

- An American visitor gives his reaction to Philippine life.

## MANILA TO AN AMERICAN

An American visiting the Philippines is apt to experience a strange shock of recognition. For a half-century of United States colonial tutelage relinquished in 1946, seems to have fashioned the Philippines into a mirror of America. But the reflection it casts can be deceptive. Nothing is more disappointing to Americans than the discovery, often belated, that "our little brown brothers," as imperial propaganda used to call them, are only superficial relatives.

Americans are often led astray by the outward signs of resemblance. Manila looks, in many ways, like a sprawling, unwieldy city in the United States.

Its traffic-clogged avenues are blighted by billboards proclaiming American merchandise in high-pitched Madison Avenue jargon; sleazy drive-ins offer "colossal" hotdogs, hamburgers, and other gastronomic imitations.

Manila's suburbs, with their split-level ranch houses and California haciendas, rival Beverly Hills; its slums outdo Harlem. And many educated, urbane Filipinos appear more Americanized than any American.

Gentlemen with names like cigar brands — Benedicto, Modesto, Eugenio are known to their pals as "Butch" and "Baby," and they have an extraordinary capacity for behaving like Babbits.

They are avid golfers, earnest Rotarians, and proud students of "human relations" as taught by a local branch of the Dale Carnegie Institute.

Nothing is quite so disarming as to wander into a luncheon of the Junior Chamber of Commerce in a provincial town: The speeches might have been written in Cedar Rapids, even if the delivery is rather reminiscent of Wallace Beery playing Pancho Villa.

Filipinos may speak dialects like Tagalog at home but their public language is a kind of calypso American that would have delighted Mencken. Recently, reporting the mayor's investigation into police department complaints, a Manila newspaper headlined: "City Dad Probes Cops Gripes."

It is midsummer madness to hold Philippine weddings in June when the heat and humidity are at their worst. Yet fashionable Filipinas must be "June brides," and they perspire heroically through all the functions which, incidentally, feature delicacies imported from the U.S.

Though there are 7,000 Philippine Islands, Filipinos

thrive on canned American salmon and tuna fish. Manila high society rejects local avocados and bananas as lower-class "native" fare. When the late General MacArthur, an authentic Philippine folk-hero visited Manila a few years ago, a banquet at the presidential palace opened with tinned American fruit salad.

Thus this Philippine mirror of America is a kind of carnival mirror, casting distorted images. In contrast to Hawaii where the process of acculturation almost entirely assimilated a multiracial population, the Philippines was never transformed into a parcel of the United States by colonial rule. — *Stanley Karnow in Manila Chronicle.*

## SNOBISHNESS

The Athenian general Iphicrates was the son of a shoemaker. One of his opponents in a suit at law, a descendant of the patriot Harmodius, referred insultingly to Iphicrates' humble birth. With the spirit of a true democrat, the general answered calmly: "Yes, the nobility of my family begins with me; just as that of yours ends with you." — *Anon.*