

philippine studies: historical and ethnographic viewpoints

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

Book Reviews

Oona Paredes

A Mountain of Difference:

The Lumad in Early Colonial Mindanao

Mark Dizon

Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints

vol. 62 no. 2 (2014): 293–96

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies.soss@ateneo.edu.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>

propagating the idea that oceans are an abstract quantity of distance and time, thus obscuring the social relations that happen at sea. Furthermore, the seafarers are treated as spectators instead of active participants in the maritime enterprise, Filipino identity formation, and nation building.

The material reality of the maritime industry, nonetheless, is beset by conditions that breed subversion, which Fajardo brings forth in and through the narratives. One of the strong points of the book lies in the accounts of the author and the seafarers that disclose personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences. These serve as a counterdiscourse to the states' and corporations' prevalent, and at times erroneous, representation of seafarers. By foregrounding the multifaceted discourses in globalized maritime and gender studies, the author succeeds in interrogating beliefs regarding history, culture, and gender that privilege particular representations and constructs.

The study clearly delimits its scope, and perhaps the subsequent discussions may not be within range; however, "oppositional masculinities" may also include more upfront contestations against injustices like genuine unionism and labor strikes. I believe that these actions fall within the spectrum of masculinities that denounces colonial, capitalist, racist, misogynistic, heteropatriarchal, and heteronormative masculinities, even if they are traditionally depicted as solely political and "male." I also believe that, by the "feminine" asserting himself or herself in various ways, she or he may also be able to liberate identities and discourses. For so long as discourses and movements challenge conformity and passivity, they can be regarded as nonconventional and nonnormative.

The cultural critique that Fajardo employs can be expanded in future research to include how critical assessments translate to the actual transformation of unequal political, economic, and cultural systems in global capitalism. It will be relevant, for instance, to do an in-depth study on the concept of tomboy-ness as "pagkalalaki" or manhood and its role in the current neoliberal system. Hopefully, his call for dialogue and debate leads to a richer exchange in gender and maritime scholarship. In conclusion, *Filipino Crosscurrents* may be one of the first erudite publications on seafaring and heterogeneous masculinities in the Philippines and a significant contribution to the existing literature on maritime and gender studies.

Joanne V. Manzano

Departamento ng Filipino at Panitikan ng Pilipinas
University of the Philippines
<jvmanzano@upd.edu.ph>

OONA PAREDES

A Mountain of Difference: The Lumad in Early Colonial Mindanao

Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 2013. 195 pages.

It is no secret that Philippine history tends to be Manila- or Tagalog-centric and relegates other regions such as Mindanao to a peripheral position in the national narrative. Among the various groups in peripheral Mindanao, Muslims gain the most attention in historical studies. If Muslims of Mindanao occupy a footnote in traditional Philippine history, the Lumad or indigenous peoples of Mindanao are the footnote to the footnote. The Lumad groups enter Philippine history only with the arrival of the Jesuits in 1859, because the former are usually portrayed as previously living in ahistorical isolation from the rest of the world. Oona Paredes tries to redress this neglect by showing the agency of the different Lumad groups in their contacts with Spaniards ever since the early seventeenth century. One reason for the ahistorical portrayal of the Lumad prior to 1859 is the overreliance on Jesuit sources that typically downplay the role played by the Recollects in northern and eastern Mindanao in the earlier centuries. The ace up Paredes's sleeve is her access to the Recollect archives, which are notorious for being closed to outside researchers. Thankfully Paredes does not let the opportunity go to waste by extracting as much anthropological insight from the interactions between Lumad groups and the Recollects from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century.

Unlike most historical works, the book does not attempt to convey a single narrative with a unified start, middle, and end. The author chooses particular episodes in Lumad history from different ethnic groups and time periods, and analyzes each of them in the light of current anthropological theories on Southeast Asians. While the first few chapters are dedicated to the theoretical framework and the historical context of Spanish colonialism and evangelization, the succeeding chapters discuss distinct case studies, such as the Kagayanon conversion in the 1620s; the Caraga revolt in 1631; three separate petitions in 1722, 1838, and 1839 when Lumad datus requested Spanish presence in their settlements; and the Lumad's appropriation of Spanish colonial symbols of power, such as the golden cane and military titles. What ties these disparate chapters together is Paredes's overall attempt to explore the "curious relationship" (21) between the Lumad groups and the Recollect missionaries.

In her attempt to put the Lumad in their proper place in Philippine history, Paredes turns history on its head. Lumad groups are usually associated with the uplands or mountains, but they have settlements in lowland areas and they also move about. The misinterpretation of the Spanish word *monte* is part of the problem because, as Paredes notes, the term can also refer to any forested, uncultivated area. This is just one of the many pinpoint observations made in the book that disprove the supposed geographical isolation of the Lumad in history. In Philippine history, Lumad groups are portrayed as lying outside the ambit of Spanish colonial rule. However, Paredes points out that colonial-era contacts with Spaniards, especially Recollects, shaped Lumad politics, culture, and history. What are normally considered indigenous Lumad traditions have their roots in the Lumad colonial experience and not in a prehispanic past. The golden cane, a traditional symbol of political authority among the Lumad in northern Mindanao, can be traced to the Spanish colonial practice of gifting indigenous leaders with canes of office. This willingness to constantly “harmonize” foreign with local traditions showcases a Southeast Asian notion of modernity present among the Lumad. In effect, Paredes crafts a history of the colonial Philippines where the Lumad are taken out of their supposed peripheral isolation and put in their rightful place as active participants of the colonial experience.

At the other end of the colonial relationship one finds the Recollect missionaries. Unlike traditional national histories that emphasize the abuses of Spanish friars and the exploitative nature of Christian conversion, Paredes explores the humility exhibited by Recollect missionaries and the strength of their social bonds with Lumad converts. The Recollects’ audacity to enter their mission fields alone and unarmed is attributed by these missionaries to their *santo celo* or inspired spiritual state. From the Lumad converts’ perspective, this audacity is associated with the missionaries’ individual prowess. This interpretation reconciles the hagiographic content of friar chronicles and Southeast Asian notions of men of prowess. In the spectrum of possible colonial relationships ranging from total subjugation to total resistance, Paredes chooses a middle ground of accommodation on the part of both Recollects and Lumads.

Not wanting to speculate too much on the personal reasons for conversion, Paredes cites wider societal factors as important elements in the conversion process. The conversion to Christianity and the decline in revenge raiding went hand in hand. Common social norms led to the creation of a

new Christian identity that shifted alliances among different Lumad groups that were united as blood brothers, sometimes in opposition to the Muslim Magindanaw sultanate. At the societal level, conversion to Christianity was tied to the question of alliance and warfare. Military successes in the region singled out the Spaniards as good potential allies of Lumad groups like the Kagayanon who wanted independence from the Magindanaw sultanate. In contrast, Recollect missionaries found it more difficult to convert people in Karaga who had stronger ties with the Magindanaw. This type of argument that places emphasis on indigenous notions of military prowess is not new, but Paredes puts a twist in her interpretation. When Sultan Kudarat of Magindanaw ordered the Kagayanons to kill the Spanish missionaries, the Kagayanons refused to do so based on their fondness for the Recollects. Although military prowess contributed to decisions of welcoming the Spaniards and their religion, what drove the Kagayanons to defend the Recollects in the face of the strong opposition from the Magindanaw sultanate were neither military motives nor the presence of Spanish troops, but rather the strong bonds and their tight allegiance to the Spanish missionaries. Their initial decision to oppose Kudarat did not make sense militarily, but it did so socially.

While most studies of the colonial encounter have followed the template of Spanish action followed by indigenous reaction, which renders natives as passive recipients of colonialism and Christianity, Paredes flips the pattern and cites three instances when Lumad datus willingly asked for Spanish colonial rule and the Spaniards accommodated Lumad demands and concepts. Some Lumad datus requested for Spanish colonial authority because of the endemic armed conflicts in their settlements. Paredes views this phenomenon as a typical Southeast Asian strategy of resorting to outsiders as detached third-party mediators in local factionalism. However, the Lumad requests had conditions attached to them, such as exemption from tribute and compulsory labor. Ironically, according to Paredes, the Spaniards had to accede to these demands because of the weakness of Spanish colonial power in northern and eastern Mindanao. Typical colonial power relations where the Spanish Crown imposed itself on the subjugated indigenes were reversed in the case of colonial Mindanao, where Lumad datus had the upper hand because the Spaniards needed Lumad assistance in fighting the Moros. In Spanish documents, the use of the word *sacup* (alliance group) also shows how colonial encounters were not one-sided affairs: the Lumad were not the

only ones affected by the colonial experience; the Spaniards, too, participated in indigenous notions of alliances.

Strong anthropological grounding has enabled Paredes to avoid the common pitfalls in the portrayal of indigenous communities in history. The reader is offered a dynamic picture of Lumad groups as active stakeholders in Spanish colonialism. No participant in colonialism is portrayed as a passive actor, whether Lumad or Spaniard. However, there are a few minor issues. First, while scholars are free to use the periodization that suits their study, Paredes's timeframe for "early colonial Mindanao" is unique, and the reader is left guessing as to what this phrase means until the second chapter; this late explanation is a bit remiss (39). Second, Lapu-Lapu supposedly killed Magellan (18), which is historically inaccurate. Third, Paredes's portrayal of Spanish colonialism in the Americas as a story of total annihilation is still based on the Black Legend. Fourth, by primarily emphasizing Lumad–Recollect relationships, the author sidesteps the crucial role of native mediation common in colonial encounters, although the historical sources themselves might have been the limiting factor. Fifth, Paredes interprets major concessions like tribute exemptions given to Lumad converts as a clear sign of Spanish colonial weakness in Mindanao (135, 144), but similar concessions were given to many *indios*, including those who worked on the friar estates at the very heart of Spanish colonial power in the Philippines.

Paredes considers many of her findings to be "suprising data" (150) specific to the Lumad when they are most likely the common pattern in Spanish colonialism. This expression of surprise is perhaps a reflection of the state of popular historiography, which tends to downplay these observations. Paredes shows a clear direction for colonial studies of the Philippines that is based on innovative anthropological and ethnographic analysis. Scholars following in the same path will likely show that her findings are not surprising at all but actually the norm prevailing during the colonial period. Spanish colonial rule might simply be local alliance formation not only in early colonial Mindanao but also in the rest of the colonial Philippines.

Mark Dizon

Department of History
Ateneo de Manila University
<mdizon@ateneo.edu>