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Otto van den Muijzenberg, ed., trans.

Colonial Manila, 1909–1912: Three Dutch Travel Accounts

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Lim's division did not participate in the later battles in Bataan and was not part of the Bataan Death March. The Japanese however brought him to Camp O'Donnell in Capas, Tarlac. In July 1942 the new colonizers released him from the camp, after which he went to a hospital to recuperate. He had plans then of starting an underground resistance movement against the Japanese. When he left the hospital he tried to escape in a *batel*, a large sailboat; unfortunately, the Japanese found him and brought him to Fort Santiago in Manila. He was believed to have been executed later by the Japanese. His remains were never identified, and the day of his death was never ascertained (264–65). Although Lim never attained his ambition to put his mark on the military history of the Philippines, his death at the hands of the Japanese made him a hero worthy to be memorialized.

Meixsel states in the introductory part of the book that his goal in writing *Frustrated Ambition* was to provide a new perspective on military affairs in the Philippines during the American occupation, a perspective that “return[s] some agency to Filipino soldiers who attempted to affect the course of their own country’s history, a history from which they have, for far too many years, remained largely absent” (8). The way that he sets about achieving this goal may not appeal to every reader who may be looking for a biography on Vicente Lim, as the book’s title announces, but is then inundated with information on the Philippine Army. A proper biography of Lim remains to be written, and toward that goal Meixsel’s book will serve as a very useful resource.

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OTTO VAN DEN MUIJZENBERG, ED., TRANS.

Colonial Manila, 1909–1912: Three Dutch Travel Accounts

Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2016. 262 pages.

Otto van den Muijzenberg has translated three Dutch travel accounts about the Philippines that were written around a decade after the start of the

American colonial period. In making these texts accessible to a Philippine audience, *Colonial Manila, 1909–1912* is a welcome addition to the growing number of English translations of foreign travel accounts, written mostly by nineteenth-century travel writers—from household names like the German ethnologist Fedor Jagor to the Dutch colonial official J. A. B. Wiselius, whose 1875 travelogue was published in translation simultaneously with *Colonial Manila*. This work is Van den Muijzenberg's second book-length publication with the Ateneo de Manila University Press offering perspectives of Dutch eyewitnesses on the colonial Philippines; the first was *The Philippines through European Lenses* (2008), which contains and discusses photographs from the collection of Meerkamp van Embden, a Dutch businessman who lived in the country from 1889 to 1927. Like the photo collection, the three accounts in *Colonial Manila* offer insights on Philippine colonial society from the perspective of the country that colonized neighboring Indonesia. Since the Dutch regarded themselves as benevolent colonial masters bent on uplifting their subjects, similar to the Americans in the Philippines, these insights are especially promising.

The three travel writers, each of whom has a separate chapter in this book, occupied prominent positions in their respective fields. Of the three, the best-known is the feminist Aletta Jacobs, the first Dutch woman to attend university and become a medical doctor, for which she is honored in the national historical canon that is mainstreamed through the secondary education system in the Netherlands. Her chapter contains open letters that she sent to Dutch publications during her trip to Manila. The second, Gerret Rouffaer, was a well-known orientalist scholar with extensive knowledge of both Spain and Indonesia. His chapter consists of excerpts from the diary he kept while in the Philippines. Finally, Hendrik Muller was an ethnologist and diplomat. Featured in *Colonial Manila* is the chapter about the Philippines in his 1912 travel book *Azië Gespiegeld* (Asia Mirrored). Van den Muijzenberg begins each chapter with a brief introduction of the author; he then presents the travel account and concludes with his comments.

The letters in Jacobs's chapter were sent to Dutch media during her campaign trip for women's suffrage together with American suffragette Carrie Chapman Catt. Manila's American elite welcomed the two in July 1912, and most of Jacobs's informants were Americans. Van den Muijzenberg is right to point out her lack of contact with Filipinos, except for Rafael del Pan, a Filipino of Spanish descent who made Jacobs aware of the mutual mistrust between Americans and Filipinos (75–76). Still, her letters mainly expressed

admiration for supposed American colonial achievements in education and health care. In her efforts to stress the messianic impact of her and Catt's visit, she conveniently ignored the already lively feminist movement in the country. One American is curiously absent from Jacobs's letters, considering her interest in medicine: Victor Heiser. But Van den Muijzenberg's suggestion that she might have ignored Heiser because she found him too racist (90) remains a wild guess. She never questioned American or Dutch colonial presence in Southeast Asia. As the letters are neatly in line with US colonial rhetoric, it is surprising that the translator defends them against research by feminist scholars like Harriet Feinberg (1990) and Ena Janssen (1998), who have concluded that Jacobs was an imperialist. Van den Muijzenberg contrasts her Philippine letters with those that Jacobs sent from South Africa and the Netherlands Indies, which are supposedly more imperialistic than those she wrote from Manila (87). It is unlikely, though, that Jacobs suddenly changed her mind about imperialism. If, instead, we view her Philippine letters in connection with those she wrote from other colonies, her ostensibly progressive focus on education and health care comes to express the benevolence her American informants professed.

Of the three travelers, Rouffaer, who knew Spanish and Malay, had by far the most interactions with locals. His hitherto unpublished diary is notable for containing over 175 contacts with scholars, priests, politicians, and officials, about whom he gives his opinions. Van den Muijzenberg is critical of his unquenching thirst for information of all kinds, from colonial architecture to geology, leading to a supposed lack of depth. But this breadth of Rouffaer's interests also means that his diary is a treasure trove of data, accompanied by the critical (to the point of being pedantic) comments of this know-it-all. For instance, Rouffaer agreed with Otto Scheerer on the sloppiness of Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera's scholarly work (184); on another occasion he lectured American volcanologists about post-eruption water levels in Taal Lake (121). Although Rouffaer often described the Philippines from an orientalist viewpoint, he also appreciated local politicians like Sergio Osmeña, who supposedly "display[ed] dedication, tact, and impartiality" (174), and the "silent, modest" (175) Emilio Aguinaldo. Rouffaer's verdict as to whether American colonialism was beneficent and whether independence could work remains unclear.

For Muller, finally, there was no question that the country was not ready for independence: his chapter concludes with his despedida (farewell party), hosted by "friendly ilustrados" at the house of Pardo de Tavera, who

agreed that the “present level of the native makes the wish of immediate independence . . . simply ridiculous” (230). His stereotyping of natives as indolent shows the influence of previous imperialist visitors like Jagor. However, his pride of Dutch colonialism also led him to deride the American “experiment” that supposedly asked for trouble by giving Filipinos too much leeway.

Van den Muijzenberg’s editing of the accounts by Muller and Rouffaer is at times problematic. For instance, he excludes long sections of Muller’s chapter included in this volume because he deems the information contained in these sections as too familiar to Philippine readers. This decision leaves the remainder without its context and omits parts that can be interesting to scholars with no access to the original text, such as Muller’s description of a religious procession, his racialized description of the appearance of Filipinos, or his report of a lecture by Dean Worcester, which Van den Muijzenberg mentions but does not include in his translation—a missed chance to shed light on the process of imperialist knowledge exchange. Finally, footnotes from Muller’s original text and those added by the editor are numbered consecutively without any indication of which ones are Muller’s and which ones are the editor’s. Rouffaer’s diary, in turn, is edited in such a way that it becomes a thematic rather than a chronological account; observations about the same topic but made days or weeks apart are put together in a running text, thereby distorting the context of Rouffaer’s comments. Interested researchers will have to go back to the original sources.

As it turns out, these travel accounts, like the more well-known ones, tell more about the mindset and perspective of their authors than about the country they visited. Nevertheless, the three travel accounts do contain interesting insights, especially on the exchange of information between Dutch, American, and Filipino elites as well as the sources of their imperialist knowledge. Americans, other foreigners, and even Filipinos participated in shaping US imperialist discourse here. This book enables readers to appreciate such and other insights on the connections and exchanges between the travelers and the colonial elites and the imperialist discourses both groups operated in; it is a welcome addition to the already available travel accounts about the Philippines.

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