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Postcolonial Fissures and the Contingent Nation An Antinationalist Critique of Philippine Historiography

This article examines instances in Philippine historiography where nationalism, as a unitary end, has been used to elide and obscure class difference. It begins with a partial explanation of the lacunae in antinationalist thinking in the Philippines, and then proceeds to a critique of contemporary nationalist historiography. Using historians Zeus Salazar and Reynaldo Ileto as case studies, it examines how nationalist historiography can serve as means to implicitly justify localized acts of class oppression. The works of these scholars, while crucial in forwarding critiques of colonialism and neocolonialism, privilege nationalist unity over thorough examinations of disjunctures produced by class difference.

KEYWORDS: NATIONALISM · PHILIPPINE LEFT · HISTORIOGRAPHY · POSTCOLONIAL · CLASS

In a recent interview with *Philippine Studies* (Aguilar et al. 2011, 125), Benedict Anderson situated his classic *Imagined Communities* within debates in British historiography. At the time of the book's writing, Eric Hobsbawm—the Marxist doyen of social economic history—was the major critic of nationalism, representing a view common in the British Left. In this context, Anderson notes, Tom Nairn's defense of Scottish nationalism, the seminal *The Break-up of Britain*, was a “Molotov cocktail” thrown at conventional Left wisdom (ibid., 126). *Imagined Communities*, written “in support of Tom” (ibid.), was thus an intervention in a European debate on nationalism by a scholar immersed in the emancipatory nationalisms of the colonized. By Anderson's admission, *Imagined Communities* is more sympathetic to nationalism compared to the works of authors like Hobsbawm.

Anderson's book is a polemic in a discussion previously colored by Marxist internationalist critiques of nationalism. By dint of Hobsbawm's and other Marxists' influence over the historical profession, an engagement with their antinationalism was and is de rigueur for British analysts of nationalism. In Nairn's (2003, xii–xviii) preface to the new edition of *The Break-up of Britain*, for instance, he takes great pains to critique “ethnic nationality” and nationalism's articulation with reactionary movements such as Thatcherism. Similarly, Anderson (2003, 141) argues against the quick equation of nationalism and racism, claiming that imagining the nation is an act of love. In this sense, Anderson contends, it can inspire acts of heroism like those performed by anticolonial nationalists.¹

In historical studies of Southeast Asia, however, leftwing critiques of nationalism are rare. As Craig Reynolds (2005, 21) notes, Southeast Asian historians have a clear “willingness to take the nation as a given and something worth fighting for and writing about. . . .” In contrast, South Asian scholars of the Subaltern Studies collective quickly took on a project of “fashioning a historiography that explored the violent effects of that unitary discourse and that exploded the histories of peoples and classes excluded by elite nationalism” (ibid., 22). Commentators like Partha Chatterjee (1993, 134) have argued that postcolonial nationalisms may turn hegemonic and, in the process, “exclude the vast masses of people whom the dominant elite would represent and lead, but could never be integrated with their leaders.” Chatterjee's work thus illustrates that even the oppositional nationalisms of postcolonies may reproduce the exclusions of their European versions.

Reynolds (2005, 22–23) does not explain the reason behind the divergence between South Asian and Southeast Asian historical scholarships on nationalism, claiming a more modest goal of arguing for the continued relevance of nationalism in the study of Thai history. The goal of this article is equally modest, albeit informed by a different theoretical impulse. Namely, I contend that (1) critiques of nationalism such as Hobsbawm's and Chatterjee's have been inadequately discussed in Philippine historiography, but (2) these critiques need to be introduced in light of historical developments in the Philippines since the collapse of Marcos-era nationalisms. The aim is not to condemn nationalisms en bloc but to conceive of nations as “historical phenomena rather than *a priori* eternal data of human society” (Hobsbawm 1977, 10). Hobsbawm (ibid.) is explicit about the implications of this analysis on political praxis:

In short, the Marxist attitude towards nationalism as a programme is similar in many respects to other a priori abstractions of what in his day was petty-bourgeois radicalism, e.g. the “democratic republic”. It is not unsympathetic, but contingent and not absolute. The fundamental criterion of Marxist pragmatic judgment has always been whether nationalism as such, or any specific case of it, advances the cause of socialism; or conversely, how to prevent it from inhibiting its progress; or alternatively, how to mobilize it as a force to assist its progress.

This instrumentalist assessment of nationalism is not exclusive to socialists. At its barest, Hobsbawm's contention is that nation building must not be an end in itself but must be assessed in light of how it assists or retards emancipatory political projects (in his case, Marxist socialism and proletarian internationalism). Hobsbawm's position, moreover, reflects his broader views concerning the unwieldy task of defining nationalism. Nationalism, for him, is subjective because it entails personal identification; but it is also objective, as identification is “made possible by virtue of living in states” (Hobsbawm 1992, 8). This dynamic precludes any fixed definition of nationalism. The nation “can only be recognized *a posteriori*,” and must be assessed in light of phenomena that are “locally and historically rooted” (ibid., 9). Such will be the approach of this article as it examines a form of nationalism that emerged at a specific juncture in Philippine intellectual history.

In what follows I seek to analyze cases in Philippine historiography in which nationalism, as a unitary end, has been used to elide and obscure acts of oppression, placing particular emphasis on class oppression. This elision in turn prevents scholars from producing empirically driven explanations about what occurs in particular localities and how these histories disrupt unified national histories. In the first part of this article, I provide a partial and brief explanation for the lack of antinationalist historiography and theorizing in the Philippines, locating the exposition within a broader intellectual history of the Philippine Left. The focus on the Left is crucial because, as the case of Hobsbawm illustrates, the most biting criticisms of nationalist theorizing come from leftists. By the Left, however, I do not simply refer to the organized Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and “national democratic” organizations under its penumbra. Instead I point to postwar intellectuals and activists who combined anticolonialism with a renewed emphasis on the broader category of “the masses.” The CPP would eventually express these intellectual commitments through the language of Leninist anti-imperialism and the Maoist “mass line” of “learning from the people.”

The second, more substantive, part of the article is an antinationalist critique of two prominent nationalist historians: Zeus Salazar, the founder of the Pantayong Pananaw school of indigenous historiography, and Reynaldo Ileto, the most trenchant analyst of peasant/proletarian folk mentality in the Philippines. I selected these two historians because of their claims of having fundamentally transformed the way Philippine history and the history of the “masses”/Filipinos has been written. Both, I argue, also represent strands of a broad leftwing nationalism that emerged during the Marcos years. My critique stems from a conjunctural analysis of the Philippine nation-state: its postcolonial and postauthoritarian circumstances require a departure from the anticolonial nationalisms of the Philippine Revolution of 1896 and the antidictatorship movements of the Marcos period. In this context historians of the Philippines must contend with the various fissures of the nation-state: the tenacity of local politics, the imperialism of Manila, the problem of minority-majority relations, and, most importantly, class difference.²

The Givens of National History

The explicit nationalism of much Philippine historiography may seem unproblematic given the country’s colonial history. One can easily defend

Philippine nationalism through the Leninist delineation between the nationalism of oppressed nations and that of its oppressors—a part of Lenin’s conception of imperialism as a means to extend capitalist exploitation beyond national borders. From this viewpoint, oppressor nationalisms aid imperialism and deepen global class divisions, making the anticolonial nationalism of the oppressed integral to proletarian struggle and Marxist internationalism. Filipino nationalism falls neatly into the latter nationalism, rendering its ubiquity in historiographic discourse a natural offshoot of international power structures. It becomes the grammar of the oppressed.

Hobsbawm (1992, 134) has argued, however, that “the nationalism of small nations was just as impatient of minorities as what Lenin called “‘great-nation’ chauvinism,” citing various cases of Eastern European nationalisms that turned oppressive. That nationalism can dovetail with authoritarianism should not be surprising to scholars of Southeast Asia where the anticolonial nationalism of the Indonesian military degenerated into the fascist nationalism of Suharto’s New Order. It was precisely their role in the struggle against the Dutch—along with their duty to combat “communist terror”—that Suharto and other Indonesian generals used to lay the ideological foundations of a brutal authoritarian state (McGregor 2007). This same postcolonial state would become the colonizer of East Timor, Aceh, and West Papua (I analyze below limited parallels between the case of East Timor and Muslim Mindanao).³ Also, if outgrowths of anticolonial nationalisms are inherently emancipatory, why is it that the major critique of Indian nationalism cited above emerged from a collective that trades on its refutation of colonial thought? These comparative points establish the necessity of engaging the historically specific nature of nationalism in Philippine historiography.

Despite the absence of explicitly antinationalist work, there have been various works in Philippine historiography that are nonnationalist. Since the 1970s, non-Manila-centered histories (McCoy 1977; Kerkevlit 1977; Abinales 2000; Finin 2005; Kerkevlit and Mojares 1991; Mojares 1999; Aguilar 1998; Caouette 2004 to name a few) have exposed the limits of “national history,” which occlude the divergent histories of various localities. These works establish that local histories may not only diverge from linear narratives about the nation as a whole, but can even contradict these narratives. There has also been critical work examining the ways in which the nation has been imagined and reimagined at specific historical periods (Hau 2000; Hau 2004; Rafael 2000; Rafael 2006; Chu 2010), revealing the

contingency of the concept. Such works serve as antidotes to the essentialism of nationalist history, allowing for a rehistoricizing of what has always been a historical concept. The following antinationalist critique, as such, takes these works to what I believe is their logical conclusion: that primordial and static representations of “the Filipino” or the “Filipino nation” retard emancipatory political projects.

Sources of Contemporary Nationalism

As mentioned, Hobsbawm’s a posteriori approach to defining nationalism requires historically specific discussions of the phenomenon. The critique that follows, as such, refers to a contemporary leftwing nationalism that emerged in postwar and postcolonial Philippines. Scholars (Curaming 2006, 107; Tadiar 2004, 160; Iletto 1998, 185–86; Iletto 2011a trace the genesis of this nationalism to 1956, the year Teodoro Agoncillo published his *The Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the Katipunan*. Agoncillo’s tome does not require much discussion in these pages, but its import lies in its explicit linking of class positions with anticolonial nationalism. As Agoncillo’s title implies, the “masses” and not the educated *Ilustrado* elite led the first anticolonial revolution in Asia. For Rommel Curaming (2006, 99), Agoncillo’s writings, along with those of fellow nationalist historian Renato Constantino, shifted the definition of “Filipino” away from simple citizenship and rendered “socio-economic class” a determinant of one’s belonging to the nation. As “bearers of history, the ‘masses,’” however ill defined a concept, “became the proprietary claimant” to a distinctly Filipino mentality (ibid.). The defining element of postwar nationalism, then, is the conjoining of the nation with the lower class.

The reclaiming of the Philippine Revolution became one of the symbolic foundations of the Maoist CPP’s student radicals, who saw themselves as heirs to the revolutionaries of 1896 (Iletto 1998, 189). Writing as Amado Guerrero (1980), CPP founding Chairman Jose Maria Sison bolstered the link between class and nationalism by conceiving of the Philippines as a semicolon of the United States. Sison contended that the US, despite having granted formal independence to the Philippines, “persists in violating the national sovereignty of the Filipino people . . .” (ibid., 29). Underpinning this argument is the belief that the United States has encouraged feudal relations “to perpetuate the poverty of the broad masses of the people, subjugate the most numerous class, which is the peasantry, and manipulate

local backwardness for the purpose of having cheap labor and cheap raw materials from the country” (ibid., 39–40).⁴ Having rendered the masses the main victims of US imperialism, violations of national sovereignty simultaneously become acts of class oppression. In other words, the nation that rightfully asserts independence belongs to the masses. Like Agoncillo and Constantino, then, Sison conceived of national belonging in social-economic terms.

With the notable exception of Kathleen Weekley (2010), no author has systematically questioned the nationalist rhetoric of the CPP.⁵ In criticizing nationalist thought, however, Weekley is too quick to dismiss the impact of nationalism on the anti-Marcos Left, arguing there is not much “evidence to suggest that it was nationalism that drove Marcos’ opponents” and that the national struggle “was rarely nationalist beyond national-democratic slogans” (ibid., 51, italics in original). However, as Caroline Hau (2010, 75) correctly posits in a critical rejoinder to Weekley, the nationalism of this period “took the form of what was taken for granted rather than something that needed to be explicitly foregrounded and theorized. . . .” In fact, the rhetorical foundation of Sison’s (1971, 223–36) new “national democratic revolution” was a narrative concerning how he and his comrades constituted the new “propaganda movement,”⁶ continuing the anticolonial struggle of nationalist heroes like José Rizal and Andres Bonifacio, while also transcending the latter because of the new movement’s Marxism. By ignoring the implicit rhetorical hold of nationalism on the Philippine Left, Weekley ignores a crucial facet of the anti-Marcos Left’s nationalism: its givenness. Rather than dismiss this nationalism as mere rhetoric, it is more productive to examine the intellectual milieu that rendered it a natural adjunct of radical politics.

Patricio Abinales (2001, 201) links the CPP’s anti-imperialism to the work of bourgeois nationalists like the postwar senator Claro M. Recto. Rectonian nationalism and its offshoots emphasized the unfairness of postwar relations between the US and the Philippines, and the need for Filipinos to assert national sovereignty. This affinity for Recto before Mao is affirmed by Rodolfo Salas, CPP Chairman from 1977 to 1986 and NPA Commander-in-Chief from 1976 to 1986. Salas (2010), also known as Kumander Bilog, narrates that majority of the young students in the nucleus of the CPP had read Recto’s and Constantino’s nationalist writings before those of the Great Helmsman. Even after Sison began quoting Mao, most of his comrades continued to read only these authors (ibid.).

The trajectory of Sison's thinking illustrates the centrality of the nation in CPP ideology. Consider the essays in Sison's 1967 anthology of essays, *Struggle for National Democracy* (SND), for which Agoncillo wrote the introduction. Published before the founding of the Maoist CPP, SND was the first book that outlined Sison's "national democratic" ideology. The book's first edition was explicitly nationalist, containing essays with titles like "Nationalism and the Standard Issues of the Day," "Nationalism and the Youth," "The Nationalist as a Political Activist," "U.S. Imperialism vs. Economic Nationalism," "Nationalism and Land Reform," "Nationalism and the Labor Movement," and "Socialism and Nationalism." However, in the book's second edition (Sison 1971), with the CPP now ensconced in the center of radical politics, these essays were either excised—as in the case of "Socialism and Nationalism"—or given new titles—as with "Nationalism and the Standard Issues of the Day," which became "On the Standard Issues of the Day." The words "nationalism" or "nation" cannot be found anywhere in the second edition's table of contents. At no point in his introduction to the second edition does Antonio Zummel—a top cadre who would eventually become chief negotiator of the CPP's National Democratic Front (NDF)—explain these changes.

It is difficult to speculate on the reasons for the changes. It is improbable that Sison decided to downplay the nationalism of SND to appeal to internationalist Marxist circles; the book was written for domestic propaganda and agitation. Moreover, the CPP gained prominence after the weakening of ties between China and the Soviet Union in the 1960s. Highly sectarian in its international work, the CPP's internationalism was limited by its disdain for the USSR (considered the socialist fatherland and the Vatican of internationalism by postwar communists) and its unwavering allegiance to Mao Zedong thought.⁷ Moreover, the fratricidal attitude of the Maoist CPP to the original Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP, which also translates to Communist Party of the Philippines) precluded any nostalgia for the height of the Communist Internationalism during the heyday of the Comintern in the 1930s. Founded in 1930 the PKP, which was, save formal affiliation, "a section of the International from its birth" (Richardson 2011, 147), served as the bearer of prewar Communist internationalism. This internationalism, however, was untenable in the context of postwar nationalism, and Maoist hegemony within the Philippine Left would be the final nail on its coffin.

The more likely reason for the changes in SND was that the CPP was grafting communism unto an existing nationalist framework, constantly negotiating the tensions involved in this process of translation. Like Ho Chi Minh, CPP members were nationalists before communists.⁸ By the time of SND's reissue, however, the already influential CPP no longer needed to gain legitimacy through the explicitly nationalist language of Recto, Agoncillo, and Constantino. Nationalism, as such, could be woven directly and seamlessly into Maoist discourse.

Indeed, a large part of the CPP's attraction to Maoism lay in its compatibility with domestic nationalism. Mao's Asian communism was forged in the context of a nationalist struggle in alliance with the Guomindang. It is no coincidence that Hobsbawm (2002, 278–79) condescendingly remarks that Chinese Communism "in spite of its internationalist rhetoric" was ultimately "national if not nationalist. . . ."

Thus it would have been political suicide for the CPP to insist on internationalism during martial law. Within the intensely nationalist milieu of the Marcos period, it is not surprising that no internationalist critique of nationalism emerged from the Left. The Marcos period saw the national question emerge at the center of political debate. As Curaming and Claudio (2010, 20) note:

During martial law, two versions of "democracy" from different ends of the political spectrum were being forwarded. On the one hand was Marcos's democratic revolution from the centre, which saw the state take on increased powers for the building of a "New Society" through martial rule. On the other hand was the "National Democratic" revolution of the CPP and its founding Chairman Jose Maria Sison/ Amado Guerrero, which targeted American imperialism and local reactionaries.

Both revolutions were inherently nationalist, with Marcos's New Society defined along ethnonational lines (Rafael 1990) and the CPP's National Democratic revolution premised on nationalist anti-imperialism. In this contest, Marcos (1980, 6) attempted to outflank the CPP's nationalism by insisting that "the underlying values of Marxism-Leninism clash with the prevailing values of Filipino culture" (an argument that, as shown below, Salazar also forwards). Given this milieu, it is unsurprising that intellectual

discourse in the 1970s was refracted through the lens of the nation. It is in this context that we must situate the nationalism of the historians discussed below.

Salazar and the Closed Circuits of Nationalism

The rise to prominence of the indigenization movement in Philippine studies, represented by Zeus Salazar's Pantayong Pananaw (PP) in history, must be seen in the context of martial-law-era nationalism. Salazar, as demonstrated below, operates in the interstice of Marcosian and leftist nationalisms. Before examining Salazar's individual work, however, a brief comment on PP as a collective enterprise is in order: Ramon Guillermo (2003) contends that PP cannot be equated only with Salazar, and that the term "Pantayong Pananaw" has "acquired several usages" based on Salazar's original approach. To critique the entire PP endeavor is an intellectually unwieldy task, because the diversity of voices within it precludes an analytically consistent argument. Guillermo himself, for instance, is broadly aligned with Pantayong Pananaw, but deploys a Marxist perspective that Salazar eschews. What follows, as such, is a critique of Salazar's own work. Insofar as I discuss his followers, I engage not so much their own empirical contributions, but the apologia they have written to defend their mentor.

Zeus A. Salazar began his career as a historian in the University of the Philippines, where he completed a degree in AB history in 1955 (Navarro 2004, 2). In 1958 he commenced graduate studies in France, obtaining various diplomas in ethnology, anthropology, and linguistics (*ibid.*). His studies culminated in a doctorate in cultural anthropology in 1968 (*ibid.*, 3). Upon returning to the Philippines later that year, he rejoined the UP History Department, where he has taught (with some interruptions) ever since. Although never a member of the CPP, he became an active member of the anti-Marcos movement in the 1970s, participating in the string of protests in early 1970 known as the First Quarter Storm (*ibid.*, 4).

Prior to formally articulating PP as a historical method, Salazar was an advocate of indigenous psychology and a close collaborator of its doyen Virgilio Enriquez. This engagement with the indigenization movement in the social sciences would prompt Salazar to investigate the implications of indigenization on historiography (*ibid.*). Salazar (2007) situated the genesis of PP to his early UP historiography courses in the 1970s and credited Agoncillo for developing a "Filipino point-of-view" (*punto-de-bistang Pilipino*) amid

a Philippine history "chained to American traditions" (*pagkakagapos sa tradisyong Amerikano*) (Salazar 1997a, 38).⁹

Despite writing various essays that touched on its themes in the 1970s and 1980s, Salazar began to develop a systematic version of PP only in the early 1990s (Guillermo 2003). At the core of PP is a classification of knowledge about the Philippines into three categories: *pansila* (for them), *pangkami* (for "us" excluding "you") and *pantayo* (for "us" including "you"). *Pansila* refers to knowledge produced by non-Filipinos about the Philippines, *pangkami* refers to knowledge produced by Filipinos for outsiders, while *pantayo* is a historiography for Filipinos by Filipinos. Naturally it is the latter category that Salazar seeks to develop. Essential to *pantayo* is a commitment to writing in the national language "Filipino" (in reality, Tagalog) in order to communicate directly to the masses.

The primary goal of *pantayo* historiography, as Salazar notes in majority of his essays, is *ang pagbuo ng Kapilipinuhan* ("the formation of the Filipino nation"). To analyze and to advocate for nationalist historiography, Salazar (1998b, 92) adds, is a "holy" task in the service of nation formation ("Banal na gawain . . . tungo sa pagbuo ng bansa"). The primary aim of his work is thus "to report and explain about [sic] Pilipinas to Filipinos in their own terms and with a view to strengthening Filipino nationality, to pursuing Filipino goals and ideals" (Salazar 1998a, 313). Like Agoncillo, Constantino, and Sison, Salazar equates the nation with the masses, at times using the words "the poor" (*mahihirap*) and *Bansa* ("Nation") interchangeably (Salazar 2006, 440). This *Bansa*, to reemphasize, is a whole, and the strengthening of it is Salazar's normative goal. The goal of forming and strengthening the nation, as I contend below, is a key attribute of Salazar's work that allows him to denigrate works that question the organic unity of the nation.

Despite his debates with Marxists over Western socialist theory's relevance to Philippine realities (Guillermo 2009, 1–5), many of Salazar's early followers were either affiliated with or heavily influenced by the Maoist Left (Mendoza 2006, 110–11). Salazar himself was briefly imprisoned by the Marcos regime as a political dissident from 1972 to 1973 (Navarro 2004, 4), although he would eventually ghost write significant parts of *Tadhana*, Marcos's nationalist history of the Philippines (Curaming 2006, 53–123). In this sense, Salazar's biography illustrates the strange relationship between nationalism and the Philippine Left. Salazar, accorded grudging admiration by some leftists while being hired by their

archnemesis, is testament to nationalism's ability to provide the interstitial space where avowed political antagonisms are glossed over in light of a common love for country.

Despite Salazar's preoccupation with writing for Filipinos, there have been some attempts to reframe and recuperate his work in the context of global historiographic debates. Portia Reyes (2008, 241–43), for example, compares the PP movement to the rise of postcolonial theories from India, viewing it as a necessary response to the universalization of Western knowledge. PP, however, can only be compared to Indian postcolonial theory on a superficial level. Raewyn Connell (2007, xi) notes that the hegemonic nature of "Northern theory" lies in its ability to limit the applicability of postcolonial knowledge in the South to its place of origin, depriving it of any relevance outside its immediate context. For her, the analytic importance of Indian Subaltern Studies is its capacity to parlay local knowledge into world historical debates (ibid., xiii). Salazar, who insists on writing about the Philippines primarily for Filipinos, provincializes himself and denies "Filipino" interventions in global knowledge-production by writing only for a domestic, often nationalist audience, whereas writers like Chatterjee connect debates in Indian history to larger issues.

Reyes (2008, 250) contends, however, that PP's advantage over Subaltern Studies is the former's recognition of its audience. Beyond addressing this audience, PP hermeneutically examines this audience's mentalities. The goal of PP is thus to "explore the consciousness of social practices of subaltern classes as marginalized bearers of culture and history of the Filipino people" (ibid., 249).

There are a number of slippages here in Reyes's argument. First, why does she assume, like Constantino and Agoncillo, that the subaltern classes are bearers of the category "Filipino?" The articulation of these two categories, as shown below, is not self-evident. Second, what is the common phenomenology that allows for the hermeneutic approach of Pantayong Pananaw? I will contend that the fractures of the Philippine nation-state preclude any consistent Filipino subjectivity.

Similar to Reyes, S. Lily Mendoza's (2006) work tries to locate resonances between PP, often portrayed (correctly) as essentialist, and poststructural theories that deconstruct privileged subjectivities. She claims that Pantayong Pananaw and related disciplines in the Philippine indigenization movement deconstruct "Eurowestern master narratives" like

Marxism, which fail to "engage and take seriously the differing subjectivity and culture of Filipinos. . ."] (ibid., 214). To this argument, one needs to point out that the insistence on a distinct local culture amid "modernizing" trends like Marxism and liberalism was the main feature of reactionary and racist history in postwar Europe, such as German *volk* historiography. In other words, ethnonationalism also has its roots within European traditions of ethnology and racial science. Indeed, it is not surprising that a European-trained ethnologist like Salazar would become a pillar of Philippine ethnonationalism. To point out the similarities between European ethnology and PP, of course, is not to suggest that PP is a form of fascism, only to posit what commentators like Chatterjee have previously noted: that nationalism itself is bound up with the history of European colonialism; it is itself a master narrative—perhaps the most successful one. Moreover, while it is also true that ethnonationalism propagated by a university professor in a poor Southern state must be treated differently from that of European scholars, PP's emphasis on "unification" dovetails with state rhetoric about the consolidation of power. However, before examining PP's emplotment within state-centric narratives, let us first turn to Salazar's conceptualization of class.

Portia Reyes and Ramon Guillermo (2009, 88) argue that Salazar's refutation of Marxism (in particular, through a polemical translation and annotation of the *Communist Manifesto*) is premised on his perceived inapplicability of Marxian concepts like "feudalism" and "the proletariat" to the Philippine context. Salazar is certainly not a nationalist Marxist like Sison, but within the broader framework of PP there are hints of a class-based system of analysis. Salazar (2007), for example, refers to the pangkami perspective as reflecting an "elitist culture" (*kulturang elitista*) that seeks to "judge the activities of Filipinos based on the rules and standards of outsiders or foreigners" (*hatulan ang gawain ng Pinoy mula sa patakaran at sa pamantayan ng tagalabas o banyaga*). An example of pangkami knowledge is the work of late-nineteenth-century nationalist propagandists like José Rizal, who wrote in Spanish and sought to validate the nationalist project within the terms of colonialism (ibid.).¹⁰

Salazar's critique of pangkami knowledge is an important nuance in PP, allowing the framework to level claims of "elitism" against certain social groups without resorting to the grammar of Marxism or other "Western" theories. Despite its rhetorical populism, does PP truly account for class

difference, or is it a mere conflation of class and nationalism, premised on Agoncillo and Constantino's assumption that the "true" nationalism is that of the poor?

A major target for Salazar's polemics (and, as shown below, Ilet's as well) is American historian Alfred McCoy. In his works McCoy (1982a, 1982b, 1994a, 1994b, 2009, 2001) writes about the rapaciousness of local oligarchs in the Philippines, the Marcos dictatorship and its oppression of Filipinos, the weakening of national state institutions through localized acts of corruption, and the violence underpinning much of postcolonial Philippine politics. McCoy also focuses on the local and regional nuances of Philippine politics as a means to expose the corruption of local elites. In this sense, he is a perfect bogeyman for Salazar: a leftwing analyst, deploying Western methods to unearth localized class tensions within the Philippine nation. More importantly, scholars like McCoy fail to write for "the nation as a whole"—the biggest sin for a historian whose main project, as noted earlier, is nation-formation (Salazar 1998a, 319). Salazar's polemics against McCoy, as such, are not peripheral comments; they illustrate the key difference between what Salazar calls "Pilipinolohiya," which "works towards unity and homogeneity," and Western "Philippine Studies," which, similar to colonial discourse, "tends to produce the opposite effect" (ibid.)

Salazar begins his refutation by quoting a statement from McCoy (quoted in ibid.) about the variations in the Philippine economy, particularly in the Visayas region: "The sugar planters of Western Visayas . . . became citizens of the world market in the 1860's but did not become citizens of the Philippine Republic until 1946—a difference of nearly a century that left them with strong anti-national interests and close political ties to their premier sugar customer, the United States." To this statement Salazar (ibid.) replies rhetorically: "The Western Visayan planters did not become citizens of the Republic until 1946? But I thought the Philippines did not become an independent republic until that time! What is the purpose of McCoy's elucubrations except to divide and confuse?"

The first half of Salazar's response is semantic; McCoy's point is that international commercial interests trumped national identification. In the same volume that Salazar criticizes, for instance, Milagros Guerrero (1982) contends that the economic opportunism of the regional elite, particularly in the Western Visayas, determined to what extent they participated in the nation-building project of Emilio Aguinaldo's Malolos Republic. This

means they could have opted, prior to 1946, to identify as Filipino citizens. Salazar could have easily labeled these elites as deploying an inauthentic instrumental nationalism, perhaps even contending that they exhibited a pangkami worldview. In his polemic, however, he sheathes one of his own theoretical weapons in order to criticize an American scholar, rendering McCoy's analysis completely alien from the unified nationalism which he seeks to construct. In the process, he ignores a fissure within the nation and glosses over the elitist history of Philippine nationalism.

As to the question of whether or not McCoy's real intention was to divide, one may reply in a similarly rhetorical manner: What is wrong with a divided historiography if divisions actually exist? Is Salazar contending, contrary to McCoy, that the elite of Western Visayas saw themselves as being part of "the nation as a whole?" If so, why does he not provide evidence to the contrary to support his contention? Salazar disparages historical studies that emphasize national divisions even when these divisions do exist or have existed. Empirical reality, in this case, is of secondary importance, and it is trumped by the ideological goal of national unity—a unity premised on a homogenizing narrative, oblivious to the nuances of local politics. For Salazar (1998a, 320) Filipinos generally do not see the "local" as something distinct from the nation, and in this regard the "local" is simply a "new term for 'native.'" This argument is premised on the existence of a common Filipino subjectivity that produces a common phenomenology of nationalism.

Salazar's ahistorical treatment of Filipino identity and history collapses once one turns to the specificities of local politics. In Muslim Mindanao "intrusions from the national state"—at times violent—and the unresponsiveness of national politicians to local political context precluded many in the island from identifying with the national state being constructed under American auspices (Abinales 2010, 117). In fact, the Filipinization of the Moro region was not inevitable and was a function of the shifting allegiances of Moro elites to national politicians during the American period. A combination of opportunism, political interest, and loyalty to local constituents informed the manner in which Mindanao elites conceived of the island as integrated within the larger narrative of the Philippine nation (ibid., 69–72). Salazar's conception of the "local" as being another word for a united "native" prevents an analysis of these specificities. This lack of sensitivity to the nuances of local politics and history is a major attribute of Pantayong Pananaw. Consider, for, example, Salazar's (1998b, 14, my

translation) treatment of the various causes of the Philippine Revolution of 1896 and the subsequent Filipino-American War: “As such, amid the various, individual, inter-individual and even ethnic, supra-ethnic or inter-ethnic causes of those events, only two goals/projects of uniting the archipelago can be seen to have encompassed/can encompass all these: the ‘*Tagalog*’ goal of the KKK and the ‘*Filipino*’ project of the Ilustrados.”

Pantayong Pananaw assumes that a Tagalog-centric history can encompass the various nuances of local politics. In a heated online debate with Mindanao specialist Patricio Abinales, Salazar charges the former of wanting to separate Mindanao from the Philippines (Abinales et al. 2010, 24). In response Abinales argues that independence for Mindanao is warranted since, from Quezon’s Commonwealth until Marcos’s martial law, it has benefited little from being part of the Philippines (ibid., 25). Averse once again to a factual debate about Mindanao’s underdevelopment and the history of Filipino state violence directed at the island, Salazar passes off Abinales’s separatism as a function of his association with foreign scholars (ibid., 26). Abinales is thus on the wrong side, and Salazar (ibid., 32) replies from an assumed moral high ground:

[N]asa panig ako ng pagbubuo ng Bansa, isagawa man ito ni Marcos, ni Estrada, o kahit na ni P’noy. Kalaban ninyo ako at ako ang may karapatan na husgahan kayo sa ngalan ng Bansa.

I am on the side of forming the Nation, whether this be done by Marcos, Estrada, or even P’noy [Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III]. I am your [those like Abinales who seek to divide the Philippines] enemy and I am the one who has the right to judge you in the name of the Nation.

Although this censorious statement may have been uttered in a heated and informal context (over Facebook), it nonetheless reflects Salazar’s ultimate goal of nation-formation. The quote betrays a gaping ideological blind spot in Pantayong Pananaw. That Salazar would declare allegiance to an elitist despot like Marcos and a convicted plunderer like Estrada for the sake of national unity exposes how easily the centripetal tendency of nationalism dovetails with elite state formation. It is not surprising that one of Salazar’s (2006) more recent works involves a rehabilitation of Joseph Estrada as a figure of the masses.

Salazar, of course, does not directly endorse the violent pacification of separatists in Mindanao, nor does he advocate Marcos-era militarism, but his conception of nation elides neatly with state rhetoric. If “unity” is the ultimate goal of the nationalist, those who sow disunity are rendered enemies in a demonology that easily becomes the basis for violence. This is illustrative of what Howard Zinn (1980, 9) sees as a process whereby the historical memory of the elite state becomes that of the nation, in the process occluding social tensions on the ground. This elision is less explicit, though no less problematic, in the work of Reynaldo Ileto.

Ileto and the Anti-Caciques

Unlike Salazar, Ileto does not explicitly promote ethnolinguistic binaries between “us” and “them.” One of the first among many Philippine historians trained in the Cornell Southeast Asia Studies program, he writes in English and deploys “Western” theoretical frameworks, having a special affinity for hermeneutics and Foucauldian genealogy. Ileto, more than Salazar, can be compared with the aforementioned Subaltern Studies collective because of his seminal *Pasyon and Revolution* (1979)—a classic known for resurfacing the millenarian and folk mentalities that informed the Philippine Revolution of 1896. The emerging narrative of the *Pasyon*, as Ileto (2011b, 166) himself notes, is a supplement to *The Revolt of the Masses*. Like Agoncillo, Ileto views the Philippine Revolution as an event driven by forces from below, with a fervor shaped by the frustrations of peasants and the urban proletariat. What distinguishes Ileto from Agoncillo (and even Salazar) is his deft treatment of popular culture, which he uses to reveal the inner motivations of subaltern revolutionaries. For Ileto, the *pasyon*—the life of Christ represented as a popular epic through song—is a key text that reveals the semiotic ties between folk mentality, religious millenarianism, and proletarian radicalism.

Like Salazar, Ileto is a product of Marcos-era leftwing nationalism. In 1971, while conducting fieldwork for his PhD dissertation, he claims he became immersed in study groups sympathetic to the Chinese Revolution (ibid., 115). Upon returning to the United States in 1972, his energies were increasingly directed to the anti-Marcos struggle. He notes in a short autobiographical chapter:

My enthusiasm for thesis work withered, however, in September of that year after President Marcos, with the encouragement of the

United States, declared martial law, jailed all the activists he could get hold of, and clamped down on criticism. I was, again, drawn to the protest movement, this time against Marcos' martial law, and by early 1973 was inclined to abandon my PhD studies in order to engage in full-time activism. (ibid., 116)

Ileto, of course, did not quit academia, finishing instead the dissertation that would eventually become *Pasyon*. Upon returning to the Philippines to teach history at the University of the Philippines, he developed close ties “with scholars who were attempting to indigenize Philippine history and anthropology, employing the use of the Filipino language in academic writing as the first stage in the process” (ibid., 118).¹¹ His relations with the indigenization movement led him, like Salazar, to participate in Marcos's *Tadhana* project. In his autobiographical notes, he justifies his involvement with the project by claiming that the nationalist historians working on the project were attempting to “decolonize history” in the tradition of Agoncillo (ibid., 119).

Unlike Salazar, however, Ileto has written critically about Philippine nationalism, and, while not discrediting those who have labeled him as such, Ileto (2012) feels constricted by the title “nationalist historian.” After Agoncillo criticized his work, Ileto began to question popular nationalist historiography, seeing it as a linear construction, and calling for “history that resists incorporation into the state's metanarrative” (2011b, 121). But Ileto would come to regret any generalizations he made about nationalist history during his various engagements with Western scholars, whom he felt unfairly passed off scholars like Agoncillo as “nationalists, activists, and polemicists” who were “not ‘real’ historians” (Ileto 2011a, 519). In retrospect, he admits he should have interrogated “the ways in which national(ist) histories were actually read and understood in schools and social movements. . .” (Ileto 2011b, 121). He now believes that *Revolt of the Masses* has been denied “its rightful place as a classic in Southeast Asian history” (Ileto 2011a, 519).

There have been numerous responses to *Pasyon and Revolution*. Scalice (2009), for instance, argues that it was the elites and not the masses who drew inspiration from the *pasyon* (although his analysis does not preclude the possibility of elite narratives filtering down to the masses). Guerrero (1981), in a narrow and positivist response that discounts the unquantifiable social impact of cultural texts, takes umbrage at the liberties Ileto took with

archival sources. Schumacher (1982), in perhaps the most powerful critique of *Pasyon*, demonstrates that the revolutionary narrative Ileto analyzes could have taken root only in the Tagalog region because of the geographically limited reach of the *pasyon*. These three works are methodological and empirical responses to *Pasyon and Revolution*. What has yet to be examined, however, is the overarching nationalist motif of Ileto's entire oeuvre.

Ileto's second book, *Filipinos and their Revolution* (1998), reveals more about his intellectual commitments than *Pasyon* because of its comparatively more ambitious scope. *Pasyon and Revolution's* ambit is delimited by the phenomenon it examines; it concerns the Philippine Revolution of 1896 and the popular texts that reflect its milieu. *Filipinos and their Revolution*, by contrast, consists of various case studies where Ileto attempts to apply his *pasyon/history-from-below* framework to other and more recent historical events. In one of the book's earlier chapters, he introduces the notion of an “underside” of Philippine history—“the thought-world” of the masses whom the elite considered “history-less” and “superstitious” (ibid., 31). He contends that this historical impulse influenced the proletarian reception of José Rizal during the Philippine Revolution (ibid., 73–74), informed the politics of millenarian popular movements in the 1920s and 1930s, and impinges on contemporary commemorations of the revolution (ibid., 239–51). The framework is a constant, applicable to multiple points in Philippine history. Thus what emerges is a transhistorical, almost primordial, lower-class mentality. As with Agoncillo, the energies of this lower class are what propel the movement of national history. And as with Salazar, the roots of this identity can be traced to broader patterns embedded in early Southeast Asian history (ibid., 77).

Although Ileto does not explicitly use the “existence” of an underclass mentality to justify state-building projects, this phenomenological constant is his equivalent of “*pantayo*,” his means of understanding Filipinos on their own terms. More importantly, to emphasize local tradition and to insist on its uniqueness relative to “external” forms of thinking is a mere step away from claiming that this tradition reflects essential characteristics of national identity. In fact, Salazar (1998b, 14) reads Ileto's work in this essentialist manner.

It is his primordialism that causes Ileto to reproduce some of Salazar's analytic lapses. Nowhere is this more evident than when Ileto analyzes the lower-class reaction to the death of former antidictatorship senator Benigno

Aquino in 1983—the event that triggered the massive protests that would ultimately lead to the downfall of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. He argues that the mourning Aquino’s death generated from the masses was part of a “rhythm of Philippine history”—the same rhythm that mobilized the masses in 1896 after the death of Rizal (Ileto 1998, 166). In the same way that Rizal’s death exposed the failure of “bad mother Spain” to fulfill its colonial pact of progress, Aquino’s assassination revealed the cleavages of Marcos’s authoritarian “New Society” (ibid., 172).

Originally written directly after Aquino’s death, the chapter does not discuss the bloodless People Power Revolution of 1986 that overthrew Marcos. At first glance, Ileto’s piece seems prophetic, especially when he concludes that the Aquino assassination unleashed a “tremendous amount of energy from below”—an energy that the elite would be hard-pressed to contain (ibid., 175). He envisages that if this anger of the masses—the same common *tao* of Agoncillo—could be harnessed to challenge the Philippine state, “it would constitute a significant advance for third world socialism, or (which is more likely) it would mean the old forms appearing in a new guise. . . .” (ibid., 176).

Ileto’s allusion to an advance in third-world socialism likely refers to the then burgeoning New People’s Army (NPA) of the CPP, which peaked in the mid- to late 1980s (Rutten 1996, 116). This impression is buttressed when Ileto (1998, 192–93) claims that Aquino’s death effectively fused the radicalism of the Maoists with the millenarian “other politics” of 1896. In examining Ninoy’s death in light of his “other politics” framework, however, Ileto admits that the fusion of radicalisms occurred through signifiers largely dominated by the elite. For instance, he notes that the powerful Catholic Church, through Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin, played a key role in the mythologizing of Aquino’s death (ibid., 199). Despite the clear influence of the elite on events, Ileto ignores that Aquino’s death was also—if not more—resonant with the middle class and business elite who began to mobilize against Marcos after the event. These same groups, notes Eva-Lotta Hedman (2006), would constitute the “dominant bloc” that would hijack the anti-Marcos movement to preserve the bourgeois state in the dictatorship’s aftermath. Such cleavages were already evident at the time. In 1983, a major feature in the popular anti-Marcos magazine, *Mr. & Ms.* (1983, 19), documented the rise of pro-Aquino mobilizations attended by society’s “well-heeled” in the business district of Makati. What distinguished the post-1983

protests from those of the 1970s was the increasing involvement of hitherto apolitical elites in the anti-Marcos struggle. What prevented Ileto from observing this shift in the political climate? What would explain his focus on millenarian radicalism—his primordial underside—amid the increased mobilization of the upper class?

Within Ileto’s cosmology, popular nationalism is the domain of subaltern classes—the heirs of his “other politics.” When this nationalism articulates with elite interests, it is of lesser import. This same attachment to the revolutionary potential of grassroots folk Catholicism has also precluded Ileto from engaging the dark side of millenarianism. For instance, while Ileto glorified the triumph of “other politics” in the final days of Marcos, various anticommunist vigilante sects—many of whom also drew inspiration from localized versions of Catholicism—were committing atrocious human rights violations in the countryside, a trend that intensified during Corazon Aquino’s administration (Kowalewski 1990). Like the Katipuneros of Ileto’s *Pasyon*, these groups blended nationalism (in their case, an anticommunist nationalism) with a syncretic Catholicism. The major difference was that, unlike the Katipunan fighters, the vigilantes were brutal murderers. Once again, the conflation of popular nationalism with progressive revolutionary politics creates problematic blind spots in the historical narrative.

Like Salazar, Ileto’s nationalism leads him to ignore class-based critiques of the nation. In an oft-cited essay called “Orientalism and the Study of Philippine Politics,” Ileto (2001) polemicizes against the “orientalism” of largely American works that document the historical domination of the Philippine state by oligarchs (*caciques*), warlords, and elite families. One such work is by one of his advisers at Cornell: Benedict Anderson’s (1988) seminal “Cacique Democracy in the Philippines” traced the historical origins of the national oligarchy, and examined its return in light of the 1986 People Power Revolution, illustrating the tenacity of the Philippine oligarchy despite changes in the structure of the national government. For Ileto (2001, 27), works such as Anderson’s mimic the logic of American imperialism, which “feudalized” Philippine society in order to justify colonial occupation. In presenting the Philippines as a society divided by class interests and dominated by a small oligarchy embedded in disjointed localities and fiefdoms, Ileto (ibid.) argues, the US government was able to justify its project of “benevolent assimilation.”

In response, McCoy (2009, 42) contends that it was unlikely for American imperialists to deploy orientalist frameworks, because they were not exposed to the dominant discourses of orientalism that emerged in key educational institutions. John Sidel's (2002, 134–35) response, moreover, notes that none of the works Iletto attacks use their criticism of Philippine society to glorify American style democracy or colonialism. On the contrary, he contends that scholars like McCoy have been critical of American empire (ibid, 135). In other words, one can accept the analysis of “orientalists” without becoming a pawn to US propaganda.

Indeed, in the sense that they are critiques of local oligarchs, warlords, and bosses, Anderson and other scholars' works have similarities with American colonial discourse. It is true that American colonizers used the presence of oligarchs to justify their intervention for the sake of the Filipino people. However, Iletto's critique does not state anything about the empirical validity of Anderson's data or that of other “orientalists” works. This lacuna raises questions about Iletto's method of criticism, because a work is not rendered inaccurate simply because it is rhetorically similar to imperial logic. Iletto (2001, 27) himself hints that his criticism does not discount the empirical validity of Anderson's work:

The problem is not so much that the saga of socio-political development presented by Anderson is a total misrepresentation, but that this narrative is derivative of the research produced by scholars I mentioned earlier [so-called “orientalist” American scholars writing about the Philippine elite like Alfred McCoy], and has its roots in colonial writing itself.

The sleight of hand occurs because Iletto does not state what a “total misrepresentation” would be. In other words, there is no discussion of veracity, no engagement with facts, simply an outline of discursive resonances. It is thus that Iletto sets up the nationalist binary of colonizer and colonized, while ignoring the violent politics within the latter category. Assuming that Anderson's work and those of scholars like McCoy are similar to imperial discourse, this similarity does not disprove the reality of the continued exploitation by elites of the masses documented rigorously in “Cacique Democracy” and other works that Iletto criticizes. If there is a local oligarchy and if this oligarchy entrenches class oppression in the country, would it

be correct to dismiss these harrowing realities simply because American colonizers detected them first? Does the imperial origin of the facts these studies present preclude validation from those embedded within everyday Philippine politics? I have previously argued, for example, that peasant workers in the Central Luzon plantation Hacienda Luisita implicitly identify with and replicate notions of rapacious families with particularistic interests (Claudio 2011, 137). Because these notions resonated with farm workers in Luisita, they served as their grammar of dissent. In this regard, “orientalist” analysis became part of grassroots thinking. Iletto disregards the profound impact of so-called orientalist discourse on activist movements that seek to challenge oligarchic democracy in the Philippines.¹²

Iletto himself has demonstrated that colonial discourse can have seeds of truth embedded in it. In a nationalist reinterpretation of Second-World-War-era Japanese colonialism, he argues that historians cannot “declare that all their [the Japanese] messages and letters to fellow Asian leaders were meaningless rhetoric,” since embedded in the logic of Japan's colonialism was a “recognition of common cause with Asians. . .” (Iletto 2007, 87). Why is it permissible to reread the Asianist fascism of imperial Japan in light of domestic nationalism, but unacceptable and “orientalist” to replicate the arguments of American colonial officers in light of verifiable evidence? The double standard is glaring.

If Iletto's criticism condemns imperial logic that conceived of the Philippines as divided and anarchic, one may assume that Iletto would have more sympathy for a unifying history of “the Philippines.” However, since Iletto does not outline an alternative project for Philippine historiography, one can only speculate as to what this project would be. In this respect, Salazar is more explicit. Similar to Iletto's works, Salazar's (1998a, 313) proposed pantayo field of study called “Pilipinolohiya” (Philipinology), which “aims at understanding Pilipinas from within,” is also critical of external perspectives that do not consider the mentality of Filipinos. As alluded to earlier, Salazar (1997, 39) also condemns knowledge produced in the service of colonialism, labeling these works as pansila (“for them”), and denying them any import in his historiographic universe. The PP approach to colonial knowledge, as such, is very similar to Iletto's, except that the former is bereft of references to “orientalism” or “the production of knowledge.” In their critiques of foreign scholarship, both Iletto and Salazar disqualify information on account of who produced it, and not on the basis of historical accuracy. Therefore,

as opposed to the common argument among PP practitioners that Iletto is “proto-Pantayo,” one may reverse the adage and claim that Salazar is “proto-Iletto.”

Conclusion

Historian Dipesh Chakrabarty (2010, 83), like other scholars associated with the Indian Subaltern Studies collective, celebrates the decline of “universal” European history and the democratization of historical practice that occurred in its wake. PP and Iletto’s history from below are assertions of perspectives from outside the ambit of empire, and are thus part of the challenge to Eurocentric history. Salazar’s constant insistence, for example, on speaking from a national *pook* (place) allows for the unearthing of hitherto unacknowledged subject-positions. Nationalist historiography is thus a means to interpret against the grain of colonial thought, against “orientalism” and other master narratives. It was necessary in a particular historical context. Chakrabarty argues, however, that the unearthing of subaltern histories is not enough, adding that the deconstructive tendency in postcolonial history needs to be balanced by a renewed concern for the truth. Of Indian historiography, he laments how it has been infused with a “spirit of partisanship,” precluding the historian’s ascetic relationship with truth—the self-denial that Leopold Von Ranke famously referred to as “extinguishing the self” (ibid., 81).

I do not read Chakrabarty’s return to Ranke as an injunction toward unreflexive positivism. On the contrary: the struggle to extinguish the self (one that can never really be achieved) is, in fact, a necessary act of reflexivity, a historian’s grappling with one’s own subjectivity. In the case of the scholars discussed, their unreflexive relationship with nationalism prevents them from engaging the class and regional cleavages of the Philippine nation.

It is, of course, unsurprising that many nationalist works emerged from the 1970s onward. The intellectual history I outlined in the first part of this article reveals the conditions of scholarship within the Philippines in which these historians wrote and continue to write. It is telling, for instance, that both Salazar and Iletto have both been affiliated with the University of the Philippines—an institution integral to the articulation of postwar leftwing nationalism (see Ordoñez 2008). Their interventions were naturally colored by the polarizations and debates within institutional contexts such as the UP, and further research should be done to situate intellectual history

within these contexts. Nonetheless, to assess the contribution of historians only through factors internal to Philippine historiography reproduces a key analytic misstep of nationalist historiography: that is, to assess everything that happens locally on “its own terms,” without the necessary task of comparing local phenomena with what occurs and has occurred outside. External criteria are also valid, and to ignore these is a form of methodological nationalism. For while local historians may have operated in contexts where nationalism is a given, external critiques of nationalism from scholars like Hobsbawm and Chatterjee reveal key fissures in nationalism that progressive historians must attend to, especially when these fissures, as shown above, occlude the reality of class oppression.

The historian’s goal must be to swing the pendulum between individual perspective and empirical reality, acknowledging that, epistemological hurdles notwithstanding, there are observable facts and truths that require unearthing. Instead of Salazar acknowledging the rapaciousness of Western Visayan and Muslim Mindanao elites, he conjures away the cleavage for the sake of unity. Instead of Iletto confronting the facts about oligarchic democracy—the very structure that retards the emancipation of the country’s poor—he passes these off as products of “orientalist” thought. And yet these realities about the Philippine nation are those confronted by many on the ground, by the very masses that contemporary nationalist historiography has sought to represent. Their tales of oppression, whether or not one is able to refract these through the lens of the nation, require telling. A fractured national body requires equally fractured and localized histories.

Notes

This work benefitted from critical feedback by Jojo Abinales, Carol Hau, Jun Aguilar, Nicole Cui-Unjieng, and three anonymous readers. All mistakes and opinions, however, are my own.

- 1 Yet, the work of Filomeno Aguilar (2005) on Filipino nationalist *ilustrados* shows otherwise: these acts of love did not preclude racism, or, at the very least, the articulation of nationalism with Eurocentric race theory. Also in response to Anderson, Balibar (1991, 44) contends that, even in cases where postcolonial nationalism does not create “counter-racisms,” there are still racisms directed at other postcolonial nations and internal racisms directed at minorities.
- 2 A related phenomenon that places into question the integrity of the nation-state is the deterritorialization of the national body through the increase of labor migration. For lack of

space, the topic is outside the ambit of this essay. Refer to Hau (2011, 27–34) for an analysis of the phenomenon.

- 3 See the work of Edward Aspinall and Mark T. Berger (2001), which examines the fissures of the Indonesian state amid the colonial policies of Jakarta.
- 4 Abinales (2001) has explored the various CPP debates about the nature of feudalism in the Philippines and the country's mode of production.
- 5 The work of Weekley is also notable for its engagement with Hobsbawm's analysis of nationalism.
- 6 For a different take on a "new propaganda movement" that emerged in the early 1950s, see Ileteo 2010. Note that Sison's appropriation of "new propaganda movement" is self-referential unlike Ileteo's.
- 7 In the family memoirs of the Quimpo siblings (most of whom were anti-Marcos activists), David Ryan Quimpo, who led international propaganda efforts for the CPP's National Democratic Front in France narrates the mutual suspicion between Soviet-aligned communist parties and the CPP. To its disadvantage, the CPP leadership maintained an international line that condemned "soviet social imperialism" (Quimpo 2012, 408).
- 8 See Walden Bello's (2007) introduction of Ho Chi Minh's essays for an analysis of the fusion of communism and nationalism in Ho's thinking.
- 9 Salazar's anti-Americanism is certainly buttressed by the fact that, in contrast to the generation of Southeast Asianists that followed him, he was educated in France. As Judt (1992, 187–204) illustrates, anti-Americanism, along with Russophilia, were dominant intellectual tropes in postwar France.
- 10 This is not inaccurate; Aguilar (2005), for example, has documented how Rizal and his comrades, while in Europe, adopted race theories of the time to distinguish themselves from "lesser" races in the Philippines like the Negritos and Igorots. Their nationalist rhetoric, while validating their cause, simultaneously distanced them from these "lower races," thus reproducing the Western race theory of the time.
- 11 Although he does not mention Salazar explicitly, there is no doubt that Ileteo is referring to him.
- 12 As a member of the center-Left Akbayan Citizen's Action Party, I also noted how significantly this literature trickled down to discussions in local communities and how community organizers found this literature helpful in explaining the fundamental ills of Philippine society and politics. However, the diffusion of intellectual ideas to peasant communities admittedly requires systematic tracking and rigorous analysis.

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