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## <Book Review>

Portia L. Reyes

**Milagros Camayon Guerrero. *Luzon at War: Contradictions in Philippine Society, 1898–1902 (with an introduction by Vicente L. Rafael)*. Quezon City: Anvil Publishing Inc., 2015, 295p.**

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essays is that formal authority is akin to fire: it can protect one against coldness, but it can also burn. And when it wants to burn, it summons instruments of suffering: brute force, legal charges, imprisonment, accusation of madness, forcing into oblivion, shaming, discrediting, harassment, rumors, and ridicule. The result can vary from death, despair, exile, voiding of subjectivity and meaning by being ignored, silenced, or emotionally tormented. Today's Thailand is, once again, turning towards authoritarianism and this pattern of suffering is all too eerily familiar.

The only thing I miss from reading this otherwise brilliant collection is its comparative aspect, which would have allowed it to live up to its title, a *sarong* for Clio. Hidden here and there in the articles, comparison with other areas could be brought out more forcefully, and its implications for the discipline of History, and not only Thai history, could be more engaged with and debated. Nonetheless, the essays are a pleasant read and a must for scholars working on Thailand and Southeast Asia. Above all, the authors in the book have composed a worthy tribute to Craig J. Reynolds by building upon his works and taking them further afield.

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***Luzon at War: Contradictions in Philippine Society, 1898–1902***  
***(with an introduction by Vicente L. Rafael)***

MILAGROS CAMAYON GUERRERO

Quezon City: Anvil Publishing Inc., 2015, 295p.

*Luzon at War* has been long in coming. As a dissertation at the University of Michigan in 1977, it has eluded Filipino historians for years; that it is finally out as a book is a happy occasion. Prior to the writing of *Luzon at War*, its author—Milagros Guerrero—has co-written with the celebrated Filipino historian Teodoro Agoncillo the highly influential *History of the Filipino People*, and has also worked with renowned historian Renato Constantino in the edition of the five-volume compendium *The Philippine Insurgent Records*. As such, when she arrived in the United States for her graduate studies, wrote Vicente Rafael, she “was already known” as a scholar of the Philippines (p. 3). She has delved into the genre of “history from below” and studied the tumultuous period of the Philippine Revolution and the nascent republic from the perspective of the periphery and the marginalized. She has looked beyond the political developments in social and political centers of Malolos and Manila, examining the social realities of the Revolution among the masses in the provinces instead. Using declassified sources on the Filipino state, taxation, landownership, and popular movements in particular, *Luzon at War* illustrates the variegated discord in society from 1898 to 1902, as the Spanish colonizers exited and the republic fought for its existence by warding off the

onslaught of the American imperialists on the islands and its people.

Five chapters comprise the book. Guerrero painstakingly provides a “serious and realistic analysis of the mechanisms of political and social change outside Manila and Malolos” and introduces her readers to the difficulties of both the government and the governed during the birth of the Philippine nation state (p. 23). She claims that in 1898 the Tagalog provinces of Luzon welcomed the Revolutionary Government by Emilio Aguinaldo. Townsmen organized militias, which attacked Spanish outposts and welcomed state envoys and other insurgent troops. To underline the country’s independence and prove that Filipinos could govern, Aguinaldo called for a nationwide reorganization. In response Manila, still at a quandary from the occupation of American and Filipino forces and nearby provinces elected prominent members from the *cacique ilustrado* or *principalia* (landowning, educated or privileged) class. Conflict characterized the transfer of power—civilian appointees contended with military commanders, who were uneasy to share powers or refused to accept their subservience to civilians. Free from the constraints of the outgoing colonial regime, which they also served, and far from the central Aguinaldo government in Malolos, new provincial officials collected taxes and rents and maintained peace and internal security with impunity. Long-entrenched ruling families used their new position to demand personal services, extort old and new taxes, and embezzle public funds, earning the ire of the masses who expected real and lasting change following the Spanish colonizers.

In Luzon support for the revolution, according to Guerrero, rested on people’s opposition to the colonial taxation and friar control of political and social life and vast tracks of arable land. Correspondingly, upon its ascent to power, the Aguinaldo government abolished forced labor and took control of friar lands. To support itself and its ongoing war with the Americans, the Aguinaldo government enforced a war tax on every citizen, required those who could not pay to serve either in civil or military public works and demanded rent from the use of agricultural land. It disbanded militias and encouraged citizens to return to cultivation. The economy stagnated, nonetheless. From 1898 to 1902 typhoons, floods, and epidemics like malaria and rinderpest repeatedly hit Central Luzon, its people, and animal resources. Restrictions on commerce between Manila and the provinces paralyzed agriculture, shattering interdependency among provinces and steadily dwindling supply of food and staple commodities. Meanwhile, to administer land use and ownership, the government ordered tillers to register their plots. Illiterate peasants sought assistance from *escribanos* (writers), some of whom unscrupulously register the illiterate farmers’ lands as their own. Other peasants, fearing the imposition of land tax, ignored the new regulation and, hence, the opportunity to legally own their plots. Also the *kasama* (sharecropper) who tilled the land for the small *inquilino* (landowner) were neglected, leading to their further impoverishment and even displacement from the farming industry. Increasingly the *ilustrado* and *cacique* minority “emerged as the true victors in the Philippine revolution, politically, socially and economically” (p. 164).

Peasant leaders, narrates Guerrero, realized early that the Spanish colonial government would not impose the social change they longed for. Their brief hope upon allegiance with Andres Bonifacio's Katipunan<sup>1)</sup> was snuffed by Aguinaldo's government which, like the colonial regime it replaced, also imposed burdensome taxes administered by corrupt officials. Widespread indignation exemplified in social revolts Panasacula, Santa Iglesia, Guardia de Honor, and the Colorums erupted, underscoring cleavages in the Revolution. In the provinces, *ilustrado* and military leaders undermined peasant leaders like Teodoro Panasacula and Felipe Salvador and refused to recognize their groups as parts of the revolutionary force. Similar to the country's colonizers, the elite equated peasant movements with troublemakers, savagery, banditry, and fanaticism, forcing them to flee to the mountains where they waged guerrilla warfare. Heavily influenced by religion, the guerrillas assassinated and raided towns and/or large farmlands, whose leadership, frustrated from the Aguinaldo government's inaction, turned to American colonizers for protection. The arrest and execution of peasant leaders and the disbandment of their societies suppressed the movement; and the newly established American regime alleviated some farmers' plight, but failed to resolve the "the age-old problem of social inequality in Philippine society" (p. 265). Years after independence peasant demands continued, because the social regeneration promised to them in the Revolution remained unfulfilled.

The discernible fissures in Filipino society and the persistent poverty and want among their peasants could indeed be traced back to the birth of the nation state. And *Luzon at War* could have delved deeper in unpacking these complex and multi-faceted contradictions. For instance it could have unraveled the idea of the educated and landed elite as a monolithic class and illustrated the cleavages brought about by politics and self-interest among their rank. It could have been enriched with further inquiry into the world of the underprivileged members of social movements—it could have amply established their particular relationship with Bonifacio's Katipunan, their culture, their philosophy, and their enduring popularity. Also the allegiance between some members of the elite and the Americans could have been better elucidated. Lastly it could have been aptly reworked as a book—that it is a dissertation in print might be charming, but updating it would certainly not have hurt. Still it should be stressed that Guerrero's *Luzon at War* provides a good overview of the social realities behind the conflicts among Filipinos during the turbulent birth of the nation state. It is an important contribution in Philippine history and a revelation of the historiography of its time; scholars of the Philippines and Southeast Asia must read it.

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1) Shorthand for the secret anti-colonial society Kataastaasang, Kagalang-galangang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (Greatest, Most Venerable Union of the Children of the Nation), which fought wars of independence against the Spaniards and the Americans.

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## *Magic and Divination in Malay Illustrated Manuscripts*

FAROUK YAHYA

Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015, xxvii+349p., 308 illus., 2 maps

A fully developed scholarly source for illustrated manuscripts dealing with humans, life, the future, beliefs, death, and so on, is much needed by arts, religious, cultural, and ethnical studies scholars. Globally speaking, studies on the history of divination, talismans, and amulets suggest that there is a connection between magic and medicine notes in the eastern and western parts of the world. However, access to a comprehensive collection of Eastern illustrated manuscripts including magic, divination, medicine, and sorcery notes is implausible. There is also a dearth of studies related to such collections in Arab countries and particularly in Persia.

Farouk Yahya considered about 96 published and non-published manuscripts in the Malay-Indonesian world chiefly since the late eighteenth century in an attempt to fill a part of this blank space. Yahya's book thus encourages other Asian scholars to produce similar works about their cultural heritage. He draws our attention to the fictional characters, popular customs, and local knowledge of magic, divination, and medicine of a region where people used to have great respect for magic and magicians. This book is divided into two parts and eight chapters.

The first part comprises an Introduction and Background, whereby the author simultaneously considers three approaches in his study, including (a) a general survey of the manuscripts, (b) an analysis of a particular illustration and note on magic/divination, and (c) an assessment of a specific manuscript. Some Malay manuscripts are unknown and sometimes undated. Apart from the destructive influence of Southeast Asian climates in wrecking the colophons, I recollect a discus-