

Filipino thought as outlined in the last section of his book (that could have come first) on the “Filipino Enlightenment” — this being a review of literature, a review of Filipino and other ethnological writings of the nineteenth century that bring the lives of Paterno, Pardo and de los Reyes in the context of the birth of Filipino thought and the birth of the nation. From the many references in this book, it is obvious that this but the first of more biographies. One can only hope that as Mojares publishes the rest of his studies in the near future, this work, this shameless display of erudition will inspire rather than stunt the continuous study of the past and the minds that formed it.

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Rizal, Jose. 1961. *Cartas entre Rizal y sus colegas de la propaganda*. Manila: Jose Rizal National Centennial Commission.

Richard T. Chu. *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos of Manila: Family, Identity, and Culture, 1860s-1930s*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010, xx + 451p.

Works of scholarship are artifacts of their times. Edgar Wickberg’s magisterial study, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898* [1965], provided an overview of “Chinese” economic and social activities in the late Spanish colonial Philippines. Its concern with gauging the extent of “Chinese” involvement in the Philippine economy and highlighting the role of Spanish colonial rule in promoting anti-Chinese sentiment as well as cementing “Chinese” solidarity can best be understood as an attempt to lay bare historical patterns of economic and social change that shaped the post-colonial construction of the “Chinese Question” in

this part of Southeast Asia (itself an American construct that was mobilized for Cold War objectives).

Over the past two decades, the nationalist stereotyping of the Southeast Asian “Chinese” as economically dominant, culturally different and politically disloyal Other, to be “assimilated” or “integrated” into the post-colonial body politic, has ceded ground to a new and by now no less stereotypical image of the “Chinese” as exemplary postmodern transnational subjects who, in pursuit of individual and familial interests, practice a form of “flexible citizenship” [Ong 1999] that strategically combines migration with capital accumulation to “negotiate” (a keyword, along with “hybrid,” of transnationalism) their way through an increasingly globalized world where nation-states nevertheless remain weighty, often repressive, players.

Richard Chu’s *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos of Manila* deftly navigates between these two dominant paradigms for the study of the “Chinese” in Southeast Asia. The inaugural volume of a new Brill book series “Chinese Overseas: History, Literature, and Society” under the editorship of Wang Gungwu, *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos* seeks to understand the process by which hitherto fluid “Chinese” and “Filipino” ethnic identities became mutually exclusive as boundaries between them hardened in the Philippines, but eschews the assimilation-vs-integration debate and other “nation-state metanarratives” (p. 6) that have colluded in the “reification and essentialization” of ethnic identities. At the same time, its focus on a period that encompasses the final four decades of Spanish colonial rule and both American colonial and Philippine Commonwealth periods is meant to “provide a historical context to understand today’s modern Chinese transnational practices” (p. 9), rediscovering in the past cosmopolitan figures, values and lifestyles that prefigure the success stories and trends of current globalization.

Offering a “social history” of everyday com-

mercial and familial practices in Fujian and Filipinas/Philippines, Chu points to the salience and ubiquity of “flexible, border-crossing practices” — among them name-changing, taking of Spanish citizenship, speaking multiple languages, networking with Chinese and non-Chinese alike — by which Chinese migrant-merchants and their offspring “evade [d], manipulate [d] or collaborate [d] with hegemonic efforts to control their bodies, identities, families, movements and resources” (p. 11). Chu marshals a wide array of source materials in Spanish, English, Chinese and Tagalog, including baptismal and matrimonial records, naturalization papers, court documents, dossiers of prominent individuals (*varios personajes*), letters, newspapers, literary fiction and other publications, family genealogies, and biographies, supplemented by interviews and the author’s autobiography.

Chinese and Chinese Mestizos adopts a micro-historical approach that, although not in fundamental disagreement with Wickberg’s main thesis, offers nuanced case studies that demonstrate the “variegated and constantly changing meanings of identities” (p. 10) and complicate the big picture Wickberg paints of the rising antagonism between Chinese mestizos (persons of mixed Chinese and native — occasionally Spanish — ancestry) and Chinese, the deepening identification of the Chinese mestizos with the interests of the “indios” (“natives”), and the eventual disappearance of Chinese mestizos into the new political identity, “Filipino,” that they helped define.

The social and political divide between Chinese mestizos and indios on one side and *sangleys/chinos/intsik* on the other side, argues Chu, is by no means solely a creation of Spanish colonialism. Equally if not more important, he argues, twentieth-century American and Commonwealth codification and application of citizenship laws, coupled with rising Chinese and Filipino nationalisms and the push-pull factors of large-scale

Chinese immigration to the Philippines, were instrumental in crystalizing ethnic divisions as Chinese and Chinese mestizos found their multiple claims, identifications, options and practices — among them bigamy/polygamy, dual families, interracial marriages, contacts with non-Filipinos, sojourn and education in China, having mestizo offspring instead of “pure” Chinese children — increasingly narrowed if not curtailed by the dichotomous, either-or, logic of Chinese, Philippine, and American nation-state-oriented and nationalist discourses and practices.

Chu offers a new periodization that extends beyond Spanish colonial rule to include the American colonial era (often treated separately in previous scholarship; an important exception is Wilson [2004]) and Philippine Commonwealth period by arguing that even though the legal category of “Chinese mestizo” had been abolished by the 1880s, it was still used administratively in some areas until the end of Spanish rule, and remained in use as a social category well into the American period. A further reason for this periodization is the availability of archival materials, but this modest claim on the part of the author is less compelling as a justification than the startling implications of the materials he mines.

While Wickberg’s arguments about the “disappearance” of the Chinese mestizos and the rift between mestizos and Chinese generally hold true, as a *longue durée* argument, of Chinese mestizos who were several generations removed from their Chinese forefathers and who lived in the provinces, Chu concentrates on the personal histories of a number of prominent Manila-based first-generation Chinese mestizos, men like Mariano Limjap and Ildefonso Tambunting, to show how “ethnic categories are better understood as flowing along a shifting and problematic continuum” (p. 14). Like their Chinese merchant fathers (Chu here discusses Joaquin Limjap, Ignacio Sy Jao Boncan, and Carlos Palanca Tan Quien-sen), these mestizos

could speak or understand not only Spanish and the local languages but Hokkien as well; built extensive social and commercial networks with Chinese, natives, and foreigners; traveled constantly and widely; acquired their knowhow in business as much from their China-born fathers as from their locally-born mothers (whether *mestiza* or *india*); and educated their children in China, Hong Kong, Spain, and later America.

Although Mariano Limjap identified himself as a "Spanish mestizo," he represented his Chinese father (a Spanish subject) in business deals and traveled to China and Hong Kong, maintained links with relatives in China, served as a member of the Malolos Congress under the Philippine revolutionary government, and entertained high officials from both China and America. Bonifacio Limtuaco, who spent his childhood in China, requested a change of legal status from *mestizo* to *sangley*, appearing in public dressed in "Chinese" clothes. An excellent genealogy of Cu Un-jieng and his many children by his Chinese and Chinese-mestiza wives brings the discussion from past into present by presenting the full range and hybrid ramification of their citizenship, familial, educational, and cultural practices.

The lives of women, unlike men, are not as extensively documented owing to paucity of data. Nevertheless, they offer a revealing picture of women's variegated experiences as "Chinese mestizas," "indias" and "Chinese." During the Spanish period, there were very few "Chinese" women. A woman who married a native or Chinese mestizo or foreign husband took on the husband's legal classification. But an *india* who married a *sangley*/chino remained an *india*, and was re-classified as Chinese mestizo upon her husband's death. More likely to be subjected to discipline by their Chinese husbands or fathers (whom Chu calls "victim-agents"), and discouraged by the Spanish colonial state from identifying with the "Chinese," some women, including upwardly mobile Chinese mesti-

zas, still chose to marry Chinese men, and were instrumental in socializing their children in mercantile and professional occupations.

While Chu is careful not to downplay the anti-Sinicism of the Spanish era, his account of Mariano Limjap's career as an "ilustrado" (translated in the book as "illustrious," but perhaps more conventionally understood as "learned" / "educated") offers vital clues to understanding the seemingly contradictory argument made by Michael Cullinane [2003: 363 n.56]. In his study of *ilustrado* politics, Cullinane noted that Chinese mestizos such as Telesforo Chuidian and Mariano Limjap, although well-educated and socially prominent, were not actually considered "ilustrado." Chu's detailed biographical studies suggest that these first-generation Chinese mestizos, precisely because of their continuing connections with the Chinese, may have been perceived as "like us" but also simultaneously "not like us" by other Chinese mestizos already at a remove from their Chinese ancestry and by the larger society.

Benedict Anderson's [2008: 31] analysis of Jose Rizal's novels cogently reveals the textual strategies by which Chinese mestizos like Rizal — technically a fifth-generation mestizo, although his father changed their legal status to *natural* (native) — downplayed, even actively concealed, their "Chinese" origins. And yet, a cursory look at the Philippine press in the early decades of the twentieth century also bears out Chu's argument that negative attitudes were not necessarily nor universally shared. Pro-Chinese attitudes were evident not just in the waning years of Spanish rule, but in the first decade of the American occupation. Articles in *El Renacimiento Filipino* [1911a; 1911b; 1911c], for example, show that, around the time China became a republic, Filipino nationalists, knowing of Sun Yat-sen's connections with the Philippine Revolution, were by no means unsympathetic to the Chinese or to Chinese nationalism.

What these apparently divergent data suggest

is that “Chinese” and “Filipinos” lived in a country in a transitional era where social distinctions among them — lodged in the intangible realm of perception and discourse — existed but were in flux, and Chinese and Filipino nationalisms were not always mutually exclusive. Positive and negative mutual images were part of an existing “pool” of discourses that could be used as circumstances and political agendas required. Commonwealth and post-colonial Philippine judicial interpretations of citizenship claims, backed by the disciplinary mechanisms and punitive force of the state, were crucial in constructing and cementing ethnic boundaries based on a dichotomous logic. From the late 1930s to the early postwar period, nationalist attempts to (re)shape bodies of “Filipinos” and “Chinese” especially through families, schools, work, and legislation would have incremental effects in defining and solidifying ethnic differences.

Chu’s book, by choosing a periodization with a wider compass, illuminates the continuities and discontinuities across state practices that led to the other-ing of the Chinese, the stigmatizing of “mestizo” (and the Hokkien *chhut-si-a*) by both the American colonial state and ethnocentric forms of Chinese and Filipino nationalisms, and the subsequent post-colonial resignification of “mestizo” in terms of “white” (American or European) ancestry that effectively occluded its “Chinese” origins and connections. But the concluding section of *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos* also looks beyond the Commonwealth-Cold War period of mutually exclusive identities to an important shift in state policies and cultural milieu by the 1970s that resulted in the mass naturalization of Chinese and their “integration” into the Philippine body politic.

Historical studies are always limited by the sources available, and inevitably, sources reveal far more about elite Chinese and mestizos and their families than about those who are less privileged. The limitations of archival materials do not allow

Chu to extrapolate beyond the case studies presented in the book to answer the question of whether the mobility, networking, hybridity, and availability of options of the wealthy and socially prominent Chinese and Chinese mestizos are characteristic of their indigent, laboring counterparts as well. In the absence of a big trove of official documents (Chinese newspapers published during this period were destroyed in the Second World War), scholars will have to rely more on literary works, travel accounts, and oral histories of individuals and families to obtain glimpses of lives that are no less richly varied and exposed to different kinds of people, languages, and cultures, but perhaps more circumscribed in their actual choices, contacts, and options. Social histories of laboring Chinese (the proverbial *intsik beho tulo laway* [old or “old-looking,” drooling Chinese]), of the transformation of Binondo from entrêpot to commercial capital to “Chinatown,” and of the changing popular images and perceptions of Chinese and Chinese mestizo over time are research projects that spring logically from the ground-clearing re-interpretation offered by *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos*, projects that Richard Chu, among all the scholars working on the Chinese in the Philippines, is exceptionally well-qualified to undertake.

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Julian Go. *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning: Elite Political Cultures in the Philippines and Puerto Rico during U. S. Colonialism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008, xi + 377p.

Julian Go's extended comparison of American colonialism in Puerto Rico and the Philippines is nothing short of groundbreaking. As the first work that simultaneously examines the introduction of American political ideas and institutions to these two island colonies in the first decade and a half of American rule, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning* introduces a fresh and welcome perspective to the in-depth single-country focus that has typified colonial histories to date. As such, it represents an exciting development in this revitalized field of scholarship and makes a seminal contribution to American, Puerto Rican, and Philippine colonial historiographies.

Along with its comparative dimension, the book's approach is likewise innovative. Theoretically and methodologically self-aware, Go draws on new culture sociology to construct an analytical tool that is at once richly interpretive yet empirically grounded. Examining "semiotic systems of meaning in practice," his framework emphasizes the centrality of cultural schemas in shaping the content, meaning, and mode by which American political principles and processes were conveyed by Americans and understood by Puerto Rican and Filipino colonial elites. By locating meaning, not in people's hearts and minds, but in the internal logic derived from their practices, from "patterns of opposition and contrast," he maneuvers the slippery terrain between the essentialism and subjectivity that sometimes bedevil structural functionalism and cultural interpretivism, on one end, and the determinism that befalls more materialist approaches, on the other.

The book crafts its account of American, Puerto Rican, and Filipino colonial paradigms, and the interplay among them, principally from secondary literature, but supplemented with some primary research. Unpacking the American worldview, the first of seven chapters explains how Lamarckian notions of racial difference and Progressivism informed the conviction of American colonial policymakers that "backward" Puerto Ricans and Filipinos were capable of uplift and that tutelage in government would best impart to them the capacity essential for democracy. That this plan seemed compatible with Puerto Rican and Filipino demands lent American colonialism the legitimacy that proponents believed could sustain it in the long-term.

Because colonial elites understood terms like "democracy" differently from their American mentors, Go's second and third chapters contend that they "domesticated" the American program in terms of an intellectual universe that was shaped by their political experience under Spain