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## **Of Dreams, Sweat, and Tears: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Modern Filipino Heroes by Mariano A. Dumia**

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against women. The section ends with Sharon A. Bong's essay, which critically assesses Pope John Paul II's *Letter to Women* in relation to the lesbian body with its dialectical tension between sex and gender.

The sixth and final section, on Images of God's Body, discusses ecofeminist attempts at reclaiming women's bodies and their biologically linked roles in two papers. A. Motti, S.C.C., in the first essay deconstructs oppressive facets while appropriating liberative elements of Hindu goddess myths, as well as underscores the challenges these pose to Christian God-language and ritual. The second essay, by Jeane C. Peracullo, explores the image of the world as God's womb, which in many Asian religions is a powerful symbol that suggests hidden growth and creative power. This section emphasizes women's physiological difference as an originary experience and source of theological reflection. In the first, women's bodily experience of menstruation, birthing, breastfeeding, and menopause (which entails being gifted with a womb) are appropriated in the theological reflection on how women live the Eucharist in their daily lives. In the second, embodiment is discussed as an essential ingredient in women's understanding of God and the world, and the intelligibility of imaging the world as God's womb.

Overall, *Body and Sexuality* provides a helpful overview of how Asian Catholic women today do (re)constructivist theology on their body and sexuality using Asian cultural resources and experiences. It is the voice of women theologians in Asia who are trying to articulate their difference and their faith-experiences in ways that are faithful and challenging to the Judeo-Christian tradition. True to its claims, the book is a clear manifestation of women doing theology grounded in a constitutive difference as determined by their body, sexuality, identity, and experience. The book questions patriarchal claims that limit women to a passive role; it argues that faith is not the sole territory of men, but also of women. True to its purpose, *Body and Sexuality* serves "as a 'free space' and a 'laboratory of ideas' on a topic in which women's voices have long been muted" (vii). In the book, we hear the beautiful voices of women theologians blending together in their difference and in harmony as they bear witness to the song of God's love made more intelligible and personal through their bodies and more meaningful and whole because of their sexuality.

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MARIANO A. DUMIA

## **Of Dreams, Sweat, and Tears: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Modern Filipino Heroes**

Quezon City: New Day and Mariano Dumia, 2009. 250 pages.

Despite its geographic distance from the Philippines, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a land that is close to the hearts and minds of countless Filipinos. Of the kingdom's current population of 28 million, about 6 million are foreigners. One in six of those foreigners is a Filipino. Indeed, since 2006 at any given year about a quarter of a million Filipino workers goes to Saudi Arabia—the single largest deployment to any country of destination in the world, and more than half of the annual deployment to the entire region of West Asia. Of those quarter million Filipinos who leave annually for jobs in Saudi Arabia nearly half falls in the category of new hires, i.e., on new work contracts. Of the more than US\$14 billion in remittances that are sent back by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) from around the world to their families in the Philippines through the formal banking system, more than a billion dollars come from OFWs in Saudi Arabia.

The first Filipino workers arrived in the kingdom during the early 1970s, just when the Philippine labor export program was beginning to make itself evident as a national policy. This labor export program has now become a cornerstone of Philippine foreign and domestic policies. Not surprisingly, Filipino contemporary popular culture is replete with stories of those who have braved the deserts of Saudi Arabia in order to extract its life-giving essence—hence the term *Katas ng Saudi*, which roughly translates as Saudi juice or extract. Indeed, a movie was made in 2007 with the same title, featuring a member of the Philippine Senate, Jinggoy Estrada, the son of another famous actor, former Pres. Joseph "Erap" Estrada.

It is in such a context that one must appreciate the contributions of Mariano A. Dumia in his book *Of Dreams, Sweat, and Tears*. Its five chapters attempt to shed light on the kingdom and how Filipinos living and working there have adapted to its peculiar social, economic, political, cultural, and religious conditions. Chapter 1 provides a general and straightforward description of the kingdom, its topography, climate, history, politics, and so forth. Chapter 2 describes Philippines–Saudi Arabia relations as a kind of preface to Chapter 3, which is a lengthy discussion (nearly a hundred pages) of the history and current situation of Filipino labor migration to Saudi

Arabia. Chapter 4 attempts to situate this long labor migration history in the context of a more current and global concern: terrorism. Finally Chapter 5 attempts to envisage and describe the future of the Philippine presence in Saudi Arabia.

The book seems intent on presenting Saudi Arabia not only as a kingdom in its own right but also as a destination for many Filipinos who are seeking to escape poverty and unemployment in the Philippines. Saudi Arabia is presented as a mostly cruel desert landmass but endowed with a natural resource—oil—that makes it the envy of any country, starting in the late twentieth century. Saudi Arabia is said to be the cradle of Islam, a faith that is both strict and compelling to believers and nonbelievers alike. Islam is the religion that dominates the social, cultural, and political landscape of the kingdom. However, Dumia leaves it to the reader to develop a sense of comparison and perspective, and one is left with the question: How does Saudi Arabia compare economically, geographically, politically, and culturally with the rest of the countries in the Persian Gulf region?

Despite the extensive descriptions and narratives, Dumia still leaves certain issues unexamined. After the discussion of the diplomatic history of the Philippines and Saudi Arabia, the chapter simply ends (rather abruptly) with a list of bilateral agreements entered into by both states. There is no discussion of the problems and challenges facing the two countries in their effort to forge closer and more substantive ties with each other. Dumia touches on the “trade imbalance” between the two countries caused by the dependence of the Philippines on oil from the Gulf (notably from Saudi Arabia), but this issue is not pursued further. It is curious that there is no mention of the controversial dimension of labor migration as it affects the relations between the two countries. There is also no attempt to chart the future of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Saudi Arabia.

The longest chapter in the book actually contains several lists that would have been properly placed in an appendix (a part that is noticeably absent), such as the names of Filipino clubs and organizations and their respective heads; the names of outstanding OFWs and employers; and the names of nongovernmental organizations (surprisingly, without their respective addresses and contact numbers, which would have been a useful reference for OFW readers). Dumia does attempt to offset the monotonous lists. Two-thirds into the chapter, one finds OFW poetry that serves as a refreshing

“intermission” and a kind of bonus to the reader. But, again, these refreshing passages deserve a better place at the end of the volume.

Dumia also brings up the problems encountered by OFWs in the kingdom but makes no mention of the resolution of serious concerns such as rape, maltreatment, and nonpayment of salaries, among many others. What happens to abusive employers? Despite this lack of discussion, there is a rather graphic description of a beheading that takes place. One is pressed to ask: What is the point in that?

Strangely, Chapter 4 is entitled “Terrorists and Filipino Martyrs” and one gets the impression that the two are synonymous. One is reminded of the adage (that Dumia also points out) that one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter. However, the chapter actually gives two renderings—one of terrorism as a global issue that deeply affects Saudi Arabia, another of the Filipinos that have become part of the “collateral damage” of both terrorism and the war on terror. Interestingly there is no discussion of how terrorism affects the relations between the two countries other than the costs in lives lost.

The final chapter also takes on the problems of OFWs, which are already extensively discussed in Chapter 3. It does so by outlining the services offered by the Philippine government to address the welfare- and employment-related problems and concerns of OFWs in Saudi Arabia. However, the chapter ends with a list of very common advisory Dos and Don’ts such as “Always have your passport . . . with you”; or “Do not carry, sell or consume liquor or alcoholic drinks”; or “Do not talk with a woman in public who is not your wife or acquaintance”; and so on. This is hardly a fitting closure to a volume that speaks of the heroism of Filipinos in Saudi Arabia, although it might be expected from someone with as rich a diplomatic and consular experience as Dumia’s.

To a great extent Dumia speaks as a career diplomat, having served from 1991 to 2005 at the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh and in other diplomatic missions in West Asia. This explains why in much of his discussions (particularly in Chapter 2) Dumia seems to conflate the Philippine mission’s diplomatic concerns with its consular concerns, such as its assistance to nationals (ATN) program. This conflation comes easily, especially in a post where one finds more than a million Filipinos on any given day. This “official-speak” is evident in the book’s discussions, which to a migration scholar are predominantly descriptive and lack insight. However, this approach may not be an

altogether bad thing for it does, in fact, provide the scholar-reader a glimpse of the mindset of a bureaucrat who deals with extremely emotional issues and concerns, practically on a daily basis.

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PAUL R. LINDHOLM

### **Shadows from the Rising Sun: An American Family's Saga During the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines**

Quezon City: New Day, 2009. 188 pages.

Although there is no lack of memoirs by American nationals in the Philippines during the Japanese Occupation, *Shadows from the Rising Sun* by Paul R. Lindholm stands out because of its perspective. Lindholm; his wife Clara; their children Beverly, Dean, Jamie, and Janet were an American Presbyterian missionary family assigned to Silliman University in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental. They thus spent the war years in the mountains and forests of Negros Oriental living closely with Filipinos rather than in Camp O' Donnell with the Bataan Death March survivors or the Santo Tomas Internment Camp on the campus of the University of Santo Tomas with civilian Americans.

*Shadows from the Rising Sun* is a record and personal narrative of those years. It begins with the family's arrival in Manila from China, where they had lived since 1931. They arrived in Silliman University in February 1941. Lindholm had barely begun his missionary work there when Pearl Harbor was bombed and the Pacific War erupted. The Lindholm family, together with other American missionaries, evacuated to the mountains of Negros Oriental. Constantly on the move to escape detection by the Japanese, they lived in a variety of shelters ranging from caves to nipa huts to the comfortable houses of Filipino friends and acquaintances. They experienced shortages of food, clothing, and medicine and had to rely on their creativity and the generosity of Filipinos to survive. They encountered "wild men" of the mountains, Filipino guerrillas, and former church members. Amid all these, Lindholm kept his fledgling mission work alive by organizing church activities,

officiating at church rites, and conducting training for young church leaders. In May 1944 the American missionaries in Negros, including Clara and the Lindholm children, were evacuated by American submarine and taken back to the United States. Lindholm remained in Negros until the war's end and was finally reunited with his family in July 1945.

The book is a chronological narrative of their experiences and is useful both as a record of events in Negros Oriental and as a chronicle of daily life during the Japanese Occupation. Experiencing the war in the margins of the theatre of action, Lindholm is at best an observer from the sidelines—receiving updates on the war over the radio (KGEI San Francisco) owned by a Filipino church member, messages and warnings brought by Filipino runners, and Japanese propaganda flyers. He mentions such events as the progress of the war in Europe, various naval battles in which Japanese ships are sunk, and the activities of well-known persons such as Negros governor Alfredo Montelibano and guerrilla leader Col. Wendell Fertig. Much of this information can be found in greater detail and quality in other sources.

The strength of the book lies in its chronicle of the Lindholms' daily life on the mountains of Negros Island. Lindholm's account differs vastly from the majority of the memoirs of Americans most of whom were locked up in internment camps. In contrast, Lindholm and other missionaries roamed the mountains of Negros Oriental and enjoyed the protection and help of Filipino communities, yielding experiences and points of view that can provide historians and other researchers fresh data and insight. Notably, although food was scarce, there was none of the desperate starvation experienced by those in the internment camps. The Lindholms and other Silliman missionaries never really produced any food consistently but depended on what Filipinos shared with them or what they could forage in the mountains. They always had a supply of some rice or corn; had no shortage of bananas, coconuts, and other fruits; and even enjoyed the occasional chicken. Feasts were not uncommon as in July 1943, when Lindholm inaugurated a Sunday school building in Busilak. There was no difficulty in producing a spread of corn meal and two pigs, with the guerrillas getting their customary share of one leg from each pig (68). It seemed that what the Lindholms missed the most were white flour and sugar for baking American goodies such as cakes and pies.

Family life went on during the occupation and that of the Lindholms' was no different. There were birthday celebrations and adventures in the forests but also anxiety, illness, and discomfort. It is interesting to note that