Philippine Bibliographical Survey: 1956

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Philippine Bibliographical Survey: 1956

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

I

THE most important book published in the Philippines in 1956 is not registered in the copyright office nor is it likely to get into the hands of the ordinary reader. It is in Latin and it is almost entirely a series of rules and regulations. Yet for that reason it will affect to a lesser or greater extent the lives of more than eighty per cent of the total population of the Philippines. The book, entitled The Acts and Decrees of the First Plenary Council of the Philippines, is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

Curiously enough the best seller of the year was not a novel or an essay but a harmony of the four Gospels in Tagalog edited by Father Juan Ledesma S.J. and published through the generous contributions of a host of subscribers. 15,000 copies were printed.


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and by January 1957 over 14,000 had already been sold. Plans for reprinting are under study. This book has a history and we might be forgiven the digression of telling it.

One of the earliest (and at the time one of the few) to be admitted to the doctorate in Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome was the Filipino Jesuit, Father Juan Trinidad S.J. He was a master of many languages (European and Semitic) but in addition to the biblical languages which he had to know as a Scripture scholar he was also a master of Tagalog (he was a native of Baliwag, Bulacan) and it was his ambition to render the whole of Scripture into vibrant Tagalog. He worked on his translation even amid the most inconceivable distractions—during air raids, or alone in the same house with enemy troops in occupied Manila. He played a hero's role during the bombing and street fighting in Ermita when, as acting rector of the Ateneo de Manila, he personally took care of the wounded and the dying, even running into the streets to fetch them amid the falling shells. He died shortly after the liberation of the Philippines, from typhoid fever caught during a missionary trip to a neighboring barrio. His translation was not ready for the press, but his colleague, Father Juan Ledesma, took up the work, rechecked the translation and despite what seemed insurmountable obstacles, by sheer persistence managed to have the New Testament part published under the title Ang Bagong Tipan. That work has been reviewed in our pages (I:88-90, June 1953). It was upon that translation that the present harmonization of the Gospels is based. It has been published with funds, every cent of which was personally begged by the indefatigable editor. When the bibliographical history of the Philippines is written, the adventures (and the importunities) of Father Ledesma and the patient scholarship of Father Trinidad should form a separate chapter.

II

Upwards of 290 works (published or unpublished) were registered in the copyright office during the year 1956. Many of these do not come under the term "book" at all. Some are pamphlets and others not even that. The items displayed on the shelves of the copyright office include such material as a few sheets of cheap paper clipped together inside a filing folder.
Of the copyrighted material about fifty-three titles are intended for a special class of people and would be of no interest to the ordinary reader. These include English dictionaries (of American origin), almanacs, a song book, quiz books for certain types of civil service examinations and manuals on such activities as salesmanship or poultry raising. Sample titles: *Simplified Farm Accounts; A Coincidental Radio Survey; Car Owners' and Drivers' Handbook*. There is a souvenir book for tourists (*Olongapo in Subic Bay: a Souvenir Handbook*). There are language primers, e.g. *Basic Tagalog for Foreigners and Non-Tagalogs*.

Of the remaining titles, about thirty would not bear inspection. Some are mushy novels on newsprint, or synopses of movie scripts, or a typewritten collection of somebody's uninspired verses, or a confession (presumably hair-raising) of a spiritist (*Nakigsulti ako sa mga espiritu*). There is also a manual for the interpretation of dreams based, according to the title, on ancient beliefs (*Karaang talamdan sa mga dango*). For the cultural anthropologists interested in local superstitions, we subjoin the bibliographical data.3

III

To the philologist and others interested in Filipino dialects three works will be worthy of note. The first is an Ilocano grammar written by the Belgian priest and scholar, Father Morice Vanoverbergh C.I.C.M.4 That work is reviewed elsewhere in this issue by the Ilocano Jesuit from Laoag, Father Isaias Edralin S.J., himself a linguist of no mean attainments, being at home in three European languages and four Philippine dialects.

Equally noteworthy is the dictionary of the Visayan dialect (Cebuano) compiled by the Visayan Jesuit, Father Rodolfo Cabonce S.J.5 This work is unpublished but is now in use among the bishops and priests in Mindanao. It contains a 17-page grammatical introduction and 215 pages of the dictionary proper in double columns.

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There is also a Tagalog dictionary by Sofronio Calderón with a foreword by Teodoro Agoncillo who informs us that the compiler has been connected with the Protestant missions and was the translator of the Protestant edition of the New Testament (1901) and of Malachi (1904).

IV

In history some titles are noteworthy. One is a detailed history of the presidential election of 1953 which swept Ramón Magsaysay into office and which has recently been a subject of rather noisy debate in the papers. The book is by Dr. Jorge Coquía, a contributor to PHILIPPINE STUDIES. A review as well as a condensation of this book will be published in a forthcoming issue of this Quarterly.

The town of Paete in Laguna is celebrated in an informal 242-page history with appendices and illustrations by Eugenio Quesada. Paete is a town of respectable antiquity, having been founded as a Catholic mission in 1580. Quesada's treatment is somewhat anecdotal, often personal.

The town of Mauban is likewise celebrated in a brief historical sketch. The town, as reported in a historical document written by Father Felix de Huerta, existed since 1583. Its first known parish priest was Father Fernando Moraga (1600). A series of appendices supply information on people, places, customs and topography.

Dr. Encarnación Alzona, who holds a Ph.D. from Columbia University and a licentiate in arts from Radcliffe (and who is the author of a textbook on educational history in the Philippines and of a work entitled The Filipino Woman) has recently published a 66-page survey of the Spanish legacy in the Philippines.

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The items that she singles out for brief comment are: 1. Religión; 2. la enseñanza; 3. la educación de la mujer filipina; 4. el Observatorio Meteorológico de Manila; 5. gobierno; 6. legislación colonial; 7. economía y comercio; 8. vías de comunicación; 9. urbanización de Manila; 10. el periodismo; 11. la imprenta; 12. la lengua castellana; 13. las bellas artes; 14. la música y el baile; 15. la sangre española; 16. la separación. This survey, unfortunately all-too-brief, carries an introduction by Dr. José Ma. Delgado who last March was one of three who were honored with the Jubilee Medal on the fiftieth anniversary of their graduation from the Ateneo de Manila (A.B. 1906).

There is an 83-page exposé by Dr. José Ma. Hernandez and Simeón G. del Rosario subtitled The Story Behind Agoncillo's Story of Andres Bonifacio. It calls attention to the Marxist line running through Agoncillo's book and juxtaposes passages from Agoncillo with parallel passages from Marx, Lava, Taruc, Balgos and Evangelista. The authors call attention to the original or printer's copy of the Agoncillo book which was later allegedly edited to soften the diction and make it sound less revolutionary. A chapter cites several euphemisms of this kind. The authors conclude that though Agoncillo is a Marxist writer, he may not necessarily be a Communist.

Agoncillo's book itself does not seem to have been entered in the copyright office this year. Indeed it is to be deplored that many publications are not copyrighted at all or at least not at the time of publication, with the result that a bibliographical survey such as this would be likely to omit mention of the books unless such books had received some notoriety elsewhere as was the case of the Agoncillo book. That book of course is well known to readers of PHILIPPINE STUDIES from the thorough critique that it received from Professor Nicolás Zafra and his colleagues of the department of history of the University of the Philippines.

No less than seven books on Rizal were published last year, doubtless a result of the "Noli-Fili controversy" that rocked the


country for an entire month last summer. There are two translations into English of the *Noli me tangere*: one by Osias,\(^\text{13}\) the other by Bocobo.\(^\text{14}\) There is a 29-page biographical sketch by Esteban de Ocampo with bibliography and illustrations.\(^\text{15}\) A group of essays by various authors has been compiled by Sixto Orosa, with an introduction by Conrado Sanchez.\(^\text{16}\) There are two booklets intended for elementary school children. One is a "Rizal Catechism" by Esteban de Ocampo,\(^\text{17}\) the other is a collection of *Playlets on Rizal and Selected Poems* by Consuelo Banag and Herminia Ancheta.\(^\text{18}\) Finally eleven of Rizal's Spanish poems with notes in English are published by Sabino Aguila.\(^\text{19}\)

VI

On the subject of freemasonry two books have been published by prominent Masons. One is by Mauro Baradi.\(^\text{20}\) The other is a translation of Kalaw's essay on Philippine Masonry together with an eulogy on Kalaw by Conrado Benitez.\(^\text{21}\) This latter work is published in connection with the centennial celebration of Freemasonry in the Philippines. The work is illustrated and supplied with appendices. The professional historian will probably raise eyebrows at certain things in this book, for instance


the caption under Rizal's picture: "...and being a Freemason, he was shot on the Luneta in Manila." The thoughtful reader also might well ponder the implications for society of such passages as the following:

If the applicant should be moved to join Masonry out of curiosity, he will be disappointed, for the mysteries of Masonry and its secrets are only conferred after many tests of fidelity to those applicants who deserve them and who do not demand them. (p. 46)

VII

It is unfortunate that education, which should be one of the most inspiring fields to write upon, should also be one of the most tedious. Triteness and lack of originality would seem to be the characteristics of educationist literature. There was one notable exception in 1956: a 51-page pamphlet entitled Educational Policies by Gregorio Hernandez Jr., Secretary of Education. The booklet has an unusual publishing history. It was published by one college in honor of the newly-appointed president of another college. Dr. Salvador Araneta's engaging introduction explains the genesis of the booklet and also its importance:

When we received news of the appointment of our younger brother Francisco as rector of the Ateneo de Cagayan, our whole family was overwhelmed with joy and pride. However, to my wife Victoria and to me, the appointment had greater meaning. She as head of the Feati Institute of Technology and I of the Araneta Institute of Agriculture felt particularly happy to have a third college president in the family.

To honor him on the occasion of his appointment Victoria and I wanted something practical and preferably something of educational value. From our brother Francisco himself came the answer. He requested the printing of this selection of speeches of Secretary Hernandez, which we have the distinct honor of presenting to the educators of the Philippines.

From Secretary Hernandez's lips has come a most expert analysis of Christian Philosophy and modern thought in education. In his speeches he opens for us vistas in Theology, Philosophy, Sociology and Law that give perspective and depth to every position he has taken on educational questions . . . .

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The choice and arrangement of speeches was done by Father Araneta himself according to a clear-cut plan: I. The agencies of education; II. The culture that we transmit. This is a brochure worth study. We might add that it also is not entered in the copyright office.

Another work in education that should be worth consulting is that on educational legislation by Miss Concepción Aguila of Centro Escolar University. Miss Aguila holds a doctorate from Georgetown University. We have not had a chance to examine this book.

Dr. Urban Fleege, chief of the technical assistance mission of the UNESCO, has written two brochures both of which are published in mimeographed form by the Philippine-Unesco National Community School Training Center at Bayambang, Pangasinan. The first of these works (Problems in Education, 76 pp.) carries a foreword by Benigno Aldana then assistant director (now director) of the Bureau of Public Schools. The second (The Community School: Potentialities and Needs, 104 pp.) carries a foreword by Gregorio Hernandez, Secretary of Education.

Other works on education are of the usual variety. Natividad Malolos in a 38-page pamphlet annotates the teachers' code of ethics. Cresencio Peralta issues "challenges to Filipino education" and complains that it is not Filipino enough. Felisa C. Santiago proposes to dramatize the teaching of mathematics in secondary schools. An unpublished manuscript compiles the laws and regulations governing administrative procedure in the Bureau of Public Schools. Leopoldo Yabes of the University of the Philippines laments the lack of academic leadership at that University, makes some observations on the humanities, on freedom, on "Eng-

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lish as Filipinos should speak it,” and on state patronage of letters.  

VIII

In the religious-ethical field one title is noteworthy for its matter and its author: *Marriage is Forever* by Father John P. Delaney S.J.  

This is a compilation of his last articles on the popular series “Love, Courtship and Marriage” published in the *Weekly Women’s Magazine*. It should be noted that this and similar brochures of Father Delaney were not published or edited by him but by others who had heard the lectures or who had acquired copyright for them after their appearance as articles in periodicals. The popularity of these lectures can hardly be imagined but we need no imagination to gauge the popularity of the man himself. When he died (12 January 1956) some 20,000 journeyed 24 kilometers to see him buried in the tiny cemetery of the Jesuit novitiate at Novaliches. And this year on the first anniversary of his death some 500 persons went in ten buses and an uncounted number of cars to visit his grave.

One other title catches the eye in the religious field. It is a series of lessons in question and answer form taken from Scripture and church history. The work is in Pampango. The work appears to have been first printed in 1908 as it bears a preface in Pampango dated 16 May 1908 and a letter in Spanish from Ignacio Ampuero, priest of the archdiocese of Manila, dated 18 May 1908.

IX

In the civic field six titles are noteworthy. Juan F. Rivera examines the legislative process of local governments. The author has already written a book on the *Law of Public Adminis-

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tration and two others are forthcoming: Running and Supervising the Local Governments of the Philippines and The Law of Local Governments.

The Institute of Public Administration of the University of the Philippines has published a study on The Philippine Presidency by John H. Romani and a survey of Governmental Services in the Philippines by H. B. Jacobini and associates. There is also a study of Public Administration in the Philippines by Edwin O. Stene and his associates. We are told that there are fifteen titles in this series, of which at least eight have been printed.

Delfin Batacan's Looking at Ourselves has already been reviewed in this Quarterly (December 1956). Reynaldo Mendoza and Luciano Gunabe have collaborated on Leadership for Filipinos intended for the military. A chapter on "Psychology and the Soldier" uses such terms as "the ego," "super-ego," "the ethical layer," "the censor."

In the literary field the most noteworthy production of the year was, in our opinion, the Tagalog translation of the libretto of the opera Carmen adapted to Bizet's music. The extraordinary success of its production on the stage has already been described by Carmita Legarda Carrion in the September 1956 issue of this Quarterly. A similar translation is that of The Merry Widow, adapted to the music of Lehár, by Nina Estrada Puyat.

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One noteworthy novel was published, *A Season of Grace* by N. V. M. Gonzalez which we hope to review in a future issue.\(^{39}\)

Of the poems published, the most sophisticated appear to be those by Bienvenido Santos (reviewed in our September issue)\(^{40}\) and those by Ricaredo Demetillo entitled *No Certain Weather*.\(^{41}\) Mr. Demetillo has kindly sent us a copy of this volume, a courtesy which we appreciate.

Other volumes of verse, apparently of no very great merit, are also on record. *Bamboo Leaf* by Isidro Panlasigui is published by the University of the Philippines.\(^{42}\) *Santang Buds* by Alfonso Santos, also published by the University of the Philippines, offers 20 poems of a sentimental character.\(^{43}\) J. C. Bacala offers 70 romantic poems under the title *Quicksands and Other Rhymes*.\(^{44}\) Antonio M. Molina’s introduction is ominous: “Far from being impeccable productions of the choicest pen, the poems here collected may suffer, here and there, from grammatical imprecisions or even some wantingness in poetical finish.” (Italics added.) Leandro Balagot writes on the *Romance of the Poor Man’s Life* which he says is in a diction “easily understandable to the common people.”\(^{45}\) In a democratic spirit, the author has supplied at the bottom of each page the meanings of the more difficult words in the poems.

Cenon Rivera has collected his poems, stories and other papers in Tagalog and English in a mimeographed volume called *Pintig ng buhay at iba pang katha*.\(^{46}\) Mr. Rivera is on the faculty of the University of Santo Tomás.

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In the field of biography Whitey Smith's *I Didn't Make a Million* should perhaps prove interesting. He was an immigrant boy from Denmark who grew up in California, became a band-leader in Hongkong and Shanghai, came to the Philippines when Japan invaded China, was interned in Santo Tomás and is "still in business in Manila." This work is being printed serially in one of the local papers.

Finally in the field of drama, the anthology of plays edited by Jean Edades and Carolyn Fosdick might perhaps be worth looking into. Philippine drama is discussed at length. There are sectional introductions and suggested readings and a key to pronunciation is appended. The selections are grouped into: classical drama, drama of the Orient, England, Europe, the United States, the Philippines.

About a hundred titles are textbooks, mostly of American origin. Among those of local origin a few might be noted. There is a grammar and rhetoric in Tagalog entitled *Ang retorica: panimulang pag-aaral*. It has an English-Tagalog glossary at the back. There is also a *Balagtasan* on such questions as: *Pagibig—bulag o hindi? Kayamanan o karunungan? Tubig o lupa? Salapi o pagibig?* There are two volumes of *Spanish for Filipinos* of which Book I is a preparatory course for colleges in accordance with the regulations and recommendations of the Real Academia Española, while Book V is apparently a reader. There is a

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primer in religion translated from the German *Katholisches Gottlehrbuchlein* published by Herder, with a teachers' manual to go with it, also translated from the German.

XII

There are some thirty-eight books on law, many of which could also be included under the category of textbooks. Some might possibly be of interest to others than professional lawyers; for instance, a handbook on the rights and obligations of husband and wife written, as the preface tells us, “in simple English for those not fortunate enough to continue their high school and college studies” and based on the provisions of the Civil Code.

XIII

Of the unpublished manuscripts entered in the copyright office, we might mention a few. One deals with the lessons of the Huk campaign. One is a grammar of the Chabacano dialect of Cavite. Another is a nutrition survey of college students in an attempt to determine factors “related to the high prevalence of eye and dental defects.”

Those are the works that have been copyrighted or that we have been able to track down. But since so much printed material in the Philippines is never entered in the copyright office and never otherwise gains any notoriety, it is possible that some titles may have escaped us.

One final remark. Among the volumes copyrighted is a mimeographed movie script that attempts to trace the history of the

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Philippines from Lapulapu to Magsaysay. The subtitle however reminds us of Polonius: a "Historical, Sensational, Colorful and Dramatic Screen Play." The author tells us that it took him fifteen years to write it. We could wish that many of the titles mentioned above had been allowed to cool off for fifteen years.

As we go to press a book of drawings by Arturo R. Luz very expensively printed has just come off the press and sells at an unusually low price. It is published by Fernando Zóbel de Ayala and bears his monogram. But detailed notice of the book belongs in our survey for next year if God should grant us the favor to live that long.

60 I wish to acknowledge indebtedness to my secretary, Mr. Manuel Gosiengfiao A.B., who made several visits to the copyright office for me and upon whose notes I have chiefly relied for the comments made above on copyrighted material.