

Learning History in Postcolonial Philippines: An Analysis of Cesar A. Majul's "Moro Wars" and Philippine Historiography

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Abstract

Nation-building has been a central agenda in writing and learning Philippine history ever since the country's independence. History has served to construct the national identity which has eagerly been pursued in postcolonial society, and nationalism has remained a guiding principle of historical experiences.

This paper takes a look at Cesar Majul's historiography as an example of nationalist history and analyzes Majul's construction of the well-known "Moro War" thesis and its influence in the broader socioeconomic context. Such "nationalist history", has been criticized by various schools of history, such as postcolonial, subaltern, autonomous history, and the current academic fashion of postmodernism. While criticizing the nationalistic centralized narrative and exploring the different dimensions of human experience, the anti-nationalist critique tends to discard the notion of universality, truth and social justice; without those concepts, historical knowledge becomes mere intellectual enterprise. History is not only the study of the past but also essential to our intellect and emotion, and our action in the world. Argument over different historical perspectives is insufficient if it only remains as plain explanation and comparison.

Keywords: Historiography, Nationalist History, Postcolonialism, Nationalism, Postmodern

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This paper takes a look at Cesar Majul's historiography as an example of nationalist history and analyzes Majul's construction of the well-known "Moro War" thesis and its influence in the broader socioeconomic context. Such "nationalist history", however, has been criticized by various schools of history, such as postcolonial, subaltern, autonomous history, and the current academic fashion of postmodernism. While criticizing the nationalistic centralized narrative and exploring the different dimensions of human experience, the anti-nationalist critique tends to discard the notion of universality, truth and social justice, without which historical knowledge would become mere intellectual enterprise. History is not only the study of the past but is essential to our intellect and emotion, and our action in the world. Argument over different historical perspectives is insufficient if it only remains as plain explanation and comparison.

Speaking forty years ago to the students of the University of the Philippines, Cesar A. Majul claimed that "admittedly, some mythology enters (sic) the picture when people write about their ancient days; but then who can deny that a great deal of mythology and fiction is involved in our lives and relations with one another as long as they serve some pragmatic purposes?" (Majul 1969). This passage casts an important question on both the writing and understanding of history from an early 21st century point of view, in which history is no longer considered as a purely scientific, objective study of the past. For Majul and Filipino historians from the 1960s and the 1970s, the writing of history directly involves the issue of national integration and national identity. The criticism of such nation-oriented or "nationalist history" has spawned debates about the way history is written over the past decades. Postmodernism, the current academic fashion, posits ever serious and yet nagging questions to the very methodological premise on which history as a discipline is formulated.

By reading Cesar A. Majul's classic work, *Muslims in the Philippines* (1973) as an example of the progressive construction of nation-oriented history, I will argue that Philippine histories have been constructed centering around the revolution. The reason for this was nation building. This paper attempts to investigate the preceding theory which outlines for a deeper understanding particular ideas are formed at a certain time. Afterwards, the problems of nationalist history and also methods and concepts in the study of history are discussed based on which the criticism of "nationalist history" such as Majul's

has been made. Examining different narratives of the past, coupled with the reference to corresponding theories may offer the deeper understanding of the nature of historical knowledge.

"Can We Write History"?

Contemporary historians can no longer afford to be innocent to one's ideological inclination and to their intervention in the representation and narrative-making. For instance, the very act of categorizing a certain group as an agent of history creates a particular identity and story. A question that historians ask in this case would be "can we write history?" instead of "how can we write one history?" The advent of postmodernism makes writing and understanding history extremely difficult.

David Harvey (2007, 42) remarks that postmodernism "now emerges full-blown as both a cultural and an intellectual dominant." Its influence is probably most felt in literature but no less greater in other fields of the social sciences. Due largely to the emergence of feminism, environmentalism, civil rights and independence of former colonized states since the Second World War, modern Western-originated Enlightenment thought, characterized by confidence in human rationality and neutral, value-free, universal truth, has been thoroughly criticized. Scholars are now equipped with postmodern and poststructural concepts and read their Foucault, Derrida and subaltern studies (Morris-Suzuki 2005, p.10). They know that truth is relative and that all narratives are constructed and contestable.

Since postmodern is the antithesis of modernity, the target of postmodern criticism is "the bias of modern, especially post-enlightenment intellectual frameworks." Methods and concepts associated with such a framework (e.g. scientific rationality, upward human progress, the sovereignty of nation-states as a political system, notions and identities embedded in such as system, and the like) are denounced as "western-centric, capitalistic, imperialistic, and patriarchal" (International Workshop, 2002). Under such circumstances, a story of a nation both in writing and understanding of history is either dismissed or ignored as a totalizing narrative. A crucial problem in understanding history in the postmodern age is that the past is considered as a linguistic/semiotic construction and contest over the power of representation.

The dilemma of postmodern criticism of history comes to light when we deal with human atrocities committed to other peoples such as wars and colonization. If all historical narratives are constructions and discourse, accordingly contestable as postmodernists would claim, truth and objectivity are just relative. Consequently, the critical reflection on socio-economic structures that generate such atrocities can hardly be made. If we erase the line between a

fact and fiction, no criticism is possible at all. Therefore, historians such as Friedlander insist the limits of representation. The point is that there is something that can be called reality which is not reducible to a discourse. For him, this is not only epistemological but also a moral question, and without some claim to the truth, we cannot make a difference between fiction and history (Friedlander 1997, 391). As critics of postmodernism lament, "without notions as reality, reason, facticity, objectivity, and realism" which seem to be rejected as Enlightenment concepts, "then anything goes" (Jenkins 1997, 82).

To the seeming excess of postmodern deconstruction of history, Appleby and others call for democratic practice of history: everyone listens to other voices since no one can be certain that his or her explanations are definitively right. All histories are provisional and none will have the last word. Then we need to be open to skepticism about dominant views and trust in the reality of the past and its knowability (Appleby et al. 1997, 217). Controversies in postmodern critique of history over the past three or so decades seem to have cooled down with the Appleby and others' arguments.

Trends in Historiography in the Post War Philippines

Postmodern critique seems to have little influence on the discipline of social science in the Philippines, except on literary criticism. Philosopher F.P.A. Demeterio (2003) says that the Philippine state is considered premodern because of inaccessibility to the benefits of "modernity" for a majority of the population (such as hospitals or better health insurance or even basic literacy (Ahmad 2008, 69). In such a socioeconomic condition wherein daily survival is the pressing concern, "theoretical stratum of postmodernism threatens to deconstruct the collective efforts to our intellectuals' aspiration to pull our country into modernity." For those intellectuals, modernity has been synonymous with socioeconomic development and a functional nation-state. One component for achieving such a state of modernity is to "rebuild our sense of nationhood" amid diverse ethno-linguistic groups. History has served as a guiding discipline for national integration (see e.g. Tan 1982, 38). Filipino historians thus have self-consciously constructed the past for the sake of the nation building. I will first take a brief look at the development of intellectual trends in writing history.

Historian Resil Mojares says that the postwar historical scholarship had followed two primary trends: "classical colonial scholarship" and "nationalist, Filipino-centric" historiography. The former weighs on the actions and institutions of Western imperial agencies and uses written materials produced by colonial officials preserved in imperial capitals. The latter emerged in the 1950s and 1960s partly as a reaction to such colonizers-biased historiography. "Filipino-point of view" focuses on what the Filipino themselves thought and did

modifications and change under the impact of Western colonialism. Teodoro A. Agoncillo, Cesar A. Majul, and John N. Schumacher, S.J. can be classified as the pioneers in writing history from the Filipino point of view (Mojares 1991, 9-10).

"Filipinos" as a subject of history was a nagging concept back then, when "Filipinos" connoted only "Christians or Bisayas" (Glang 1969, 35). Amid the deteriorating peace and security conditions brought about by the communists armed struggle and separatist movement in the southern archipelago, the integration of minorities into the body politics became a political agenda. Political leaders and scholars alike believed that the new concept of *Filipinoness* needed to be created in order to evoke national sentiment for building a nation. Leslie Bauzon writes that ethnographical studies are needed in order to foster "our greater knowledge and understanding" of the rich cultures and creativity of the ethnic groups comprising the Philippine population, and thus recognize them as a precious part of "our cultural heritage." Those studies must help in realizing the unity and stability of the Philippines (Bauzon 2002, p. 150). Thus, an academic inquiry was promoted to seek the commonality in the past based on which national identity would be promoted.

Studies on local and minorities' histories were pursued for that purpose. It was a transition of historians' attention from Manila to other localities. National institutions as well as local ones such as the National Historical Institute (NHI), National Commission for Culture and Arts and the Philippine Social Counsel played an active role in promoting local history in order to incorporate it into the framework of national development (Tan 1982, pp. 17-18, Churchill 1993, pp. 20). In order to actively promote the studies of the ethnic and cultural minorities, the administration founded an institution such as the Tribal Research Center in 1967. The TRC is an integral unit of the Commission on National Integration, or CNI, which was established in 1957 for the mission to enhance the progress of the Muslims and other cultural minorities of this country. The mission includes "the promotion of their educational, economic, social, and political progress" (Majul 1972, p. 14).

The TRC's initiative, in cooperation with academic institutions such as the University of the Philippines (UP), laid the groundwork to make CNI a prospective grantee of Asia Foundation, SEATO, UNESCO, PSO, Fund-for-Peace Program, etc (Tamano 1974, p. 266). The UP developed a program of local history starting with a graduate history course on The History of the National Minorities including the Muslims, which was offered in the second semester of the 1976-1977 academic year (Tan 1982, p. 18). Not only did the institutions at the metropolis play significant roles, but also those of locals: the Cebuano Study Center at San Carlos University, Cebu, Silliman University in Dumaguete, Central Philippines University in Iloilo, Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro,

Mindanao State University and Dansalan College in Marawi, as well as Notre Dame College of Jolo in Sulu.

In those various local histories, national formation serves as the central guiding principal in historical narratives (Gealogo 1993, pp. 43; also Mojares 1991). Mojares, citing from historian Lucien Hanks, describes the patterns on which nation-oriented local history can be classified.

The first is that local history being the enactment of nationally significant events in a particular locality. Such type of local history could foster local pride but it is largely unproductive for local historiography in so far as it preserves the bias in favor of national events as against local ones. Other significant "local" events would be neglected as a consequence.

The second perspective is that local history reflects events of a national magnitude; and related to this is a third perspective that both local and national history reflect events in world history. Mojares argues that these viewpoints are more productive than the first one because, instead of taking the locality as the static setting of the national level, the focus is placed on what is really happening on the local level.

The fourth perspective is that the unique local history is independent of national history, or in other words, autonomous local history. Ascribing to local history the integrity of its own structure of events is, according to Mojares, an essential goal for local historians to work toward. The fifth one is functional relationship of local and national history. It means, on the one hand, to avoid the rashly generalizing impulse that glosses over the importance and uniqueness of local experience, and on the other hand, a particularistic and relativistic impulse that rejects to consider the context into which various local histories belong (Mojares 1991, p.12-13).

The Philippine National History Society, which organized the National Conference on Oral and Local History in 1998, clearly states that "while it is true that events at the local level have their own dynamics, local history always unfolds within the larger state of the nation" (Apilado 1999). Although the fourth and fifth perspectives are grounded in the study of local histories (such as McCoy and McCoy and De Jesus), still disproportionate attention has been given to the events of national relevance, such as the Revolution in the end of the 19th century. In other words, local history functions to complement the desire of the regime to forge a new national identity, and the more meaningful whole (Bauzon 1991, pp. 136-137).

In the 1970s, with the growing activism against the Vietnam war and the U.S. hegemony over the Philippines Marxist analysis of history held its sway, coupled with the influence of New History 2. The shift of historical actors and methods from center-elites and positivist-documentary resources to those of the masses and greater variety of both documented and undocumented resources is

further accelerated. Slogans like "Partisan scholarship," "history from below" and "history of inarticulate" are cherished as the trend of historical study moved from center to periphery, elites to masses, and political to cultural.

Tadhana: the History of Filipino People, written under the auspices of President Marcos, exemplifies such a type of historiography. With the purported aims of producing a "truly" nationalist history that could help "repair the damage" brought by the colonial experience, the book envisions the emergence of the Philippine nation-state as a long process of development that went way back to the Pleistocene period. Flora, fauna, and geographical features are depicted as characteristics of the "Philippine" archipelago. By discussing the earlier formation of ethnic communities and states as the beginning of Filipino history and Filipino roots, Philippine history is plotted as a constant search for the revival of ancient freedoms (Veneracion 1993, p. 64). *Tadhana* was considered, indeed, as a manifestation of the definite trend towards the building of national histories and also the expression of history from a Filipino perspective (Tan 1982, p. 19).

Cesar A Majul's historiography, which I will analyze below, is suited for the purpose of national integration and pursuit of inclusive national history. Former Executive Secretary Alejandro Melchor commended at the book launching that Majul's *Muslims in the Philippines* (first print 1973) as "useful and timely" because it was a "specific application in the understanding of a specific problem, an approach that may well presage the changing of our own present approaches and the building of our New Society" (Melchor 1973 in Majul 1999, p. ix). "A specific problem" refers to the marginalization of the Muslim population, whose integration was an important political agenda for the Marcos administration. For the New Society project, which was considered as a first serious attempt made by the national government to integrate cultural minorities by preserving their distinctive culture and customs,¹ Majul's work was taken as an explanation to the "problem" that emerged in the southern Philippines. Writing history of the Muslims as "one of war," primarily against the Spanish incursions (Majul 1999, p. 403), which he presented as the "Moro Wars," Majul says that the effects of the "Moro Wars" left deep scars on the Muslims up to the present and constitute their current socioeconomic problems. Those wars left a heritage of mistrust, suspicion and fear between two religious communities and for many years served to obstruct the integration of the Muslims (Majul 1976). I will now take a look at Majul's presentation of the history of Muslims.

Cesar A. Majul and "Moro Wars"

Muslims in the Philippines is one of the early well-researched scholarly works about the history of the Muslims in the southern Philippines as well as

adjacent islands, and their encounter with Spanish colonization when academic inquiry in Islamic influence was still not a major concern of scholars (Majul 1999, 39). Majul tried to overcome the limitation of Najeb Saleeby's pioneering works in which Saleeby's lack of knowledge about Islamic institutions relegated the inquiry into Islam in the Philippines to a relatively unintelligible isolated phenomenon. Majul was critical that Saleeby's works, among some other publications on Sulu and Mindanao (e.g. Tan 1967, Iletto 1971, Kiefer 1972), "still remained authoritative and most Filipino historians and writers of history books have repeated uncritically most of what he had written" (Majul 1999, 39).

In such scarcity of historical studies on the Muslims, Majul theorized that the "Moro Wars," coupled with the advent of Islam to the Philippine archipelago, was a part of the general expansion of Islam in the Malay world where sultanates established a connection (Majul used the term "Malaysian" or "Malaysian world" for the geographical conception of Malay Peninsula, Indonesia and Philippine Archipelagos, Majul 1999, 85). The history of the Muslims that Majul established became so influential that it displaced the Saleeby-Majul paradigm from which all historical works on the Filipino Muslims were drawn (Tan, 1997; also Sakili 1997).

Following a discussion about materials and sources for writing the history of the southern Philippines, Majul describes an introduction and spread of Islam in the Philippines via Malaysia. A subsequent whole chapter is introduced to describe the intrusion of European colonialism into the Malay world, which is synonymous with Islamic community or *darul-Islam*. Due to the encounter with colonizers and Christianity, a distinct sense of Islamic patriotism emerged among Malay leaders, and because of Islam-bound identity, they were called "Moros" which put them into a separate category from other population of the Philippine archipelago or "Indio."

Majul affirms that without Islamic consciousness shared among the peoples of Sulu and Mindanao, the latter would have easily been swept away by Western colonialism and relegated to the limbo of conquered peoples (Majul 1999, 84). Then he takes a closer look at "Moro Wars" that took place between the Spaniards and Muslims from about the time of Legazpi's arrival in 1565 to the last days of the Spanish rule in the Philippines (Ibid, 121). Majul described the "Moro Wars" as the process of forging a self-conscious, Islam-bound identity, which consolidated the anti-colonial struggle of the Muslims. By interpreting Muslim history in such a way, Majul recast the negative images that Islam and Muslims were associated to patriotism or patriotic fighters. His "Moro Wars" has remained a popular paradigm in the writing of history of the southern Philippines and Muslim Filipinos to this day (see e.g. Bauzon 1991; De los Santos 1999; Glang 1969; Gowing and McAmis 1974; Guerrero 1972; Isidro 1974; Quimpo 2003; Sakili, Isduri, Asain 1997; Tan 1993).

Majul explains the "Moro Wars" as a six-stage series of wars based on "shifting motives and different political results" (Majul 1999, p. 122). What he extracted from this series of wars is, first, that they were religiously motivated conflicts between the Spaniards and the Muslims for the former tried to subjugate the latter (see Majul 1985, p. 18; 1972, p. 20). The loss of their religion posed the greatest threat for the Muslims. Islam then became an "ideological force which rationalized resistance while infusing patriotism" (Majul 1999, p. 113). Second, the "Moro Wars" depicts the Muslims as an unconquered people contrary to others in the archipelago and attributes this to their religion and the relatively advanced political institutions of a sultanate (1999, p. 377 & p. 399).

What is significant about the "Moro Wars" is that they differ radically from a previous derogatory description of the Muslims as pirates. Spanish historians such as Vicente Barrantes and Jose Montero y Vidal called the Spanish expeditions "*guerraspiraticas*," or pirate wars, carried out to suppress what they considered as piratical incursions of the Muslims into Spanish-held territories. Depicting the Muslims as pirates had been the norm. Delor Angeles wrote in 1964 how the recognition of the Muslims as pirates was inherited from previous scholars (Angeles 1974, p. 27). According to Angeles, Jesuit historian Horacio de la Costa also supported the view of Vicente Barrantes and Jose Montero y Vidal. De la Costa believed that assuming Spanish sovereignty over the Visayas imposed the clear duty of bringing an end to these raids. Although Gregorio F. Zaide regards the "Moro Wars" as an outgrowth of the Spanish invasion, Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Oscar M. Alfonso argue that the Muslim raids on Christian settlements were piratical. Nejeeb M. Saleeby also wrote that the Muslims were piratical. Angeles observed that researchers primarily referred to the instructions that Spanish Governor Sande gave to Figueroa, a commander of the expedition to Sulu in 1578, to assess the motive of Spanish expansion, which was, as it appeared in the instruction, directed against Muslim pirates (Abgekess 1974, p. 30).

Majul's counter-argument to Spaniard-biased designation of the Muslims as pirates is that it was patriotism and their religious zeal that kept the Muslims unconquered (Majul 1999, p. 84, p. 113 and pp. 406-407). He legitimizes the Muslim "piracy" as the counter-offensive against Spanish invasion, and goes on to insist that although it is true that there were Sulu and Iranun pirates, sultans were also concerned about the piratical activities, and marauders privately financed for profit without official sanction (1999, p. 122 & p. 408). Also, piracy in the early part of the seventeenth century was essentially a private entrepreneurship; there was no official connection with sultans who were also wary of sea pirates (Majul 1999, p. 122).

Defense of Islam fueled the struggle of the Muslims. Majul writes that the Moro Wars led the Muslims to believe that the wars against them were

mainly because of their religion. This, against Spanish expectations, made the Muslims adhere more to Islam as a cherished value and source of identity to differentiate them from their enemies: the Spaniards, and Christianized *indios* (Majul 1966, p.20; italics original).

In order to show the important role that Islam played in the Muslim struggle, Majul cites correspondences between sultans, reports as well as accounts by the Spaniards. He, for instance, cited a letter from Sultan Amsterdam of Ternate to Sultan Barahaman of Maguindanao, which stated that the Dutch were enemies of faith and that they actually had a plan to introduce Christianity to Sulu. The letter demonstrated a high degree of Islamic consciousness (Majul 1999, p. 98). Majul also referred to Sultan Kudarat's letter to Sulu Sultan Bakhtiar, narrating that the killing of two priests in 1655 was because of their preaching of Christianity and their attempt to force Muslim leaders to leave Islam.

"Moro Wars" as a Myth

The discourse of Spanish offensives against the Muslim South was undeniably religious in tone (McKenna 1998, p. 82). Some recent studies, however, criticize Majul's emphasis on religion as the foremost motive of the Spanish invasion of the southern archipelago and conflicts with the Muslims. Thomas M. McKenna, in his ethnographical work on the rank-and-file in the Muslim separatist movement in Cotabato, states that a notion of the identity of the Philippine Muslims (or Moros) that transcended their linguistic or political distinctions existed in the Spanish colonial period is a myth. According to McKenna, individual skirmishes, engagements and campaigns conceptualized as the "Moro Wars" are not based on historical evidence. Beginning from their earliest expedition up to military campaigns during the last decades of the nineteenth century, Spanish official documents advocated the destruction of mosques, the suppression of Islamic teaching, and the coercive conversion of the Muslims to Christianity. "Nevertheless," McKenna says, "this religious rhetoric is most often inlaid in texts that also announce more mercenary objectives related to monopolizing trade, controlling resources, and collecting tribute" (1998, p. 82). There is not much historical evidence to suggest that anti-Spanish conflicts led to the forging of Islamic identity among the Muslim populace, nor did such elevated consciousness "form[ed] a sort of identity and nationalism among the Muslims" (Majul 1999, p. 114). McKenna also draws upon the "two most famous anti-Spanish appeals on record," the 1603 address by Datu Buisan to the Leyte chiefs and Sultan Kudarat's 1639 exhortation to the Maranao datus, to say that they contain no reference to Islam nor any mention of religion whatsoever (McKenna 1998, p. 82). The relationship between the Muslims and Spaniards was, according to McKenna:

...primarily a cold war consisting of extended periods of mostly peaceful existence with the Spanish colonial intruders in the North coinciding with intersultanate rivalry in the South. That relative calm was only occasionally punctuated by armed confrontations between Spaniards and particular sultanates, clashes that tended to be isolated events of relatively brief duration (McKenna 1998, p. 83).

James F. Warren, too, criticizes Majul's classic book because it romanticizes Muslims' encounter with the Spaniards to a certain extent as a holy war, or *jihad*, between the "Moros" and the Iberian invaders. Majul's interpretation, according to Warren, misses the dynamics of the cultural-ecological transformation and the multifaceted changes in the Mindanao-Sulu region for more than four centuries because it lacks a perspective on the complexity of the region, having become a crucial part of the global economic system involving China and the West (Warren 2002, p. 24).

Historian Shinzo Hayase makes a different interpretation as well. He says that the term "Moros" gives a wrong impression that the Muslims were all united. Although Hayase writes that missionaries' preaching of Christianity stimulated a self-awareness of being a Muslim among the sultans and the *datus*, the fact is that each ethno-linguistic community achieved an unique social and historical development (Hayase 2007, p. 48). Such a perspective resonates with Samuel K. Tan, who disagrees with the unitary approach that considers the Muslims as a unified people since the pre-Spanish period. Tan says that it causes some misconceptions and illusions about the Muslim history and culture. Muslim resistance was not necessarily correlated with the existence of basic unity in culture or history (Tan 1982, pp. 61 and 65).

"Moro Wars" as an Interpretation

Majul emphasized faith in Islam that transcends their ethno-linguistic difference and makes the unified Muslim struggle possible. Such an interpretation helped create a dichotomous relationship between the people who embraced Islam and their common enemy, the Spaniards, who tried to proselytize the Muslims.

It is not, however, correct to say that Majul ignored the internal rivalry and contestations or disputes among the "Moros." His book also depicts peace terms as well as animosities among sultanates and those between sultanates and European forces. For Majul, "it seem(ed) quite obvious that it was in common

defense of the Faith that even erstwhile enemies fought side by side against the Spanish" (Majul 1999, p. 406).

An illustration of the power relation in the Pulangi river basin based on the accounts of Majul, McKenna and Rey Ileto will reveal the contrast in interpretation. Since the early sixteenth century, Maguindanao and Buayan started to dispute the leadership over the territory (Hayase 2007, p. 53). McKenna writes that the rivalry motivated the Buayan sultan to enter into a peace treaty with Spain in 1605. As a consequence of the contested relationship and also of the expansion of the lucrative trade with China, joint-sponsored slave raids by Cotabato sultanates against Spanish-held territories were discontinued (McKenna 1998, p. 83). Majul, on the other hand, describes the peace treaty as:

This agreement [peace treaty], as can be clearly seen, represented a shrewd move on the part of the Spaniards, for in so dealing with the Rajah of Buayan as the paramount chief of Maguindanao, they were creating dissensions between him and his rival, Buisan, over the control of the entire Pulangi (Majul 1999, p. 134).

With respect to the raids led by Maguindanao-Buayan into Spanish territories, Majul's view is that it "represented a determined effort on the part of the Muslims to wean these areas away from Spain and to exact tribute from the natives in some areas, thus contesting Spanish rights over such inhabitants" (Majul 1999, p. 136). Historian Rey Ileto, on the other hand, describes the peace treaty in terms of superior power that Buayan enjoyed over Maguindanao, which has been misunderstood by generations of historians:

Sirongan [Raja of Buayan's] desires to be recognized and supported by Spain, however, is symptomatic of the internal strains in the Maguindanao polity, the ever-present centrifugal forces which make any political unification a tenuous affair. Some months before the signing of the treaty, Kapitan Laut Buisan [of Maguindanao] had made an angry speech at the Buayan court which brought to light his jealousy of the special treatment given by the Spaniards to Sirongan (Ileto 1971, p. 5).

Along the "Moro Wars" interpretation, Majul asserts that "Islam played in stiffening the resistance of the Muslim against Spanish effort to dominate

them cannot be over emphasized" (1999, p. 407). But why, then, is the Islamic factor that led to the unitary resistance important for Majul to emphasize? The explanation can be found in the underlying logic of Philippine national history, to which now I turn.

"Moro Wars" and the Philippine Revolution

Majul believes that the possession of "a common past" is imperative for an unified national community (Majul 1966, p. 3). In the making of national history, a certain event of the past comes to be identified as "our" history, rather than that of different peoples. Benedict Anderson asserts that French citizens forgot medieval religious conflicts among fellow Frenchmen, and instead remembered them as "family history" due to a systematic historiographical campaign deployed mainly through the state's school system. A vast pedagogical industry obliges young Americans to remember the hostilities of 1861-65 as a great "civil war" between "brothers" rather than between two sovereign nation-states (2003, p. 201). In other words, by remembering a particular piece of the past, by making it *our own*, we create a sense of belonging to a certain group of people (Morris-Suzuki 2005, p. 23; emphasis mine).

In the Philippines, "a vast pedagogical industry" categorizes history in a chronological sequence: A Golden Age (pre-Hispanic Society), the Fall (i.e. the conquest by Spain), the dark Age (17th and 18th centuries), Economic and Social Development (19th century), the Rise of National Consciousness (post 1872), the Birth of the Nation (1898) with several binary oppositions of forward/backward, reason/superstition, enlightenment/enslavement, modern/traditional, religion / progress and so forth (Ileto 1986, pp. 4-5).

In such sequential mapping of national history, "a piece of the past," which is to be identified by all, is the Philippine Revolution 1896-1899 through which a new nation came into being. Ikehata wrote in 1968 that:

...for almost two decades, debate over the description of the national history, and especially of the history of the revolution around which the national history centers, has raged back and forth in the academic and journalistic worlds (p.116).

Ikehata points out that such a debate has developed over and revolves around the point: who really bore the burden in the history of liberation of the Filipino people—that is, what stratum of people.

The question became particularly important after the publication of Teodoro Agoncillo's *The Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the*

Katipunan (1956). Agoncillo's thesis that the masses were the center of the Revolution was controversial enough at the time when the orthodox view upheld *ilustrados*, or elites as the leaders of the uprising. Importantly, the identification of a particular stratum as the standard-bearer of the revolution is not simply a problem of history but is also the one closely connected to the similar problem of singling out a stratum as standard-bearer of the nation-building for the present and the future as well (Ikechata 1968, p. 117). This is why there has been a heated debate over whether it is Bonifacio or Rizal (synonymous with masses and elite respectively) who should bear the symbol of the Revolution (e.g. Agoncillo 1956; Constantino 1969; Ito 1998, chap 9 and May 1996; Nagano 2000; Quibuyen 1999).

How to describe the Revolution, particularly on whose role historians shed a light, is of great importance. But how about minorities and the Muslims? Nathan Quimpo argues:

The Muslim "Filipinos," who are mostly in southern Philippines, do not feel much attachment to the Philippines and Filipino since, in the first place, they did not take part in the adoption or appropriation of these names....they did not take part in the 1896 Revolution, the 1898 declaration of Philippine independence nor in the 1899 inauguration of the Philippine Republic (Quimpo 2003).

In order to integrate the Muslims into the nation towards a path of building a national community, the Revolution, the center of national history, needs to find a juncture with the history of the Muslims. The "Moro Wars" is the key in that dimension. By claiming that the "Moro Wars" are part and parcel of the struggle of the entire nation, Majul connected the struggle of the Muslims with that of other people, which culminated in the Revolution.

Former Executive Secretary Alejandro Melchor stated that Christians and the Muslims needed to take pride and glory in each other's achievements to become one people (cited in Majul 1999, p. xii). The "Moro Wars" as the unified anti-colonial struggle for more than three centuries is the very factor that the Muslims would be proud to show as their "achievement." Majul, in *Muslims in the Philippines*, tells readers that the Muslims were determined to retain their own views of independence and liberty (1999, p. 371). Their struggle "was not an isolated or insignificant phenomenon but an essential part of the general resistance of all Muslim peoples in Malaysia (refers to the Malay Peninsula, Indonesia and the Philippine archipelago) against Western Imperialism [sic], colonialism, and Christianity." Therefore it "can be considered part of the

heritage of the entire Filipino people in the history of their struggle for freedom" (1999, p. 410).

Rationalizing the anti-colonial struggle of the Muslims as that of freedom for the entire nation or even for the Malay world is found in numerous texts. Mastura, for instance, interpreted Sultan Kudarat's exhortation of Maranaos in 1639 as his emotional reaction to the condition of foreign rule and also his passion for the freedom of his fellow Filipinos (1984, p. 21); Gowing and McAmis posit, "If the history of the Philippines were written fully and without prejudice, it would tell of how the Muslim Filipinos offered the earliest and the longest armed national resistance to the encroachment of Western imperialism in these islands" (1974, p. ix); *Tadhana* states that Filipinos never lost sight of the national community by vigorously confronting the colonial powers through armed resistance, in which the Muslim struggle is a particularly important element. Among the Filipino oligarchic class and other non-Christians, the armed resistance of Muslims strengthened the need for unity and the search for a secular, humanistic, and Filipinistic basis of cohesion (Marcos 1976, p. vi). *Tadhana* goes on to suggest to "recount these first glorious blows" from these struggles carried out by the Christianized people, the Muslims and indigenous elements of the pan-Filipino resistance to the colonial order (p. 214).

Critique of Nationalist History

Nationalist history, projected to overcome colonial historiography, has however become the target of criticism. Such criticism can be categorized into three: the first one centers on perspectives and interpretations. Writing history primarily as that of struggles against the foreign invasion (e.g. Majul's "Moro Wars") and of a process towards forging a nation (e.g. *Tadhana*) fall in this category. Critical reflection of such nationalistic perspective and interpretation is initiated at the early stage. In the essay on personal experience of the Cornell University, which was regarded as "Mecca" of the Southeast Asian Studies, Rey

Ireto recalls that nationalist history was considered as "bad history." Like Eurocentric history in the U.S., academic institutions in the 1960s and the early 1970s, and some American scholars (such as Harry Benda, John Smail, Wolters and Benedict Anderson) attempted to find a "third-way".

Ireto explains that as a "third-way," Smail's "autonomous history" paradigm was put forward in 1961. The idea of autonomous history is to focus on the social history of the region:

...to avoid being Eurocentric or Asia-centric, one must look beyond the colonial relationship, shake off the preoccupation with the nationalist or anticolonial encounter, examine the underlying social structure, and detail the social changes of the people, other than the domestic elite, who make up the bulk of the population (Ileto 2002).

Smail considered nationalist historiography as a "closed system" and only a partial solution to reject colonial history and reflect great changes in Southeast Asia, which meant the rise of new sovereign states and the breaking down of particularism.

Second is based on empiricism and positivist stance of objectivity and the validity of materials. A good example is Glenn May's deconstruction of Andres Bonifacio (May 1996). Based on facticity and the validity of materials and interpretations, May claims that Bonifacio as a national hero is the fabrication of Filipino historians. May's "objective analytical work" is, however, countered by Floro Quibuyen who reveals that May's tactic in dismissing sources he does not like (i.e. nationalist historians) is itself dubious; May interprets materials that he thinks valid, making his own judgment in the process (Quibuyen 2002). As Ileto also points out, it is hard to claim innocent objectivity in May's favor of written documents particularly produced by official ones and intellectuals over non-documentary sources such as symbols, rituals as well as epics (Ileto 1998, chap.9). Due to postmodern criticism and deconstruction mentioned at the beginning this paper, it became almost impossible to keep absolute faith in documentary sources and hold on to concepts like objectivity and bias-free observation (see e.g. Friedman 1997).

Third one is the very methodological premise on which history as a discipline is formulated: the sense of time, truth and of being (Chambers 1997). At first glance, this approach seems to overlap somewhat with the first one, but they are different in a significant way. While the first criticism is about the shift of attention from political history to social and from nationalism to indigenous perspective, the third is about the attempt to overcome methods and concepts originated in the modern Europe that have conditioned the ways that human practices are analyzed. Here, postmodern deconstruction comes in.

Ileto's critical evaluation of DGE Hall's history writing is a case in point (Ileto 2002). Hall's text was considered first to proclaim the death of the Eurocentric history and it pioneered and influenced the "autonomous history" paradigm. Ileto scrutinizes Hall's study of Burmese history to locate "Burma" within the broad narrative of the spread of Reason and Progress to put into context the teaching of Asian history with Burma in it. The incorporation of Asian history into the Big Story of the march of Progress made British conquest almost a necessity. Having been a colonial scholar-official in British Burma, Hall was so critical about

nationalist history that he seemed to believe it was the fault of despotic, narrow-minded or even insane Burmese kings who drew their people into wars against the level-headed agents of modernity, namely the British.

Postmodern criticism is to deconstruct the very notions of reason and progress, the values engendered by modernity, in order to look beyond human practice outside authoritative time and mental frames. Seeking human practices outside the modernity-framework of "big story" has been carried in subaltern studies, which the works of Iltis (1979) and Tadiar (2009) closely relate to. I will summarize subaltern studies' challenges to modern historiography and illustrate how the history of the Muslims would be like if the methods of subaltern studies are applied.

A Subaltern Studies' initial member, Dipesh Chakrabarti (1998, 2001) uses the term "localized knowledge" to see history without the desire to integrate it to the coercive whole, such as a nation-state. "Localized" does not connote the center or whole from which the term "local" is derived. The local in the national context could be the indicator of complexity and diversity, but it never threatens the wholeness, or, "authentic" national history. Since "localized knowledge" does not envisage the states and nations as "central organizing principles of human society" (Pandey 1992) as they used to be or still are, it does not dismiss events of the past that do not help put forward or even contrast the developmental goal of a people towards a national community. Localized knowledge does not elide pesky facts that are unfit to form the larger nation-state but it pays attention to "historical discontinuities, dead ends, contradictions, as well as alternative explanations of the motivations of historical actors" (McKenna 1998, p. x). By defining subaltern people as an oppressed class, who cannot imagine the state, Chakrabarty writes:

We live in societies structured by the state, and the oppressed need knowledge forms that are tied to that reality... Can we *imagine* another moment of subaltern histories, one in which we say—permanently, not simply as a matter of political tactic—with that which is fragmentary and episodic? *Fragmentary*, not in the sense of fragments that refer to an implicit whole, but in the sense of fragments that challenge, not only the idea of wholeness, but the very idea of the fragment itself (for, if there were not any wholes, what would fragments be, what fragments of?). Here, we conceptualize the fragmentary and the episodic as those which do not, and cannot, dream the whole called *the state* and must, therefore, be suggestive of knowledge forms that are not

ted to the will that produces the state (Chakrabarty 2002, pp. 34-35; italics original).

The concept of "fragmentary" reflects the critical examination that "historiography functions, and has long functioned in a political context where the rhetoric of nationalism is of central importance" (Pandey 1990). By writing history within this purview, "minority" cultures and practices have been all expected to fall in line with the "mainstream" national culture, and all that is challenging, singular, local, not to say all different, appears threatening, intrusive, even "foreign" to this nationalism.

Localized knowledge is to become conscious of the time framework that defines the way human progress is explained, as well as notions associated with the framework (i.e. secular, rational, political, etc), in order to understand the different relationship and different ways of being in the modern world.

In terms of the fragmentary episode that Majul's historiography does not mention, McKenna's analysis is revealing. In songs and stories among the rank-and-file of the Muslim rebellion, there is no concept of *bangsa* (nation) but *inged* (face-to-face community). Under the official propaganda of the independent "Bangsamoro nation," the rank-and-file fighters' struggle in defense of Islam is linked with the armed defense of their cultural tradition, property, livelihood and life. In one of their songs, those sentiments are expressed in the language of locality and territoriality rather than in terms of nationality (McKenna 1998, p. 191).

Furthermore, the rank-and-file narrate their experience in words that never appear in modern historical writings. McKenna observes that popular support for the rebels was expressed symbolically in popular narratives of the divine mercy shown to the rebels, which is most often manifested as ancestor spirits that appear in the form of crocodiles. A Campo Muslim resident told McKenna that:

The *pagali* (literally, relatives) are large crocodiles with bands of yellow around their necks. In times past, people would place food on the riverbanks as offerings to petition them for favors. These stories are hundreds of years old, but we have proof that these spirit crocodiles still exist because they assisted the fighters during the rebellion. Once, in fact, when a carnival came to Cotabato City during the war, the government soldiers arrived and shot all the crocodiles on display there" (McKenna 1998, p. 192)

Another "unauthorized" narrative illustrates how those deemed to be fighting for the *injet* were afforded divine mercy in the form of supernatural guardians of the *injet*. One of the well-known commanders recounts:

Once during the siege of Tran, I was eating ripe mango with my companion. I heard a bird call 'Awa, Awa' (means 'leave' or 'get away' in Maguindanao). I told my companion, 'Quick, we have to move.' He did not believe me. I jumped into our foxhole and just then a jet appeared overhead and dropped a bomb right where we were. My friend was blown to pieces (p. 326, footnote 18).

Stories like this would be classified as mythology or folklore studied by anthropologists, but notes the discipline of history.³ Historians cannot talk about how supernatural spirits affect events in the real world because it makes no sense to the secular, rational, modern human existence that the modern social sciences have established.

Such an attempt toward a more democratic historiography has dismissed "unauthorized" voices either as a concern in anthropology or mythology or as a people's psychic defense mechanism in attempting to attain peace of mind (McKenna 1998, pp. 271-272). These views consider that mystification helps Muslim subordinates reduce emotional distress by placing power out of reach, thus, serving as a form of consolation.

The exclusion of mythological explanation from historiography leads to label those who believe in it as primitive or pre-modern. Peasants and their rebellions have been described as "*pobres y ignorantes*" (poor and ignorant), pre-political and exhibiting a backward consciousness (see e.g. Chakrabarty 2000, 8, Iletto 1998). "Fanaticism" and "ignorance" are the words that explain recurring protests and peasant upheavals (Sturtevant 1976, p. 174). Importantly, such an interpretation helps to establish a presupposition that pre-political and pre-modern peasants are inevitably transformed to modern, political citizens of the nation-state. *The Philippines Free Press* explicitly expresses it: "no nation can be founded on a downtrodden peasantry" (Jan. 17, 1931 cited in Sturtevant 1976, p. 191).

Such a conceptualization leads us to re-examine "the presumption that the political consciousness of masses is backward" (Quimpo 2008, 210). The difficulty of NGO and PO (people's organization)-initiated popular political education of the masses in the Philippines to "raise their political consciousness" is, according to Nathan Quimpo, the translation of concepts (such as "power" and "empowerment," which they are not familiar with) into Filipino or other local languages (2008, pp. 207-211). However, other ways of being and thinking are not

without questions of power or justice, to borrow from Chakrabarty, but those questions are raised on terms other than vocabulary of modern thought (2000, p. 112). Therefore, it is wrong to perceive that modern citizens have "true historical consciousness," while the peasantry are examples of "partial" or "false" consciousness (Scott 1979, quoted on Quimpo 2008, p. 211).

Along that line is Neferti X. M. Tadiar's recent work on a continuation and critical extension of a subaltern studies project (Tadiar 2009). Dealing with literature, not historiography, Tadiar summarizes that a unitary sovereign nationalist subject articulated in literature after the Second World War as the proper historical agent of an anti-imperialist movement. She then tries to seek non-hegemonic, dissident national subjects in the contemporary period, whose experiences, woven in "often viewed as atavistic and mystified habits," help to "bring about broad social changes in ways that these groups could not foresee" (Ibid, p.8). The reason Tadiar sees the subaltern as "the political seeds of an alternative future" is that they inhabit where the contradictions of global capitalism first appear, therefore there we can find their creative capacities struggling to surpass the limits of the life to which they are condemned and the apparatuses of capture minted by capital and state powers to appropriate those creative capacities and their political potential (Tadiar p.9).

In sum, localizing knowledge is communication with, or engagement in, experiences outside the concepts accepted in modern epistemology rather than established methodology. Chakrabarty claims that our engagement with the "other-worlding," (other ways of thinking of, relating to and being in the world), is prior to an objective and historical study of cause and effect explanation (2000, p. 112). The former relationship makes the latter possible.

Critique of Decentralizing Thoughts

An attempt to unfold a heterogeneous world and identities outside modernity and its imagination, however, does not go unchallenged (see e.g. David Harvey 1990, 2000, 2007; Ellen Meiksins Wood 1995, 1999; San Juan, E. 1999). The critics point out that the widely embraced relativist stance toward universalism and collectivism, in reality, enforces the logic of post-Cold War reconfiguration of the world economy and the interventionist and regulatory practices of the state (e.g. Harvey 2007, p.42). David Harvey cautions that as the result of such a relativist stance, various social movements tend to detach themselves from state power but to gain their lot within the state. Postmodern identity politics makes hard to extract those movements from the local and the particular to understand the macro-politics, and also to imagine connections among those struggles (Tadiar, p. 200).

This critical view of the "post-" phenomena poses a serious question: can we even think of or affect social change, without universals of some sort? (Harvey 2007, p. 247) Can such a form of knowledge help to make sense of today's new forms of insecurity and critical issues that confront us? (see e.g. Ellen Meiksins 1995. San Juan 1999, p. 1 and p. 13)

The cautionary criticism of postmodernism correctly points out that the emphasis on fragmentation and difference complicates any sort of social solidarity or achieving the national power by any social group (e.g. indigenous peoples). San Juan Jr. offers critical evaluation to a postmodern practice of dismantling collectivity reflecting on political economy of third world countries (e.g. San Juan, E. 1998, 2008). Although his criticism deals with postcolonialism which, unlike postmodernism, gains a momentum in the Philippine academic scene, particularly in literary studies, both phenomena overlap in the predominant non-European interpretation of modernism.³

In his book, *From Globalization to National Liberation*, San Juan Jr. criticizes Dipesh Chakrabarty's "obsession" which is "to unmask, demystify, or deconstruct the themes of citizenship and the modern state". San Juan, E. laments such an academic pursuit for it does not speak of material reality which produces and reproduces subaltern themselves: the status quo of existing property relations, asymmetries of actual power relations in India, as well as a nuclear-power chauvinism that thrives in regional conflict with Pakistan and China (San Juan, E. 2008, p. 25).

Learning History in the Postcolonial Philippines

Ongoing debate on postmodern critique and subaltern studies has relativized modernity and historical materialism by which our understanding of the world has largely been circumscribed. At the same time, the criticisms of postmodern thoughts convincingly direct our attention to the deepening crisis brought about by the post-Cold War restructuring of state-market relations and material relevance of postmodernism.

My purpose in bringing together conflicting schools of thought is not just to illustrate one after the other, but to seek historical knowledge that makes us better equipped to make connection to the growing complex world. Examining the development and experience of Philippine historiography could offer us some insights into such historical knowledge.

"As a developing nation, the Philippines is not so much concerned with the question of whether or not history can be scientific. It is more interested in the issue on the role of history in the search for national identity (Tan 1982, pp. 39-40). Historians from Agoncillo, Renato Constantino and Majul to Samuel Tan do not consider the study of history neutral nor objective scholarship.⁴ It is

curious to learn that the writing of Philippine history has never considered itself as bias-free, but as a struggle over meaning and the questions for whom the history is written and from whose point of view. As I have described previously, such an attitude has been the object of criticism. Now that positivist and documentalist approaches no longer remain authoritative, some scholars suggest that nationalist history can be reconsidered in the light of postcolonial scholarship. Iletto suggests that it is perhaps time to revisit the issue of previously dismissed "bad" national history such as Agoncillo's and Majul's from Southeast Asia, which was written against and subtly marginalized as "good" Southeast Asian history but institutionalized in the late 60s. In the light of postcolonial strategies, such obscured works may reveal "features of utmost relevance to us today" (Iletto, 2002).

Historian Daqing Yang argues that there are "the different regime of truth" in different societies. Yang observes the argument over the Nanjing massacre and the overall Sino-Japanese War both in China and Japan, triggered by a diary published by a former member of the Japanese imperial army and points out that Chinese historians tend to place great emphasis on the overall character of the war as Japanese aggression, often at the negligence of "details"; an influential tendency among Japanese historians is their seeming obsession with details, either ignoring or paying *pro forma* attention to the big picture (Yang, 2002. emphasis original). Seen from this perspective, it can be said that "the regime of truth" of Philippine historiography is national integration: imbuing the sense of national identity and fostering nationhood.

But if we cease our discussion at that, saying that different nations have their own regimes of truth or no historian can capture the whole truth or totality of what really happened, and that what we can do is to read a text with attention to the social location of a historian and his or her position in the present, and compare different interpretations seeking the coherence of the narratives, then we miss the important aspect of historical knowledge. Morris-Suzuki suggests (2005) to shift our attention from "historical truth" to "historical truthfulness." This is to focus on the process by which people of the present make sense of the past, rather than on existence or nonexistence of historical facts. By being more aware of historical knowledge, we absorb and engage with our emotion and identity and being truthful to different interpretations and angles of the same past events, we can have a fuller understanding of what had happened, and importantly, our implication in the past.

Italian historian Benedetto Croce says that the only true history is contemporary history and that changes in the contemporary scene must also change historiography. When great changes occur in the contemporary scene, there must also be great changes in historiography, that the vision not merely of the present but also of the past must change" (quoted in Iletto 2002). Ultimately,

the reason we study history is to "illuminate the problems of the present and the potential of the future" (Appleby and others 1994, p. 9), then learning Philippine history can be said as one way to seeking the roots of present wrongs in order to envision a more egalitarian society. One may say that the emphasis on "partizan scholarship," the phrase that characterizes historians such as Renato Constantino differs little from nationalist history. But as Onofre D. Corpuz addresses "the long neglect of social justice," one must inevitably confront the problems of colonialism and its consequences in learning Philippine history or the histories of other postcolonial societies in that sense (Corpuz 2005, p.623). It may be possible, as Smail advocates, to study underlying social structure since the precolonial time and look beyond the colonial relationship. However, nobody disputes the fact that to understand contemporary Philippine society, "shake off the preoccupation with anticolonial encounter" is impossible. Evaluation of colonialism differs according to perspectives through which we see the world: whether in the Wallenstein-type of world system or linguistic construction. But surely, colonialism caused us, systems and institutions in which we live.⁵ The Durban Declaration 2001⁶ unequivocally declared that the effects and persistence of these structures and practices brought about by colonialism have been among the factors contributing to lasting social and economic inequalities in many parts of the world today.

Postmodernism makes us more sensitive to multiple voices and to our limitation and possibility for envisioning the forms of social patterns and human practices. However, the negative legacy inflicted upon us is its "divorce from history and nature" (San Juan, E. 2008, p.227) by the means of endless relativism. Emphasizing the importance of being open to various interpretations, however, does not mean that all narratives are equally true or need to be taken as relative true. As philosopher Tetsuya Takahashi emphasizes the value of historical narratives cannot be judged without reference to the outside events that they describe. Efforts to assess the value of narratives by, for example, favoring the suppressed narratives of marginalized communities over the dominant narratives of majorities are inadequate since we only value suppressed minorities over majorities. This practice, however, cannot be a valuable form of historical knowledge. However, without some sense of "truth and untruth" or "justice and injustice," historical knowledge is incomplete (quoted in Morris-Suzuki 2005, p.236). All narratives are not equal but they compete over legitimacy and recognition especially when it comes to, as mentioned in the beginning, human atrocities committed to other peoples such as wars and colonialism. What makes a narrative weigh over the other is our judgment of truth and justice.

To do so, we must uphold a notion of truth and the basis of such a judgment would be social justice or the lack of such. Morris-Suzuki says that

different narratives have different implications for the way in which we take responsibility for addressing the legacies of past wrongs. Drawing on diverse narratives on the Holocaust, Morris-Suzuki summarizes that each narrative offers a distinct perspective on responsibility: conventional interpretation that focuses on the political and ideological dimensions of the rise of Nazism and emphasizes primarily the guilt of political leaders; a narrative which puts greater stress on the continuity of social structures, rooted in the 19th-century Imperial Germany, which offered the necessary breeding ground for Nazism. This view broadens the social range of responsibility for the Holocaust, and in some respect makes the location of specific guilt more difficult to pin down. A third narrative that focuses on parallels between the crimes of the Nazis and those of others, particularly the Soviet Union, suggests a symmetry of responsibility between Germans and their enemies; and a fourth narrative presents Soviet atrocities that seeks to shift the focus of responsibility away from the German nation altogether (Friedlander 1988; Nolte 1993a; Nolte 1993b; Hillgruber 1993, quoted in Morris-Suzuki 2005, p.14).

Viewing Majlu's work in terms of a narrative and responsibility that the narrative engenders, a critical aspect of "Moro Wars" is that:

[They obviate] any need for the social analysis of present-day political mobilization for Muslim separatism: ordinary adherents of Philippine Muslim nationalism are simply reenacting the precolonial past (McKenna 1998, p. 85).

James Warren emphasizes the fluidity of ethnicity and the ethnic identity in Mindanao and Sulu in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ethnic categories such as Iranun and Balangingi became fixed by the modern state and the people in these categories were designated as "Moros," but they were principally descended from Christian captives from Luzon, Cebu, Negros, Leyte, Panay and Samar. If today's Balangingi and today's Cebuano, Ilocano, Tagalog, Visayas and Yoggads share the same ancestral roots, Warren asks, what does that reveal for understanding what it means to be a "Filipino" and for political relations between Christians and Muslims? (2002, 413)

Furthermore, the emphasis on unified the Muslims struggles tend to blame the outsiders for creating current problems.¹ Writing about the cause of the MNLF Majul says:

Theirs [MNLF] has been a history of continual warring against foreign armies trying to colonize them or

against neighboring indigenous groups trying to displace them from their land (Majul 1985, p. 102).

What the MNLF fought against was the Philippine government which "became a mere successor to the previous imperialistic Spanish and American governments" (Majul 1972, p. 25). Such a perception, however, ignores the immense land-holdings of datus and the class conflicts among the Muslims (Kawashima 1989).

It is true, as Majul writes, that the destruction of mosques caused Muslims to believe that these actions were the result of a Christian education that fostered hatred towards Islam. These beliefs may be merely suspicious, but it is belief rather than actual facts that move people into action (1972, p. 26).

Locating those responsible for wrongs in the past is not a methodological practice but is bound to have material consequences. Nur Misuari's agitation stems as "from early sixteenth century until the close of the nineteenth century and till the end of the Second World War, they [Muslim Filipinos] fought one of the longest and bitterest anti-colonial wars in history" (cited in Majul 1985, p. 136); this narrative cannot be discarded because of the fact that the lives of hundreds and thousands of people have been lost or disrupted in the separatist and independent struggle. The interdependence of the real-life event and historical interpretation urge us to see history beyond the scope of authenticity or relativism.

Majul's "Moro Wars" are not completely irrelevant to his conviction that Islamic values have universal importance. While working for the betterment of the Muslims during the Martial Law years, he emphasized that the individual Muslim must develop the Islamic virtues of bravery, perseverance, truthfulness, dignity, love of knowledge, and the like. Such effort would make the Muslims capable to work for the unity and cohesion of their community as well as their social well-being (Majul 1971, pp. 27-28). The emphasis on Islam as a factor behind the unified anti-colonial struggle served to raise morale of the contemporary Muslims, and lead them toward self-awareness of their glorious past, virtue and unity that could shape their identity and Filipino citizenry in the integrated national community (see e.g. Majul 1971, 1976, 1999).

A cohesive national community and planetary humanity that Majul dreamed of has yet to be achieved. On the one hand, ethnic divergence and assertiveness in this century are pitched against the national centers and the developmentalist state (Kothari, quoted in Parajuli 1996), and the importance of this vision of the latter has not diminished. In the current globalizing world, where the threat of mutual destruction is more serious than ever, it is not at all utopian to pursue the knowledge frame that allows us to envision plural ways of being in the world.

Notes

- ¹ Jainal Rasul mentioned that under the Marcos administration, ancestral lands were recognized through Presidential Degree no. 410 on March 11, 1974, and the codification of Muslim laws on persons was likewise a genuine attempt not only to recognize Muslim culture but to preserve their Islamic heritages as well (1979, p. 7).
- ² Rey Ileto articulates the world of rebellion of the peasants that involves superstitious beliefs and communications with supernatural existence. As Ileto narrates (1998), *Pasyon and Revolution* (1979) applies a quite similar methodological approach as that of Subaltern Studies.
- ³ Agoncillo once said that a past, which is not invested with significance in relation to the present ideals, hopes, and fears, is not history but chronology. With this concept of history as a frame of reference, "we of this time and place might well ask ourselves whether we have made good use of our usable past in our march toward a life of freedom and independence" (quoted in Hila 2001, p. 12). Also, Constantino writes that the purpose of his book was to make the past reusable for present tasks and future goals. Thus, he made "no claims to new findings, only new interpretations" (1975, p. vii).
- ⁴ The argument about the similarity and difference between postcolonialism and postmodernism is dealt with, for example, by Linda Hutcheon. It seems to me that postcolonialism belongs to the larger pool of postmodern fashion. It is only that postcolonialism refers to or deals with epistemological examination of political system and identities that have been constructed in the process of colonialism.
- ⁵ I borrow from Morris-Suzuki (2005, p 253).
- ⁶ World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Violence. Durban, South Africa. August 31 to September 8, 2001.

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