

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

---

## Editor's Introduction

Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr.

*Philippine Studies* vol. 55, no. 3 (2007): 285–286

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

---

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at [philstudies@admu.edu.ph](mailto:philstudies@admu.edu.ph).

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>

# Editor's Introduction

Employing a nonlinear narrative structure and focusing on the meaning of science to its practitioners, Warwick Anderson offers a synthesis of the history of Western science and medical research from the earliest beginnings of the colonial enterprise in the Philippines through to 1970. As Anderson shows, Western science entered the colony through Spanish priests, who saw their science as corollary to the wider missionary endeavor. Outstanding were members of the Society of Jesus, who were theologically positioned to pursue scientific work. Under American rule scientists strategically legitimized colonial annexation, science becoming integral to the new imperialist's *mission civilisatrice*. By the 1930s key Filipino individuals pushed to promote science as indispensable to nationhood. In the transition from colonial to postcolonial, the state structure remained central to the scientific enterprise.

Despite the secularity of American scientists, Anderson alerts us to important parallels, which he signals with terms such as “the gospel of American colonial science” and, among Filipinos, “converting to national science.” Anderson aligns science with religion and highlights its character as a belief system—even as colonial scientists were based in institutions that buttressed their work. Excluded, however, from this essay's scope is the complex relationship between Western science and the magical worldview of the population and perhaps even of some of the scientists.

Juxtaposing the works of Manuel Arguilla and S. Rajaratnam, Philip Joseph Holden argues that the short story, by its very form and the pragmatics of publication, is more significant than the novel in articulating the modernizing project of what he calls, rather uncritically, as the nationalist bourgeoisie. This project, Holden points out, was both an extension and

antithesis of colonial power, made evident in the way the short story as a modernist genre dealt with the contradictions of life under late colonialism and the search for some new beginning. The short story embodies the ways in which, for an elite few, colonial modernity simultaneously enthralles and alienates, exemplified in the way the short story portrays time, the native male body, crowds, and mass movements. Holden resorts to the neologism “paracolonial” to avoid the colonial-national binarism, a term that is also apt because Rajaratnam wrote as a Malayan but ended up a Singaporean.

In contrast to the first two articles that discuss colonial intellectual elites who sought to shape society and history, the last two deal with economic history and the market forces that transcend even powerful decision makers. Vicente Angel Ybiernas focuses on the First World War and the economic boom it precipitated but also the bust that inevitably came. The colonial administration of Francis Burton Harrison and his Filipino allies seized this boom to introduce policy changes to expand exports to the United States and create public enterprises to drive growth. The latter approach, a departure from laissez faire economics, was intended to create financial independence as a precondition for political independence; instead, it eventuated in near bankruptcy in 1921. Ybiernas emphasizes chronology to illumine the causal chain: the debacle resulted from the postwar financial crash rather than corruption in the public enterprises. Were these irregularities just another form of contradiction of late-colonial modernity?

The Philippine inability to make the most of Japan’s export market, with gains accruing instead to China and other Southeast Asian countries, is the focus of Rosalina Palanca-Tan’s analysis. The country has a palpable comparative advantage in specific exports, but small- and medium-scale enterprises squander opportunities due to poor product quality and price competitiveness; and the state’s inappropriate policies, lack of infrastructure, and poor leadership. Palanca-Tan suggests that the improvement of Philippine exports to Japan, quite ironically, may require Japanese assistance. This state of affairs is not unrelated to weak scientific development.

Given the prominent role of the Manila Observatory in the history of science, *Philippine Studies* memorializes this institution with a set of photographs, including the one on the cover, obtained from the Archives of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus. We thank Archivist Fr. José S. Arcilla, S.J., for his kind permission to publish these materials.