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Axel Borchgrevink

Clean and Green: Knowledge and Morality in a Philippine Farming Community

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than serious academic research. There is no doubt about the thoroughness of his investigations.

My final quibbles refer to minor points: one is the small print or font of the Ateneo Press version, making reading the text sometimes difficult; the other is a presumably mistaken reference on page 78 to a domestic worker returning home to purchase 10,000 hectares for her poor relatives.

I congratulate the academic institutions in Singapore (NUS Press) and Kyoto (Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University) for recognizing the importance of these essays and encouraging their republication as a book. I can only hope that studies of this standard become more common among Filipino scholars and their Southeast Asian counterparts. Aguilar has shown us the great merits of exhaustive scholarship combined with lucid writing. We remain in his debt.

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AXEL BORCHGREVINK

Clean and Green: Knowledge and Morality in a Philippine Farming Community

Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2014. 292 pages.

Skillfully combining approaches that highlight morality and knowledge, Axel Borchgrevink's *Clean and Green: Knowledge and Morality in a Philippine Farming Community* presents an insightful analysis of village social dynamics in Bohol. The book is a welcome addition to ethnographies of Philippine lowland rice-farming communities. Like many of the strongest works in this tradition, Borchgrevink's monograph paints a detailed picture of rural life—rich in characters and stories that alternate between the magical and the everyday—to illustrate how morality pervades practices, beliefs, and behaviors in a tight-knit community. Morality is not an essentialized, unchanging black box but is instead a dynamic kind of knowledge internalized and constituted through experiences, social interactions, and emotions.

Trained as an anthropologist and currently an associate professor at Oslo and Akershus University College in Norway, Borchgrevink draws

from his dissertation fieldwork between 1995 and 1998 in the village of Ginopolan, Valencia, Bohol. He maintains an active presence in the book's narrative, both as a situated observer guiding us through the analysis of the empirical material and as a figure sometimes implicated in the turn of events. Reflections on authorial positionality are necessary, particularly as they elucidate aspects of the research process often obscured (such as the complexities of employing an interpreter in ethnographic work) and as they provide a sense of how researchers end up choosing their study areas (in the author's case, upon catching a glimpse of Ginopolan's idyllic, green vista). The latter point deserves a little more space in the discussion as these motivations are not mere idiosyncrasies but are relevant analytically in light of the book's call for a more attuned understanding of local variations in studies of the lowland Philippines. What drove the author to select the municipality of Valencia and the province of Bohol, for instance? The choice of study area shapes the case's comparative usefulness and the kinds of engagement with existing studies it might have, especially if, as Borchgrevink argues, aspects of Ginopolan social life diverge from those documented elsewhere in the Philippines.

Clean and Green's narrative begins with what seemed to the author a behavioral puzzle: why would tenants continue to pay more than the legally mandated share of their harvest to landowners? He then proposes an alternative reading of this question, one that focuses on morality and departs from explanations often mobilized in studies of rural Philippines, including standard analyses that focus on class position, peasant rationality, and patron–client relations, among others. He scales up the argument further, using morality-as-knowledge as the thread that weaves various disparate issues together. For example, morality establishes the link between the spiritual potency of *anting-anting*, or amulets, and political success in barangay elections. Spiritual potency needs to be morally acceptable to the community for it to translate into a political following. Strong moral ideals also underpin the ubiquitous cleanliness ethic (*hinlo*) in rice farming and village life, wherein the practices of keeping clean become associated with the virtues of hard work, diligence, and community cooperation. In both examples he shows how morality as a type of knowledge is internalized or learned and reproduced in a tight-knit community like Ginopolan.

Analysis in the book's first half pivots on morality's role in fostering collectivity and cooperation in village-level associations (chapter 2), in

avoiding open confrontation to foster harmonious relationships (chapter 3), and in (de-)legitimizing local political authority through “murmuring” (chapter 4). In the second half Borchgrevink turns to how moral models translate medical and supernatural expertise into power and prestige (chapters 5 and 6) and organize, store, and reproduce different kinds of agricultural knowledge (chapters 7 and 8). Indeed, this processual emphasis on how morality structures practices and knowledge is one of the book’s key contributions, going much beyond a dead-end analytical claim that the village is a moral community.

While adept at engaging theories from cognitive anthropology and sociology of knowledge to examine Ginopolitan village dynamics, Borchgrevink claims that *Clean and Green*’s original theoretical innovation is in linking emotions and moral knowledge. In the text he focuses on two pervasive emotions that drive villagers’ moral models: *uwaw*, or shame, and *wiud*, or the reluctance to upset another. Establishing the link between emotions, knowledge, and practices is a significant contribution. Emotions are bodily responses based on and expressed through a moral filter of right/wrong or acceptable/unacceptable. Moral knowledge structures emotions, which provide strong motivational force for actions. Emotions, like *uwaw* and *wiud*, establish the important link between moral ideas and the motivations for social practices. There are multiple productive avenues where this contribution could be taken further, including identifying the kinds of emotions that matter in particular contexts; casting the focus on emotions in other aspects of social life (for example, the economic); identifying the causal relationships between the three concepts; and engaging with notions of affect, embodiment, and practical bodily knowledge.

The book’s greatest strengths lie in the richness of the empirical data that Borchgrevink presents and his careful reappraisal of familiar dynamics examined many times over in Philippine studies. He tacks back and forth between his own findings and their implications, drawing out new insights by addressing gaps in less-explored topics (e.g., *purok* organization) and in understudied types of communities (e.g., those with egalitarian landholding structures). He is explicitly cautious not to see the Ginopolitan case from the perspective of dominant, mainstream framings, such as the “Filipino values” tradition, arguing instead that a parallel focus on cultural models advances these concepts in more fruitful directions.

The later chapters on agricultural knowledge and interactions of knowledge demonstrate Borchgrevink's analytical sharpness in using the morality-as-knowledge framework. The book takes its title from Valencia's annual "Clean and Green" contest, which Ginopolan has previously won. For the author this preoccupation with village beautification and cleanliness has broader theoretical implications. First, notions of cleanliness (hinlo) spill into agricultural knowledge and other spheres of social life. Second, these concepts are underpinned by strong moral ideals. Cleanliness or hinlo is a cultural model that is foundational for many social practices. There is, for example, a moral and aesthetic imperative—in the sense of a strong motivational force to maintain good community relations—for villagers to participate in collective work toward beautifying their purok and maintaining clean rice fields. He pushes this observation further theoretically, noting that cultural models change and therefore need to be viewed in terms of how various knowledge traditions interact. For instance, public practical knowledge, or those forms of knowledge formed by doing, assimilates various aspects of scientific knowledge through selective appropriation guided by moral considerations. Moral ideas of modernity and development shape access to and adoption of new farming technologies. Farmers respect scientific knowledge as government knowledge aimed at producing a modern and developed countryside, and see themselves as subjects with an obligation to participate in development efforts by assimilating these technologies. However, farmers do not adopt all modern agricultural techniques that state agricultural extension officers promote, particularly when novel techniques conflict with the hinlo ethic and prevent them from maintaining a clean field.

Knowledge interactions structured by morality is an important argument that can be further developed through engagement with science and technology studies, or STS (a field that the author mentions in passing), and its key concepts such as hybridity and coproduction. A focus on hybridity and coproduction, for example, troubles pre-given dualisms, such as nature/society, wild/tamed, town/country, scientific/indigenous, and sees these categories and dualisms instead as produced through particular knowledge practices and arrangements. Borchgrevink takes these categories as given in his analysis of hinlo as a cultural model that codifies the wild nature/domesticated culture opposition. But the inverse could also be proposed: the nature/culture opposition, rather than being an essence that describes the

cultural model, is produced through practices of maintaining the hinlo ethic. Borchgrevink acknowledges the limits of his distinct oppositional framing, noting how hybrids, anomalies, and ambiguities tend to be tolerated in Filipino society (193). STS works on coproduction allow us to argue that if morality is a kind of knowledge then it too could be understood as constituted by—and not just a determinant of—such practices. The linear causality between morality, emotions, and practices could then be recast accordingly.

The book's emphasis on change and dynamism serves as a good counterpoint to tendencies in "somewhat unfashionable" (xiv) village studies of treating a community as a closed system that is immune to change and isolated from multiscalar flows. We may debate claims about the current trendiness of village studies and the degree to which insularity in analysis holds true for many of these works. However, what should be less controversial is arguing that we need more of the ethnographically rich and analytically sharp village studies that Borchgrevink delivers in *Clean and Green*.

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LISANDRO E. CLAUDIO

Taming People's Power: The EDSA Revolutions and Their Contradictions

Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2013. 226 pages.

How do memories weave into the fabric of contemporary reality, and how does an interpretation of an event, as opposed to the event itself, become a site of political contestation? In *Taming People's Power: The EDSA Revolutions and Their Contradictions*, Lisandro Claudio examines memories of the EDSA Revolution not to contribute to historical knowledge of what occurred on those fateful last days of February 1986, but to make sense of memories and memorials as competing national narratives and fraught mythologies that somehow cast their dark shadow on the acrimonious Philippine politics. He rethinks the connections between the Philippine leftist movement and national politics by situating this interaction in the plane of mythology, narrative, and discourse. Accordingly, the book is divided into two main