REVIEWS

Julian Go and Anne L. Foster, eds. 2005. *The American colonial state in the Philippines*: *Global perspectives* . **Pasig City: Anvil Publishing Inc. With foreword by Patricio N. Abinales. First published 2003 by Duke University Press. 316 pp.**

Patricio N. Abinales's foreword to the Philippine edition of *The American Colonial State in the Philippines*: *Global Perspectives,* with its claim of four "first" for the book, might as well serve as the book's campaign statement for an entry in the *Guinness Book of World Records.* In his foreword, Abinales claims that the book is the first to compare American colonialism with other colonialisms in Asia, the first to put the Philippines alongside other American possessions and compare colonial state formation with the (re)building of the American state itself, the first substantive critique of American exceptionalism "from below" and from an "Asian location," and the first multidisciplinary volume on the American colonial state in the Philippines.

A reader not conversant with American exceptionalism and the historiography of imperial America and colonial Philippines cannot counter or affirm these claims, or if indeed they are true, discern their significance. Only in reading Julian Go's introductory chapter will dabblers in history have a fuller understanding of Abinales's claims. For Go, the book "marks the first systematic attempt to take stock of [the] moves away from the [American] exceptionalist narrative and toward

Vietnam into a multisectoral, market economy. Since then, Vietnam has achieved high economic growth and a major reduction in poverty. Despite these achievements, development has also led to environmental destruction and pollution, harsh working conditions particularly for women, an increasing gap between the rich and the poor, and an increase in prostitution and sex trafficking.

The Disenfranchised , by providing a glossary of all of the negative consequences of development, clearly shows how development in Asia, despite high economic growth and increased prosperity, has marginalized specific sectors of the population. If the consequences include severe environmental destruction, harsh worker repression, adverse impact on women, and major injustices committed against indigenous communities, then is this the path that Asia should be taking? Indeed, development, a concept that originated in the West, has primarily benefited Asia's elites as well as the powerful Northern countries. The book advocates "people-centered" development. Though the book includes considerable examples of social movements that have resisted the oppression of the victims of development in Asia, and though the authors provided some of their own suggestions as to what should be done instead of the current actions taken, the book falls short of giving the reader a strong sense of what should be done. Rather, the reader is likely to be exhausted from the numerous examples of where development has gone wrong. The concept of "people-centered development" needs to be expanded. Nevertheless, the book plainly illustrates how Asian countries, many of which are known worldwide for their spectacular economic success, must still profoundly reconsider how they will pursue development, in light of the often destructive consequences on people and the environment.— BRADLEY CARDOZO, *VOLUNTEER INTERN, THIRD WORLD STUDIES CENTER, COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES DILIMAN*

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Hussin Mutalib. *Islam and Democracy: The Southeast Asian Experience.* **Singapore: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2004. 136 pages.**

Southeast Asia is home not only to a multiplicity of cultures but also to such dichotomies as development and underdevelopment, poverty and prosperity, capitalism and socialism, and, purportedly, Islam and democracy. Whereas the first three are contradictions arising mainly

from disparities in wealth and in measures to acquire wealth, the purported incongruence between Islam and democracy is fundamentally a question of moral judgment. The debate on whether or not Islam and democracy can coexist has engendered conflicting responses in many parts of Southeast Asia, where believers of Islam practice their faith within the framework of democracy and in so-called democratic states.

In the book *Islam and Democracy: The Southeast Asian Experience*, such issue is revisited as it endeavors to chronicle how the peculiarities in the adoption and indigenization of democracy by selected Southeast Asian states have affected their Muslim populace. The book is a compilation of papers, each tracing the link between Islam and democracy in an attempt to reexamine the argument that the two are antithetical both in theory and practice. The book aimed at "reducing the possible tensions, misconceptions and misperceptions on issues surrounding Islam's place and beliefs within modern democracies" (v). In particular, the book highlights the role of the *Shar'iah* in promoting the identity and rights of the Muslims across democratic regimes in Southeast Asia. The convergences and divergences in the juridical precepts of the Shar'iah and the secular state's laws are likewise identified in the book's seven chapters.

While the author makes a bold attempt to differentiate Western from Islamic democracy, what the book's first chapter does is to reinforce confusion instead of shedding light on the issue at hand. The author claims that "the Islamic concept of democracy…is not a quantitative concept based on majority-minority, power and opposition but a qualitative concept based on the right of every person to express himself freely" (6). His emphasis on the freedom of expression as central to the Islamic version of democracy is problematic, if not deceptive, taking "expression" in a very limited sense when it means a host of things other than the mere ability to argue or put forward one's opinion. For instance, the Islamic precept that "women…must cover their bodies and faces outside their own domestic quarters to which they are largely confined" (Rhoads 1996, 82) is enough guarantee that Islamic democracy should not be reduced to mere freedom of expression when such principle contradicts the very stipulations in the Islamic doctrine and is not even applied in practice. Hence, to approach Islamic democracy by merely locating what ideals in Western democracy can fit into it is nothing different from interpreting it in Western terms using Western language, which is the very practice that Muslims

themselves criticize and dismiss as an attack to their own values and identity.

The contours of Islamic resurgence in Southeast Asia as precipitated by the emergence of various Islamic movements and the burgeoning demand of Muslims "for a greater implementation of the Shar'iah within their states" (12) is examined in the second chapter. Although the author provides a comprehensive account of the manifestations and causes of this resurgence, his discussion is restricted to the reassertion, application, and articulation of Islamic ethos in framing and/or obtaining a political agenda. Similarly, while the book defines political Islam as the "sustained and open pressure by Muslim groups, political parties, organisations, civil society and intellectuals" (12) on governments to effectively address their concerns, the illustrations are confined to the violent means by which Muslims exert this pressure in pursuing their aspirations. This discounts the efforts of other actors, including Muslim NGOs and peace advocates, whose strategies are outside the framework of radicalism. By viewing political Islam through the prism of Muslim militancy and worse, terrorism, the author distorts the entire context in which adherents of Islam in Southeast Asia use the spaces provided by democracy to engage their states and challenge their opponents diplomatically. Nevertheless, the book is useful in highlighting the nature of Islam in Southeast Asia as distinct from the one in the Middle East and in successfully elucidating new trends in Islamic politics beyond its region of origin.

By placing high premium on the need to strengthen Shar'iah enforcement in countries where Muslims are legitimate citizens, the third to fifth chapters reveal the nuances in the enforcement of such law in three Southeast Asian countries with a sizeable number of Muslim communities—Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. Despite the varying degrees in the application of such law across the three countries, there is consensus that the extent of implementation of Shar'iah is limited and that democratic measures are needed to further accommodate the Islamic law and upgrade its position vis-à-vis the states' legal systems. This issue is further discussed in the last two chapters, where the practice of Islamic law is juxtaposed with modernity on the one hand, and the ambiguities in the application of Shar'iah within democratic frames are examined on the other. Although a bold assertion is made that Islamic precepts must not be modified in the name of modernity, the issue of whether Islam and democracy can coexist remains vague, especially with the recognition that "Islamic references to the notion

of democracy rarely reflects the philosophical concerns of democracy per se but most end up as either critiques or apologies" (129).

At best, the book merely reiterates the already known principle that there is no one-size-fits-all democracy and that Islam has its own version of it. Although the book renders an opportune review of Islam in Southeast Asia, a rare initiative at that, it only provides cursory recommendations as to how Islam and democracy can better coexist in the region and how the two can reinforce each other in serving the ends of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The book is a reminder that in any attempt to link Islam and democracy, one must recognize first that they have a number of irreconcilable differences to avoid vilifying one while eulogizing the other. To impose that the two are similar in all ways by erroneously tailoring one's tenets to the other will merely end up in hypocrisy and false analysis.— SARAH JANE DOMINGO, MASTER IN ASIAN STUDIES STUDENT, ASIAN CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES DILIMAN

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Helen Yu-Rivera. *Patterns of continuity and change: Imaging the Japanese in Philippine editorial cartoons, 1930-1941 and 1946-1956.* **Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 2005.**

The first image in Helen Yu-Rivera's book illustrates the highly unstable period following the First World War. A figure of a lady labeled "peace" admonishes a group of squabbling figures, dressed in military uniforms and costumes of world powers and other actors, to keep quiet, lest the God of War, Mars, wakes up. The power of images to condense and to state what lectures or articles could not in a highly constrained space of a two-dimensional plane is most apparent. This particular image expresses a generation's feeling of foreboding. It depicts visually an assessment or, perhaps more precisely, the beginnings of the formation of a point of view that holds conditions of peace as ephemeral or as mere transitions to conditions of war. In one corner of a printed editorial page, the spirit of pessimism is evoked as a realist tone slowly pervades a drawn discourse on the tenor of the times.