BOOK REVIEW: Hawkins, Michael C. *Making Moros: Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule in the Philippines' Muslim South.* DeKalb, Ill., Northern Illinois University Press, 2013.

Reviving the Subaltern, Reimagining the Nostalgia: Reconstructed Mentalities of the Moros in Early American Colonization

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ABSTRACT

Michael Hawkins's *Making Moros* (2013) is one of the first attempts to write a subaltern history of Mindanao Moros by using colonial documents and newspapers published during the American occupation in Muslim Mindanao. The book also offers fresh perspectives discussing various taxonomies of sorts, contested identities forcefully imposed by the Americans on the Moros to fit their self-imposed colonial mission, and the nostalgia that the colonization process left the minds of the colonized. This book responds to the dominant Mindanao historical literature focusing on political history of the people and place, largely discussing the military implications of the Americans on the island.

Keywords: *Moros, subaltern history, Mindanao history and historiography, identity formation and reformation, colonial nostalgia*

The book-in-review is the published form of Hawkins' dissertation in Northern Illinois University last 2009. Tracing the author's publication history reveals that aside from confirming his statement in the preface of the book, a Hawkins article was published in Journal of Southeast Asian Studies on October 2008, bearing the

book's subtitle that served as the basis for expanding this written work.[1] In essence, *Making Moros* aims to interpret a brief yet neglected part of Mindanao history, specifically of the Moros, the American military intervention and occupation period (1899-1913) as a defining moment for synthesizing the perceived identity (ethnoreligious) of the Moros, and the imposed yet mostly gradual socio-cultural ideation of modernity (secular) by the Americans into a lasting collective memory that persists in the Moro's psyche and political actions. The same book has also been published by Anvil Publishing, Inc. for the Philippine edition.[2]

Hawkins emphasized that studying the mentioned period would enlighten readers and academics alike on why the Moros react to national-level policies in such a manner. Studies pertaining to the 20th century Mindanao colonization mostly begin during the social integration period (circa 1910 onwards, experimental settlements facilitated by General Pershing) which was usually focused on the settlers' situation and ethnographies of adaptation, yet the Moros' account are usually neglected or given little emphasis.[3] The claim of inadequate exposure holds true as seen in the articles commemorated almost every anniversary of Bud Dajo and Bud Bagsak massacre, and the nostalgia, as Hawkins also said, of associating the events with the formation of the separatist movements—see: Nur Misuari—which made such historical injustices including the Jabidah massacre a reason for their cry.[4]

Hence, there is a gap in understanding the root of Moros' psyche: Does the "savageness" seen in both events represent the general perception? Has the problem of framing of contextualization on messages and events been addressed? Does active interaction between two entities of different

[1] Michael Hawkins, "Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule in the Philippines' Muslim South," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 39, no. 3 (September 11, 2008): pp. 411–29, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022463408000325.

[2] Michael Hawkins, *Making Moros* (Mandaluyong City: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2015).

[3] Michael C Hawkins, *Making Moros* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2013), p. x.

[4] Articles were written by several Filipinos discussing the massacres in Bud Dajo and Bud Bagsak in different depths, to name a few: Patricio Abinales (2013), Manolo Quezon (2016), Ferdinand Llanes (2016), Stella Estremera (2016) and the like. Most of the writings focused on a drastic event but seldom or none in an ordinary event, re: social history, compared to non-Moros, i.e. Christian Filipinos who are usually featured in national dailies. There are dissertations of Dphrepaulezz (2013) and Suva (2016) which discussed the mishaps of the event and not the identity formation of the Moros; the former focused on the religious aspect while the latter, on ethical-moral order.

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ethnicities and socio-cultural backgrounds exist?[5] And if so, does it merit an epistemological exchange of thoughts and practices? How does the exposure affect the worldview of the subordinating entity? Among others, these questions were answered in Hawkins' work in varying depths.

Reading further, Hawkins presented how the Americans used epistemological imperialism through the creation of scientific knowledge (e.g., various taxonomies) sourced from the local or the place of the colonial subject as a justification for their imperial historicism to be imposed on the latter. Manners of imposition varied involving subtle intrusion and reformation of the subject's various aspects of life: daily activities in the colony, long-held traditions, and identity formation. However, Hawkins clarified, as stated in the book, that the flux of influence was never one-sided but contributory and mutual—while the Moros benefitted from the knowledge brought by the Americans, these people who sought to educate the "savages" with Western civilization were in turn educated by observing the Moros reenact their past with near actuality.

Hawkins conducted a nine-month-long participant observation in a Muslim community starting in September 2007,[6] this action was similar to what McKenna did in 1985 wherein he acquainted in a community near Cotabato.[7] Hawkins, like any contemporary historian do, did not solely rely on written and printed primary sources but considered doing oral interviews of utmost importance given that this method exposes both the mentalities of the people about certain events and the collective memories that may or may not be present in the printed or written documents. In such cases of incongruency especially for the written sources, using the subaltern perspective is appropriate for 'reading against the grain,' i.e., to sift the embedded perspectives then previously unheard.[8]

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[5] Hawkins, *Making Moros*, p. 12.

[6] Hawkins, "Imperial Historicism," p. 411: Hawkins' funding for fieldwork was generously funded by Fulbright Research Grant; Hawkins, *Making Moros*, p. ix.

[7] Thomas M. Mckenna, *Muslim Rulers and Rebels: Everyday Politics and Armed Separatism in the Southern Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 2.

[8] Patricio N. Abinales, "What Sayeth the Margins? A Note on the State of Mindanao Scholarship in Mindanao," South East Asia Research 30, no. 1 (December 7, 2021): 1–16, https://doi.org/10.1080/0967828x.2021.1991843. Among scholars that were cited by Hawkins, Dipesh Chakrabarty was the most staple one. This can be pointed out on Hawkins' goal of "giv[ing] voice specifically to the Moros."[8] His writing was a response to subaltern studies in which Chakrabarty was one of the advocates. An active supporter of "new imperial history," Hawkins employed Chakrabarty's idea on giving the masses, the unheard ones in the scheme of 'big history,' a voice to be heard for the first time.

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The majority of the sources used in writing this book were official reports of the provincial governor, personal and official letters of administrators, diaries and journals of high officials during their stay in the vicinity (and who had active participation during that time), scientific papers (mostly written by Dean C. Worcester), committee reports from the Philippines, censuses, and the staple newspapers from the locality (The Mindanao Herald being the most cited source) and from United States. These sources mentioned represent most archival and document sources. Letters and reports are usually found in institutional libraries such as the Library of Congress in the United States, but in terms of local document sources, these are possibly housed in different higher educational institutions (aside from Metro Manila known HEIs for their repositories and other museums and libraries): In Mindanao, Notre Dame University in Cotabato City and Mindanao State University–Main in Marawi City are candidates in handling such papers. In terms of oral interviews, Hawkins mentioned several trips in BARMM and Quezon City to talk with key Muslim personalities who still have vivid recollections of the memories passed down.

In this review, two chapters are discussed in detail: Chapter Two, "Disruptions" and Chapter Three, "Capitalism as Panacea." The first represents the attempt of the Americans to detach the Moros from their Islamic identity to justify the latter are savage according to the American's conceived civility. The second discusses the 'perceived potentials' of the Moros to dominate in a capitalistic world as they possessed characteristics, then suitable for warring, fit for thriving in a modern world which hails competitiveness—one of the reasons why the Americans would not give up on Moros despite their consistent clashing of worldviews.[9]

The Americans did acknowledge the achievement of Islamic civilization; due to this feat the former had a hard time to debase the connection of the Moros with the world—its relatability to the Western Asian where the religion has originated. The Americans then plotted to use the argument of 'heterodoxy and syncretism' against the Moros. General Wood initiated the issue on the illegitimacy of Islamic practices in Mindanao. He asserted that the teachings had eschewed from the original ones rendering the Moros' shared consciousness with the Islamic world, be it religious, political, and literary, were a sham. Wood claimed that the practice of Islam in Mindanao was not pure because of the inclusion of ancient practices linked in Animism were unconsciously incorporated to the original Islamic tradition from Western Asia, hence, the Moros since then acted upon deviations from

[9] Hawkins, *Making Moros*, pp. 22-23.

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Qur'an-based practices—highly centralized political power, power tripping, custom-based "laws," and slavery practices were among others that were cited which made their practices impure. The Americans successfully manipulated the Moros recategorization into a primitive rather than a beneficiary of earlier and advanced civilization through wild claims that they propagated—under the Americans' historicist narrative.

Time and again, the attacks here were not directed to Islam as an agency but to the Moros being legitimate Muslims, as reference to the heterodoxy and syncretism notions brought upon the Americans. Moving on, the Americans then attacked the institution of slavery. Under the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, it abolished any means of slavery in their territory and made it illegal to enslave a person in any other means. Yet the Americans, again, struggled to convince themselves about the barbarity of such practices. Here, the apparent distinction between Western and Eastern notion of slavery becomes evident. The American concept of a slave is as it is in common English dictionary definition; whereas in the context of the Moros, the slave does not mean that one would work until one's tongue goes out but would only act as a helper in one's household. In an account that these helpers were virtually indistinguishable to the household members unless personally asked.[10] In addition, "nuanced assessments of the cultural and economic aspects of Moro servitude threatened to unsettle familiar narratives of evolutionary history and problematized the Americans' unique form of imperial historicism"[11] hence doing so would further invalidate the claim of the Americans on Moros' savageness.

Yet the Abrogation of Bates Treaty (1903) and the establishment of an act against slave-holding and hunting was approved thereafter did merit only a bit. In 1904, the Americans stopped using their recent past on slavery to justify their civilizing attempt, thus, reverted to the feudalistic tendencies of the Moros like the Middle Age Europe. Thus, positioning the Moros like the Medieval Europeans where the process of development and evolution of civilization spanned several decades long, the Americans successfully positioned themselves as catalysts to make the process faster—an indispensable ally to modernity. Lastly, there were misrepresentations of the

[10] Hawkins, *Making Moros*, p. 66. See also: James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898 : The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2021), and Domingo Non, "Moro Piracy during the Spanish Period and Its Impact," *Southeast Asian Studies* 30, no. 4 (1993), https://kyoto-seas.org/pdf/30/4/300403.pdf. Both works clearly defined the difference of treatment and context of slavery for the Moros in contrast with the European idealization.

[11] Hawkins, *Making Moros*, p. 67.

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Moros during the time of taxonomic process: the reliance of the Americans to the initial research/scientific findings as guide to historical imposition and interpretations (especially on ethnologies) made their discourse to experience "disruptive ripple effect throughout…the imperial taxonomies and policies."[12] The Moros then brought traditional samples from their places of origins. Yet the outrageousness was not bought by the Americans but rather they became selective despite the effort to find evidence of the Moros' savageness. They noticed the irregularities and artificialness of the samples brought so they became meticulous. Despite the Americans' desire to find evidence of the Moros' savageness, they still insisted on finding and listing it in an objective way.

In terms of economic mindset in which served as the precursor to modernity, Hawkins mentioned that of all dimension of man, the one that can unify people with different backgrounds was the concept of wealth acquisition—thus, capitalism which was dubbed as 'a great synthesizing force of modernity.'[13] Here, the Americans justified that for economic progress to be attained worldwide, all of those places who had no access nor had not known of such should acquiesce to the incoming colonizer. In short, colonialism as inevitable conduit to capitalist and modernist progress. While in this case of the Moros, capitalism, through the initial benefits of agriculture and its produce, had made the Americans successfully infiltrate their primal desires, and one of those was economic progress waiting to be tapped. The Americans then rechecked the background of the Moros on their potential to merchandising and commerce. Then they found that, excluding the racial-economic slur given by the Spaniards to the Moros, that these people were adroit on matters relating to economic processes. Such practices of the Muslims can be traced back through the life history of Muhammad (SAW) being a caravan merchant, hence, a role model to the Muslims and Moros alike.

Aside from this economic potential, the Moros were considered one of the top brasses in terms of labor performance. They were known industrious and had good work ethic as evidenced by many testimonies during that time. Even Pershing attested this. Thinking such feat could not be better, the Moros were observed of having ingenious minds when some Americans saw some children made a simple toy yet had applied basic mechanisms of a machine. Thus, they had concluded that the Moros were not primitive as they

[12] Hawkins, *Making Moros*, p. 72.

[13] Hawkins, *Making Moros*, p. 75.

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thought but only needed technological assistance to have their way to modernity fast-tracked.[14]

What succeeded this gradually technological advancement was their introduction to market systems as preparation to their modern global exposure. It was in 1904 in Zamboanga in which the Americans opened the "First Moro Exchange" (the result of good trading relations with Lanao Moros in 1901, hence the Americans saw an opportunity for wider audience) where structures of different use were present—for commerce, storage, and lodging. It was created to foster feelings of security and trust among men. The exchange or fait had been a peaceful rendezvous to Moros of different groups and leaders which had met in the battlefield.[15] Such trading hubs scattered in the entire island in a span of four years, thus, had birthed to 24 more Moro Exchanges in Mindanao. It offered several goods and products according to location; some sold coffee, some had fish, while others being near to the sea became entrepôts to those inbound and outbound sails. It was here that the Americans did clearly consider the Moros as a potential mimic entity of their past progress: a living creature which would represent their past self—mistakes and improvements, an actor in a motion picture. The Americans wanted to teach the Moros to see Mindanao through the former's lens by teaching them their scientific findings to the latter, combining the indigenous knowledge with the supplemental objective data and taxonomies "without resorting to basely coercive imperial policies."[16] Lastly, Hawkins concluded this chapter by depicting the introduction of modern spaces to the Moros: the concept of individual or private spaces for privacy and potential for economic success, while the public spaces for collective responsibility of the people living within the community, serving as stewards of the environment and also provider of budget for communal development, i.e. community tax paying. The introduction of land titles and the like had made the Moros more receptive to such levies because of the benefits one could reap during those times of affirmed citizenship.[17]

Making Moros can be considered as the first to tackle in this manner: it is a history of mentalities of the Moros in relation to first, their interactions with the Americans and second, the stiff anachronistic image crafted by the Americans for the Moros which fitted their frontier pursuits overseas. Seeing

[14] Hawkins, *Making Moros*, pp. 78-82.

[15] Hawkins, *Making Moros*, pp. 85-86, 95.

[16] Hawkins, *Making Moros*, p. 94.

[17] Hawkins, *Making Moros*, pp. 100-105.

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this book under themes, it is a trifocal history book on the social, political, and intellectual history of the early colonization dynamics of Moros and the Americans in Mindanao.

Other authors that were closer to Hawkins were anthro-historical works of Thomas McKenna and balanced treatment of social and political history of Patricio Abinales. Social history is not new and had been led by several authors whose works became classic and staple readings for undergraduate and graduate classes: *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840-1940* by David Sturtevant (1976), *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* by Benedict Kerkvliet (1977), and *The Pasyon and Revolution* by Reynaldo Ileto (1979).[18] Most of the history literature delving on Mindanao from postwar to early 2010s focused on political history, which generally tackle the military history of the American occupation in Mindanao. Others wrote heavily on Lumad interactions with the Moro and the Migrant-Settlers.[19] Hawkins and Charbonneau led the American scholars to write more on different aspects of Mindanao starting 2010s onwards.[20]

[18] David R. Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines 1840-1940* (Ithaca Cornell University Press, 1976); Benedict J Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); and, Reynaldo Clemeña Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979).

[19] Peter G. Gowing, "Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos, 1899-1920" (PhD Dissertation, 1968), and the book form, first published by New Day Publishers in 1983; Samuel K. Tan, "The Muslim Armed Struggle in the Philippines, 1900-1941" (PhD Dissertation, 1973) and the expanded book form (1900-1972) published by Filipinas Foundation, Inc. in 1977; Wayne Wray Thompson, "Governors of the Moro Province: Wood, Bliss, and Pershing in the Southern Philippines, 1903-1913" (PhD Dissertation, 1975); Michael Anthony Balis, "The American Influence on the Mindanao Resistance during the Second World War" (MA Thesis, 1990); and, Renato Oliveros, "Islam in the Moro-American War (1899-1913): Implications on Muslim Mindanao, the Philippines" (PhD Dissertation, 2005), among others, which discussed politico-military implications of American occupation and intervention in Mindanao. In terms of exemptions, the works Cesar Adib Majul, primarily represented by his *Muslims in the Philippines* ([1973, two printings] and 1999 at UP Press) focused on the religious aspect of the Moros while still discussing political themes during the meeting of Spanish and Moro worldviews. Isaac Donoso's *Islamic Far East: Ethnogenesis of Philippine Islam* (UP Press) traced the integration of "the Philippine Archipelago…into the Islamic world as its easternmost limit…to analyze the historical genesis of Filipino Muslim identity," (2013, p. xvi). Oona Paredes' *A Mountain of Difference* (2013, Cornell University Press), as its subtitle described, focused on the "Lumad in Early Colonial Mindanao" esp. in the northern part of the island. While the wealth of works of Rudy Rodil and Karl Gaspar discussed the struggles of the Moros and Lumads from the hands of the foreign colonizers, Christian Filipinos, and the policies applied by the Philippine government.

[20] Other than the mentioned two, Miller and Dphrepaulezz wrote other aspects of Mindanao history: Karen R Miller, "Agricultural Commodities on the Philippine Frontier: State-Sponsored Resettlement and Ecological Distress in the 1930s," *Springer EBooks*, January 1, 2019, 57–77, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-15322-9_3; and, Omar H. Dphrepaulezz, "'The Right Sort of Young Men': General Leonard Wood and the U.S. Army in the Southern Philippines, 1898-1906" (PhD Dissertation, 2013). Patricio Abinales still leads the Filipino scholars to write

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In terms of "coaxing the voice of the Moros," this has been a difficult task because the documents consulted in writing this book were written under the policymakers' viewpoint. What dominates was the Americans' voice, yet at least there is now a discernable marking of the Moros plea or act. Obviously, the records from the Moros regarding the American period were of mental recollections and oral traditions. Moros tend to accomplish written records only through their genealogy/*tarsila* but this usually limits in family matters, especially those concerning the royal lineage. What was remarkable, as reflected in the epilogue of the book, was the nostalgia of the elders over the missed opportunity of the Moros to be part of the American dream.[21]

All in all, this condensed book is for advanced undergraduate or incoming graduate students of history. It is highly recommended for the interested ones to read other references on the historical background of the American occupation in the Philippines before reading *Making Moros* for a better understanding of the deeper historical contexts presented in this work.

about Mindanao history along with Rudy Rodil and Karl Gaspar. James Francis Warren had his classic 'Sulu Zone' reprinted last 2021, as mentioned in the earlier footnote, and the book of Datu Michael O. Mastura on the Magindanao royalties was finally published last year Datu Michael O. Mastura, *The Rulers of Magindanao in Modern History, 1515-1903* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2023). One of the latest works was of Chanco (2016) who generally wrote on the settler colonialism history in Mindanao—Christopher John Chanco, "Frontier Polities and Imaginaries: The Reproduction of Settler Colonial Space in the Southern Philippines," *Settler Colonial Studies* 7, no. 1 (March 9, 2016): 111–33, https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473x.2016.1139869.

While most of the Filipino scholars based in the Philippines also studied migration history in different parts of Mindanao but mainly studied small locale up to provincial levels. See: Faina Abaya-Ulindang, *Resettling the Huks in the Land of Promise: The Story of the Economic Development Corps in Mindanao, 1950-1970* (Manila: National Historical Commission of the Philippines, 2017); Andrea V. Campado, "PIONEERING in the COTABATO FRONTIER: THE KORONADAL VALLEY PROJECT during the PREWAR YEARS," *Banwa* 2, no. 1 (2005): 7–37, https://koha.upmin.edu.ph/cgi-bin/koha/opac-retrieve-file.pl?id=b0ef7d6d781cac5b4ceac76e093348fc; and, Bernardo Arellano, "The History of Migration Settlement of Ilonggo People in Tacurong, Cotabato (1930s-1970s)," *U.P. Los Baños Journal* 20, no. 1 (July 1, 2022), https://www.ukdr.uplb.edu.ph/journal-articles/5751/.

[21] Further discussions about the supposed inclusion of Mindanao to the USA as naval base and plantation pushed by the Muslim elites and the triumph of the Christian Filipinos to fully integrate Mindanao as a 'Filipino' territory can be read in detail at Nobutaka Suzuki, "Upholding Filipino Nationhood: The Debate over Mindanao in the Philippine Legislature, 1907–1913," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 44, no. 2 (April 22, 2013): 266–91, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022463413000076.

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