

Asian Place, Filipino Nation: A Global Intellectual History of the Philippine Revolution, 1887-1912. Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020. 272 pp. \$35. Paperback ISBN-13: 9780231192156.

Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz's book places the Philippine Revolution in an Asian cosmopolitan, regional, and international context, and then traces Pan-Asian development in the Philippines from the Philippine Revolution to the present day, using transnational and comparative approaches. The book expresses the agency of Filipino activists, politicians, and other players. According to the book, the Philippine Revolution represents the first case of a successful trans-nationalization of Pan-Asianism (26). The author consults scholars on Pan-Asianism such as Rebecca Karl, who argues that Chinese nationalism partly draws from Philippine experiences, and Cemil Aydin, who argues that Pan-Asianism features an element of anti-Westernism in its evaluation of modernity, Westernization, and the international order by Japanese intellectuals (14). The author seeks to introduce Pan-Asianism as based in Southeast Asia and beyond just Japan. She further argues that the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 made the Japanese model and Japanese leadership appealing to other Asians (21).

After CuUnjieng Aboitiz introduces the overall argument of her work in Chapter 1, she uses Chapter 2 to discuss the international and the colonial background. These involved the *ilustrados*, who were Europe-educated *mestizo* elites who sought reform from Spain (32-33). The *ilustrado*-led propaganda movement sought the full assimilation of Filipinos within Spain, and used Pan-Asianism on behalf of the colonized and the oppressed. Filipino propagandists such as Jose Rizal, who wrote in Spanish, constructed a distinct Filipino identity and national consciousness. He countered Spanish views by articulating an Asianist discourse that located the Philippines as Malay within a more regional Asian landscape using Western methodologies.

Ilustrados like Jose Rizal, Pedro Paterno, Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, and Isabelo de los Reyes disproved Filipino barbarism, making use of Spanish travel and missionary texts as well as Ferdinand Blumentritt's theory of "Migration Waves." The *ilustrado* strategy entailed imagining and associating the Filipino nation within an older, richer, documented civilizational realm. The propagandists (*ilustrados*) also used the specter of a Japanese takeover of the islands to win reforms from the Spanish, while admiring Japan.

After the discussions on the *ilustrados'* nationalist and Pan-Asianist mobilizations in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 begins by exploring Spanish imperial anxieties through religious and military reports of *ilustrado* activities, which detailed that foreign-based propagandists in Asian cities plotted revolutionary activity using their international connections, against Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines. The revolutionary Pio Valenzuela even alleged in his memoirs that Rizal had positive views on Japanese support for the Philippine revolution. According to the author, this is a possible fabrication but reflects the Asianist fantasies prevalent at the time (102).

Meanwhile, CuUnjieng Aboitiz adds a comparative element to the study by introducing Vietnamese Pan-Asianism, as Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese intellectuals used Social

Darwinism to justify the need to work together. She explores in particular how Phan Boi Chau's violent political activity was inspired by Chinese and Japanese thinkers (98-100).

With the failure of the *ilustrados* to obtain reforms from Spain, the propaganda movement was abandoned. Andres Bonifacio, a radical who came from the urban middle class in Manila and who believed in violent revolution, founded the *Katipunan*. The *Katipunan* was a radical Filipino organization, founded in 1892 with the ultimate aim of expelling the Spanish from the islands. The *Katipunan* launched the Philippine Revolution and established Philippine independence under General Emilio Aguinaldo, which unsuccessfully sought international recognition. In Bonifacio's work *Ang Dapat Mabatid ng Mga Tagalog (What the Tagalogs Should Know)*, Bonifacio wrote that precolonial Filipinos had good political and trade relations with Japan. Bonifacio, who led the *Katipunan* to revolution against the Spanish, saw Philippine history as part of Asian history that sought freedom from Western colonization (82-83).

After the discussions on the *Katipunan's* mobilization during the Philippine Revolution and the use of Pan-Asianism in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 centers on Philippine First Republic emissary Mariano Ponce. Ponce's interests and work on race and geography involved Japan, Asia and the Malays. He argued that Southeast Asians were interconnected and even linked local Filipino Bulaqueno customs to Malay and Polynesian ones. He was involved in the *Comite Central Filipino* that sought to win international aid for the Filipino revolution. He also solicited Japanese support, and joined meetings of various Asianist societies. Furthermore, letters were sent to Galicano Apacible, former *ilustrado* and chairman of the Hong Kong committee under Aguinaldo. Contents of the said letters were also forwarded to Apolinario Mabini, the first President of the Philippine cabinet under President Emilio Aguinaldo and Aguinaldo's closest advisor. In the letters and in the repetition, the messages stressed that the Japanese government supported Filipino independence and that Filipinos must seize the opportunity presented by Japan (13, 34, 76, 118-120).

The book argues that Pan-Asianism in action also involves person-to-person volunteering and organizing study and training trips for Filipinos to Japan, as well as inter-Asian and leadership training for Japanese military men in the Philippines. For example, Chinese Nationalist Sun Yat-Sen and Japanese count Miyazaki deepened their relationship with Filipino revolutionaries, supplied arms to them, and used the Philippines as staging ground for their own causes. Nationalist Filipinos, on the other hand, used the Pan-Asian network to obtain support and arms.

The author connects the Philippine Revolution with broader Asian struggles by exploring Vietnamese texts about Asians from India, Korea, the Philippines, China, and Vietnam coming together through transracialism under Japanese leadership. She thus identifies two streams of Pan-Asianism: the Japan-centric Sinic East Asian core and the transnational colonial Pan-Asianism of the Southeast Asian periphery. Traditional Pan-Asianists often stress the centrality of Japanese power in preserving and promoting Pan-Asianism across East and Southeast Asia. But CuUnjieng Aboitiz seeks to present that Pan-Asianism also came from the periphery, from colonized places in Southeast Asia like the Philippines that saw their history as part of a broader Asian narrative, and with international, transnational, and regional effects.

CuUnjieng Aboitiz traces the origins and developments of how the Japanese and American empires ended up competing in the Pacific. She consulted English-language Japanese newspapers such as the *Japan Times* that gauged Japanese public opinion about Japan potentially acquiring the Philippine Islands from Spain eventually. Citing the Filipino Asianist scholar Ricardo Jose, CuUnjieng Aboitiz writes that the Japanese victory in the 1905 Russo-Japanese War led to the United States undertaking measures that included an accelerated timetable for Filipino independence and a color-coded war plan to deal with the possible resurgence of a Filipino insurrection. By consulting Filipino newspapers such as *El Renacimiento*, she tracks the progress of the Russo-Japanese War from a Filipino perspective, as well as the roots of Japanese discontent in the aftermath of World War One. With the help of Philippine Constabulary reports, CuUnjieng Aboitiz further explores how Americans in the Philippines were paranoid and vigilant of the Japanese threat due to Pan-Asianism.

After the discussions on Mariano Ponce, Filipino Pan-Asianism, and Japanese Pan-Asianism before World War II in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 begins with how during World War II, Japan replaced European colonial power in many Southeast Asian countries and incorporated them to varying degrees in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The Japanese supported pre-war anti-colonial nationalists such as Phan Boi Chau, Son Ngoc Thanh, Ho Chi Minh, Sukarno, and Aung San during the war, and promised independence from colonialism without realizing it. CuUnjieng Aboitiz reveals that Sukarno was a very ardent internationalist Pan-Asianist and that Aung San advocated for Asian regional unity based on each country's nationalism.

The author then discusses twentieth-century Asianists such as Rizal biographer Carlos Quirino, former Foreign Secretary Leon Maria Guerrero, the renegade Filipino Revolutionary General Artemio Ricarte, the pro-Japanese Benigno Ramos and Pio Duran, Pan-Malayan Muslim Ahmed Ibn Parfahn, President Jose P. Laurel and President Diosdado Macapagal. The author consults war memoirs, speeches, radio broadcasts, and personal writings to unearth these politicians' and intellectuals' views about Pan-Asianism. For example, the Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia led to the direct sponsorship of Pan-Asianism in education. The stated views of outspoken Pan-Asianist and professor of law Pio Duran and Revolutionary General Artemio Ricarte reveal their admiration for Japan. The diary of Leocadio de Asis shows how he studied as a Filipino *pensionado* in Japan, deepening his understanding of the country and its people, and got exposed to Japanese wartime propaganda, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, critiques of US colonial policy, as well as the Japanese promotion of Filipino national identity and culture within the Sphere.

CuUnjieng Aboitiz then proceeds to trace Pan-Asianism after Japanese defeat, leading to non-alignment, Third Worldism, and Pan-Malayism. She discusses postwar Filipino leaders such as Wenceslao Vinzons who built transnational Malay organizations, Filipino Muslim Ahmed Ibn Parfahn, who extolled the Vietnamese victory at Dien Bien Phu as inspirational, and Diosdado Macapagal, who was described as a Pan-Malayan President who facilitated the Maphilindo confederation. Third Worldist solidarity and nonalignment connected Filipino thinkers and actors to

their Southeast Asian neighbors. The book then tackles the persistence of Asianism in Chinese wartime literature, as mentioned by current Filipino President Duterte, and Asianism in Chinese-Filipino histories, consulting Caroline Hau. The author concludes by identifying a more coherent Southeast Asian political region due to Pan-Asianist thought.

The book concludes by addressing how the Bolshevik Revolution and Wilsonian principles undercut the international principles of Pan-Asianism (181), which is the only point that could have been expanded further. The Soviet Union and the United States, which both espoused anti-colonial ideals, served as inspirations and models for different anti-colonial peoples in Asia. The comparative approach, with a wide range of material on the Philippines and Vietnam, and a narrower selection of Japanese and Chinese sources, and on the afterlives of Pan-Asianism, is evidently prodigious. This book connects with works such as Erez Manela's *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*, which reconstructs the internationalization of nationalism through US inspiration of Egyptians, Indians, Chinese, and Koreans at the end of World War I and Woodrow Wilson's ideals. It also resonates with *The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*, a collection edited by Christopher Lee, that touches on African and Asian nations desiring alternative modes of political connection and explores how Nehru of India, Nasser of Egypt, Zhou Enlai of China and Ahmed Sukarno of Indonesia used the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference to create a political alternative to colonialism and the Cold War.

A notable strength of the book is its ability to connect transnational advocacies and stress continuities in Filipino Pan-Asianism from the revolution well into the present day. Perhaps the initiatives of the Filipino Third Republic to participate in the South-East Asia Treaty Organization, initiatives towards forming a Third Force, participation in the non-aligned movement, the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the new power alignments in modern Asia-Pacific could have been included when examining the continuities of Pan-Asianism within institutions and organizations, as well as the various models on transnational mobilizations on Asian issues and Asian unity. Another strength of the book is that it presents an Asianist approach to Philippine nationalism and reveals the ties between Filipinos and other Asians. Some questions remain, such as the extent to which Filipinos really self-identify as Asian, given the centuries-long legacies and cultural influences of both Spain and the United States. Vestiges from the Philippines' colonial past continue to shape perceptions on race, ethnicity, and religion in Filipino society.

The intended audience would certainly include transnational historians and scholars on Asian nationalisms and South and Southeast Asians, though anyone who studies Asia would find this book revealing. The book generally caters to a specialist audience, but even non-specialists can follow the book with ease. The work provides the non-specialist history enthusiast with new perspectives on the Philippine Revolution and the origins of Pan-Asianism. This book serves as a gateway towards connecting the Philippines, Southeast Asia, and East Asia from a contemporary, non-Western lens.

The writing of the book, in the English language, with the author's deep academic training and extensive background clearly evident, is easy to follow. The book's narratives and findings are organized chronologically, from the nineteenth century up to the present. The book exhibits the author's command of the diverse and voluminous sources she consulted from the archives. CuUnjieng Aboitiz employs techniques that appeal to the reader's imagination of these Pan-Asian forces and enhance the text. I would recommend the inclusion of this text to history AP, honors, undergraduate, and graduate level classes that study the Philippines, Asia, Asian nationalisms, and the Third World.

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