

Reviews & Notices

Lee, Christina. *Saints of Resistance: Devotions in the Philippines under Early Spanish Rule*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. pp. 193. ISBN 9780190916145. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55997/1008pslviii175br1>

This book by Christina H. Lee is a welcome addition to the corpus of studies in Philippine cultural history. It deploys a resisting-reading of colonial narratives while revisiting their textualization from the vantage point of personal interest and a shared cultural background with the persons and cultures under study: *Kabisay-an* and *Katagalugan*. Although not exhaustive of the plurality of lowland cultures of the Philippines, it certainly augments Cebuano studies in its treatment of the popular shrine of Santo Nino de Cebu, and three Tagalog Marian shrines: La Naval in Quezon City, the shrine of Caysasay in Taal and the shrine of Antipolo.

The work demonstrates that the archives, while not the sole repository of cultural knowledge, significantly influences the tone and terrain of writing culture. Lee incorporates in the reading of primary sources a listening to the narratives of people, from their collective memory. The graduate students who have read this work and whose insights are reflected in this review were not only inspired to pursue the questions and that this methodology has opened up. They also valued what involvements they already have with their local Christian communities, realizing that cultural appropriation, from the acculturative movement to enculturation as a moment in these encounters, is invariably a life - process that is palpable, embodied and life - changing. Students took to the field- some revisiting in their study the places that have been under scrutiny here. Thus, this book impels anthropological imagination that seeks the voice, albeit not from the archives, but from the natives: the same peoples acting on their lives and on their storied relations to the *santos*. 'Resistance,' the key word that juxtaposes with the *santos* in these chapters, does not mean a rejection of the worldview that the *santos* represent, rather, it prescinds from the hermeneutical distance instigated by the *santos*' presence, and an instauration of new sensibilities and new humanities at the heart of the pilgrims that have peopled the shrines.

For resistance is a condition of acceptance: both are aspects of freedom. To wonder is a resisting from resting in 'the same,' and to wander about in the waft and weft of the weave.

And acceptance is a freedom to select what one would like to make as one's own artefact—that is, what one wants to include as ingredient in one's continuing life. And, although the mechanical metaphor is unintended, there will be 'remainders' from this 're-membrance'. And these remainders are but materials for yet another meeting; yet another meaning, another making.

Thus, rather than being held captive by the groove of the text, one has to participate in its 'effective history,' which is the staging of real resistance. Nevertheless, the studies get to pursue the very question that animated the book's contribution, and it may be rendered thus: 'Why is it that devotion to saints is so entrenched?

The chapter on Cebu's Sto. Nino devotion argues that the natives have re-fashioned the saints, introducing 'tri-cultural components' (the pre-Hispanic, the native, and Chinese) and that, there is a hidden script in these transactions of the native. This script might as well be this significant claim that shows agency not only at the individual but in the work of culture itself; an 'inter-cultural agency.' A contemporary appropriation is the notion of *batobalani sa gugma*: it is because the *santo* in question is a magnet all its own, a 'magnet of love,' because he walks with the Cebuanos in the bittersweet realities of life.

The three chapters on the aforementioned images of Mary in the Tagalog-speaking places have a similar provenance, where the author traces authorship of image, and the evolution of titles that discloses difference between the native point of view and that of the colonizers. In all these, it is the native experiences, thought- images and narratives that are valorized. Filipinos, during this cultural encounter in the sixteenth century, were changed from such an encounter. However, they also changed the terms of the encounter whilst traversing unchartered social relations, mainly through idioms of kinship - with nature, with the divine, and with human beings. In so doing, they have tapped differential terms of power, knowledge and authority as they charted arising enmities or arising amities.

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(with Suello, M.A., Arong, F.G., Saw, J., Sanchez, L., Suwartono, Y., Casiano, K.J., Jacinto, A., Bahia, A., Beluso, M.R., Htoo, R. Dizon, J.F.)

Guerrero van der Meijden, Jadwiga. *Person and Dignity in Edith Stein's Writings Investigated in Comparison to the Writings of the Doctors of The Church and the Magisterial Documents of the Catholic Church*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019. pp. 369. ISBN: 978-3-11-065942-9.

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Scholarly works on St. Edith Stein keep on coming in. This book is an addition to an already relatively huge output about her. It shows that interest in the St. Edith Stein's thought is growing and does not give signs of waning. A German by nationality and Jewish turned Catholic by religion, this Discalced Carmelite woman martyred by the Nazis transcends the