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The Joys of Dislocation: Mindanao, Nation and Region by Patricio N. Abinales

Book Notes

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Book Notes

ABINALES, PATRICIO N.

The Joys of Dislocation: Mindanao, Nation and Region

Pasig City: Anvil, 2008. 197 pages.

A collection of commentaries on mainly political affairs in Mindanao, the Philippines, and Southeast Asia written over a decade of dislocations and peripatetic movements, this book puts Mindanao at the center of the author's reflections. As Macariu D. Tiu's foreword puts it, Abinales is "at his best or worst (as some would say) when he takes the bull by its horns. His essays are informed, sharp, and take a stand. . . . You may or may not agree with [Abinales's] views, but his explorations into many conjunctural issues will surely gratify readers searching for a good and enlightening read" (viii). Apart from ruminations on what an Islamic state would look like and on the situation of the left, the book has some unexpected moments that do stand out, as when Abinales narrates female power in Sulu in the early twentieth century, recounts a comical discussion on rats found in the Congressional record for 1954, dissects the word *raket*, and mourns the death of a *turo-turo* (street food) stall at the corner of Katipunan Road and Aurora Boulevard. As a sort of conclusion, the last essay in the collection is a riposte to complaints about the apolitical character of Asia's Generations X and Y, reaffirming the author's faith in "the capacity of the human spirit to resist and to dream, but expressed in a manner different from the immediate past" (197).