



**Review: [Untitled]**

Reviewed Work(s):

*Historical Dictionary of the Philippines* by Artemio R. Guillermo; May Kyi Win  
Norman G. Owen

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trading partners, to the objects of slave raids, and then to dependents of Malay traders. Largely ignored by British colonial authorities, the jungle dwelling Orang Asli finally attracted concerted government attention during the Malayan Emergency (1948–60), when the threat of Orang Asli support for (mostly Chinese) communist guerrillas prompted the first government provisions of limited education and medical care and led to the establishment of a special federal agency to oversee their welfare.

The failure of the Department of Orang Asli Affairs to protect Orang Asli land rights and the involvement of this department in the government's efforts to convert Orang Asli to Islam are described in the next two chapters. The handling of Orang Asli land rights is particularly egregious: Malay applicants are often given preference for Orang Asli lands that Orang Asli themselves may not apply for (pp. 75–76), while in the regroupment schemes designed to serve as the government's solution to the "Orang Asli problem," Orang Asli are denied permanent ownership of the land they have been allocated (p. 120). Numerous examples are given of the failure of these regroupment schemes to provide acceptable alternatives to the traditional habitats of the Orang Asli, who are described as increasingly demoralized but nevertheless resistant to insistent pressures to convert to Islam and become Malay.

This volume draws on materials from a variety of sources, including a number of less accessible works published in Malaysia, to present a clearly written and coherent argument that supports the rights of the Orang Asli to preserve their own cultural identities and to determine their own futures. Written for undergraduate students and general readers, I would also highly recommend this book to Malaysian and Southeast Asian specialists for its clear overview and its insightful analysis of the plight of Malaysia's true original peoples. Of course, the book's most important audience ought to be Malaysians themselves, particularly those government officials with the power to challenge and change current policies. Unfortunately, as the authors acknowledge, their book, like similar publications, must confront the current government's negative attitudes about foreign criticism and its clear control of the local press. Nevertheless, they refuse to remain silent observers of a type of cultural destruction that is convincingly depicted as both unfair and alterable.

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*Historical Dictionary of the Philippines.* By ARTEMIO R. GUILLERMO and MAY KYI WIN. Lanham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, 1997. xi, 363 pp. \$62.00.

As a historical dictionary, this is a disgrace. It is so full of questionable statements and outright errors that a 1,000-word review cannot begin to do justice to them. To single out a few of the most egregious:

- The description of the Philippines as peopled by "tribes" who came in three "waves" (Aetas, "Indonesians" and "Malays") reflects early twentieth-century theorizing, long abandoned by serious anthropologists and prehistorians.
- For nearly thirty years now the Code of Kalantiao (pp. 60–61) has been known to be a complete forgery.
- Ma-I was not the "Chinese name for Manila" (p. 185), but referred to Mindoro.
- Encomiendas were not "landed estates of the Spaniards" (p. 81); they represented control over people, not land. They did not, therefore, produce "tobacco for export

- to Mexico" (p. 131), nor was tobacco "the chief export commodity during the galleon trade" (p. 196). Tobacco developed as an export crop only late in the eighteenth century, when the galleon trade was almost at an end.
- Inquilinos were not "hired managers" of the friar estates (p. 125), but leaseholders, who sublet the land for cultivation to tenants.
  - The Americans captured Manila in 1898, not 1899 (p. 152), and the First Philippine Commission (p. 89; with a duplicate entry under Philippine Commission, First) was appointed not at the end of the Philippine-American Revolution [*sic*] in 1901, but in 1899, while the war was still going on.
  - It is misleading to say that "new [non-Catholic] doctrines of Christianity came to the Philippines in the 19th century" (p. 205) when none were allowed in until after 1898.
  - Sugar was exported duty-free to the U.S. after 1909, not 1934 (p. 135).
  - Ramon Magsaysay did not serve as President "for only two years" (p. 147), but three (January 1954 to March 1957).
  - The chronology (pp. xix–xl) misdates the start of the galleon trade (1593, not 1615), the attack of Limahong (1574, not 1622), and the alleged "introduction" of sugar cane and tobacco in 1800 by governor Jose Basco (who served 1778–87).

Almost as disturbing as the factual errors is the erratic judgment as to what should be included and at what length. Among the people, events, and institutions for whom there is no entry are the Tobacco Monopoly, tribute (*tributos*), Andres de Urdaneta, Juan de Salcedo, Bishop Salazar, Apolinario de la Cruz, Macario Sakay, the Lopez family, the Lukban family, the Jones Act, the Wood-Forbes mission, the H-H-C bill, the Progressive Party, T. H. Pardo de Tavera, Bishop Barlin, Raul Manglapus, and Koxinga. It may be objected that space was insufficient, but there is a separate entry for the term "Steel Butterfly" (for Imelda Marcos; p. 230) and room to announce that July 28–29, 1995, was the "First International Conference of Philippine-Japan Relations, sponsored by the Yuchengco Institute of Philippine-Japan Relations of De La Salle University, held in Manila" (p. xxxviii). There are entries for all 75 current provinces, but not the historic provinces of Morong, Tondo, and Tayabas, nor the bishoprics of Nueva Caceres and Nueva Segovia; all the American governors-general, but none of the Spanish ones. Any reader interested in darker chapters in the Philippine past, such as slavery, prostitution, or the involvement of the CIA, will look for these in vain.

The lack of perspective is further shown in the fact that Andres Bonifacio warrants only half a page—less than Josephine Bracken, who married Jose Rizal on the eve of his execution—and Apolinario Mabini a mere eleven lines. Presidents Magsaysay and Macapagal each get just under a page, roughly the same as Jose Rizal and Narciso Ramos, father of the current president. On the other hand, Hacienda Luisita (of the Cojuangco family) gets more than a page, as do Juan Ponce Enrile, RAM, coup d'état, and Limahong.

Some of the failures of this book may be attributed to the fact that neither of its authors is a historian (nor is anyone mentioned in the acknowledgments). Their preference for the recent past, especially since the declaration of martial law in 1972, is reflected in the number and length of entries on this period as well as in the bibliography, which has twenty pages on "Politics and Government" as against just fifteen on "History." Topical entries (on population, forestry, agriculture, national security, etc.) tend to be entirely contemporary. The entry on "Economy," for example, begins in 1985—so much for economic history!

This emphasis on the present, however, does not preclude distortions of current or recent developments. Most typhoons do not travel “in an easterly direction” toward the Philippines (p. 247), but come west from the Pacific. The Tasaday are introduced as a “tribe . . . still living a Stone Age way of life” (p. 240) with no indication that many scholars have serious doubts as to their identity. The transition within Philippine Communism from the PKP/Huks to the CPP/NPA is presented (p. 64) as unproblematic, ignoring the bitter rivalries and schisms involved. The suggestion (p. 201) that “Ramos’s image of incorruptibility . . . separated him from the other presidential competitors” in 1992, and that his “slender war chest” also distinguished him from his “six well-heeled opponents,” will come as a surprise to supporters of Jose Diokno and Miriam Defensor Santiag (who does not even warrant an entry) as well as most observers.

Even the basic mechanics of scholarly publishing are mangled. There are dozens of phantom cross-references (to other entries that merely reflect back to the original, to nonexistent entries, or even to the same entry!) while virtually every mention of “the Philippines” is mechanically referenced back to that entry, which simply tells us where the name came from. The bibliography is so badly organized that four books on nineteenth-century history appear in the section “After Independence.” Typographical and grammatical errors abound.

There might be some marginal utility in this book as a reference on the recent and contemporary Philippines, provided allowances were made for the authors’ evident bias. Regrettably, however, it purports to be a historical dictionary and the unwitting may actually take it to be a reliable guide to Philippine history. The whole venture reeks of opportunism, the publishers and series editor presumably counting on the fact that many libraries will buy this book simply because it is part of a series. It will probably remain on their shelves, perpetuating myths and misinformation, for decades, ruining the market for any prospective rival historical dictionary that might actually be useful to students and scholars.

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*Managing Marital Disputes in Malaysia: Islamic Mediators and Conflict Resolution in the Syariah Courts.* By SHARIFAH ZALEHA SYED HASSAN and SVEN CEDERROTH. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press for Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 1997. ii, 253 pp. Distributed by University of Hawaii Press.

The involvement of the Islamic Syariah courts in Malay society has been negotiated continuously since Islam was first established on the peninsula in the fifteenth century, when it had to compete with the authority of royalty and of customary law (*adat*). In effect, the only part of the Islamic legal code to be fully entrenched in the traditional Malay states covers what in other systems would be civil law, pertaining to quotidian community life, issues of marriage, family, inheritance, ritual observances, and personal morality, all of which have their counterparts in pre-Islamic practice. Successive colonial and postcolonial regimes have tried to standardize and bureaucratize the religious court system, but even after forty years of an independent, federal nation, each of the eleven states retains its religious autonomy and personnel, allowing for substantial variation in legal interpretations and judgments across the country. Attempts by the central government to reduce