To answer the question raised at the beginning of this review, this book contains some interesting anecdotal material about events relating to the author's experiences. It is also an entertaining read. But its main interest is forensic. It is a well-written compilation of complaints typical of the marginalized and dwindling expatriate population of the Philippines. By reading Kirk's book you can get a sense of these grievances at home without risking the zealous hand of Father Cullen dragging you off to jail from your bar stool.

<div align="center">Alan Robson
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Reference

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The anthropology of the new media in the Philippines.
<div align="center">Raul Pertierra, 2010. Quezon City: IPC Culture and Development Series, Ateneo de Manila University, 235 pp. [online] Available at: <http://www.ipc-ateneo.org/node/71></div>

THE ANTHROPOLOGY of the New Media in the Philippines is published, appropriately, on the Internet, and free to download. Pertierra felt a need not only to communicate the ideas about modern communication quickly and easily, and to make it as readily accessible as possible, but also to do so by means of the same medium of which he writes.

This book examines the uses and effects of new computer-mediated-interactive-communication technology (CMICT) in the lives of ordinary Filipinos—often in unexpected ways—noting as an example that the mobile phone, as a simple, relatively inexpensive device, has transformed the lives of peoples throughout the world.

So too has the Internet or the virtual world, which may offer opportunities not available in "real" life. Dispersed family members, lonely individuals, entrepreneurs, researchers, and anyone wishing to connect for whatever reason increasingly depend on this new technology. We live in an age where the requirements of communication across distances, cultural borders, temporal zones, political differences, economic needs, and personal situations affect our everyday lives.

While the economics of CMICT are often flouted and by now obvious, Pertierra has taken an anthropological approach, by which he means material is often drawn from ordinary narratives of everyday life. Anthropology's concern is frequently about personal or family interests and the struggles to make sense out of an increasingly complex world. This world now extends far beyond local boundaries and includes strangers. No longer limited to familiars, far from home and exposed to new ideas, Filipinos nevertheless try to comprehend their experiences in culturally meaningful terms. One of the tasks of anthropology is to describe these attempts. Understandings of the self, the family, religion, and society are being reformulated as the world is transformed by forces of globalization, economic rationalization, and capitalist consumption. The new media are both an agent of this transformation as well as a lifeline to earlier cultural understandings. Thus, the new media do not only expedite communication but also generate new conditions of possibility.

The eight chapters of the book discuss in more detail many issues in relation to CMICT, such as social relationships and dating, virtual relationships, reading and intellectual skills, education, meaningfulness in or for life, economic impact/implications, social/economic in/equality, and politics, among others.

Chapter 1, "Living in an Age of Uncertainty," presents a summary of the book's main argument. It is often claimed that we are living in an age of uncertainty with extreme predictions that we are on the verge of a major evolutionary break and that CMICT is a truly revolutionary invention. But will society and culture be fundamentally transformed by

it? Thus the chapter examines how the new media affect people as they go about their normal everyday lives. The new technology is employed in a wide variety of activities, from keeping in touch with relatives and friends, seeking useful information about jobs and economic prospects to idly passing the time away. These activities have important consequences for social institutions such as the family, the economy, and even politics.

Pertierra outlines here the Philippine context of this technology: a shift from community to society, from a mode of life based on kinship and locality to one centering on the stranger and the national or global. This, and the surplus of information that CMICT provides, has led, ironically, to increasing uncertainty as people try to make sense of an excess of meanings. This semiotic explosion is quickly overtaking any attempts at maintaining past traditions and orderly expectations. Culture has become detached from a mode of life and instead becomes a paradigm for living, in which "free floating" global signifiers of meaning are independent of their context.

Chapter 2, "Are We Entering a New World Order?," examines how transformative CMICT is and the claims for its consequences for social life. The control of fire, the domestication of plants and livestock, the invention of the wheel, and the discovery of writing, while truly revolutionary technologies were nevertheless relatively slow in producing significant transformations. By comparison, the electric lightbulb, the railway, the motorcar, and the telegraph achieved significant changes quickly. It is too early to predict whether the new communications technology belongs to the former category, but it is clear that its effects are being felt as quickly as the latter.

In this chapter Pertierra covers diverse issues: Is CMICT a truly revolutionary technology? Will society and culture be fundamentally transformed by the new technology? Is the Philippines likely to share in these revolutionary transformations? While there is little doubt that the mobile phone and the Internet have changed the lives of most Filipinos, it is too early to claim that the immediate future will be fundamentally transformed for the better.

Chapter 3 describes the anthropological context of "New and Expanded Networks" within which CMICT operates. New conditions of communication have arisen involving wide networks of both familiars and strangers. A possible result of this communicative expansion is the development of the public sphere, whose members, while having diverse interests, come together in trying to achieve a common understanding.

These expanded networks necessarily involve mediated relationships. A new virtual world has opened up, in which sex is a main commodity. Asian cam models (Mathews 2010) are only one element of this virtualization of sexuality, but it also includes online marriages, families, religion, and even online gift-giving and cyber friendships.

Chapter 4 presents a brief ethnography of "Cellphone and Internet Use in Buenavista" as an example of a poor, and technologically poor, rural municipality and its (lack of) access to the new media. The chapter illustrates how the new communication technology has the capacity to significantly expand social and cultural relationships, even in such a technologically impoverished location, through the use of internet cafes, the use of which can even take precedence over new clothes or shoes among teenagers. These expanded relationships have implications for local identity as well as for notions of community and globality. These are particularly relevant for the growing Filipino diaspora and for the increasing transnationalization of everyday life.

Chapter 5, "Case Studies Revisited," examines four former informants (interviewed in 2005) and how their lives have changed in the intervening years while deeply involved in technologically mediated relationships and practices. All of these informants had related as much to their virtual selves as to their actual ones; several years later, they continue to use the new communication technology in diverse ways. These case studies aptly illustrate how the new technologies insert themselves into everyday lives and identities, such that our possessions can come to possess us.

Chapter 6 discusses the case of migrants and overseas workers and their communicative practices. Entitled the "Old & New: Migrants &

Overseas Workers," this chapter continues with an explanation and illustration of the uses and insertion of technology among a people about whose migration is almost legendary. While much has been written about Filipino overseas contract workers (OCWs), Pertierra combines an anthropological and technological approach to show how OCWs and other migrants utilize this new technology to create both a new life and identity and maintain old ties, simultaneously connecting while also deepening the feelings of separation.

Chapter 7, "The New Media and Politics or the Politics of the New Media," examines the effects of the new media on the political process. While the chapter perhaps diverges from the preceding ones, it nevertheless raises the issue of how technology now impacts on political participation and persuasion, so evident during political crises of the past 20 years when texting was utilized to rally popular opinion and participation. Despite the use of technology in this sphere, there has been remarkably little scholarship on it.

Chapter 8 returns to a more anthropological and sociological theme as it looks at the changes in cultural practices following the new communication technology. "New Media, New Culture or the End of Kultur?" discusses the various ways CMICT has shaped contemporary culture. The new media not only expand the possibilities for culture but also affect the way we experience it. No longer limited to face-to-face encounters, culture is increasingly mediated and globalized, and includes strangers as part of everyday life, containing images, practices, and representations drawn from afar. Contemporary culture becomes not only lived but also aspired to, imitated, and consumed, generating new identities and norms, and shaping new expectations.

Overall, although Pertierra develops a coherent and general perspective, each chapter has its own orientation and may be read separately. Unlike other scripts that often focus on a particular issue or aspect, and may be too technical, *The Anthropology of the New Media in the Philippines* considers the social, cultural, and political contexts and

effects in each arena. These are well illustrated by the numerous examples and case studies provided, to which, I am sure, most readers will be able to relate. By this means, Pertierra makes an interesting and entertaining manuscript that foreshadows much yet to be researched and fathomed, not only in the Philippines but more broadly—or should we say, globally.

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Reference

Mathews, Paul. W. (2010). *Asian Cam Models: Digital Virtual Virgin Prostitutes?* Quezon City: Giraffe Books.

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Narrative episodes from the Tulalang epic.
Hazel J. Wrigglesworth, Ampalid Ampatuan, Letipá Andaguer, and Adriano Ambangan, 2008. Manila: Linguistic Society of the Philippines. 274 pp.

While the very real threats of language endangerment in the Philippines and elsewhere have motivated linguists to pursue a program of description, less attention has been granted to the documentation of rare storytelling traditions. *Narrative Episodes from the Tulalang Epic* provides material evidence of just how precious oral epics truly are, and why it is important more than ever to share and understand them.

Ilianen Manobo storytellers of North Cotabato have been working with Hazel Wrigglesworth for four decades, and the latest results of their collaboration are astonishing. What is referred to as the "Tulalang epic" is a collection of oral stories, all of which involve the Ilianen Manobo culture hero, Tulalang, and his exploits. Of this tradition, four distinct episodes were selected for careful documentation and explanation: "The Famous Young-man Who Disguised Himself as a Monkey," "The Children Who Were Septuplets," and two versions of "The Woman Who Lived Alone." Wrigglesworth is at pains to point out, however, that these names are her