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## Philippine Literature in Spanish

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# Book Reviews

## PHILIPPINE LITERATURE IN SPANISH

HISTORIA ANALITICA DE LA LITERATURA FILIPINO HISPANA (desde 1566 hasta mediados de 1964). Por Estanislao B. Alinea. Ciudad de Quezon, 1964. xvi, 176 [and 2 pp of errata] pp.

Mr. Alinea, Professor of Spanish at the Ateneo de Manila, is a teacher, lawyer, and a former newspaperman: his book bears the characteristics of all three professions. It is clear, precise, straightforward, and on occasion it shows an eye for the interesting detail.

Like a good teacher he asks questions and provides answers. Why is the Revolutionary Period given that name? What is to be thought of Rizal's *Noli me tangere*? What about Professor Antonio Abad's novel, *La vida secreta de Daniel España*? To the last-mentioned question, he replies with a three-page analysis.

Like a good lawyer Mr. Alinea presents the issues on both sides, and he is not afraid to take sides. Like a newspaperman, he provides his readers with the essential details of an incident. For instance, when Zaragoza Cano's epic poem, *La epopeya de la Raza*, was awarded second prize in a national literary contest, while the first prize was given to Balmori's collection of lyrics called *Mi casa de nipa*, was Zaragoza Cano justified in tearing up his diploma in public? The incident of course created a furor, and some condemned the poet for "ungentlemanly conduct," while others defended him for protesting the "violation of the rules" by the judges. What was to be thought of the incident? Mr. Alinea leaves us in no doubt as to his verdict. (He says, quite rightly, that the judges should have awarded the first prize to Zaragoza Cano's epic, according to the rules of the contest; and they should have created another prize for Balmori's lyrics because they definitely deserved a prize.)

Many of the items mentioned by Mr. Alinea are not new to the student of Philippine letters or of Philippine history. In many cases

the treatment is sketchy. The book as a whole could be better organized, and it definitely should be better printed. But this is a book that should be read by all interested in Philippine literature. And the passages reproduced by Mr. Alinea from the poetic jousts between Jesus Balmori and Cecilio Apostol make us wish that Mr. Alinea will follow this work with a more complete anthology of Philippine literature in Spanish. Such a book is much needed, and Mr. Alinea is the person to compile it.

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

## ATHEISM IN THE RENAISSANCE

**DOUBT'S BOUNDLESS SEA. SKEPTICISM AND FAITH IN THE RENAISSANCE.** By Don Cameron Allen. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1964. xi, 272 pp.

This book opens with an essay on the meanings attached by the Renaissance to the terms 'atheism' and 'atheist', and it closes with an account of the 'redemption' and death of an English atheist of the seventeenth century. In between, in well-documented pages, the men themselves of the Renaissance are allowed to come forward and express philosophical opinions symptomatic of the skepticism and the insecure, and consequently violently defensive, faith of their times. As a chronicler whose principal aim is to "display the profiles of some of these atheists . . . , [to] record the beliefs of unbelievers", and to describe the "trepidation of the orthodox", Professor Allen is successful. But, in spite of obvious efforts to avoid probing into intellectual history for the causes of late-Renaissance rationalism and fideism, some remarks occasionally made by Dr. Allen about the phenomenon he is discussing reveal certain assumptions that betray his unawareness of the impact thirteenth century Aristotelianism (or one aspect of it: Averroism) had on the content and the methods of Western thought, an unawareness that, in this reviewer's opinion, is fatal to any understanding of the Renaissance character.

More often than not, Professor Allen writes, the word 'atheist' was during the Renaissance a 'smear word'. It was a "majestic term of reproach and condemnation". To most protestants, for example, the pope was the arch-atheist, just as in the eyes of Elizabethan recusant Catholics, "Canterbury was the head of the Anglican atheists." Atheism, of which two faces were known to the Renaissance—the one practical and "not especially dangerous to the Christian Faith," the other speculative and "very much to be feared"—was "seldom separated from heresy or even theological disagreement. In brief, what characterized the late-Renaissance use of the words was "intolerant confu-