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**<Book Review>**

**Christian T. Ylagan**

**Martin F. Manalansan IV and Augusto F. Espiritu, eds. *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora*. New York: New York University Press, 2016.**

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South-to-North migration; and case studies of reversed geographies of power in the Asian context. Further studies are needed to explore the similarities and differences between transnational marriage migration in Asia and other regions. There is also a need to enhance understanding of the societal implications of remittances in the context of transnational marriage migration. In all, *Marriage Migration in Asia* is an excellent contribution to understanding the complex patterns and dynamics of transnational marriage migration in Asia in the twenty-first century.

Ibrahima Amadou Dia  
*International Development Consultant*

***Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora***

MARTIN F. MANALANSAN IV and AUGUSTO F. ESPIRITU, eds.

New York: New York University Press, 2016.

In *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora*, Martin F. Manalansan IV and Augusto F. Espiritu shepherd new forays by Filipino and Filipino-American scholars into the tempestuous seas of Philippine studies. Influenced by works from preeminent scholars such as Vicente Rafael (1995); Antonio T. Tiongson, Jr., Edgardo V. Gutierrez, and Ricardo V. Gutierrez (2006); Rolando Tolentino (2011); Priscelina Patajo-Legasto (2008); Coloma *et al.* (2012); and Reynaldo Iletto (2014) that reflect the preoccupations of contemporary Philippine studies with representations of Filipino identity and experiences as imbricated in diasporic and globalized contexts, *Filipino Studies* issues upon itself both a warning and a challenge against radicalizing views of Philippine postcoloniality as either purely victimized by or purely antagonistic toward its colonizers. Taking the image of “palimpsest” as its semantic inspiration, the essays in the volume problematize the “layerings’ or shifting stratigraphy of power that obscure or erase and at the same time resurrect specific historical, cultural, and political experiences” (p. 2). At the core of this volume is its focus on the continual reinscriptions of previously held ideas, assumptions, and frameworks about “Filipinoness”: a process that did not end with the formal liberation of the Philippines from its colonizers, but which is instead resemanticized alongside paradigmatic power shifts brought on by waves of diaspora, transnationalism, and globalization. This Filipinoness, insofar as it implies not just *what* a Filipino is but also *where* to locate such an identity, has been a spectral question in Philippine studies scholarship. Manalansan and Espiritu’s volume recuperates Filipinoness from the aporias between contestatory modes of power and gives Filipino subjectivity a voice by ascribing it with a palimpsestic quality, that is, as deriving its valence simultaneously from existing narratives that seek to define it and from the ongoing emendations of those narratives. What makes Manalansan and Espiritu’s volume excitingly productive is that it opens up Philippine studies to the anxiogenic possibilities that arise

from refracting the critical lens of viewing Filipino subjectivity toward instances of mercurial agency that transgress its convenient yet disingenuous historiographical framing as a passive precipitation of neo-imperial trauma. In short, the essays in Manalansan and Espiritu's volume, which are in themselves performative attempts to recode the palimpsest, make legible the complicity of Filipinos in the writing of their own complex narratives.

The first section of *Filipino Studies*, "Where From? Where To? Filipino Studies: Fields and Agendas," includes historicizing meditations by Neferti Tadiar, Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, and John D. Blanco on how cultural and economic capital have been deployed—initially through institutionalized methods of racializing orientalism and later through globalized structures of exploitative labor brokerage—to effect new modes of domination. These essays emphasize the participatory ways that Filipinos themselves have buttressed modes of domination, for example in the consumption and reproduction of "reified versions of 'Filipino culture'" (p. 22) or in the facilitation of emigration toward state- and corporate-sponsored exploitation of racialized labor (p. 39). Of particular interest among the essays is Blanco's genealogy of Oriental Enlightenment, a text that could perhaps serve as a hermeneutical key in understanding the volume's larger framework of reimagining Filipinoness as palimpsestic.

In his incisive work, Blanco considers the seemingly oppositional ways that *ilustrados* (foreign-educated middle class) José Rizal and Trinidad Pardo de Tavera have appropriated the historical experience of Filipinos being orientalized by their foreign colonizers. Noting the ideological divide between Rizal's affirmation of the irreducible Otherness of the colonial subject from the colonizer, and Pardo de Tavera's contention that colonialism is the generative seed without which Filipino subjectivity could not exist, Blanco scrutinizes how Rizal and Pardo de Tavera provide the philosophical impetus for the weaponization of cultural difference toward a Filipino-led revolution on one hand, and for the justification of a benevolent process of colonially directed self-actualization on the other. While Pardo de Tavera has largely been polemicized in contemporary historiography for espousing an assimilationist social philosophy, Blanco is quick to point out the need to also temper the approbation generally accorded to Rizal's "liberatory" schematic. For while Rizal did imagine an independent Philippines, he did so through an arguably self-orientalizing appeal to racial antagonism premised on the strategic essentialism of an imagined pan-Asian heritage, of which only the educated *ilustrado* class could be the logical gatekeepers. Implicit in this schematic is the paradox that the "Orientalist premise of [Western] superiority . . . could also be employed to argue against revolution . . . , in favour of the inevitable and universal spread of technological, industrial, and secular 'progress' . . . as Rizal *also* argued" (p. 62). Meanwhile, Blanco notes that in advocating for an alignment of this self-orientalizing "difference" toward more fully developed cultures as a path toward national self-actualization, Pardo de Tavera

insisted instead on the indefinite suspension of political reflection by any except the educated class

in order to create a system of education free from the unnatural pressure which represses the reason of man and subjects it to the reason of another by means of religious, political, or social dogmas. (p. 69)

In highlighting the imbricated ways that Rizal and Pardo de Tavera's "critical Enlightenment stance to a discourse of racial(ized) and/or spiritualized civilizational difference was fated to repeat itself in succeeding generations of Philippine nationalism" (p. 71), Blanco genealogizes two polar views that have oriented a lot of the scholarship in Philippine studies and serve as the dominant narratives that the rest of the essays in this volume, whether explicitly or implicitly, seek to revise. The first view deploys Philippine studies toward recuperations of a radical yet phantasmatic sense of pre-colonial or pan-Southeast Asian belonging; the second mobilizes it toward militant indictments of colonial models of coercion and subjugation. In surfacing the possibilities that such ideologies are not strictly oppositional but could in fact be perfectly consistent with each other, Blanco instantiates Manalansan and Espiritu's proposal not just to read but also to *write* the narratives of Philippine studies—and, by extension, Filipinoness—as a palimpsest.

The remaining chapters of the volume serve as critical explorations of the discursive nature of the palimpsest as applied to specific frameworks and research fields. In the section titled "Colonial Layerings, Imperial Crossings," Victor Bascara, Kimberly Alidio, Julian Go, and Dylan Rodriguez reconceptualize colonialism and empire by reading against the historiographical grain to address such things as the insolvency of colonial loyalty, the educational biopolitics of sociolinguistic acculturation, the fraught alliances and antagonisms of Filipino *ilustrados* and their counterparts from other former Spanish colonies, and the vexed relationality of an insurgent Filipino racial ontology with colonial violence.

The chapters by Richard T. Chu, Robert Diaz, and Kale Bantigue Fajardo, which appear in the section titled "Nationalist Inscriptions: Blurrings and Erasures," investigate the ways that "nation" can function simultaneously as an organizing principle for communities seeking social capital while being a conceptual target of institutional mechanisms of disciplinary exclusion. Focusing specifically on the subjectivity of Chinese individuals, female and queer male sex workers, and displaced Filipinos, these chapters deconstruct participatory modes of racial, heteronormative, and transnational power that divest these groups of their agency in conventional ethnographic accounts that ventriloquize minoritarian experience as mere articulations of woundedness or pain.

In the section "The Filipino Body in Time and Space," Martin Joseph Ponce, Denise Cruz, Sarita Echavez See, and Lucy Burns interrogate notions of womanhood, queerness, and desire as they relate to how Filipinos encode themselves as persons enmeshed in intersectional contexts. Situating these embodiments within—and as irrupting into—the discourses of modern sexuality, the essays in this section examine cultural artifacts and modes of cultural production to expose how both performing and challenging racialization, gendering, and sexuality were integral components of (post)colonial projects.

Finally, the section “Philippine Cultures at Large: Homing in on Global Filipinos and Their Discontents” interrogates the territorialization of culture/culturalization of territory amid transnational and diasporic dynamics that continue to destabilize notions of home and belonging. The chapters by Francisco Benitez, Anna Romina Guevarra, Emily Noelle Ignacio, and Rick Bonus surface the future problematics of Philippine studies as they relate not just to the effect of (im) mobilities in shaping ever more hybrid Filipino ontologies, but also to how Filipino presence becomes constitutive in shaping the habitus of previously alienating racial and cultural spaces. In particular, Benitez’s invocation of Judith Butler’s engagement with Levinasian ethics becomes an important teleological counterpoint to Blanco’s hermeneutics of reading and writing the palimpsest of Philippine studies. Butler argues that the structure of address between the “I” and the Other is an interruption of narratives that behooves the I’s need to be recognized as a subject by an interlocutor. From this argument, Benitez extrapolates the problem that confronts displaced or hybrid subjects: how the multiplicity of addresses they are mired in satisfies the ontological and communitarian desire to be recognized but at once also precludes the possibility of stable positionality, rendering their attempts to be fully recognized as always necessarily provisional (p. 335).

This constant interpellation of hybrid subjectivity foregrounds Filipinoness as an irresolvable conundrum and perhaps limns the Sisyphean anxiety that haunts Philippine studies. Yet paradoxically—and as Manalansan and Espiritu intimate in their palimpsestic reframing—the provisionality of Filipinoness is precisely what allows for its endless reinscriptions. But *whose* reinscriptions? At the heart of the palimpsest metaphor are assumptions of access to the narrative, knowledge of its language of writing, and willingness to have one’s own textualizations be edited, overwritten, obfuscated, or erased. While the volume acknowledges the discontinuities that could arise from the recalibration of the narratives of Philippine studies, implicit in Manalansan and Espiritu’s own avowal of their volume as the labor product of privileged Filipino and Filipino-American scholars from the Global North—our modern-day *ilustrados*—is the necessity for even more interlocutors to engage Filipinoness in discursive address. Where *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora* succeeds the most is that in laying bare the complex textuality of Filipino (self-)narration, it becomes an open invitation to these interlocutors, whose complementary or competing perspectives are informed by their own positionalities, to engage and mediate Filipinoness: a translocal script that unfolds in real time.

Christian T. Ylagan

*Comparative Literature Program, Western University, Canada*

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### ***Inventing the Performing Arts: Modernity and Tradition in Colonial Indonesia***

MATTHEW ISAAC COHEN

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016.

In *Inventing the Performing Arts: Modernity and Tradition in Colonial Indonesia*, Matthew Isaac Cohen focuses on how “modernity” and “tradition” are woven together in shaping the practice of performing arts in Indonesia. Using E.J. Hobsbawm’s term “invented tradition,” this book uses a similar approach to Hobsbawm’s by questioning the difference between tradition and modernity and showing how both are interwoven and unavoidably connected rather than opposites. This book discusses the century-old process of invention of performing arts in Indonesia, in chronological order from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, depicting the many agencies and dynamics involved in the process.

Starting with an advertisement of a family circus from Batavia, as well as postcards and images from museum collections of the nineteenth century, the author beautifully demonstrates the many agencies involved in the process of invention, including those from Europe, China, and Java, to show the complexity of the invention of performing arts in Indonesia. Through the rest of the book the author illustrates how the development of performing arts in Indonesia has been subjected to influences from many agencies, not only local but also international, and how the development is connected to the trends of performing arts at the international level. It is reasonable to suggest that the performing arts in Indonesia are not only the result of tradition, which is isolated from the outside, but are also influenced by, and adaptations of, trends in other countries as well.

This book consists of three parts arranged in chronological order. The first part focuses on the “common ground for arts and popular entertainments” in the setting of the nineteenth century; the second focuses on the “maelstrom of modernity” of the twentieth century; and the third focuses on “occupation and ‘Greater Asian’ modernity,” informed by the 1942–45 period of Japanese occupation.

The first part introduces the topic of performing arts and their significance in and for Indone-