

Patriotic Masculinity and Anti-Colonial Nationalism in Select Philippine Historical Films

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ABSTRACT

In the past years, a surge of historical movies focusing on the history of patriotism and the sacrifice of leading Filipino revolutionary figures has flooded mainstream Philippine cinema. These include *El Presidente* (2012), *Bonifacio: Ang Unang Pangulo* (2014), *Heneral Luna* (2015), and *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral* (2018), which tackle the life and heroism of Emilio Aguinaldo, Andres Bonifacio, Antonio Luna, and Gregorio del Pilar, respectively. These films bring to the surface the long-standing debate on the concept of heroism in relation to the Philippine Revolution. The portrayals of heroes in these films highlight the complex nature of masculinity, particularly, on how it is fashioned and refashioned to look heroic and patriotic. On the receiving end, the public, as consumers of films, patronize and embrace the portrayals as acceptable representations of nationalism. Through a historical, filmic, and cultural critique, this study provides analyses and interpretations of the complexities of heroism, masculinity, patriotism, and nationalism.

Keywords: historical films, masculinity, nationalism, patriotic masculinity, Philippine Revolution

INTRODUCTION

In *A Question of Heroes*, Joaquin (2005) raises pragmatic questions and criticisms about the role of heroes during the Philippine Revolution and presents a compelling counter-narrative about the character and identity of the Filipino heroes who are emblematic of the country's national narrative. Most of his questions fall into two categories. First, he analyzes where the heroes failed and what traits contributed to their failure. Second, he also questions the projected and protracted macho traits the conventional narratives contain. From this standpoint, this article wants to make a case. We need to reassess our understanding and appreciation of heroes,¹ as they, as historical texts, are subject to perennial critical appreciation and reevaluation. Santillan (1998) points out that it is imperative to contextualize the creation of historical films in the period when they were made (163).

The years from 2011 to 2016 fall into a period that we can call the 'sesquicentennial decade' of Philippine revolutionary heroes. The national celebrations of this decade saw a series of state-sponsored historical and cultural initiatives to commemorate the heroism and the emblematic nationalist images of these heroes. In 2013, the state commemorated the sesquicentennial birth anniversary of Andres Bonifacio (1863–2013). The following year, the government did the same for Emilio Aguinaldo (1864–2014). In 2016, Antonio Luna (1866–2016) was honored. Gregorio del Pilar (1875–1899), the youngest amongst the heroes studied in this article, will have his sesquicentennial in the year 2025. It is in this context that since 2012 there has been a surge of historical films in the Philippines that feature the lives and struggles of Philippine revolutionary. These films invite the public to reimagine the lives of these heroes as reflections of Philippine nationhood during the era of the Philippine Revolution, one of the most pivotal periods in Philippine history.

This article is a study of Filipino historical hero films and their portrayals and problematizations of masculinity as a political and cultural concept in contemporary Philippine society. It analyzes the concept of masculinity in the Philippines, as shown and represented by the films about the lives of the four heroes mentioned above. The films studied are *El Presidente: The Story of Emilio Aguinaldo and the First Philippine Republic* (2012), *Bonifacio: Ang Unang Pangulo* (2013), *Heneral Luna* (2015), and *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral* (2018) (see Figure 1).

On the one hand, at the time of their release, these films triggered the resurgence of long-standing debates on heroism, betrayal, and the essence of studying the Philippine revolution, as a significant turning point in Philippine history, specifically, of the development of Filipino nationalism. On the other hand, they also prompted the public discussion on the complex nature of masculinity, and how it is fashioned and refashioned to cater to the heroic and patriotic framework, which the public, as consumers of films, patronize and consider as a template for their perception and appreciation of nationalism.



Figure 1: Movie Posters of the Subject Films. Source: Internet Movie Database (IMDb)

In *Pasyon and Revolution*, Iletto (2011) questions the prevailing narrative wherein the Philippine revolution progressed by means of the political and social exploits and maneuvering of the 'few men in power.' He also contends that the revolution was a process that seemed linear, wherein it started from the Katipunan and culminated in the establishment of the Philippine Republic (78). Anchoring on this historiographical observation, the four subject films are emblematic of the dominant masculine representation and narration in Philippine films. This study uses historiographical criticism and film criticism as theoretical frameworks and methodologies, with inclinations on historiographical analysis and feminist film theory's critical engagement of masculinity and patriarchy in films. Via these frameworks, I introduce the concept of 'patriotic masculinity.' This stands on two theoretical positions. First, on the critical use of Donaldson's (1993) 'hegemonic masculinity,' wherein masculinity is articulated as a central cultural discourse, and second, Chernilo's (2007) critique of methodological nationalism, in which societal sectors have a tendency to equate all nationhood as end goal of modernity. This study attempts to provide new outlooks in assessing the concepts of masculinity and nationalism portrayed in Filipino hero films.

The concept of 'patriotic masculinity,' which I use as a historical and visual notion, is prevalent in the manifestations and portrayals of the Philippine Revolution, its actors and movers, and its political and cultural legacies both in the narrative and cinematic sense. To add, the study's use of feminist perspective draws primarily from the idea of Neroni (2016) that feminist film theory scrutinizes the manifestations and contradictions in film (2). Secondly, the imprinted behavioral codes on belief systems, oftentimes considered cultural rather than biological, are identified by the study as ideological representations (7). Thornham (1999) has earlier pointed out that films are, by nature, bearers of ideology (12). Cinema, since time immemorial, is a platform of contested discourse; it has been considered a praxis where cultural notions on sexual differences are produced, reproduced, and represented (Smelik 1998, 7). Smelik points out that by assuming various realities, the feminist theory engagement in film criticism could be brought to the surface. These realities include the following: the inbuilt tensions between politics and pleasure (7), the established role of the active and powerful male character that perfectly reflects a visual machinery suited for men (10), and the contestation of hegemonic ideas by diversifying discourses and the inclusion of marginalized sectors in the grand narrative (26). Being a "product of deliberate propaganda," films both shape the cultural attitudes of societies and reflect changes within certain social systems (Thornham 1999, 10). Therefore, this study critiques masculinity as a fundamental approach in feminist film theory.

Further enunciations on the discourse of nationalism expose an intricate understanding of its use in historical narratives and films, particularly in the visualization of masculinity. I articulate 'patriotic masculinity' as a manifestation of the masculinity in films, grounded on the conceived notion of nationalism in the Philippines that is patriotic and anti-colonial. The unnoticed prevalence of this notion in historical films, particularly in portrayals of revolutionary heroes, coagulates the conventional

appreciation of nationalism, despite its tricky, generalizing, and fundamentally hegemonic trait. As an attempt to veer away from the established understanding of hegemonic masculinity, I argue that patriotic masculinity is in line with the agenda of postcolonial discourses. Although this manifestation of masculinity is intruding and indirectly stimulates patriarchal tendencies, postcoloniality provides the discursive justification as it cloaks patriotic masculinity's messy character, and it supports the prevailing notion that Philippine nationalism is fundamentally anti-colonial.

As a critique of Western hegemony, postcolonial discourse interrogates the structural elements of imperialist discourses used to legitimize colonial rule and the marginalization of local cultures; and it seeks the establishment of alternative modes of research and analysis in culture and society (Patajo-Legasto 2004, 8). Given this, the primacy of the 'allergy' to anything dominantly Western is observed. Despite the presence of the same structures of dominance such as masculinity, nationalism as a concept is less despised because it presents itself as a form of anti-colonial construct. Hau (2004) laments that the epistemological nature and perceived meaning of nation is a mirror reflection of historical experience, and thus, "nations cloak themselves in the mantle of inevitability by interweaving history and their own stories so tightly that it is often difficult to imagine history being anything other than a history of the nation" (108, 115).

The centrality of historical writings in films "contribute to fashioning the myths, articulating the aspirations, and formulating the policies of the nation" (115). Therefore, standing on these modalities, the nation, or the nation-state, as Chernillo (2007, 18) calls it, is "reduced to the self-sufficient, solid and well-integrated representation of the modern society;" the perceived acceptance of the anti-colonial national discourse that is prevalent in Philippine history is subconsciously "thought of as the natural and necessary organizing principle of modernity." He further states that the nation "is an unfinished project which paradoxically presents itself as an already established form of socio-political organization" that has been labeled as "historically necessary, sociologically solid, and normatively grounded" (19, 24).

Though this study interchangeably uses nationalism and its equally complex twin concept of patriotism, it is necessary to differentiate nationalism with the latter, which is another complex concept. Publicly accepted as a term which ascribes one's love for his country (not necessarily a nation *per se*), in various metrics and categories (Ariely 2007), it can be distinguished from the rudiments of nationalism by arguing its counter-concept character (Blank et. al 2001, 7). Without essentially identifying with everyone in terms of the socially and politically acceptable term of reference, one can be manifestly patriotic but does not subscribe to the way nationalism has cemented advocacy for a homogenous society. Synonymous as they may seem in terms of consolidating collective feelings to pursue a common goal, patriotism and nationalism differ, as the former tends to be more of the action and collective sentiment, while the latter pertains to the process and the creation of an amalgamated

society with prescribed (and imposed) commonalities and aspiration. The use of patriotism in the concept I introduce exhibits an era-based revolutionary sentiment as a significant imprint in historical film portrayals and in the larger milieu, as an instrument in nation-building.

HISTORICAL FILMS AND FILIPINO HEROES IN FILMS

On Historical Films

Tolentino (2014a) considers films as medium, and form of narrative composed of a mixture of the aesthetics of realism and artistic ritualism (xvii-xx). This type of visual narratives interrogates the collective and marginal experiences of people, including our meanings of nation and national identity (xvii-xx). Rosentone (1995) argues that the film has been one of the primary bearers of historical meanings and interpretations in many societies (3) while Campos (2014) laments that “cinema is a powerful medium that can mediate and mediate on history.” (75) To add, historical films envision and imagine a world of visuals, illustrations, sound, and textual and artistic sources (Flores 1998, 195). Combining these propositions, historical films therefore play an integral part in the development of the Philippine cinema. From its formative decades in the early 20th century until its ‘Golden Age’ from the 1950s to 1970s, historical personalities, events, and periods have been the dominant subjects of historical films. The *Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* by the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) defines historical films as

...based on real lives or actual events that happened in the distant past. The first type focuses on the true-life stories and biographies of famous persons, such as heroes and heroines, as well as notorious personalities, such as bandits, criminals, and underworld who existed at one time or another in the past. The second type deals with historical places and events which are resurrected or recreated in the film. (CCP 1994, 88)

In understanding the role of film in national formation, it is imperative to look at how the Philippine Revolution is portrayed in films (Flores 1995, 193). In a study by Santillan (1998), he classifies the historical films from 1912 to 1970 into five categories: (1) *Rizalismo* films – or films portraying the life of José Rizal;² (2) *tulisan* films – or films depicting banditry in the 1910s to the 1930s; (3) guerilla films or films focused on the heroism of Filipino guerilla freedom fighters during the Pacific War in the Philippines; (4) background films, or films that are fictional but the context of the film portrays a historical period; and (5) biographical historical films, which depict the exploits, bravery, and legacy of Filipino heroes, most of whom are heroes of the Philippine Revolution against Spain (155-182). In the category of biographical historical films, some of the films shown from 1912 to the 1960s include *Los*

Martires: Gomez, Burgos, y Zamora (1912), *Tandang Sora* (1974), *Heneral Gregorio del Pilar* (1949), *Dagohoy* (1953), *Lapu-Lapu* (1955), *Padre Burgos* (1949), *Diego Silang* (1951), *Heneral Paua* (1956), *Kilabot sa Makiling* (1959), and *Alyas Sakay* (1961). The subject films in this study are both the first (in the case of *El Presidente*) and subsequent (*Bonifacio*, *Heneral Luna*, and *Goyo*) portrayals of the lives of the subject heroes. Before *Bonifacio*, there were five films that tackled the life of Bonifacio, namely *Andres Bonifacio* (1934), *Mag-inang Mahirap* (1939), *Andres Bonifacio* (1964), *Bayani* (1992), and *Supremo* (2012).³ There is one film before the 2015-portrayal that shows Luna's life, namely the *The Tragic Death of General Luna* (early 1940s).⁴ Lastly, before *Goyo*, the films *Heneral Gregorio del Pilar* (1949) and *Tirad Pass: The Last Stand of Gen. Gregorio del Pilar* (1996) depict the life of Del Pilar.⁵

The study of history in films is the study of the history of encounters of forces in society, and its relations to people and cultures consuming those films (Flores 1998, 184). There is a strong bond between the two, as reflected in the corresponding development of the Filipino nation (where the Philippine Revolution is one turning point) and the development of cinema in the Philippines during the waning years of the 19th and the early decades of the 20th century. The country's transition to nationhood and the progress of the business of cinema in the archipelago coincided in one spectacle of political, social, and cultural transformation. Within this transformation, the film industry has been an arena of heroic portrayals, depicting and emphasizing the gallantry and pride of Filipino nationalist struggles.

As a narrative based on various texts, the historical film should be analyzed not only from the rudiments of historical research and criticism (Navarro 2004, 6), but also through various modes of cultural criticism – whether art, literary, or film criticism. An intertextual analysis is needed to understand a film, wherein the historical and artistic content of the film is taken into consideration (6). History is textualized through film, thus, “the question of history and representation is a question that concerns the notion of narrative” (del Mundo, Jr. 1999, 6). Campomanes (2015) adds that “(historical) films can express, narrate, and capture experiences, ideas, and emotions in a way that no book can possibly duplicate” (1).

Moreover, aside from its default submission to the dominant narrative, historical films also play a role in bringing in the unheard voices, and the marginalized and degraded truths, which the prevailing historical narrative predisposes to the consuming public (Flores 1998, 194). David (2014) posits that in historical films, nostalgia plays a shadowy role, and this causes perennial problems to the filmmaker in actualizing the ‘inaccessible or non-existing reality.’ Therefore, from these modalities, a historical film is composed of the historical narrative on which it is based, the artistic imagination of the director, and the political agenda of the film and the filmmakers. The historical narrative complements with the way the director, as the author of the film, presents and visualizes historical events and personalities. In most cases, this idea of presenting a perceived interpretation is subtle, and the films are commonly

labeled as 'based on' or 'inspired by true events.' But in the case of the subject films, for example in *Heneral Luna* and *Goyo*, the director himself admits that there is an attempt to alter events and bend facts to present an intended theme:

This film is a work of fiction based on facts. Liberties have been taken with the depiction of historical figures and the order of events. While historical accuracy is important, there are bigger truths about the Filipino nation that can only be reached by combining the real and the imaginary. (Tarog 2015, introductory credits)

The film combines historical fact with fictional elements to serve a narrative theme. (Tarog 2018, introductory credit)

The trilogy [*Heneral Luna*, *Goyo*, and a movie about Manuel Quezon] isn't particularly devoted to the idea of recreating history but of presenting historical events to expound on a certain theme. This shift in priorities makes it even more necessary to introduce fictional elements in the narrative and to be a little loose with chronology without being grossly inaccurate. (Tarog 2018, 19)

Historical films need to be spectacular (del Mundo, Jr. 1999, 8). And in a spectacle, conventionally, the central character dominates and dictates the plot and guides and facilitates the flow of the story. The film actor not only carries the story of the film, but also brings in and offers to the public the physical features, looks, and the body he or she possesses (7). In the Philippines, the main character in the film is commonly referred to as the *bida*, i.e. the protagonist of the story. In the subject films studied, the hero is the *bida*, though varying appreciations of historical films may argue that the *bida* could be considered an antagonist to the historical period portrayed. The life, struggles, and vision of the hero protagonists traversed into both the truthfulness of historical narrative and the image produced by the film, based on how the director, as an auteur, perceived the life of the hero and visualized it.

In his extensive study about movie protagonists as cultural texts, Tolentino (2000) says that the *bida* is a nexus of both the expression of national aspirations and the metaphor of the people's or the viewers' expression of those aspirations (2). He adds that this central character entangles the discourse or narrative of power relations, whether visualized in films or exemplified in the actual realities of a society (4). In a study of Filipino action films (*pelikulang bakbakan*), Salazar (1989) emphasizes the conventional traits of the protagonist, which include righteousness, independence, respect for children, women, and the needy, and allies with and fights for the abused and marginalized (8-9). Furthermore, the *bida* complex of a character has always been gendered; male, female, and LGBT characters have conventional portrayals, and these characterizations are imposed to usher in the idealized notion of

film characters. Sexuality and gender serve as one primary basis in how the viewers identifies themselves with the film (9).

On Film and Nationalism

In broad strokes, nationalism and patriotism are the conventional thematic arks of Filipino historical films. In the cinematic production's aim to bring historical issues into the public discourse and present a prescriptive or alternative understanding of historical events and issues, films create a more complex area of contestation ideas and interpretations of the past and the society in general. As a clear actualization of the Andersonian dictum of the nation as an "imagined community," the perennial target audiences of this kind of films – teachers, students, and history enthusiasts, enter the equation in the scheme of applying history and film as instruments of public discourse.

Detouring centripetally in the tangent points of nationalism and film, Campos (2016, 2) argues that the project of creation of national cinema, which includes films that tackle social realities and historical issues, is a reaction to tyrannical contexts and tendencies such as colonial rule and dictatorial regimes. The national cinema, he adds, was fostered by progressive intellectuals, composed of film critics, culture scholars, and academics, in the aim of influencing mass-based audiences (2). In line with this is what Tolentino (2014b) says about nationalism as an embodiment of multiple nationalism, such as class, gender and sexuality, race, and ethnicity intended as a political project aimed at transforming political and social structures (105). This is a reflection or an exemplary representation of the aim of the nationalist framework in Philippine history and historiography – to counter the dominant narrative and mobilize the larger audience to create a progressive outline in history and society. Indeed, films are central to the issue of nationhood (Flores 1998, 184). The visualizations and imagining of a past that was, or never was, relies on the interaction between various ideas and sectors, where each one has a definite say on each important aspect of a film.

A survey of how nationalism has been used as a theme reveals a multitude of ways in which nationalism was instrumental in the intrinsic establishment of national filmic traditions. In his study of postwar Hollywood films, Chopra-Gant (2006) details the popular representations of masculinity and/in the family, wherein the notion rests on the reinvigorated idea of the American nation and national identity. This notion was exemplified by the themes of 'absent fathers,' military servicemen, male friendship, and soldier-to-civilian-life transitions. Van der Heide (2002) talks about the development of Malaysian cinema, and how it uniquely posed itself as a reflection of the idea of an Asian cinema. He also details the story how the Malaysian film industry faced the gargantuan task of projecting the nation through a homogenous cultural identity despite the reality of complex ethnic, religious, and social differences in Malaysia.

Hewitt (2008), meanwhile, looks at how France answered the lingering question of war memory representation, of a country embattled with its conflicting national memory of collaboration and resistance during World War II. The answer was provided by making the cinema a national patrimony and postwar national reconstruction of culture and identity. Related to this, the study of Scharf (2008) presents a picture of Germany in transition: on the one hand, the birth of the New German Cinema movement anchored on the dealings with its war past (the Nazi era and its failed National Socialism Project, and the issue of the Holocaust), and on the other hand, the harnessing of the identity of 'being German' by returning to provincial identities.

Considering these epistemological permutations and focusing on the Philippine film context, nationalism has a not-so-subtle inclination towards the Philippine Revolution of 1896–1899, both in historical narratives and in films. Mirroring Dumol and Camposano's (2018) sketch of the nation as an ensuing political project of becoming, nationalism and nationalistic sentiments is manifested in masculine actions and portrayals. The personal and historical experiences of the heroes of the revolution, as well as the portrayal of their lives in films, are texts of the processes of becoming – crossing lines and periods of manhood and expressing manifestations of masculinity in various ways during a time of war. As Gilmore (1991) asserts, manhood is an artificial state created by certain cultures or societies, it is "a challenge to overcome, a prize to be won by fierce struggle, if not 'the big impossible'" (17).

Treating the revolution as a historical moment where everyone acted in accordance with what is perceived to be rightful and just, given the call of the times, a patriotic kind of masculinity can be considered a manhood ideal; a culturally imposed model "to which men must conform whether or not they find it psychologically congenial" (4). The portrayals of the Philippine Revolution in films effectively ushered in the character of the revolution as masculine-centered, and an anti-colonial nationalist. A lot of men became in uniform and enlisted when the revolution broke out. And as members of the newly formed armed forces, most of them, especially the leaders, abruptly transformed themselves to professional military men, obsessed with proving they were worthy of their power and position and with making names and earning merits on the battlefield.

THE HERO AS TEXT: BIOGRAPHIES AS INTERPRETATIONS

As a topic of historical inquiry, the waning decades of the 19th century, culminating with the Philippine Revolution of 1896, have been regarded as a vital era in the historical development of Filipino nationalism. The period saw the rise of revolutionary heroes who shaped the outcome of the revolution against Spain, and subsequently, the establishment of the first Republic and the war with the Americans. Hau (2004) places here the rhetoric and practice of nation-building as a key narrative in

attaining nation-statehood (109). Indeed, this era is also a contested arena of historical and historiographical issues, which include heroism, historical idolatry and mythmaking, public history, and nation-building. The tradition of nationalist historiography in Philippine history writing puts the late 19th-century revolutionary events as primary signifiers of anti-colonial and anti-imperial understanding of history (Schumacher 2008, 14). For example, in a survey of historical studies on the Philippine Revolution in the second half of the 20th century, the “Filipino-centric” approach is the dominant theme and approach (Churchill 2011, 288-293).

The written historical biographies of heroes serve as the basis of the subject films’ portrayals. These texts provide the historical foundation for the subject films’ reinterpretation and reimagining of the life of the hero and serve as their springboard in projecting the nationalistic visions and sentiments of the subject heroes. Analyzing these texts in a historiographical approach illustrates how the films use historical narratives to arrive at a certain portrayal of heroes vis-à-vis their masculine character and patriotic values. The movie *El Presidente* is based on Emilio Aguinaldo’s (1869–1964) autobiography, *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan* (1998).⁶ There is no explicitly stated source material mentioned in *Bonifacio: Ang Unang Pangulo*, but one can speculate that the movie was patterned after the campaign that started in 2013, in light of Bonifacio’s sesquicentennial birth anniversary, to declare him as the first president of the country.⁷ The film carries the campaign’s primary historical argument, namely that Bonifacio is the country’s first president. Vivencio Jose’s *The Rise and Fall of Antonio Luna* (1972/1999)⁸ serve as the primary textual reference of the film *Heneral Luna*. Lastly, the movie *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral* is based on Teodoro M. Kalaw’s work *Gregorio H. del Pilar: El Héroe de Tirad* (1930) published in 1930.⁹ On the aspect of the historical accuracy of these biographies as primary texts of the subject films, how factual, reliable, or problematic are these textual narratives to begin with?

In *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan* (1998), Aguinaldo narrates his memory of his childhood, the Revolution, and the decades that followed. He claims that the autobiography was to help historians fill in the gaps in Philippine history, to make memories of previous generations relevant to the contemporary era, and to inspire Filipinos on the value of heroism and freedom (viii). Since this is an autobiographical work, it elaborates his version of history, particularly of the Philippine Revolution. One historical timeline followed by the film *El Presidente* is Aguinaldo’s periodization in his memoirs – from his travails as a young man who loved to work, his rise to politics in Cavite province, until his sojourn in the military camp at Biak-na-Bato in Bulacan province. This work by Aguinaldo has been used by several historians who studied him, such as in Alfredo Saulo’s *Emilio Aguinaldo: Generalissimo and President of the First Philippine Republic – First Republic in Asia* (1983). In this work, Saulo presents Aguinaldo as the person who made all the successes of the Revolution possible (Saulo 1983, 2).

Other historical works follow the same tone, i.e., that of Aguinaldo as the pioneer leader of the Philippine Revolution and the first President of the First Republic of the Philippines (Calairo 1998, 125–

127). But there are works that pose a critical stance and argue anti-heroic descriptions on Aguinaldo. For example, Joaquin (2005) points out his parochial mindedness, lack of boldness, and timid character in acting on challenges (128-130). He also considers Aguinaldo as the "second greatest anti-hero," as he exemplifies the opposite of the conventional Filipino concept of a hero who sacrificed and died for his homeland (112). Meanwhile, Satoshi Ara (2015) posits that Aguinaldo's life during the American colonial period and the Japanese occupation is a complete opposite of his heroic deeds during the Philippine Revolution, wherein he showcased his flexible and opportunistic character and blatantly collaborated with the Americans and the Japanese.

Most of the written biographies and historical works on Andres Bonifacio tackle common points of his life as a hero. First, his struggles as a member of the working class in Manila shaped his patriotic ideas, and second, his downfall as a revolutionary leader was both a product of personal errors and deadly partisan politics within the revolutionary ranks (Agoncillo 1956; Cristobal 2005; Joaquin 2005; Ocampo 2014). In the epilogue of Agoncillo's biographical work on Bonifacio titled *The Revolt of the Masses* (1956), an unnamed man called Bonifacio a "noble plebeian," (315). Cristobal (2005) labeled him a "Man of the People," and that his rise as the *Supremo* of the Katipunan was a product of his life experience and his innate leadership qualities (xii and 6). Other traits such as being quiet, calm, humble, tolerant, broadminded, compassionate, and confident, and his will to overcome poverty were the qualities he used to inspire others and to aspire for greater rights for his countrymen through an armed struggle against Spain (Agoncillo 1956, 78-79; Kimmuel-Gabriel 2014, 60). These portrayals of Bonifacio's life concretize the dominant narrative that he belonged to the lowest strata of the late 19th century Manila. But recent studies show that he was a middle-class man able to find his place in the flourishing commercial sector in Manila (Richardson 2013; Kimmuel-Gabriel 2014). These presentations of the life of Bonifacio are viable justifications for him to be considered the first president of the country (Guerrero et. al 1996). And these are also the central discussion points in the film *Bonifacio: Ang Unang Pangulo*.

Jose (1972) claims that his biography of Luna is a complete turn-around and radically different from what is usually known about Luna's life. He portrays Luna as a human being and a transformed man who committed himself to the revolutionary cause (Preface). The conventional view about Luna is that of a "man of brutal temper," ambitious, and someone who had the tendencies of a strongman (Joaquin 2005, 161-167). But in his work, Jose depicts Luna as a scientist, a propagandist turned revolutionary, and a compassionate and visionary general. In an earlier work on the history of the First Philippine Republic, Agoncillo (1960) offers a more nuanced analysis of Luna's life. Despite his bad temper, he characterizes Luna as one of the most powerful commanding generals of the whole revolutionary army, a leading military-politician of the government, and he was Aguinaldo's most reliable general to repel the American military advance during the Philippine-American War (653-675). And like Bonifacio, Luna was a victim of deadly partisan politics of the Revolution. His assassination in 1899 was another tragedy of the Revolution, during a time when the short-lived First Philippine Republic was on the brink

of its gradual collapse. Indeed, Luna's revolutionary career was an example of being in the right place at the wrong time.

According to its director, *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral* is intended to be an introspective film about the life of Gregorio del Pilar, with less of the nationalistic approach seen in *Heneral Luna* (Tarog 2018, 16-18). In his biography on Del Pilar, Kalaw (1930) highlights the young general as a popular, promising, and powerful revolutionary leader, especially after his successes in several decisive battles in Bulacan in 1898, and his appointment as the Commandant General of the province of Pangasinan in 1899 (40-45). The distinctive role by Del Pilar's brother Julian in the development of his nationalist ideals and military uprightness is also pointed out in the narrative. And this is explicitly highlighted in the film. Kalaw recognizes Del Pilar's physical attributes as a handsome and admirable self-proposition but cautioned the reader that these characteristics were prone to fuel imagination and fantasy, as well as half-hearted and partly fallacious legends (2). Moreover, he admits that his narrative about Del Pilar, specifically about the death of the general in the *Battle of Tirad Pass*, was based on the problematic accounts of John McCutcheon of the *New York Herald* and Richard Henry Little of the *Chicago Tribune* (72-73). Aside from Kalaw, what is currently known about Del Pilar is due to Jose P. Santos' short biography *Sino si Heneral Gregorio H. del Pilar* (1930). In this work, Santos dramatically narrates Del Pilar's life as a nationalist and revolutionary, and Aguinaldo's most favored general (Santos 1930, 2). This narrative validates the long-standing doubt of Del Pilar's perfectly clean popular military image as Aguinaldo's shadow right-hand man (Joaquin 2005, 185-208).

The Philippine Revolution of 1896, in historical texts and in films, was not only a test of faith, principles, and visions for the nation. It was also a test of manhood for some key actors in this historical period. To mention a valuable context for this section, the emergence of larger states in the 19th century has made warfare a masculine pursuit in the internationalized and globalized military traditions dominated by the West (Watson-Andaya 2001, 24). In his work on the myth of manhood in the Philippine film industry, Tolentino (2000) argues that war is a form of patriarchal, masculine aggression on a national scale, beyond its universal and normative daily manifestations (14-20). The subject films in this article extract historical information and recreate them to give birth to filmic portrayals of masculine heroes, which are partly accurate, and partly fictional. Browsing through the said biographies reveals how these heroes were crafted not only as mere historical personalities but as textual characters with commendable traits and values worth emulating. Moreover, the biographies of the heroes illustrate one historiographical reality: that the life of a hero is reconstructed in various ways, depending on the sources and on the historian who wrote about them.

PATRIOTIC MASCULINITY IN HISTORICAL FILMS

Masculinity, or manhood, as a social and cultural construct, is beyond the physical and physiological aspect of the male person; manifesting it comes with attaining it, through a process set by communities and societies, based on the collective notion of what is appropriate or acceptable (Gilmore 1991, 11). True manhood is a precarious and elusive status, aspiration, and attainment of inner security through a spectacular test and sealed by a dramatic proof (17). Zooming in on the Philippine context, from the perspective of cultural construction, on the one hand, Filipino masculinity can be mirrored in the Filipino epic and action star archetype. Cruz (1985) argues that the Filipino epic hero's traits and visions reflect our conception and imagination of the ideal male person (Cruz 1985, 73-79). Navarro and Elumbre (2017) argue that masculinity of Filipinos should be viewed not as an isolated case but must be within the complex process of being a male person and of manhood, bounded by overarching contexts of culture, commercialization, and globalization (167-168). Looking at lexicographic definitions, for example in the 19th century, masculinity has been related to the male person, and the characteristics of being intelligent, determined, just, and gentle. Noceda and Sanlucar (1860) refer to the masculine character (*masculino*) as *naoocol sa lalaqui* [pertains to men] and the self-trait of being a *maguino*, [nobility] (551) who corresponds and commands respect, power, and social titles (*macho* (549) *noble* (562), *mataas na tauo* [respected individual] (576), *dató* [chieftain] and *guino* [noble] (586), *varon* (634). In the 17th century, the town *ayuntamiento* (local government), a staple political and social institution of the Spanish colonial placemaking, was the place where the act of calling and assembling the local nobles and men-of-power was held [*pagliponin mo ang manga magino*] (San Buenaventura 1627, 99).

There are various kinds, classifications, and manifestations of masculinity, depending on the approach and realization of an individual or a collective (Connel 2005). Anderson (2009) problematizes the concept of inclusive masculinity through an extensive analysis of institutions that perpetuate dominant masculine perspectives, such as team sports and the military, and how the local and global contexts are changing the nature of masculinity in the United States (56). In their study, Aguilin-Dalisay et. al (1995) further affirm that masculinity, as understood in the Philippines, is both biological, socio-cultural, and psychological (152-153). It revolves around the dimension of the physical, emotional, and intellectual parameters, pragmatically idealized in the understanding of *pagkalalaki* [manhood] and being *tunay na lalaki* [real man] and *ganap na lalaki* [fulfilled man] (152-153). Moreover, De Castro (1995) explains that masculinity or manhood can also be viewed as a form or manifestation of social and cultural values and principles (128-129). Furthermore, Alzona (1956) laments a heteronormative stand wherein manliness and heroism go hand in hand (265). For her, heroes possess the qualities worthy of a man, extolling bravery and stoicism, valor, and uprightness, and claiming admiration and distinguished recognition from the community through their courageous acts (265-266).

Looking at how the masculinity, manhood, and machoism have been portrayed in the Filipino film industry, it is vital to look at how they were visualized in various media genres and platforms. Cañete (2014) argues that the iconography of the Philippine macho emerged during the Golden Age of Filipino cinema in the 1950s, when films were produced using the Western models of machismo – a product of the country's colonial experience, and the dominance of Western culture in various outlets of media (2). The cultural roots of the term macho partly reflect the general portrayal of machos in Philippine popular films. The word macho, which originated from *majo* in late 18th-century Madrid, traditionally refers to a man who fathers a lot of children, bonds publicly with his equally masculine male counterparts, and establishes social status through the dominance over the other sex (2). A period where the macho character of the lead role has been institutionalized was during the time of the Philippine Commonwealth Government.

McCoy (2000a) argues that the Commonwealth Government, in its aim to create a strong army, adopted the Western notion of masculinity, a form of colonial masculinity, and constructed and reconstructed the gender notions on a national level through the institutions of military education (315-318). He further states that "in building an army on the American model, the Commonwealth imported a foreign model of masculinity and then, through mass mobilization, drilled Filipino males to its standards" (339). Moreover, the government drafted the film for its propaganda efforts, in creating an image of the Filipino warrior male and of Filipino manhood, with a Filipino man who is disciplined, courageous, and patriotic (McCoy 2000b, 194). In the postwar period, the postcolonial and decolonializing efforts ushered in a more national imperative in reconstructing visual representations. But it maintained the dominance of the macho visualities. David (2000) laments that in the case of the Philippines, there was an imposition of nationalist and anti-imperialist criteria of Philippine film production (11). One of these, is the visualized macho in Philippine cinema.

Applying the notion of patriotic masculinity in analyzing the subject films, representations of masculinity and patriotism/nationalism are classified into three categories: (1) anti-colonial, (2) representations that submit to the state perception or the status quo, and (3) characterizations that reflect the Filipino cultural and popular notions of masculinity. As a disclaimer, the study recognizes the decades-long attempt to democratize the narrative and historiography of the Philippine Revolution. Watson-Andaya's (2001) observation on the scarcity and the appearance of a scant space for female experiences in the studies on revolution and nationalism poses a strong concern (2). Roces (2001) describes the Philippines Revolution and the Philippines politics in general as gendered fields of historical study (33). There is an apparent dominance of the male narrative at the surface, yet "women hold power behind the scenes and use their kinship ties to access this power" (33).

These three categories dissect one aspect of the Philippine revolutionary historical and historiographical milieu by looking at how masculinity is portrayed and problematized, and how it added to the complex understanding of heroism and nationalism (Figure 2).

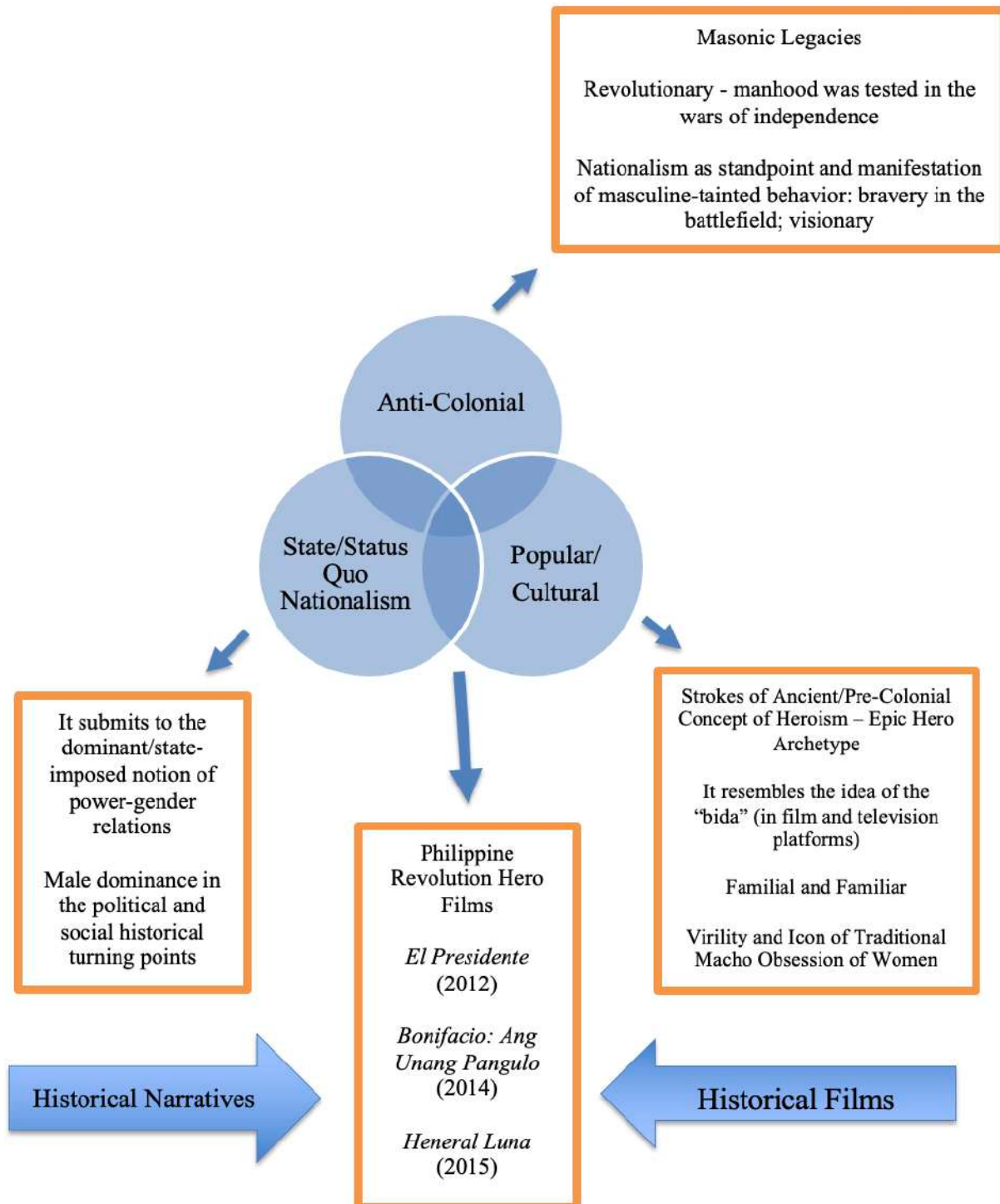


Figure 2: A Diagram of the idea of Patriotic Masculinity

Patriotic Masculinity: Anti-Colonial

The anti-colonial manifestations of patriotic masculinity in the subject films are the following: emphasis and due credit to the heroes' masonic involvement, masonic traits, and anti-friar sentiment; military leadership and decision-making in the battlefield as tests of manhood, and their nationalist visions for an independent country. The idea of masculinity as 'revolt to boyishness' (Schafer 1986, 100) metaphorically projects the idea of revolutionary manhood as a component of a nation. The guiding image of a potential hero proving himself worthy of independence was portrayed in the subject films, and this was amplified by the very essence of nationalist thought projected by the historical films. Aguinaldo, Bonifacio, and Luna, as revolutionaries, identified themselves as masons, while Del Pilar, has imbibed the masonic traits in his 'training' as a young general in the battlefield.

The film *El Presidente* puts the province of Cavite at the center of the anti-revolutionary struggle. Aguinaldo was credited to the success of the revolutionary campaigns – from increasing the masonic membership in the towns in Cavite, to the successes in the battles against the Spanish forces. The film clearly showed that the province's brand of nationalism steered the Philippine Revolution towards its primary legacy, i.e., the establishment of the first Philippine Republic in Malolos in 1899. Moreover, explicitly shown throughout the film was Aguinaldo's critical stance against colonial rule. This narration persisted in the decades after the revolution, which penultimately ended in year 1962, with Aguinaldo playing a vital role in the transfer of the day of celebration of Philippine Independence from 4 July to 12 June.

Bonifacio: Ang Unang Pangulo portrays latently the idea of destroying the false fraternal relations and the racist Spanish masculinity. The document "Casaysayan," which is considered a foundational document of Katipunan, indicates the fight against racial discrimination as one of Katipunan's primary objectives of revolting against Spain (Richardson 2013, 8). Through this, the Katipunero recalibrated its concept of manhood and masculinity and advocated the treatment of your fellow person with dignity and respect as a core value of the revolution. The strong male bond as the symbolism of collective patriotic masculinity exemplified the closer-than-brother relationship of Bonifacio and his intellectual and revolutionary confidants, especially Emilio Jacinto. The close family relations and neighborhood affinity between the Bonifacios and Jacinto made them inseparable during the formative years of the Katipunan. They just parted ways when Bonifacio went to Cavite, and Jacinto led the revolutionaries in Laguna (Gealogo 2013, 33).

General Luna, with all its attention-capturing lines and visualized acts, proudly shows its anti-colonial posture through its overt portrayal of Luna's masonic background and anti-imperialist sentiments. Luna's grand and well-defined military strategy against the American military advance, and his clear stance against any form of negotiation on the annexation of the Philippines by the United States

exemplifies the projection of anti-colonial masculinity. Moreover, through the fictional character Joven, where one point of view of the film could be sourced from, Luna laid down his views and visions for the Philippines as an independent country. And it strongly manifests Luna's anti-colonial position.

General Del Pilar in *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral* symbolizes a form of revolutionary loyalty. His nationalistic ideas are equated to his loyalty to the revolutionary cause, which was framed as his clear and unwavering loyalty to Aguinaldo. His successes in major battles in Bulacan in 1898 earned him his place in the roster of Aguinaldo's favorites. Aside from the portrayal of his personal failures, the film also emphasized his frequently undiscussed character of being Aguinaldo's *berdugo* (hatchetman).

Patriotic Masculinity: Status Quo Nationalism

McCoy (2000b) argues that from the 1930s to the post-EDSA Revolution years, the state and the film industry collaborated in portraying the Filipino martial masculinity of heroes and soldiers, dominated by the spectacle of gunplay and extraordinary violence (194-195). To project the image of an admirable Filipino soldier, they launched an aggressive program of political mythmaking through film ventures to shape collective consciousness (195). In the letter of protest submitted by President Manuel Quezon to the MGM Studio, the producer of the film *The Real Glory* wherein the Filipino soldier was portrayed badly and inappropriately, stated: "The Filipino is one of the finest soldiers in the world – brave and intrepid in combat, resolute and resourceful in adversity, and determined and persistent in his will for victory" (196). Using Anderson's (2002) analysis in which a kind of nationalism that originated in Latin America reached Asia and became a framework in its anti-imperialist struggles, there is a strong inclination to masculine heroism – manifested in how the history of the Philippine Revolution has been written, and how the Philippine film culture has subscribed to this 'macho' culture. This idea of nationalism based on the notion of being macho, masculine military men are highly observed in the four subject films. The portrayal of the obsession with military ranks and titles, male-domination revolution, and the minimal and supporting role played by women were clear examples of this.

In *El Presidente*, Aguinaldo's meteoric rise to the presidency was unequivocally framed through his immaculate macho posture – clean, heroic, and prophetic. This is a complete opposite to the historically messy nature of any revolution. The film's portrayal of the mystic prediction about the three women in Aguinaldo's life, namely, Hilaria Aguinaldo, Maria Agoncillo, and *Inang Bayan* (motherland) depicts its take on women as a vital composition to the lead actor's macho image and the imposition of the traditional role as a wife of the male hero. The third woman, motherland, was a necessary exaggeration. It was absent in the historical sources but was inserted in the film to further the idea of Aguinaldo's life-long commitment to patriotism. To add, from a political-economic angle, the movie was supported by institutions of masculinity. San Miguel Corporation, a business enterprise known for its alcoholic

beverages and professional basketball teams, and the Boy Scouts of the Philippines, a national organization that fosters value-driven initiatives for young men, sponsored the production of the film.

Bonifacio: Ang Unang Pangulo emphasizes the Katipunan's institutional character as an organization that advocated a double-edged revolution: a revolution against the colonial oppressors to liberate the Katagalugan (Philippine archipelago), and a revolution to change the social and cultural grammar of the society at the time. The film portrayed the Katipunan strongly advocating the eradication of the false fraternal brotherhood promised by the Spaniards to the Tagalogs (in its context, the native Filipinos). It also depicted the women members of the Katipunan in a progressive manner, through the strong-willed portrayal of Oryang (Gregoria de Jesus) and Tandang Sora (Melchora Aquino).

The films *Heneral Luna* and *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral* present more discursive engagements and portrayals of this category of patriotic masculinity. The films interpreted the Revolution as a story of military courage and discipline. In *Heneral Luna*, the loaded image posed by Luna's *Artikulo Uno*¹⁰ solidifies the general's historical and filmic portrayal as an iron-fist leader. In the film, Luna promoted and demoted soldiers instantaneously, and on the battlefield. If they commit mistakes or errors or show insubordination, they were humiliated publicly through slapping and foul words. Even Aguinaldo did not escape Luna's uncontrollable temper. Meanwhile, *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral* contests the military career of del Pilar with his adulthood issues. The movie metaphorically portrays the revolution as a story of a soldier's struggle to manhood.

Like in *Bonifacio: Ang Unang Pangulo*, women are portrayed in *Heneral Luna* and *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral* films as progressive but still secondary characters. For example, the character of Isabel (Luna's love interest), despite being strong and independent, remained in the shadows because of her secret affair with Luna. In *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral*, women were relegated as the forgotten, piled-up letters inside Del Pilar's bag. Those letters came from the women who Del Pilar courted in every town he had visited. It should also be pointed out one resonating instance wherein Luna used a gay slur to attack someone's apparent cowardice: *¡Es un maricon!* (He is a gay!), referring to his political rival, Pedro Paterno.

Patriotic Masculinity: Popular/Cultural

In the popular/cultural aspect of this idea of patriotic masculinity, the representations are the following: (1) parallelism or use of the Filipino epic hero archetype, (2) the concept of *bida* in Filipino films, the importance of a family in the life of a man, of the hero, and the 'macho', and (3) the justified trait of womanizing and the framing of the hero as a romantic lover. The Philippine epic heroes, as one basis of the conception of heroes in Philippine history in culture, is central to the story, essence, cultural values, and morale of the indigenous culture (Manuel 1962). The archetype that Philippine epics follow

includes a male with a physique, supreme intelligence, and a thirst for adventures, who is courageous and has unparalleled warfighting skills, and most importantly, who has a vision about his fate (Eugenio 2004). The heroes in the subject films somehow follow this literary archetype. They, as creations both by historical reconstruction and cinematic production, as Cruz (1985) argues, are literary creations (Cruz 1985, 78-79). Moreover, Salazar (1989) considers the action films as modern epic tradition, as they manifest the centrality of the protagonist and his role as hero-saviors of his community (11). As discussed previously, the subject films are good examples of how one *bida* is tainted with notions and concepts biased to one gender or sexual behavior. Understanding masculinity in visual culture requires us to analyze the sources of male social and cultural representations, and the utilization of those representations (Cañete 2014, xi). The masculine male, the macho, or masculinity in general, have been imagined, intuited, and instrumentalized in contemporary visual spaces in the Philippines (xi). Moreover, Flores (1998) laments the tendency of historical and hero films to “imprison” the character in the image of an “action hero” who manipulates the decisions and the movement of events, deciding on the outcome of the narrative based on his personal travails (187). The plot of the movie seems to be based on the lead character’s moral foundation, emotional conflicts, and decision-making. With this, the spectacular nature of biographical films tends to create a saintly image of a hero detached from the pragmatic nature of actual historical events. The mythmaking tendencies of hero films has been a default composition in the film tradition (Flores 1998, 189).

In *El Presidente*, the action-packed scenes are overkill versions of the presumably actual historical events. The lead actor’s background as an action star in template Filipino action movies in the 1990s is one lens to understand this approach in the film. The opening scene portraying the arrest of Aguinaldo by the American forces in Palanan in Isabela province resembles both Filipino and foreign action film fight scenes. To mention the obvious, one can easily spot the famous bullet-avoiding move patterned after an iconic scene in *The Matrix* (1999). The use of the amulet (*agimat* or *anting-anting*) in the film is an archetypal Filipino epic and action film feature depicting masculine traits. Central in the film is the unwavering presence of Aguinaldo in all scenes. This symbolizes his appearance in major turning points in the country’s history seen in a series of shots showing his life decades after the revolution (1900s–1930s). The role of his family in cementing Aguinaldo’s masculine posture was significantly portrayed in the inclusion in the film of his cousin Baldomero, his first wife Hilaria, and later, his second wife, Maria Agoncillo.

The positive revisionist approach of the film *Bonifacio: Ang Unang Pangulo* clears Bonifacio’s name of the misconceptions about his life and identity, and further projected some of his commendable traits. For example, Bonifacio is depicted as a loyal husband and protective brother to his sibling, especially to Nonay (Espiridiona Bonifacio), who was courted by one of the original members of the Katipunan, Teodoro Plata. Moreover, the popular image of Bonifacio as a ‘proletariat’ leader is further enriched with the inclusion of various cultural elements. Striking among these are the portrayals of the

Katipuneros' April-1895 excursion in the Pamitian Cave in San Mateo, Morong Province, and the dramatic narration of the legend of Bernardo Carpio. Iletto (1998) explains that the legend of Bernardo Carpio was significant in igniting the Katipunan's ideological thrusts towards freedom and independence (99-103). The legend's narration is one of the examples of the movie's past-present prescriptive storytelling format.

Tarog's two films contain various metaphorical and object-based symbolisms that fall into the popular and cultural manifestations of patriotic masculinity. In *Heneral Luna*, illustrative of the passing on of knowledge of older to younger generation was the conversation of Luna and the journalist Joven (which means 'young' in Spanish). A calm but macho depiction of Luna is observed in the scene where he plays the guitar under the moon ('luna' in Spanish). To add, Luna as a macho lover is seen through his secret affair with Isabel, which shows not only his attempt to hide a potential political issue but also his suppressed romantic attitude, aggravated by his critical position in the government. The portrayal of Luna's death is also a metaphor of his real-life brother Juan's most famous masterpiece, the *Spoliarium*. This award-winning painting represents the conditions in the Philippines as a colony of Spain through the metaphor of the bunker of dead gladiators. The painting was microcosmically reinvented to portray Luna's death as a deadly result of the Revolution's partisan politics.

Del Pilar as a military leader is discussed in a nuanced manner in *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral*. On the one hand, the symbolic use of the *agila* (eagle) portrays Del Pilar's power and popularity as a respected general. Like the eagle, everyone recognized Del Pilar's authority, depicted in the celebration and theatrical play organized by the people of a town in Pangasinan to honor him, upon his appointment as commandant of the province. But upon his death, the eagle was also metaphorically used as the American eagle flying in the mountains, depicting the triumph of Americans against the Filipinos in the Battle of Tirad Pass. On the other hand, the film also featured his vulnerabilities and struggles to prove himself worthy of the title and prestige as a general. Crucial was the role of his brother Julian, who helped him with his travails to fight his inner demons and youthful habits. In the Philippines, culturally, the older brother serves as a person's confidant and conscience. Julian guided Del Pilar in his quest for greatness. The popularized image of Del Pilar in *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral* as an apple-of-the-eye macho general was unequivocally portrayed in a homoerotic manner. The movie showed Del Pilar as a gorgeously handsome and unapologetical womanizer, who eventually found his equal in a strong-willed woman named Remedios Nable. Together with his comrades, war and ogling with women was Del Pilar business in every town they visited during their sojourn. The friction between the women involved with Del Pilar further projects his homoerotic character in the film. For example, the scene in the market between Remedios and Felicidad Aguinaldo, Aguinaldo's younger sister and Del Pilar's ex-lover, argued over Del Pilar's fidelity while picking which ripe mango to buy is a clear metaphor of the sensational nature of love in the time of the Revolution.

CONCLUSION: MULTIPLE PORTRAYALS, MULTI-FACETED HISTORIES

In November of 2019, the social media platforms in the Philippines erupted when the trailer and movie poster of a Basque-produced Spanish film titled *El Cano and Magellan* was released online. The said release resulted in a public discussion involving Filipino academics, journalists, social media bloggers, students, and history enthusiasts. Online critics argue that the film revives the long-standing problem of the dominant colonial narrative and representation of precolonial ethno-linguistic communities in Philippine history. To conclude this article, this standpoint encapsulates how film and nationalism currently go hand in hand. The deluge of critical, agitated, and mob-like criticism against the film, despite the call for a nuanced approach to the issue, is an unnoticed yet vital component of historical film criticism. The combination of narrative, artistic imagination, the intended purpose of the film, and the meanings and symbolisms they project, all constitute the complex nature of historical films. I envision this same eagerness in some locally produced films that equally portray problematic notions of masculinity and nationalism.

The four subject films in this study symbolize what was and has been the conventional components of historical film production. The films attempted to advance the idea of substantial Filipino by making history and nationalism topics and focal points of cinematic production and conversation. But they still patronize the age-old structures of social depiction and representation. Of course, one can always argue the historical film's religiosity to the historical narrative, that they need to swim to the actualities of the historical era they portray. The apparent hesitation of the film industry to smash the glass ceiling creates the impression that it is being held hostage by the conservative opinion of its viewers. The attempts of the subject films to portray progressive notions of historical events and ideas came short of their purported groundbreaking approach to historical portrayal. Almost two decades ago, it has been lamented that the cultural literacy of a nation floats around the vast and deep discourse of consumerism and transnationalism (Tolentino 2000, 58). Therefore, the absence of postcoloniality is a blatantly discernable trait of historical films. In his analysis of Philippine postcolonial cinematic discourse, David (2005) argues:

...first and foremost, that Philippine cinema does possess a postcolonial dimension that occasionally surfaced in the past but remained naturalized for the most part; second, that these issues of postcoloniality can be seen as vital to discourse of Philippine national identity and development, involving as they do the commercial and ideological axes of both global cinema and imperialist capitalism; and finally, that even Foucauldian theory might be able to expect further, perhaps even newer, directions once these areas for historical inquiry have been explored extensively and exhaustively. (12)

Patriotic masculinity is historical and visual. Manifested in various categories and subcategories, this concept strengthened the intended purpose of historical films – to visualize nationalism and ignite discussions on the idea of mythmaking in films. As historical films are integral in the formation of a national consciousness, paralleled with state and non-state projections of a national past (i.e., textbooks, museums, national symbols, etc.), they are as well the unintended agents of national discussions on our accepted, protracted, and imposed identities and principles as a nation. Despite their nationalist vision, the films discussed in this article tend to project the colonial discourse of masculinity. In the process of conceptualizing the Filipino nation, in various platforms such as films, the prevailing mindset takes us back to the historical milieu of how the concept has been idealized. The cultural and sociological inclination to the hero complex, usually portrayed through the handsome macho influenced partly by our colonial experience, complexifies and creates this dominant notion of the hero. As Lorde (2003) metaphorically asserts, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house”.

NOTES

¹ This study uses the term ‘hero’ to refer to the historical figures portrayed as central/lead characters. Although all of them fall into other categories, such as ‘nationalists’ and ‘patriots,’ the use of the term hero is based on the underlying premise that to contest their position as monumental characters in Philippine history, it is a prerequisite to consider them as such. One basis of the study in choosing the four heroes as subjects was the Filipino public’s appreciation of their heroic deeds – from having monuments and places named after them to and local and national holidays to commemorate their lives. The fact that they were chosen as subjects of biographical films, the study recognizes, as far as the criticism of those films is concerned, the films’ recognition of them as heroes. These stipulations are still subject to further scrutiny and debate.

² This includes the earliest films, such as *La Vida de Jose Rizal* (1912) by Edward Gross, *La Fusilamiento de Dr. Jose Rizal* (1912) by Albert Yearsley, *Noli me tângere* (1915) and *El filibusterismo* (1916) by Edward Gross, *Patria Amore* (1929) *Buhay at Pag-ibig ni Dr. Jose Rizal* (1956) by Ramon Estella, *Noli me tângere* (1961) and *El filibusterismo* (1962) by Genardo de Leon.

³ The first three film titles are obtained from the studies of Santillan (1998) and Flores. The titles of the remaining two are from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb). The film *Mutya ng Katipunan* (1929) by Vicente Manansala, although discussing various parts of the life of Andres Bonifacio, highlights the role of women, such as Marina Dizon and Melchora Aquino, in the Katipunan and the Philippine Revolution, as explained by Santillan (1998, 172).

⁴ Flores (1998, 186) mentions that this film was shown for several days at the Tivoli Theater, a Philippine movie house that existed from 1940 to 1946.

⁵ The titles are obtained from Flores (1998) and IMDb.

⁶ This was first published in 1964.

⁷ This campaign started in 2013 and was spearheaded by a group represented by public historian Michael Charleston “Xiao” Chua. See Carmen N. Pedrosa’s “Was Andres Bonifacio the first president?” *Philippines Star*, 01 December 2018. But the historical argument that advances the idea of Bonifacio as the first president started in the 1990s. See Milagros C. Guerrero, Emmanuel N. Encarnacion, and Ramon N. Villegas, “Andres Bonifacio and the 1986 Revolution” and “Balintawak: The Cry for a Nationwide Revolution,” in *Sulyap Kultura* (1996).

⁸ This was republished by Manila Trademark Publishing in 1999. The production team of the movie, Artikulo Uno Productions, together with Anvil Publishing released a book containing an expanded interview with Jose, titled *Heneral Luna: The History behind the Movie, an interview with Dr. Vivencio R. Jose, author of ‘The Rise and Fall of Antonio Luna’* (2015).

⁹ The TBA Productions team headed by the director Jerrold Tarog published a movie-book tie-in titled *Goyo: Ang Batang Heneral* (2018).

¹⁰ Throughout the film, Luna weaponized the first article of the code of military responsibilities to institute discipline and loyalty among the soldiers of the Philippine revolutionary government: “Ang hindi sumunod sa utos ng Punong Heneral ay tatanggalan ng rango at ipapapatay ng walang paglilitis sa hukuman ng militar.” [Those who do not follow the orders of the Commanding General will be stripped off their ranks and will be executed without trial in a military court.]

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