

# philippine studies: historical and ethnographic viewpoints

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**Transpacific Femininities:**

**The Making of a Modern Filipina by Denise Cruz**

Book Notes

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# Book Notes

DENISE CRUZ

## **Transpacific Femininities: The Making of a Modern Filipina**

Durham, NC: Duke University Press

The emergence of a global Filipina is the focus of Denise Cruz's *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of a Modern Filipina*. The author is assistant professor in the Department of English at Indiana University in Bloomington, with a PhD in English from the University of California, Los Angeles. In this book Cruz explores the connections that link nationalism, modernity, and femininity together, viewed using the prism of English literary production. The author looks at a wider array of popular icons of femininity in Philippine society, from the precolonial woman to the barrio lass, from the hispanized Maria Clara to the Westernized and urbanized student. Based on sources written by Filipina and Filipino writers in both the colony and the metropole, Cruz argues that these writers helped form the image of the Filipina woman in the first half of the twentieth century. In this regard English literature serves as a venue "to contest, question, and imagine the modern Filipina." As such, the construction of the Filipina is not merely a product of Spanish and American colonialisms but a result of the transpacific connections that link the country to political, economic, and cultural movements in the wider Pacific world. Cruz also observes that the period when writers became fixated with imagining the Filipina was contemporaneous with the time they began defining a literary canon for Philippine literature in English, as well as with the onset of debates about the Philippine national language. Moreover, the early twentieth century also marked the peak of the international suffrage movement as it became active

on both sides of the Pacific. The end of the American colonial regime also spelled changes, with the Japanese occupation, the early Cold War period, and the nationalism of the tumultuous 1960s all exerting influence on the imagining of the Filipina. Given the transpacific vista, the author inevitably touches on the issue of the migration of Filipinos to the US, both in the colonial and postcolonial periods, as a factor that affects gender construction. The transpacific nature of the study demonstrates how gender cannot be fully understood within the confines of a single nation-state.

F.P.A. DEMETERIO III

## **Ferdinand Blumentritt and the Philippines: Insights and Lessons for Contemporary Philippine Studies**

Manila: De La Salle University Publishing House, 2013. 238 pages.

Feorillo Petronilo A. Demeterio III, who is professor in the Department of Filipino at De La Salle University, surveys Ferdinand Blumentritt's writings on the Philippines, classifies them, and provides statistical and graphical information about them. Blumentritt's intellectual production is divided into four periods to which separate chapters are devoted. These periods and their corresponding number of works are reported as follows: Blumentritt's pre-Rizalian period (87 works produced at an average of 12.4 articles per year); Rizalian period (127 works, at 12.7 articles per year); post-Rizalian Spanish period (13 works, at 6.5 articles per year); and American period (18 works, at 1.4 articles per year). The themes covered by Blumentritt's writings per period are identified and discussed, and their percentage distribution presented. The discussion of each period ends with "general observations" on Blumentritt's Philippine studies. Appendix A lists all of Blumentritt's works on the Philippines, their original titles, the English titles, and extant translations; it also informs readers which of these works (equivalent to 40 percent of the texts) can be accessed in Metro Manila and where these are located. Prior to discussing each of the four periods, Demeterio furnishes readers with Blumentritt's intellectual biography. The book's conclusion summarizes Blumentritt's writings by period, enumerating major themes as well as lessons for contemporary Philippine studies based