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Michael Salman. The Embarrassment of Slavery: Controversies over Bondage and Nationalism in the American Colonial Philippines

Author(s): Paul A. Kramer

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have thrown a little more light on this critical side of jazz in Japan would have made this a perfect book for me.

MICHAEL H. KATER
York University

MICHAEL SALMAN. *The Embarrassment of Slavery: Controversies over Bondage and Nationalism in the American Colonial Philippines*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 2001. Pp. xi, 335. \$45.00.

The American colonial Philippines—the period of formal U.S. political rule over the islands from the Philippine-American War (1899–1902) to 1946—has long been a neglected field of historical research in both the Philippines and United States. For Filipino historians, U.S. rule, which relied heavily on elite Filipino collaboration, confounded narratives of the rise of independence-based Filipino nationalism. For U.S. historians, colonial rule in the Philippines was obscured by national-exceptionalist claims that the United States was not a colonial empire and by the inattention of military and diplomatic historians cleaving to U.S. metropolitan actors and archives. Along with other recent work, Michael Salman's revealing study of discourses of slavery and emancipation in the early twentieth-century Philippines suggests that this topic is beginning to attract the scholarly attention it deserves.

Salman identifies slavery and emancipation as the central means by which both U.S. and Filipino actors came to comprehend U.S. colonialism in the Philippines. Slavery and emancipation, as he puts it, "became points of social, cultural, and political conflict in a series of intertwined American and Philippine histories" (p. 20). In locating these points, Salman's work simultaneously contributes to three different but related areas of historical inquiry. First, it provocatively extends to Southeast Asia historical debates about the politics of emancipation that have heretofore been firmly and almost exclusively anchored in the Atlantic world. Second, it undertakes a cultural history of U.S. colonial rule that highlights competing definitions of and negotiations between ruler and ruled, whereas most prior studies have focused primarily on more conventional political and administrative history. Third, implicitly but perhaps most significantly, it puts the Muslims of the southern archipelago, and the animists of northern Luzon, at the center of Philippine history. These regions, Salman argues, with their "non-Christian" peoples, were the crucibles in which notions of what it was to be "Filipino," and what it was to be "colonial," were forged.

The book is organized chronologically, from the Battle of Manila Bay in 1898 through the 1916 Jones Act, which "Filipinized" the colonial state and promised eventual independence. Even before the advent of a colonial state, Salman argues, "[a]ntislavery ideology and the history of abolition shaped Americans' debate

on U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines" (p. 28). Drawing on earlier works, he shows how the ranks of anti-imperialist leadership included abolitionists and how these figures made public sense of U.S. colonialism in light of questions of slavery and freedom. When, in 1899, the United States negotiated the Bates Treaty with Moro *datus* in the southern islands, promising nonintervention with "slavery," it further fueled anti-imperialist arguments that colonialism was contrary to progress, freedom, and morality. Salman then provides a nuanced social history of slavery within the political structures of the southern Philippines; in the interests of indirect rule, U.S. officials represented these systems as "mild," to be eliminated gradually through promises of compensation and U.S. protection for runaways. "The problem," Salman notes astutely, "lay in resolving the contradiction between antislavery commitments and the imperative of colonial order so that one did not fully negate the other" (p. 115). As the U.S. colonial state consolidated, its officials increasingly redrew slavery as "harsh," passing "anti-slavery" laws that touched off ten years of Moro-U.S. warfare.

In his final section, Salman reveals how "slavery" emerged as one of the central tropes in U.S.-Filipino colonial politics through what he calls "the metaphysics of slavery and nation" (p. 123). He begins by exploring the meanings of "slavery" within Tagalog political culture, isolating antislavery tropes within the larger fabric of late-nineteenth-century Tagalog millennialist revolutionary thought. Slavery was also an organizing theme for the elite Filipino nationalists who collaborated and contended with U.S. proconsuls. U.S. colonialism might itself be cast as "slavery," as Spanish colonialism had been, although "official" nationalists' own interests in the existing order suggested other rhetorical routes. Indeed, as Salman adeptly shows, the enslavement of "non-Christians" in northern Luzon by Christians was used by U.S. colonial officials as an argument against Filipino capacities for self-government. In response, nationalists denied the existence of slavery in the islands in both present and past. Turning the tide of the "slavery" controversies, Salman argues, was essential to the maintenance of U.S. control. "The meanings of slavery emerged as an embarrassment," he observes, "first for American advocates of colonialism and the colonial state in the Philippines, and then for American anti-imperialists and Filipino nationalists" (p. 20).

Despite the book's many strengths, Salman's careful tracking of languages of slavery and emancipation is carried out in isolation from other discourses, leaving readers the mistaken impression that such themes were the primary or even exclusive ground of Philippine-American colonial politics. While highly significant, "anti-slavery" politics were far from the only languages of Philippine-American colonial politics, which involved equally charged exchanges over the meanings of race, republicanism, education, civilization, and family that intersected with, rather than being subsumed within, "anti-slavery." The presence

or absence of slavery was far from the only criteria for “self-government,” progress or civilization for the Philippines’ resourceful American rulers. Salman’s argument for the predominance of “anti-slavery” is achieved in part by effacing important boundaries between discourses. He blurs the lines between distinct tropes of colonial difference: for example, fusing at one point “slavery, head-hunting and other ‘barbaric practices’” (p. 144). Confronted with the absence of slavery and emancipation in William McKinley’s 1898 “Benevolent Assimilation” proclamation, Salman reduces its many tropes—among them “high mission,” “good and stable government,” “individual rights and liberties,” as well as “benevolence” and “assimilation”—to those of slavery and emancipation, arguing that McKinley’s terms “resonate strongly with an American repertoire of binary oppositions between individual freedom and slavery” (p. 29).

These criticisms aside, this book persuasively makes the case that, for both Filipinos and Americans, slavery and freedom were core perceptual and political tools in colonial political struggles. It furthermore points toward comparative and transnational perspectives: as Salman notes, the marking of “slavery” and efforts at “emancipation” were projects the United States had in common with other colonial states. This book both greatly enriches our knowledge of the early twentieth-century Philippines and opens the way for further research in a field that has long merited it.

PAUL A. KRAMER
Johns Hopkins University

CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

BRUCE CURTIS. *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840–1875*. Buffalo, N.Y.: University of Toronto Press. 2001. Pp. x, 385. \$60.00.

Even scholars who appreciate the charm of statistical representation and the quantitative impulse as topics of historical inquiry may feel that thirty-five years of the Canadian census makes a rather narrow topic for a book. Yet there are good reasons not to disdain this one. Excellent archival records survive from the mid-nineteenth-century Canadian censuses, and they enable Bruce Curtis to depict in unexampled detail the complex social process of surveying, compiling, and standardizing. The author draws two main conclusions from his story. First is a word to the wise to quantitative historians, who should never take official numbers for granted, without asking where they came from. It is tempting to say that a quantitative history must always be also a cultural history, involving not only patterns of numbers but also unstable categorizations of ethnicity, religion, disease, property, and occupation, and motives to conceal or to exaggerate whenever the results are associated with a public purpose. In the case at hand, the process of gathering data was hilariously unsystematic until 1871. This leads to Curtis’s other

main point: that a successful census is a striking institutional achievement, associated with ominous bureaucratic modes of rationalization and even domination.

The author’s reflections on Michel Foucault’s “governmentality,” developed at the beginning and end of his book, are pertinent and of some interest. But the heart of the study is made up of material gathered from archives and from evanescent contemporary publications about the censuses of 1851 and 1861, both fascinating failures, and 1871, which was executed with relative competence. As in the United States during this period, there was no permanent census office but only a temporary staff assembled on rather short notice and chosen, through 1861, mainly for patronage reasons. The enumerators, a haphazard lot, were given forms, often in inadequate numbers, sometimes in the wrong language, with ambiguous categories and egregious misprints, and sent out into the Canadian winter to locate and interview the inhabitants of Upper and Lower Canada. Their mission was not only to count the population but also to gather myriad data about religious faith, ethnicity, education, wealth, and manner of earning a living. Despite the many obstacles, the enumerators succeeded in registering many more people than actually lived in Canada, a 110 percent effort that we can credit mainly to the piece-rate system of compensation. They also produced a superlative result for Canadian literacy in 1861, merely by ignoring in many cases the troublesome item: “Persons over 20 years of age not knowing how to read or write.” Often they had little idea how to handle questions about race or occupation, and the guidance they received from the census office was often absent or even contradictory.

The bumbling inadequacies of these early censuses, organized mainly by Walter Cavendish Crofton and then William Hutton, contrast sharply with Joseph-Charles Taché’s meticulous effort in 1871. Curtis links Taché’s systematic approach to his ultramontane Catholicism, a marriage, he proposes, of backward-looking religious severity with the “totalizing” purposes of the modern state. At the same time, he suggests that Taché’s choice to tally the inhabitants on the basis of legal residence rather than where they happened to be on census day, and to identify ethnicity with (Old World) country of origin, reflected a special form of population politics. Taché wanted to show a large and flourishing population of pure-blood French Catholics.

Not only in retrospect but in its own time, the Canadian census was deeply controversial. The great questions were the ratio of French to British population and of Catholics to Protestants. Also at issue was the rate of demographic growth, a question that was itself suffused with ethnic politics with and rivalry against its large and boastful southern neighbor. Ironically, the relatively competent 1871 census was the most contested, because it seemed to indicate a radical slowing of population growth. In retrospect, it can be read as illustrating how, even where enumeration is