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Jose Rizal, by De Witt

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The differences among these writers can be so stark that the book runs the risk of becoming another Tower of Babel—and proof that women, indeed, are idle tattlers. But that should not be the case. Rather, the point seems to be that feminism, to be truly liberating, must be specific—to personal history, class position, artistic conventions, and national history. If we are to be feminist writers and critics in the Philippines—and this seems to be the conclusion towards which the interviews taken together are heading—we must cease to parrot platitudes about patriarchy, no matter how correct these may sound. For to do so would be to ignore the specificities of oppression (and consequently the spaces of resistance)—and wouldn't that be triumph of patriarchy?

If only for issuing that challenge, the book deserves reading (and its many typos can be easily overlooked). But as should be obvious by now, *Sarilaysay* has much to recommend itself—including cover art by the late Maningning Miilat—and should find a space in bibliographies of future, more comprehensive (re)readings of Philippine Literature.

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Jose Rizal: Philippine Nationalist as Political Scientist. By Howard A. De Witt. Second edition. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1998. 314 pages.

This is not a new scholarly biography of Rizal, as the author himself acknowledges. Nor does it, except in one chapter, consider Rizal as a political scientist, in spite of its title. In chapter 1 a series of political science concepts are defined, and Rizal is indicated in a few sentences to have written some ideas which could be so categorized. Of course, Rizal himself never categorized his political philosophy, which he no doubt had, under such categories, and therefore cannot be called a political scientist in any meaningful sense of the term.

As may be gathered from the books previously published by Dr. De Witt, his principal scholarly interest has been the history of California (though he also has seven books to his credit on rock music, on which he is said to be a "recognized authority," and is a regular contributor to various such periodicals). Among his California books were two directed toward Filipino farm labor and trade unionists in California, which led him to his hobby on Rizal. From the fact that he acknowledges the criticisms of his first edition by his students in History 125 and Political Science 102 at Ohlone College in Fremont, California, one may surmise that this book is primarily intended as a textbook for such courses, no doubt attended by some young Filipino-Americans in search of their roots in the motherland. This inference is confirmed by the fourteen "worksheets" on Philippine history and on Rizal's life which follow the text—typical quizzes for undergraduates.

The motivation of the book is worthy of praise; the execution less so. Both footnotes and bibliography contain hundreds of books and articles on Rizal and on Philippine matters generally. It is perhaps ungracious of me to say that though my five books and various articles on the nationalist movement are cited frequently and often with high praise, repeatedly the book says the opposite of what I said in the book of mine which is cited. The book is filled with historical errors, inconsistencies, and a mass of undigested materials. To cite one example which occurs repeatedly, all priests—those of the Spanish friar orders, the Spanish Jesuits, Fathers Burgos, Gomez, and Zamora, and Filipino priests in general—are called “friars,” (while Ambeth Ocampo is gifted with the title of “Father”). All this in spite of the fact that such authors as the highly (and rightly) praised biography of Guerrero, to say nothing of all of my own books, have carefully distinguished the category of friars from Jesuits and secular priests.

The book is completely without a visible order, as the author jumps from century to century and back, and repeats himself in numerous parts of the book. He says that this second edition corrects some of the factual and typographical errors of the first. A multitude more of each remains to be corrected. It would be pointless to try to show the fallacies and inconsistencies which abound, or to criticize the thesis of the book, for it has none that is perceptible to this reviewer. I cannot recommend this book to anyone, undergraduate or professional, as its one contribution is the listing of large numbers of books and articles, annotated or not. But clearly many of them do not deserve even a mention. It is unfortunate that so much work be expended on something which will serve no one.

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La Revolucion Filipina, 1896–1898. El Nacimiento de Una Idea. By Virgilio A. Reyes. Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones Ltda., 2000. 199 pages.

At least four things are needed to start a revolution: a complaint, a leader, the means, and the occasion. These four must converge at the same time, or there will be no revolution.

The cause of the Philippine revolution was the frustrated efforts at peaceful reform in the last decades of the nineteenth century in Spain. The occasion was the discovery of the Katipunan, Bonifacio's secret revolutionary society. The means were inadequate—bolos, daggers, and knives still being forged in the printing house where the Katipunan was discovered. Since evidence of their plot had been discovered, Bonifacio, founder of the society and first leader of the revolt, had no choice but to rise in arms.