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Literary Survey-1954

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NOTES and COMMENT

Literary Survey-1954

Last year the present writer remarked upon the lack of composite publishers' lists to keep the Filipino reading public abreast of the book market.¹ With a view to meeting that need in part, we made a survey of the books copyrighted with the Philippine Government. The present article is an attempt to carry on the work thus begun. Again acknowledgment must be made to the officials of the copyright office for their unfailing courtesy and cooperation.

The total number of books copyrighted, originating in the Philippines was about 130. Of these about thirty-seven are textbooks. Ten of these were on the National Language. There were thirty-three books on law, most of which may be classified also as texts. There were however also some excellent commentaries in this field, as well as a few books of more general interest, which we shall mention below.

These two categories account for more than half of the total. There are, naturally, a certain number of books which escape the purpose of this study, like *Dynamik Ju-Jitsu* and *Atomic Love Letters*. Also there are books on dressmaking, Scouting for boys and girls, a *Police Officers' Manual and Handbook*, a *Manila in Your Pocket*, etc. etc., all excellent, no doubt, for their purpose but not useful to the scholarly public and therefore not included in this inventory. The elimination of these accounts for about forty more, leaving about thirty titles for mention and brief description.

¹ PHILIPPINE STUDIES, II (Mar. 1954), 50

It is interesting that this year there are only three books on education. One of these, Camilo Osias' *Life-centered Education*² was reviewed at some length by Father de la Costa in this quarterly. The second is *Educational Engineering*³ by Domingo Soriano. This book carries a sub-title, "Promoting Adaptability in the Schools of the Philippines." The foreword is by Cecilio Putong. Mr. Soriano is a Division Superintendent of Schools and holds his degrees from the University of the Philippines and Columbia. This book will be reviewed, we hope, in a future issue of this magazine. Mr. Soriano quotes Smith, Stanley and Shores: "When the principles and techniques of social change are applied to the problems of inducing, controlling and maintaining changes in an educational system, the process is referred to as 'educational engineering'."

The third book on education is Dr. Orata's *Educational Trends Abroad*,⁴ a collection of essays which appeared in a column bearing the same title in the *Manila Daily Bulletin* from 1949 to 1953. Dr. Orata professes only to describe those elements of foreign education which will contribute to the improvement of the Philippine educational system. Those interested in the problem of religious instruction in the public schools will find Dr. Orata's approach constructive, sympathetic and stimulating though unsound in some of its assumptions.

Domingo Abella's *Bikol Annals*⁵ is described as a collection of vignettes of Philippine history. Specifically, it is about the See of Nueva Caceres (Naga). Father Horacio de la Costa, S.J., who writes the introduction, praises it as a "thorough study of a circumscribed area," based on "primary sources in Rome and Spain." This is volume one, containing five parts, sixteen appendices and photographs, among which are documentary photostats. Obviously this is one of the worthwhile books of the year. The author hopes to prepare other volumes.

² *Life-centered Education*. By Camilo Osias. Manila. 1954. Pp. x-219. Cf. PHILIPPINE STUDIES, II (Dec. 1954), 395.

³ *Educational Engineering*. Promoting Adaptability in the Schools of the Philippines. By Domingo Soriano. Manila. 1954. Pp. xviii-147.

⁴ *Educational Trends Abroad*. By Pedro Orata. Manila. 1954. Pp. xiii-495.

⁵ *Bikol Annals*. (The See of Nueva Caceres). Vol. I. By Dr. Domingo Abella. Manila. 1954. Pp. xiv-384. Appendices, Photographs.

The recent conflict in Korea has given birth to two books. Juan F. Villasanta has written *Dateline: Korea*⁶ which he subtitles "Stories of the Philippine Battalion." Mr. Villasanta is former UN war correspondent and a staff member of *The Manila Evening News*. He gives copious maps and illustrations. The author saw three Filipino Battalions in action in Korea: the 10th, the 20th and the 19th. As a correspondent for the Philippine News Service he arrived in Korea only a week after the 10th BCT landed; he returned a second time to observe the 20th and the beginning of the operations of the 19th. *These Are Your Boys*⁷ is an attractive volume telling the story of the 14th BCT, "The Avengers". The editor is Capt. Ernesto Jimenez who was assisted by a staff of six assistants. It is admirably and generously illustrated.

The December issue of this magazine noted briefly and without enthusiasm a collection of very short biographies called *Men of Destiny*.⁸ The only other other biographical works are about Dr. José Rizal. The same issue mentioned two of these: *The Rizal Family*⁹ by Esteban A. de Ocampo, which traces the descendants of the national hero, and *Interesting Stories About Rizal*¹⁰ by Panlasigui and Alip. José G. Dioces has rendered into Visayan under the title *Si Dr. José Rizal y Mercado Namatay nga Katoliko*¹¹ the Spanish work of Rev. Martin Legarra, ORSA, *La Muerte Cristiana del Dr. José Rizal*. Juan Collas' *Rizal's Unknown Stories*¹² was commented on in our December issue.

⁶ *Dateline: Korea*. Stories of the Philippine Battalion. By Juan F. Villasanta. Bacolod City, 1954. Pp. 171. Maps, Photographs.

⁷ *These Are Your Boys*. The Avengers. Edited by Capt. Ernesto T. Jimenez. Tokyo. 1954. Pp. iii-319. Photographs. Cf. PHILIPPINE STUDIES II (Dec. 1954), 400.

⁸ *Men of Destiny*. Vol. II (Great Men Born in January). By Alejandro P. Capitulo, Sr. Manila. 1954. Pp. iv-50. Cf. PHILIPPINE STUDIES II (Dec. 1954) 399.

⁹ *The Rizal Family*. By Esteban A. De Ocampo. Preface by Jaime de Veyra. Manila. 1954. Pp. viii-36. Cf. PHILIPPINE STUDIES. *Ibid*.

¹⁰ *Interesting Stories About Rizal*. By Isidoro Panlasigui and Eufronio M. Alip. Manila. 1954. Pp. x-175. Cf. PHILIPPINE STUDIES. *Ibid*.

¹¹ *Si Dr. Jose Rizal y Mercado Namatay nga Katoliko*. Sinulat ni Tal. Pari Martin Legarra, ORSA. Hinubad sa Binisaya ni Jose G. Dioces. Cebu. 1953. Pp. 92.

¹² *Rizal's Unknown Stories*. Edited by Juan Collas. Manila. 1953. Pp. 107. Cf. PHILIPPINE STUDIES. II (Dec. 1954) 398.

A review is under preparation of *Sociology in the Philippine Setting*¹³ by Hunt, Coller, Espiritu, de Young and Corpus. *Love Courtship and Marriage*¹⁴ is a series of essays by a variety of authors. In general its approach to the important subjects it professes to treat is disappointing. However more extensive comment will be reserved for a review to be presented later in the pages of this magazine. *Freshman Psychology*¹⁵ by Mrs. Librada B. Amparo and Mrs. Remedios Tuason is described in a sub-title as "A Course for Beginners in General Psychology." Both authors are on the staff of Far Eastern University. This book aims to present a comprehensive inventory of modern psychology with the result that it offers conflicting views as possessing equal validity and leaves its readers with no consistent ideas on human life and thought.

*Friend of the Brave*¹⁶ by Tage H. H. Ellinger is a popular presentation of Professor Ellinger's observations among "cultural minority groups of the Philippines," specially the Bontocs, Ifugaos, Kalingas, Palawanos, Abenlens, Negritos, Tao-sugs. The contents of the volume appeared previously as magazine articles. There are well-taken photographs, selected apparently for an appeal not purely scientific, and an introduction by Dr. José P. Laurel.

As mentioned above there were about 33 books on law. Two that are of more than technical interest are *Acquitting the Innocent*¹⁷ by Pedro C. Mendiola and *The Minimum Wage Law*¹⁸ by Emiliano Morabe. *Acquitting the Innocent* contains fifty-four cases of conviction by lower courts whose decision upon appeal was reversed by the Supreme Court. *The Minimum Wage Law* is sub-titled "A Study of Its Significance and Implications." Mr. Morabe is Chief of the Wage Administration Service.

¹³ *Sociology in the Philippine Setting*. By C.L.Hunt, R.W.Coller, S.C.Espiritu, John E. de Young, and Severino F. Corpuz, Manila. 1954. Pp. xii-482.

¹⁴ *Love, Courtship and Marriage*. Compiled and edited by Juan M. Ruiz and Josefina D. Constantino. Manila. 1954. Pp. x-172.

¹⁵ *Freshman Psychology*. A course for Beginners in General Psychology. By Mrs. Librado B. Amparo and Mrs. Remedios Tuason. Manila. 1953. Pp. 214.

¹⁶ *Friend of the Brave*. By Tage H. H. Ellinger. Introduction by Jose P. Laurel. Manila. 1954. Pp. 160.

¹⁷ *Acquitting the Innocent*. By Pedro C. Mendiola. Manila. 1954. Pp. 270.

¹⁸ *The Minimum Wage Law*. A Study of its Significance and Implications. By Emiliano Morabe. Manila. 1954. Pp. xxvii-499.

Secretary Salvador Araneta published a collection of his addresses under the title *Economic Re-examination of the Philippines*.¹⁹ This book was reviewed in our September 1954 issue and again discussed in our December issue.

*Chemistry in the Philippines*²⁰ contains "the history and development of chemistry as a subject of study, and as a force in the economic and cultural life of the people." The editors say further: "This book is a modest attempt to present in one comprehensive volume the impact of chemistry upon nearly all the fields of human endeavor in the Philippines during the past fifty years." There are twenty-nine chapters by various authors. Each chapter deals with a specific phase of the influence of chemistry. For example, there are three chapters on various aspects of the sugar industry, one on ceramics, one on the glass industry. The Board of Editors are Amando Clemente (Chairman), Patrocinio Valenzuela, Ramon R. Angeles, Gil O. Opiana, Amando B. Isip, Joaquin Marañon, Benjamin R. Salonga. This book impresses the present writer as the best of the year's crop.

N. V. M. Gonzalez has produced a volume of short stories, *Children of the Ash-covered Loam and Other Stories*.²¹ Mr. Gonzalez is rated by Francisco Arcellana, who writes the introduction, as "one of the most skillful writers in the country today." The volume contains seven stories. Mr. Gonzalez has also just completed a novel, *A Season of Grace*, which was serialized in *Woman's Magazine*, Aug. 6 to Nov. 12, 1954. It has not yet, as far as this writer is aware, appeared in book form.

Francisco G. Tonogbanua has published his second book of verse, *Green Leaves*.²² *Collected Poems*²³ by Nelly Ledesma contains 34 poems "in the modern idiom." Miss Ledesma is a graduate of the Assumption Convent College, Manila, and some of the verses in this book have previously been printed in student publications. This is her first volume of verse; another may be forthcoming. Severino Montano has gathered three of his plays in one volume

¹⁹ *Economic Re-examination of the Philippines*. A Collection of Speeches and Studies on the Subject 1947-1953. By Salvador Araneta. Postscript by Eduardo Romualdez. Malabon. 1953. Pp. 369. Cf. PHILIPPINE STUDIES. II (Sept., Dec. 1954) 299, 376.

²⁰ *Chemistry in the Philippines*. Edited by a Board of Editors: Amando Clemente, Chairman. Manila. 1954. Pp. xiv-666.

²¹ *Children of the Ash-covered Loam and Other Stories*. By N.V.M. Gonzalez. Introduction by Francisco Arcellana. Manila. 1954.

²² *Green Leaves*. Another Book of Verses. Francisco G. Tonogbanua. Manila. 1954. Pp. 48.

²³ *Collected Poems*. By Nelly Ledesma. New York. 1954. Pp. 38.

under the title *3 One Act Plays*.²⁴ The first is a tragedy, "Sabina," the second a satirical comedy about a Filipino family in the United States, "The Ladies and the Senator"; the third is a historical drama about Rizal, "Parting at Calamba." *Literature and Biographies*²⁵ contains a number of Pedro V. Bolneo's uninspired literary efforts, and Fernando Castro's novel *Let there be Light*²⁶ was allowed to speak for itself in our December issue.

In agriculture Professor Villegas has published two books in his field of animal husbandry: *Fundamentals of Animal Husbandry*²⁷ and *Rabbit Culture*.²⁸ Colin M. Hoskins, aided by experts from the College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines, at Los Baños, from the Araneta Agricultural Institute and the Central Luzon Agricultural College published *Samaka Guide to Supplementary Subsistence Farming*,²⁹ with San Miguel Brewery as Sponsor. Its purpose is to show farmers how to grow more food from their home garden.

The year 1954 in the Philippines contributed one lone volume to Catholic Literature: *Mary's Queenship*³⁰ by Manuel A. Gracia, C.M. This is a study based on De Montfort's well-known *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*.

Mauro Baradi's *Freemasonry in the Philippines Today*³¹ was noted in our December issue. A Tagalog work on the same society has been published under the title: *Talinghaga at Suliraning Panglipunan ng Masoneria* (Symbols and Secrets of Masonry).³² The authors are Tomas Dar Juan and José B. Feliciano.

²⁴ *3 One Act Plays*. By Severino Montano. Manila. 1953. Pp. xii-132.

²⁵ *Literature and Biographies*. By Pedro V. Bolneo. Manila. 1954 Pp. 77.

²⁶ *Let There be Light*. A Novel. By Fernando Castro. Foreword by Jose P. Laurel. Manila. 1954. Cf. PHILIPPINE STUDIES. II (Dec. 1954) 400.

²⁷ *Fundamentals of Animal Husbandry*. By Valente Estrada Villegas. Malabon, Rizal. 1954. Pp. xiii-232.

²⁸ *Rabbit Culture*. By Valente Estrada Villegas. Malabon, Rizal. 1954. Pp. 20.

²⁹ *Samaka Guide to Supplementary Subsistence Farming*. By Colin M. Hoskins. Sponsored by San Miguel Brewery. Manila. 1954. Pp. 53.

³⁰ *Mary's Queenship*. By Manuel A. Gracia, C.M. Manila. 1954. Pp. x-91.

³¹ *Freemasonry in the Philippines Today*. By Mauro Baradi. Manila. 1954. Pp. xxxii-29. Cf. PHILIPPINE STUDIES II (Dec. 1954) 398.

³² *Talinghaga at Suliraning Panglipunan ng Masoneria*. By Tomas Dar Juan and Jose B. Feliciano. Manila 1953. Pp. 128.

The list of books for the year 1954 is not impressive. The number considered by us worthy of special comment is slightly less than last year. Unquestionably the greatest factor in the slow growth of a national literature is economic. And this in turn is attributable largely to the lack of a reading public. It is doubtful whether modern education in the Philippines is producing an appetite for reading among the young.

The Right Hon. Vincent Massey, Governor General of Canada, in a recent address, observed that there was a world-wide decline in the reading of books, and placed the blame on the popularity of TV, radio and movies. Quoting — and lamenting — a recent boast: "Radio and TV have books on the ropes," he said: "They [books] are being replaced by radio in its various forms, by television, and of course by the cinema. The last two represent increasingly the pictorial tastes of the masses who are turning more and more to wordless cartoons or to pictures in which captions are couched in the most primitive and rudimentary language... If radio and television have books 'on the ropes,' the values of civilization are in the same position."

Governor-General Massey omitted from his indictment one important culprit: the comics. These — radio, movies, television, the comics — are four obstacles to the growth of a reading habit and therefore ultimately to the production of books. There is a considerable and laudable effort being made to spread the use of libraries in the Philippines. But the question that remains to be answered is, if the people have books available, will they read them?

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