Book Reviews

Charles McDonald and Guillermo Pesigan (eds.), *Old Ties and New Solidarities: Studies on Philippine Communities* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 2000), 355 pages.

This book foregrounds Philippine Studies' multidisciplinary character. As the editors put it, the 18 essays that comprise this volume "reflect the great variety of perspectives and approaches relevant to the social construction of Filipino communities (p. 3)." Perhaps to emphasize the idea that this book contains exemplary "studies on Philippine communities," the editors declare that these were selected from more than a hundred essays read at the Third European Philippine Studies Conference in Aix-en-Provence in 1997.

As always, it is a problem to organize such a vast array of material. The anthology deals with this constraint by making the essays fit into rubrics which signify "types of communities" (namely, ethnic communities; professional, local, and religious communities; and the modern national community) that sustains the production of material culture ranging from stamps to verses. This framework is not without its value as a heuristic device. But unfortunately it does not provide access to the theoretical interest that the material might harbor. Ostensibly it holds a naturalized, if not reified, typology of Philippine communities that tends to stifle the potential of the studies gathered here.

The essays cover a wide spectrum of topics (e.g., ethnicity, nationhood, gender, migration, and state policies) and considerably depart from the prevailing normative, depoliticized, and ahistorical analyses of Philippine society and culture. With a few exceptions, the essays assert the interrelationship of power, culture, history, and human agency in the analysis of the social experience and struggles of Filipinos here and abroad. In this context, social experience and struggles make sense and become meaningful in everyday practice. From the selected essays, we thus take note of how meaning is

grasped not as stable and unitary symbolic expressions, but as discourse, performance, and visuality that are open to contestation and critique.

Discourse

Resurreccion's *The Social Construction of Ethnic Names* shows how ethnic names, viz., Kalanguya and Ikalahan, are invested with meanings in order to explain the tensions and contradictions imbedded in claims on local resources. The author, following Foucault, views such process of ethnic naming as "rituals of truth (p. 51)."

Sajor's *Local History and Actors' Strategies in an Ifugao Village* argues against the prevailing "ahistorical static view of indigenous norms and practices on access to resources." Alternatively, he espouses the notion of "flexible normative order" by showing how an Ifugao community appropriates both customary laws and state legal systems in dealing with disputes concerning landownership, boundaries, and inheritance.

Thompson's *Moral Appeal and Collective Action in the 1953 and 1986 Philippine Elections* discusses how the mobilization of idioms of morality during the Magsaysay and Aquino Administrations has resulted in the successful restoration of "democratic politics" (read "competitive elections") in the Philippines. Perhaps to suggest the limits of moral crusades, he points out the irony that "neither new administration ... represented a major break with the patronage politics of the past (p.267)."

Pesigan's *Women Folk Religious Leaders' Discourse on Salvation and Development* shows how the millenarian ideology and practice of women religious leaders and their followers in Southern Luzon express resistance against government-sponsored developmental schemes.

Wendt's *"Talking" and "Writing" During the Spanish Colonial Era"* and de Lemps' *Shifts in Meaning of "Manila" in the Nineteenth Century* take up the politics of language use. The former situates the process in the context of colonial and missionary work while

the latter in the process of place making or formation of spatial territory such as Manila.

Rixhon's *Levels of Discourse in Tausug Parang Sabil Epic* examines the politics of authenticity in the multiple interpretations of the *parang sabil* produced by knowledge workers, state, and media. It views folklore as an ideological system that has practical implications for nation building.

Performance

Afable's *Kalanguya Sung Poetry* explores the ideological underpinnings of the sung poetry or *ba'liw* of the Kalanguya. She demonstrates how the shifting functions of *ba'liw* (i.e. from a local model of and for communicating sociality to one that serves as a symbol of ethnic identity) is predicated upon its modes of production and reception in various contexts.

Visuality

The cultural politics of nation formation takes center stage in Muuzenberg's *Faces of the Nation on Postage Stamps.* Using stamps as politically and morally laden visual artifacts, Muuzenberg shows how the governing elite, through time, "legitimate its views on the nation and state through representations on postage stamps (p.270)." In a sense, what he proposes is an aesthetized notion of hegemony that underpins the uncontroversial way of stereotyping the nation using symbols such as the flag, the canonized national hero, and the church as national emblems.

Parenthetically, other essays in this anthology deserve considerable attention in another context of critique.

While the above-mentioned tendencies point to new sources of material and methods, these do not insinuate a new direction for the field, which is largely brought about by the uneven engagement of the essays with current theory. The implications of such theory may in fact already be implied by the essays, but regrettably are not sensitively reckoned and pursued. For instance, we would have wanted to see more explorations into the performative and pictorial

aspects of meaning making that would hopefully prompt us to converse across disciplines and persuasions in the study of a transdisciplinary category like culture as broadly contemplated.

On the whole, we appreciate the commitment of the anthology to foreground ethnography and history as indispensable means of interrogating self-contained, homogeneous, and static notions of community and identity.

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Ikehata Setsuho and Ricardo Trota Jose (eds.), *The Philippines Under Japan: Occupation Policy and Reaction* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999), 394 pages.

If an understanding of the past is a key to making sense of the present and the future, this collection of eight meticulously researched and clearly written articles on the Japanese occupation of the country is a must read.

This book stands out with its extensive use of hitherto inaccessible primary Japanese documents and selected interviews with Japanese personnel directly involved in the Occupation. With these invaluable resources, the scholars writing for this book have provided new perspectives essential to our understanding of the political, social and economic aspects of the Japanese occupation unstudied or glossed over in the past.

A careful examination of Japan's official occupation strategy towards the Philippines which was originally rooted in a surprising policy of appeasement and conciliation serves as the book's unifying theme. The book's eight contributors (seven Japanese and one

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Filipino) examine the unravelling of this policy in various areas of the Occupation experience, stressing the policy's contradictory and devastating consequences given the exigencies of war and popular resistance to military occupation.

In the book's opening chapter, Nakano Satoshi identifies the guiding documents, policies, and reasons adopted by the Japanese military administration for its official strategy of appeasement in its occupation of the Philippines. This strategy was implemented in two major ways. First, the Japanese authorities sought to win over the Quezon-led Commonwealth government with the promise of respecting existing governance structures and practices and the grant of independence. Second, the authorities sought to develop a "wait and see attitude" among the people by trying to depict the war essentially as that between the United States and Japan, with no meaningful stakes for Filipinos. While the appeasement policy facilitated the active or passive collaboration of a substantial portion of the national political elites, this strategy, however, met a dead end with the challenge of widespread guerrilla resistance, the failure to provide economic security for the people, and the abuses committed by the occupation army.

Terami-Wada Motoe analyzes an internal challenge to the official appeasement policy with the opposition by some Japanese military and civilian officials who favored supporting and working with the anti-American and pro-Japanese independence leaders such as the exiled General Ricarte who was brought back during the war and Benigno Ramos of *Sakdal* fame. This opposition culminated in the creation of the Filipino volunteer armies such as that of the *Makapili*; the "Peace Army" organized by Ricarte himself; and the *Bisig-Bakal ng Tagala* of Aurelio Alvero. In contrast to the collaborating national elites who were provided amnesty after the war, the surviving Filipinos who joined the volunteer armies on the Japanese side typically served prison terms and were treated as social outcasts in their local communities.

Kawashima Midori explores the impact of the appeasement policy in Muslim Mindanao with Lanao as a case study. She discovers that an earlier attempt by some military officials and civilian advisers to partition Mindanao and put it under the special and

economic control of Japan was voted down by the top authorities because it proved inconsistent with the official appeasement policy. Moreover, Kawashima's research on Lanao belies a widely accepted idea that Muslims and Christians put aside their differences to fight the Japanese military. The collaboration with the Japanese authorities in the area cut across religious affiliations and there were Muslim and Christian leaders on both the guerrilla and Japanese sides.

The religious face of appeasement policy toward the Christian churches in the Philippines is examined by Terada Takefumi. To help win the support of the majority Christian population and elite officials, the Japanese Army General Staff created a special Religious Section made up of Christian clergy and laity from Japan. The members of this section visited various parts of the country to say mass and hold services in local churches and facilitated the release of detained religious personnel. Bishop Taguchi of Osaka later joined the section staff and actively led the appeasement campaign directed at the Philippine Catholic Church. Through the policy recommendations of Bishop Taguchi, the Japanese military administration sought a comprehensive agreement (*concordat*) with the Vatican that would have addressed contentious demands such as: the Filipinization of the ruling hierarchy of the Catholic Church; the regulation of church property; and regulation of educational curricula.

The book has three important chapters on the impact of the Japanese occupation on the economy: Ikehata Setsuho on the mining industry; Nagano Yoshiko on cotton production; and Ricardo T. Jose on the rice crisis. All authors agree that the failed policies pursued during the occupation period which were meant primarily to serve the needs of the war effort set back Philippine economic development. The three authors also concur that guerrilla resistance to Japanese attempts to operate these industries was a major reason for these failed efforts.

Ikehata documents how the Japanese military sought to exploit the rich mineral resources of the country (copper, iron, chrome, manganese) through the system of military controlled or commissioned management enterprises. She further points out that

aside from guerrilla resistance, the following factors explain the failure of Japanese attempts to operate and exploit the mines: difficulties of hiring local labor, securing safe transport of mined ore, lack of investment funds, insufficiency of transportation, and lack of fuel.

In the case of the cotton industry, Nagano stresses that Japan's grandiose cotton production plan in the Philippines and elsewhere in Southeast Asia was an attempt to compensate for the cut off of imports of raw cotton by Japan from the U.S. and India. This failed because of the antagonistic attitude of landlords and peasants and the unsuitability of new seed varieties, in addition to guerrilla resistance.

Ricardo Jose discusses the intractability of the rice crisis in his chapter on the rice shortage and countermeasures adopted during the Japanese occupation. The Laurel government's efforts to increase food production and control prices and food distribution proved futile because of its meager resources and low level of public support. As the war progressed, most of the rice procured by government agencies went to the Japanese army or fell into the hands of black marketeers. Reflecting its devastation, the postwar rice industry would take more than five years to reach its prewar production levels.

The book's final chapter by Hayase Shinzo chronicles the tragic disintegration of the Japanese immigrant community in Davao as it was mobilized for the war effort by the Japanese administration. The Japanese residents in Davao who were running a thriving abaca industry by the time of the war were mostly migrant laborers of Okinawan ancestry, lacking education and who had intermarried with the local population. Considered as "inferiors" by the Japanese military and civilian officials, the Japanese residents of Davao, particularly the spouses of Filipinos, actively supported the Japanese military to prove their Japanese ancestry and loyalty.

An added bonus for researchers is an extremely useful appendix identifying and listing the location of source materials related to the Japanese occupation in the Philippines.

The editors of the book are established scholars in their field. Ikehata is professor of Southeast Asian History and president of Tokyo University of Foreign studies and the acknowledged dean of Japanese Philippine specialists. Jose is professor of history at the University of the Philippines and an authority on the Japanese occupation of the Philippines.

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Alfred W. McCoy (ed.), *Lives at the Margin: Biography of Filipinos Obscure, Ordinary, and Heroic* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000), 481 pages.

This book is an admirably diverse collection of scholarship on the Philippines. It consists of nine chapters by Philippine and Western authors who represent a wide range of academic disciplines – from anthropology to history to political science. This diversity is reflected in the subjects of the chapters. The book covers a wide geographic spread from Northern Luzon to the Visayas to Mindanao. Male and female lives from upper, middle, and lower classes are examined. Furthermore, it is an enjoyable read.

I offer my interpretation of the volume from the perspective of a social scientist. I realize that my concern with the generation of generalizable theoretical insights may not jibe with the goals of the collection's authors. So, it must be said that, in spite of the critical comments I offer below, *Lives at the Margin* is a very well constructed "collection of individual stories" whose main virtue may, in fact, lie in its being "an antidote to overbroad generalizations" as pointed out by one of the volume's contributors (p. 423).

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When read from a social science standpoint, *Lives at the Margin* is light on theory and insights that are readily applied to Philippine

studies as a whole or to more general studies of Asia or the developing world. Critical insights are here but at a much lower level than I had hoped for, especially considering the theoretical wealth of McCoy's earlier edited volume, *An Anarchy of Families: State and Family in the Philippines* (1993). To be fair, in his introduction, McCoy presents the work as an exercise in biography, what he terms "a central, sharply contested form of Filipino literary and political expression" (p. 1). He also considers it an underdeveloped field of study. The present work attempts to address both of these concerns. First, it is very much *not* an exercise in the use (or misuse) of biography for political purposes – a practice McCoy is quite critical of in his introduction. Second, McCoy explicitly situates the essays collected in this volume within the realm of social history or biography from below. This is undertaken with an eye toward illuminating hitherto unexplored aspects of Philippine history and society. As the title suggests, this is accomplished by offering fascinating glimpses into the lives of important Filipinos who have been overlooked – intentionally or accidentally – by "official" history. In effect, "exploring the lives of those whose obscurity may reveal larger historical phenomena" (p. 21).

Brief, critical summaries of the chapters follow. These are not arranged in the order in which they appear in the book, but in the order in which I read them. (Perhaps revealing too much of my own predilections.)

The chapter by Vina Lanzona takes a very good, enjoyable, and important look at the highest-ranking female member of the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP), Celia Mariano-Pomeroy. The article goes beyond biography to address issues of gender roles and relations. Furthermore, Lanzona raises important questions concerning the value of feminist history and biography.

Alfred McCoy's article on Jose Nava, former head of the Federacion Obrera de Filipinas, offers a very good and highly focused look at the life of this "union *supremo*" (p.279). However, he does not explicitly expand upon insights gained in the study of Nava's life nor does he offer much that is readily applied to the labor movement in general.

Brian Fegan tells the life story of a peasant political leader. Though unknown on a national or regional level, Mang Dionisio Macapagal's remarkable political story spans multiple eras in Philippine history: from the Commonwealth to People Power and beyond. Fegan's chapter is the most concerned with theoretical insights and advances. He relates his essay to the works of Carl Lande, Frank Lynch, and James Scott – and moves beyond them. His conclusions regarding the various idioms of political understanding that peasants employ are especially insightful. He argues that individuals engaged in political discourse are often concurrently employing contradictory world views; easily switching between rival – even mutually exclusive – interpretations.

Benedict Kerkvliet also presents a biography of a peasant, a woman from Nueva Ecija. He tells the engrossing tale of Manuela "Elang" Santa Ana, a local, leftist politician whose major motivation is helping poor peasants – primarily by supporting various land reform schemes. Of interest is Nana Elang's reliance upon the use of legal methods in her pursuits and her rejection of more radical, illegal methods (with the exception of her days as a member of the *Hukbalahap* during the Japanese occupation). Kerkvliet goes beyond biographical description to touch on theoretical questions, although this is mainly limited to brief explanations of factional and patron client-based models of Philippine political behavior and why Nana Elang does not fit the models. He ends with a list of features that set the political acts of his subject (and others like her) apart from those predicted by conventional models of Philippine politics. However, he does not move beyond this contrast. Perhaps this collection of biographies is not the place for it, but a bit of theory building would have been very welcome.

Michael Cullinane offers a lengthy, detailed account of Hilario Camino Moncado, founder of the Filipino Federation of America. This organization was one of the largest and most successful associations of Filipinos living and working in Prewar America. Cullinane highlights the remarkable career of this former Sacada, born into rural poverty in the Visayas, emigrating to the sugar fields of Hawaii, and eventually rising to be considered the most influential – and the wealthiest – Filipino in America (pp. 94, 108).

Resil Mojares' essay is not so much a biography as an examination of the process of "manufacturing" heroes and history. He examines moves by the Archdiocese of Cebu to promote the beatification of Pedro Calungsod, a seventeenth century Visayan, martyred in Guam. Since very little is known of Calungsod, Mojares primarily looks at attempts to fill in the gaps. He relates this process to a general, post-colonial phenomenon of "retrieving...erased or obscured native lives" (p. 53).

The chapter by Sidel is as theoretical as it is biographical. In a sense, his work is similar to that of Mojares'. Sidel also deals with "manufactured" biography. He presents stories of two Cebuano "gangsters" ("Beloy" Montemayor and "Boboy" Alega) who have attained "legendary" status through folk stories and action films. He then contrasts their fictional lives with their historical lives. Sidel then goes a step further and critiques the "Robin Hood" image of criminals as social bandits held in certain academic circles (exemplified by the work of Eric Hobsbawm) (p. 150). Sidel argues these criminals are not "Robin Hoods," but "mafia" (p. 155). That is, they do not have a social agenda. They are not engaged in a form of popular resistance but, instead, are motivated by concerns of personal economic accumulation.

Patricio Abinales examines the life of a Maguindanao strongman, Datu Piang of Cotabato. Abinales argues that Datu Piang can not be understood from within the context of colonial Philippine socio-politics but must be viewed through the lens of the larger Muslim- Malay Southeast Asian trading world. He uses this interpretation of Datu Piang's life to demonstrate the disconnect between Moro, Filipino, and American colonial world views and interests in the early twentieth century. This interpretation calls into question the widely-held view of Mindanao being merely a peripheral area of the Philippiines.

The story of "Rafael," a "lower-class CPP-NPA leader" in Negros is the subject of Rosanne Rutten's essay, the book's final chapter. She situates her theoretically-inclined biography within the context of mobilization campaigns aimed at sugar hacienda workers from the 1960s onward. She uses the biography to illustrate the

fragmentation of haciendero owners' monopoly of power and the growth of a new "multifarious power structure" with more opportunities for the rise of local leaders (p. 459).

Lives at the Margins is an insightful and most enjoyable read. Aside from my minor, critical comments, the authors are quite successful in their endeavor to explore some of the uncharted waters of Philippine studies. Social historians; students of local politics, agrarian unrest, and community development; rural sociologists and anthropologists; and, of course, those with an interest in biography, will find the book of great interest.

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Vicente L. Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000), 304 pages.

This book is not easy reading at least for those of us who are not native to the English language. Those who think they know English may want to try understanding the following paragraph which summarizes the intent of the book:

> [The book] delineate(s) some of the ways in which the tracings of colonialism continue to embroider, and thus ironize, Filipino nationalism; but they also reveal how the ironies of nationalism have acted on and problematized colonial attempts at institutionalizing social order. Although arranged in rough chronological fashion, each chapter proceeds by way of juxtaposing and dispersing certain figures and motifs.

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Here, you are drowned with technical jargons (register, signs, discourse, etc.) that have special meanings among those members of the tribe that follow the teachings of Benedict Anderson. However, even if we are not steeped in their language, we can have a smattering of what they are trying to say if we examine the examples given in the book. After all, the raw material is history and us, and thus, the esoteric language will not be sufficient to cover up the basic facts.

What is Rafael saying? Basically, that the Americans screwed the Filipinos, and despite the screwing or perhaps because of it, we are dying of love for America. You may say, there is nothing new in that except that he used elegant language. The same thing had been said before by radical Philippine scholarship or even of Americans, among them, Glenn May, who in his book said that the Filipinos (in Batangas) were subjected to "social engineering". But wait, if Glenn May said so and Rafael is saying the same thing, how come that they seem to oppose each other. Rafael and his mentors such as Reynaldo Ileto were after Glenn May's head?

As Glenn May once said during a lecture at the History Department of UP in 1992, we *Indios* should understand that in America, there are two tribes of Philippine experts. One is based in Cornell and the other, spread all over from New York to Oregon (where May is based). Rafael belongs to the Cornell tribe whose headman is Benedict Anderson, and whose leading follower is Reynaldo Ileto. Remember "Imagined Communities," and "Pasyon and Revolution," and lately, "The Filipinos and Their Revolution"? May claims that his tribe is more inclined to the scientific method of historiography such that they would rather use authentic, documentary sources than myths, rumor, tales and the like. This was the basis of his critique on the myth of Andres Bonifacio's heroism. Yet, the same materials that May would expunge are the favorite sources of the Cornell group for their researches.

Glenn May would insist on authentic written documents; Ileto would opt for a detailed examination of the reaction of a crowd to a historical actor's (e.g., politician's) speech. Or in appreciating the meaning of a document, Ileto would insist on hypothesizing the state of mind of the writer of the document. Ileto criticized the old

and structural model (e.g., patron-client) of interpreting Philippine reality. According to him, the so-called client, the common people, who had been perceived as mindless followers of their patron, had to be convinced by the patron. The patron's word and manner of speech, his physical features and the values he articulates in his speech are as important as his possession of mere wealth.

Vicente Rafael's work follows the same approach. It is as much an examination of socio-economic background as the examination of the speech. His concern is the way words and speeches are understood, in addition, how pictures, movies, rumor, etc. hold meanings among a group of people. By juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated materials, he was able to articulate surprisingly fresh insights into aspects of Philippine reality from 1900 to the present.

This results from what Rafael himself claims as the "privilege of exile." They who are outsiders have the standpoint to play on many data about us. I remember that when Esteban Magannon delivered in October, 2000 a series of insightful lectures on Philippine society, Bobby Tangco extemporized on this seemingly fresh perspectives by saying that this is natural among those who view the Philippines from the outside. He calls this "*nasalsal*," (pressed) by the circumstances of exile to explain the received materials from home. There, in his place of exile, the exilee is the authority and whenever asked to explain situations on the Philippines, he had to draw on his own imaginings. Here visiting as an academic, the exilee is "*nilalabasan*" (comes out) with the imaginings organized and articulated in academic language that could create surprise, and even evoke shock, to his hearers.

Of course, there will be shortcomings, evident to those of us who are the subjects of his imaginings. For example, in explaining the meaning of the slogan chanted against the *pulis "Pulis, pulis, titi mong matulis!"* (Pigs, pigs, uncircumcized dicks!)(p. 156), Rafael would say in his footnote, "In Philippine societies, circumcision among males is a sign of maturity. It is therefore highly insulting to refer to an adult male as uncircumcized," The word "matulis" does not refer to uncircumcised male but to someone with the uncanny ability to impregnate several women, hence, to having several wives. Macho politicians in the provinces take this description as badge of honor.

But these are matters of detail. More basic is the admittedly limited range of possible areas of concern posed by being an outsider. In explaining why such and such movies were reviewed and not the others, Rafael's explanation was that those were the ones available in his neighborhood in San Diego, California. To prove this point, I took a look at the index of the book to see if Abu Sayyaf has ever been mentioned. I would suppose a serious scanning of the Philippine landscape will have something to say about this scourge of the present administration. No mention at all. In other words, the book progressed from the outside, from the problems and situations of OCWs and FilAms and lands at the airport side of the Philippines, then Makati among the Assumption culture into the Payatas and Tondo parts. It is rich in materials on how Taglish had developed mourning. But as for the conditions of Sama, Bajau, Mangyan or Agta, there is not much to say. In other words, the book does not claim that it can apprehend from within the *bayan*.

In light of the emergence of *kasaysayang bayan* in Philippine historiography, we foresee a more comprehensive understanding of Philippine reality. For whereas there are those writers like Rafael, privileged to look from the outside, there are many others of *kasaysayang bayan* who are seeing the same reality from within the *bayan*. And *bayan* cannot be Metro Manila or the areas within the range of TV and newspaper coverage. Poverty for instance, is not simply about Payatas and Tondo but with fisherfolks and peasants, plantation workers and hunter-gatherers. To gather data and understand them would require coming from them, not just observing them as subject of research. The requirement is therefore to develop scholars native to their places of origin, speaking the language and completely at ease with their culture. This is the long-term ambition of Filipino scholarship and *ADHIKA ng Pilipinas*, Inc. that promotes *Kasaysayang Bayan,* so that we ourselves would not have to suffer the vertigo of understanding our reality from the looking glass of the other.

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