

# philippine studies

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

---

## **Science Solitaire: Essays on Science, Nature, and Becoming Human by Maria Isabel Garcia**

### **Book Notes**

*Philippine Studies* vol. 57, no. 1 (2009): 143

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>

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.