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'Discordant Order: Manila's Neo Patrimonial Urbanism', *Thesis Eleven: Critical Theory and Historical Sociology* 112 (London: Sage, 2012), pp 10-34.

## **Discordant Order: Manila's Neo Patrimonial Urbanism**

**Peter Murphy and Trevor Hogan**

*Manila is one of the world's most fragmented, privatized and un-public of cities. Why is this so? This paper contemplates the seemingly immutable privacy of the city of Manila, and the paradoxical character of its publicity. Manila is our prime exemplar of the twenty-first century mega-city whose apparent disorder discloses a coherent order which we here call 'neo-patrimonial urbanism'. Manila is a city where poor and rich alike have their own government, infrastructure, and armies, the shopping malls are the simulacra of public congregations once found in cathedrals and plazas, and where household order is matched by streetside chaos, and personal cleanliness wars with public dirt. We nominate the key characteristics of this uncanny approximation of chaotic and discordant order – a polyphonous and polyrhythmic social order but one lacking harmony – and offer a historical sociology, a genealogy that traces an emblematic pattern across the colonizing periods of its emergent urban forms into the contemporary impositions of gated zones and territories. The enduring legacy of patrimonial power to Manila is to be found in the households and on the streets that undermine and devalue public forms of social power in favour of the patriarch and his householders ( now relabeled as 'shareholders' in 'public companies') at the cost of harmonious, peaceable and just public order. Such a state of affairs is not only destructive of the historic built environment of the city, especially its public parks and plazas and heritage districts, its streets, footpaths, public transport and utilities, but is directly injurious of its citizens. To address the question of Manila's private order and public chaos is to reopen the quest for the good city as the just polis. It is also to takes us beyond arguments of indigenous versus colonial forms of urbanism that are mired in nationalist and modernization ideologies respectively, and it is to reject the reductive logics of globalization arguments that Asian mega-cities are but variations of American logics of urbanism.*

**Keywords: Manila; urbanism; social theory; colonization; urban history; privatization; public sphere.**

### **Public Chaos and Private Order**

Streets are a fractal of the larger patterns of urban society. The kinds of order they embody replicate the kinds of order to be found at higher and lower levels of a social system. To take a simple example: a back street that runs parallel with Katipunan Road in Quezon City. Quezon City is one of a multitude of urban centers that make up the Los Angeles-like morphology of Metro Manila.<sup>1</sup> The street in question has no unusual character. Like numerous

thoroughfares adjacent to a major road artery, the older residential property in the street is gradually giving away to multi-storied apartments and medium-rise retail and commercial property. In any typical street it is the small things that stand out. In this Quezon City street, it is the quality of tiling at the entrance of one of these new medium-rise buildings. It catches the eye because it has a finish that is often lacking in Manila buildings. This is a city where the ready availability of very cheap labor means that employers and developers habitually use untutored backs in place of skilled hands. To the passer-by, the building entrance looks immaculate. Yet, what is equally evident is the public frame of this polished craftwork. The building entrance abuts a commonplace Manila footpath—a crumbling wreck of a pathway. In the micro-world of the street, in one quick step, the passer-by moves from the smooth space of the regular tiled portico to a striated space filled with enough irregular-shaped rises and falls to make a contemporary mathematical topologist gleeful in perpetuity.

While the mathematician may find undulating topologies fascinating, the walker finds them annoying. The typical footpath in Manila, if it exists at all, is difficult and frustrating to negotiate. It is almost always an instance of obstructive distortion. The state of the footpaths is representative of the travails of public space in the Philippine city. To cross the threshold into a private building is often exhilarating for someone on foot, because it means escaping the dented topology of walking space into space organized around more classical, and more emotionally satisfying, geometries.

Classical geometries of space—be they Euclidean, Gothic, Cartesian, or post-Euclidean—are the invisible sub-structure of a visible order. Euclidean solid geometry, Neoplatonic Gothic geometry, Descartes' coordinate geometry, and cubist-type n-dimensional geometry are key building blocks that define a city's pattern rationality. This applies at every level—from the microcosm of the tile to the macrocosm of the city plan. The reason for the success of autopoietic city building based on geometric form is that human beings find such patterns deeply satisfying. Patterns are a bridge between emotion and reason. The qualities that patterns represent are encapsulated in the idea of beauty. These qualities—such as grace, elegance, and economy—are both descriptions of reason and objects of feelings. How a city, from path to street to block, and beyond, is designed is a work of collective affective rationality. Through the template of patterns, the collective force of a city over generations engages in an act of collective design. The successes and failures of the demiurgic project are dependent on many factors—most of them lying beyond conscious manipulation or legislation. The greatest test of demiurgic success is the quality of public space. Public space that “works” is a pure expression of collective reason. Such space is accessible to, enjoyed by, amenable to, and representative of everyone in the society. It is deeply satisfying space.

Public space is a force that shapes the collective demiurge. The demiurge in turn gives shape to public space. This circularity often breaks down in practice. When that break occurs, the result is what we see in cities like Manila. There are good, attractive, interesting spaces in the city—but, for the most part, they are not public spaces. Good space in Manila is mostly private space, like the portico of the building described before. It is the space of private houses and apartments, university campuses, and gated communities. Some of these spaces are attractive—certainly many are pleasant. Yet they mostly appear as places of relief from the cracked topology of public space and the stresses of negotiating it. Gates and walls almost universally protect these private spaces. Where people can afford it, ubiquitous armed guards patrol the threshold between public and private. The Philippines is possibly the first society in the world to have universalized the gated community. The most visible emblems of this are the walled communities of the wealthy. But, unlike California where it is only the wealthy who want to retreat behind gates into sanitized invisibility, everyone except the utterly dispossessed in the Philippines erects gates and fences and walls around their property and around themselves. Even the most modest dwellings are gated with ceiling-high wrought-iron fences. Rich and poor alike have their own security guards and private armies.

Filipinos have even learnt to burrow into pocket space while on the move. Anyone who can afford it drives an automobile to avoid having to walk around the streets. The private car is probably more prized than even the private residence. Immaculately maintained and mostly new, Filipino cars on the road act like mobile bubbles of sanctuary from unpalatable public space. In the car, drivers and passengers escape the discordance of the streets behind the almost hermetic seal of the bubble. The search takes at least two forms by car and by phone. In both forms these are private solutions to public problems and indeed driven by the absence of the public altogether.

Moreover, the search for the hermetic seal is driven by real practical considerations. The dispossessed of Philippine society cause constant anxieties for the possessed. Interestingly, this is not only the fear that the propertyless might steal property. Ownership is defined as much by use as by legal fiat. Any property that is not developed can be squatted upon and once a squatter has established him or herself, the nominal owner, should he or she wish to develop the land, is obliged to pay the squatters to move on. Anxieties are also created because the dispossessed—with nowhere else to go—occupy streets and parks for the purpose of shelter and business. Street hawkers colonize footpaths and roads to sell their wares; unused bits of public land are taken over by shanty dwellers. Through this process, what is nominally labeled as ‘public space’ is privatized by a kind of subaltern colonization with a concomitant array of complex rents to be paid by each of the stakeholders who are constantly redefining these liminal

spaces. Examples abound but two can suffice here. The street vendor pays rent to the shopowner whose frontage they occupy (even though nominally the footpath is state property). The squatting vendor also pays ‘fines’ to the parking inspectors and the local policemen. Should the vendor successfully entrench their business they can sell it to others – usually new incoming families from the provinces. A second example is that of the parkers at busy intersections in peak hour traffic who receive commissions from jeepney and FX taxis on the side streets wishing to enter the main avenues to pay ‘fees’ to the traffic policemen to change the traffic directions. The cumulative effect of these informal, labyrinthine and highly imaginative private solutions and stratagems is to surround public space with an aura that is uncanny, an aura that is present in its absence. What makes it uncanny is the inability of anyone to decide whether the space they are in is really public or private. The uncanny leaves people on a knife-edge, psychologically speaking. Living in a world permeated with uncanny meanings induces a sense of unaccountable fear and loathing—unaccountable because it has no clear source. It is fear and loathing induced by an irresolvable ambiguity that occurs when public and private meanings merge, or take on the characteristics of each other.

In Philippine life, the most private of space—the household—is filled with other people: friends, relations, and servants. Private never means privacy. Indigenous and medieval Spanish notions of the crowded house dominate. The always-filled private realm has a pseudo-public character. The family is the commons. Public life, in a mirror image of this, has a pseudo-private character. The most successful contemporary public spaces in the Philippines are the malls. Here, again, public and private merge. The malls are like cars—glass-and-metal bubbles. Like the car they are private spaces; but like the street they are also public, or at least simulacra of the public. The malls have their gates and the ubiquitous guards that regulate entry into the insulated bubble space. All social classes flock to them. They have replaced many of the traditional locales for promenading, socializing, even for religious services. In a tropical climate, the air-conditioning of these bubble spaces has become almost a public good. We should not overstate the uniqueness of this. Markets have long been key public spaces. One of the important functions of the European medieval church was to act as a protector for markets set up near by. Nonetheless the contemporary mall is an oddly private public. It is a very popular congregational space. Yet it is privately policed. Moreover it is a public space where the public theatre of government and opposition is absent.

Greek, Roman, medieval civic, Renaissance, and European colonial markets were always interweaved with municipal, legal, religious, educational and scientific public spheres. The mall in contrast is the plaza privatized. In the mall-dominated city, what disappears is a visible center where markets are collocated with assemblies. Movie-going and charismatic

religious assembly are among the few congregational activities to be found in the malls. The flipside of this is that formal and informal assembly space in Manila is scarce. This helps explain the fact that, in last decades of the twentieth century, it was the streets—in particular, the great EDSA Avenue<sup>2</sup>—that were the principal gathering place for opposition to government misrule. Streets function perfectly well as civic places on the occasion of massive outpourings of public feeling. In such cathartic moments, pedestrians momentarily reclaim the streets from the automobile. However, such “assemblies of the whole”, the dream of direct democracy, are normally rare events. What is interesting about the Philippines is that it experienced a succession of “assemblies of the whole” at peak moments through the 1980s and 1990s—something quite exceptional in world-historical terms. Yet the country was not able to replicate this public wellspring in either the workings of its legislative assemblies and executive councils or in its artistic and scientific publics.

The fundamental reason for this is that public and private spheres in Manila have been reversed. So that while the private mall has become the public space par excellence, ordinary governance and politics, which is systemically corrupt, is for all intents and purposes a vast private bailiwick. So much so that, in the minds of the idealistic fraction of the professional middle class, non-government organizations have come to be the exemplars of public service. This fuzzy in-distinction between public and private permeates all Filipino institutions. The public arts are almost entirely in the hands of private collectors. Charismatic religion, with its emphasis on the pietism, has made considerable in-roads into the terrain of traditional Catholicism. Pietism is private religion. It substitutes the affections of the heart for the public grace of beauty. The sentimentalization of the public sphere is captured perfectly in maxims such as the popular one that describes Manila as “the city of our affections”. The classroom is socially esteemed but its imperatives of grades, qualifications, and teaching also colonize the public sphere of science.<sup>3</sup> Japanese-style private tutoring constitutes a shadow industry that underscores and amplifies this. Journalists incessantly speak in the first person, and often in a pseudo-pietistic style. At the same time, the great congregational public theatres for arts performances and science conferences are under-valued and under-resourced. The ethos of a privatized society is reflected even in the virtual world. Private text messaging on mobile phones is pervasive in the Philippines. All social classes use it. Meanwhile the public web space of Internet pages languishes for want of interest and upkeep.<sup>4</sup>

In a more general sense, public work is privatized. This is nowhere clearer than on the bottom rungs of Philippine society, where hard labor for little reward is the norm. Labor is privatized work. It is subject to few public standards—conspicuously missing are enforceable trade, consumer, and professional standards. Labor is survival work. A laboring society

produces little in the way of effective trade unions or skill-based association. It likewise produces little in the way of congregational work: the performative, theatrical, or public work of those who advance the arts and sciences. In such societies, labor is intuitively preferred to any schemes that might rationalize labor.<sup>5</sup> The gangs that cut sugar cane or rake leaves for a body and soul-destroying pittance might be eliminated with machines. But even those who criticize the pitiable condition of the laboring poor do not want to eliminate labor. They object to the cheapness of labor or the unemployment of labor, but not to the act of labor itself—even if on balance the making, distributing, marketing, and selling of machines creates many more and better jobs than labor rationalization destroys. At the end of the day, a laboring society simply prefers labor. To do otherwise would be to turn laborers into public workers and public actors whose votes and loyalties cannot be purchased and who are not quietistic or pietistic.

But, if this were to happen, who would be the gatekeepers who keep guard on the threshold between the fractured nature of the streets and the sentimental sanctum of the private world? Only a laboring society can afford the all-pervasive gatekeepers in their starched uniforms representing the social authority that pretends to parse private from public in a society where nobody is really sure anymore where the boundaries are. Gatekeeping in this society is one of the commonest forms of labor—and one that is valued because it is not back breaking. It is one step removed from the street and the field. It gives some dignity. But it is also a *via media* of great illusions.

### **The Spanish Period: Inside and Outside the Gate**

Where did the imaginary of the gated society come from? In the Philippines' case there are a number of overlapping precedents for it. The Chinese cultural preference for the chaotic street and the hidden order of garden and home is one important precedent.<sup>6</sup> The Chinese have long been an influential minority in the Philippines.<sup>7</sup> The Spanish—who were the principal colonizers – inventors in deed and naming of ‘the Philippines’<sup>8</sup>—also brought with them their own notions of hidden order and public discord. If the mix of street chaos and the hidden order of the garden was an orthodox ethos for the Chinese, in the Spanish case the mix of discordance and order was a heterodox influence, perhaps even a mildly heretical one. It echoed the very subtle heterodox Islamic influences on Spanish Catholicism. (We should not forget that the Spanish Inquisition was directed against the large numbers of Islamic and Jewish converts to Catholicism.) Islam was a major influence on Spanish urban culture. In Islamic conceptions of urban order, order is hidden in private pocket-like or slot-like spaces of internal courtyard gardens and in the inner sanctums of private dwellings. Sanctity in this sense is private not public.

Officially the Spanish view of order was “Augustinian”. The public edifices of church-and-plaza were keystones of Spanish colonialism throughout their empire.<sup>9</sup> In the official Spanish view, church-and-plaza was a kind of designed order based on Augustine’s distinction between the chaos of the City of Man and the lucidity of the City of God represented by the church. Spanish religious orders Christianized the Philippine archipelago. They also urbanized the archipelago. Christianity and urbanity were twins. This was a function of the explicitly material sub-stratum of Greek-Latin-Christian civilizing processes.<sup>10</sup> Symptomatic of this civilizing pattern, there were seventeen church-and-plaza complexes alone in the Old Manila of the Spanish Era. In actual practice, though, the symbolic center of Spanish rule in the Philippines was not a great plaza, but the Intramuros—the historic walled city of Manila, where the public sphere was sealed off in a stone container.

Governor-General Miguel Lopez de Legaspi began work on this great castellated Spanish colonial urbs in 1571.<sup>11</sup> The practical reason for fortification was the threat from local tribes, Chinese pirates, Muslim raiders, and Spain’s European rivals (the Dutch, British, and the Portuguese). But this fortification soon turned into a symbolic system as well. In the 1580s, the Jesuit priest Antonio Sedeña designed a 2.75-mile stonewall surrounded by inner and outer moats that encased Spanish military, educational, hospital, and commercial institutions. The project was finished in the early 1590s, under Governor-General Perez Dasmariñas, whose four-year rule was distinguished by huge compulsory labor projects using Filipino and Chinese labor. The city “within walls” (the literal meaning of the Latin “intra muros”) was accessible via eight gates. Outside this gated space was the realm of the *indios*, the native Filipinos. Inside were constructed many beautiful colonial buildings, based on Spanish Renaissance and Baroque and Mexican models. Interestingly, though, the imaginary of the walled town was not specific to the Spanish. The site of Manila had been earlier a fortified town of the native Tagalogs.

The Spanish colonized Manila as a doorway to East Asia. It was safe-haven *entrepôt* for their galleon trade between Mexico and China. This global connection was jealously regulated. Until 1834, trade was reserved to the Spanish.<sup>12</sup> Other Europeans and the Muslims were kept out. Hardly any indigenous Filipinos learnt Spanish, the international language of the portal city.<sup>13</sup> Instead, religious education promoted local languages and the cultivation of local elites. In many ways the global port of Manila was a closed world. Manila became a city where the portal-threshold was also symbolically and practically a gated community. This was a place where the universal (catholic) city and its public significations of church-and-plaza were suborned to the imaginary of a castellated and garrisoned space. The garrison mentality subtly over-determined the universal city.

Manila, of course, was not the Philippines. Nonetheless the *intra muros* model profoundly influenced the development of the archipelago as a whole – certainly of the other key colonial portal cities such as Vigan, Cebu City, and Zamboanga. On a very practical level, movement in and between islands was difficult. Notably absent in the Spanish Era was a well-developed infrastructure of public roads and harbors—or later railways. This is significant because it is this kind of public infrastructure that encourages traffic on a large scale between inside and outside. All great public realms, however they are articulated—be they church-and-plaza, temple-and- agora, museum-and-mall—require portal-and-network infrastructures to under-gird their symbolic structures.<sup>14</sup> These portal-and-network infrastructures deliver the traffic—and the turnover—of persons, goods, and ideas that allows public space to be continuously filled and emptied. Because of its necessary defensive qualities, garrison or castellated space tends to militate against portal-and-network infrastructures, most especially those that are very porous and that permit a high level of crossing of domain boundaries.

A garrison, by virtue of its function, is a closed system. A closed system is built on the careful regulation of what comes in and what goes out. Such a system is never entirely shut-off from its environment, but at the same time neither does it have a porous relationship with that environment. Closed systems rest on a strong distinction between the good inside and the bad outside. Open systems, in contrast, relativize the distinction between inside and outside. Spanish-era Philippine society developed around a series of institutions that strongly distinguished between an over-valued inside and an under-valued outside—e.g. between government (inside) and populace (outside). Where the church-and-plaza model relativized the distinctions between domains, e.g. between the domains of the mundane and the transcendent, the faithful and the faithless, the *intra muros* model presupposed that what was crucial was whether a person was “on the inside” in between “the walls of the domain”. The inside—the *inscape*—was the protected and valued domain, and thus the place to be.

Living in the protected domain was equated with order—the order that overcomes the chaos that all societies must overcome. All societies create structures and arrangements. Relatively few societies, though, invest heavily in *public* structures and arrangements. Creating order through public forms, rather than private hierarchies, is the exception, not the rule in social-historical experience. Thus, despite the implantation of the church-and-plaza model in the Philippines, it is not so surprising that closed system order in the end largely displaced open system order. Variations on the *intra muros* model became widespread through the Philippine archipelago. This was based on a social-symbolic understanding that the world was divided into domains with strong boundaries and that careful gate keeping was needed so as to regulate the relation between domain and environment in *favor of* the protected domain rather than open

environment. This contrasts with the church-and-plaza model where the apse and square—or the portico and square—function as inter-mediation between domains. In the latter case, persons are constantly crossing from one domain to another through the portal spaces of public spheres. In this model, gateways operate to facilitate orderly traffic between domain and environment. Portal or public space typically functions as a “third term” between two or more private (e.g. household or institutional) spaces and their respective domains. In contrast, when “being inside the walls of the domain” is the key social value, then “being outside in the public” is aberrant behavior. Under these conditions, the clear distinction between the “third realm” of the public and the “primary” and “secondary” private domains evaporates. Simply put, everything becomes private because the public transit space between domains is eviscerated.

The very perception of order changes under these conditions. “Being inside” is valued because the inside is a place or space that is not chaotic. It is the place of calm and order. The world outside of domain boundaries is chaotic. Crossing the road between domains is hazardous or unpleasant. Domains are not constantly translated into environments and back into domains through interstitial traffic. The overall effect of this is uncanny. Whether on the outside, “beyond the walls”, or on the inside “between the walls of the domain”, there is no clear distinction between public and private made. From the standpoint of church-and-plaza perceptions of space, expectations of what exactly is private and what exactly is public are continually confounded. This might not have been an issue in the Philippines had not the church-and-plaza model been implanted there and had it not raised social-symbolic expectations of traffic between domains. Spanish colonization was self-contradictory. It embedded a notion of publics, portals, and traffic, and then it systematically undermined this.

The chief culprit undoubtedly was the fact that Spanish colonization was originally organized around the *encomienda*. This was a patrimonial system. Large estates were given to private settlers on a temporary basis by the Spanish crown. Along with land the settlers received the right to collect taxes. Public and private roles were indistinguishable. The state devolved, in a feudal-like manner, into hierarchically nested “private public” or “public private” entities. What matters in this world is not that someone is performing a public or a private role, but rather that they are inside or outside the social-system “walls”. The *encomienda* system was dismantled at the end of the seventeenth century. The system of provincial rule (*alcaldías mayores*) that replaced it, though, blurred the distinction between public and private just as much. Public offices were for sale. They were regarded as a source of private income for the office-holder. Underscoring the uncanny relation of public and private, many public functions in the Spanish colonial era were carried out by priests. These included responsibilities for examination, certification, census taking, statistics collection, and censorship. The Pauline

distinction between “what is God’s and what is Caesar’s”—fundamental to the differentiation of public and private—was blithely ignored because the Spanish state couldn’t manage to fill its offices with persons with the required competencies. Giving permissions—required by the state’s bureaucratic law—in return for bribes was the omnivorous preoccupation of public officers.

One might have expected that the opponents of the Spanish might have overturned the *intra muros* social-symbolic system. But, if anything, they amplified it and reinforced it. Nationalist opposition to the Spanish Empire is a reminder that in politics enemies often have a great deal in common. Philippine nationalists simply turned the *intra muros* model against the colonial power. They portrayed Spain as the bad outside power and the antithesis of the good inside power of the Philippine nation. The nation, as the good inside, was defined both in cultural and economic terms. Political good was equated with authentic local culture and a closed commercial state. In so many ironic ways, this mimicked the language policies of the sixteenth-century Church orders and the old mercantilist trade policies of the Spanish Crown.

### **The American Period: Success and Failure**

The attempt to create a nationalist state during the uprising against Spain in 1899 was stymied by the Americans. For close to forty years, the United States administered the Philippines under various guises. The fact that the United States replaced Spain as an administering power was of considerable historical significance. This is almost the only time in history that America established a formal colonial territory on any sizeable scale. In conventional developmental terms, the Americans as the colonizing power did “all the right things”.<sup>15</sup> They built an extensive road, rail and harbor network—creating the basis for an infrastructural public. They put in place a good public education system. They made an international language (English) the medium of trade, government, and education. They carefully prepared the ground for democratic self-government.<sup>16</sup> They encouraged free speech. They opened up American markets to Philippine goods. They created a provincial government (Moro Province) for the Philippine Muslim minority.<sup>17</sup> In specific cases, they had spectacular successes. They drove up the literacy rate from 5% in 1898 to 65% in 1935. Yet, in the most global sense, American rule was a failure. It failed because it could not reverse the long-term decline of the Philippine economy relative to the wealthiest countries in the world economy.

Comparative world data for the early nineteenth century is sketchy, and to some extent informed guess work, but nonetheless revealing. In 1820, the Philippines ranked the 18<sup>th</sup> wealthiest nation in the world (measured in terms of gross domestic product per capita).<sup>18</sup> This is a position held today by the United Kingdom.<sup>19</sup> In 1820, on a per capita basis the Philippines

was wealthier than Russia or Eastern Europe. It exceeded the average wealth of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. As our statistical knowledge gets surer, the story gets worse. By 1870, the Philippines had fallen behind Russia and Eastern Europe, as well as behind Latin American success stories like Argentina and Uruguay. The Middle East had nearly caught up to it.<sup>20</sup> By 1950, the Philippines was ranked 79<sup>th</sup> in the world. Some of this is accounted for by new states being added to world's roster. But, however we qualify it, the bottom line was that the Philippine state was now exceeded by the average wealth of Latin America, East Europe, and the Middle East.<sup>21</sup> By 1973, it had fallen to 100<sup>th</sup> in the world, and by 2003, it was 106<sup>th</sup> in the world.<sup>22</sup> It began the new millennium with a gross domestic product per capita that was 40% of the world's average, only in advance of averages for Asia and Africa.

However the figures are sliced and diced, and whatever we regard as the starting-point for reliable figures, the trajectory of Philippine wealth creation moved downwards without relief for over a century and a half. And whatever definition we might afford the polity and economy of the archipelago across the centuries, Manila is a prime player and mover in this story. In 1820, the wealth of the country was 105% of the world's average. By 1870, Philippine per capita wealth had fallen to 88% of the world's average. In 1913, it was 69%. In 1950, it was 50%. In 1973, it was 48%; and in 1984, 46%.<sup>23</sup> As is apparent from the figures, the long-term decline began in the latter part of the Spanish Era. Did free trade cause the decline? After all, Spanish mercantilism was abandoned in 1834 for free trade under pressure from Britain, the United States and other powers. From that time, the Philippines entered on a path of relative decline. In stark contrast, the new wealthy economies—Japan and the United States—that emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were protectionist. America was heavily protected till the 1950s, and contemporary Japan still is. *Prima facie* this suggests that the *intra muros* model should have been persisted with in preference to an open system of trade. But appearances can be deceiving.

Indeed, for the first half of the twentieth century, “free trade” meant preferential access to American markets for Philippine goods. This was a bilateral (in effect a mercantilist) arrangement that eliminated duties on American goods exported to the Philippines and reciprocally on most Philippine goods going to the United States.<sup>24</sup> The Philippines was not an American state, but, as a quasi-colony, it angled to be treated as such in trade matters. As it was, neither liberal “free trade” nor mercantilist “preferential trade” made any noticeable difference to the long-term decline of the Philippine economy. The United States and Japan illustrate why this was so. Both were cases of successful modernity. Both were states of permanent innovation. Trade policy was not the key to this in either case. America till the 1950s limited access to its markets, then it liberalized its trade barriers. Yet, even when it was a protectionist state, it still

had very porous borders, allowing the easy entry of people and ideas. The Japanese model is different again. Japan has always limited entry of both goods and people. Yet it has voraciously imported ideas. Indeed the Japanese did so long before Commodore Perry's arrival on their shores in the 1850s.<sup>25</sup>

In contrast, the Philippines in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries lacked the key drivers of successful modernity. It did not aggressively import people (skills) or ideas (knowledge). Exclusion of aliens and distrust of foreign capital was a regular theme of Philippine nationalism.<sup>26</sup> The historic Constitutional Convention of 1935 conceived a principle whereby the rights and privileges of "natural born" citizens were superior to naturalized citizens. It also recommended, as a matter of principle, limiting the employment of alien labor.<sup>27</sup> Education nationalism mirrored this in the realm of the arts and sciences.<sup>28</sup> The 1935 Constitution actually provided additional hours in schools to teach nationalism. The ambition of education nationalism was to raise ethnological study above the ideas of foreign pedagogues. It promoted folklore, indigenous literature, and national historiography. While American pop culture circulated widely in the Philippines, informal barriers to the entry of other arts and sciences prevailed in condescension to nationalist agendas. This was very costly.

American rule had little long-term effect on this. Thus, while science, technology and the applied arts became the driving force of Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Seoul's spectacular modernity after World War Two, Manila exported its qualified and skilled labor. Nor did it "compensate" for this export by reciprocally importing skilled and qualified workers or harnessing the propulsive energies of settler cohorts. The one saving grace of the "brain drain" of educated or skilled Filipinos abroad was that the monies repatriated by "overseas contract workers" became one of the leading sectors of the local economy.<sup>29</sup> This type of diaspora economy, though, was never replicated in Manila or in other Philippine cities. There is nothing in post-war Manila that equates the mercurial wave of overseas Chinese settlers in Hong Kong or Taipei, or their conjugation with Indians and Malays in Singapore. The Philippines didn't even have notorious stories like the forced settlement of millions of Koreans in Japan—mainly in Japan's port cities—and their mass repatriation to South Korea after the Second World War. Settler cities and city-regions—even ones that are the product of vile state policies—have a remarkable record in creating successful economies and societies. They do this because they are effective at proliferating traffic between domains and creating the kinds of public space and infrastructure that sustains such traffic. The corollary of this is that they become highly proficient at importing and exporting people, ideas, and/or goods.

The Philippines as an archipelago is by definition a porous geography. Filipinos constitute the largest cohort of merchant mariners in the world. Manila is built around a bay. Yet

twentieth-century Manila did not become a magnet for overseas settlers. Instead it was subjected to an un-regulated flood of rural laboring poor from the countryside. The consequences of this internal migration from countryside to city were disastrous. It produced the opposite of what the settler society model produced. The cumulative result was the downward spiral of economic un-development. One of the conditions of successful modernity is the stranger city.<sup>30</sup> One of the reasons why Manila, despite its propitious marine location on the edge of a major sea region, never developed in the twentieth century as a stranger city is that the Americans came as administrators, not as settlers—and, unlike the British in Hong Kong and Singapore, they did not encourage an influx of foreigners.<sup>31</sup> Political prudence in part dictated that the Americans not encourage settler cities around the Philippine littoral. Large numbers of aliens would have offended deeply entrenched Filipino nationalist sentiment. Chinese and Japanese had a history of settlement in the Philippines, but also a history of being resented. Nationalist politics was a glass for magnifying such feelings. This was not the only consideration for the Americans, though. America was in many respects a paradigmatic “open society”. Yet it also had its own strain of the *intra muros* mind set. Settlement abroad was not the American style. The irony is that the United States, as the settler society par excellence, had little taste for the re-export of its own people. American popular culture stimulated a post-nationalist taste amongst Filipinos for migration abroad. The twentieth-century Philippine diaspora became very large. But few Americans, the religious apart, came to live in the Philippines.<sup>32</sup> As in all of its short-lived occupations of foreign states, the United States moved quickly to hand over most administrative functions to locals as soon as possible.<sup>33</sup>

At stake here is not the nature of the Philippines but rather the nature of America. The borders of America are very porous. It imports people, ideas, and (since the mid-twentieth century) goods freely. But, unlike the British, it has shown little inclination to export people as settlers. This is unsurprising when upwards of thirty percent of the American population has always been isolationist. Isolationists see American responsibilities as being properly confined to the North American continent. The manifest destiny of the United States thus has always been a rather lonely one. Correspondingly, the projection of American power abroad has always been heavily reliant on its military bases. America has rarely been a colonizing power in the traditional sense. It has typically avoided responsibility for administering large overseas territories. In the exceptional cases when it has, it has done so for time-limited periods. The Philippines was one of those exceptions, and even that exception proved in its own way typical.

The corollary of this was that the American presence in the Philippines was mediated through the more or less closed system of the American military bases and diplomatic compounds. This meant that, unlike the experiences of the settler societies and settler city-states,

American rule triggered no autopoietic civic movement, and thus no self-generating urban development. Indeed, the point of intersection between the military domain and the broader Philippine society was invariably the sleazy public of bars and brothels—hardly the best experience of the stranger city and its publics. This is ironic several times over. Firstly, because what a visit to the former U.S. naval base at Subic Bay (today a specially-administered free trade zone) reveals, inside its boundaries, is a model piece of mid-twentieth century American urbanism transplanted to the tropics. The base possesses all of the conventional urban form so often lacking in Manila. This is doubly ironic because the bits of Manila that do have a strong “Cartesian” urban morphology are more or less fortified cities. An unintended consequence of American occupation is the form of the perpetuation of the stockade city rather than the creation of a public civitas. (As we demonstrate below, Fort Bonifacio is the latest example of this legacy). This is triply ironic when we consider that American occupation of the Philippines coincided with the peak of a great spurt of American civics and the often very successful City Beautiful movement.<sup>34</sup> The failure of the Americans in the Philippines was the failure to find a way to translate this bravura experience across the Pacific and into the mainstream of Philippine urbanism. The American civic explosion was propelled by waves of immigrants flooding into the United States in the latter-part of the nineteenth century. This was the era when New York, Chicago and San Francisco took on a mature form. Daniel Burnham’s 1905 Plan for Manila demonstrates that the Americans at least imagined Manila as city like Washington or Chicago.<sup>35</sup> It could have been as great an urban creation as, say, Sydney or Melbourne in the twentieth-century inter-war era. The Burnham Plan was still the focus for urban renewal in Manila in the early 1990s. This is evident in the “clean up” of the Ermita and Malate areas, and the redevelopment of the Roxas Boulevard with a promenade.<sup>36</sup> Burnham’s design of Luneta Park provided a major point for religious and political meetings.<sup>37</sup> The Plan successfully integrated the Pasig River and Manila Bay waterfronts. It provided a unity between the important civic buildings of the era—the Post Office, City Hall, museum, and government buildings. Indeed, at the end of twentieth century, Burnham’s Manila was still the only part of the city that “breathed”, providing that crucial urban portal-public sense of “in and out”.<sup>38</sup> It was the only part of the city friendly to walkers.<sup>39</sup> For all of this, Burnham’s Plan suggested only what might be. It did not represent what was. Its rationality remained frozen in anticipation, until it became a memory without ever having been a reality. The real triumph of the Americans in the Philippines was not in urban morphology, but in public policy. In particular, the Americans radically transformed the field of public health.<sup>40</sup> They aggressively promoted a culture of hygiene. This policy and practice was the product of the Progressive-era Protestant American ethos—a White Anglo Saxon Protestant ethos—of a “clean” society, “clean” city, and a “clean”

politics. It was inspired by turn-of-the-twentieth century American Progressive urban reformism—a curious tradition created by an anti-big-city rural Protestant middle class intent on “cleaning up” the new, spectacular, often corrupt, dense, impersonal, sky-scraping cities like New York that were utterly unlike anything previously seen in urban history.<sup>41</sup> This new urbanism attracted millions from Catholic and Orthodox Europe.

If you doubt that “clean” is a civic ideal, take a look at the work of Lewis Mumford. Mumford was a literary child of the Progressive Age and America’s great historian of the city. In his many books, he returned time and again to the theme of public hygiene.<sup>42</sup> Just like the American colonial administrators in the Philippines, Mumford viewed hygienics as one of the chief criteria of a successful civics. In the case of the Philippines this model should not be sniffed at. Despite its low per capita income, the country has had tremendous success in preventive public health. It experienced very low rates of HIV/AIDS, SARS, bird flu, and other turn-of-the-twenty-first-century pandemic agents.<sup>43</sup> When African societies in contrast were devastated by HIV/AIDS, this was no mean achievement.

If the Philippines learnt from the Americans the ways of a “clean” society, the efforts to implant a “clean” city or a “clean” politics were markedly less successful. The civic hygiene model emphasized the idea of the garden city. Gardens represented clean air and beneficent sunshine. This had little traction on an urban scale in booming Manila. The population-swell of Metro Manila in the second half of the twentieth century left the city with few green spaces or parks. Notably also, professional middle class efforts to stamp out the “dirt” of corrupt politics, the legacy of centuries of patrimonial culture, had virtually no effect at all. Contrast this with the Sino-Fabianism of Singapore, where legally enforced clean habits and a very efficient water-and-sewage socialism went hand-in-hand with carefully husbanded green areas and very strict regulation of corrupt behaviors.<sup>44</sup> Most importantly of all, the Singaporeans also created a public sphere that they placed high store on. This is often misunderstood, because commentators habitually think of a public sphere as the place of peer-style coffeehouse debates and institutions of criticism. These have been late arriving in Singapore. But the city-state nonetheless was very successful at creating an infrastructural public.

In contrast the Americans acquiesced in traditional Iberian-Filipino patrimonial social structures. This killed the Burnham Plan. To be successful, a city plan has to be congruent with social behaviors. Burnham’s Plan laid a civic model over a patrimonial society. In practical terms this left the real estate and the social economy of Manila in the hands of powerful landed families. The families simply ignored government planning laws, or became their own law. In the course of the twentieth century, these families and their successors developed an urban system that was reminiscent of the *encomienda* system.

### The “New *Encomienda*” System

In the 1920s and 1930s groups like the Legarda, Araneta, and Tuason families, who transformed their familial estates into rental and market properties, represented the “new *encomienda*” system. The social weight of this new urban landlordism had a peculiar distorting effect. It allowed the proprietor kin to become *de facto* city planners as well as developers and landlords. As far as the families were concerned, there was no real distinction between these roles. Anyone familiar with late Roman history will appreciate that this is also the story of the origins of feudalism. The estate developers in Manila created what is in effect an urban feudalism. Because they controlled so much land, they could ignore or circumvent American-type civic planning regulations that required a proper, proportionate quantity of public space to be developed alongside residential and commercial space. They eventually built their own “manorial” cities within Metro Manila.

What was at work here was not simply the effects of money and power. Just as crucial was the effect of the social imagination. To illustrate this, consider the case of Chicago in the nineteenth century. There, powerful plutocrats played an enormous role in turning Chicago into a world city. But the plutocrats did it by funding large civic projects and creating and landscaping large areas of attractive public space. The contrast is telling. Chicago’s plutocracy was civic-minded.<sup>45</sup> It was civic-minded because the social imagination of Chicago was civic-minded. This civic-minded character prevailed because, from its start, Chicago was a stranger city. It was a settler city devoted to the constant traffic of goods and people, and later on cultures and ideas. Chicago’s plutocracy grasped that public space was simply a step-up from the wharves and docks and loading bays with which it had made its fortunes. In contrast, the twentieth-century Manila model stressed estate-power—power over land—rather than circulatory power. And the estate-power was and is in the hands of particular families. Estate-power is patrimonial power. This is why our recovering of the term ‘*encomienda*’ is not merely theatrical or analogous.

The “new *encomienda*” system took off in the 1950s with the decision of the Ayala Family Corporation to develop Makati—the best known and the wealthiest city in Metro Manila.<sup>46</sup> It is where financial institutions and embassies are concentrated. Instructively, Makati drew its name from Don Jose de Roxa’s San Pedro de Makati hacienda. The Ayala family turned city building into a family enterprise. They built city infrastructure, high-rise office buildings, retail properties, and gated communities for upper-class residents. The Ortigas Company repeated this in the 1980s when it turned its estate, which ran alongside the EDSA Avenue, into a second Central Business District for Manila—the modestly named Ortigas.<sup>47</sup> A

consortium of overseas Chinese went to the next stage of “private public” neo feudal development in the 1990s when it acquired the lands of the former US military base at Fort Bonifacio, and began to turn it into a “global city”.<sup>48</sup> The explicit aim was to fuse global high technology and infrastructure standards with an appropriately fortified city mentality.

In each of these cases, the distinction between state and estate is blurred. The estate takes on many of the functions of a state or at the very least of a municipality. It “privatizes” state functions—though it is a moot point whether appellations like “private” or “public” have any real meaning in the Philippine context. Family companies carry out what in other circumstances would be state or municipal planning decisions.<sup>49</sup> They defend this as being more rational than the alternative—often pictured in terms of the impossibly corrupt Caesar-ism of the Marcos dictatorship. These years (1965-1983) produced a type of crony capitalism and feudal privateering that resulted in a legion of unfinished developments that combined grandiloquently delusional aspirations to a showpiece public order with a shoddiness of execution that only the truly venal can manage.<sup>50</sup> Imelda Marcos was the chief purveyor of this folly. Her “Palace in the Sky” (at Tagatay) is a prime example of this Ozymandian architecture.<sup>51</sup> Even when projects were completed, as in the case of her Cultural Center of the Philippines, the combination of Peter-the-Great like ruthlessness in its construction with a romantic ideology of national cultural originality produced a monument to the lonely hubris of the dictator-family. Built on reclaimed land on Manila Bay, and stuck out on the bay out of reach of the populace, the CCP presents an empty spectacle. The Leandro Locsin-designed building makes the obligatory nod to indigenous form, but its prime signification is that of a compound building. It is defensible stockade space—a cantilevered monolith. It is perfect for a showpiece public culture that in fact has no public.

Nation should not be confused with public. The typical patrimonial cultural strategy is to collect things.<sup>52</sup> The Marcos pair conceived an open door national repository for the work of “national artists” and the performances of “national companies”—in tacit opposition to the private collections of well-to-do Manila families. This cultural one-upmanship, however, was not the triumph of the public over the private. Rather national collecting was simply the more acceptable face of the legendary patrimonial-turned-kleptocratic acquisitiveness of the regime. The Marcos pair transformed the private not into the public but into piracy, and ordinary corruption into grand larceny. Measured against this, the patrimony of family capitalism—estate capitalism—is quite rational. It “simply” internalizes public externalities.

Modern estate feudalism is one kind of counter to out-of-control kleptocracy. The developments that are typical of this new kind of urban feudalism are based on compound-type space. But the compound in this case *includes* the city rather than, as in the Ozymandian Marcos

model, shying away from it. The new urban feudalism threads together the closed semantics of a military compound with the simulation of urban activities. The American fort-turned-base city is a model of this kind of space—though the original model for this in fact goes back to Spanish fortified city and the urban semantics of the “intra muros”. The Fort Bonifacio development happened because the United States handed back one of a number of military bases to the Philippines. As a result, the first open space in Manila in the twentieth century became available for public redevelopment. That this proceeded in the form of a joint “public-private” venture indicates yet again the ambiguities of the notion of the public in Philippine life. It also underscores the reliance of the state on patrimonial families to drive high-technology urbanism.

The resulting city of Fort Bonifacio unconsciously mimics the semantics of the encampment space that it was named for. The estate-cum-stockade city model punctuates the larger metropolitan city with a series of quasi-private compounds with strongly policed boundaries—some visible and some invisible. Like all of these kinds of corporate cities within Metro Manila, the spaces of Fort Bonifacio are securely bounded—in the manner of a gated community—against the teeming city outside. Even when the “walls” erected are invisible, they are walls nonetheless. They exist lest the carefully constructed order of private city is made chaotic. The paradox is that its planners know what is expected of a civic development. Fort Bonifacio proudly promotes public art, public events and public order, and builds a careful civic order out of efficient infrastructure (not least, the infrastructure of streetscapes). Yet it still can’t mesh these convincingly with each level of everyday life. Its public space is curiously empty. Elsewhere in unregulated Manila, streets teeming with life exclude lucent order; the order of the high-tech feudal-fort-gated city however excludes streets filled with life.

The “new *encomienda*” system has some features that are analogous with a “company town”. It is proprietary system, but not in the sense of a public corporation. Its capital is familial or patrician. Family-patrician capital instinctively creates service classes and private security forces. Combined with landlord domination of urban real estate and “manorial” style planning power, this leads to a modern feudalism. It does not have serfs “tied to the soil”—nonetheless the poor clients of this system live and work in conditions where the procedural law of the state has little effect. The new feudalism mixes market rentals and market labor with patron-client service relationships and kin preference, “manorial” separation from a weak and corrupt state, production and service based on labor rather than skills and knowledge, and private armed force.

A parallel can be drawn with the railway baron George Pullman and his creation of a model company town—the also modestly named Pullman—in South Chicago in the nineteenth century. An important difference, though, is that Pullman’s megalomaniac town was the

exception, not the rule, in the Chicago city-region—and, in practice, it was atypical of American urbanism and indeed of American capitalism. Company towns typically appeared in America where the local economy still had a residual patrician character—from New England textile mill towns to Kentucky coal mining towns.<sup>53</sup> One study of these towns in the 1920s reported that they suffered some of the things that contemporary Manila suffers from. “The company townscape exhibited a uniform appearance. The absence of visual interest was the rule, a result from repeated building designs. The lack of trees and other landscaping did not mitigate that sterile appearance of rows of identical houses. Much of the infrastructure available in contemporary urban settings was missing: paved roads, water mains, sewer systems, and lights were generally non-existent.”<sup>54</sup>

In the family-corporate city, the public sphere is turned into a private domain. In Manila’s case, up-scale gated residences provide their own services, like rubbish collection, and of course the ubiquitous security guards-cum-gate keepers. Development companies maintain the gated commercial properties. The rest of the space, outside of the gated domains, languishes in a state of neglect. The urban poor colonize it. They impose on this space their own subaltern logic of turning public space into private residences and compounds. Their illegal erections are a kind of parody of the private family corporations. Government is a captive of both the private poor and private rich. The rich installed in their gated domains evade taxes, leaving government with no money for civic infrastructure. The poor in their “undocumented” encampments give government a crucial resource—votes, many of them bought. Votes are the coin of official legitimacy. The price of that legitimacy is that the poor be allowed to continue to live in public space (near railway tracks, under bridges, on river embankments, and so on). The poor provide the cheap labor to build the next round of “manorial” cities and enclaves. The poor then maintain, serve and secure these stockade cities, both their own DIY squatter cities and those of the rich. The paradox of insecurity for the rich is that they employ the very same minions who they most fear to protect them.

### **Urban Morphology: Searching for the Platonic City**

It might be argued that Manila’s problems stem from its domination by private interests. But this is a world in which “the private” is a trump card. It is a trump card because of the high valuation of the “inside”. Between the private development of the rich and the private development of the poor, there is little or no public realm left over. Because Manila is not a city of strangers who imagine and construct the public as the commons, the public is what is leftover after territory and space is appropriated and occupied. As the rapid population growth of the metropolis continues unrestrained there is little left over.

It is interesting how “the outside” constantly figures as the *bête noire* in interpretations of the fate of Manila. Nationalists blame the urban blight of Manila on American bombing at the end of the Second World War. Without question, American bombing of the Japanese caused a holocaust of the city. Yet, while wartime bombing may have leveled Manila, the real cause of its continuing lop-sided development was the failure to construct out of the ashes a city with a public sphere and public infrastructure and order. After all, many of the great city renaissances in history—London and Chicago are cases in point—occurred after holocausts had laid them to waste.

The Americans contributed \$620 million in reconstruction aid after the war. But this triggered no concentrated mobilization of capital for civic renaissance. There was nothing like the drive of merchant capitalists who went to their New York and Boston bankers to finance the rebuilding of Chicago after the Great Fire in 1871.<sup>55</sup> There was nothing like the concentrated effort of parliament, crown and merchant capital in Wren’s London to rebuild the city after the Great Fire in 1666. Manila’s holocaust meant simply that “the plan of the city”, the “model” of the collective demiurge, fell into abeyance. Neo-patrimonial behaviors filled the vacuum thus created. There were traces left of Spanish “Baroque” and American “City Beautiful” urbanism beneath the clutter of Manila streets, but their form was constantly swamped by an overwhelming humanity that surged in from the countryside. And the public transport system was not reconstructed.

We clearly see the failures in nationalist projects like Quezon City, which was loosely modeled after the Baroque planning of the “city beautiful” urbanism together with elements of Modernism.<sup>56</sup> Like a lot of misconceived Baroque or Modern urban plans, its monumentality is false, and its public space is unattractive. It is “big”—it has big parks, a big roundabout, and a big national research university. To successfully do “big” on an urban scale requires thick, dense public textures. Quezon City planners did “big” as empty space, much of which the urban poor has inevitably colonized. Its failure was the lack of civic imagination—in particular the lack of understanding that big civics requires the complement of medium-scale and small-scale civics. Such space needs to scale. Quezon City did not scale. Scalability is a Platonic value.<sup>57</sup> It is a universal value. Nationalist urbanism instinctively rejected universalism. It treated the geometries of big, medium and small as a handmaiden to its romantic ideals. Such ideals, so often, turn into a wasteland.<sup>58</sup>

Much closer in spirit to the Platonic city, and yet curiously several steps removed from it, is Singapore. It has no romantic wastelands at all. It is prosperous, functional, decent, and efficient. Yet it suffers from an oddly un-Platonic condition: soul-less-ness. This can be overstated, especially when many Western romantics prefer the pornography of the wasteland to

decent living conditions. Yet, given the large Singaporean diaspora that quietly chooses to live abroad, it can hardly be said that the charge of soul-less-ness is completely off-target either. Even the energetic Singaporean guardian-officials admit that, after a half century of development in a utilitarian mode, Singapore found itself lacking a “creative dimension”.<sup>59</sup> Its hygienic rationalism and its high-quality infrastructure provision on its own terms could not reverse this deficit. So the guardians of the city-state began to talk openly of their desire to turn Singapore into a “renaissance city”.<sup>60</sup>

Think of Singapore’s limits in these terms: there is no chaos on Singapore’s streets. Chaos is planned out of the Sino-Fabian city. But imagination is also cramped. The problem of Singapore is not the absence of chaos but the confusion of administration and order, and more particularly the confusion of rules and beauty. A society can do what Singapore has done—it can imitate a stock standard civic order by applying rules. Singapore’s planners very effectively deduced the rules of an International Style skyscraper city and applied them flawlessly in a tropical setting. The achievement was considerable. Yet rules do not make for beauty, but for clinical precision. Generating social prosperity through rules has a built-in ceiling.

Here, though, we need to be careful not to fall into the trap of post-modern stereotyping. The argument being advanced is not that rules create a disciplined order that is stifling, while “chaosmos” is the condition of inventiveness. Chaos is certainly not inventive. The cost of chaos is evident when we look at the case of Manila contrasted with Singapore. Singapore has successfully created a public order. The order is stiff and contrived, not to say at times punitive. But this achievement should not be underestimated either. Genuine public culture of any kind is historically rare. Most human activity—from the household to the state—is private, even where it is official. The historical act of differentiating between public and private is very difficult, and most societies blur the distinction in practice.

Manila is a prime example of a city in which the meanings of public and private have been rendered systematically ambiguous. This systemic ambiguity lends public and private life an uncanny edge. It is impossible to escape the sense that “something is not quite right” when all space becomes uncanny and has a pervading sense of being “close-to-chaos”. It is not literally chaotic. No society or city can endure actual chaos for very long, and survive intact. Rather this space is “close-to-chaos” in the sense that its incipient public order always seems on the edge of dissolve. While this may sound attractive when described on paper, in everyday life it is most unattractive. There is no doubt a public domain that is “close-to-chaos” can produce energy—as in the “teeming life” tag that is invariably applied by visitors to old Asia-Pacific cities. But, because it has no container, this energy is also wearying for the denizens of “close-to-chaos” cities. The uncanny condition turns life into a vain struggle to secure what good order

produces: lucidity, clarity, and the satisfactions of pattern rationality. During the postmodern period, Western social science made a mistake in dismissing the virtue of lucidity as the work of an overzealous gardener who obsessively trims the social bush. But no inhabitant of Manila would ever tell you that the hours spent needlessly in traffic jams or searching for un-signposted streets is a good thing. The product of an ad-hoc city topology, in turn the tainted fruit of an ad hoc new feudalism, these inconveniences are wasteful of the energy they create. Chaos is the privilege of the over-endowed. For everyone else, well-structured public space is essential.

This is especially so in low-income societies and developing economies. This is desperately so in the world's most fragmented, privatized and un-public of cities—Manila.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Metro Manila, a composite of 17 cities and municipalities, is one of the largest urban areas in the world. According to one estimate it is the 15<sup>th</sup> largest, with a populace of 14 million. Ahead of it are the following: Kolkata-Howrah (14.9 million), Cairo (15.2 million), Tehran-Karaj (15.3 million), Moscow (15.35 million), Jakarta (16.4 million), Los Angeles (16.4 million), Osaka-Kobe-Kyoto (16.57 million), Delhi (18.1 million), Mumbai (18.8 million), New York (27.7 million), Seoul-Incheon (22 million), Mexico City (22.1 million), Sao Paulo (22.7 million), Tokyo (33.7 million).

See Nation Master, "Largest Cities of the World Statistics". Accessed 22 November 2011: <http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Largest-cities-of-the-world>

<sup>2</sup> Epifanio de los Santos Avenue.

<sup>3</sup> The best illustration of the over-inflated reputation of "education" in the scheme of things comes from the experiences of those great minds Newton and Nietzsche. Imagine European science or arts without their contribution? Now both of them in their whole teaching careers had a bare handful of students—and probably none of these students understood what they said. It is not clear at all that "education" in the modern sense of the word can produce the kind of middle class essential for great periods of cultural and commercial flowering.

<sup>4</sup> One expression of this is the lack of any overviews of Manila public cultures (e.g., the live music scene) for consumption by locals—there are no weekly magazine websites. Most clubs come and go frequently, and do so outside the realm of publicity. This feeds cell-phone dependency and obsession. It renders knowledge of even routine cultural events curiously private or fraternal.

<sup>5</sup> The problems of the failure to rationalize are well summed up in a report on Japan written in 1915 by an Australian expert: "My impression as to your cheap labor was soon disillusioned when I saw your people at work. No doubt they are lowly paid, but the return is equally so; to see your men at work made me feel that you are a very satisfied easy-going race who reckon time is no object. When I spoke to some managers they informed me that it was impossible to change the habits of national heritage." On this see James Badford De Long, "The Protestant Ethic Revisited: A Twentieth Century Look". Accessed 22 November 2011: [http://www.j-bradford-delong.net/pdf\\_files/Protestant\\_Ethic.pdf](http://www.j-bradford-delong.net/pdf_files/Protestant_Ethic.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> See the reflections of I.M. Pei, the great Chinese-American architect, on this theme, in Michael Cannell, *I.M. Pei: Mandarin of Modernism* (New York: Clarkson Potter, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life 1850-1896* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).

<sup>8</sup> Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *A Short History of the Philippines* (New York: Mentor, 1969), chapters 2 and 3. See also Jose S. Arcilla, *An Introduction to Philippine History* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Manila: Ateneo De Manila University Press, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> "The plan of Manila was similar to other cities established by the Spaniards in the New World... Streets were drawn in a straight line, and delimited in equal plots of land resembling a chessboard. Legaspi designed the city's principal plaza or square, reserving the front for the first parish church and future cathedral." Ramón Ma. Zaragoza, *Old Manila* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> On the way this manifested itself in Iberian colonialism and also in turn-of-the-twentieth-century American big city civics, see Peter Murphy and David Roberts, *Dialectic of Romanticism* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Ramón Ma. Zaragoza, *Old Manila* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> In 1834, the port of Manila was open to foreign traders. Between 1855 and 1877, six other ports through the archipelago became free trade centers.

<sup>13</sup> Spanish was more widely-known in the American era than in the Spanish era.

<sup>14</sup> On the different types of public realm, see Peter Murphy and David Roberts, *Dialectic of Romanticism: A Critique of Modernism* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), Part Two.

<sup>15</sup> On American "nation building", see Peter W. Stanley, *A Nation in the Making: The Philippines and the United States 1899-1921* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), especially chapter 4; also George E. Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States: Problems of Partnership* (New York: Praeger, 1964), chapter 3.

<sup>16</sup> The Jones Act of 1916 instituted the principle of the "Filipinization" of Philippine government. Self-government (the Commonwealth era) arrived in 1935. During self-government, the Americans retained control of foreign policy and currency. The Japanese conquered the Philippines in 1942. After the Japanese were defeated, the Philippine state was granted full independence in 1946.

<sup>17</sup> Muslim uprisings against the Americans continued until 1915.

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Angus Maddison, *Historical Statistics*, accessed 22 November 2011:

<http://www.ggd.net/maddison/>

Maddison was the author of *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective* (Paris: OECD, 2001) and of *Monitoring the World Economy 1820-1995* (Paris: OECD, 1995).

Elise S. Brezis (Department of Economics, Bar-Ilan University) reviewing *The World Economy*, observed: "Today Maddison is nearly the only source for historical macro data of the world, and only he could rise to the challenge of presenting data for the entire millennium, even if there are still holes. David Landes in his recent book (1998) wrote that Paul Bairoch and Angus Maddison are the collectors and calculators of the numbers of growth and productivity. Since Bairoch is not with us any more, Maddison now has a 'monopoly' on this field." (EH.NET, November 2001.)

Accessed 22 November 2011: [http://eh.net/book\\_reviews/world-economy-millennial-perspective](http://eh.net/book_reviews/world-economy-millennial-perspective)

19 If we exclude the tax shelter states from the rankings.

20 In 1870, the Philippines' GDP per capita was \$776 compared with Russia's \$943, Eastern Europe's \$937, and the Middle East's \$742. Angus Maddison, *Historical Statistics*, accessed 22 November 2011: <http://www.ggd.net/maddison/>.

21 In 1950, the Philippines' GDP per capita was \$1070 compared with Latin America's \$2056, Eastern Europe's \$2111, and the Middle East's \$712. Angus Maddison, *Historical Statistics*, accessed 22 November 2011: <http://www.ggd.net/maddison/>.

22 Angus Maddison, *Historical Statistics*, accessed 22 November 2011: <http://www.ggd.net/maddison/>.

23 The figures for Philippines: World GDP per capita are: 1820 (\$704:\$667), 1870 (\$776:\$875), 1913 (\$1053:\$1525), 1973 (\$1964:\$4091), 1984 (\$2188:\$4681). Angus Maddison, *Historical Statistics*, accessed 22 November 2011: <http://www.ggd.net/maddison/>.

24 The Payne-Aldrich tariff law of 1909 established the bilateral free trade arrangement between the United States and the Philippines. Typical of such arrangements, it had exceptions (such as duties on sugar and tobacco imported into the United States). On the tariff law, see Garel A. Grunder and William E. Livezey, *The Philippines and the United States* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), chapter 6; George E. Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States: Problems of Partnership* (New York: Praeger, 1964), chapter 4.

25 As Johann P. Arnason observes: "The traditional view of Tokugawa Japan as a closed and stagnant country, cut off from a changing world by a reactionary regime and returned to history under Western pressure, can no longer be taken seriously." [*Social Theory and Japanese Experience: The Dual Civilization* (London: Kegan Paul, 1997), p. 257.] What is crucial is the particular ways in which Japan was open to the world. Above all, interaction with the world occurred through knowledge acquisition. This remained a vital feature of Japan throughout its modernity. From the mid seventeenth century Japanese began to show interest in Western science, including mathematics, surveying, ballistics, astronomy, geography, and medicine. This was systemized in eighteenth-century Dutch studies (*rangaku*). See Grant K. Goodman, *Japan and the Dutch 1600-1853* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000).

26 One of the classic devices to achieve this end was laws restricting ownership of residential property by foreigners.

27 Usha Mahajani, *Philippine Nationalism: External Challenge and Filipino Response 1565-1946* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1971), pp. 316-319.

28 Usha Mahajani, *Philippine Nationalism: External Challenge and Filipino Response 1565-1946* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1971), pp. 302-313.

29 By the year 2000 it was equal to 18% of the Philippine Gross National Product almost equal to the traditional mainstay of agriculture that contributed 20% to GNP. The overseas worker economy began after the Second World War but it really took off in the mid-1980s. Semi-skilled and skilled Filipino workers began to be employed in large numbers in the Middle East, Asia, and Western Europe. By the end of twentieth century, ten percent of Filipinos lived and worked abroad. There were 700,000 annual departures. Two million lived in the United States and 1.5 million in the Middle East. There were also large numbers in Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The Philippines was a much larger supplier of overseas contract workers than Pakistan, India, or China. The "Overseas Contract Workers" (OCW) included amongst their numbers doctors, nurses, engineers, construction workers, domestics, drivers, and dancers. The overseas Filipinos tend to be educated, literate English speakers. Like other diasporas, they are very good at assimilating into host societies. As contract workers, the semi-skilled do not necessarily have strong bargaining positions, and are not immune to abuse. Family separation and social isolation of contract workers is commonplace. Expiry of contracts, and a return to poorer incomes and jobs in the

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Philippines, can be difficult. At the same time, for all its faults, the system converts education into employment rather than ideology.

In February 2003, the Philippine Congress passed a bill allowing many of the country's 7.4 million overseas workers spread across 181 countries to vote in presidential elections. A pattern may emerge much like the generations of border-hopping Mexicans in the United States who rose from hard labor to economic success, and now constitute a powerful lobby for civic reform in the northern provinces of Mexico—bargaining their wealth for procedural reform.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Murphy and David Roberts, *Dialectic of Romanticism: A Critique of Modernism* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), chapter 15; “Architectonics” in Peter Murphy and Johann Arnason (eds) *Agon, Logos, Polis* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001), pp 207-232.

<sup>31</sup> Singapore's founder-statesman, Lee Kuan Yew recognized the distinctive and common features of settler societies. In 1965, he observed the similarities between Australia, New Zealand and Singapore “in so far as they are all new communities built by migrants from nothing”. They had cultures that were tough and enterprising. Typical of Lee, he couched the settler thesis in terms of eugenics—pretty much saying that there were genetically tougher and softer migrants. See Michael D. Barr, “Lee Kuan Yew: Race, Culture and Genes”, *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 29: 2 (1999). Accessed 22 November, 2011: [http://www.researchgate.net/publication/51700299\\_Lee\\_Kuan\\_Yew\\_race\\_culture\\_and\\_genes](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/51700299_Lee_Kuan_Yew_race_culture_and_genes)

<sup>32</sup> Religion was as powerful a motive for American interest in the Pacific as was trade. American missionaries were very active in the Pacific from a very early date. See Richard W. Van Alstyne, *The Rising American Empire* (New York: Norton 1974 [1960], chapter 6. The first American missionaries arrived in Hawaii in 1820 and in China in 1829. Indeed it is very difficult to separate out American movement across space from religious belief. This compound had its roots in Europe, or rather in the breakout from Europe in the early modern period. As Carey James observed of the great European age of exploration and discovery: “...a major motive behind this movement in space, particularly as evidenced by the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa or the Puritans in New England, was religious. The desire to escape the boundaries of Europe, to create a new life, to found new communities, to carve a New Jerusalem out of the woods of Massachusetts, were primary motives behind the unprecedented movement of white European civilization over the entire globe. The vast and, for the first time, democratic migration in space was above all an attempt to trade an old world for a new and represented the profound belief that movement in space could be in itself a redemptive act. It is a belief Americans have never quite escaped.” [*Communication As Culture* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 16.] For further on the American belief in movement in space as redemptive, see Peter Murphy, *Civic Justice* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2001), chapter 10.

In the particular case of the Philippines, religious mission took on a secondary characteristic. The Philippines was already a Christian society. The American decision to rule the Philippines was motivated by a significant element of WASP-ish (White Anglo Saxon Protestant) disdain for the “stagnation” of the Latin world. This had colored American foreign policy in Central America. Likewise a mix of race, religion, and Anglo-centrism played a role in American self-understandings of their rule in the Philippines. It should be noted, though, that the Protestant American ascendancy of the time never saw this rule as anything but a short-term expedient to redress the historic inadequacies of a Catholic nation. The convergence of ideas of race, Anglophone civilization, and U.S. Protestantism are discussed in Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), pp. 79-80.

<sup>33</sup> “In 1903, there were 2777 Americans as against 2697 Filipinos in the regular government; in 1921...the numbers were 614 and 13240, respectively.” T. Agoncillo, *A Short History of the Philippines* (New York: Mentor, 1969), p. 169, 207.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Murphy, *Civic Justice* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2001), pp. 299-302.

<sup>35</sup> Daniel Burnham contributed to city plans for Washington, D.C., Cleveland, San Francisco, and Manila. His most famous plan, the Plan for Chicago, was executed during 1903-1909.

<sup>36</sup> The Ermita district in Manila City is where the Philippine Supreme Court and the U.S. Embassy is located, along with nightclubs, universities, and hospitals. Malate and Ermita are popular with tourists.

<sup>37</sup> For a city its size, Metro Manila has few parks. The handful includes Rizal Park, Manila Zoo, Paco Park, Adriatico Circle, and Malate Park.

<sup>38</sup> On the civic rhythms of “in and out”, see Peter Murphy, “Marine Reason”, *Thesis Eleven* 67 (London: Sage, 2001), pp. 11-38.

<sup>39</sup> And let us not forget that over 80% of all daily traffic in the mega-cities of South East Asia is pedestrian traffic – source: Sustran... check with Paul Barter!)

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<sup>40</sup> “Before 1900, malaria, dysentery, smallpox, tuberculosis, and especially cholera had decimated the population and caused untold miseries to the masses. This was so because while the Spanish colonial government introduced vaccination and created offices charged with guarding the health of the people, the good intention... was never implemented, or at best only desultorily so, owing to bureaucratic inefficiency, stupidity, or incompetence and indolence. Public and private hygiene and sanitation were unsatisfactory, resulting in high mortality rates. When the Americans came, however, they immediately set the government agencies in motion to minimize, if not arrest completely, the spread of various diseases and to improve the health of the people through proper diet. Epidemics that used to migrate freely to the Philippines were either prevented or minimized by the establishment of the quarantine service which was supervised by competent American physicians and public health officers. It was a difficult undertaking as the Americans found out, for their invincible enemies... were not so much diseases as the apathy, ignorance, and superstitions of the people... Trained field men were sent to the provinces to explain the virtues of modern hygiene and sanitation, while the public schools included in their curricula a course on hygiene and sanitation to give the school children an elementary knowledge of how cleanliness could be next to Godliness. This effort at improving the health of the people paid off: in 1898 the death rate per 1,000 persons was 30.5 percent, but in 1907 it plunged to 21.9 percent. Except in 1917-1918 when cholera and smallpox epidemics broke out, the mortality rate per 1,000 persons progressively diminished in succeeding years.” T. Agoncillo, *A Short History of the Philippines* (New York: Mentor, 1969), p. 207.

<sup>41</sup> One of the best accounts of this period remains Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York, Vintage, 1955). On the broader political context and consequences of this urban revolution, and the “third American political revolution” that it created, see Peter Murphy, “Portal Empire: Plastic Power and Thalassic Imagination”, *New Zealand Sociology* 19 (Wellington: Massey University, 2004), pp. 4-27.

<sup>42</sup> See for instance his summa, Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1966 [1961]). The use of hygiene as a criterion of judgment is well instanced in Mumford’s treatment of the Romans, who he did not like. The failing of the Romans is summed in what Mumford took to be their failure to get sewage disposal right. “The most elementary precautions against disease were lacking in the disposal of the great mass of refuse and garbage that accumulates in a big city... If the disposal of faecal matter in carts and in open trenches was a hygienic misdemeanor, what shall one say of the disposal of other forms of offal and ordure in open pits? Not least, the indiscriminate dumping of human corpses into such noisome holes, scattered on the outskirts of the city, forming as it were a cordon *malsanitaire*.” (p. 252) And so he goes on in this muckraking style as if he were Upton Sinclair berating the owners of Chicago meatpacking plants on behalf of Progressive middle class opinion.

<sup>43</sup> The HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate in 2011 was 0.1%, one of the lowest in the world. Compare this with South Africa, which had an HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate of 20%. On other comparative public health performance indicators, the Philippines typically ranks in the middle range of world countries or better. See Nation Master, “Country/ Republic of the Philippines/ Health Statistics”. Accessed 22 November 2011: <http://www.nationmaster.com/country/rp/Health>

<sup>44</sup> In his memoirs, Lord Listowel, British Minister of State for the Colonies, 1948-1950, remarks: “The Fabian Society had taken a special interest in the Colonies thanks to the knowledge and enthusiasm of two of its members, Rita Hinden and Marjorie Nicholson. They not only provided expert advice to members of both Houses of Parliament, but befriended many young colonials, mainly students, while visiting London for the first time. Many of the young men and women they assisted, such as Tom Mboya from Kenya, Lee Kuan Yew from Singapore and Kwame Nkrumah from Ghana, were to become leaders of the National movements in their own countries. The Fabian Colonial Bureau, which was founded in 1940, did a useful service in making these young people aware that they had many friends in this country who supported their demand for more rapid progress towards independence.” (Accessed March 20, 2004: <http://redrice.com/listowel/CHAP11.html> ).

<sup>45</sup> D.L. Miller, *City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997).

<sup>46</sup> The word “Makati” derives from the Tagalog word kati, which means tide, and refers to the tide of the Pasig River that flows through Manila into the Bay.

<sup>47</sup> This is the equivalent of the late twentieth-century New York City property developer Donald Trump taking a whole area of Manhattan Island—let’s say the East Village—turning it into a new Wall Street, and then renaming it Trump City. Even Trump’s engorged ego was not capable of this.

<sup>48</sup> They called themselves the Metro Pacific Group.

<sup>49</sup> They even blocked Makati becoming an official city until 1995.

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<sup>50</sup> Gerard Lico, *Edifice Complex: Power, Myth and Marcos State Architecture* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2003).

<sup>51</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Ozymandius*

I met a traveller from an antique land,  
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal, these words appear:  
My name is Ozymandius, King of Kings,  
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

<sup>52</sup> Peter Murphy and David Roberts, *Dialectic of Romanticism: A Critique of Modernism* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), chapter 9.

<sup>53</sup> On the persistence of patrician norms in America through the nineteenth century, see Peter Murphy, "Portal Empire: Plastic Power and Thalassic Imagination", *New Zealand Sociology* 19 (Wellington: Massey University, 2004), pp. 4-27.

<sup>54</sup> Kentucky Coal Education, "Coal History/ Coal Towns/ Historic Context/ America". Accessed: 22 November, 2011: [http://www.coaleducation.org/coalhistory/coaltowns/historic\\_context.htm#america](http://www.coaleducation.org/coalhistory/coaltowns/historic_context.htm#america)

<sup>55</sup> Donald L. Miller, *City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), chapter 6.

<sup>56</sup> Quezon City is the largest city in Metro Manila. It covers about a quarter of the area of metropolis. It was founded in October 1939.

<sup>57</sup> Peter Murphy, *Civic Justice* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2001), chapter 2.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Murphy and David Roberts, *Dialectic of Romanticism: A Critique of Modernism* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004).

<sup>59</sup> There have been various statements of this deficit. See for example Linda Low and Eddie C Y Kuo's view that "[an] information society has to be knowledge-based whereby the level of creativity of both its people and institutions is the benchmark with which information is used to improve quality and standard of life. Be it creativity and innovation in science and technology or R&D, the stage is not quite ready yet in Singapore. Neither is creativity in the humanities, arts and social sciences as developed... Just as a crude indicator, ranks very low on patents granted per 1000 of labor force, sharing 46<sup>th</sup> position with Indonesia and Jordan while Taiwan, Japan and Switzerland are respectively in the first three positions (World Economic Forum 1996)." ["Towards an Information Society In a Developed Nation" in Linda Low (ed.) *Singapore Towards A Developed Status* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 37-60.]

<sup>60</sup> See for example Singapore's Ministry of Information and the Arts, "Renaissance City Report" (1999). Accessed 22 November, 2011: [http://app.mica.gov.sg/Portals/0/2\\_FinalRen.pdf](http://app.mica.gov.sg/Portals/0/2_FinalRen.pdf)