

Behind, Between and Beyond Politics: The “Political” History in the Writing of Textbook in Indonesia and the Philippines*

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One can recall the not too distant past when knowledge was thought to be an innocent reflection of “reality” and the process of its production and transmission fairly benign and straightforward. While there had been occasional doubts expressed, the foundation of scholarship on the whole rested on such a bedrock. Revolutionary and evolutionary changes in recent decades, however, swept the whole intellectual world and sent the house of old certainties almost crumbling under the weight of incessant attacks. The “postie”¹ waves have pushed the pendulum to the opposite extreme. All knowledge now tend to be seen as politicized, oftentimes indiscriminately so.

Among bodies of knowledge, history is one of those that have reached the highest level of politicization. Its nature being repository of a nation’s (or certain group’s) identity/ies makes it a fiercely contested terrain among those who have axes to grind. Suspicion of such nature has been expressed relatively early but systematic study of ideological underpinnings of writing and teaching of history began to flourish only several decades back. The heated and continuing “culture wars” inside American classrooms; the increased encroachment of the Thatcher government on educational issues in the UK; the rise of totalitarian regimes (such as in the USSR, Nazi

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¹ “Postie” fever refers to the anti-foundational theoretical projects such as postmodernism, poststructuralism and to a certain extent, postcolonialism.

Germany, China, etc.) that evidently manipulated educational system to advance their political ends; all these have laid fertile ground on which early seeds would grow (Nash, Crabtree and Dunn 1997; Phillips 1998). In Asia, the controversies in Japan concerning censorship of history textbooks stood for decades as the most visible case of interplay between politics, on the one hand, and writing and transmission of history, on the other (Reedy 1999; Ienaga 1970, 1992). While Japan's case captured the interest of many scholars in the English-language speaking world and there produced a large body of literature, it hardly provides a good model for the study of postcolonial societies in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. For one, Japan is in a sense an atypical Asian country being a former imperial power whereas most of the others were former colonies. For another, strong state control of educational channels in Japan had a relatively long tradition and, unlike in many countries in Southeast Asia, state formation proceeded without considerable divisive or ambivalent influences from the West as a factor in intra-elite rivalry. It was probably because of these that the state control of knowledge production apparatuses has been much firmly entrenched in Japan than what obtains in many postcolonial societies.

This paper aims to review relevant literature and to discuss an number of conceptual and theoretical issues that one has to grapple with in his/her effort to understand the textured relationship between politics, on one side, and production and transmission of historical knowledge, on another. I submit that an important dimension in analysis of knowledge-power nexus has long been neglected and that this dimension must be factored-in to produce a more nuanced characterization of knowledge-power relationship. I believe that such nuanced characterization will have a far-reaching implications on and applications to the analysis of knowledge production whose importance cannot be doubted as it goes into the heart of scholarly enterprise.

I. The Beaten Tracks

Social and political theories have long dealt with the intimate relationship between knowledge and power. Approaches vary but in almost all of these accounts, power takes precedence as a causal factor in shaping knowledge and knowledge, in return, helps maintain and/or enhance power. For instance, sociologists such as Mannheim, Bourdieu and Bernstein contributed considerably in establishing social and political contingency of knowledge. (see Dant, 1991; Giroux, 1983) Rejecting the long supposed function of knowledge as a mirror of reality out there, they emphasized that various forces in the society do much to influence the character of knowledge. More emphatic of the political aspect of knowledge has been the Marxist tradition. The classical Marxist notions of ideology and **false consciousness**, for instance, encapsulate the overpowering influence of power (supposedly held by a dominant class) over various forms of knowledge. What follows are few examples of studies that carry more or less this kind of approach.

1. Schools as Re-producer of Class/State Interests

In the Philippines, there is a long and strong tradition of this kind of analysis of school system in general and historical knowledge in particular. Constantino's famous essay *Miseducation of Filipinos* (1983) comes close to Marxist orthodoxy for viewing Philippine educational system as hostage to the interest of the ruling class, both in colonial and postcolonial periods. The 2-volume history texts he has written, *The Past Revisited* and *The Continuing Past* (Constantino 1975, 1978), plus dozens of notable essays, carry the same unabashedly Marxist line of interpretations. Doronila's well-regarded book, *Limits of Educational Change* (1989), while buttressed by Bernstein's sociology of education for theoretical support, carries more than subtle elements of Marxist influence. Such influence manifests, firstly, in the author's implicit acceptance of the radical, anti-colonial and strongly class-based definition of Filipino nationalism. This prompted her to classify content of history/social

studies texts as less than nationalistic. Secondly, the study views function of school system primarily as a reproducer of the interest of the dominant class.

In the case of Indonesia, a number of studies are notable for carrying quite similar lines of analysis.² Parker (1992), for example, wrote an article entitled "The Creation of Indonesian Citizens in Balinese Primary Schools". She wanted to find out how does the state through a centralized educational system affect the culture of the people in areas far from the center, such as Bali. She did content analysis of textbooks used in Moral Education (Pancasila) and Social Science subjects as well as the 1975 curricula. She also did classroom observations to find out how these subjects were actually taught in actual situation. Her findings are quite revealing of the success of the state in creating "Indonesian citizens" out of highly diversified people. She argued that despite Bali's distinct culture, younger generations of Balinese are emerging from the state-sponsored schools more like the kind of Indonesian the Jakarta-centered state would like to create. The article shows that hegemonic control has already been established and is in fact quite successful in imposing itself on the people, even in the periphery.

Leigh (1991) is supportive of Parker's line of thinking. In the article "Making the Indonesian State: The Role of School Textbooks," she emphasizes how textbooks and the questions given in national examinations reflect the effort of the Suharto regime to legitimize its rule, to promote national unity and to strengthen its control over the whole nation. Just like in Parker's article, the picture presented is that of state dominating educational channels as well as the character of knowledge being transmitted through such channels. The desire to conflate the state and the school system seems to be almost palpable. While there were explicit

² The similarity, in this sense, lies not on emphasis on class but more on the extensive role of the state. In the case of the Philippines, the state is more clearly seen (especially by Marxist-inspired scholars) as subservient to the interest of the dominant class. In the case of Indonesia, on the other hand, there is not as much emphasis, implicit or explicit, on the connection between the state and the dominant class. (This is not to say that such connection does not hold in reality. It is just that the works of scholars dealing with this issue do not tend to conflate the two.)

references to famous sociologist Bourdieu, and just a few to Marxist-inspired scholars, the Marxian element is clear enough.

In another article, "Learning and Knowing Boundaries: Schooling in New Order Indonesia," Leigh (1999) further substantiates her earlier claim by looking more deeply into the role of the examination system in the formation of mindset supportive of the state's ideological position. She argues that the rigid examination system which makes use of True or False- and multiple choice-types of questions has a "deadening" effects of the ability of the students to think for themselves. The result, she claims, is a sharply bounded and dichotomized views of knowledge and this serves as a fundamental template for patterning of thoughts amenable to the ideological interest of the New Order regime.

Still on Indonesia, Elder's thesis "Ideologies, Aims and Content in Indonesian Education" (1987) fits very well into the over-all theme discussed above. He argues that even during the transition period from Sukarno's Guided Democracy to Suharto's New Order, from 1965 to 1969, contents and aims of education depended on the ideological orientations of the state thus emphasizing the reproductive function of the school system seen to be manipulated to serve the interest of the ruling elite.

2. Battlefield of Competing Forces

Classical Marxism has long been discredited. Those who followed in the wake of Marxist orthodoxy such as Althusser, Gramsci, the Frankfurt School and Laclau-Mouffe tandem did much to refine the orthodox Marxist formulation, not to mention each other's works. One major adjustment lies in rejecting the brute economic determinism and class reductionism that rigidified classical Marxism. The impact and applications of such refinement on education studies and sociology of knowledge are no doubt wide-ranging and subtly differentiated but one major change is the shift in the view of the function of the school system from being mere reproducer of the interest of the dominant class to being a site of contestations among

different power cliques. (Apple 1991; Giroux 1983; Sharp 1980) Notable studies that fall under this category have dealt with countries such as the UK,³ US⁴ and Spain⁵ but due to space limitation, I can only relegate

³ Robert Phillips in his book *History Teaching, Nationhood and the State* (1998) shows that at the heart of the debate in the UK rests the issue of cultural and national identity and that it should be viewed against the backdrop of hegemonic struggle over the control of mechanisms for cultural transmission. He also argues that the debate is not so much about the past as about the present, pointing to the kind of “national schizophrenia” wrought by tremendous ideological, cultural and social changes that swept UK in the past several decades. As painstakingly shown by Phillips, the fractious debates escalated as a response to the initiatives of the Thatcher government to gain greater state control of the school system in general and curricular formulation, in particular. Cognizant of the educational achievements in other countries and fearful of declining competitiveness of British industries as well as of decreasing nationalism among the general populace, the government, with the prodding of “neo-conservative” groups, decided to reverse its previous decentralized and somewhat “laissez faire” attitude towards educational policy-making. Vigorous interventions were realized through legislations that paved the way for educational reforms that included, among others, the formulation of mandatory, statutory National Curriculum, not just in History but all other subjects as well. What followed was lengthy and often heated exchange of views played out in the media between the those who oppose the move and those who support it.

⁴ Quite similar experience in the US is captured in the book *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (1997) by Nash, Crabtree and Dunn. Whereas the conflict in the UK revolved around the National Curriculum, in the US, it was about the supposedly more benign National Standard, the latter being suggestive and voluntary while the earlier was mandatory. Despite the suggestive and voluntary nature of the National Standard for History, the debates it generated were as impassioned as, if not more than, those in the UK. They featured a protracted and bitter conflict between the “progressive” proponents of the Standard and the “conservative” critics of it. Having been actively involved in the preparation of the National Standard, the authors of this book tend to present the competing sides of the debate in a way more or less favorable for the “progressives”. Just like Phillips’ book, Nash’s book is a clear articulation of the politics involved in curricular formulation in history. By documenting the criticisms and the efforts of the “right-wingers” to discredit the National Standards, the campaign launched by the proponents and, finally, the negotiations for compromise that ensued, the book clearly shows the complex interplay of various forces in curricular formulation. Likewise, the authors successfully situated the debates in the context of a broader “cultural war” that, as they claim, has been raging in the US for decades.

reference to them to footnotes. In the absence (as far as I know) of comparable work on the Philippines, what follows are studies on Vietnam and Indonesia that can exemplify this approach.

Thaveeporn's (1998) thorough and fine study *Schools and Politics in South and North Viet Nam: A Comparative Study of State Apparatus, State Policy and State Power (1945-1965)* presents a textured relationship between politics and schooling in the former North and South Vietnam. It looks into the "processes by which the two school apparatuses were formed and expanded in order to ascertain how they reflected and effected ideological and economic changes." (1998: 1) It looks into the relationship between nation-based, class-based and state-based ideologies and ask very pertinent question: to what extent each of these ideologies affected the structure and content of the school systems in Vietnam. I think the author hits the heart of the matter in pointing the weaknesses in structural Marxist approach - through Althusser's notion of Ideological State Apparatus - when applied to school systems in newly emerging nation-states. He argues quite well that it can not be assumed a priori that all "school apparatuses are state apparatuses - a premise that precludes any systematic discussion of the process by which statism took over the school system and of how the degree and form of statism changed over time." (1998: 9-10) Such assertion is particularly relevant to many postcolonial societies where state formation process had to take place relatively late and under the enduring effects of colonial experience. As far as I know, this is the most sophisticated analysis

⁵ In the case of Spain, Carolyn Boyd has done a splendid job in weaving the seams of political history of history teaching in her book *Historia Patria: Politics, History and National Identity in Spain, 1875-1975*. What is of particular importance in this work is the nuanced treatment of interplay between the society, including the state and the elites, on the one hand, and the school system, on the other. By examining history curricula, textbooks and memoranda from the education ministry covering the period of one century, 1875-1975, she has successfully shown the imperfect correlation between the educational system and socio-political and economic forces in the society. She has found out that the curricula, for instance, reflect contradictory aims and values which may indicate "the weight of inertia, tradition and compromise" (Boyd 1997:xvi) Rather than a clear mirror of a dominant ideology in the society, schooling, she argues, is a battleground for competing forces.

of the interplay between politics and schooling in the region to date.

Lee Kam Hing's book *Education and Politics in Indonesia* is perhaps the only book-length work on Indonesia that can be cited here. Without resorting to the explicit use of theories, this historical study clearly describes the contested character of education in Indonesia. It is an important study in that it covers the formative period from 1945 up to 1965 when the foundation of national educational system has been laid. Of special importance as far as my research interest is concerned is the effort of the Sukarno regime to appropriate educational system to advance its own agenda. Mass education towards a socialist society had been made a cornerstone of government policy on education during the period. However, other forces tried hard to influence policies. What emerges from the author's exposition is a picture of several competing forces trying to influence the shape of educational policies. The communists, "plain nationalists," teachers' union, and several Islamic groups asserted their respective agenda in their effort to influence the shape of the incipient national educational system. The whole picture easily reminds one of a mayhem he/she could see usually in fields other than education. Indeed, the author has succeeded in showing how closely interwoven politics has been with educational enterprise.

Despite the difference in the two sets of studies cited above, they share taken for granted treatment knowledge as a handmaiden of power; as something the powerful uses to advance their own interest and something whose shape or character is influenced by such interest. It would require a Foucauldian revolution to change the equation.

II. Foucault and a New Approach

Foucault has been both exulted and maligned in social and political theories. Notwithstanding stinging criticisms, the ideas and methods he proposed have been recognized to have far-reaching implications and application in the analysis of practically all bodies of knowledge, including

the natural sciences.⁶ This may be because of the fact that he went straight into the nature of knowledge and offered insights and methods that blew fresh wind into the field. In *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1979), we can find categorical statements that fuse knowledge and power together and in which knowledge assumed an equal position with power, unlike before where it was merely its handmaiden. Following Nietzsche, he declares: “Power and knowledge directly imply one another...there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (Simons 1995:27). Within the theoretical boundary defined by Foucault, such formulation makes a lot of sense. But he offers a theoretical insight that is, for all its unfamiliar assumptions and implications, bound to create difficulties on practical or empirical ground. On the other hand, his and Nietzsche’s idea on positive power offers a refreshing counterpoint to the commonplace conception of (negative) power, usually taken as coercive, agent-possessed and -driven, purposive or utilitarian and to a certain degree quantifiable. The type of power Foucault was interested in was positive or creative rather than coercive; it is that which circulates everywhere, possessed by nobody but exercised by, and could constrain everyone. This idea of positive power, its relationship with its negative counterpart and how the analysis of the 2 might be combined to illuminate its relationship with knowledge seems to offer a key to a new door in the analysis of knowledge production in particular, and perhaps political analysis in general. Unfortunately, this remains a gray area in social and political theories, as well as in theories of epistemology.⁷ What is rather clear is the impact of negative/coercive power on knowledge (as evident in the Marxist and sociology of knowledge traditions). Hardly is there even an implied

⁶ See for example a notable study by Joseph Rouse (1987).

⁷ Dyrberg (1997) offers a comprehensive and deeply penetrating analysis of the circular nature of power and made some reference to knowledge but fell short of clearly elaborating the relationship between the knowledge and power. Like Foucault, he tended to conflate the two, as knowledge/power.

reference to the possibly autonomous character of knowledge and its capacity to impinge on power. Hamstrung by such a problem, it is therefore not easy to address vexing questions such as “What kind of and whose power affects what type of knowledge, and how?” or the inversed, “What kind of and whose knowledge impinges on, or presuppose, what type of power, and how?” While confusing signals or deadening silence from social and political theories poses a debilitating problem, it nonetheless means freedom to explore a leveled playing field full of possibilities for future investigation.

My point of departure is that while it is no longer tenable to uphold the supposed innocence of (historical) knowledge, and that while there may indeed be an “organic” relationship between knowledge and power, subsuming knowledge under the political (power relationship) and automatically conflating the two is equally unacceptable. For all its totalizing assumption and implication, an undifferentiated knowledge/power nexus tends to mislead at worst and at best to limit its analytical value to a special kind of relationship between power and knowledge and to specific sphere of the “political”. (more on this in Section IV) It is hoped that by unraveling the relationship, its analytical potentials could be unleashed and thus illuminate the relationship between knowledge and power in less equivocal and more usable terms. The “holy grail” therefore is formulation of an analytic framework that can help uncover a nuanced or textured relationship between (historical) knowledge and (political) power. I believe that this can be done by appropriating certain aspects of Foucault and combining these with those of critical theory and sociology of knowledge. Given the complexity of the tasks required, however, I cannot but take in this paper a few steps towards that goal. In what follows, I will identify and briefly discuss a number of comparative features of Indonesia and the Philippines that are salient to the analysis of the “political” in the construction and transmission of history in these two countries. This will pave the way for clarifying the meaning of the “political” (to be done in Section IV) which, in my practical intent and

purpose, will prepare me for a more difficult task of exploring the problem in greater detail and depth in the near future.

III. History-Politics Nexus in Indonesia and the Philippines⁸

One can not fail to notice some fundamental similarities between Indonesia and the Philippines: both were colonized, both underwent a long period of authoritarian rule, both expelled their respective dictators, both had impeached their respective incompetent presidents, both are now run by women president who are both daughters of former presidents. Even misfortunes they share: *politicos* of the worst kind; corruption-laden government; polluted and crime-ridden cities; appalling poverty, threat of separatism and the list could go on and on. For a Filipino like me who has had an experience living in Indonesia, it was a shock of recognition: we just don't look the same, we just don't speak languages that are closely related, but we also share uncannily similar set of mannerisms, sense humor, attitude towards difficulties and a lot more. Indeed, I did not feel very far from "home". Beyond the façade of these commonplace similarities, however, there lie very striking differences. In the course of my research, I realized that what one scholar once declared was true: Indonesia and the Philippines are "similar enough to be discussed together, yet different enough to make comparison interesting" (Pringle 1980: 1).

The differences I will briefly note here are limited to some features relevant to history-politics nexus, namely: (1) the timing of development of historical profession; and (2) the relationship between the state and the historians.

The writing of history with clear political intent began earlier in the Philippines than in Indonesia. As early as late 1800s, some Filipino

⁸ Part of this section is similar to that which appeared in the article entitled "The State and the Historians in the Construction of Nationalist Historical Discourse in Indonesia and the Philippines: A Preliminary consideration" which will form a chapter in the book *Asian Futures, Asian Traditions* (Palmer 2005).

intellectuals had already produced serious, counter-hegemonic works of historical nature. Works of the Propagandists,⁹ most notably Rizal, constituted the earliest sustained attempt by Filipinos at nationalist, at least partially historical, studies.¹⁰ While none of these early scholars was historian by academic training, some of their outputs have been considered as landmark historical pieces – foundational as far as nationalist historical discourse is concerned. In the case of Indonesia, the earliest figure to whom the beginning of local effort at modern historical work could be traced was Hussein Djadjaningrat whose dissertation on philology, written in 1913, had some bearing on Indonesian history¹¹. The nature of his work, however, effectively limited its impact on our main concern here: the nationalist historical discourse. It was not until 1930-1940s when comparable foundational works (at least marginally and/or functionally similar to the works of the propagandists in the Philippines) appeared in Indonesia.

The emergence and sustained “production” of academically trained historians was also marked by considerable time lag between the cases of the

⁹ This term refers to a group of Filipino students who went to Europe in 1880s-1890s to study. While there, they spearheaded the effort to lobby the government in Spain for through reform of colonial administration in the Philippines. They published their own newspaper, wrote books and pamphlets, contributed articles in the national dailies, delivered speeches – the content of all of which was geared towards the effort to inform and pressure the government in Spain to undertake massive reform in the Philippines.

¹⁰ Rizal is well-known for writing two historical novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. These two novels provide a panoramic view of the socio-cultural and political life in the colonial Philippines. These novels also contained Rizal’s analysis of and proposals to solve the major problems during this time. Rizal’s more patently historical work, however, is his annotation of Morga’s *Sucesor de las Islas Filipinas*. This work is significant in at least two ways: first, this marks a clear effort to counter the Spaniards’ pejorative views on the Philippines by offering the “Tripartite View” of Philippine history. Secondly, this is the first attempt at writing Philippine history from the viewpoint of the Filipinos. Probably, it is also one of the first history (in Asia) written from the viewpoint of the colonized, in response to the colonizer (Ocampo 1998a: 143-144, 1998b)

¹¹ According to Notosustanto, Djajaningrat can not be considered the “father of modern Indonesian historiography”. The credit should go to Karim Pringgodijo and Muhammad Yamin. See Notosustanto Nugroho (1965: 1). Sartono (2001: 12), however is of different opinion. For him Djajaningrat should take the credit

two countries. While the first academically trained native historian was not produced in Indonesia earlier than 1950s¹² (Notusutanto 1965: 2), Philippines had hers starting very early in the 1900s¹³. In mid 1960s, Nugroho Notosusanto (1965) expressed concern about a very fundamental problem of acute shortage of professional historians in Indonesia. By this time in the Philippines, concern was already focused on the debates about legitimate historical issues¹⁴. In other words, while Indonesia by this period was still at the “production stage”, the Philippines was already at the “contestation stage”. This is not surprising considering the relative youthfulness of the state and the nationalist movement in Indonesia in comparison with those in the Philippines. What is quite interesting is that timing may have had an important repercussion on the ability of the two states to influence the course of nationalist historiography in these two countries. In the case of Indonesia, the growth of historical profession lagged behind the growth of strong state. By the time Sukarno in 1959 initiated Guided Democracy and in effect began the long period of authoritarian rule in Indonesia that ended only in 1998 when Suharto was forced to step down, historical profession in this country was still in its infancy stage. Its growth to maturity was gradually achieved only in the following decades and it

¹² It should be noted that the institutionalization of the study of history in Indonesia did not start until the Department of History in University of Indonesia was inaugurated in 1949, that of University of Gadjah Mada followed few years later.

¹³ During the American period, several Filipinos were sent abroad to study. They were often called *pensionados*. This was in line with the design of the Americans to create a group of Filipinos who could assist them in their colonial project in the Philippines. Among these *pensionados* were a number of Filipinos who constituted the first generation of professionally trained historians such as Fernandez, Alzona, Benitez and others. There are also others such as Zaide and Alip who were both home-grown professional historians. For a biographical account about Alzona, see Camagay (1989); about Alip, see Alip (1989); about Benitez and Fernandez, see Casambre (1993).

¹⁴ The most heated debates in the 1950s centered on the proposal to make the study of life and writings of Rizal, the national hero, mandatory to students. The radical nationalist school of Agoncillo and Constantino was also on the rise that their critical evaluation of colonial-nationalist and clerical-nationalist schools resulted also in heated exchanges among their respective proponents.

was accomplished under the restrictive atmosphere allowed by the state. The case of the Philippines is vastly different. Historical profession there had more time to develop with less restriction from clutches of a strong state. By the time such strong state emerged starting 1972 when Marcos declared Martial Law, historical profession appeared to have already reached a sufficiently high level of maturity and independence that put it in better position to resist the manipulating moves by the state. One indication of this is that even the most outright attempt by Marcos to influence historical writing met only with limited success¹⁵. Many Filipino historians had been in the forefront of the movement to oppose Marcos dictatorship. This is one thing that cannot be said of Indonesian historians. As one noted Indonesian historian bitterly charges, Indonesian historians failed to act as social critics in time when the society badly needed them. (Kuntowijoyo 2000) It can thus be said that the radicalism and anti-state posture of at least certain groups of nationalist historians in the Philippines could only find parallel in the docility of their Indonesian counterparts. After pausing momentarily to clarify the concept of the political, I will pursue this point further.

IV. Clarifying the Political

Defining “the political” is crucial in this undertaking. The political is often equated to the purposive and public exercise of power and power, according to Barry Hindess, is commonly treated in Western political thought either as a simple capacity to act or the right to act that derives from consent of the people over whom power is exercised (Hindess 1996: 1-22). Traditionally, the political sphere has been associated with state functions and with individuals or groups exercising leadership or influence upon

¹⁵ This attempt refers to the *Tadhana Project* in which Marcos persuaded or co-opted many Filipino scholars to write 19-volume history of Philippines under his name. The limited success I am referring to here points to the fact that the level of maturity of the history/social science profession effectively set the limit to which he could advance his personal interest

others through the use either coercive or persuasive methods or combination of both. Carl Schmitt's famous and now classic article *The Concept of the Political* contains a definition of the political that centers on drawing distinction between friends and enemies (Schmitt 1996: 26-36). Such a definition has been celebrated as keenly insightful but it has also been criticized for being narrow or exclusionary. As an alternative, therefore, Agnes Heller suggests that "the practical realization of the universal value of freedom in the public domain is the modern concept of the political." (Heller 1991:340) In my view, Schmitt's stress on conflict and Heller's emphasis on freedom can be combined together to produce a more adequate conceptualization such that attainment of freedom may be achieved in the context of a struggle between two or more opposing groups. Both Heller and Schmitt, however, give premium to the public as the domain where the political is operative and this effectively excludes the private or personal sphere which may in fact be equally liable to politicization. As feminists happily proclaim "the personal is the political." Thus, to make the concept of the political truly non-exclusionary, as Heller and others assert, the personal or private domain must be included in the political sphere.

It must be noted, moreover, that a fundamental element in these conceptions is the agent (or agents) who acts as subject with a capacity to exercise power to make a difference, in other people's lives or to one's own. Foucault's idea of positive power is quite different in that it does not necessarily have an autonomous agent or subjects. (To note, Foucault is well known for his "de-centering of subject" masterstroke whereby meaning is taken as socially constituted rather than produced by individual agents.)¹⁶

¹⁶ It must be emphasized, however, that Foucault is far from consistent in his "de-centering" project is concerned. As Fraser (1989: 17-34) emphasizes, there are inherent ambiguities in his concept of power. See also Haugaard (1997: 92-5) who argues that Foucault's whole notion of genealogy presupposes the existence of autonomous subject. His painstaking effort, Haugaard further claims, to "carefully document all the forgotten individuals who have contributed to the creation of modern regime of truth production" bespeaks of a "birth of man" rather than a death of one.

I tend to interpret such idea as referring to the deeply imbedded, socially produced and knowledge-based constraints that impinge on the capacity of individuals to exercise what is otherwise their absolute freedom. I should be quick to note that such limiting condition is not the same as those traditionally known in social theory as social structures or social system. It is more narrowly and specifically associated with a kind of knowledge or "truth regime" whose social constitution and after-effects generates constraints on groups or individuals. (Torfing 1999) This non-agent- (at least not directly) based "exercise" of power is not traditionally within the sphere of the political. Nevertheless, I think, it should be factored in political analysis as it could illuminate configuration of and the limits of (negative) power as it interacts with its positive counterpart. This move to factor-in the effect of positive power is what is referred to in this paper as an act of going "beyond (traditional) politics" in analyzing knowledge-power nexus in writing and teaching of history. As pointed out earlier in review of literature, the various powerful entities (state, tyrants, interest groups, individuals) were seen to have a varying degrees of influence on the character of knowledge. Not in a single case was knowledge (as an embodiment of positive power) seen as constraining or influencing the exercise of (negative) power. It is about time that we see how knowledge affects the constitution of power and I would be interested in looking at the case of construction and transmission of historical knowledge in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Before going back to the cases of Indonesia and the Philippine, let me elaborate further on a number of points regarding the need for going beyond (traditional) politics in analysis of knowledge. First, by knowledge, it does not mean merely specific set of information but it also includes, more importantly, the whole gamut of rules or convention governing integration, analysis and assessment of knowledge claims. For sure, these conventions did not come about in a social vacuum. The "sociality" of knowledge has long been recognized and knowledge tends to assume life of its own apart from the agents who, at least initially, seem to produce it. It is this "life"

apart from the agents (or social structure) - that which could enable and at the same time constraint anyone - that is often neglected and must be considered. Second, in a world characterized by knowledge/non-knowledge dichotomy, there are agents, called scholars,¹⁷ who presumably hold the key to knowledge. They often quarrel among themselves about many things but when faced with attacks on the very foundations of knowledge, they band together to defend it. They are often seen as “operators of scholarly machine” and are supposed to be objective. Some of them may be charged as ideologically biased and it tends to negate their pretension of being above politics, but as a group - as guardians of knowledge - they are often invisible as a powerful force, often unseen in the (traditional) political analysis of everything, including knowledge production. Ironically, it is in their invisibility that their wellspring of power lies. And I think that it is but proper that such power be uncovered and factored in our analysis. And finally, the teachers who, along with scholars are holders of key to knowledge, should be seen as more than passive agents of transmission of knowledge. Regardless of their ideological leaning, part of the teachers’ power emanates from being an embodiment of positive power imbedded in knowledge which, as earlier mentioned, is socially constituted. On the same token, such unrecognized power of the teachers must be factored in the transmission of knowledge.

As mentioned earlier, Marcos despite his massive resources and willful intent to influence the writing of history in the Philippines met only limited success. I suspect that part of the reason lies in what Foucault considers as positive power that emanates from the conventions of historical scholarship. In my view, active resistance on the part of the historians is not an absolutely necessary requirement to limit his success, the socially constituted understanding of what historical scholarship is, how it should be practiced, not to mention its contents, effectively limits the range of possible outcomes

¹⁷ This is broadly defined to include not just academics who pursue careers in scholarship but also all others who have high level of educational attainments and use knowledge for their own purpose, career or otherwise.

of his effort. I think that even in the case of Indonesia where the historians proved to be subservient (at least on the surface) to the interests of the state, the state control of knowledge can not be complete because the positive power deeply imbedded in knowledge as shared by the society would pose some constraint. By comparing the two different cases, it would be interesting to find what particular set of factors influence the extent of constraints positive power can exert on the exercise of its negative counterpart. This is what I intend to pursue further in my on-going research work.

Of course, the role positive power plays is but one of several dimensions that will have to be looked into in the analysis. The various competing forces—both political and non-political -- must be identified to create a more complete picture and to produce a more nuanced characterization of the relationship between knowledge and power. That I have primarily emphasized positive power here is due to the fact that this is an aspect all too often neglected in existing literature and I have a suspicion that if pursued to its conclusion, the whole exercise can contribute towards effort to understand more adequately the relationship between the two. There are many more specific tasks involved other than clarifying the meaning of the political and other than revisiting Foucault's theoretical insights. But due to time and space constraints, I will have to end at this point.

V. Conclusion

The writing and teaching of history has gone a long way from being seen as *behind* politics –that is, not being recognized as politically charged. What replaced the veil of innocence is acknowledgment of its deeply political nature. The primary question ceased to be whether history is political but *between* whose politics is history being swayed. The political nature of history writing and teaching makes them an embodiment of power relationship that favors some while depriving others. While such

pronouncement has become almost a truism in some quarters, there remains a large part of the scholarly community who are oblivious to it. To the latter the danger is obvious for it denies them freedom and space for resistance. They deprive them a chance to know what they are missing. To the former, the danger lies in waste generated by paranoid suspicion and indiscriminate opposition. Preventing the waste is precisely the idea behind the suggestion made in this paper - to move *beyond* (conventional) politics - to look for a more nuanced and textured characterization between politics and knowledge. Knowing whose and what kind of power may impinge on what type of knowledge and how knowledge enables and affects the exercise of power could provide insights that will not only facilitate more productive political analysis but also situate each and everyone to a position more strategic for effective resistance.

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