culture) didn't stop evolving after the Manobo hawk dance, or the Muslim *Singkil*. . . . No, neither our dance nor culture "perished" when confronted with new (or alien) ideas and challenges. And Leonor Orosa, by dramatizing in her powerful ballets this ongoing process of development, of cultural development, is continuing the job established by the Propaganda and the Revolution: the job of *integrating* into a single nationalism all the elements in our culture, whether pagan, Muslim or Christian, in the same way that Leonor herself and other dance group leaders now integrate into a single drama all our dances, whether pagan, Muslim or Christian.¹⁵

NOTE: **Joaquin's introductory thoughts on the successful modernity of Filipino folkloric dance, while extremely insightful and cogent, are striking for being in opposition to the principal text of this and other books which instead emphasize an anthropological claim that they are documenting the indigenous authenticity of the non-Christian dances.** For example, in her preface to this same book, Leonor Orosa Goquingco says, "Fortunately, some aspects of our prehispanic heritage--and specifically in traditional music and dance--somehow survived the holocaust. Among the unconquered Filipino peoples such as our Muslim brothers and the Northern Luzon Highlanders, their culture, music and dance have remained largely untouched and untainted by Spanish influence."¹⁶ The experience of the PCN confirms that Filipino American students have absorbed the primary text and the pictures in books **[End Page 256]** such as Goquingco's, but neglected to appreciate the different message contained in Joaquin's introduction.

In my interviews with Filipino American students about the source of their interest in learning such dances for the PCN, invariably they cited a desire to learn about indigenous cultures of the Philippines of which they were previously unaware. They perceived the dances as an anthropological window on Philippine culture. At the same time, without observing a contradiction, they appreciated the modern theatricality of the Bayanihan genre, saying that it gave them a venue for expressing Filipino culture in the United States of which they could be proud.¹⁷ They seemed

unaware that, in addition to theatricality, the Bayanihan included another "modern" feature, Orientalism.

As will be seen below, Muslims were not totally incorporated into the Philippine nation-state until the twentieth century. Both prior and subsequent to that time their relations with the majority Christian Filipinos were largely hostile.¹⁸ Reflecting this uncomfortable reality, through the 1980s the Bayanihan never employed Filipino Muslim dancers or choreographers even though these were readily available.¹⁹ Yet in Bayanihan performances, a Muslim dance, the *Singkil*, was frequently its "signature piece"--closing the first half of its performance, and featured prominently in its promotional literature.²⁰ Edward Said explains that ". . . all cultures impose corrections upon raw reality," modifying newer, stranger cultural units to fit in with their own pre-existing ones.²¹ But why were Muslim dances assigned a prominent place in national dance presentations such as the Bayanihan? Those choices reveal a great deal about power and domination in the process of imagining the nation in the Philippines.

When viewed in conjunction with the popularity of the Bayanihan genre among Filipino Americans, they also reveal a great deal about Orientalism in the United States. Vicente Rafael's notion of self-colonization demands an appreciation of the century-long interaction between the U.S. and the Philippines which Filipino Americans can uniquely express. Epifanio San Juan, Jr. has commented that "long before the Filipino immigrant, tourist or visitor sets foot on the U.S. continent, she--her body and sensibility--has been prepared by the thoroughly **[End Page 257]** Americanized culture of the homeland. . . . Filipinos find themselves 'at home' in a world they've lived in before--not just in Hollywood fantasies but in the material culture of everyday life."²² In the Bayanihan, Filipino Americans found a merging of Hollywood and the broader Orientalist component of American culture which very effectively belies the exceptionalist argument that the U.S. escaped the legacy of colonialism.²³

The Bayanihan's Moro Suite

Let us now examine the filmed 1962 Bayanihan performance which so profoundly influenced the PCN style. The intimate connection between the former colony and the metropole is exemplified in the fact that the film was directed and the narration for **the film was written by an American dancer and film maker, Allegra Fuller Snyder, who had never visited the Philippines. She had been invited to film the Bayanihan's second U.S. tour by the New York agency which sponsored it.** In another irony, at the time when they procured the film, the students were unaware that Allegra Fuller Snyder, the film's director, was on the faculty of UCLA's dance department. And although Snyder knew that the students were copying the Bayanihan in their extra-curricular performances, she never introduced herself to them as someone with past experience with the Bayanihan.²⁴ The Bayanihan dance troupe endorsed the film, describing it as an "Original Production of Bayanihan Folk Arts Center, Manila," and neither the students nor their Bayanihan veteran teachers found anything in the film contrary to the spirit of the Bayanihan itself. An examination of the film, therefore, seems useful in revealing the ideology of the Muslim suite as presented by the Bayanihan.²⁵

At the film's beginning the narrator states in his introductory remarks: "From our Pacific Islands on the edge of the South China Sea halfway around the globe, we bring you--from Mindanao to the south, the mysterious and sensuous lines of the Orient. . . ." In the background we hear one loud reverberating gong followed by some chanting. Predictably, the scene opens in the sultan's palace. He is enthroned with an attendant holding a large ornate umbrella over his head. On the floor in **[End Page 258]** front of the sultan a number of women are reclining seductively. They then rise and begin dancing. Contrary to the Bayanihan's claim of "authenticity,"²⁶ this visual and aural image is not something that would be found in the Philippines. Instead it is the Orientalist imagining of the "mysterious and sensuous" bazaars of Istanbul complete with a despotic sultan and sultry female slaves waiting to fill his harem.

In introducing the Muslim dance suite the narrator states:

As we enter the court of the Sultan, the sound of the *kulintang* gong comes to us, as once it came

across the seas, when the great Majapahit spread his empire from Java to Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago and brought Mohammedanism and the mysteries of Islam, the life of all the Orient, of India, of Arabia, of China as well. Our people of the south are called Moros, and theirs is the dance of the Orient. . . . As in the Arabian Nights of old, the Sultan is entertained with ancient tales. For the thousand and first time, the Sultana performs a dance meant only for the eyes of the royal family. ²⁷

In this passage, which even refers to the "Arabian Nights," the objectifying Orientalist gaze separating "us" from the "other" is most clear. Not only are "we" watching "them," but "we" have magically been able to intrude into a hitherto private space. This feat gives us the Orientalist's great power over the material "we" are observing.

The film again shows the sultan with the women reclining on the floor in front of him. The women then begin to dance in a line with a soloist wearing a crown, presumably the sultana, dancing in front. This is the last time we hear of a "sultana." Instead, our attention is drawn to the beautiful "Asik" slave girl who is seated at the sultan's feet. She remains seated there (and the sultana vanishes from view) while other dances are performed. The Bayanihan film tells us that one dance is the "Sagayan-sa-Kulong." The narrator says:

With a wave of his magical white cloth, the soothsayer casts a spell over the warriors. In dance they will face actual combat, actual victory, as they wield the *kris*, the Malayan sword. An imaginary battle with an unseen foe works them into a frenzy. They are ready to face the real enemy or to exorcise the evil spirits. Now a second group of warriors engages them in a contest of shields. **[End Page 259]**

To the hypnotic sound of a chant, one male dancer flicks a white cloth one-by-one over the seated warriors. Then to the accompaniment of frantic drumming, these warriors clash shields with another group of dancers while waving their lethal-looking swords. The effect is quite martial and energetic with a hint of mystical fanaticism provided by the "soothsayer." This dance seems to be a total invention of the Bayanihan. Commenting on an apparently similar 1970 Bayanihan performance in Seattle, Washington, Usopay Cadar, a Maranao Muslim ethnomusicologist writes:

There is no dance in Lanao called *sagayan-sa kulong*. . . . The *sagayan* of Lanao does not involve warriors. It is purely a one-man dance depicting Prince Bantugan, the hero of [the] Maranao epic-song called *Darangen*. . . . The authentic paraphernalia should consist of . . . a wooden sword with a kerchief attached to the handle, a narrow wooden shield with bells, and a wooden headgear. They are all functional to the dance. The Bayanihan . . . has [more than one dancer and uses] real combat swords. ²⁸

So while the presumed Maranao dance which inspired the Bayanihan's performance refers to the hero of a battle, it is several steps removed from an actual battle, instead telling the story of a famous, beautiful, and very traditional poetic epic, the *Darangen*. In fact according to Cadar, Maranaos traditionally use the *sagayan* dance as a vehicle for singing a section of this popular epic:

The music provided by the Bayanihan for the dance . . . does not even resemble the real *sagayan* music. The song sung by the chanter has but a couple of Maranao words, and the text parodies the extremely poetic Maranao epic-chant. . . . The melody pursued by the singer is by no means similar to the way the epic is chanted. The *darangen* chanting, which takes its name from the epic, is one Maranao song-form. It is the only vocal music occasionally allowed to become a part of the *sagayan* dance; when so used, it has to be chanted by a professional singer. ²⁹

Instead the Bayanihan has inserted two themes foreign to the original: **Islamic mysticism and Moro fierceness in battle, both integral parts of Orientalist stereotypes.**

Eventually the female slave seated at the feet of the sultan rises and **[End Page 260]** bows before him. She then does a slow, stately dance with elegant hand movements that involves lying on the floor for a portion of the dance. At the close of the dance, the sultan beckons the slave to him. She sits at his feet and he actually pats her on the head, to which she smiles faintly. The narrator tells us that this dance is called *Asik*: "As did the slaves in the Persian markets of old, this *asik* dances the

classical slave dance to win the favor of her sultan master. Her bejewelled shoulder band tells us she is of royal rank, too--the daughter of prince and commoner."

The effect of this dance in the Bayanihan film is three-fold. First it reminds the audience of the slave trade in Mindanao and Sulu which was active in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries;³⁰ second it harkens back to the lurid Orientalist vision of Muslim slaves and harems in the Middle East; and third it sets up the Bayanihan's "signature piece," the *Singkil*. After being patted on the head by the sultan, the *asik* then jumps up when the princess's litter is carried in. As the princess alights, the slave picks up and opens an elegantly decorated umbrella. She then follows the princess throughout the entire dance, running through the crashing bamboo poles in order to hold the umbrella over her head.

In its entire Moro suite, the Bayanihan never allows its dancers to smile. They are intended to look "regal," proud and unconquered, although this doesn't seem terribly logical given that many of the dancers are portraying slaves. According to the narration:

With the sound of the *singkil*, the ankle bracelet of bells, the princess begins a dance that every young lady of royal blood in Lanao is expected to learn. It tells again the tale, brought many years ago from India, of the winning of a princess by a prince. She commences with the Princess Walk, closely attended by her *asik*. Now with proud agility they traverse the field of clashing poles, the labyrinthine perils of life. They chart the path of obstacles that the prince will have to hurdle in pursuit of his chosen one.

The princess's litter (unheard of, of course, in Lanao province) is decorated with four star-and-crescent designs at the corners. These are not traditional Maranao designs but they do suggest Arabia and Islam. The princess is wearing a white veil attached to a headdress decorated with a large, three-dimensional *sari-manok*, the traditional Maranao [End Page 261] chicken and fish design which sits atop her head almost like a crown. Needless to say, this design is never traditionally worn as an article of clothing in Lanao.³¹ Twelve men and women enter and arrange three sets each of four crossed bamboo poles. They begin to clap them rhythmically and the princess and slave dance among them. We can assume that these people are also slaves because from time to time they continue to do their job while their heads are bowed down almost to the poles--quite a difficult maneuver. The princess carries two fans with which she dances. Subsequently an entourage of approximately eight women also enter and dance among the poles with fans.

Finally the prince enters. He, like the sultan, is wearing a tight, short jacket that shows off his bare muscular chest. He gives an impression analogous to the macho (and Orientalist) King of Siam played by Yul Brynner in Rogers and Hammerstein's 1951 film *The King and I*, by posing with his feet planted wide apart. He is armed with a sword and shield. Upon his appearance the previously haughty princess reclines submissively (though unsmilingly) at his feet and then they dance together briefly. The prince swings his sword and shield aggressively when stepping in and out of the poles. He has brought with him a male entourage who dance with the princess's attendants.³²

Since the Bayanihan advertises the *Singkil* as a dance from Lanao, Maranao ethnomusicologist Usopay Cadar is especially offended by its presentation. In Lanao, according to Cadar, the *Singkil* is purely a solo female dance. He points out that an unmarried Maranao man and woman would *never* dance together in public, but he is still intrigued by fact that the Bayanihan sends the prince to court the princess brandishing a sword and shield. Perhaps, he speculates, the prince anticipates that the princess will be offended by his bare chest and display of armpits, which Cadar assures us that Maranaos consider extremely rude.³³ In his critique Cadar notes that Orientalism has penetrated the Bayanihan's music as well as dance. He says:

The Bayanihan employs the ear-splitting sound-effect in most of their so-called "Muslim music." . . . [This] is strongly disagreeable to the Maranao concept of music. The effect suggests rather an exaggerated version of the gong dominating Chinese opera, or, better [End Page 262] yet, the

Rank Organization's trademark in British cinema. . . . Such things can happen in some Hollywood musical extravaganza, but they simply cannot occur in a Maranao gathering where music and dance are highlights. ³⁴

So we see in its Moro dance suite that the Bayanihan has introduced a number of Orientalist themes: Muslims are exotic; they have slaves; they are warlike; their leaders are powerful, autocratic sultans whose entrance is signaled by an ear-splitting gong; and they live in a "sensuous" atmosphere with women waiting to bow before them. Such themes are further emphasized by their contrast to those of the lowland Christian Filipino dances that follow in the Bayanihan film. The arrogant, haughty, unsmiling Muslim royalty and submissive slaves, for example, pose a dramatic contrast to the friendly, smiling, chatty, democratic interaction that goes on in the "village fiesta" setting of most of the Christian dances, including the *Tinikling*--another bamboo pole dance performed in the "Rural" suite. ³⁵

It is especially interesting to note that contrary to the Bayanihan's interpretation that the Singkil is "the tale . . . of the winning of a princess by a prince," Maranao tradition itself relates that the *Singkil* is based on an ancient epic about " . . . the Princess Gundangan in the 'Place of Enchantment' who, frightened by an earthquake, tried to escape by running and leaping on shaking stones, trying not to get her feet caught." ³⁶ So in fact the indigenous Moro mythology of the *Singkil* involves the heroic adventure of a woman saving herself from a dangerous situation--quite different from the Bayanihan's Orientalist message of class and gender subjugation.

Nationalist Origins of the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company

The Bayanihan dance genre traces its beginnings to Francisca Reyes (Tolentino) Aquino. In 1921, as a student assistant instructor in the University of the Philippines' physical education department, Reyes Aquino was asked by nationalist dean (later university president) Jorge Bocobo to arrange a program of Philippine folk dances. She was unable to carry **[End Page 263]** out this assignment because she did not know the dances personally and there was no written material on folk dances to be had. The Philippines was coming near the close of its first quarter-century of American colonial rule, and Western influence was changing Filipino social customs. The old dances were dying out and American dances were extremely popular, especially in the urban centers and areas reached by American cultural and educational influence. ³⁷ Reyes Aquino decided to do "extensive research on Philippine folk dances for application in the public schools as part of the Physical Education program." ³⁸

The University of the Philippines, founded only in 1908, stood at the pinnacle of the English-language, colonial public education system. However at the same time, this university interest in adapting and codifying indigenous Philippine dance can be related to an interest of Filipino nationalist intellectuals to document the "subjective antiquity" (to use Benedict Anderson's phrase) of their only very recently conceptualized nation. ³⁹ Anderson points out that this was part of the modern process of bringing a nation into being by "imagining" it as having ancient origins and traditions. In his work Anderson has highlighted the nation-building contributions of the late-nineteenth-century Filipino nationalist leader José Rizal, an early proponent of the study of ancient Philippine history. As noted by historian Reynaldo Ileto, Rizal and his colleagues saw their era as an "age of enlightenment when the glory of an ancient past would be fused with the progress of nationhood," ⁴⁰ and they sought to document that ancient past. The University of the Philippines was an early proponent of Rizal's nationalism and an easy source of inspiration for cultural nationalists of the 1920s such as Jorge Bocobo and Francisca Reyes Aquino. ⁴¹

Reyes Aquino spent the years 1924-26 traveling. She transcribed and photographed folk dances all over the Philippines. Originally, she used these data for her master's thesis. Later they were published for use in the public school physical education curriculum. As a result of Reyes Aquino's work, the colonial school system, which had itself speeded the demise of folk dance in its original form, became the vehicle for institutionalizing, codifying, and transmitting a new genre of folk dance to future generations of Filipinos. **[End Page 264]**

Later Reyes Aquino spent seven years working with several others to document still more dances.

She published *Philippine National Dances* in 1946. Her stated intention was to preserve the dances in their original form but she found herself from the very beginning making certain changes. As she describes it: "They were transcribed as authentically as possible without loss of distinctive qualities, local color, or native form. Oftentimes, however, it has been desirable to rearrange, cut or add to some of the dances so that they could be presented more interestingly and effectively."⁴²

Although she did not elaborate, this subjective judgment, "more interestingly and effectively," has been the hallmark of Bayanihan-style folk dance since its inception with Francisca Reyes Aquino. Indigenous music and dances would be documented once in a hinterland area of the Philippines. They would then be modified to suit the sensibilities of Manila dance "experts" and later be codified for thousands of teachers to duplicate in the public schools or in more professional dance troupes such as the Bayanihan. In this way Reyes Aquino and her colleagues effectively adapted ancient traditional art forms to their own much more modern nation-building purpose.

Beginning in the 1930s, Reyes Aquino's student, Leonor Orosa Goquingco dramatically expanded the trend of stylizing Philippine folk dance to tell a specific story. It was also Goquingco who chose to highlight the dances of non-Christian Filipinos including the Muslims. Although Reyes Aquino had documented dances from all over the Philippines, in her school curriculum she had focused primarily on dances from Christian communities. Goquingco, however, took it upon herself to popularize as "Filipino" dances emanating from non-Christian groups. Here, as happens in Edward Said's vision of Orientalism, she encountered the necessity of rearranging the dances even more drastically than Reyes Aquino had. In an interview in 1964, she explained her reasoning:

. . . you might say [that in our stylized dances] we are trying to build . . . a legacy of original creative theater dance to leave to future generations, just as our forefathers left us their own dances, which they had invented and created, perhaps collectively. So now we have the dances [End Page 265] they left us, to view among the tribes in the dances' pristine innocence and splendor. Why gild the lily? Rather take stock of, study, record, if possible on film for all to see, and then be inspired by them to create anew and in new and larger-visited-dimensions therefrom.⁴³

Both Reyes Aquino and Goquingco founded dance troupes of their own in Manila. But they also assisted in the formation of the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company from the physical education program at Philippine Women's University. It was the Bayanihan which in 1958 burst onto the world dance stage by winning first prize from among thirteen countries competing at the Brussels Exposition in Europe. There they were discovered by American impresario Sol Hurok who introduced them to television mogul Ed Sullivan. Sullivan featured the troupe on his weekly television show thereby launching them on a series of world tours and elevating the Bayanihan to the position of premier Philippine dance troupe.

Orientalism

Clearly the Bayanihan's re-presentation of Philippine Muslim dance has been very strongly influenced by Leonor Orosa Goquingco. As early as 1941, Goquingco had choreographed a stylized ballet which contained a "Morolandia" suite. In her view, these dances were characterized by their "Oriental" component:

Inner intensity and absorption, mysticism, languid grace, much use of the upper torso, nuance of facial expression, flowing of movements of the arms as they change from pose to pose . . . the use of [singkil] or metal anklets, the expert manipulation of fans, all bespeak the *Oriental* style. Too, in dances of Moroland, improvisation is allowed, and the dancer performs according to his mood. In these dances . . . the feet may be following a vigorous rhythm while head, arms, and hand movements are languid, leisurely, and smooth.⁴⁴

Goquingco's interpretation of "languid grace" among the Moros is largely responsible for the requirement adhered to very strictly in Bayanihan-style performances in the Philippines and in the

U.S. that dancers performing Moro dances must not smile. For example, the cover photo of her lavish, colored book of photos of both folk and folkloric [End Page 266] dance features seven female dance troupe members in a variety of ethnic costumes. The two women in the costumes of Christian Filipinos are the only two who are smiling. All of those in the costumes of people from Mindanao, Sulu, and northern Luzon are deadly serious. And of course, the Moro dancer is costumed with a *sari-manok* headdress.

Goquingco's section on "The Dances of the Muslim (Moslem) Filipino Groups" is also quite striking in its documentation of the differences in facial expression. All of the pictures of dances in this section are of staged theatrical productions directed by Christian Filipinos. They all feature extremely serious facial expressions. In contrast, Goquingco's sub-section on the Moro Maguindanaon people of west central Mindanao, features three pictures of young adults who are modeling traditional clothing and/or holding traditional weapons. Both of the women in the pictures and one of the men are smiling broadly, looking very much like Filipinos from anywhere in the Philippines.⁴⁵ This suggests the veracity of the claims of Filipino Muslim ethnomusicologists, dance, and music teachers, who point out that indigenous dance in Mindanao and Sulu contains the entire range of facial expressions--as do the dances of almost all other peoples--depending on the theme or purpose of the dance. Dances celebrating joyful occasions such as harvests or weddings call for smiling. Those dealing with serious or mournful occasions such as war, sickness, or death will be serious or even grim. Assigning one facial expression to an entire suite of Moro dances indicates a very different agenda.

A possible clue as to the nature of this agenda is found in the fact that the term "Oriental," as used above by Goquingco, does not occur very frequently in internal Filipino discussions of Philippine history or culture. It does, however, have a very long history in the discourse of the West, most especially that of Europe, as described by Edward Said. Filipino nationalist writer and Goquingco admirer Nick Joaquin acknowledges that much of what Filipinos know of Islam has come through Spanish and American sources: "If Sinbad, Alladin and Ali Baba have become part of Philippine imagery, this enrichment of the mind is a service we owe, not to Islam, but to its rival culture. . . . [The Filipino] who invokes, say, the Arabian Nights and the Rubaiyat can thank for that . . . [End Page 267] the English courses in school."⁴⁶

Historically, the source by which Filipinos came to learn of the "Orient" was a deeply compromised one. In *Orientalism*, Said points out that Western scholars developed an "expertise" on the East (the "Orient") and on Islam in particular and then created a new secular discourse whereby they could control it. This was a complex process. On the one hand, the "Orient" (the area from the Mediterranean Sea to China) was seen as the source of European civilization, religion, language, and learning. On the other, it represented cultures and languages that were believed to be strange, foreign, and necessarily inferior to that of Europe--the quintessential "Other." Because of this, Orientalism is a "style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."⁴⁷ By that means, Said says, European academics appropriated for themselves the power to interpret Asian reality to the West, and claimed credit for modernizing and even "creating" the Orient.⁴⁸ But this creation was always in opposition to themselves.

Said emphasizes that Orientalist surveillance was doubly vigilant when it came to Islam: ". . . where Islam was concerned, European fear, if not always respect, was in order. . . . For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma."⁴⁹ It was believed necessary to "diminish" Islam. Thus, for example, the genuine teachings of the Qur'an were ignored and ridiculous stereotypes were propagated such as "Oriental despotism and sensuality."⁵⁰ These stereotypes emphasized the "otherness" of the Orient and simultaneously gave the European Orientalists more power over it.

Why is Orientalism rampant in the Bayanihan's representation? One of the activities occurring in the Bayanihan film is an attempt to dominate and control Filipino Muslims by making their dances the "signature pieces" of the Philippines' premier national dance troupe. The Bayanihan appropriates the right to represent Moros and Moro culture without Moro consent. It bases its "right" on its nationalist imprimatur.

Nationalism and the Pursuit of Modernity

At first glance, it seems impossible that these Orientalist stereotypes that separate a non-Christian "them" from a Christian "us" could be [End Page 268] viewed as a vehicle for Philippine nationalism--something to pull the country together--and to showcase to foreigners. Yet as Filipinos in the Philippines attempt to distance themselves from the U.S. colonial period and as Filipinos in the diaspora continue to search for a national identity, this strange identification is in fact taking place. This is especially ironic given the history of stormy, colonial relations between Moros and the Philippine state.

Filipinos are aware (although some Filipino Americans may not be) that their historic relations with the Moros have been overwhelmingly unfriendly. The Moros retained their religion precisely because they were not conquered by Spain in the way the Christian Filipinos were.⁵¹ Complete political control over the Moros by the Philippine nation state only came about because the conquering American armies during the Philippine-American war subjugated them by massacring thousands of resisting Muslims between 1902 and 1913 and then initiating a long military occupation.⁵² So while the Muslims of Mindanao and Sulu were indeed "unconquered" by Spain, their conquest by the U.S. in the twentieth century remained to be completed by the Philippine government even after independence in 1946.

Moro integration into the Philippine state was extremely slow. Under the American colonial government, the Muslims were not allowed to elect representatives to the Philippine Assembly as were Christian Filipinos; they were ruled first by American military officers and later by appointed civilian American and Christian Filipino administrators. Armed revolts were common. Moros only elected their own leaders after independence in 1946. In the 1920s (during the formative years of Reyes Aquino), there was a movement which extended all the way to the U.S. Congress for the separation of Muslim territory from the Philippine Government--a movement which was vigorously opposed by that government in Manila which insisted on its continued inclusion in the Philippine nation state.⁵³ Muslim objections to their inclusion in that state were most visible in the widespread armed rebellion in Mindanao and Sulu during the last several decades of the twentieth century.⁵⁴ Christian Filipinos who traveled to Mindanao and Jolo were often [End Page 269] very aware of the differences in history and culture. The life story of Leonor Orosa Goqingco provides an example. She had been born in Jolo in the Sulu archipelago, a product of the modernizing project of the American colonial government. Her father, Sixto Y. Orosa (a native of Batangas province near Manila) and his wife, Severina Luna Orosa, both doctors, were among the first Christian Filipinos to be sent to Muslim territory (from 1914 to 1926) to introduce modern Western medical services. Sixto Orosa wrote an anthropological-style book titled *The Sulu Archipelago and Its People* in 1923 which included such statements as: "Among the older people, the teeth are blackened and short, as it was formerly the custom to file them when a child reached the age of fifteen."⁵⁵ There could hardly be a more graphic description of the "Other."

Later, Goqingco found herself drawing on her father's book along with those of other colonial anthropologists when she took an interest in Moro dance, because during the time she lived in Jolo and for several years afterward, she was much more interested in modern Western knowledge. Nick Joaquin, who interviewed Goqingco for a 1961 article, reported that "When girls her age were playing with dolls, Leonor was going through all the volumes of an encyclopedia in her father's library. Literature was her first love; she was a voracious reader. She does not recall being interested in Moro dances at all when she was a child in Jolo."⁵⁶

Joaquin goes on to point out that Goqingco's first interest in dance was in the modernity of Western ballet. It was primarily, he says, as a result of critical acclaim while dancing during visits to Japan and the United States, that Leonor Orosa Goqingco began to use her ballet training to choreograph dance sequences using Filipino themes. She created Moro and Igorot suites as well as stylizing and speeding up Christian Filipino dances such as the *Tinikling*. Goqingco expanded on Reyes Aquino's beginning in combining a nationalist vision with modern theatricality to package

Filipino folk dances to suit a modern audience's tastes. Nick Joaquin, who had bemoaned the "monotony" of village dances as performed in real life, was delighted with the imaginative flair in a 1961 Filipinescas performance choreographed by Goqingco of a Moro dance: **[End Page 270]**

The next sequence takes us to Morolandia, and nobody has really seen the *Kandingan* until he sees it danced here, not by a pair but by an ensemble, not all over the stage but practically without stirring from downstage, the performers massed in an irregular half-circle, not quite facing each other. The effect is stunning; the dancers are garbed in primary colors. Gradually, the men and the women break apart into two groups and simultaneously do two different dances: the women, a sinuous arm dance; the men, a lusty sword dance. Suddenly the lights go out. A spotlight discovers the dancers massed at center stage and looking like a giant multicolored blossom, like a huge rainbow jewel. This is one of the most breathtaking moments of the show. ⁵⁷

Filipino American students have demonstrated time and again that they share Joaquin's enthusiasm for this style of dance.

The practice of appropriation and distortion of Moro culture became especially prominent during the dictatorship of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos from 1972 to 1986. Goqingco (as well as other Filipino artists) participated actively in this process. For example, Goqingco's striking book, *The Dances of the Emerald Isles*, was published in 1980. It contains several acknowledgments of the Marcos's patronage, including a full-page picture of dancers taking "part in a townwide celebration in honor of President Ferdinand E. Marcos." ⁵⁸

Under normal circumstances it would not be controversial for the President and First Lady of a nation to promote the artistic heritage of their country. However, this period was also the time that Marcos was fighting a particularly brutal civil war against Moro separatists in Mindanao and Sulu--attempting their final conquest. In the martial law period, thousands of people died or were displaced in the south, and in February 1974 Marcos' troops even bombed the largely Moro city of Jolo to the ground. ⁵⁹ It was at this time that the non-Christian dance suites of the Bayanihan assumed even more prominence than they had previously achieved. During this time the Bayanihan, with its "signature piece," the *Singkil*, became a special project of First Lady Imelda Marcos, who provided new costumes, encouraged frequent trips abroad, and arranged Bayanihan performances at the presidential palace as often as once a week. ⁶⁰

These cultural activities were intimately related to President Marcos's **[End Page 271]** foreign and domestic political policies. Because of the violent challenge to Philippine sovereignty in Mindanao and Sulu during this time, it became important for Marcos to be able to emphasize to the world the continued inclusion of the Moros within the Philippine state. Marcos began by floating a story which claimed that during World War II, his life had been saved on the battlefield by an anonymous Moro. When visiting Mindanao and Sulu, Marcos attempted to appeal to Moros to support him because he owed a special debt of gratitude to them and so could be relied on as an ally. The identity, of course, of the mysterious battlefield Moro was never established and eventually, Marcos' violent treatment of the Moros completely discredited this story. ⁶¹

Besides the Moros, a larger Muslim group existed which needed to be convinced of the Moros' permanent inclusion in the Philippine polity. This was to be found in the Islamic countries from Libya to Brunei, a number of which were actively providing funding, arms, and training to the Moro separatists in revolt against Marcos, and were opposed to Marcos' war against the Moros. ⁶² It was to that audience that dance proved a potent cultural reassurance. Who could doubt that Moros were actively integrated into the Philippine state if one of their dances was the "signature piece" of the national dance troupe? Marcos made it a point to have the Bayanihan perform all over the Middle East as well as in the Islamic states of Southeast Asia.

With a different audience in mind, Marcos used the Bayanihan's Moro dances to distance himself from charges of being a puppet of U.S. imperialism made by the vocal Philippine left (based in Manila but able to articulate its views in the U.S. and Europe). By linking his government with the

images of a proud and "unconquered" people, Marcos appropriated for his own purposes the history of resistance of the Moros and the fact that they had avoided conquest by colonial Spain. Thereby, he--Marcos--was the successor of anti-colonial warriors.⁶³ This imagery was particularly effective in portraying Marcos as a nationalist.

Further, in order to extend the notion of power and domination to include all of the peoples of the Philippines, Marcos actively emphasized the metaphor of a mythical golden age in the Philippines' past where a benevolent and uncolonized sultan ruled peacefully over a group of [End Page 272] contented slaves.⁶⁴ The Bayanihan was utilized to justify the entire martial law experience by its claim to be the culmination of a long history of Philippine authoritarianism. In tandem with the Bayanihan, which was primarily a foreign export, Marcos developed his notion of the historical "loyalty to the paternal leader" for a domestic audience via, among other venues, his multi-volume series, *Tadhana: The History of The Filipino People*.⁶⁵ He also floated the notion of following the example of Brunei and making the Philippines into a sultanate.

Orientalism, as Edward Said points out, is primarily a language of power and domination. And nationalism can be shaped into a scheme for internal colonization, as proposed by Vicente Rafael. For example, because Muslims are consistently viewed as "others," their inclusion in the nation is always problematic and conditional. That phenomenon was illustrated by anti-Marcos author Nick Joaquin. Joaquin has actively critiqued the prominence given by Marcos to Muslim images of the Philippine nation. He writes scathingly, "Aboriginal purity is the phantom that haunts us. We ache back to a time when the Filipino heart was Philippine, uncorrupted, undistorted, unencrusted over by foreign cancer."⁶⁶ But in describing the formation of the Philippine nation state, Joaquin chooses to focus not on the entire Filipino people--not even the entire Philippine elite--but only those elite "principales" from the Tagalog and Pampanga areas near Manila. For this reason, Joaquin reacts indignantly to the suggestion that the nation should trace its ancestry to some Muslim sultan. He denies what he calls the "prime superstition of our history: that the Moros were 'never conquered.'"⁶⁷ While going to great lengths to claim that the ancient culture of the Tagalogs and Pampangos was untouched by Islam, he emphasizes that Moros are included in the Philippine nation state by virtue of conquest. He actively defines "Filipino" identity in opposition to Islam, and emphasizes instead the process of nation-building utilized by Tagalogs and Pampangos via their cooperation with the Spanish colonizers: "[W]e can claim of our ancestors that, although for a while, without doubt, painfully disoriented (yes, it's a pun), they did not go under but eventually emerged: transformed by the new media; for evidence of this is already part of our history."⁶⁸ [End Page 273]

Ironically, the potential end result of Joaquin's analysis, like Marcos', is an invitation to dictatorship. Joaquin is adamant that because the Tagalogs and Pampangos had the nationalist vision to imagine the Philippine nation and to "represent" in their vision the Moros and all other peoples within the territory, the Philippine government should resist with all its power any attempt to secede or rebel. It is its duty, he says, to protect and defend the national territory--just as Abraham Lincoln did in the U.S. Civil War.⁶⁹ Looking back at their historical role, Joaquin says: "[T]he Tagalog and Pampango sent forth to pacify some other tribe in revolt were not, as we say, sent forth to 'divide and conquer' but rather, as history shows, to unite and consolidate. . . ."⁷⁰

Joaquin's analysis resonates with Benedict Anderson's insight that the phenomenon of "official nationalism was typically a response on the part of threatened dynastic and aristocratic groups--upper classes--to popular vernacular nationalism."⁷¹ An important critique of this elite-oriented nationalism in the Philippines has been done by Reynaldo Ileto, who stresses the importance of the democratic participation in society of Muslims and other traditionally excluded minorities. Ileto is critical of José Rizal and other nationalist *ilustrados* who romanticized a mythic Filipino past as a justification for demanding political independence from colonial rule.⁷² He critiques the elitist view of Philippine history which enshrined the town-center (the residence of the Philippine elite) as the progressive mover in Philippine history and its allied theme that whatever activities strengthened the political center were good and those that weakened it were bad.⁷³ As an alternative, Ileto provides more historical detail about the implications of Joaquin's nation-building model and shows that not only did the colonial and Filipino elite "center" historically proceed to suppress dissent in newly conquered territories such as Muslim Mindanao and Sulu, but they also conducted a lengthy war

with Christian Filipino "bandits" and other ordinary poor folk, who expressed dissent and resistance by refusing to live under the authority of the "town-center" in Luzon and the Visayas. Iletto pleads with Filipinos to beware of the appropriating tendencies of the state and to listen to the very different voices of the "excluded" and the "rebels" when imagining the nation. ⁷⁴ [End Page 274]

NOTE: Renato Rosaldo observed that "culture" as it is projected in the twentieth century is usually in inverse proportion to power in the society. ⁷⁵ He would agree, I think, that the Philippine elite has frequently hidden behind the culture of others--making its own invisible. Through the Bayanihan, among other venues, the Orientalist gaze of the colonizer was utilized by the Philippine nation state to control all its people. In this context we realize that it is not only Moro dance which the Bayanihan wove into a fairy tale, but all of its various representations of Philippine society. Not only are the proud, unconquered Muslim sultans and slaves figments of Orientalist imagination, but the warlike Igorots, the romantic Spaniards, and the carefree Christian peasants are fictional characters as well.

Constructing the Court of the Sultan on American Campuses

With this problematic history, why is it that Filipino American students living in the United States have become so enamored of the Bayanihan fairy tale? Seen from Iletto's optimistic perspective, one might expect that through their Pilipino Cultural Nights, young Filipino Americans would be more interested in contributing to the democratization of the nationalist view of Philippine history rather than embracing its very Orientalist features. As ethnic minorities in a multicultural United States, Filipino American students have the potential to be very welcoming of a similar multicultural reality in the Philippines, in complete opposition to the narrow, essentializing nationalism of Marcos or even of Joaquin. Filipino Americans, by virtue of their position inside the metropole, represent populations whose collective stories do not fit into the neat categories of the nation-builders at the "center" either in the Philippines or in the United States.

However, the fact remains that the Bayanihan-style of dance is widely utilized by students as a model when organizing their Pilipino Cultural Nights. **What is it about this genre that appeals to them?** Interviews with Filipino American students revealed that they are modern to the core and so the modern theatricality of the Bayanihan is a powerful [End Page 275] attraction. **The desire for Western modernity also explains the students' willingness to embrace the Orientalist features of the Bayanihan.** After all, Edward Said credits the West with inventing Orientalism only in recent centuries as part of its very modern attempt to dominate both the Middle East and the Far East.

Filipino American students admit that they are deficient in a knowledge base from which to critique at least the non-Christian suites of the Bayanihan. Theodore Gonzalves points out that Filipino American students are almost entirely lacking in access to community institutions such as museums or to regularly-scheduled courses on Philippine or Filipino American history. ⁷⁶ Pilipino Cultural Nights have had to assume the almost exclusive role of instructor in Philippine history and culture in addition to the other roles that they play. For example, in the PCN at California State University, Long Beach on February 19, 1994 ("*Tayo ang Pag-asa* [We Are the Hope]") the college-student characters in the show's skit specifically exhorted the Filipino high school student characters to attend the PCN so that they would learn the Philippine history and culture missing from their history books and so improve their self-image and sense of identity. **Without community or educational institutions** willing to fill in the blank left by the erasure of Philippine history from the American educational curriculum, Filipino American students are left to fall back on their own sensibilities when evaluating the value of presenting a Bayanihan-style dance.

These sensibilities are dazzled by the Bayanihan. Prior to their exposure to the PCN, Filipino American students say they are most frequently dependent on their parents and a small circle of relatives and friends for their entire knowledge about the Philippines. These relatives and friends tend to come from one province in the Philippines and/or from modern, Americanized Manila. It is likely too that those students come from a fairly homogeneous class background. While students appreciate the sacrifices of their parents, frequently they perceive their parents as somewhat boring.

Bayanihan-style dance, with its four suites depicting very different cultures, costumes, rhythms, and

mythologies, paints a very different picture. Foremost, it is exciting to them. This, I believe, is one reason **[End Page 276]** why students are so anxious that their parents attend the PCNs. They want to share their new vision of the Philippines both with others who will appreciate it, and with those whose drab existence (in their view) will be enhanced by it. A second attraction is that the **Bayanihan genre tells the students that Philippine culture is rich and varied.** It presents a panoply of kings, princesses, proud warriors, beautiful señoritas, and happy, energetic, flirtatious young men and women very different from the homogeneous family from which the students came. If, on the basis of their home experiences, students had assumed that Philippine culture was unimpressive, the Bayanihan tells them otherwise. **There is a corresponding relief in the refutation of the popular belief in the United States that "Filipinos are 'a people without culture.'"** The anthropologist Renato Rosaldo encountered this comment most blatantly from his Harvard professor during the 1960s, but its circulation has been as old as the U.S. decision to take the Philippines as a colony. ⁷⁷

Precisely because they value the exotic Orientalism of the Bayanihan, PCNs have more and more frequently highlighted both the Moro and the Igorot suites as opposed to the peasant and "Maria Clara" suites which depict Christian Filipinos. The Court of the Sultan is also more exciting than a "barrio fiesta" celebrating a harvest in the countryside. The students, most of whom were raised, if not born, in the United States, are more than willing to accept uncritically the Bayanihan's projection of mythic Moro princes and princesses as the embodiment of regal Filipino origins. At the same time, **however, they do not share the historical prejudices against Moros and Igorots instilled in many Christian Filipinos raised in the Philippines.** These prejudices are an intriguing variation among Filipinos from the Philippines, who participate in the Orientalist project as exemplified by the *Singkil* and the Moro dance suite.

Danongan Kalanduyan, the only Maguindanaon who, for twenty years has been teaching kulintang music and Moro dance in the United States, has consistently experienced this distinction. Those Filipino Americans who were raised in the Philippines, he reports, when viewing or participating in a Bayanihan-style Moro dance suite, appreciate immediately that this is a depiction of an alien, non-Christian culture, **[End Page 277]** which has been utilized for nationalist purposes. For this reason, he says, they are much more accepting of the distortions which the Bayanihan has imposed when informed of them by indigenous artists and ethnomusicologists such as himself. Christian Filipinos, in his experience, were often raised to fear and despise Moros. Many, he said, consider them almost sub-human. For this reason they find nothing wrong with a mainstream Filipino dance troupe based in Manila appropriating dances, music, costumes, and imagery such as the *sari-manok* for their own purposes. In their view, he said, if the Philippine nation as a whole could appropriate this imagery so much the better. It served to illustrate domination over the despised Moro. ⁷⁸ In contrast, Filipino Americans born and raised in the United States, in Kalanduyan's experience, tended to approach the Moro suite with a different mentality. He finds them much more open to accepting a non-exploitative rendering of Moro music and dance when given the opportunity of studying with a teacher such as himself or Usopay H. Cadar, the only Maranao ethnomusicologist teaching and performing in the United States.

Kalanduyan and Cadar note that **Filipino American students, like the Bayanihan, seem to prefer to emphasize Moro and Igorot dance suites over Christian community dances.** They attribute this, however, to a source other than a desire to express internal colonization and control. Filipino Americans raised in the U.S., they claim, possess American artistic sensibilities, and Americans, they point out, are overwhelmingly urban, living in a highly stratified society. **A vision of a more communal, rural lifestyle as depicted in most Christian community folk dances, does not have the same appeal.** Finally, they suggest, Filipino American students have an additional investment in a Bayanihan style of dance: frequently these students are talented dancers and/or musicians. Their future life will take place in the United States. If they are to make a living and/or achieve fame as a cultural artist, it will be among other people with Western sensibilities. Hollywood, in their view, frequently dictates Filipino American student taste because they can picture themselves utilizing this genre to advance a musical career in America. ⁷⁹

In spite of this complex situation, Cadar in particular is very positive about the potential for Filipino American students to break the pattern **[End Page 278]** of discrimination and Orientalism practiced

by the Bayanihan. He notes that they are persistent, indeed relentless, in pursuing the answer to the question, "What is a Filipino?" He feels confident that this persistence will enable them to "get it right" eventually. He says, "[t]he Maranao bamboo dance *Singkil* is symbolic of [a] proud pre-colonial heritage. Learning it right, doing it right, should be the goal in order to validate the past, to fill the void, to right the wrong. Faking it is tantamount to correcting one mistake with another mistake: two wrongs do not add up." Cadar concludes by being especially optimistic about the potential of Pilipino Cultural Nights to transform the consciousness of Filipino American students in a positive way:

Learning and doing the true Moro music and dances is in itself a journey toward self-knowledge and an effective way of fostering self acceptance and letting the lost souls grow up. Empowerment begins from individual self confidence and culminating into collective action, which translates into unity, strength and power. The powers-that-be seldom ignore or defy collective action.

The UCLA/PCN displays that power, and accomplishes more. First, the event is a collective effort. Second, it is a vehicle for the young idealistic Filipinos to converge for a common cause. Third, the performance involves the students actually to experience their own culture. They become active participants. They define, recreate and purvey what they identified with as their heritage in the arts. Reading about one's heritage is passive participation; recreating it is a heightened experience. The performance provides the vehicle for the students to work together for a common positive purpose and to bury their differences. Besides, the event itself is fun-filled, educational and ennobling.

Therefore, if they do it right by getting away from the Orientalist Bayanihan approach we can realize . . . the potential for Filipino-American students to negotiate their own cultural identity and empowerment.⁸⁰

Such optimism from a long-time teacher of Filipino Americans provides confidence that in time the corresponding servility, arrogance, and grimness of the Court of the Sultan will be replaced in the PCNs with a different version of the *Singkil*--one that involves a playful Princess Gundingan running, leaping, and, yes, smiling on her way to the "Place of Enchantment."

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Notes

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1. "Message" sent from Malacanang, Manila, dated January 8, 1991 to the "*Sirong Ganding*" concert of Muslim *kulintang* music performed by Filipino Americans in New York City. Printed in their program dated February 16, 1991.

2. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

3. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

4. The term comes from Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October 28* (Spring 1984): 125-33.

5. Michael Salman, "The United States and the End of Slavery in the Philippines, 1898-1914: A Study of Imperialism, Ideology, and Nationalism," Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1993, 22.

6. Vicente L. Rafael, "White Love: Surveillance and Nationalist Resistance in the U.S. Colonization of the Philippines," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, edited by Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 186.

7. November 23, 1998.

8. See especially Theodore S. Gonzalves "The Day the Dancers Stayed: On Pilipino Cultural Nights," in *Filipino Americans: Transformation and Identity*, edited by Maria P. P. Root (Thousand

Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1997), 163-82.

9. The word "*Makibaka*" was popularized during the opposition movement to dictator Ferdinand Marcos which began around 1966. Students and others in the United States were active in support of this movement. See, for example, Madge Bello and Vincent Reyes, "Filipino Americans and the Marcos Overthrow: The Transformation of Political Consciousness," *Amerasia Journal* 13:1 (1986-87): 73-83; and Chic Fortich, *Escape! Charito Planas: Her Story* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1991).

10. The similarity in "group bonding" between the PCN students and rural villagers was noted most recently by Allegra Fuller Snyder in a personal conversation, January 6, 1999.

11. After the Spanish reference to Muslim "Moors" in Spain.

12. "*Makibaka*: Celebrating twenty years of Pilipino student activism," program of the Pilipino Cultural Night, March 27, 1992, UCLA Royce Hall, p. 6.

13. "Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company," Original Production of Bayanihan Folk Arts Center, Manila, Philippines, Helen Z. Benitez, President; directed and written by Allegra Fuller Snyder. Similar images are reproduced in full color in Reynaldo G. Alejandro's *Philippine Dance: Mainstream and Crosscurrents* (Hong Kong: Vera-Reyes, 1978).

14. *Ibid.*, 37.

15. Nick Joaquin, "Introduction: Heritage: Educated Feet," in Leonor Orosa Goquingco, *The Dances of the Emerald Isles* (Quezon City: Malaya Books, 1971), 9. Emphasis in the original.

16. Goquingco, *Dances of the Emerald Isles*, 10.

17. Interviews with Nick Basilio Zanolria, UCLA student and former participant in the PCN of Long Beach City College, November 29, 1998; Patricia Salumbides, coordinator of the PCN at San Francisco State University, November 5, 1998. See also "*Baliktanaw*."

18. See, for example, Salman, "United States"; Reynaldo C. Ileto, *Maguindanao: 1860-1888: The Career of Datu Uto of Buayan* (Marawi City: n.p., n.d.); Peter G. Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos 1899-1920* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983); Peter G. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos: Heritage and Horizon* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1979); James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1985); and Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of Philippines Press, 1973).

19. Interview with Danongan Kalanduyan, May 25, 1992.

20. Alejandro, *Philippine Dance*, 169.

21. Said, *Orientalism*, 67.

22. Epifanio San Juan, Jr., "Mapping the Boundaries, Inscribing the Differences: The Filipino Writer in the U.S.A.," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 19:1 (Spring 1991): 117. Quoted in Oscar V. Campomanes, "The New Empire's Forgetful and Forgotten Citizens: Unrepresentability and Unassimilability in Filipino-American Postcolonialities," *Critical Mass* 2:2 (Spring 1995): 145-200.

23. For an excellent review of the literature on (and opposed to) the exceptionalism argument as it applies to the Philippines and the United States, see Campomanes, "New Empire's."

24. Interviews with Joel Jacinto, January 5, 1999; and Allegra Fuller Snyder, January 6, 1999.

25. Before doing the Bayanihan film, Snyder had worked on a film about Bali, and so she felt a familiarity with Hinduism, if not Islam. She also detected in the Bayanihan's Moro suite a pattern of "West coming East" from India and Indonesia to the Philippines. (Interview, January 6, 1999).

26. Cited in Usopay H. Cadar, "The Bayanihan: How Authentic is its Repertoire?," *Solidarity* 5:12 (December 1970): 45.

27. It is true that by the sixteenth century Sulu and the Maguindanao region of western Mindanao had strong Sultanates which resisted Spanish attempts at colonization. See especially William Henry Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994), 173-78; Ruurdje Laarhoven, *Triumph of Moro Diplomacy: The Maguindanao Sultanate in the 17th Century* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1989) for a description of the consolidation of the Maguindanao Sultanate; and Warren's *Sulu Zone* for Sulu. However the Bayanihan narration conveys some misimpressions as well. For example, Majapahit was the name of the last great Hindu dynasty in Java in the 14th-century. It slowly gave way to the advance of Islam in the fifteenth century. See D. R. Sardesai, *Southeast Asia: Past and Present* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 52-59; and D. G. E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia* (London:

Macmillan, 1964), 77-89.

28. Cadar, "The Bayanihan," 48-49.

29. *Ibid.*, 48.

30. See Salman, "United States," part 2; and Warren, *Sulu Zone*.

31. Eric Casiño, who spent time among the Maranao in the 1960s, reports that the *sari-manok* "is sometimes placed on top of bamboo poles in the center of the village (especially at weddings)." Eric Casiño, *Muslim Folk Art in the Philippines*, (Manila: National Media Production Center for the National Museum of the Philippines, 1967), 12. For illustrations of the Bayanihan-style sari-manok headdress, see Alejandro, *Philippine Dance*, 32, 166, 174.

32. For an illustration of the prince and the bowing pole clappers, see Alejandro, *Philippine Dance*, 168.

33. In the film of the 1962 Bayanihan performance, the prince's chest is exposed but not his armpits. Cadar viewed a 1970 performance by which time the prince's jacket had been replaced by a much skimpier vest. Essentializing costumes is risky. The Philippines is a tropical country with a long history in which costume variation has been extreme. Modern religious sensibilities, both Christian and Muslim, have tended to emphasize modesty in dress very different from the traditions of Southeast Asians before extensive Western contact. Among Moros, the tight, short-sleeved jacket only occasionally worn open at the chest has the most discussion in the literature as a costume of the Tausug people of the Sulu archipelago. It is apparently Chinese in origin. See Goqingco, *Dances of the Emerald Isles*, 163. For costume description of the early years of the modern era, see Scott's *Barangay* especially pages 167 and 171; and Warren, *Sulu Zone*, 246 and Figures 1, 3, 4, and 9. Gowing's *Mandate in Moroland* has a large collection of photos of Moro leaders taken at the beginning of the twentieth century--some by Sixto Orosa, Goqingco's father. For an extensive discussion (complete with patterns) of Sulu-area costumes in the late twentieth century, see Ligaya Fernando-Amilbansa, *Pangalay: Traditional Dances and Related Folk Artistic Impressions* (Manila: Filipinas Foundation, 1983), 82-139.

34. Cadar, "The Bayanihan," 49.

35. See especially Alejandro, *Philippine Dance*, 224.

36. Peter G. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos - Heritage and Horizon*, (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1979), 133.

37. Nick Joaquin is vociferous in praising the Filipino interest in Western modern dance. "That was among the first things the Americans learned about us: our skill on the light fantastic. They brought in ragtime--and before you could say Borrromeo Lou, we were foxtrotting and cakewalking all over the islands. (Borrromeo Lou, if you need historical enlightening, was our first great vaudeville maestro.) Jazz! How we took to jazz! As was amply attested by the cabarets mushrooming all over during the 1920s and by the quantities of tap-dancers and high-kickers available for the stage during the heyday of Philippine vaudeville. Onstage or at the cabarets, Filipinos did the Charleston and the Black Bottom as though they had the whole history of ragtime behind them. We took to syncopation like ducks to Pateros." Goqingco, *Dances of the Emerald Isles*, 8.

38. Alejandro, *Philippine Dance*, 37.

39. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 14-16.

40. "Outlines of a Non-Linear Emplotment of Philippine History," in *Reflections on Development in Southeast Asia*, edited by Lim Tech Ghee (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1988), 133.

41. The introduction of the Rizal cult at U.P. can be traced to Austin Craig, an American who was the first chairman of the history department. Craig was also responsible for staging in Manila at the February 1922 carnival a U.P. pageant featuring an elaborate "Court of the Sultan." Craig (with co-authors H. Otley Beyer and Leandro Fernandez) wrote the script for "Maynila [sic] Receives Legaspi in 1591." *The Philippine Herald* highlighted the starring role of a local coed, "Miss Fernandez is Sultana In Soliman's Court," January 5, 1922, page 1. In what sounds remarkably similar to a Pilipino Cultural Night of the 1990s, the pageant included folk dancing and music composed by later-to-be-famous U.P. music professor Nicanor Abelardo. The cast was made up of 200 U.P. students costumed in pure silk, who portrayed not only the court and local vassals of Manila's Sultan Soliman, but also Legaspi, the Spaniards, and visiting traders from India, Arabia, China, Siam, and Japan. See Barbara S. Gaerlan, "The Politics and Pedagogy of Language Use at the University of the Philippines: The History of English as the Medium of Instruction and the Challenge Mounted by

Filipinos," Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1998, especially chapters 2 and 3, pages 138-40. Also, *The Philippine Herald*, February 9, 1922, 1, 4.

42. Quoted in Alejandro, *Philippine Dance*, 39.

43. Quoted in *ibid.*, 45.

44. Quoted in *ibid.*, 169. Italics added.

45. Goqingco, *Dances of the Emerald Isles*. This section runs from pages 155-85. The three photos of individuals are on pages 179-80. Fernando-Amilbansa, *Pangalay*, also has a number of photos of Tausug and other Sulu residents smiling while dancing or while posing in elegant dress. See pages 30, 44, 71, 76, 81, 94. See also Alejandro, *Philippine Dance*, 172-89 for examples of the serious facial expressions associated with the dance style.

46. Nick Joaquin, *Culture and History: Occasional Notes on the Process of Philippine Becoming* (Metro Manila: Solar Publishing, 1988), 135.

47. Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

48. *Ibid.*, 121.

49. *Ibid.*, 59.

50. *Ibid.*, 102-03.

51. A little-known fact is that in 1901, two years after paying Spain \$20 million for the Philippines in the Treaty of Paris, the United States paid Spain an additional \$100,000 and entered into a new treaty to obtain title to the Sulu archipelago. *U.S. Statutes at Large, 56th Congress, 1899-1901* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), vol. 31, 1942. See also Gowing, *Mandate*, 28. I am grateful to Madge Kho for this reference.

52. See Salman, "United States," part II; and Gowing, *Mandate*, 43-166.

53. Bernardita Reyes Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919-1934* (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1983), 134-35. I am grateful to August Espiritu for this reference.

54. See, for example, Thomas M. McKenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebel: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Samuel K. Tan, *Internationalization of the Bangsamoro Struggle* (Quezon City: University of Philippines Press, 1993); Thomas M. Kiefer, *The Tausug: Violence and Law in a Philippine Moslem Society* (New York: Rinehart & Winston, 1972); and T. J. S. George, *Revolt in Mindanao: The Rise of Islam in Philippine Politics* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980). At the same time many Muslims have inexorably been drawn into the Philippine state. So, for example, the ready availability (rejected by the Bayanihan) of Muslim artists and scholars.

55. Quoted in Goqingco, *Dances of the Emerald Isles*, 163. Ironically, according to Scott, tooth filing and staining was so widely practiced in the Philippines in the sixteenth century that the feature which Filipinos most noted about the Europeans when they first arrived (as opposed, for example, to skin color) was their ugly white teeth. See *Barangay*, 18-19.

56. Quijano De Manila (Nick Joaquin), "Dance of the Cross: In Leonor Orosa's 'Filipinescas,' The Native Lent Is Choreographed For The First Time." Originally published in the *Philippines Free Press*, Manila, April 1, 1961. Reprinted in Goqingco, *Dances of the Emerald Isles*, 241-45. The quote is on page 244.

57. *Ibid.*, 245.

58. Goqingco, *Dances of the Emerald Isles*, 208. See Alejandro, *Philippine Dance*, 43 for a picture of Imelda Marcos honoring Goqingco as a 1976 National Artist.

59. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos*, 256.

60. Interview with Leonilo (Boy) Angos and Barbara Ele, Feb. 23, 1992. According to Ricardo Trimillos (personal communication, May 1994), Imelda Marcos may have had a personal reason for favoring the Bayanihan as her cultural vehicle. She was an alumna of Philippine Women's University. As has been shown in a related context in the United States, a common theatrical device is for an empowered group to take on the temporary identity of a disempowered group precisely to emphasize the fact that beneath their "blackface" they are really white. See, for example, David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991), 115-63.

61. This story was recounted to me by Usopay Cadar, electronic communication, November 21, 1998.

62. The situation was further complicated by the fact that during the 1970s and 1980s large

numbers of Filipinos, primarily Christian, but increasingly including Muslims, were emigrating to Islamic countries (among others) to work as contract laborers. There is a large literature on the Diaspora of Filipino workers around the world. See especially Jane Margold, "Narratives of Masculinity and Transnational Migration: Filipino Workers in the Middle East," in *Bewitching Women, Pious Men: Gender and Body Politics in Southeast Asia*, edited by Aihwa Ong and Michael Peletz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 274-98; Dean T. Alegado, "The Political Economy of International Labor Migration from the Philippines," Ph.D. diss., University of Hawai'i, 1992; Jonathan Y. Okamura, *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998); and Vicente L. Rafael, "'Your Grief Is Our Gossip': Overseas Filipinos and Other Spectral Presences," *Public Culture* 9, 267-91.

63. This notion was emphasized in the May 1973 introduction written by Marcos' executive secretary Alejandro Melchor to Majul's book *Muslims in the Philippines* in which he says, "I would like to concentrate on what it [the book] does to relate to our current pre-occupation—that of building a nation anew. If you remember, our history books usually treat Philippine history as congruent with the story of Western colonialism in the Philippines; usually, they deal with our pre-European history in cavalier fashion, as if it can be glossed over. This work is among the first, if it is not the first, to correct this perspective; it links our cultural identity with the larger civilization of Southeast Asia, and makes the Philippines an integral part of the cultural mainstream of Southeast Asian peoples. In doing so, it also brings forward the reconstruction of a neglected area of the region's past: the story of the sultanates and the datships, in Sulu, Mindanao, and Borneo, through which our ancestors virtually lived as nation-states in themselves, in lively interaction with similar political entities throughout the Malaysian world." Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, viii. A few months after the declaration of martial law, the University of the Philippines' Asian Center decided to publish Majul's scholarly book which had been completed in 1970. A second edition was rushed the following November to include Melchor's introduction. The Asian Center had recently been incorporated into the Philippine Center for Advanced Studies (PCAS), established by Marcos' Presidential Decree No. 342. PCAS was described by a faculty participant as "the brain machine of President Marcos" which, among other tasks, wrote position papers for Marcos on international issues. Eventually it came to include the Institute of Islamic Studies. See Gaerlan, "Politics and Pedagogy," 251-55.

64. See, for example, Vicente L. Rafael's "Patronage and Pornography: Ideology and Spectatorship in the Early Marcos Years," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32:2 (April 1990): 282-304.

65. Iletto, "Outlines," 133.

66. Joaquin, *Culture and History*, 47.

67. *Ibid.*, 136.

68. *Ibid.*, 9.

69. *Ibid.*, 128-32.

70. *Ibid.*, 130.

71. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 137.

72. Iletto, "Outlines," 132-36.

73. *Ibid.*

74. Iletto, "Outlines," 144-54; and Reynaldo C. Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979).

75. Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 198-204.

76. Gonzalves, "Day the Dancers Stayed," 166.

77. Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth*, 197. For a discussion of the history of this concept, see Campomanes, "New Empire's."

78. I found this assertion quite alarming, so I asked the closest person at hand, my housemate R. Vic Gaerlan about the attitudes of Filipino Americans raised in the Philippines toward Moros. Vic was born and raised in La Union province in northwest Luzon and came to the U.S. in 1956 when he was nine years old. "Oh yes," he assured me. On the beach just down the street from his house was an old stone fort from the nineteenth century or perhaps earlier built specifically as a watch tower to warn the townspeople of Moro attacks. He was informed on numerous occasions while growing up that all Moros were anxious to slit his throat and that he should never trust one for a single minute. See Warren, *Sulu Zone*, for an excellent description of the slave raiding in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

- [79](#). See especially Usopay H. Cadar, "Maranao Kolintang Music and its Journey in America," *Asian Music* 7:2 (Spring/Summer 1996): 81-103; and Neva Chonin "A Dilly of a Career: The Bay Area's Invisible Skratch Pikz Have Become World Stars of Turntablism," *Datebook, San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, November 1-7, 1998, 1, 36-37.
- [80](#). Electronic Communication, November 21, 1998.