

## Book Reviews

John D. Blanco. *Frontier Constitutions: Christianity and Colonial Empire in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, 372p.

*Frontier Constitutions: Christianity and Colonial Empire in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines* shows the benefits of bringing contemporary cultural and literary theory to bear on questions of nineteenth-century literature and history of the Philippines. Blanco has an impressive command of the nineteenth-century texts and subjects about which he writes, as well as the various scholarly and theoretical literatures that he uses to interpret them. The book will interest scholars of Philippine history and literature, as well as a broader audience of those invested in cultural studies and postcolonial studies. In the field of Philippine Studies, it probably comes closest to the work of Vicente Rafael [1988; 2005] in character and ambition; it also calls to mind Andrew Sartori's work [2008] on nineteenth-century colonial intellectual and cultural production in Bengal.

Blanco argues that the nineteenth-century Philippines was a "state of exception" that is also exemplary of "colonial modernity." The "state of exception" is defined in principle and abstractly by the condition of coloniality, but also more specifically, in the nineteenth-century Philippines by legal and institutional history: Blanco theorizes the significance of how "Special Laws" were supposed to pertain to the Philippines (by definition, what is "special" is an exception), and yet those "special" laws never obtained, making the colonial state in practice even more, and perpetually, exceptional.

For Blanco, the project of the Philippine colonial state in the nineteenth century reflects a general project and condition of "colonial modernity." Blanco describes "colonial modernity" as the

Spanish state's response, starting in the late eighteenth century, to the crisis of colonial rule that followed the fall of the evangelical model of Spain's Catholic mission in the world: "the structural formation and cultural habitation of an impasse between not only different orders of representation, but also different imperatives facing the colonial state after the breakdown of Spanish imperial hegemony" (p. 5). Blanco focuses on the representations of this impasse, or these contradictions of colonial modernity, as they manifest in the nineteenth-century Philippine texts — fiction, non-fiction, and visual — which are the primary sources of his work.

Blanco's "colonial modernity" is a state of productive contradiction. "Colonial modernity" requires consent — it solicits the acquiescence of colonial subjects, or rather, incites their consent to being governed — but it is also based on racial dichotomization and the exclusion (or exception) of the colonial native from those whose consent rightly constitutes sovereignty. While modernity demands consent, coloniality is its denial. "Colonial modernity" is, however, itself something of a perpetual crisis, and in Blanco's analysis, it is both necessary and impossible, and so turns out to be unsustainable: the state demands, solicits, conjures into existence the consent of subjects who, it turns out, make demands of their own. But rather than describing a triumphal version of how contradiction is resolved by transformation, Blanco's book dwells in the space of that necessary but impossible colonial modernity, reading texts of Spanish colonial officials and commentators as they illustrate attempts to describe, incite, contain, or quantify native consent to Spanish colonial rule. Blanco's emphasis nicely captures the often self-contradictory tendencies and aspirations of different agents, branches, and ideologies of the late Spanish colonial state in the Philippines, and notes how political subjectivities that challenge colonial logics are unintentionally but necessarily engen-

dered.

Blanco advances this thesis by weaving together theoretically-driven analysis with close textual readings. Blanco's fluency with cultural studies, postcolonial studies, and literary theory is evident throughout, and these fields orient the work. The language and frameworks of Michel Foucault are particularly evident, but references to theorists both historical and contemporary abound — Immanuel Kant, Antonio Gramsci, Hannah Arendt, Carl Schmitt, Partha Chatterjee, Walter Mignolo, and Mikhail Bakhtin, among others. Blanco's writing style is often poetic, and sometimes opaque, as often is the case in such theoretically-inclined works. For readers without particular background or interest in these theorists, Blanco's text still offers valuable readings of his primary sources and incisive summations of their historical contexts, nicely bringing fresh readings of more canonical texts (e.g. Rizal's *Philippines within a Century* or Balagtas's *Florante at Laura*) into conversation with lesser-known pieces, including some which I have never seen treated in contemporary scholarship. The range of Blanco's primary sources is impressive, as is his ability to quickly offer insightful contextualizations.

Particularly valuable is Blanco's facility with sources (primary and secondary) in both Spanish and Tagalog. With his guidance, we read texts written by creoles or mestizos in Spanish, as well as texts written by peninsular Spaniards in Tagalog. This exemplifies one of the book's insights, which is that these are literatures of *transculturation* rather than acculturation (a rhetorical shift that emphasizes the production of subjectivities in relation to each other, rather than focusing on purported origins. See especially Chapter 3). Moreover, Blanco is one of a very few scholars writing in English about the Spanish colonial Philippines who is as comfortable in the worlds of Spanish literature as he is in the worlds of Philippine studies and history. His fluency with

Spanish literature allows us to see the late nineteenth-century print-culture of the Philippines as part of a broader, unevenly-global "Spanish" literature that may not have been dominated by or centered in Spain itself. Instead, the Philippines appears as one of the centers from which this Spanish literature was produced. In Chapter 5, for example, he thinks through and with the peninsular literary practice of Spanish *costumbrismo* — in which tableau and "types" appear in illustrated periodicals as well as novel form — in order to read Philippine literature of the late nineteenth century as a variety of colonial *costumbrismo*.

The book is organized into three sections, including seven chapters and an epilogue, preceded by an introduction. Individual chapters could stand on their own, especially as some of the clearest articulations of Blanco's overall argument appear towards the beginning of chapters, as summaries of earlier chapters or sections.

Blanco emphasizes the contingency of politics and history. The book is not about the inevitability of the nation, but instead about "a dialogue stretching across the long nineteenth century among concerned writers and artists about the future of colonialism and the possibility of a future without it" (xvi). Yet despite this emphasis on contingency, and the detailed and vivid renditions of the contradictions of Spanish colonial rule during this period, Blanco's theorizations sometimes flatten out that contingency: we get the impression of "a" singular colonial project, one whose contradictions form a well-oiled meaning-making system. Yet the texts that Blanco brings to our attention sometimes suggest a more haphazard, less fateful world of meaning (or perhaps multiple worlds of meaning). Overall, however, this is clearly an important first book from a scholar to follow.

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Resil Mojares. *Brains of the Nation: Pedro Paterno, T. H. Pardo de Tavera, Isabelo de los Reyes and the Production of Modern Knowledge*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008, 565p.

“A shameless display of erudition.”

FILIPINOS are notorious for having short memories. This may explain why history is used in schools for nation building because many young Filipinos cannot see the past beyond their lifetime. This may also explain why history, both either as a discipline or an academic subject in schools becomes contested territory. Since history is never innocent and always has a point of view the question of whose version and why is often debated. To understand the past one must go beyond the dates, names, and events that fill textbooks and look at the way history is written; this is why an archeology of the sources for Philippine history is important, why a genealogy of Filipino thought is essential. Resil Mojares, eminent scholar from Cebu, has spent the past two decades writing up lives, biographies of Filipino thinkers of the nineteenth century from years of reading and note-taking. The tip of the iceberg is a timely and surprisingly readable book, *Brains of the Nation:*

*Pedro Paterno, T. H. Pardo de Tavera, Isabelo de los Reyes and the Production of Modern Knowledge*.

Many Filipinos have been reared on the idea that “nationalist history” or a history written and understood from a Filipino point of view began in the 1960s with the popularity of the works of Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Renato Constantino that became and remain standard history textbooks today. Their works obscure the fact that the writing, or re-writing, of Philippine history from a Filipino viewpoint began earlier, in the late nineteenth century, with a generation of expatriate Filipinos in Europe that formed a constellation whose shining star was Jose Rizal who published in Paris, in 1890, an annotated edition of Antonio de Morga’s *Sucesos de las islas Filipinas* (Events of the Philippine Islands) first published in Mexico in 1609. Unfortunately, this ground-breaking work is overshadowed by his novels *Noli me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1890). Rizal’s edition of Morga is seldom read today because Rizal did not write a history, he annotated one, but his notes, though obsolete, reveal the first Philippine history from a Filipino viewpoint. Rizal, however, was not alone as can be seen in a letter to him from the painter Juan Luna, from Paris on November 8, 1890, that reads in part:

I made a sketch of the death of Magellan based on the description of Pigafetta: it is a very important event in our history. If I give it the title “*La Muerte de Magallanes*” [Death of Magellan] it will be an admiring homage to this great man (a Portuguese to boot, according to Blumentritt) but if I give it the title as I want it to be “*Victoria de Si Lapulapu y huida de los españoles*” [Victory of Lapulapu and Flight of the Spaniards] instead of *La Muerte de Mgallanes* every silly fellow will criticize it and the painter and poor citizen will be pushed to a wall. At any rate, this sketch is dedicated to you if you like it. [Rizal 1961: Vol.II, Book III,

Part2, 588]

Embarking on a project that traces the genealogy of Filipino thought, Mojares highlights others of that generation who have long languished in Rizal's long shadow. Retrieved from the dustbin of Philippine history: Pedro Paterno (1858–1911), T. H. Pardo de Tavera (1857–1925), and Isabelo de los Reyes (1864–1938) are given their due. Like Rizal these men wrote a lot for a nation that does not read. Unlike Rizal, however, the few times Paterno, Pardo, and de los Reyes are taken out of the dustbin, they are exposed to ridicule for the political, ideological, or religious positions they took in their time. Not till now have their works been given competent and impartial study.

The neglect of their works is due to three things: First, their published works and manuscripts are rare, quite hard to find due to the destruction of the National Library, the National Museum, the University of the Philippines Library, and many private Filipiniana collections during the Second World War and the Battle for Manila in 1945. Second, their works are largely in Spanish, a language alien to a successor generation educated in English. Spanish used to be a bridge that connected Filipinos from different times and places but today it separates a young generation from its past. Third, these men have been oversimplified and painted as eccentrics with unpopular politics and, in the case of de los Reyes, an odd mix of politics and religion. Worse these men are overshadowed by others in the National Pantheon like Apolinario Mabini, Marcelo del Pilar, Mariano Ponce, and Graciano Lopez Jaena, whose works were compiled as a series known as “Documentos de la biblioteca nacional de Filipinas” begun by Teodoro M. Kalaw before the Second World War.

Paterno was prominent in his lifetime but is best remembered in school history today as the archetypal “balimbing,” the starfruit with many sides that has become the symbol of turncoats and

opportunism prevalent in twentieth century Philippine politics. Pro-Spanish during the Spanish colonial period, Paterno changed spots and rose to become president of the Malolos congress during the short-lived Philippine Republic, only to shift loyalties during the early years of the American administration when he tried in vain to get into the good graces of William Howard Taft. Pardo de Tavera is largely associated with the Federal Party and is often painted as a traitor to his own people for distancing himself from the Aguinaldo government and serving in the American colonial administration, thus obscuring his competent and pioneering works on bibliography, history, philology, linguistics, and even the use of Philippine medicinal plants. De los Reyes was known to Ferdinand Blumentritt before the latter corresponded with Jose Rizal, but his many works on history and folklore were overshadowed by his involvement in the labor movement and the Philippine Independent Church.

The lives of these three men make for an interesting read, and there are many primary sources to show how they took to each other. For example, Rizal commented on de los Reyes and his Ilocano point of view. Pardo called Paterno a fake and a plagiarist in annotated entries for his 1903 bibliography of Philippine books, *Biblioteca Filipina*. It is significant that two of the three subjects in the book served at the helm of the National Library of the Philippines, from that founded by Paterno in 1887 to the cultural agency headed by Pardo from 1923 to his death in 1925. Mojares goes beyond the stereotype caricatures, painting more complete, nuanced portraits in the round of figures we have only seen in sketches, as fleeting references in the standard work by the late E. Arsenio Manuel in four of the seven-volume *Dictionary of Philippine Biography* (1955–95).

From a study of lives to a consideration of their writings, Mojares, in a hefty 562 pages, places these three men in a projected genealogy of

Filipino thought as outlined in the last section of his book (that could have come first) on the “Filipino Enlightenment” — this being a review of literature, a review of Filipino and other ethnological writings of the nineteenth century that bring the lives of Paterno, Pardo and de los Reyes in the context of the birth of Filipino thought and the birth of the nation. From the many references in this book, it is obvious that this but the first of more biographies. One can only hope that as Mojares publishes the rest of his studies in the near future, this work, this shameless display of erudition will inspire rather than stunt the continuous study of the past and the minds that formed it.

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Richard T. Chu. *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos of Manila: Family, Identity, and Culture, 1860s-1930s*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010, xx + 451p.

Works of scholarship are artifacts of their times. Edgar Wickberg’s magisterial study, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898* [1965], provided an overview of “Chinese” economic and social activities in the late Spanish colonial Philippines. Its concern with gauging the extent of “Chinese” involvement in the Philippine economy and highlighting the role of Spanish colonial rule in promoting anti-Chinese sentiment as well as cementing “Chinese” solidarity can best be understood as an attempt to lay bare historical patterns of economic and social change that shaped the post-colonial construction of the “Chinese Question” in

this part of Southeast Asia (itself an American construct that was mobilized for Cold War objectives).

Over the past two decades, the nationalist stereotyping of the Southeast Asian “Chinese” as economically dominant, culturally different and politically disloyal Other, to be “assimilated” or “integrated” into the post-colonial body politic, has ceded ground to a new and by now no less stereotypical image of the “Chinese” as exemplary postmodern transnational subjects who, in pursuit of individual and familial interests, practice a form of “flexible citizenship” [Ong 1999] that strategically combines migration with capital accumulation to “negotiate” (a keyword, along with “hybrid,” of transnationalism) their way through an increasingly globalized world where nation-states nevertheless remain weighty, often repressive, players.

Richard Chu’s *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos of Manila* deftly navigates between these two dominant paradigms for the study of the “Chinese” in Southeast Asia. The inaugural volume of a new Brill book series “Chinese Overseas: History, Literature, and Society” under the editorship of Wang Gungwu, *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos* seeks to understand the process by which hitherto fluid “Chinese” and “Filipino” ethnic identities became mutually exclusive as boundaries between them hardened in the Philippines, but eschews the assimilation-vs-integration debate and other “nation-state metanarratives” (p. 6) that have colluded in the “reification and essentialization” of ethnic identities. At the same time, its focus on a period that encompasses the final four decades of Spanish colonial rule and both American colonial and Philippine Commonwealth periods is meant to “provide a historical context to understand today’s modern Chinese transnational practices” (p. 9), rediscovering in the past cosmopolitan figures, values and lifestyles that prefigure the success stories and trends of current globalization.

Offering a “social history” of everyday com-

mercial and familial practices in Fujian and Filipinas/Philippines, Chu points to the salience and ubiquity of “flexible, border-crossing practices” — among them name-changing, taking of Spanish citizenship, speaking multiple languages, networking with Chinese and non-Chinese alike — by which Chinese migrant-merchants and their offspring “evade [d], manipulate [d] or collaborate [d] with hegemonic efforts to control their bodies, identities, families, movements and resources” (p. 11). Chu marshals a wide array of source materials in Spanish, English, Chinese and Tagalog, including baptismal and matrimonial records, naturalization papers, court documents, dossiers of prominent individuals (*varios personajes*), letters, newspapers, literary fiction and other publications, family genealogies, and biographies, supplemented by interviews and the author’s autobiography.

*Chinese and Chinese Mestizos* adopts a micro-historical approach that, although not in fundamental disagreement with Wickberg’s main thesis, offers nuanced case studies that demonstrate the “variegated and constantly changing meanings of identities” (p. 10) and complicate the big picture Wickberg paints of the rising antagonism between Chinese mestizos (persons of mixed Chinese and native — occasionally Spanish — ancestry) and Chinese, the deepening identification of the Chinese mestizos with the interests of the “indios” (“natives”), and the eventual disappearance of Chinese mestizos into the new political identity, “Filipino,” that they helped define.

The social and political divide between Chinese mestizos and indios on one side and *sanglely/chinos/intsik* on the other side, argues Chu, is by no means solely a creation of Spanish colonialism. Equally if not more important, he argues, twentieth-century American and Commonwealth codification and application of citizenship laws, coupled with rising Chinese and Filipino nationalisms and the push-pull factors of large-scale

Chinese immigration to the Philippines, were instrumental in crystalizing ethnic divisions as Chinese and Chinese mestizos found their multiple claims, identifications, options and practices — among them bigamy/polygamy, dual families, interracial marriages, contacts with non-Filipinos, sojourn and education in China, having mestizo offspring instead of “pure” Chinese children — increasingly narrowed if not curtailed by the dichotomous, either-or, logic of Chinese, Philippine, and American nation-state-oriented and nationalist discourses and practices.

Chu offers a new periodization that extends beyond Spanish colonial rule to include the American colonial era (often treated separately in previous scholarship; an important exception is Wilson [2004]) and Philippine Commonwealth period by arguing that even though the legal category of “Chinese mestizo” had been abolished by the 1880s, it was still used administratively in some areas until the end of Spanish rule, and remained in use as a social category well into the American period. A further reason for this periodization is the availability of archival materials, but this modest claim on the part of the author is less compelling as a justification than the startling implications of the materials he mines.

While Wickberg’s arguments about the “disappearance” of the Chinese mestizos and the rift between mestizos and Chinese generally hold true, as a *longue durée* argument, of Chinese mestizos who were several generations removed from their Chinese forefathers and who lived in the provinces, Chu concentrates on the personal histories of a number of prominent Manila-based first-generation Chinese mestizos, men like Mariano Limjap and Ildefonso Tambunting, to show how “ethnic categories are better understood as flowing along a shifting and problematic continuum” (p. 14). Like their Chinese merchant fathers (Chu here discusses Joaquin Limjap, Ignacio Sy Jao Boncan, and Carlos Palanca Tan Quien-sen), these mestizos

could speak or understand not only Spanish and the local languages but Hokkien as well; built extensive social and commercial networks with Chinese, natives, and foreigners; traveled constantly and widely; acquired their knowhow in business as much from their China-born fathers as from their locally-born mothers (whether mestiza or india); and educated their children in China, Hong Kong, Spain, and later America.

Although Mariano Limjap identified himself as a “Spanish mestizo,” he represented his Chinese father (a Spanish subject) in business deals and traveled to China and Hong Kong, maintained links with relatives in China, served as a member of the Malolos Congress under the Philippine revolutionary government, and entertained high officials from both China and America. Bonifacio Limtuaco, who spent his childhood in China, requested a change of legal status from mestizo to *sangley*, appearing in public dressed in “Chinese” clothes. An excellent genealogy of Cu Un-jieng and his many children by his Chinese and Chinese-mestiza wives brings the discussion from past into present by presenting the full range and hybrid ramification of their citizenship, familial, educational, and cultural practices.

The lives of women, unlike men, are not as extensively documented owing to paucity of data. Nevertheless, they offer a revealing picture of women’s variegated experiences as “Chinese mestizas,” “indias” and “Chinese.” During the Spanish period, there were very few “Chinese” women. A woman who married a native or Chinese mestizo or foreign husband took on the husband’s legal classification. But an india who married a sangley/chino remained an india, and was re-classified as Chinese mestizo upon her husband’s death. More likely to be subjected to discipline by their Chinese husbands or fathers (whom Chu calls “victim-agents”), and discouraged by the Spanish colonial state from identifying with the “Chinese,” some women, including upwardly mobile Chinese mesti-

zas, still chose to marry Chinese men, and were instrumental in socializing their children in mercantile and professional occupations.

While Chu is careful not to downplay the anti-Sinicism of the Spanish era, his account of Mariano Limjap’s career as an “ilustrado” (translated in the book as “illustrious,” but perhaps more conventionally understood as “learned” / “educated”) offers vital clues to understanding the seemingly contradictory argument made by Michael Cullinane [2003: 363 n.56]. In his study of ilustrado politics, Cullinane noted that Chinese mestizos such as Telesforo Chuidian and Mariano Limjap, although well-educated and socially prominent, were not actually considered “ilustrado.” Chu’s detailed biographical studies suggest that these first-generation Chinese mestizos, precisely because of their continuing connections with the Chinese, may have been perceived as “like us” but also simultaneously “not like us” by other Chinese mestizos already at a remove from their Chinese ancestry and by the larger society.

Benedict Anderson’s [2008: 31] analysis of Jose Rizal’s novels cogently reveals the textual strategies by which Chinese mestizos like Rizal — technically a fifth-generation mestizo, although his father changed their legal status to *natural* (native) — downplayed, even actively concealed, their “Chinese” origins. And yet, a cursory look at the Philippine press in the early decades of the twentieth century also bears out Chu’s argument that negative attitudes were not necessarily nor universally shared. Pro-Chinese attitudes were evident not just in the waning years of Spanish rule, but in the first decade of the American occupation. Articles in *El Renacimiento Filipino* [1911a; 1911b; 1911c], for example, show that, around the time China became a republic, Filipino nationalists, knowing of Sun Yat-sen’s connections with the Philippine Revolution, were by no means unsympathetic to the Chinese or to Chinese nationalism.

What these apparently divergent data suggest

is that “Chinese” and “Filipinos” lived in a country in a transitional era where social distinctions among them — lodged in the intangible realm of perception and discourse — existed but were in flux, and Chinese and Filipino nationalisms were not always mutually exclusive. Positive and negative mutual images were part of an existing “pool” of discourses that could be used as circumstances and political agendas required. Commonwealth and post-colonial Philippine judicial interpretations of citizenship claims, backed by the disciplinary mechanisms and punitive force of the state, were crucial in constructing and cementing ethnic boundaries based on a dichotomous logic. From the late 1930s to the early postwar period, nationalist attempts to (re)shape bodies of “Filipinos” and “Chinese” especially through families, schools, work, and legislation would have incremental effects in defining and solidifying ethnic differences.

Chu’s book, by choosing a periodization with a wider compass, illuminates the continuities and discontinuities across state practices that led to the other-ing of the Chinese, the stigmatizing of “mestizo” (and the Hokkien *chhut-si-a*) by both the American colonial state and ethnocentric forms of Chinese and Filipino nationalisms, and the subsequent post-colonial resignification of “mestizo” in terms of “white” (American or European) ancestry that effectively occluded its “Chinese” origins and connections. But the concluding section of *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos* also looks beyond the Commonwealth-Cold War period of mutually exclusive identities to an important shift in state policies and cultural milieu by the 1970s that resulted in the mass naturalization of Chinese and their “integration” into the Philippine body politic.

Historical studies are always limited by the sources available, and inevitably, sources reveal far more about elite Chinese and mestizos and their families than about those who are less privileged. The limitations of archival materials do not allow

Chu to extrapolate beyond the case studies presented in the book to answer the question of whether the mobility, networking, hybridity, and availability of options of the wealthy and socially prominent Chinese and Chinese mestizos are characteristic of their indigent, laboring counterparts as well. In the absence of a big trove of official documents (Chinese newspapers published during this period were destroyed in the Second World War), scholars will have to rely more on literary works, travel accounts, and oral histories of individuals and families to obtain glimpses of lives that are no less richly varied and exposed to different kinds of people, languages, and cultures, but perhaps more circumscribed in their actual choices, contacts, and options. Social histories of laboring Chinese (the proverbial *intsik beho tulo laway* [old or “old-looking,” drooling Chinese]), of the transformation of Binondo from entrêpot to commercial capital to “Chinatown,” and of the changing popular images and perceptions of Chinese and Chinese mestizo over time are research projects that spring logically from the ground-clearing re-interpretation offered by *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos*, projects that Richard Chu, among all the scholars working on the Chinese in the Philippines, is exceptionally well-qualified to undertake.

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Julian Go. *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning: Elite Political Cultures in the Philippines and Puerto Rico during U. S. Colonialism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008, xi + 377p.

Julian Go's extended comparison of American colonialism in Puerto Rico and the Philippines is nothing short of groundbreaking. As the first work that simultaneously examines the introduction of American political ideas and institutions to these two island colonies in the first decade and a half of American rule, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning* introduces a fresh and welcome perspective to the in-depth single-country focus that has typified colonial histories to date. As such, it represents an exciting development in this revitalized field of scholarship and makes a seminal contribution to American, Puerto Rican, and Philippine colonial historiographies.

Along with its comparative dimension, the book's approach is likewise innovative. Theoretically and methodologically self-aware, Go draws on new culture sociology to construct an analytical tool that is at once richly interpretive yet empirically grounded. Examining "semiotic systems of meaning in practice," his framework emphasizes the centrality of cultural schemas in shaping the content, meaning, and mode by which American political principles and processes were conveyed by Americans and understood by Puerto Rican and Filipino colonial elites. By locating meaning, not in people's hearts and minds, but in the internal logic derived from their practices, from "patterns of opposition and contrast," he maneuvers the slippery terrain between the essentialism and subjectivity that sometimes bedevil structural functionalism and cultural interpretivism, on one end, and the determinism that befalls more materialist approaches, on the other.

The book crafts its account of American, Puerto Rican, and Filipino colonial paradigms, and the interplay among them, principally from secondary literature, but supplemented with some primary research. Unpacking the American worldview, the first of seven chapters explains how Lamarckian notions of racial difference and Progressivism informed the conviction of American colonial policymakers that "backward" Puerto Ricans and Filipinos were capable of uplift and that tutelage in government would best impart to them the capacity essential for democracy. That this plan seemed compatible with Puerto Rican and Filipino demands lent American colonialism the legitimacy that proponents believed could sustain it in the long-term.

Because colonial elites understood terms like "democracy" differently from their American mentors, Go's second and third chapters contend that they "domesticated" the American program in terms of an intellectual universe that was shaped by their political experience under Spain

and most powerfully by the mutually interdependent patron clientelistic social relations generated in their agricultural export economies. Although Americans had envisioned a progressive training scheme, colonial leaders equated democracy with a high degree of local autonomy akin to that which they had sought from Spain. Having cast the United States as a better patron than Spain for giving them rights and democracy, Puerto Ricans and Filipinos expected to enjoy greater independence through American federalism or an American protectorate, respectively. This autonomy would enable them to infuse public office with their traditional roles as father or head of societies they likened to the family or the body, doling out resources channeled to them by Americans to cultivate clients that formed their voting constituencies.

To Americans, such practices were reminiscent of the bossism that corrupted politics in the mainland and proved that their wards had misapprehended their lessons in good government. Thus in Chapters Four and Five, colonial elite paradigms confront what Go terms “recalcitrance” in the political field, as American officials exerted greater control than anticipated over colonial personnel and resources and thwarted strategies once effective against Spanish colonial officials. Governor General Luke Wright and his administration ignored appeals that the leading Filipino political party, the Partido Federalista, had couched in the language of patronage. When the hegemonic Puerto Rican Federal Party wielded *retramiento*, a strategy of non-cooperation, to prevent Americans from reconfiguring electoral districts and thereby empower opposing parties, they only succeeded in turning over to their Republican rivals control over the House of Delegates. Recalcitrance in the economic field further undermined elite schemas, as crisis and natural disasters impaired the resource base, especially of Puerto Rican elites, that had allowed

them to render assistance to their clients.

In the next three chapters, Go surveys corruption convictions, legislation, and political discussion in Puerto Rico and the Philippine Islands before and after major showdowns between Americans and colonial elites and argues that while Filipinos persisted in prior practices and continued to domesticate American forms, Puerto Ricans abandoned old schemas and expanded their cultural repertoire by incorporating American strategies. This was because Filipinos encountered only “limited recalcitrance” in the political field, but Puerto Ricans faced “convergent and recurrent recalcitrance” in both political and economic fields. Indeed, Federal Party communications with the Puerto Rican public, American officials, and fellow elites after they clashed with Americans do indicate a shift towards American rhetorical strategies, but the Filipino elite discourse examined is less conclusive. For rather than track pre- and post-crisis speech acts aimed by the same group of elites towards the same audiences, the book compares earlier communications that Federalistas addressed to multiple audiences with those that Nacionalistas later directed primarily to a Filipino electorate that had vindicated their pro-independence platform by handing them control over the Philippine Assembly. Such an audience would likely have been more receptive to old-style rhetoric. More important, studying contests between Speaker Sergio Osmeña and the Filipino-controlled Assembly, on the one hand, and Governor General W. Cameron Forbes and the American-dominated Philippine Commission, on the other, would reveal, not divergence, but parallels between Filipino and Puerto Rican responses at this stage. For much like their Puerto Rican counterparts, Filipino legislative leaders did not merely domesticate American forms, but Americanized their cultural repertoire: in disputes over appropriations and appointments, the Assembly molded itself in the image of Anglo-

American lower houses and deployed tactics devised by the British House of Commons and the colonial assemblies of British North America against their royal antagonists.<sup>1)</sup>

Similarly, analyzing how proponents of American colonialism justified colonial rule before U.S. and international audiences, one is reluctant to concede that American colonialism's exceptional character was "due to the exceptional demands of the local elite than to the exceptional character of America's deep traditions and beliefs." Before these communities, American colonial architects took care to demonstrate that their program cohered with an American democratic tradition portrayed as exceptional.<sup>2)</sup> That the program enjoyed some support from the governed offered one kind of proof, but so, too, did establishing its consistency with constitutional principles embodying this tradition.<sup>3)</sup>

Finally, the primacy of schemas in this work raises intriguing questions about factors other than patron clientelism that might likewise have influenced their structure, content, and operation. When Apolinario Mabini analogized between the aborted Philippine Republic's legislative, executive,

and judicial departments and society's intellect, will, and conscience, he also evoked the soul's faculties [Majul 1998: 182] to which these latter categories exactly correspond and which he would have encountered through scholastic philosophy at the University of Santo Tomas. Perhaps a richer, more complete conceptual universe would have emerged had it reckoned with whether and how exposure to European intellectual traditions — notably, Aquinas theology and Spanish liberalism — informed Filipino elite understandings of social roles and obligations and the relationships between individual, society, and government.

The above issues notwithstanding, this book makes a significant contribution to the literatures it engages and will help define the terms of this emerging comparative colonial conversation.

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1) See Golay [[1997] 1998: 140]. See particularly Conference Committee of the Philippine Commission, *Election of Resident Commissioners to the United States: Record of the Discussions between the Conference Committees of the Philippine Commission and the Philippine Assembly, with a Brief Account of the Facts Preceding the Appointment of Said Committees, and an Excerpt from the Journal of the Assembly Giving an Idea of What Occurred after the Report of Disagreement*, Philippine Assembly, Second Legislature, 1st Session, 1911.

2) See generally Kramer [2003].

3) See, for example, leading legal debates in five seminal *Harvard Law Review* articles published during Senate ratification debates over the 1898 Treaty of Paris: Baldwin [1899], Langdell [1899], Lowell [1899], Randolph [1898], and Thayer [1899].

Majul, Cesar Adib. 1998. *Apolinario Mabini-Revolutionary: The Great Role He Played in the Malolos Congress, the Birth of the Philippine Republic, and the Filipino-American War*. The Centennial Collection of Filipino Heroes. Manila: Trademark Publishing Corporation

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Anne L. Foster. *Projections of Power: The United States and Europe in Colonial Southeast Asia, 1919-1941*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010, xii + 241p.

Much has already been written about the colonial experiences in Southeast Asian countries in the first half of the twentieth century. While Thailand kept its political independence throughout this period, all other countries in this region were colonized by Western powers, mostly by European nations, except for the Philippines, which was placed under the United States as its second colonial master at the turn of the century. Due to the *de facto* predominant presence and influence of European powers in Southeast Asia, discussions on this period largely focused on European powers, while the role of the United States was considered as minor or auxiliary.

In light of the historical experiences in Europe, the period between World War I and World War II has been termed as the “interwar period.” It was during this period that the historical paths of European nations changed drastically, while Europe finally saw its position decline as the political and economic center of the world, a position that it had maintained since the nineteenth century. Arguments on the “interwar period” of Southeast Asian history might make sense when attempting to explain reconfigurations in Southeast

Asia from a European point of view. However, this approach does not explain what role the United States played in Southeast Asia during this period and how it related to the process that played out as the United States gained superpower position in the region after World War II.

Through painstaking archival research, *Projections of Power* illustrates the positionality of the United States in Southeast Asia in the fields of politics, economy and culture between 1919-41 or what we can call the “interwar period.” However, it is interesting to note here that the author does not use the term “interwar period” in this book. Although she does not explain the reason explicitly, this may be due to Foster’s aim to reexamine this period in the light of American modern history.

As is widely known, the United States experienced a period of progressivism in the early twentieth century and it was during this period that the United States established its systematic administration and governance as a nation-state as well as an empire. As Foster discusses, this process unfolded within the United States and in the Philippines simultaneously (pp.81-86). In this context, we might see that the author understands the period of 1919-41 not as the “interwar period,” but as the paradoxical period for rising American hegemony in Southeast Asia and the rest of the world. Herein lie the distinctive features of this book: it offers a new framework for understanding the foreign relations among European and American powers in colonial Southeast Asia.

Focusing on the United States as the crucial actor in the discussion, the book explains how European and American powers connected with each other for sustaining their interests in the region, while respectively taking different positions on internal matters in regards to their colonies. To this end, I find that the discussions in the first three chapters relating to the politics, economy and culture are unique, while the latter two chapters which discuss the changing scenes after the 1929

Depression follow a rather conventional framework of previous literatures.

Chapter 1: "New Threats and New Opportunities" describes how the United States coped with the issues of raising communism in 1919-29 through the inter-colonial cooperation. Foster argues that the United States as a newcomer in this region cooperated with Britain, France and the Netherlands for this end. It was particularly so after the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) rebellion in 1926-27, as French, British, Dutch, and U. S. officials "perceived communism as a common, dangerous threat to the colonial order" (p. 41).

Chapter 2: "The Highways of Trade Will be Highways of Peace" presents the U. S. involvement in trade and investment in Southeast Asia. During the 1920s, the European colonial masters played the dominant roles in trade and investment in this region. However, we should not overlook the phenomenal rise of the penetration of America in Southeast Asian economies after World War I. This chapter exemplifies the dynamic American influence in rubber, tin and oil industries and how the United States found itself in rivalry against Japan as another rising power in Asia. In this connection, the author, focusing particularly on the U. S. role in economic expansion, also argues that blocking Japan became a common agenda among European and American powers (pp. 69-70).

Chapter 3: "An Empire of the Mind" depicts the colorful picture of American cultural influence in Southeast Asia between 1919-41. Foster observes that "America's most successful consumer product came from Hollywood" (p. 75). Indeed extensive discussions are given here on the influence of American movies in mass culture. The role of missionaries and the penetration of American goods into the consumer market are also exemplified here.

While the above three chapters emphasize the vigorous presence of American factors in a straightforward fashion, the latter two chapters

illustrate the constraints or contradictions of U. S. presence after the 1929 Depression. For example, Chapter 4: "Depression and the Discovery of Limits" describes how the U. S. economic interests in the export commodities like rubber, sugar or tobacco were affected when British Malaya, the Netherland Indies or some colonial administrations enforced various restrictions in the 1930s.

Chapter 5: "Challenges to the Established Order, 1930-1939" deals with various factors that shook the foundation of colonial rules, that is, communist or millenarian movements like Nghe-Tihn or Saya San rebellions and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Foster keenly looks at what European colonial masters expected of the United States in coping with these chaotic situations. She discloses her view that European colonial officials felt more threatened by Japanese ambitions in Asia than by continued radical nationalist activities in their colonies. She also states that Britain and France were willing for the United States "to participate in the region, especially in containing Japan" (p. 152).

Foster's view underestimates the prolonged effects of nationalist movements on colonial policies of European powers as well as the United States in Southeast Asia. Needless to say, the Cold War period, particularly its earlier part of the 1950s and 1960s was an era of rising nationalism in Southeast Asia. If we look back to the 1930s from the dramatic changes of this region after independence, we cannot downplay the historical significance of communism or millenarian movements as they started to spread sporadically in the 1930s, as well as their pervasiveness throughout the duration of the Japanese occupation period and their role as crucibles of nationalism after World War II.

From this perspective, the arguments in Chapter 5 should have been more clearly presented in regard to the following two points: first, how internal factors like rising nationalism affected the colonial orders after the Depression, and second,

how this situation of uncertainty in Southeast Asia was interwoven with international elements like Japan's invasion in Manchuria in the decision making process of foreign policies among European and American colonial powers. If these points had been developed more carefully, the book would have been able to bring out the more dynamic structural changes in colonial Southeast Asia in the 1920s and 1930s. The continuities and changes in U. S. foreign policy in Southeast Asia after 1945 could have been more logically traced in the conclusion of this book. The above observations notwithstanding, this is a worthwhile work for enriching our knowledge of the history of U.S. diplomatic policy as well as its economic penetration in Southeast Asia.

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Alfred W. McCoy. *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009, xiii + 659p.

In 2008, I was in a packed audience in one of the Ateneo de Manila University's large halls. Along with some other Philippinists, Alfred W. McCoy gave a presentation on what would become one section of *Policing America's Empire*. During the open forum, one Filipino woman stood up and asked if it was true that Quezon collaborated with the Americans as a spy. McCoy answered with an air of confidence that documents amply proved that Quezon had indeed dealt with the Americans behind closed doors and, if I remember right, cited a few more examples of Quezon's nefarious dealings. Somehow, this exchange remained in my mind while reading this book.

*Policing America's Empire* is an exemplary achievement of scholarship. In this work, McCoy's long-standing interests in narcotics, torture and

state violence are woven into Philippine history. Its contents include clandestine operations of police, political threats, assassination plots, narcotics, illegal gambling, and prostitution — incidents and characters of what he calls the "netherworld." Its seventeen chapters encompass more than one hundred years, from the late Spanish colonial era to the Arroyo administration and are basically arranged chronologically. The first chapter entitled "Capillaries of Empire" sets the stage, where a colony is used as a laboratory of new technologies. Practices of governmentality and new technologies in turn bounce back to the metropolis. In this way, McCoy shows how the democracy of both the metropolis and the colony are corrupted. Part One (Chapters 2–9) deals with the American colonial era and Part Two (Chapters 10–17) with the commonwealth and post-independence periods. In particular, Chapters 9 and 17 make this work an excellent case study of global history. Respectively, he describes the work of surveillance in the United States as a repercussion of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines and the implications of colonial rule for the present-day America's war on terror.

However, more than the sheer length of this book or its varied subject matters, the use of documents is truly impressive. His reading of primary documents is extensive, ranging from the papers of the famous, such as Manuel L. Quezon and Dean C. Worcester, to those of the obscure, like Ralph Van Deman. Findings in primary documents are supported with careful readings of secondary sources and a string of articles from various publications, from the well-known *Philippines Free Press* to the lesser-known *Makinaugalingon*. His writing style is precise and crisp and it is because of this, combined with his expository strategy of placing an eye-catching scene at the start of each chapter, that the book reads like a crime thriller.

Its contributions lie in McCoy's attempt to add to two inter-related topics of scholarly interests. The first contribution is to America's empire and

its policy on the peripheries. Since the early 2000s, "Empire" has been a catchword, and there have appeared a number of works that use "Empire" as a central theme. What distinguishes the present work from most other studies is the denseness of descriptions as well as the nuanced examination of trans-border flows of ideas and people. Chapters are filled with detailed accounts of historical context, U.S. influences and Filipino applications. For instance, in Chapter 1, he delineates the technological advances of the late Victorian era. Along with typewriters and telegraphs, he describes the invention of Decimal Classification and its application in libraries, hospitals and the armed forces. Then, he discusses its evolution into the world's first scientific criminal identification system invented by Alphonse Bertillon. After providing the reader with the background of the Guardia Civil and affiliated paramilitary organizations of the Spanish colonial era, as well as America's colonial war and racial divide in the early part of American colonization, he sets a Spanish mestizo named Rafael Crame as the central figure of Chapter 5. Crame started to use Bertillon's criminal identification system and applied it to the enemies of the American colonial state under the aegis of American constabulary Chief Harry H. Bandholz. In Chapter 9, some thirty years later in California, intelligence officer Ralph Van Deman, who served in the Philippines, used it against the Japanese Americans for spying allegations. And later still, McCoy suggests, this method along with Deman's confidential files would be used against "radical" Hollywood celebrities and would have reverberating effects on California politics. Here, we see that ideas, people and technologies move both ways, from the metropolis to the colony and from the colony to the metropolis.

McCoy's second contribution is to the question of continuity of Philippine political culture. In his descriptions, Philippine history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has consistently been

filled with gambling, goons and political intrigues. In this regard, the present work shares similar tendencies with other notable studies on Philippine politics by American-trained political scientists. Despite these shared tendencies, here again, McCoy breaks from the previous studies. In the now-classic works on Philippine politics such as John Sidel's study of bossism and McCoy's own edited book on political families, these "dysfunctional" features of Philippine politics were, more than anything else, attributed to Filipino essential cultural traits. In *Policing America's Empire*, McCoy argues that they arose from the Americans' efforts to suppress revolutionary nationalism as well as their double-talk on formal democracy and backdoor coercion, plus their own corruption. He claims that these "dysfunctional" features then became a staple in Philippine politics. Opium consumed mostly by the Chinese around the turn of the century became methamphetamine to which middle-class college students were addicted in the 1960s and which proliferated and turned into a billion-dollar underground industry during the Estrada administration. *Jueteng* as a popular form of gambling, which existed even before the American colonial rule, grew disproportionately and was connected with the national politics in the 1990s. Then, it played the central role in major political scandals of the Estrada and Arroyo administrations. The U.S. Army's pacification efforts were, via anti-communist campaign in the 1950s, repeated in the "salvagings" undertaken by the Marcos dictatorship, Cory Aquino's internal security policy, Ramos's state-endorsed massacres and Arroyo's extra-judicial killings. Similarities and recurrences of these incidents certainly make his argument very persuasive.

Seen in this light, owing to its strength as a historical study involving the careful use of documents and compilation of incidents, *Policing America's Empire* rests at the apex of studies on Philippine politics. Grounded observations of goons

and *politicos* in Cavite and Cebu, party-switching and lack of substantial party platforms, family-as-political dynasty, gambling-like political competition among *caciques* — these issues have been brought up in previous discussions on Philippine politics. However, when they were interpreted as representative features of Philippine politics, these studies were subject to critiques that labeled them as “Orientalism.” McCoy’s work defies interpretation. He presents bare descriptions of massive corruptions in one hundred years of Philippine politics. “Orientalism” or not, he might say, this is what happened and what is happening.

Amidst numerous facts and complex references, McCoy sets a clear logic. Referring to Jürgen Habermas, he claims that “each crisis of legitimacy is best resolved by a widening of political participation” (p. 266). When the Americans controlled the Philippines as colonial masters, Filipino nationalists tried to create political crisis’ to divert power to themselves. For instance, in the 1920s, Quezon tried to raise the ante by using Detective Ray Conley’s corruption case in an effort to delegitimize Leonard Wood’s governorship (Chapter 8). Political developments after the fall of Marcos can also be explained with the same logic. People Power, the ousting of Estrada and the “mob” rallies in support of him are all manifestations of the expansion of political participation at the time of crisis. This thesis is even supported by the legal structure of the Philippine constitution. According to his analysis, the 1987 constitution regards the “people” as a third legislative chamber and legitimizes popular participation in the streets as a means to bring about political change (p. 496).

This book is indispensable reading not only for Philippinists, but also those who are interested in U. S. Empire or in the global history of the twentieth century. It is well-organized, its logic is crystal clear, and its descriptions highly persuasive. Nevertheless, like any other scholarly work, this work is written from a certain perspective. Even

with many revealing facts about the Philippines, this is essentially a work of political history. The tenet that underlies 600-plus pages is the notion of democracy based on transparency and due process. Crimes and social vices are antithetical to this notion and therefore corrupting. The Philippines is described as a place where crimes and social vices overwhelm democracy and its history is presented as a story of “dysfunctional” democracy. Given the purview of different statecrafts and the place of democracy as an unquestionable ideal among them, there is no way to deny the importance of McCoy’s approach. However, history can be more than that.

For instance, why is it that Philippine society as a whole has been so pro-American? After all, the American colonial venture in the Philippines was, as McCoy proves, violent and odious to the people of the colony. Despite all this, U. S. offered something very appealing to the Filipino people. U. S. colonialism is remembered not as a time of rampant political corruptions and social vice, but as a period of tutelage for modern, democratic government. In order to understand this seeming contradiction, it is necessary to see not just what happened and how they happened, but how these incidents were remembered. Certainly, McCoy may argue that, along with the powerful discourse of democratic tutelage, surveillance, censorship, and repression effectively silenced the voices of the radical opposition. But memories must have persisted and, to me, the radical opposition found a way to repeatedly express their grievances in Philippine history.

Related to this point would be an analysis of those under surveillance. In the beginning section of the book, they were the revolutionaries. By the 1930s, they were political rivals, criminals, and bad cops. McCoy clarifies the workings of surveillance and its influence on the politics, but does not really look into how the surveillance affected its subjects other than those who have succeeded in transforming themselves into masterful politicians like



Quezon. In addition to political tutelage and popular education, he proves that actual coercion helped break the thriving revolutionary movement in the early part of U. S. colonial era. If so, what happened to the revolutionaries whose minds were broken by threats? How did these apostasies affect Filipino society? (After all, the political situation and social disturbances of the 1930s such as the Sakdal Uprising suggest that the memories of the revolution and apostasies were not completely suppressed.) What were the long-term effects of this strategy at the societal level other than gambling, crimes and narcotics? These questions seem to be of importance in understanding the Philippines, at least as important as the questions regarding “dysfunctional” democracy.

One more critique I would like to raise here concerns the understanding of violence. In McCoy’s portrayal, the Philippines is a violent place due to both state and non-state actors. In one memorable section, he states that the Cory Aquino administra-

tion equaled, if not surpassed, the Marcos dictatorship in its human rights violations on per-year basis (p. 443). We all remember how Cory was regarded when she died in 2009. She was still the symbol of People Power, not of mass murder. In the final analysis, when dealing with the question of violence, the most important factor may not be the level of violence, but how that violence is interpreted. While I admire McCoy’s careful writings and thorough research, in this respect, his perspective on the Philippines is somewhat simplistic.

Lastly, although the book is already a monumental achievement, I regret that he probably had to cut out some of the sections he had originally intended to include. In his “Acknowledgments,” he refers to the Philippines Constabulary papers at the University of Oregon Library, but nowhere in this voluminous book could I find the reference to these papers.

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