

Philippine literature in the spanish colonial period essay sample

[Countries](#), [Philippines](#)



The Spanish colonizers wanted to undermine the native oral tradition by substituting for it the story of the Passion of Christ. However, the native tradition survived and even flourished in areas inaccessible to the Spaniards. Also, the Spaniards were late in instituting a public educational system, which contributed to the survival of the existing folk literature.

The church authorities adopted a policy of spreading the Church doctrines by communicating to the natives in their own language. *Doctrina Christiana* (1593), the first book to be printed in the Philippines, was a prayerbook written in Spanish with an accompanying Tagalog translation.

The task of translating religious instructional materials forced the Spanish missionaries to employ natives as translators. Eventually, these natives learned to read and write both in Spanish and in their native tongue. These bilingual natives were called the *Ladinos*. They published their works, mainly devotional poetry, in the first decade of the 17th century. The most gifted among the *Ladinos* was Gaspar Aquino de Belen who wrote *Mahal na Pasion ni Jesu Christo*, a Tagalog poem based on Christ's passion, was published in 1704.

Until the 19th century, the printing presses were owned and managed by the religious orders. Thus, religious themes dominated the literature of the time.

In the 18th century, secular literature from Spain in the form of medieval ballads inspired the native poetic-drama form called the *komedya*, later to be called *moro-moro* because these often dealt with the theme of Christians triumphing over Moslems.

Francisco Baltazar (1788-1862), popularly called Balagtas, is the acknowledged master of traditional Tagalog poetry. His narrative poem, “Florante at Laura,” written in sublime Tagalog, is about tyranny in Albanya, but it is also perceived to be about the tyranny in his Filipino homeland.

Printing overtook the oral tradition, and it set for the development of prose. The first Filipino novel was “Ninay,” written in Spanish by Pedro Paterno.

National hero, Jose Rizal (1861-1896) chose the realistic novel as his medium. Rizal’s two novels, “Noli Me Tangere” and its sequel, “El Filibusterismo,” chronicle the life and ultimate death of Ibarra, a Filipino educated abroad, who attempts to reform his country through education.

Inspired by Rizal and his two novels were Andres Bonifacio (1863-1897) and his closest aide, Emilio Jacinto (1875-1899). Both were writers and social critics who were profoundly influenced by the liberal ideas of the French enlightenment.

The Philippine revolutionary period also had its share of women writers. Gregoria de Jesus, wife of Andres Bonifacio, wrote notable Tagalog poetry. In Vigan of the Ilocano North, Leona Florentino, by her poetry, became the foremost Ilocano writer of her time.

[_ \(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_language\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_language)

Spanish (español), also called Castilian (castellano) is a Romance language that originated in Castile, a region in Spain. Approximately 406 million people speak Spanish as a native language, making it second only to Mandarin in

terms of its number of native speakers.[1][2] It also has 60 million speakers as a second language,[1] and 20 million students as a foreign language.[6] Spanish is one of the six official languages of the United Nations, and is used as an official language by the European Union and Mercosur. Spanish is a part of the Ibero-Romance group of languages, which evolved from several dialects of common Latin in Iberia after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century. It was first documented in central-northern Iberia in the ninth century and gradually spread with the expansion of the Kingdom of Castile into central and southern Iberia.[7]

From its beginnings, Spanish vocabulary was influenced by its contact with Basque and by other related Ibero-Romance languages and later absorbed many Arabic words during the Muslim presence in the Iberian Peninsula.[8] It also adopted many words from non Iberian languages, particularly the Romance languages Occitan, French and Italian and increasingly from English in modern times, as well as adding its own new words. Spanish was taken to the colonies of the Spanish Empire in the sixteenth century, most notably to the Americas as well as territories in Africa, Oceania and the Philippines.[9][dead link] Spanish is the most popular second language learned by native speakers of American English.[10]

From the last decades of the 20th century, the study of Spanish as a foreign language has grown significantly, in part because of the growing populations and economies of many Spanish-speaking countries, and the growing international tourism in these countries.[citation needed] Spanish is the most widely understood language in the Western Hemisphere, with significant

populations of native Spanish speakers ranging from the tip of Patagonia to as far north as New York City and Chicago. Additionally, there are over 10 million fluent second language speakers in both Brazil and the United States. Since the early 21st century, it has arguably superseded French in becoming the second-most-studied language and the second language in international communication, after English.[11][12][13][14]

Philippine Literature during Spanish Period

(<http://www.studymode.com/essays/Philippine-Literature-During-Spanish-Period-The-1057906.html>)

The indigenous literature of the Philippines developed primarily in the oral tradition in poetic and narrative forms. Epic poems, legends, proverbs, songs, and riddles were passed from generation to generation through oral recitation and incantation in the various languages and dialects of the islands. The epics were the most complex of these early literary forms. Most of the major tribal groups developed an original epic that was chanted in episodic segments during a variety of social rituals.

One common theme of the epics is a hero who is aided by benevolent spirits. The epics that have survived are important records of the ancient customs of tribal society before the arrival of Islam and Christianity. After the arrival of the Spanish, Catholic missionaries employed indigenous peoples as translators, creating a bilingual class known as *ladinos*. These individuals, notably poet-translator Gaspar Aquino de Belen, produced devotional poetry written in the Roman script, primarily in the Tagalog language. Later, the

Spanish ballad of chivalry, the corrido, provided a model for secular (nonreligious) literature. Verse narratives, or komedya, were performed in the regional languages for the illiterate majority. They were also written in the Roman alphabet in the principal languages and widely circulated.