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An Historiographical Study**

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Wenceslao E. Retana: An Historiographical Study

JOHN N. SCHUMACHER

THE year 1962 marks the hundredth anniversary of the Spanish writer Wenceslao Emilio Retana y Gamboa. In the history of Philippine historiography Retana is deserving of careful study, for mere quantity if nothing else, as the large number of titles under his name in any Philippine bibliography will demonstrate. More important, for better or worse, Retana is one of the best-known and most frequently used authorities for many fields of Philippine history. Finally, he not only wrote on Philippine history, but was intimately involved in it, because of the role he played in the opposition to the Filipino patriots of the Propaganda movement. It seems important then to attempt an evaluation of Retana as historian of the Philippines.

FIRST CONTACTS WITH THE PHILIPPINES

Born in Spain in the town of Boadilla del Monte, province of Madrid, on September 28, 1862, Retana came to the Philippines with a minor post in the colonial administration in 1884. Here he remained until 1890, holding various positions in the colonial service, and finally returning to Spain on the grounds of ill-health.¹ These years in the Philippines were of decisive

¹ "Retana y Gamboa (Wenceslao Emilio)", *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1923), L, 1378; Vicente Castañeda, "Noticias," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* LXXXIV (1924), 374; Manuel Artigas y Cuerva, *¿Quién es*

importance in determining his future career, for the interests, contacts, and knowledge which he acquired were the beginning of his work on the Philippines in which he was to make his reputation as an historian.

During these years, it is evident that his duties in the Spanish colonial administration did not weigh too heavily on him, since he was not only editor of the Manila newspaper *La Oceania Española*, and earlier, assistant managing editor of *La Opinión*, another Manila weekly, but was also correspondent of *La España Oriental* of Manila, *El Porvenir de Visayas* of Cebu, and *El Eco de Panay* of Iloilo.² Later he asserted that during this period of six years he had written over five hundred articles, mostly under the pseudonym *Desengaños*.³

It was during this same period that he published the book *El indio batangueño*, a study of the customs, character, folklore, etc., of the people of the province of Batangas.⁴ Another published work was *Transformismo: diálogos con un "bago"*, a sharp satire against the pretensions of Spaniards who fancied themselves grand personages once arrived in the Philippines.⁵

Retana? su antaño y hogaño; reseña bio-bibliográfica (Manila: J. Fajardo, 1911), p. 2. The *Espasa* article is a eulogy, perhaps written by Retana himself, who was one of the collaborators of the encyclopedia; Artigas' book is hostile, but generally well-informed; Castañeda's article is an obituary. Artigas lists the government positions held by Retana in the Philippines.

² Artigas, p. 18; *Espasa*, p. 1378; Epifanio de los Santos Cristobal, Wenceslao E. Retana: ensayo crítico acerca de este ilustre filipinista (Madrid: Fortanet, 1909), p. 29. De los Santos was a close friend of Retana, and his essay is extremely laudatory.

³ *Filipinas: cosas de allá (páginas literarias)* (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1893), p. v.

⁴ *El indio batangueño: estudio etnográfico* (tercera edición; Manila: Chofre, 1888). This work, as Artigas recognizes, is not deformed by the anti-Filipino bias of similar later works. "... es de los que menos veneno tiene para los hijos del país. ..." (Artigas, pp. 61-62).

⁵ This work was later republished together with three other essays of the period in the volume mentioned in note 3 above. In the preface Retana proclaims that he publishes these, the "least bad" among his literary productions of those years, which were the object of much praise in the Philippines. This, he says, shows the sad state of literature in that country. (*Filipinas: cosas de allá*, p. v). These remarks

Nothing of this extensive literary production can in any sense be called scientific work, nor was it generally directly connected with history. Nonetheless, it deserves notice here as being the beginning of Retana's writing on matters Philippine, an interest which was to occupy the rest of his life.

On his return to Madrid, he received a post in the Ministerio de Ultramar, Spain's colonial ministry. At the same time, he continued his journalistic work, acting as correspondent for *La Voz Española* of Manila, and contributing to the Madrid papers *La Política Moderna* and *La Época*, and later to *El Nacional* and *El Heraldo de Madrid*. His articles on the Philippine Revolution in 1896 received a great deal of notoriety, and were widely copied abroad.⁶ Having already published his early bibliographical and historical works by this time, Retana had come to be looked on as an authority on the Philippines, especially amid the general ignorance in Spain of her Pacific colony at that time. He also began to move up the political ladder during this period, for he was deputy to the Cortes⁷ in 1896, and later became Civil Governor of the Provinces of Huesca and of Teruel.⁸ It would appear, however, that his political obligations still only occupied a part of his time, since he continued to publish book after book.

are accompanied by others more depreciative and offensive for the Philippines.

⁶ *Espasa*, p. 1378; *Artigas*, p. 25.

⁷ Deputy for Guanabacoa in Cuba, a position given him by the Conservative party which controlled the elections there, apparently without his ever having been in his constituency, according to a common practice of the time.

⁸ Julio Cejador y Frauca, *Historia de la lengua y literatura castellana* (Madrid, 1919), vol. 10, p. 131. Cejador, in his discussion of the work of Retana, gives his principal attention to his novel, *La tristeza errante* (Madrid: Fernando Fe, 1903), which he praises rather extravagantly. The novel, which did have three editions (1903, 1916, 1918), is rather pretentious in its style, and though it is vivid in its characterization and its description, scarcely seems to deserve such praise. It is marked by the anti-clericalism and anti-Catholicism which is found in many of Retana's writings of this period. There are incidental references to the Philippines in the novel, but its story is laid in Spain.

POLEMIC WRITINGS

Shortly after his return to Spain, Retana began collaboration with José and Pablo Feced on a fortnightly newspaper known as *La Política de España en Filipinas*.⁹ The purpose of this periodical was to combat the campaign for Filipino rights being waged in the press by a group of Filipinos, whose organ was the Madrid fortnightly, *La Solidaridad*. The professed program of the latter periodical was an assimilation of the Philippines to Spain by complete extension of the Peninsular legal code to the Islands and by representation for the country in the Spanish Cortes. Due to the extensive influence of the four orders of Friars in the Philippines — the Augustinians, Dominicans, Franciscans, and Recollects — the campaign had become strongly anti-Friar, and under the leadership of the Spanish Grand Master of the Gran Oriente Masonic group, was seeking the expulsion of the Friars from the Philippines and the confiscation of their property.¹⁰

La Política de España en Filipinas took up the polemic with *La Solidaridad*, both sides indulging freely in that bitter invective and insult characteristic of much of Spanish political journalism in the late nineteenth century. Since the Filipinos in their campaign for assimilation insisted much on the level of culture in the Philippines and on the ability of their people, their opponents carried on a systematic denigration of all things Filipino, emphasizing all that was unfavorable, and depreciating all accomplishments of the Filipinos. In this campaign, the biting satire of Retana played a major part.

During this same period he published a number of books which might be classified as polemic works. The first of these

⁹ *La Política de España en Filipinas. Quincenario defensor de los intereses españoles en las colonias del extremo Oriente* (8 vols.; Madrid, 1891-1898).

¹⁰ It is outside the scope of this paper to discuss the reasons for the anti-Friar orientation of the Propaganda movement, nor does it seem to be something which is capable of a simple explanation, such as is common in historical works which try to portray the Friars as the enemies of all that the Filipino Propaganda movement stood for. Nonetheless, however it is to be explained, the campaign of *La Solidaridad* was strongly anti-Friar in character.

were the *Folletos Filipinos*, four small books which appeared immediately after Retana's return to Spain. The first *folleto*¹¹ was a defense of the Friars against various charges brought against them by the Filipino Propagandists; the other three¹² were abusive and satirical attacks, largely personal, on the Filipino and European collaborators of *La Solidaridad* and their program.¹³

Likewise in the polemic genre was *Cuestiones filipinas: avisos y profecías*,¹⁴ of which the first part was a collection of newspaper articles of Retana on questions of colonial policy in the Philippines. The second part, though likewise polemical in intent, has a more permanent value, since it is an example of his sense of contemporary history and concern for documentation. He studies the manifesto presented in 1888 to the government in Manila, demanding the expulsion of the Archbishop and of the Friars. Not only does he analyze the document and its circumstances carefully, showing, e.g., the large proportion of "signers" who were either non-existent, or who had denied signing the document, but what is more important for the historian, he reproduces all the official documents connected with the affair or pertinent to its background, documents which would in many cases be unavailable today otherwise.

Another example of contemporary history with a quasi-polemical purpose is the rather journalistic account the administration of General Valeriano Weyler as Captain-General of the Philippines (1888-1891).¹⁵ The book is a defense of Weyler

¹¹ *Folletos filipinos: I. Frailes y clérigos* (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1890).

¹² *Folletos filipinos: II. Apuntes para la historia (aniterías y solidaridades); III. Sinapismos (Bromistas y critiquillas); IV. Reformas y otros excesos* (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1890).

¹³ The Propagandists, of course, did not hesitate to pay Retana and his friends back in kind, but in spite of attempts which make rather distressing reading today, Retana somewhat excels in effective abuse.

¹⁴ Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1892.

¹⁵ *Mando del general Weyler en Filipinas* (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1896). This book first appeared in installments in *La Política*.

against the complaints of the Filipinos, apparently written at the instigation or with the help of its subject. But it is of some value for the large number of contemporary documents, both official and private, which are reproduced in it.¹⁶

Two other books which deserve to be classified as polemical works, though they might have some title to be considered serious history, are *Filipinas: el precursor de la política redentorista. Breves comentarios a un libro raro*,¹⁷ and *Supersticiones de los indios filipinos: un libro de aniterias*.¹⁸ The former treats of the activities of a *criollo* of the early part of the country, Luis Rodríguez Varela, whose writings of a separatist tendency had brought him to grief. This example, says Retana, should be a warning to the Filipino Propagandists. The second book is a bibliophile's curiosity — an enlarged reproduction of an amulet in the form of a booklet containing prayers in garbled Latin, Spanish, and the Pangasinan dialect, found on a captured bandit in the Philippines, and presented to Retana by a friend. Though there is no doubt of the value of the book to the cultural anthropologist, one is led to suspect to some extent its real purpose in the context of the campaign of denigration of the Filipinos in which Retana was then involved.

Near the end of 1895 *La Solidaridad* was forced to cease publication, since it had few readers among Spaniards and the authorities in the Philippines had by now quite effectively prevented its entering there. Thereupon the Feced brothers gave up their part in *La Política de España en Filipinas*, and Retana became sole editor. From this time on, especially since *La Solidaridad* no longer existed as an opponent, the tone of the paper became more irenic and gradually came to include many studies in Philippine history, languages, bibliography, etc. This element had never been lacking, but once the polemic context

¹⁶ Retana had, of course, been a government employee in Manila during much of Weyler's administration. It was perhaps through these relations with Weyler that Retana became Inspector-General of Police for Barcelona from 1911 to 1918, during the period when Weyler was Captain-General of Catalonia.

¹⁷ Published in Madrid in 1894, making use of the forms of *La Política* where it had originally appeared.

¹⁸ Madrid, 1894.

was removed, such articles predominated. Several of the books which Retana published during this time or later, first appeared as a series of articles in *La Política de España en Filipinas*.¹⁹

HISTORICAL WORKS

To this period too belongs Retana's first real historical work —his publication of the hitherto inedited work of the Augustinian, Padre Joaquín Martínez de Zúñiga, *Estadismo de las islas Filipinas*.²⁰ This manuscript was a valuable early nineteenth-century description of the Philippines. In editing it Retana published notes and various appendices, which occupy the better part of the second volume, and which show a broad knowledge of Philippine history as well as considerable research. The comment of Blumentritt, the German Filipinologist who was working with the Filipino Propagandists and who had been bitterly attacked by Retana, is not exaggerated; that the notes and appendices of Retana are of even more value than the original work.²¹

Retana's interest in documentary source material, mentioned above, gave rise to an important series of volumes en-

¹⁹ Such, besides those already mentioned, were *Los antiguos alfabetos de Filipinas* (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1895); *Fiestas de toros en Filipinas* (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1896); and, either in whole or in part, a number of the bibliographical works to be treated below.

²⁰ *Estadismo de las islas Filipinas, ó mis viajes por este país*. Publica esta obra por primera vez extensamente anotada W. E. Retana. (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1893). Though it is true, as Artigas notes (p. 29, note 1), that Father Pedro Peláez, the Filipino secular priest, had earlier begun to publish the manuscript in the newspaper *El Católico Filipino*, the publication was apparently never completed. Retana, in recognition of the erudition shown in his edition of Martínez de Zúñiga, was named *correspondiente* of the *Real Academia de la Historia* of Madrid, (Castañeda, p. 375).

²¹ In a review in the German geographical periodical *Globus*, translated in *La Política* IV (3 Julio 1894), 187-88. The Filipino bibliographer and historian T. H. Pardo de Tavera made almost the same comment (*Biblioteca Filipina* [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903], p. 252, no. 1634.

titled *Archivo del bibliófilo filipino*,²² in which he reproduced various rare or important documents concerning the Philippines, some of them ethnographical or linguistic manuscripts, but the vast majority of them historical. There are numerous documents from every century, and in volumes III and IV there is an interesting series entitled "Documentos políticos de actualidad", in which much documentation pertinent to the first stages of the Philippine Revolution is published. As was remarked above, these documents are even more pertinent today than they were at the time, for their originals are in many cases now lost or destroyed. In spite of having included a certain number of rather ephemeral items, the series, as far as it goes, is a notable achievement in fulfilling its program, which the editor says was from the beginning to "...be an arsenal of data of every kind, which in the course of years, may be of real profit to Filipinists."²³

The next historical work under the editorship of Retana was the seventeenth-century history of Mindanao and the other islands of southern Philippines by the Jesuit Combés.²⁴ The original was, and is, the fundamental work for the early history of that part of the Philippines.²⁵ This edition further

²² *Archivo del bibliófilo filipino. Recopilación de documentos históricos, científicos, literarios y políticos y estudios bibliográficos por W. E. Retana* (5 vols.; Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1895-1905). The fifth volume, which appeared in 1905 after a lapse of seven years from the publication of the fourth, was published by Victoriano Suárez. Promised succeeding volumes never appeared.

²³ *Ibid.*, V, xvi. How well it achieved this end is evident from its place among the sources of almost every substantial work on Philippine history published in recent times.

²⁴ *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, por el P. Francisco Combes de la Compañía de Jesús. Obra publicada en Madrid en 1667, y que ahora con la colaboración del P. Pablo Pastells de la misma Compañía saca nuevamente a luz W. E. Retana (Madrid: [Minuesa de los Rios], 1897.

²⁵ "... the base and source from which have set out modern writings on the southern islands of the Philippine Archipelago." (Pardo de Tavera, p. 107, no. 661). "... one of the most valuable pearls of Philippine literature..." (Blumentritt, cited in A. P. C. Griffin, *A List of Books (with References to Periodicals) on the Philippine Islands in the Library of Congress* [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903], p. 135.

enriches it with a wealth of historical, linguistic, bibliographic, and other information from inedited sources. However, it is difficult to say just how much of this was the work of Retana, since the Jesuit historian and former Mindanao missionary, Pastells, was his collaborator, and Retana says in his prologue that everything scientific in the notes is from Pastells. At least the 150—page historical and bibliographical introduction, however, seems to be the work of Retana.

This was really Retana's first major venture into the field of early Philippine colonial history. (*Estadismo* had dealt with the early nineteenth century). Another similar work, the *Sucesos* of Morga, published some thirteen years later, shows the maturity of scholarship which had come by that time, for this edition of one of the most important of the early historians of the Philippines²⁶ not only makes available a rare work, but is a real contribution in its own right, reproducing many hitherto inedited documents from Spanish archives to clarify the history and make known its author, Morga. The work (as edited by Retana) is still a standard source for the early period of Spanish colonization in the Philippines.²⁷

In 1907, Retana published his principal historical work, his biography of José Rizal.²⁸ According to Retana's Filipino friend and collaborator, Epifanio de los Santos Cristobal, this work cost him ten years of preparation, and there can be little argument with de los Santos' judgment that it is, together with

²⁶ Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las islas Filipinas*. Nueva edición, enriquecida con los escritos inéditos del mismo autor, ilustrada con numerosas notas que amplían el texto y prologada extensamente, por W. E. Retana (Madrid: V. Suárez, 1909).

²⁷ An earlier edition had been published by Rizal in 1891. However, due to confiscations by the Spanish authorities of any work by Rizal, this edition almost immediately became quite rare. Moreover, the annotations of Retana are considerably more extensive, and the large number of inedited documents he added make his the more useful edition today.

²⁸ *Vida y escritos del Dr. José Rizal* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1907). The substance of this book had appeared previously in a series of articles in the Spanish review *Nuestro Tiempo* from 1904 to 1906. However, the finished biography was not a mere reprint of the collected articles, as was the case with several other works of Retana.

the *Aparato* (Retana's major bibliographical work, which will be discussed below), his major and permanent contribution.²⁹

On reading the biography it is not difficult to believe that ten years' work went into its preparation, especially since these were also the years of his great bibliographical work, the *Aparato*. The book gives evidence of an immense amount of investigation of sources, especially letters to and from Rizal, most of which were published here for the first time. Retana had had, of course, personal contact with Rizal (the latter had once challenged him to a duel over a statement that he had made concerning Rizal's family in an article in *La Política*), and had known, either as friends or as enemies, most of the men with whom Rizal had worked and against whom he had fought in the Filipino Propaganda campaign. Having been the opponent of Rizal and his associates up to the end of Spanish sovereignty in the Philippines, he had had access to this side of the campaign; after his reversal of position (which will be discussed later), he had made friends with some of the Filipinos who had been close to Rizal, and through them had obtained many of Rizal's letters, as well as personal reminiscences. He was thus in an excellent position to become Rizal's first major biographer, and he made the most of his opportunities.

Perhaps the best testimony to the research that went into his work is the fact that all who have written biographies of Rizal since have drawn extensively on Retana. Some seem to treat him as a primary source, which, to a certain extent, he really is, since he had access to personal sources of information no longer available. There is an anti-Friar bias to the book

²⁹ De los Santos, p. 16. De los Santos played a large part in obtaining for Retana materials for the biography from the Philippines, and after the larger part of the work had appeared in article form in *Nuestro Tiempo*, compiled extensive additional notes for Retana, which the latter apparently incorporated into the biography in its final form. There are a number of references to this work of de los Santos in the correspondence of James Le Roy, the American historian of the Philippines, with de los Santos, to be found in the Robertson Papers in Duke University Library, especially in Le Roy's letter to de los Santos of 2 de Mayo de 1906 (X-F, Letters, 1902-1906).

to a certain extent, but in general he is careful to give an objective presentation to the arguments against his own conclusions on certain obscure parts of the life of Rizal. Other biographies have surpassed it in more life-like presentations of Rizal, and in deeper insights into certain parts of his career. The discovery subsequently of further materials, particularly letters of Rizal, has added to our knowledge of the man, and not all will accept Retana's interpretation of Rizal's mind and character, at least in detail. Yet even until now, Retana's biography remains one of the indispensable works for a knowledge of the Philippine national hero, if for nothing else, for the wealth of information it contains.

Among Retana's historical works could well be placed his history of Philippine journalism, of the Philippine theater, and of Philippine printing. But these can perhaps be better treated below under Retana as a bibliographer. The rest of his subsequent historical work falls into two periods, that from 1907 to 1911, when he became Inspector-General of Police in Barcelona, and that from 1918 till his death in 1924.

Retana's published historical works between 1907 and 1911 are generally reprints of articles on small points of history. Frequently rather than serious history they are merely a use of historical material for anti-Friar and anti-Catholic tracts. For since the loss of the Philippines to Spain, Retana had completely reversed his political and religious position. Such an anti-clerical tract, for example, is his work on the censorship in the Philippines.³⁰ It is a rather tedious series of resúmenes of the sessions of the permanent commission for censorship, as found in a document, possessed by Retana, for the years 1866-1875. The summaries are each accompanied by comments by Retana, designed not only to bring out the illiberality and narrow-mindedness of the Friar and Jesuit members (which is sufficiently evident), but to attribute to them the worst of mo-

³⁰ *La censura de imprenta en Filipinas* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1908). This is a reprint of an article which had appeared in *Nuestro Tiempo* in 1907.

tives. The whole thing is in the poorest of taste, even lacking the cleverness of earlier Retana polemical satire.³¹

Something similar might be said of another brief monograph on the first Filipino conspiracy against Spanish rule in the sixteenth century.³² It is done with inedited documents from the Archivo de Indias of Seville, but the work is marred by frequent irrelevant anti-Friar remarks.

At the same time, while providing commentary which was often biased and inaccurate on current Philippine affairs for Spanish reviews like *Nuestro Tiempo* and *La España Moderna*³³, he was writing a series of articles in the Manila newspaper *El Renacimiento*. These were generally ephemeral pieces of no value, and even more anti-Friar and anti-Catholic than his Spanish articles. Thus in 1908 he published a series of articles entitled *España y Rizal*, which Artigas says were nothing more than extracts from his published biography, seasoned with bitter censures of the Friars for a popular audience.³⁴

In the last years of his life, after finishing his term as Inspector-General of Police in Barcelona, Retana's historical work is more serious and objective, as he turned back to early colonial history. For the fourth centenary of the coming of Magellan to the Philippines he published two works of collective biography, the first being brief biographical sketches of the persons of noble or high rank who had been in the Philip-

³¹ It seems probable from its title that the little work, *La Inquisición en Filipinas. El caso inaudito del Gobernador Salcedo* (Madrid, 1910) was of the same nature. Salcedo was a governor-general of the seventeenth century who was imprisoned by the Augustinian Commissary of the Inquisition. I have not seen this book, however.

³² *La primera conjuración separatista: 1587-1588* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1908).

³³ Such, for example, were his *De la evolución de la literatura castellana en Filipinas: los poetas* (Madrid, 1909), earlier published in *Nuestro Tiempo*; and *Un nuevo cisma religioso: la Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (Madrid, 1909), previously published in *La España Moderna*.

³⁴ Artigas, p. 72. Artigas gives some other examples of the type of articles on pp. 52-53 and 68-69.

pines during the period of Spanish domination³⁵; the second, of all those who were known to have reached the Philippines on Magellan's expedition.³⁶ In the prologue to the former work, Retana explains that it is merely an epitome of a larger work he is planning on *La nobleza española en las islas Filipinas*, which in turn is only a part of a work, now nearly finished, of some 15,000 articles on *Los apellidos españoles en el Extremo Oriente*.³⁷ Both the published works mentioned above are models of erudition, demonstrating an extensive knowledge of both primary and secondary sources in Philippine history, and great diligence in investigation.³⁸

RETANA AS BIBLIOGRAPHER

In spite of his undoubted merits and pioneer work as historian and editor of historical works, Retana's principal interest and perhaps his chief claim to a permanent place in Philippine historiography is rather his bibliographical work. Indeed, such historical works as his editions of Combés' history of Mindanao and of Martínez de Zúñiga's *Estadismo*, as well as his *Archivo del bibliófilo filipino*, grew out of his bibliographical interests.

³⁵ *Indice de personas nobles y otras de calidad que han estado en Filipinas desde 1521 hasta 1898* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1921). This had earlier been published in the *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, vols. 76-78 (1920-1921).

³⁶ *Indice biográfico de los que asistieron al descubrimiento de Filipinas* (Madrid: Sanz Calleja, 1921). This had originally appeared in the Madrid review *Raza Española* of that year.

³⁷ There are a number of genealogical articles by Retana in *Nuestro Tiempo* and *Raza Española* from 1919 to 1924, which were undoubtedly part of these projected works. Castañeda, p. 378, also lists a number of books which Retana left in preparation at the time of his death, among which were several biographical dictionaries or indices of various classes of Spaniards who had lived in the Philippines.

There were also several articles in the *Revue Hispanique*, some of them of book length, though the only one apparently published in book form was the *Diccionario de filipinismos* (New York and Paris, 1921), a dictionary of Spanish words used with special meanings in the Philippines and of hispanized Tagalog words adopted by Spanish-speakers there.

³⁸ It was apparently due to these two works that Retana was elected *académico de número* of the Real Academia de la Historia in 1922. See its *Boletín* LXXXI (1922), 415-16.

This interest in Philippine bibliography was early aroused, for he tells us that unlike the usual Spanish administrative official in the Philippines, he did not return to Spain with well-lined pockets, but with nothing more than books. In 1893, he published his initial bibliographical work, a catalogue of his personal library of Filipiniana.³⁹ Though it is nothing more than a catalogue, it has some value, since even at this date, the Philippine library of Retana was outstanding.

The same year appeared Retana's edition of Martínez de Zúñiga's *Estadismo*. The second volume was in large part taken up with the annotations of Retana, in praise of which Blumentritt has already been cited. This praise, no doubt, applies most of all to the "Bibliografía de las islas Filipinas", which is the principal part of this volume.⁴⁰ The great Chilean bibliographer, Jose Toribio de Medina, who was then working on his own bibliographical works on the Philippines, confessed that when he saw Retana's work, he felt like putting aside his own investigations on the subject without publishing them.⁴¹

The following year, on the occasion of the interest aroused in Spain by the campaigns of the Spanish troops against the Moros in Mindanao, Retana published a bibliography of that island⁴², whose origin he describes with his characteristic lack of modesty:

I drew it up in a single week, in answer to the laments of some newspaper, whose name I do not remember, which was complaining that there scarcely existed anything written about that island. I catalogued 174 titles, arranged in chronological order.⁴³

³⁹ *Catálogo de la biblioteca filipina de W. E. Retana* (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1893).

⁴⁰ "Bibliografía de las islas Filipinas," Martínez de Zúñiga, vol. II, apéndice B, pp. 93-352.

⁴¹ Cited by de los Santos, p. 15.

⁴² *Bibliografía de Mindanao. (Epítome)* (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1894).

⁴³ *Aparato bibliográfico de la historia general de Filipinas, deducido de la colección que posee en Barcelona la Compañía General de Tabacos de dichas Islas* (3 vols.; Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1906), III.

The bibliography is annotated, and contains practically all works of any importance, at least from the Spanish side, though Retana's contact with foreign works seems to have been mostly through notices of Blumentritt.

In the succeeding years, he published various minor bibliographical articles on the Philippines. At the same time he went on acquiring all the books on the Philippines he could lay his hands on, as well as copying notes on those which he was able to examine in the collections of leading bibliophiles in Spain. His plan in all this, as he tells us, was to publish an *Epitome* of the general bibliography of the Philippines, in accordance with the following plan:

- . . . cataloguing according to strict chronological order:
- 1° the works which I possess;
 - 2° those which I have examined personally in public and private libraries, but which I do not possess;
 - 3° those which, though not included in either of the two preceding groups, appear in works of bibliography, biography, history, etc., etc.

On finishing this task, I will conclude it with an alphabetical index of authors and translators which will make easy the use of the ten or twelve volumes which the *Epitome* will comprise. . . .⁴⁴

As a beginning to his work, not destined to appear, at least as here projected, Retana started publication of the first part of his *Epitome* in the pages of his *Archivo del bibliófilo filipino*.⁴⁵ In the first four volumes 1167 titles appeared, appropriately annotated and commented upon. But when the *Archivo* came to a temporary stop in 1898, he determined to publish in one volume the entire catalogue of his library, which he did that same year.⁴⁶ Blumentritt wrote of this bibliography:

Retana was the chronicler of the Philippine monks, and thus was able through their and the old Spanish care and support [sic], to bring to

⁴⁴ *Archivo*, I, xxxvii-xxxviii.

⁴⁵ "Epítome de la bibliografía general de Filipinas. Parte primera: obras que posee el autor," *ibid.*, 381-465; II, 455-510; III, 499-546; IV, 447-544.

⁴⁶ *Catálogo abreviado de la biblioteca filipina de W. E. Retana* (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1898).

gether the largest library of Philippine literature ever collected. Almost everything which has been written in Spanish and printed on the subject of the Philippines was to be found in the collection of this versatile defender of the rule of the monks. At the same time nearly everything printed in the Malayan speech of the Archipelago (prayer books, theater pieces, etc.), was included, as well as the first newspapers, etc., printed in the Philippines, so that the library, rich also in MSS (2697 numbers), stands unique and alone. Foreign works . . . are very sparingly included.⁴⁷

This work, however, has value today only as one of the steps in the formation of Retana's major bibliographical work, the *Aparato*. For shortly after this, he sold his library to the *Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas*, or *Tabacalera*, as it is known.⁴⁸ This Spanish company, which controlled a large part of the Philippine tobacco production, had decided to gather together a library of all that was available on the Philippines. In addition to purchasing Retana's collection, the *Tabacalera* made use of his advice and assistance to buy widely from all possible sources,⁴⁹ and assembled a magnificent library of Philippine materials.⁵⁰ With this collection, they then invited Re-

⁴⁷ Cited in translation by Griffin, p. 5. The figure 2,697, which in the poor translation seems to refer to the MSS, actually refers to the total of the whole collection. The "monks" of the translation are the Friars.

⁴⁸ The story of the formation of his library and how he came to sell it to *Tabacalera* is told by Retana in "Revista histórico-bibliográfica," *Archivo*, V, 478-484.

⁴⁹ Retana's relations with the Company were long-lasting, and in several ways fruitful for Philippine history. In 1904-1905 the bookseller Pedro Vindel had published a catalogue of the library of Philippine book which he had gathered (*Catálogo sistemático é ilustrado de la Biblioteca Filipina reunida y puesta en venta por P. Vindel* [Madrid, 1904-1905]) with descriptions of almost 3000 works. Retana had done the bibliographical descriptions of over two-thirds of the works for Vindel, but refused, he tells us, to put his name to the work, because the bookseller wished to commercialize the bibliography more. On Retana's suggestion *Tabacalera* bought most of the collection, all the valuable works which it did not already possess from Retana's own collection.

⁵⁰ This splendid collection was sold to the Philippine National Library, where it formed the nucleus of the Filipiniana section before the war. Today little remains of it since the destruction of most of the Library in the battle for Manila.

tana to make a general bibliography of the Philippines. The result was the *Aparato bibliográfico de la historia general de Filipinas deducido de la colección que posee en Barcelona la Compañía General de Tabacos de dichas Islas*,⁵¹ three folio volumes, containing almost 5,000 entries, arranged chronologically and with critical notes. The whole work is magnificently done, with numerous facsimiles of rare imprints, reproductions of old maps, etc. It is the most complete single bibliography of the Philippines, even today, and an indispensable instrument of serious work on Philippine colonial and revolutionary history.⁵² Not only the mere number of works included makes it such, but the quality of those possessed by the library on which it depended, for practically all the fundamental printed works are there. What Retana says of it in his prologue, justifying the use in the title of the words "for a general history", seems quite true:

And as the work is not just a simple inventory of a library, but in its pages are contained the references to all the elements necessary to write the general history of the Philippines, hence the title which I have placed on the work. . . .⁵³

The latter part of the third volume of the *Aparato* contains a whole book, previously published, on the history of Philippine journalism. Originally published in *La Política* as a series of articles, the work had appeared in book form in 1895, using the forms of *La Política*.⁵⁴ In the *Aparato* Retana completely revised the original and extended it considerably, listing a total of 163 newspapers, etc., beginning from the first paper known to have existed in the Philippines (1811). As de los Santos remarks of this work,

. . . it is at the same time of an extraordinary utility, because in the course of it (600 columns), one can gain an appreciation of the unfold-

⁵¹ Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1906.

⁵² For a demonstration of this, one has only to glance through such a modern bibliography as Streit and Dindinger's *Biblioteca Missionum*, vol. 9, on Philippine mission history from 1800 to 1909, where Retana is the most frequent source cited.

⁵³ *Aparato*, pp. xlv-xlv.

⁵⁴ *El periodismo filipino (1811-1894)* (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1895).

ing of the social, political and literary life of the Islands in the nineteenth century.⁵⁵

Another bibliographico-historical work of Retana is his history of the theater in the Philippines.⁵⁶ After treating the origins of the Philippine theater, which he considers to have begun only with its introduction by the Jesuits in the sixteenth century, he discusses the published theatrical pieces, giving copious extracts from many of them, particularly those of the nineteenth century. With his great familiarity with almost all the early Philippine literature, he is able to draw a great deal of information on the subject from the sources.

Closely allied with, and, of course, in part overlapping his other bibliographical work, was Retana's work on the history of printing in the Philippines. The first phase of it was the more strictly bibliographical. In 1896 the Chilean bibliographer Medina published a book entitled, *La imprenta en Manila desde sus orígenes hasta 1810*,⁵⁷ which he dedicated to Retana. It was a catalogue of all the works he had found to have been printed in Manila during that period. Soon afterwards, Retana published a supplement of some 200 titles to this work of Medina, together with his own critical observations and corrections.⁵⁸ This work, in turn, he dedicated to Medina. Apart from the bibliographical section, there was an important essay on the origin of the first Philippine press, which Medina had believed to have been imported from Macao. Retana develops the historical proofs for the position that it was actually made in Manila. In 1904 Medina published his own additions to his original work,⁵⁹ taking cognizance of and incorporating many of Retana's contributions, though disagreeing with some.

⁵⁵ de los Santos, p. 14.

⁵⁶ *Noticias histórico-bibliográficas del teatro de Filipinas* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1910). This was originally published as a series of articles in *Nuestro Tiempo*, vols. 26-32 (1909-1910).

⁵⁷ J. T. Medina, *La Imprenta en Manila desde sus orígenes hasta 1810* (Santiago de Chile, 1896).

⁵⁸ *La imprenta en Filipinas, 1593-1810. Adiciones y observaciones a "La Imprenta en Manila" de D. J. T. Medina* (Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1899).

⁵⁹ *La Imprenta en Manila desde sus orígenes hasta 1810. Adiciones y ampliaciones por J. T. Medina* (Santiago de Chile, 1904).

The properly historical part of his work on the printing press in the Philippines, whose foundations Retana had laid in his *La imprenta en Filipinas*, was further developed in a book published in 1908, where he gathers together all the data, not only of his own work, but of Medina's two books, and of the further supplement which had been published in the meantime by the Augustinians PP. Pérez and Güemes,⁶⁰ and gives a chronological catalogue of all the printing presses known to have existed in the Philippines, together with their printers, variations, etc.⁶¹ Finally taking up the question of the origin of the Philippine printing press, he published a lengthy monograph on the question, demonstrating his thesis with historical, bibliographical, and typographical proof, reproducing in the latter, facsimiles of various early imprints to substantiate his point.⁶²

CHANGING VIEWPOINT OF RETANA

In the course of the discussion of the principal works of Retana, it has been noted more than once that there were considerable shifts of viewpoint on his part — in his attitude toward the Friars, in his attitude toward the Filipino people, in his attitude toward Rizal, etc. It seems necessary to inquire into the motivation of these various shifts here, for our judgment of him as an historian must be influenced by his sincerity and honesty in his historical writings.

The question has been raised previously, especially in two small works which appeared in the first decade of this century. The first of these, by the Filipino historian, Epifanio de los Santos Cristobal, has been used frequently in the course of this

⁶⁰ Angel Pérez, O.E.S.A. y Cecilio Güemes, O.E.S.A., *Adiciones y continuación de "La imprenta en Manila" de d. J. T. Medina* (Manila: Santos y Bernal, 1904).

⁶¹ *Tablas cronológica y alfabética de imprentas e impresores de Filipinas (1593-1898)* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1908). Artigas (pp. 114-116) while praising this work in general, points out a number of errors and omissions.

⁶² *Orígenes de la imprenta filipina: investigaciones históricas, bibliográficas y tipográficas*, por W. E. Retana (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1911). For a discussion of the value of this work, see below.

paper, though with certain reservations.⁶³ For it is a lavish panegyric of "this illustrious Filipinist", as he calls Retana in the title of the book. Retana and de los Santos were friends and collaborators, a fact which gives much weight to the book as far as factual matter is concerned, but which urges to some caution in its use. Shortly after the appearance of this work, another pamphlet appeared, anonymously, entitled *Filipinerias: a propósito de un folleto*.⁶⁴ It is an indignant reply to the work of de los Santos, calling to mind the campaign of denigration of the Filipinos carried on by Retana in his *Folleto filipino*, *La Política de España en Filipinas*, and elsewhere, and attributing his change in attitude to his ability to see where the financial advantages lay after the fall of the Spanish regime in the Philippines.

To get at the truth in this matter, as far as that is possible in so brief an investigation, we shall try to trace the evolution of Retana's viewpoint. As has been pointed out above, the period from 1890 to 1895, when *La Solidaridad* ceased publication, was one in which Retana carried on a two-fold program: to defend the Friars from the attacks against them, maintaining that they were essential for the maintenance of Spanish rule in the Philippines; and to counter-attack on the Filipino Propagandists, both personally and through a systematic depreciation of all things Filipino, in an effort to disprove the contention of the Propagandists that the Philippines was ready for greater autonomy. The first element is admitted by de los Santos, who claims that Retana eventually came to realize the wickedness of the Friars by the excesses they went to. The element of denigration of the Filipinos he barely mentions, and gives no indication of what it was really like. The author of *Filipinerias*, on the other hand, points out that Retana did not change his attitude toward the Friars long before the end of the Spanish regime, as de los Santos maintained, but continued to praise and defend them until the Spanish re-

⁶³ Wenceslao E. Retana. *Ensayo crítico acerca de este ilustre Filipinista* (Madrid: Fortanet, 1909).

⁶⁴ Iloilo: La Editorial, 1913. A similar position to Retana is taken by Artigas, in his *¿Quién es Retana?*, though the latter is a more complete and balanced treatment of Retana's work as a whole.

gime ended in 1898. What he did do was to attenuate his anti-Filipinism, gradually preparing a way for reconciliation with the Filipinos, since he saw the end of the Spanish regime in sight. An indication of this may be found in the book *Los frailes filipinos, por un español que ha residido en aquel país*⁶⁵, which is an anonymously published edition of his *Folletos filipinos: I. Frailes y clérigos* of 1890. In this revised edition he suppressed the sections offensive to the Filipinos, though not yet attacking the Friars as he would do in later works. Here, says the anonymous author of *Filipinarias*, Retana is trying to keep the good-will of the Friars, while preparing the way for reconciliation with the Filipinos he had been insulting.

Following 1898 there was at first a neutral period, in which Retana published nothing further on the Philippines, except of a bibliographical nature. During this period he made contacts with various Filipino historians and bibliographers, chiefly younger men, who had not been connected with the struggles preceding the Revolution, and who therefore had no bitter memories of him. Around 1904 he began publishing in the Manila newspaper *El Renacimiento* articles characterized by what de los Santos calls "ardent Filipinism", in which he is extravagant in praise of all things Filipino. At the same time, as has been said, his publications take on a strong anti-Friar bias, and some are mere excuses for ridicule or vilification of the Friars.⁶⁶

After the publication of his *Origenes de la imprenta filipina* in 1911, at least as far as the present writer has been able to discover, there are no further writings on the Philippines until the end of his term as Inspector-General of Police, in 1918. In the final period from 1919 until his death in 1924, his writings are all quite serene and objective, with no reference to controversial questions at all.

With the lack of conclusive data it is somewhat hazardous to try to interpret the behavior of Retana. Nonetheless, certain facts seem clear, which make possible an interpretation.

⁶⁵ Madrid: Minuesa de los Rios, 1898.

⁶⁶ The above two paragraphs follow the line of argument of the author of *Filipinarias* in their substance.

Retana's first period of defense of the Friars and attack on the Filipino Propagandists has been explained many times as the result of his being in the pay of the Friars. Besides the fact that no evidence has yet been presented to substantiate this assertion, there is no need to suppose it.⁶⁷ Retana, it would seem, even as many otherwise anti-clerical Spaniards, believed in the necessity of the permanence of the Friars in the Philippines, not out of regard for the Church, but for the maintaining of Spanish rule there. Since the Filipino Propagandists considered them an obstacle to greater freedom for the Philippines and attacked them, he took up their defense. But this was only part of his principal purpose — to prevent the growth of the movement for greater Philippine autonomy. It was this latter which led him to attempt to refute the Propagandists' contention that the Filipinos were ready for greater participation in the administration of their own affairs, by depreciating all things Filipino. The Friars, on the other hand, naturally welcomed a defender, and undoubtedly aided him with information for his bibliographical and historical interests.

The second period, when Retana dropped his anti-Filipinism, could conceivably be explained by a realization of the unfairness of many of his former attacks. Not so, however, his change of conduct toward the Friars. If it had been only for patriotic reasons that he had defended them in the past,

⁶⁷ There is a letter of Clemente José Zulueta dated April 26, 1904, to James Le Roy, speaking of Retana's change of attitude, in which he says:

"... Retana ya no es frailista. El se explica diciendo que combatió en favor de los frailes porque estos le *pagaban*, en forma de compra de sus libros y suscripción a su periódico. Reconoce que ha sido un gran error suyo tal procedimiento y que le ha perjudicado mucho en su carrera... (Robertson Collection, Duke University Library, X-F, Letters, 1902-1904).

If this is the only "pay" that Retana received from the Friars—the purchase of his writings, though it would be evidence of a certain dishonesty and hypocrisy on the part of Retana, it scarcely demonstrates any previous collusion on the part of the Friars. It seems neither surprising nor reprehensible that they should buy works which defended them, and which were often historical works of value as well.

there was indeed no longer a need to do so, since the fall of the Spanish regime. But the deliberate efforts to vilify and defame them point to a certain hypocrisy and dishonesty in either this period or previously when he had only praise for them. In this context his extravagant praise for all things Filipino during this period, paying no heed to exactly contradictory statements he had made in the past, seems to point to the accuracy of the accusation of *Filipinerias* that by all this he was seeking to win a reading public for his writings in the Philippines, and looking for support from anti-clerical circles there.⁶⁸

A further accusation is made by the author of *Filipinerias* that Retana had promoted a celebration to be held in Manila in honor of the third centenary of the printing press in the Philippines in 1910, in which a prize was to be offered for the best monograph on the origin of the printing press in the Philippines. This, says our anonymous author, was set up by Retana for himself, knowing that there was no one else to compete with him for the prize. As a matter of fact, Retana was awarded the prize of one thousand pesos, being the only one who had made an entry, despite the protests of James Robertson, one of the judges, that since there had been no competition, no award should be made.⁶⁹ These facts are all presented by Retana, together with transcripts of his original proposals in *El Renacimiento* for the holding of the contest, though with no reference, of course, to any accusation against

⁶⁸ This was the conviction of Le Roy, stated in numerous letters to de los Santos, to Pardo de Tavera, to José Albert, and in letters to the editor of *El Renacimiento* in Manila, published in several numbers of January 1907. Copies of these letters are in the Robertson Collection, X-F, Letters, 1902-1904 and 1904-1906. Artigas asserted the same, and just as vehemently, pp. 91-100.

⁶⁹ A copy of the protest of Robertson is to be found among his papers at Duke University Library, X-F, Articles and Notes, n.d., V. Robertson further points out that there was nothing in the monograph which had not been established in previous publications, either of Retana or of others, and that a previous work of Artigas, not entered in the contest, had stronger arguments on some points.

himself.⁷⁰ But to the impartial observer there does seem to be conduct here which is something less than honorable.⁷¹ Undoubtedly Retana felt that he was owed something by the Filipino people for his studies of Philippine history, as appears from the article he reproduced here, which goes on for almost two columns in a pitiful lamentation as to how little recognition W. E. Retana has been given in the Philippines, in spite of his having been the first to undertake the very long list of achievements which he presents. Whether this would be a justification of his conduct here, is hard to say.

One final fact should be presented, which, on the one hand, shows that he had been less than fair and objective in his writings, but which, on the other hand, shows his sincere regret and willingness to admit his faults. In the note to the entries on some of Retana's anti-Friar writings the bibliography of Streit and Dindinger has the following note:

It is to be observed that Retana had changed his earlier point of view and now attacked the Friars. At the end of his life he regretted this new position he had taken, in a conversation with Padre Lorenzo Pérez, O.F.M.⁷²

⁷⁰ *Orígenes de la imprenta filipina*, Apéndice.

⁷¹ Artigas, who had deliberately not entered in the contest his own book on the subject—*La primera imprenta en Filipinas* (Manila: Germania, 1910)—(see pp. v-vi of this book), published a strong criticism of the conduct of the contest in a pamphlet, *El Concurso del tercer centenario de la imprenta* (Manila, 1911). Its criticisms are along the lines of those of Robertson. See also his *¿Quien es Retana?*, especially p. 111.

⁷² Robert Streit, O.M.I. and Johannes Dindinger, O.M.I., *Biblioteca Missionum*. Neunter Band: *Missionsliteratur der Philippinen, 1800-1909* (Zentrale in Aachen: Verlag Franziskus Missionsverein, 1937), p. 478, note to nos. 1308-1309.

In the archives of the Franciscan Philippine Province in Pastrana, Guadalajara, Spain, there are a number of letters of Retana to Padre Lorenzo Pérez during this period, which clearly reflect his change of heart and express his return to his religion. Padre Antolín Abad, O.F.M. the present custodian of the Archives, has kindly communicated to me extracts from a number letters of the years 1920-1922 which show this.

It has already been observed that all Retana's writings during this last period are written with serenity and objectivity, without bias toward anyone. Moreover, some time in the year 1922 he made a written retraction of his anti-religious writings, which he left with the Jesuit colonial historian, Padre Constantino Bayle, to be published after his death. It reads as follows:

I declare myself a Catholic, a member of the apostolic, Roman Church. I lament that in some of my writings I have made manifestations which were more or less in contradiction with the principles of that religion, in which I was brought up, and in which I wish to live and die.⁷³

It is clear, then, that the writings of Retana must be used with discrimination and care. To treat such tracts as the *Folletos filipinos* or *La censura de la imprenta en Filipinas* as scholarly historical works would be as foolish as to reject Retana's biography of Rizal or his *Aparato* because of the bias of his other works. It is to be hoped that the facts presented in this paper may help to a proper evaluation of individual works.

RETANA AND PHILIPPINE HISTORIOGRAPHY

The writings of Retana which seem to be real and permanent contributions to Philippine historiography fall into three groups. The first is that of the works he edited, among which four would seem to deserve the title of being permanent value and significance. These are: the *Archivo*, for the wealth of rare or unavailable documents which it affords to the historian, even though containing a certain amount of ephemeral material; the *Estadismo* of Martínez de Zúñiga, the *Historia de Mindanao y Joló of Combés*, and the *Sucesos de las islas Filipinas* of Morga, all three of them standard sources for the period or place they treat, and enriched besides with the valuable introductions and annotations of Retana.

⁷³ *Cultura Social* (Manila, 1924), p. 222; cited by Jesus Maria Cavanna y Manso, C. M., *Rizal's Unfading Glory. A Documentary History of the Conversion of Dr. Jose Rizal* (Manila, 1952), p. 271.

The second group would be his bibliographical works. Though our knowledge of the history of Philippine printing has since been considerably advanced, Retana's writings on this subject contributed considerably to these advances, even if not perhaps as much as he claimed. Among bibliographies, even though the *Aparato* is by no means complete or definitive, up till now nothing has appeared to replace it. Other bibliographies may be more complete for a particular field, as that of Streit and Dindinger for mission history, but for breadth of coverage and wealth of information, Retana's *Aparato* has not yet been surpassed.

In original historical work, Retana's principal contribution of significance is his biography of Rizal. As has been remarked above, in spite of the flood of new works on Rizal which have appeared since Retana's, many of them of considerable value, it has remained a classic. It will surely continue to be a source from which others will draw, though its interpretation of Rizal and his work may be rejected on a number of points, as has already happened. But in spite of a certain anti-Friar bias, this is a solid and conscientious work of historical scholarship, more than any other of his historical writings, and those who disagree with Retana on a particular point or as a whole have the task of presenting evidence for their own views, and cannot reject him lightly.

The most significant fact in the evaluation of Retana as an historian would seem to lie in the nature of the works which have here been named as forming his lasting contribution. Editions of rare works, erudite annotations, extensive bibliography—all these point to a vast and deep knowledge of the facts of Philippine history, to a wealth of research into its sources, to a profound knowledge of its literature, but not to the historian who synthesizes the results of research into a picture of a period or place. Even the other work mentioned, the biography of Rizal, only goes to confirm what has been said. For its prime value is as a source and compendium of information on Rizal, and though efforts at synthesis and interpretation of character are by no means lacking, they do not form the primary worth of the book, nor are they well unified into a single consistent pic-

ture. While Retana's work of historial synthesis is not to be completely ignored or rejected, his real worth is elsewhere, and it is as an investigator, as a collector of the facts of history that he has the right to recognition in Philippine historiography. But within these limits, his merit as an historian is indeed considerable, and whatever opinion one may hold of the man, every impartial historian of the Philippines must recognize the debt owed by Philippine history to his diligence and research.