Hispanofilipino Literature Exhibit

Fater, Charlotte

http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/163528

Downloaded from Deep Blue, University of Michigan’s institutional repository
Hispanofilipino Literature Exhibit

Charlotte Fater

Mentors: Fe Susan Go, Marlon Sales, and Barbara Alvarez
Project Overview

- Design an exhibit as part of the program Sites of Translation in the Multilingual Midwest
- Research the history of the Philippines and its literature
- Identify additional materials for use in exhibit
- Create wall panels and a layout for the display of physical materials
Exhibit Objectives and Personal Goals

- Educate visitors on history, literature, and translation in the Philippines
- Showcase the U-M library collections
- Expand my knowledge about the history and literature of the Philippines
- Learn practical skills related to exhibit design
Challenges and Solutions
### CHALLENGE

- Lack of access to the physical materials

### SOLUTION

- Digital scans, cardboard boxes, and index cards
#2

**CHALLENGE**

- Design accessibility and relative size

**SOLUTION**

- A contrast check and a reality check
Evolution of a Wall Panel

First Encounters

The first Spanish expedition reached the archipelago in 1521, but it was not until 1542 that the name Philippines (or Filipinas in its archaic Castilian spelling) was coined in honor of Philip II of Spain. It would take another two decades for Spain to establish its first settlements on the islands in 1565 upon the arrival of Miguel López de Legazpi.

Although an economically profitless venture for the Spanish Crown, the Philippines remained a colony of Spain because it was regarded as a springboard for the Christianization of continental East Asia, particularly China.

Translation figured prominently in the literary activities of this period. Although the official colonial policy was to teach the Spanish language, the Spanish priests who were directly involved in learning and documenting native literatures in order to facilitate the process of conversion.

First Encounters

The first Spanish expedition reached the archipelago in 1521, but it was not until 1542 that the name Philippines was coined in honor of Philip II of Spain. It would take another two decades for Spain to establish its first settlements on the islands in 1565 upon the arrival of Miguel López de Legazpi.

Although an economically profitless venture for the Spanish Crown, the Philippines remained a colony of Spain because it was regarded as a springboard for the Christianization of continental East Asia, particularly China.

Translation figured prominently in the literary activities of this period. Although the official colonial policy was to teach the Spanish language, the Spanish priests who were directly involved in learning and documenting native literatures in order to facilitate the process of conversion.
#3

**CHALLENGE**
- Working from home - too few coworkers and too many distractions

**SOLUTION**
- Roommates and picnic tables
The Final Product(s)
Many books and manuscripts produced during the early days of Spanish rule reflected this missionary role. One of the first two books ever printed in the Philippines in 1593 was the *Doctrina christianana*, a book of Catholic prayers in Spanish with an accompanying Tagalog translation written in both the Latin alphabet and the pre-Hispanic Filipino alphabet called baybayin.

Also worth mentioning is the *Boxer Codex*, a manuscript produced in the capital city of Manila around 1590. In addition to very vivid narrative descriptions of Asian cultures, it also contains a series of drawings depicting the peoples of the Philippines and its neighboring countries.
The two foundational novels of the Filipino nation were written originally in Spanish by the most illustrious of the ilustrados. They were the *Noli me tángere* (or *Noli*) and *El filibusterismo* (or *Fili*) of the intellectual and martyr José Rizal. The *Noli* was first printed in Berlin, Germany in 1887, while the *Fili*, its sequel, came out in Ghent, Belgium in 1891.

Since Spanish authorities banned the novels in the Philippines, the first Philippine edition got published only in 1899, a year after the fall of the Spanish Empire. It was around this time when the first translations of the novels were made. In addition to translation into various Philippine languages, a number of English-language translations of Rizal’s novels have been produced over the years.

It is worth noting that the University of Michigan played a pivotal role in the American imperialist project in the Philippines. One of Michigan's alumni, Dean C. Worcester, became the US Secretary of Interior of the Philippine Islands. He also acted as the consultant of the University of Michigan Mission, whose objective was to gather archaeological and anthropological data on the Philippines. Worcester's controversial research methods, which involved incursions into ancestral lands in search of precious metals, earned the ire of Filipino nationalists.

The Filipino newspaper *El Renacimiento* published its most famous editorial entitled “Aves de rapiña,” or Birds of Prey, in criticism of Worcester’s dubious fact-finding mission. It was Worcester who brought back to Michigan his collection of papers, photographs and other effects on the Philippines, which are now curated as the Worcester Philippine History Collection.
The fall of the Spanish Empire in 1898 paved the way for the US to claim the Philippines as its colony. Amidst the many changes in society, religion, and economy, the presence of American missionaries and educators, who brought with them a new educational system, helped shape the character of the Filipino people. The concept of national identity in the context of American colonialism and independence led to the formation of national awareness, with the Katipunan as a key organization, advocating for the independence of the Philippines and the restoration of national dignity, where the very notion of national identity is fraught not only in a host of languages, but also in the cultural and social fabric of the country.
Translation, Memory, and the Archive: The Literary Worlds of the Spanish Philippines

The Philippines were central to the Spanish Empire in the 16th and 17th centuries. Manila, the capital, was a major center of trade and culture, and the islands served as a vital link in the trans-Pacific trade network. This map of Manila in 1739 provides a glimpse into the city's historical and cultural significance.

The city of Manila was located on the island of Luzon, which was a hub for trade with Asia and Europe. The map illustrates the strategic importance of the city as a gateway to the rich cultural and economic exchanges of the time.

The map also highlights the economic activities that took place in Manila, such as the trade in goods like spices, silk, and gold. These activities were crucial to the development of the Spanish Empire in the Philippines, and they had a significant impact on the region's history.

Overall, this map of Manila in 1739 provides a snapshot of the city's role as a center of trade and culture in the Spanish Empire, and it serves as a reminder of the enduring legacy of the Philippines in the global history of trade and commerce.
Lessons Learned

- The history of the Philippines
- Perfectionism: a double-edged sword
- What is history, who writes it, and why that matters
The Future of the Project

Hopefully, it will be possible to safely visit the exhibit in its final form in the Clark Library on the second floor of Hatcher Graduate starting in January, 2021.
Questions?