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Review Author: Mijares Ramos

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Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

Rina Angela P. Corpus's

*Dance and Other Slippages:
Critical Narratives on Women, Dance, and Art*

Review Author: Clarissa Cecilia Mijares Ramos

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it (ibid., 240). The difference is in their method: Osias wants national and international cultures studied simultaneously; Constantino wants to address socioeconomic inequity first.

Liberalism and the Postcolony has its accomplishments. Fashioning a history of ideas via bureaucrats is a promising and mostly unexplored project for historians (as opposed to paid biographers), and it complexifies the normal characterization of the elite. In this regard, Claudio fulfills his goal of showing that some bureaucrats self-identified as liberals and that their philosophy played a role in shaping the Philippine state. Unfortunately, his postcolonial liberalism is built on vague definitions and inconsistent comparisons. These contradictions raise doubts about the distinguishing traits of liberal “mediation,” as well as the ultimate value of liberalism itself.

Dominic Sy

Department of English and Comparative Literature,
University of the Philippines-Diliman
<dcy@up.edu.ph>

RINA ANGELA P. CORPUS

Dance and Other Slippages: Critical Narratives on Women, Dance, and Art

University of the Philippines Press, 2013. 143 pages.

The literature on Philippine dance by Filipino writers is so scanty that every published contribution is considered valuable. Rina Angela P. Corpus’s *Dance and Other Slippages*, however, begs to move outside that category of “just-another-valuable-contribution” toward being a piece of substantial scholarship that could pave the way for a shift in perspectives in Philippine dance studies.

Corpus was a volunteer and meditation teacher at the Brahma Kumaris Center for Spiritual Learning in Tagaytay City. In that tranquil city south of Manila she finalized her two books on dance, *Defiant Daughters of Dancing* (University of Hawai’i Press, 2017) and *Dance and Other Slippages*—the former, based on her master’s thesis; the latter, a compilation of essays spanning over ten years of introspection (1999–2013). She was assistant professor in the Department of Art Studies of the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman, where she earned her undergraduate degree in Art Studies and her

master's in Art History. She moved to Melbourne in 2016 for her PhD in Dance at the Victorian College of the Arts in the University of Melbourne. Corpus has not only written about Filipina contemporary dancers, but for a brief moment she was a contemporary dancer herself. She studied classical ballet in her youth and was affiliated with the Quezon City Ballet. She also took classes and dance workshops with Ballet Manila, Swiss Chamber Ballet International, Perry Sevidal Ballet School, and Limon Dance Institute in New York. In 2006 she directed and performed in a dance-solo-show titled "The Four Faces of Woman: A Dance-Exhibit Celebrating Women and Spirit," which was supported by UP's Office of Initiative in Culture and the Arts, the Anthrosophia Wellness Foundation, Inc., and the National Commission on Culture and the Arts.

Corpus's affinity for dance and interest in understanding and facilitating meaning making are fleshed out in her 2013 publication. Offering a feminist-postmodernist approach to dance criticism, she seeks to "challenge the previous 'paternal' authorities of the 'great art' and 'grand dance' canons" (xiii). This approach to dance allows her and her work to stand out in a sea of Philippine dance performance critics who have mostly taken to formalistic and historical-materialist approaches.

None of this is to say that Corpus disregards history. In fact, in *Dance and Other Slippages* she chronicles the lives of Filipina dance-artists and lays out a purposely selected dance repertoire for posterity. Her interest in history and historicity is evident in her previously published works. Corpus has been consistent in anchoring her research methodology on dance biographies as evident in *Defiant Daughters of Dancing*. Through her inquiry into the lives and artistic expressions of dance-artists, Corpus provides insights on the sociopolitical landscape of Philippine contemporary dance. She applies this kind of probing in *Dance and Other Slippages*, which focuses on the reading of dance performances and the retelling of dances through conversations about their conceptualization and production of dance.

The book consists mostly of reviews of dance productions from 1999 to 2012. With over eight chapters, it is a compilation of textual analyses of dance performances and gallery shows that focus on women. She begins her reviews with layouts of analytical frameworks, citing feminist theorists whose ideas she applies to the reading of dance texts. Her carefully curated repertoire list consists of materials that have women as either subjects or producers.

This book should be lauded for providing space for independently produced dance shows. Featured in *Dance and Other Slippages* are dance-artists and performances that can be considered to have thrived outside traditional theater and the formal support structures for the arts in the country. Keeping true to her postmodernist preferences, Corpus conscientiously includes independently produced dance events that have not received ample exposure and patronage, such as Agnes Locsin's *Sabel*, Gerard Mercado's *Daragang Magayon*, Angela Baguilat and Joelle Jacinto's *Mariang Sinderela*, and Denisa Reyes's *One-Ton Pinay* as restaged by Myra Beltran in 2000. Despite and maybe because of the economic and aesthetic challenges, these productions may be considered as among the most important and intelligent dance performances of our generation. Corpus regards them as telling of the situation of the Filipina in dance and in the world, pointing out the ways in which they move against the grain and in opposition to patriarchy. Her review of these performances are greatly textured and informed by aesthetic readings, power-play between and among identified forces and movers, and the economic realities in which they exist. This kind of analysis is also illustrated in the chapter on Merceditas Manago-Alexander, whose experiences as an immigrant artist in New York has been made favorable by her own grit and careful navigation of the racial and gender politics of the American dance scene.

Corpus also informs her readers of her personal context and presuppositions. This admission allows for some interaction between the author and the reader and harks back to her feminist postmodernism of going against traditional constructs and the limitations of written texts. Prior to articulating her own understanding of the production, Corpus lays out her own experiences that affect her reception of these visual texts. In her review of a university dance production, *Mariang Sinderela*, she writes:

My subsequent involvement in a university student paper and later, with a left-wing feminist group soon prevented me from attending dance classes which I grew to cynically pass off—in characteristic grim-and-determined activist conviction—as an elitist endeavor . . . my long respite from ballet also paved the way for me to study and trace the roots of ballet. (101–2)

Interspersed in dance reviews and interviews are her analyses of works of visual artists who have worked primarily with female subjects. While the inclusion of such narratives seems contrived, these essays give better grounding to Corpus's feminist theory that seeks to consciously put women in spaces where they have been rendered "invisible, incomprehensible . . . [and] absent" (70) and allow them to be heard. Her review of Andrew Ward's "Lines of Violation" (GSIS Museum, March 2000), an exhibit of "sleek, corporate-looking glass panels that bear penciled hand drawings of Asian comfort women" (74), becomes an opportunity to be more critical of artistic products and their functions. Here we see how events that supposedly honor women can be platforms for exclusion and oppression. By providing background information on the completion of the artwork coupled with recollections of how the now-elderly Filipino comfort women were treated during the exhibit launch, Corpus demonstrates how the exhibit goes against the intention of showing compassion toward them.

Her most important contribution is documenting snippets of lives of our most talented female dancers and their works, especially those who have built careers outside of the major Philippine dance companies, including those who have pursued careers abroad. Corpus details their struggles as dancers and choreographers in earning their spot on the international stage. That they are engaged in conversations on what it is like to have danced in Manila and what they are up to abroad gives a sense of comfort and pride. Their stories permit us to see how Philippine dance pedagogy and its "products" are comparable to western standards. Her interviews with dance-artists on their performances and their choreographic processes provide the context by which shows are viewed and understood by the author. These conversations set Corpus apart from critics who publish in dailies; she takes the time to touch base with her subjects for an informed criticism.

Corpus problematizes the political position of dance in the country and Filipina artists in the world. Dance is still a marginalized art form in the Philippines, considered as nothing but an intermission from more important things. Many still fail to see the value of these productions apart from entertainment. Through Corpus's work and imaginings, however, dance becomes less of a spectacle and more of a valid resource for social and political thought, and dancers turn into empowered individuals with the ability to construct their own present, presence, and even future.

Corpus begins her exposition by referring to dance as a cultural excess but one that is increasingly gaining popularity, especially through new technologies and digital platforms. Working with the public notion that dance in the Philippines is a stereotypically female domain, the author treats *Dance and Other Slippages* as an act of reclamation, a reiteration of the strong presence of the woman in the dance, if only in the Philippine context.

Clarissa Cecilia Mijares Ramos

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ateneo de Manila University
<cmijares@ateneo.edu>

BOB EAST

The Neo Abu Sayyaf: Criminality in the Sulu Archipelago of the Republic of the Philippines

Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2016. 136 pages.

Bob East is an independent researcher with a PhD in International Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. His previous works on the topic of criminality and the Abu Sayyaf include *Terror Truncated: The Decline of the Abu Sayyaf from the Crucial Year 2002* (2013) and *472 Days Captive of the Abu Sayyaf: The Survival of the Australian Warren Rodwell* (2015).

The question of whether fundamentalism can be used as an ideological smokescreen—purported end justifying means—for acts such as kidnapping, bombings, extortion, and murder has long been a subject of intense scholarly debate, more so in the case of scholars of conflict in the southern Philippines. East's *The Neo Abu Sayyaf: Criminality in the Sulu Archipelago of the Republic of the Philippines* queries whether the Abu Sayyaf Group's (ASG) activities in Basilan and the Sulu archipelago are a case of national terrorism, national insurgency, a combination of both, or something in between. East argues that in the early 2000s the ASG's poor leadership and eventual fragmentation caused its shift from having a primary ideological motivation to focusing on profiteering from a range of criminal activities. Hence, the term "neo" or "new" Abu Sayyaf. This position is neither novel