

Zanier includes two interesting illustrations from a series of twenty-six executed by a Chinese artist in the early eighteenth century, and on page 94 states that a great volume of material on botany and agronomy lies languishing in the Lyon Municipal Library and other archives. With all this valuable data on hand, one cannot help feeling that what was really needed was a full-length study dealing with all such facets of East-West technological transfer, not merely a revised version of lecture notes. I hope that in the future the author will publish one, for judging from the contents of this book he has already done a lot of the groundwork.

On a final note, the text of this fine booklet has been marred by a lack of proper copy-editing. I noticed too many typos (even without trying to spot them) to enumerate here, but undoubtedly the responsibility for this lies with the publisher rather than the author.

REFERENCE CITED

BERGER, Gunther, George MÉTAILLÉ, and Takeshi WATABE

1996 Une chinoiserie insolite: Étude d'un papier peint chinois. *Arts Asiatiques* 51: 96–116.

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PHILIPPINES

MEÑEZ, HERMINIA. *Explorations in Philippine Folklore*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996. xiii + 159 pages. References, index. Paper US\$17.00; ISBN 97155-0211-3. (Distributed by the University of Hawaii Press)

Explorations in Philippine Folklore is exactly what the title says it is. This slim collection of essays encompasses a broad spectrum of the topics and methods of analysis found in the field of folklore, all centered on the diverse Philippine folk group. The thematic range is impressive: Meñez analyzes the messages inscribed by drivers on their jeepneys, delineates the parameters for including sexual innuendo in social banter, traces the historical development of the viscera-sucking witch, and more. This is a noteworthy collection, and makes very enjoyable reading.

Throughout her career as a scholar of folklore, Meñez has investigated the lore that has arisen in the Philippines. A University of Pennsylvania graduate, she has taught at UCLA and at California State University, Sonoma, but her interest in folklore stems from hearing stories as a child in Aklan during World War II (x). The essays were published or presented between 1971 and 1995, and their collection here is a valuable resource for people interested in this area of the world. They are also valuable reading for the diversity of interests that they show, and for the capable way in which Meñez has put together her work.

In "The Art and Language of Manila's Jeepney Drivers" Meñez examines the decorations that festoon the popular vehicles to decipher the identity of this subcultural group. Her second essay, "The Philippine Folk Epic and Multicultural Education," continues the emphasis on discovering identity by presenting the cultural themes and values enshrined in the epic, and by pointing out how "folklore is a major, although relatively neglected, field of study that offers excellent materials for teaching cultural pluralism" (13).

A feminist point of view is used effectively to elucidate the role of women in Filipino society, both past and present, in several essays: "Female Warriors in Philippine Oral Epics," "The Shaman and the Warrior in Isneg Society," "The Viscera-Sucker and the Politics of

Gender,” “Female Victimization in Philippine Balladry,” and “The Ballad of Domestic Tragedies and Applied Folklore.” The essay on the viscera-suckers is a particularly deft piece of scholarship, and presents a solid case for this *asuang* being developed by Spanish religious leaders to co-opt the traditional leadership roles of women, “a process of disenfranchising the most powerful Filipino women and a politics of gender that has deep roots in the Spanish conquest of the Philippines” (94). More work is done with Spanish roots in the essay “The Philippine Folktales Hero Juan Tamad.” The role of luck is clearly shown as the circumstance that allows the mediation of opposing dualities, in a very Lévi-Straussian structural analysis.

Two other essays deal with contemporary issues with psychological and political connections. “Mythology and the ‘Ingkanto’ Syndrome” looks at supernatural illnesses and has interesting echoes of the American preoccupation with UFO encounters. “Talismanic Magic and Political Leadership” draws lessons on how culture helps define power, with a discussion of the People Power Revolution and subsequent coup attempts.

Finally, there is a strong dose of performance theory with the essays “The Performance of Folk Narrative in California’s Filipino Communities” and “Filipino American Erotica and the Ethnography of a Folkloric Event.” Both of these essays show evidence of careful observation and well thought-out conclusions and are excellent examples of the kind of ethnographic work that folklore has in common with anthropology.

The ordering of the essays does not seem to follow any plan, either thematic or chronological, but this in no way weakens the collection as a whole. The notes for each essay are located at the end of the book, just before the references; this is a little inconvenient but is not a serious drawback. In fact, it is difficult to find anything to critique about this body of work. The variety and the liveliness of the analyses make it a very entertaining and informative read.

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INDONESIA

SEARS, LAURIE J. *Shadows of Empire: Colonial Discourse and Javanese Tales.*

Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996. xxii + 349 pages. Map, illustrations, selected glossary, bibliography, index. Cloth US\$49.95; ISBN 0-8223-1685-4. Paper US\$16.95; ISBN 0-8223-1697-8.

This book is about the tales told in the Javanese shadow-puppet (*wayang*) theater, specifically the *wayang purwa*, which uses flat, leather puppets, as presented in the Central Javanese court town of Solo. This being said, the statement should at once be amended, because the author presents us with anything but a typical discussion of these tales, which have in the past been presented in the scholarly literature as the “essence” of Javaneseness. Rather, she wonders whether *wayang* “ever was the dominant expression of a Javanese philosophy, religion, or ‘worldview’” (11), and points at various interests that have shaped our perception of the shadow theater in such a way as to give the impression that it was.

Primary among these were Dutch colonial and scholarly interests that “discovered” *wayang* in the nineteenth century and, true to contemporary ideas, found this oral tradition to be a degenerate derivative of the original, written Indian *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* tales. At the same time, however, they saw in it proof of Java’s deep Indic roots, the development of which was thought to be usable as a defense against a vigorous Islam, which was seen as threatening Dutch interests, especially after the revolt in Java from 1825 to 1830.