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Caroline S. Hau's

Elites and Ilustrados in Philippine Culture

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appointed ambassador to the United Kingdom (UK), which was considered a penalty and not a promotion for Guerrero.

Fernandez could have provided background information on the Recto decade in Philippine foreign policy, a narrative that would have placed Guerrero in the same pantheon as Laurel and in clear contrast to Magsaysay. Instead of criticizing Vice President Carlos P. Garcia's ambivalence (Garcia was acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs to Magsaysay), the author could have shown the entire picture of Philippine diplomacy during the Cold War: the "conservatives" of the pro-American side (Magsaysay and Carlos P. Romulo) and the "progressive-neutralist" side (Recto, Laurel, and Guerrero). Guerrero's speeches as ambassador to the UK, Spain, India, Mexico, Cuba, and Yugoslavia and as a member of the Philippine delegation to the UN showed his allegiance to Recto's progressive-neutralist side. Recto was known for his advocacy for the reexamination of Philippines–US relations, closer Asian ties, and the adoption of a neutralist foreign policy during the Cold War.

Despite the identified shortcomings, Fernandez succeeds in some ways in situating Guerrero's story in the intersections of family, literary, diplomatic, and transnational history of the postwar Philippines. Fernandez gives us a glimpse of how Guerrero's nationalist and realist approach might have contributed to the Philippines's quest for identity in the community of nations. Through a meticulous analysis of the diplomat-scholar's speeches and dispatches, Fernandez secures Guerrero's place in Philippine diplomatic history.

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CAROLINE S. HAU

Elites and Ilustrados in Philippine Culture

Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2017. 398 pages.

The 2016 presidential election brought back the spotlight on an age-old quandary that has inundated the Philippines: the social and political

predominance of the elite in a destitute country. Throughout the election period, politicians roused the Filipinos' imagination of the elite, as some were vilified while others disassociated themselves from this privileged segment of society. As candidates tried to establish themselves as representatives of the masses, the term "elite" became increasingly conflated with the opulence of rich businessmen, the extravagance of socialites, and even the detachment of middle-class intellectuals from impoverished Filipinos, who end up victims of their economic and intellectual dominance. Caroline Hau's *Elites and Ilustrados in Philippine Culture* addresses this perplexity as she explores the complex relationship of this favored group with Philippine history and society.

One might describe Caroline Hau as constituting the very elite that she examines in this book. Her multicultural background as a Chinese Filipino academic based in Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies exemplifies the privileged intellectual elite. Like José Rizal, Hau represents the modern *ilustrado* who is open to foreign ideas to produce works that contribute to national progress. She is best known for *Necessary Fictions: Philippine Literature and the Nation, 1946–1980* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000) and more recently *The Chinese Question: Ethnicity, Nation, and Region in and beyond the Philippines* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2014). For more than twenty years, Hau has been navigating privileged intellectual spaces all over the globe in an effort to understand the intricate tapestry that is Philippine society. In *Elites and Ilustrados*, Hau specifically scrutinizes the threads that both strengthen and weaken the elite's ties to the Philippine nation.

Given that Hau dedicates this book to Southeast Asian scholar Benedict Anderson, traces of the latter's work can be seen in how she unpacks the Filipino elite's imagined identity. The book maps out the social imagination of this group through the imprints they have left in our history. In the first chapter, she captures the convoluted imagination of the Filipino elite, which conflates their wealth with their intellectualism, as seen through the nineteenth-century *ilustrado* who came from well-to-do families and learned liberal ideas overseas. Rather than adhere to this popular notion, Hau unravels the elite's intricate social ties to highlight their fluid identity that extended beyond riches, race, knowledge, and nation. Thus, she interrogates the popular imagination of the Filipino elite throughout the book.

The first four chapters focus on Philippine literature, specifically Rizal's *Noli me tangere* (1887) and *El filibusterismo* (1891), Ninotchka Rosca's *State of War* (1988), Nick Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* (1961), and Miguel Syjuco's *Ilustrado* (2010), where Hau gathers different pieces that create the Filipino elite. Hau offers a fascinating notion of the elite that builds upon the transnational character of the ilustrado, a person substantially transformed abroad upon embracing new values and practices. As she thoroughly analyzes the fictional ilustrados depicted in these works within their historical contexts, she manages to tie their imagined identities to Philippine realities. By establishing the links between them and Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), she highlights the fluidity of ilustrado identity, which struggles to settle its roots in one place. Neither here nor there, the ilustrados are often displaced in national politics and discourse due to their distance and complicated identity politics. Hau adds that the ilustrado's dilemma becomes increasingly complex especially for those who come from multicultural households.

Hau's thorough analysis of Chinese Filipinos and Filipinos who live abroad in the later part of the book strengthens her imagination of the transnational Filipino elite. These two chapters are particularly important given contemporary discourses that question the loyalties of these transnational, if not, transracial, Filipinos. While her analysis of the Chinese elite focuses on the racial politics that emerged during the NBN-ZTE corruption scandal in 2007, similar racial arguments have also been raised during the South China Sea dispute in 2016. Hau's analysis on the pertinence of race and place in the imagination of Filipino nationhood puts forward a closer examination of the modern ilustrado—the overseas Filipinos—in postcolonial discourse. She argues that migrant Filipinos are significant reminders of the transnational and transcultural shifts in Philippine society. Like the ilustrado, these migrants negotiate Filipino identity in a progressively globalized life. Hau questions the exclusionary behavior of some Philippine-based Filipinos who undervalue the opinions of Filipino migrants who only desire to strengthen their ties to their nation.

Elites and Ilustrados is not an apologia for the elite; rather, it highlights Hau's dedication to examining the complexity of this social group. While she attempts to initiate a discourse about them, one could only wonder who she is in dialogue with. Her eloquent exploration of elite life in history and culture limits this discourse to those who have the requisite literacy to

comprehend her arguments, mainly the very intellectuals she is trying to depict or other intellectuals who are deeply critical of the elite. Despite the book's desire to expand the conversation about the elite, its language and content limit its accessibility to a few. Most of the books she assesses, while considered the best of Philippine literature, are not the kind of media the masses consume. To a certain extent, *Elites and Ilustrados* captures the very dilemma the Filipino intellectual elite face in this globalized world. One can see the demands of global academia in her work, from the exemplary rigor and discipline of her research to her articulate use of the English language. However, one can also imagine people distancing themselves from Hau's analysis of the Filipino elite because her book is inaccessible or is representative of an elite culture. To see this book sidelined in national discourse would be disappointing given her strong arguments on Philippine society's deepening multicultural and transnational character.

Elites and Ilustrados contributes to an academic tradition that shapes the national imagination of the Philippines by investigating the complex nature of the Filipino elite and their place in the nation. In a society that often defines itself in a class binary—between the elite and the masses—this book expands our understanding of these social boundaries through the exploration of the transnational nature of the elite as seen in our history and literature. In highlighting the precariousness of the Filipino elite in national discourse, especially in their identity politics in this increasingly globalized world, Hau's book highlights the mutable boundaries of class and national identity. Because she exemplifies the cultural negotiations of the Filipino elite who operate within and beyond the Philippines, her book interrogates our notion of nation as she examines the elite through the transnational Filipino.

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