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**In the Far Islands: The Role of Natives from the Philippines
in the Conquest, Colonization and Repopulation of the
Mariana Islands, 1668–1903**
by Augusto V. de Viana

Book Notes

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by an appreciative commentary, and the commentators themselves form a who's who in anthropology, the lead being Clifford Geertz. The volume's title, *Fine Description*, comes from the paper of Charles O. Frake given at the American Anthropological Association meetings held in November 1991 on the occasion of Conklin's retirement, which is reproduced in this volume. The attention to detail in Conklin's ethnography is "fine" in the twin senses of fine detail and fine art: "meticulous in construction, but it is also grand in design" (x). Thus, despite the changing concerns of anthropology as a discipline and the pitfalls of ethnography, Conklin's detailed, rigorous, and respectful ethnographic writings have imparted to us a lasting knowledge of how the Hanunóo and Ifugao he lived with talked, worked, thought, played, and looked at the world. In their introduction, Joel Kuipers and Ray McDermott distill five principles from Conklin's work to guide ethnographic description in a responsible and principled direction. The commentators note how Conklin's work anticipates and subtly addresses many of the issues that ethnographers would grapple with in the late twentieth century. The volume ends with Conklin's reflections on his introduction to anthropology, which appeared originally in 1998.

DE VIANA, AUGUSTO V.

In the Far Islands: The Role of Natives from the Philippines in the Conquest, Colonization and Repopulation of the Mariana Islands, 1668–1903

Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2004. 305 pages.

From a former "province" of the Spanish Philippines, which loomed large in the imagination of *ilustrados* in the late nineteenth century, the Mariana Islands have been expunged from the collective memory of Filipinos. Augusto V. de Viana's book, based on his Ph.D. dissertation, helps recall the intimate ties between Luzon and the Visayas and this group of Pacific islands. It narrates the early encounters of the Spanish with what Magellan called the Ladrões and discusses the belated (1660s) Spanish conquest and missions, and the resistance of the indigenous Chamorro population. The forcible relocation of the population to Guam and the emptying of other islands such as Saipan, plus epidemics, revolts, and suicides, diminished the

Chamorro population, with fears of extinction in the eighteenth century. In this context, the engagement of people from Luzon and the Visayas changed from missions to repopulating the islands. In the nineteenth century not only did the Marianas become a penal colony but it was also a place of exile for political deportees, especially in the wake of the 1872 Cavite Mutiny, the 1896 Revolution, and the Filipino-American War. The book ends with thoughts on the mestizo culture of the Marianas, with traces of influence from Luzon and the Visayas.

GARCIA, MARIA ISABEL

Science Solitaire: Essays on Science, Nature, and Becoming Human

Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006. 253 pages.

From the author's science column, "De Rerum Natura," seventy pieces are gathered together in this book and grouped together under seven labels. The first one, "Feast of Lifetimes," contains essays that celebrate creatures, such as fireflies and elephants, and the complexity of the earth, the geological history of the Philippines, and the DNA. The second set of essays, "Beggars for Discovery," speaks of the joys of discovery and rediscovery, even of such matters as taste, memory, and aging. The third, "Exquisite Minds," pays tribute to some well-known scientists but also to Filipino scientist Dr. Ray Punongbayan as well as those whose work qualifies them for the IgNobel Awards. The fourth, "Gender Benders," gathers pieces that ponder on various aspects of sexuality, from orgasms to chromosomes. The fifth, "Sense of Home, Nonsense at Home," tackles Filipino ways of apprehending the world and argues against the magical worldview. The sixth, "Science Meets Life and Art," reflects on what science has to say about everyday life, from the belief in the soul to gadgets such as computers. The seventh and last set, "Weird and Extraordinary Ideas," discourses on daring ideas about the nature of the universe and possibilities in outer space. In the prelude the author refers to science writing as her dance, but the book's title employs another metaphor: a solitary card game, probably from the vantage point of a physicist's widow. This dance, this game, is the author's way of saying that science matters in illuminating and generating meaning about the human condition.