Imaginable as Other: The Representation of Muslims in Zaide and Zaide's *Philippine History and Government* and Agoncillo's *History of the Filipino People*

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Abstract

This paper looks at the tendency of Filipino national histories to represent Filipino Muslims as Other, rather depicting them as constituent members of the nation. These narratives help to perpetuate the cultural misunderstandings that characterize Christian-Muslim relations and they ultimately postpone the meaningful integration of Muslims into the body politic. I demonstrate how two archetypical examples of the genre: Zaide and Zaide's *Philippine History and Government* and Agoncillo's *History of the Filipino People*, misrepresent, downplay, or at points even denigrate Moro contributions to national history. My hope is that by rendering visible the problematic representations of Muslim Filipinos, we can begin the process of revising Filipino history so that it is more inclusive and appreciative of all of its minority and marginalized groups.

Keywords: other, other Filipino, Filipino Muslims, marginalized, Moro

Samuel Tan's *The Filipino-American War, 1899-1913* is a resplendently ironic work. His intention was to write the anti-colonial resistance of Muslims into the narrative of the nation, or as he puts it, "to give the 'other Filipino' the important place they [*sic*] deserve in Filipino revolutionary history."[1] Previous histories of the war focused mainly on events in and around Manila, a trend that had continued until fairly

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> Forgetting, and I would even say historical error, is an essential factor in the creation of a nation, and it is such that the progress of historical studies often poses a danger for nationality. Historical research, in effect, shines light on the acts of violence that are at the origin of all political formations, even of those whose consequences have been the most beneficial... The essence of a nation is that all its individuals have many things in common, and that they also forget many things.
>
> Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?"[2]

recently.[3] To write a history of the war's effects on the southern third of the country (Mindanao, Sulu, and surrounding islands), where the majority of Muslims resided at century's turn, such as Tan intended would thus fill significant gaps in historical knowledge. More urgently, such a work could potentially highlight the common history of the archipelago's various peoples, thereby breaking down, in a small way, the divisive boundaries of religious and cultural difference that at times balkanize the Philppines. Yet this is not what Tan accomplishes. Rather than conjoin Christian and Muslim struggles, he perpetuates the dividing line between them. He notes, for instance, that while there were no pitched battles in Mindanao from 1906 to 1912, there was "a series of independent and isolated incidents of piracies, brigandage, and personal violence."[4] This characterization might be unremarkable, would Tan not have referred to similar acts which took place in Luzon, perpetrated by Christian Filipinos, as "defiance," "resistance," "guerilla," and

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[1] Samuel K. Tan, *The Filipino-American War, 1899-1913* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2002), xiv-xv.

[2] Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?" (Paper presented at the Sorbonne, Paris, France, March 11, 1882), in La Bibliothèque Electronique de Lisieux, http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/bib_lisieux/nation01.htm (accessed December 22, 2007). My translation.

[3] See, e.g. Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *Malolos: The Crisis of the Republic*, rev. ed. (Quezon City: University of Philippines Press, 1997). Recent works have looked at the war's effects on different regions. See William Henry Scott, *Ilocano Responses to American Aggression, 1900-1901* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1986); Glenn Anthony May, *Battle for Batangas: A Philippine Province at War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Resil B. Mojares, *War Against the Americans: Resistance and Collaboration in Cebu, 1899-1906* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2005).

[4] Tan, *Filipino-American War*, 176.

"revolutionary activities."[5] He identifies what is essentially the same series of acts by two sets of terms: one pejorative, the other neutral, even romantic. *The Filipino-American War* shows that Christians and Muslims participated equally in the libratory struggle against the American invaders. They were not, however, equal participants.

Tan's account provides a familiar view into how Muslims have figured into the writing of Philippine national history. Even though he writes more sympathetically than most, he cannot but imagine Muslims as a separate people. His work serves as yet another example about how perceptions of Muslims as "infidels," "pirates," and slave raiders that originated from the Spanish colonial period (1521-1898) still inform perceptions about by the them today among the majority lowland Christian population.[6] *The Filipino-American War* is exceptional, however, in that it explicitly attempts to appreciate the historical agency of Muslims as anti-colonial warriors who fought in the service of the Filipino nation. The majority of post-World War II national histories, by contrast, are less conscientious.

In this paper, I will chart the representations of Filipino Muslims, commonly referred to as *Moros* (originally the Spanish term for Muslims throughout the empire), from national/ist histories. The twentieth century historiography of the nation that marginalizes Muslims is vast. To fully account for this pervasive bias in the innumerable works in which it is produced would require the consultation of literally hundreds of works. For the purposes of brevity, therefore, I will focus on two exemplars par excellence of this literature. The first, *Philippine History and Government*, 5th ed., is a high school primer penned in its earlier editions by Gregorio Zaide, perhaps the most prolific Filipino historian of the twentieth century, with newer editions being written by his daughter.[7] The second, Teodoro Agoncillo's *History of the Filipino People*, 8th ed., is *the* standard nationalist work.[8] Although the most recent edition is over two decades old, it is likely still the mostly widely-read Filipino history

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[5] Ibid., 92, 93.

[6] The standard work on Muslims during the Spanish era is Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, rev. ed. (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1999).

[7] Gregorio F. Zaide and Sonia M. Zaide, *Philippine History and Government*, 5th ed. (Quezon City: All-Nations Publishing, 2002).

[8] Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 8th ed. (Quezon City: Garotech Publishing, 1990).

textbook throughout the globe. My principal aim will be to show how the often subtle omission of Muslim historical achievements from these works effectively writes them out of the history of the nation and thus compels readers to imagine them as Other. I contend that because of this erasure such histories, rather than inculcate a broad national citizenry that transcends religious difference, as truly national histories should do, in fact reproduce the structures of religious difference, and call upon readers to imagine Filipino Muslims as something Other than Filipino.

Muslims are of course not the only Filipino group that is excluded from national histories—the Chinese, Indians, the numerous and distinct "cultural minorities" are typically mentioned only in passing if they are mentioned at all. The marginalization of Filipino Muslims from national histories is, however, a particularly salient problem because of the decades of strife that have been fought along religious lines. Writing Muslims out of our history—or perhaps not bothering to write them in—serves to aggravate sectarian tensions and ultimately postpones the eventual resolution of the dischord in Mindanao. A more complete history of the Philippines would deal fairly with all marginalized groups. It would be at that point that one could speak of a truly *national* history, one that treats all members of the nation as equal participants. Here, however, I will deal only with the issue as it pertains to Filipino Muslims.

Indeed the problem of the Christian-Muslim encounter—let us stray from the deterministic word "conflict" lest our scholarship reproduce the terms of irreconcilability[9]—that lies at the heart of Muslim marginality. A fundamental problem that underlays the writing of Filipino histories is that contemporary political issue of Moro separatism informs the national discourse about Muslims. Muslim separatism in the Philippines, which is generally said to have begun in March 1968, when Christian officers in the Army murdered anywhere from a dozen to as many as two hundred of their Muslim counterparts near Corregidor Island in what has become known as the Jabidah Massacre, became a serious national issue in the late 1960s.[10] Then President Marcos's attempts to resolve the conflict met with limited success, as would most

[9] I thank Ziad Aburish for impressing upon me the importance of such terminology.

[10] Cesar Adib Majul, *The Contemporary Muslim Movement in the Philippines* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1985), chap. 4.

attempts by his successors.[11] There is at present no satisfactory historical treatment of the now more than forty-year long affair. Muslim separatism has since become a major feature of Philippine politics and will remain one until a sustainable peace is achieved. In ways that have yet to be fully appreciated and measured, it informs popular thinking about Filipino Muslims today, and it almost always results in them being cast in negative light. Neither the Zaides nor Agoncillo deal squarely with this particular problem, as for instance Tan does in a less direct way, and it would perhaps be asking too much of them to expect that they did. The complicated issues this problem raises go beyond the scope of this paper, and thus, I can do no more than introduce it here.

Constructing a National Christian Community

Like high school textbooks throughout the contemporary world, the dual purpose of Zaide and Zaide's *Philippine History and Government* is to instill democratic values in the country's youth by charting the nation's history and explaining how governmental institutions function. The historical section of the book comprises the first three quarters of the text while the rest is devoted to civic institutions. Perhaps because it was written to rally people behind the idea of the Philippine nation, its view of the past is uncritical in many respects. Some of the history it provides is simply out of date. For instance, Zaide and Zaide reproduce the discredited "wave migration" theory, which posited that the archipelago became populated by successively "superior" groups (a notion that resonated with the American imperialists for obvious reasons), as a possible explanation of the archipelago's settlement.[12] The text is far too charitable in its view of Philippine politicians. In its discussion of the first six postwar presidential administrations, for instance, the word "corruption" is only found once, in reference to President Magsaysay's (r. 1953-1957) firing of "corrupt and lazy government officials."[13] One would

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[11] A brief overview is provided in Marites Dañguilan Vitug and Glenda M. Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao* (Quezon City: Ateneo Center for Social Policy & Public Affairs, 2000).

[12] Zaide and Zaide, *Philippine History and Government*, chap. 3. The evidence disproving this theory can be found in William Henry Scott, *Prehispanic Source Materials for the Study of Philippine History*, rev. ed. (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1984[1968]), 31-32, 143-144.

[13] *Ibid.*, 161-165. Magsaysay's vice president, Carlos Garcia, finished out Magsaysay's term, was then elected for a single four-year term (1957-61), and then lost his bid for reelection in part

naturally expect to find some errors of fact and interpretation in any historical work; let s/he who has written the immaculate text cast the first stone. What is significant about the errors in this case, however, is that they are symptomatic of the authors' tendency to disfavor historical accuracy in favor of a more nationalistic narrative of a particular sort. This text is designed to be a handbook of the imagined community of Filipinos. They are not an earthbound group.

A broad, generally nondenominational Christian theology suffuses nearly every chapter of the book. The authors' stated intent is made quite explicit in the book's preface, for it was written for "the goodness of the Lord to this nation."[14] Further reading demonstrates that this is not just a personal statement of faith; it is also an epistemological lens through which the Zaides read history. In chapter three there is a "Chart on the Origin of the Filipinos," that lists three broadly possible routes: creation by God, through the "human theory of evolution" or explanations posited by indigenous "legends of fairytales."[15] The authors make clear which explanation they favor.

> We will study about all these three explanations about the origin of our ancestors... Scientists do not believe in the story of God's creation as told in the Holy Bible. Instead, they have invented the theory of 'evolution,' or the story of how the first man came from apelike creatures who walked the face of the earth thousands of years ago... As Christians, however, we do not believe that man evolved from apelike creatures. Instead, we believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, because God loved us.[16]

The book's Christian religious content is thus scarcely concealed. How the Philippines' non-Christians might interpret these claims is difficult to

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because of charges of corruption. The man who defeated him in the election, Diosdado Macapagal (1961-65), lost his bid for a second term for the same reason. Ferdinand Marcos, Macapagal's successor, became the first Philippine president to be elected to two consecutive terms. The two term limit set forth in the 1946 Constitution mattered little to Marcos. He declared martial law on September 21, 1972. He held on to the reins of power as long as he could, until he was ultimately ousted by the "People Power" revolution of 1986. See Patricio N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), chaps 7-8.

[14] Zaide and Zaide, *Philippine History and Government*, second unnumbered page following title page.

[15] *Ibid.*, 31.

[16] *Ibid.*, 30.

gauge. Their exteriority to the Filipino nation as a result of their practice of a different faith, or none at all, is made nonetheless clear. The authors' religiosity clearly informs their interpretation of the past, and it often produces surprising effects.

Filipinos today venerate a generation of nationalists, called *ilustrados*, of whom the polymath novelist Jose Rizal (1861-1896) is the best example, who were inspired broadly by European Liberalism.[17] Anticlericalism, in particular, resonated with this group because it provided a powerful ideological weapon with which they could combat the Spanish religious orders that largely carried on the matters of governance the colonial state.[18] If it can be said that their writings had only one overarching theme, it would be that the friars were responsible for everything calamitous that ever happened to the Philippines.[19] Exactly how this group's activities in the last quarter of the nineteenth century directly or indirectly led to the revolution that broke out in 1896 is a longer story than can be recounted here.[20] Two related points are nonetheless worth mentioning. First, the religious orders in the Philippines came to be seen as villains by the country's nationalist vanguard by the last few decades of the century. They were, for instance, depicted as murderous, lustful, ignorant, covetous, gluttonous—anything but virtuous—men in Rizal's *Noli me tangere* (1887). Second, whatever its causes and course, the 1896 revolution, inspired in part by the activities of the Ilustrados, was an inexorably anti-Spanish affair: revolutionaries sought to villify and literally exterminate the Spanish presence in the Philippines. Ilustrado antipathy towards the friars and anti-Spanish sentiment amongst mestizos are in fact familiar themes in Philippine

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[17] The classic account of this generation remains John Schumacher, S.J., *The Propaganda Movement, 1880-1895: The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness, The Making of the Revolution*, rev. ed. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000[1997]).

[18] Cesar Adib Majul, "Anticlericalism during the Reform Movement and the Philippine Revolution" in Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *Studies in Philippine Church History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), pp. 152-171.

[19] See Rizal's two canonical novels, *Noli Me Tangere*, trans. Harold Augenbraum (New York: Penguin, 2006[1887]) and *El Filibusterismo*, trans. Ma. Soledad Lacson-Locsin (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007[1892]); see also Marcelo H. del Pilar, *Frailocracy in the Philippines*, trans. Leonor Agrava (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1979[1889]).

[20] See Onofre D. Corpuz, *Saga and Triumph: The Filipino Revolution against Spain* (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1999).

histories.[21] Yet these two themes are largely absent from *Philippine History and Government*.

Filipino nationalists, American imperialists, and many historians have emphasized the ruinous effects—often unfairly—of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines. Zaide and Zaide, by contrast, look upon the country's Spanish past with unapologetic gratitude, noting that "The Philippines could not avoid being a colony because the European powers were building their empires by grabbing colonies in other continents. *Fortunately*, we fell to the Spaniards who brought Christianity to us."[22] It is not often that one sees a colonized people lavish their conquerors with such effusive praise. Whereas a secular nationalist would have emphasized native resistance, Spanish misrule, the ruinous upheaval caused by colonization, etc., the Zaides remark curtly that the process of conquest and colonization (which was more complex, uneven and centuries-long than depicted), simply happened because it was inevitable, and that, in any event, it was a fortuitous event for the Filipinos, with the implicit contrast being drawn with other colonized Asians. More than three hundred years (1560s-1898) of Spanish rule, whatever its character, is memorialized here as a single foundational moment. This claim is put forth in the service of engendering a society that is both Christian and Filipino. Whether terrestrial or celestial, it would leave little space for nonbelievers.

Zaide and Zaide's first mention of Muslims takes place in chapter two (titled "Social Environment"), in a discussion of the country's religious composition, under the factually incorrect heading "The Only Christian Nation in Asia." The passage in which they appear is worth quoting at length because it is emblematic of the way that the text as a whole deals with Muslims.

> The Philippines is the only Christian nation in Asia. About 93% of the people are Christians – 83% are Catholics, 7.6% are Aglipayans, 2.3% are Protestants and other sects.
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> Catholicism was Spain's greatest legacy to the Philippines. The Americans introduced western Protestant Sects (Episcopalian, Baptist, Methodist, Seventh-Day Adventists.)

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[21] Cf. Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, chaps. 6-10 and Renato Constantino, *A Past Revisited. Volume I: Pre-Spanish-1941* (Manila: published by the author, 2002[1975]), chaps. 7-10.

[22] Zaide and Zaide, *Philippine History and Government*, 62. Emphasis added.

> The Aglipay Church or Philippine Independent Church is a unique Filipino Protestant sect, founded by Isabelo de los Reyes in 1902, with Gregorio L. Aglipay as its first Bishop. It resulted from the 19th century desire for freedom and reform. Today it has some 1.43 million adherents.
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> A spiritual revival in the country has been propagated by the translation and wide use of the Bible in native languages. Bible study groups, charismatic evangelical groups and prayer meetings have become a popular feature of many communities.
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> The Iglesia ni Kristo, founded by Felix Y. Manalo in 1914 is a Philippine sect with members both in the country and abroad. It has 475,000 members.
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> Islam, with 1.6 million followers, is the country's second largest religion.
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> Pagan religions followed by tribal minorities (such as ancestor and nature worship), account for a very small minority of the religions (0.03%.) Buddhism (0.002%) and Shintoism (0.008%) are followed by Chinese and Japanese communities. There are also local communities that have special cults (e.g. the Iglesia Watawat ng Lahi which worships Jose Rizal) or practice faith healing rituals.[23]

Zaide and Zaide do not characterize the Philippines as a "multi-religious" or something like a "spiritually diverse" country, but rather explicitly state that it is a "Christian nation," *the* premiere Christian nation in Asia to wit. Much space is devoted to listing the varieties of Catholic, Protestant, and homegrown Christian sects, and in the cases of the Philippine Independent Church and the Iglesia ni Kristo, they, authors even say something about their origins. The absolute least amount of space possible is devoted to Muslims, who are blithely mentioned as being physically present in the Philippines. Nothing further is said about them. It is also noteworthy that Christian revivalism is discussed—and in a mildly appreciative tone—and its Islamic equivalent is not. Islam in the Philippines too has been evolving amidst the challenges posed by modernity much in the same way every faith across the world has.[24] By highlighting the dynamic nature of Filipino Christianities and not doing the same with Islam, Zaide and Zaide create the impression that the latter is a moribund faith; it is something that is unworthy of

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[23] Ibid., 23.

[24] Patricia Horvatich, "The Ahmadiyya Movement in Simunul: Islamic Reform in ONe Remote and Unlikely Place," in Robert W. Hefner and Patricai Horvatich, eds., *Islam in an Era of Nation-States: Politics and Religious Renewal in Muslim Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 1997), pp. 207-230.

consideration for the majority non-Muslim Filipinos and unappreciative to say the least to Muslim Filipinos. These are subtle and perhaps even unconscious moves on the part of the authors. They constitute the first pen strokes that create a dividing line that will separate those inside and outside of the nation.

Historians of the Philippines have not yet figured out how to treat the history of the Muslim populations in the Spanish period, other than to say that Muslims largely evaded colonial subjugation. They say little of substance about their material, cultural or spiritual life. Sulu and most of Mindanao are treated as if they were separate entities entirely, as if they were oceans apart, in spite of the broad cultural commonalities that the peoples of the archipelago shared.[25] Because this division is assumed to exist, a number of basic historical issues are left unexplained. How similar or different was the culture of these areas compared to that of the Christianized populations? How and when did it change? To what extent did Spanish colonization disrupt local trading patterns? What role did religion and religious difference play unifying or dividing people?

Zaide and Zaide not only reproduce this divide between the Philippine Christian core and Muslim wilderness, they construct a nation against it. They project into the Spanish period an embryonic Filipino people that is gradually into being within the colonial framework, a group that is, unsurprisingly, engendered by its Christian faith. Religious affiliation alone thus determines membership, and Muslims and animists are therefore, excluded. This dichotomy is brought into relief by the authors' discussion of the various campaigns the colonial government waged against the Muslim groups in the south, a series of events commonly referred in Philippine historiography as the "Moro Wars."[26]

> The word 'Moro' in Spanish means a Muslim. The Filipino Moros in Mindanao and Sulu were not conquered by Spain. Many times the Moros were defeated in battles, but they won the war in the end.
>
> Out of loyalty to Spain and the Cross, the Christian Filipinos from Luzon and the Visayas fought against the Filipino Moros from those wars. Thousands of Christian Filipinos died in battle. They served as soldiers or as seamen in all the Spanish expeditions against the Moros.[27]

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[25] See the magnum opus, William Henry Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Univ. Press, 1994).

[26] See Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, chaps. 4-8.

[27] Zaide and Zaide, *Philippine History and Government*, 75.

It is revealing that the authors memorialize the "Thousands of Christian Filipinos [who] died in battle" but do not similarly mention the killing of any Muslims. Nor do they show any concern for their violent death. They go on to describe some of the heroes of these wars, first the Christian and then the Muslim ones. In between those two sections, however, there is a passage depicting the inhumanity of the Muslims:

> In retaliation for these Spanish attacks, the Filipino Moros raided the coastal towns of the other islands as far north as Ilocos. They burned churches, killed the Christians, and took slaves whom they sold in slave markets of Celebes, Malacca, and Djakarta.[28]

How horrific indeed! Yet Zaide and Zaide oversimplify the past. Slave raiding has its particular history in Southeast Asia and within the Philippines, a history that—as far as we can tell based on the available primary materials—reaches back into history before the arrival of the Spanish in the sixteenth century and even Islam in the fourteenth century.[29] Unconcerned with the political, economic, social, or psychological dimensions of slave raiding, Zaide and Zaide see fit to depict it as an exclusively Moro undertaking, which implies that it was Islamic religion or culture that had propeled human brigandage. A more accurate assessment would note that slave raiding continued in areas that were primarily Islamic because among the Spanish had put a stop to it in the areas they controlled—mostly—areas in which they also converted the people to Christianity. Presumably, Visayans, who were at the moment of Spanish arrival not yet converted to Islam, would have continued slave raiding as they had had it not been for the Spanish. And while the cultural dimensions cannot be overlooked, slave raiding must be seen as being primarily economic in its motivations, hence its increase in the

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[28] Ibid.

[29] The best sources on this phenomenon as it ocurred in the Philippines remain James Francis Warren's "triptych," *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: National University of Singapore, 2007[1981]); *The Sulu Zone: The World Capitalist Economy and the Historical Imagination* (Amsterdam: Free Univ. Press, 1998); *Iranun and Balangingi: Globalization, Maritime Raiding and the Birth of Ethnicity* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2002). On slave raiding in Southeast Asia, see Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680: Volume One: The Lands Below the Winds* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1988), 129-136.

eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, when the global economy in Southeast Asia required a greater supply of labor. Indeed the Spanish themselves encouraged the enslavement of Muslims and animists as a means of Christianizing them and thereby saving their souls.[30] Slave raiding, therefore, was not a product of either Islamic religion or Moro culture, as Zaide and Zaide would have their readers believe.

In Zaide and Zaide, there is no explanation given as to why the so-called Moro Wars were fought. Were they necessary? Were they religious in motivation? What was the economic and social impact for those whose labor made such campaigns possible? The fact that the Spanish tried to conquer the islands by force is mentioned earlier in the text, so the thoughtful reader can piece together that these wars were largely expansionist for the Spanish and defensive for the Muslims.[31] Nowhere is the possibility that Moros were simply defending themselves against attacks asserted; Muslim "retaliation" is mentioned but incursions that prompted them are not. In the place of accuracy, explanation, or analysis, Zaide and Zaide conjure inflammatory images of burning churches, murdered and enslaved Christians.

Zaide and Zaide's false dichotomization of Filipinos who were either "inside" or "outside" Spanish colonialism obscures the myriad forms of interaction that took place; it is a product of a contemporary mindset much more than it is a judicious portrayal of the past. Conflict and commerce between islanders, for instance, did not suddenly stop when Magellan and his successors stumbled ashore.[32] They construct a bifurcated world in which there were two broad types of mutually exclusive social practices, practices which we are led to believe stem ultimately from cultural and religious motivations. Native responses to Spanish impositions did not neatly cleave along religious lines but in fact varied from outright acceptance to acquiescence to violent rejection; that

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[30] Michael Salman, *The Embarrassment of Slavery: Controversies over Bondage and Nationalism in the American Colonial Philippines* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 227-228.

[31] Ibid., 63.

[32] See William Henry Scott, "Crusade or Commerce? Spanish-Moro Relations in the Sixteenth Century," in his *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain and Other Essays in Philippine History*, rev. ed. (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1982), pp. 42-48.

there was space for negotiation is undeniable.[33] Here is where the Zaide and Zaide's desire to write a history that is both nationalistic and Christian creates a major stumbling block, one that they do not acknowledge and never really resolve. They seek to account for the history of the Muslims, who inhabited the archipelago that the nation would later ascribe as its own. But they are unable to fully conceive of the Filipino Muslims' history as fully part of their own—theirs is something else, something Other. Consequently, they deal with the Muslims in a quixotic episodic manner, treating a few decontextualized events that seem random in their selection.

One would think that in their discussion of the early twentieth century, the time when American colonialism transformed Christian-Muslim relations into a national political issue, Zaide and Zaide would devote more space to the role of Muslims. The Americans, after all, were instrumental in creating the unimaginatively titled "Moroland," the early twentieth century administrative region that covered all of Mindanao—an event that more than any single development before or since integrated the country's southern region into the Manila-centered colonial and later postcolonial state.[34] Yet it is another missed opportunity. The historical agency of Muslims is no more appreciated in the authors' discussions of the American colonial and postcolonial state than it is in the sections on the Spanish period. They only meaningfully appear, as a result, when they can no longer be plausibly ignored: in the turbulent postwar period when the Moro separatism was born.

Ferdinand Marcos was in his first term as president during the Jabidah Massacre (1968), in his second term when the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF the principal organization of Muslim separatism through the mid 1980s) began to assemble in the early 1970s, and was effectively dictator by the time that the MNLF started to fight back militarily, and achieve recognition diplomatically.[35] Any historical narrative of the modern Philippine state which considers Muslim

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[33] A classic example of Filipino syncretism is Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).

[34] Peter Gordon Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos, 1899-1920* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1983), 342. The area was known first as "Moro Province," from 1903-1906.

[35] Vitug and Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon*, 31-35.

separatism would likely include it as part of a discussion of Marcos's long reign, given especially the tendency to break up political histories into presidential terms. Zaide and Zaide, however, do not make any mention of Muslim separatism in either the chapter on Marcos's two presidential terms or the chapter of his dictatorship.[36] Neither the MNLF nor its leader Nur Misuari appear once, and neither do the terms "Muslim" and/or "separatism."

Zaide and Zaide do acknowledge Muslim separatism as a component of the nation's history, but in a rather belated and unenlightening way. Rather than discuss the topic in the historical section of the book, as they should have, they discuss as a sort of a historical aside in the section on governmental institutions. Further interesting is that they do not treat the issue as it originated and developed under Marcos but broach the topic when it supposedly became resolved—a history not worth relating apparently. In discussing the Ramos administration (1992-1998), the authors list ten major achievements. Here is the second one:

> 2. Settlement of the 30-year communist insurgency and Muslim separatist movements, through peace talks and other arrangements with National Democratic Front/New People's Army [the major communist organizations] representatives and the Moro National Liberation Front leader Nur Misuari. Thus ended the armed rebellions in the country which had cost at least 120,000 lives.[37]

This is the first indication that Muslim separatism even existed as a historical phenomenon. The fact that this discussion occurs in such an abbreviated fashion, and so belatedly, is astonishing. Nothing is said about its origins or trajectory. Instead of a history of Muslim separatism as such—something one would expect in a national history—what is presented is a passing reference. The way in which it is presented is also revealing. It is not depicted as an ongoing political issue, but as a problem that has already been solved. By minimizing Muslim separatism as a historical event, the authors are able to represent the (Christian) nation as strong unified entity, bereft of any divisive pressures.

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[36] Zaide and Zaide, *Philippine History and Government*, 164-166, chap. 24.
[37] Ibid., 180.

Zaide and Zaide do discuss Muslim separatism in slightly greater detail during their discussion on governmental institutions. To contextualize the emergence of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), the semi-independent Muslim majority state within a state achieved by plebiscite in 1989, they provide what is the book's only substantive historical explanation of the development of Muslim separatism.

> During the martial law era, Pres. Marcos tried to win the favor of the Filipino community and the Arab world by creating two Muslim regions (Region IX and XII [of the current sixteen administrative regions]) in western and central Mindanao. He sent his wife, First Lady Imelda Marcos to meet with Libyan leader Col. Gaddafi to make the Tripoli Agreement in 1976 that would have given more powers and territory to the Muslims in Mindanao. Then, on January 28, 1986, Pres. Marcos merged the two autonomous regions into one. But still, this did not bring peace to Mindanao.
>
> A civil war erupted, with the Muslims led by Professor Nur Misuari. The bloody civil war only ended after the ouster of President Marcos. But, from time to time, the various Muslim armed groups in Mindanao have fought with government troops and threatened civilians. The Muslim militants include the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF [a splinter organization]), and the terrorist Abu Sayyaf bandits [whose origins and ideology is not yet understood].[38]

As with previous treatments of Moro history, what the authors leave out here are explanations for Muslim grievances. It is stated that "Marcos tried to win the favor of the Filipino community and the Arab world," but the events that compelled him to accomplish this are not—more history without a history. The concatenation of events gives the reader the impression that Marcos's only role was that of a proactive conciliator. When his attempt at achieving a diplomatic solution failed (again, to what problem we are not told), it was at that point that "A civil war erupted." While the story is more complicated, it is more accurate to say that the reverse is true—that Muslim groups resorted to force only after a political solution could not be reached.[39] While the authors are discreet in terms of their employment of the term "civil war," instead of, for instance,

[38] Ibid., 229.
[39] Majul, *The Contemporary Muslim Movement in the Philippines*, chaps. 3-4.

"insurrection," they are less judicious when they describe the conflict's costs. That "Muslim armed groups... fought with government troops and threatened civilians" is of course true, but also true is that government troops and civilian militias intimidated and murdered Muslim noncombatants.[40]

Zaide and Zaide do make one more mention of Filipino Muslim agency, as their activities pertain to the birth of ARMM, before ultimately closing the subject.

> The Muslims are the most important minority group in the country. In history, Islam was the oldest organized religion and government in many islands. Muslims are the largest minority group. Powerful Islamic countries in Southeast Asia and the Middle East support the Filipino Muslim cause... The roots of the Muslim problem are really basic to all peoples. The 'Moros' are looking, like all Filipinos, for a better life for themselves.[41]

This is a conciliatory gesture, in a way. Even if the authors have not sympathetically approached the historical or contemporary political significance of Muslims, this final statement about them indicates a willingness to ultimately extend national kinship towards them. One wonders however if this is merely a geopolitical consideration, hence the assertion: "Powerful Islamic countries in Southeast Asia and the Middle East support the Filipino Muslim cause." At other points in the text where Muslims had been discussed, they had been treated not merely as different from Christian Filipinos, but as less civilized people. Certainly the authors did not take great pains to appreciate the agency of Muslims or their historic contributions to the Filipino nation during the Spanish or American colonial periods. Nonetheless, they are portrayed in the end as no less Filipino than any other group. This makes clear that although

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[40] Majul provides a description of the activities of these militias, called most often *ilagas*. Reliable information reveals that Ilaga is derived from Ilongo Armed Group Association, which is 'composed of 200 armed members, specially trained for terrorism and slaughtering Muslims. It is supported by 'influential Christian settlers and government officials,' including seven mayors, for political, economic and religious reasons. Their mission is Operation ILAGA or DAGA, so called to kill Muslims like rats. [*Ilaga* is Bisayan and *daga*, Tagalog for 'rat']. It alludes to the previous Rat Campaign, when the tails of rats were brought by the government; therefore every rat killed is deprived of its tail. Similarly, every victim of the ILAGA Gang is maimed: his left ear is chopped off if male and her nipples are slashed if female, as evidence to receive compensation (Ibid., 48n7).

[41] Zaide and Zaide, *Philippine History and Government*, 229.

Zaide and Zaide seek to promote Christianity and nationalism, they value the latter slightly more than the former.

The End of Anti-Colonial Struggle?

Agoncillo begins the *History of the Filipino People* by outlying the geographic and cultural landscape of the Philippines. After describing the land, he moves onto what he sees are the quintessential Filipino cultural traits: hospitality, close family ties, respect for elders, fatalism, loyalty, sensitivity, the tendency to be indolent, lack of initiative, curiousness, individualism, jealousy and regionalism.[42] (It should be pointed out that he did not have a PhD in History, nor did he have advanced degrees in Psychology or Sociology, so his claims should be read with this lack of expertise in mind).[43] Following this, he goes on to describe some of the differences between Filipinos from different regions, but in a peculiarly selective way. He first discusses the Tagalogs, then the Ilocanos, followed by the Bicolanos, then the Visayans, and finally, the Muslims.[44] Immediately problematic, this list leaves out the majority of ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines; even major groups with populations of over one million such as the Pampangans are left out. In fact, the order of the groups discussed seems to have nothing to do with their numbers (most to least populous they would be: Visayans, Tagalogs, Ilocanos, Bicolanos, Muslims). Nor is this simply a matter of listing the groups about which the most historical writing has been produced; there is, for instance, a growing, though still modest literature written about Bicolanos. Indeed, there seems to be no explanation for this quixotic assemblage of the customs of a few ethnolinguistic groups—or for even beginning his history in this manner. Most peculiarly, however, is that "Muslims," a religious though not an ethnic group, are included in the section.

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[42] Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 4-15.

[43] "He was proud of the fact that he did not possess a PhD except an honorary one conferred on him. I asked why he did not pursue postgraduate studies and his reply was, 'You will be remembered by the works you publish, not by the letters that come after your name.'" Ambeth R. Ocampo, *Talking History: Conversations with Teodoro A. Agoncillo* (Manila: De la Salle University Press, Inc.: 1995).

[44] Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 15-19.

Muslims in the Philippines do not comprise a homogenous ethnic or linguistic group, just as they do not really [appear as such] anywhere else in the world. If, in his introduction of the various ethnolinguistic groups, Agoncillo had wanted to discuss the ones who were Muslim, then he certainly could have talked about the Maguindanaos, Maranaos, Tausugs, the three of the major Muslim ethnolinguistic groups, or any one of the smaller ones. But this is not what he does. To characterize the makeup of the Philippines, he thus employs what is in fact a colonialist racial typology which harkens back to the era of American racial "science." As one anthropologist of the time characterized it:

> The native population of the Philippines is made up of a number of different tribes, which *naturally* fall into these three groups, *viz.*:
> a. The mountain pagan tribes, including the dwarf-like negritos, doubtless the aboriginal inhabitants of the archipelago.
> b. The Mohammedan Moros of Sulu and Mindanao
> c. The Christian tribes, the Indios or Filipinos of the Spaniards, who form the bulk of the population.[45]

Agoncillo's typology may be more refined, but it is no more scientifically valid or warranted.

His racial classification is clearly problematic, but Agoncillo puts it to good use. Building upon his arbitrary distinction between Muslims and virtually everyone else in the Philippines, he provides a short introductory passage about them that is thoughtful and sympathetic. After first discussing the traits of the Muslims, he ruminates:

> One wonders why the Muslim brother has not been integrated into the Philippine body politic. There are obvious reasons. One is that as a non-Christian who has for centuries struggled for his individual identity he has come to suspect his Christian brother of betrayal, for the latter was used by the conquerors in their attempts to obliterate Muslim culture and religion. Consequently, the Muslim casts suspicious eyes on this Christian brother, who, he thinks, is afflicted with Messianic delusion. There is nothing more abominable to the Muslim than to be told to discard his 'Moro' way of life. Then, too, the various governments of the Philippines, from the Spanish period down to recent times, had utterly neglected the Muslim, let alone other minorities. Because of his fierce

[45] Frank R. Blake, "Philippine Literature," *American Anthropologist* vol. 13 no. 3 (July-Sept. 1911): 449-457. Emphasis added.

> love of his culture and religion, the Muslim is looked down upon as an aberration—a 'Moro,' with all its ugly implications. The result is that he becomes antagonistic to any attempt to bring him to the Christian society's fold, for he believes that the attempt is made not because he is loved, but because conversion to the Christian way of life is necessary. The proud Muslim does not accept such imposition.[46]

This musing can be profitably read in two ways. First, it evidences that for Agoncillo the problem of the non-integration of the Muslims into the Philippine body politics is a salient contemporary issue. Second, the passage demonstrates the difficulty with which intellectuals—a prominent historian in this case—have sought to grapple with this problem. As stated earlier, the place of the Muslims in Philippine history is an open question. Unfortunately though, in his *History of the Filipino People*, Agoncillo himself never quite figures out how they fit in to the master narrative. For him, their importance in Philippine history stems almost exclusively from refusal to be subjugated. "The Muslim is, among Filipinos, the fiercest lover of freedom."[47] Thus, they only appear in the text when they violently resist. It is as if to say that Muslims are only useful insofar as they fight off colonizers, that they serve no other function in Filipino history; nothing else about their heritage, culture, languages, material achievements, etc., is worth considering.

Agoncillo sees a fine line between the embryonic Spanish colony that will later become the Philippine nation and the archipelago's Muslims. He notes the introduction of Islam to Sulu in the late fourteenth century, to Mindanao in the early fifteenth, and soon thereafter to the Visayas and Luzon.[48] He argues that: "The arrival of the Spaniards in the second half of the 16th century and the subsequent conquest of Luzon led the Muslims to retreat to the south where they maintained their independence from foreign powers to the end of the Spanish regime."[49] His point is valid overall, even if he states a bit simplistically. By confining "Muslim" history to a place outside of the colonial Philippines, rather than, say, writing a broader cultural history that links the various peoples of the archipelago, he dodges the issue of having to treat their proto-national accomplishments. Hence there is no mention of Muslim

[46] Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 19.
[47] Ibid., 18.
[48] Ibid., 22-23
[49] Ibid., 23.

contributions to the "cultural transformation" of the archipelago in the section under that heading.[50] He briefly reconstructs the customs of prehispanic animist Filipinos but does not do the same for their Muslim counterparts.

Agoncillo limits the scope of his discussion of Muslims during the Spanish period to certain moments of violent contact. Interisland and international trade, which do not figure prominently in his account anyway, link the colony to Russia, France, Germany, Japan, the United States, and Mexico but, strangely, not to Sulu and Mindanao.[51] The economic hegemony of the Celebes Sea in the nineteenth century, the Sulu Sultanate, does appear to have existed in Agoncillo's imagination.[52] The Sultanate's economy was driven almost entirely by the trafficking of slaves captured from nearly every corner of the archipelago; its impact on the colonial society is thus difficult to ignore.[53] Though he does not reference the Sultanate by its name, Agoncillo does refer to it indirectly, during his brief discussion of the Moro Wars.

> The active resistance against the Spaniards heightened from 1718 to 1762, and from 1850s [*sic*] to 1878, during the so-called 'Moro Wars...' This was the time that the Iranuns and the Maranaos of Lanao commenced their relentless ravaging pillages in the Visayas which caused economic stagnation in many parts of the islands under the sway of Spanish rule. Thousands of Christians were captured during the Moro raids, resulting in the decimation of population in the Visayas. These 'Moro raids' were in retaliation for Spanish acts of reducing Moro captives to slavery and razing their homes, landed and personal properties to the ground.[54]

A credit to his impartiality in this matter: he acknowledges the equally violent role the Spanish played. Agoncillo discusses the Moro Wars further before identifying the possible historical origin of what is now a notorious, because it is misunderstood, form of resistance. "By 1876," he writes, "Jolo had surrendered to Spain, and the 'Moro Wars' were carried

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[50] Ibid., 96-100. Cf. Zaide and Zaide, *Philippine History and Government*, 47-48.

[51] Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 116-118.

[52] Cf. Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898.*

[53] James Warren, "Slavery and the Impact of External Trade: The Sulu Sultanate in the 19th Century" in *Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy and Ed. C. de Jesus (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2001[1982]), pp. 415-444.

[54] Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*, 114.

out mainly through the *juramentado* or *sabil allah* ritual suicide attacks, commencing an open resistance to the unwanted Spanish occupation of their ancestral lands."[55] This sentence is interesting for the simple fact that he documents the nineteenth century occurrence of what is today a much discussed practice among the cottage industry terrorologists. More importantly, however, is Agoncillo's point that the conclusion of the so-called Moro Wars signaled the rise of a different form of warfare. One way of reading his assertion that the suicide attacks constituted "open resistance to the unwanted Spanish occupation of their ancestral lands" is to say that they were anti-colonial in character. While he himself does not explicitly use the term here, his subsequent discussions of the role of Muslims in Philippine history can be understood under this rubric.

The next mention of Muslims is during the time of the Filipino-American War. Agoncillo circuitously argues that Americans employed three main tactics to integrate Muslim groups into the emergent Manila-centered colonial state structure: military coercion, infrastructural development, and integration through diplomatic agreements with local elites. First, however, he incorrectly asserts that:

> the Americans were very diplomatic and cheerful in dealing with the Muslims. In an attempt to win them over, the Americans appointed General John C. Bates to negotiate a treaty with the Sultan by which the Muslims and the Americans could co-exist peacefully. There was, therefore, no attempt on the part of the Americans to conquer the Muslims, for they knew that they would have a big fight on their hands if they made such an attempt.[56]

His subsequent listing of some of the pitched battles that took place between the American forces and Muslim groups contradicts this assertion. Under the heading "The Muslim Struggle," Agoncillo depicts "the Muslim armed response to imperialism," which he argues, "can be classified into the ethnographic areas where it occurred: Lanao, Cotabato and Sulu."[57] He goes on to discuss some of the major campaigns and personalities of this theatre of the war before noting American attempts at building civil society:

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid., 223.
[57] Ibid., 252-253.

> In the Mindanao area, the work of pacification was also undertaken by American laymen, entrepreneurs, and teachers, particularly during the period of the Moro Province from 1903 to 1906. The Lunds and Lamassons in the Subanun country of Zamboanga opened the socio-economic potentials of the area. Coconuts were introduced in Lapuyan and other areas to improve agricultural income. But perhaps, most effective were the efforts of American capitalists and planters who started to explore the commercial and trade potentials of Mindanao, especially in Davao and Cotabato. The general effect of these socio-economic activities was to neutralize any resistance to colonial rule.[58]

He concludes by discussing the American efforts at securing cease-fire agreements with Muslim elites. He argues that the end result of this three-part civilizing mission in the Philippine south was that "with the comprehensive provisions of the [Carpenter-Kiram] Agreement, the beginning of the end of the Sultanate was initiated. At the same time also, the gradual rise of Filipino power over the Moros would become a reality in subsequent developments in Moroland."[59] This, in Agoncillo's estimation, is the process by which the people he identifies as Muslim in the Philippines transitioned from being outside to being inside the Philippine state. The period under discussion here terminates at some unspecified point in the mid-1910s. We are led to presume then, that the Muslims at this point happily became "Filipinos" as did their Christian and animistic brethren. He does not write about Muslims again in his text, but for one fleeting moment. And when he does discuss them, it is in a dismissive and even contemptuous way.

Agoncillo's treatment of Muslims in his *History of the Filipino People* is limited and problematic, but up to a certain point, it can be said to be impartial. He does not, for instance, portray them as uniquely cruel in a way that Christian Filipinos are not, as Zaide and Zaide do. Nor does he employ pejorative terms to describe resistance by Muslims, as for instance, Tan does. His dispassion dissipates, however, when he broaches the topic of Muslim separatism. He writes that "The greatest threat to peace and order" during the Marcos era came from

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[58] Ibid., 294-295.
[59] Ibid., 307.

> the so-called Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), of which a former political science student of the University of the Philippines is the alleged leader. Because of the casualties on both the government side and the Muslim secessionists, President Marcos initiated a truce movement in February, 1975 by appealing to the members of ASEAN and to the Muslim countries to help force a ceasefire in the affected areas of Mindanao and Sulu. He offered amnesty to all those connected with the secessionist movement and promised to bring the Muslims to the 'level similar to the areas in Luzon...' For this purpose, the President set aside 'plenty of money.' Five days later in Baguio, President Marcos said that the secessionist movement was 'being abetted and sustained' by outside support. During the truce period, however, the MNLF attacked the Philippine Constabulary forces in Mindanao, resulting in heavy casualties. Displaying coolness and restraint, President Marcos continued to seek ways and means of having fruitful dialogue with the Muslim secessionists. He poured millions upon millions of pesos into the Muslim area to show his good intentions as far as the development of the Muslim areas was [*sic*] concerned. At the same time, he invited Muslim countries to investigate the condition of the Filipino Muslims in order to determine for themselves what his government was—and is still—doing to uplift the condition of the Muslim masses.[60]

This is partisan, rather than judicious, history. To adequately address how this profoundly misrepresents the concatenation of events would require the spilling of a copious amount of ink, more than can be printed here. What is readily apparent, however, is the distinct ways in which Marcos and the separatists are depicted. Marcos—the greatest threat to peace and order for the innumerable people he murdered—is portrayed as a consummate statesman while the "secessionists" are portrayed as senselessly violent extremists, devoid of any political intelligence or rationale for resorting to force.[61] We should recall that in the beginning of his text, Agoncillo speaks favorably about the Muslims' unwillingness to be subjugated. In this passage, by contrast, he disparages the Muslims and their struggle; there is a change of register. Here is where two Agoncillos come into view. The first is a relatively dispassionate scholar, the second an ideologist. Here is where the former recedes as the latter emerges. The vagaries of history pitted two forces that Agoncillo had previously praised against each other, anti-colonial struggle and Filipino

[60] Ibid., 677.

[61] A very concise history of the Marcos dictatorship can be found in Abinales and Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 205-229.

nationalism. There is undoubtedly a middle ground that the historian could have treaded in treating this event. But rather than search for that middle-ground, Agoncillo ends up favoring one over the other, with lamentable consequences for his otherwise generally fair-minded if still inadequate treatment of Filipino Muslims.

An Uncertain Fate

In this study I made use of the fifth edition of Zaide and Zaide's *Philippine History and Government*. In the preface the authors list eight reasons for having revised the book. Reason number three is: "The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in the U.S., and how the Philippines became the first Asian country to join the global war on terror."[82] Philippine cooperation with the United States' so-called War on Terror marks a shift not only in the country's foreign but also its domestic policy.[83] There is no doubt that it will add a new dimension to the Philippines' interaction with its Muslims, who are consistently ranked as the poorest, least-educated, under- and unemployed within the already impoverished country. It is of course too soon to tell how this new direction in policy will affect all involved in the long term, other than insuring that Muslims will be (and, so far, have been) subjected to greater surveillance by the government, as well as being looked at with greater scrutiny and suspicion by many among the Christian majority. Tragically, one immediate consequence is that it has furnished the Philippine government with a new rhetorical weapon: the ability to designate individuals or groups as "terrorists." Thus the more powerful side has become even more so.

Writing more inclusive histories will not in and of itself resolve the myriad challenges posed by the Christian-Muslim encounter in the Philippines, if simply because books, no matter how judicious, thoughtful or insightful, cannot in and of themselves accomplish the difficult labor of building a positive politics of change. What such histories could do is better inform the participants who seek to build this better future. Towards that end, let us hope that the future histories of the Philippines

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[82] Zaide and Zaide, *Philippine History and Government*, third unnumbered page.

[83] For a thoughtful introduction into some of the issues raised here, see Patricio N. Abinales and Nathan Gilbert Quimpo, eds., *The US and the War on Terror in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Anvil, 2008).

more accurately portray, and seek to appreciate the richness of all Filipinos, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, or culture.

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