This is an engaging and timely book on an important topic. Claussen considers the lives of Filipina nuns, both as collective practice and as individual narratives of self-fashioning. She helps to bridge the gap between our knowledge of local religious practice in the Philippine countryside, and our knowledge of changes in the Catholic church at large, and in doing so provides an unexpected and revealing glimpse of a world that will be of interest to Southeast Asianists, feminist theorists and all those interested in the contemporary transformations of world religions.

Fenella Cannell, London School of Economics and Political Science

Claussen is at her very best in seizing small details that would escape almost anyone's attention and analyzing them, displaying their deep significance for us. The result of this high-density, superior-quality scholarship is an extraordinarily forceful piece of work in which she touches all the facets of these nuns' lives. Any preconception I might have had about nuns in general, and Philippine nuns in particular, has been shattered by this book, which I would see as a must on any serious reading list concerning a study of clergy today.

Jean-Paul Dumont, George Mason University

Unconventional Sisterhood is an ethnographic exploration of the ways in which Filipina Missionary Benedictine Sisters are renegotiating traditional understandings of gender, religious responsibility, and national identity in the context of a rapidly globalizing nation. And, unlike the popular stereotypes of staid sisters cloaked in rigid religious dogmatism, they are doing so by telling jokes, engaging in eclectic religious rituals, maintaining connections with a local nationalist cult, and committing themselves to a radical—and feminist—politics.

For many of the sisters, the vocation itself represents a radical choice given strong cultural (and often specifically paternal) pressures to instead embrace wifehood, motherhood, and domestic/familial responsibility. The congregation not only affords an alternative vocational option for activist Filipinas, but also evidences a strong (and constitutionally mandated) concern with national women's issues. While—significantly—the sisters do not all identify themselves as "feminists," all are committed to the revision of mainstream Philippine gender norms. Claussen's work not only represents an important addition to scholarship on Philippine feminism, it also speaks to a lack of specifically ethnographic work focused on consciously "feminist" collectives. Unconventional Sisterhood is one of only a few ethnographies focused on female monasticism—of particular cultural importance in the Christian Philippines, wherein nuns enjoy both relatively high social status and freedom from many of the traditional constraints delineating Filipina lives. It is noteworthy as well for its focus on Metropolitan Manila—a socially complex, dynamic, diverse, and under-studied environment.