

Literature: a tool for philippine liberation



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INTRODUCTION Literature reflects the culture of a nation. It can serve as a tool to express a feeling and emotion.

Remember during the Spanish regime, Rizal exploited the functions of literature. His two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* contained a lot of subversive themes that sparked the revolution and consequently the victory over the Spaniards. Literature is deeply rooted in the culture of a nation. Stories and poems reflect the local color of its origin. The poem “*Stopping by the Woods*” by Robert Frost may not be too appealing to local readers because of the presence of snow in the poem. Our geography doesn’t allow us to experience snow.

Ildefonso Santos’ poem “*Katlea*,” on other hand, shows more local color. *Cattleya* is a flower that even an ordinary Filipino knows. Thus, learning others should be in second priority we must first learn when did our nationalistic approach in making articles in any genres of literature started. The period of enlightenment indeed is the main topic of this research. It aimed to delve the causes of great evolution of literature during this period.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE Spain already ruled the Philippines for at least 300 years before Philippine nationalism was developed.

Towards the 19th century, the bureaucratic centralized government established in Manila had caused widespread discontent in the entire archipelago, but there was yet no united front against the Spanish Regime. Not until the martyrdom of the Gomburza. Gomburza is an acronym for Fathers Mariano Gomez, Jose Apolonio Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora, three Filipino priests who were executed on February 17, 1872 by Spanish colonial

authorities on trumped-up charges of subversion arising from the 1872 Cavite mutiny. Their unjust execution enraged and left a profound and bitter effect on many Filipinos, especially Jose Rizal, the national hero, who, himself, was to suffer a mock trial leading to his execution. Thus, the start of the period of enlightenment. Literature, if not totally, changed into a more nationalistic in its approach.

This period is divided mainly in two sub-periods — the propagandist period and revolutionist period. When we say propagandist, they are referred to those who seek fairness through reforms. They intend to deliver their reclaims through writings. Poetry, essays, novels, editorial write-ups are the predominant genres in this time. On the other hand, revolutionist movement is the who seek liberty up to extent of sacrificing their own life.

Driven by great rage, Andres Bonifacio lead the movement in its way to absolute freedom. Together with his compatriots, they fought the Spaniards with all their might. At the same time, these heroes wrote some nationalistic poems, essays and also stories expressing their sense of nationalism. This two periods contributed a lot to Philippine literature for it is the time when the people tried to travel the world of free writing. **PROPAGANDA MOVEMENT**
A group of Filipino ilustrados in Madrid, shocked by what they saw as the disparity between Spain and her colony, organized the “ Propaganda Movement”.

Among its members were Rizal, Lopez-Jaena, the political exile Marcelo del Pilar, Mariano Ponce, and the Luna brothers–Juan and Antonio. They published a fortnightly newspaper in Spanish called La Solidaridad. Its aim

was to expose corruption and atrocities in the Philippine colony. The publication lasted from 1889 to 1895. Copies of it were smuggled into the Philippines and were read surreptitiously behind closed doors.

The filipinos who were influenced by liberal concepts were the same people who benefited from foreign trade—the ilustrados, members of the prosperous merchant class who sent their sons to study at universities in Spain and elsewhere in Europe. Many of these students, chief among them Jose Rizal and Graciano Lopez-Jaena, would organize a reform organization, called the Propaganda Movement. Some prominent people who contributed in the blossoming of phil. iterature during this period: Graciano Lopez Jaena' – On December 18, 1856, saw the birth of Graciano Lopez Jaena in Jaro, Iloilo to Placido Lopez and Maria Jacoba Jaena. At the age of six, young Graciano was placed under the watch of Father Francisco Jayme who noted his intellectual promise, especially his gift of speech.

At the age of 18 he had the audacity to write the story “ Fray Botod” which depicted a fat and lecherous priest. Botod’s false piety “ always [had] the Virgin and God on his lips no matter how unjust and underhanded his acts are. ” This naturally incurred the fury of the friars who knew that the story depicted them. Although it was not published a copy circulated in the region but the Friars could not prove that Lopez Jaena was the author.

Historians regard Lopez Jaena, along with Marcelo del Pilar and Jose Rizal, as the triumvirate of Filipino propagandists. Of these three Lopez Jaena was the first to arrive and may be said the Genesis of the Propaganda movement. His undying quotation were as follows: “ Neither gratitude nor appreciation has

anything to do with rejecting what is wrong, censoring what is bad, exposing the ills that afflict society in order to remedy them. When our parents are wrong, we say they are wrong; when past generations committed mistakes, we say they had made mistakes. For saying this, neither are we ungrateful to them nor disrespectful to their memory. ” Marcelo Hilario del Pilar y Gatmaytan (August 30, 1850—July 4, 1896) was a celebrated figure in the Philippine Revolution and a leading propagandist for reforms in the Philippines.

Popularly known as Plaridel, he was the editor and co-publisher of *La Solidaridad*. He tried to marshal the nationalist sentiment of the enlightened Filipino ilustrados, or bourgeoisie, against Spanish imperialism. Mariano Ponce He wrote in the propaganda publication *La Solidaridad* under several pseudonyms, including Naning, Kalipulako and Tigbalang. Antoniuo Luna In Spain, he contributed to the *La Solidaridad* periodical, published by the reformist movement of the elite Filipino students in Spain. He wrote a piece titled *Impressions* which dealt with Spanish customs and idiosyncrasies under the pen-name “ Taga-ilog”. He was active as researcher in the scientific community in Spain, and wrote a scientific treatise on malaria titled *El Hematozoario del Paludismo* (Malaria), which was favorably received in the scientific community.

Jose Rizal (full name: Jose Protacio Rizal Mercado y Alonso Realonda) (June 19, 1861 – December 30, 1896), was a Filipino polymath, nationalist and the most prominent advocate for reforms in the Philippines during the Spanish colonial era and its eventual independence from Spain. Rizal was a polyglot conversant in at least ten languages. He was a prolific poet, essayist, diarist,

correspondent, and novelist. He wrote a lot of poems including, In Memory of my Town, To the Youth, and a lot more.

But Jose Rizal's most famous works were his two novels, *Noli me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. These writings angered both the Spaniards and the hispanicized Filipinos due to their insulting symbolism. They are highly critical of Spanish friars and the atrocities committed in the name of the Church. Rizal's first critic was Ferdinand Blumentritt, a Sudetan-German professor and historian whose first reaction was of misgiving.

His last poem written was entitled *Mi Ultimo Adios*. The poem is more aptly titled, "Adios, Patria Adorada" (literally "Farewell, Beloved Country"). By virtue of logic and literary tradition, the words come from the first line of the poem itself. As the movement was failing in Europe, Jose Rizal returned to the Philippines and created his *La Liga Filipina* in 1892. It also failed after his arrest a just few days after the creation of the group. The group split into two: the *ilustrado* elites formed their own *Cuerpo de Compromisarios*, while the lowly *ilustrados* formed the revolutionary *Katipunan*.

The former disappeared into oblivion, while the latter started the Philippine Revolution (1896-1898) by 1896, culminating both the formation of patriotic sentiment and nationalistic ideals. **REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT** The radical wing, led by a warehouse clerk named Andres Bonifacio, founded the *Katipunan* whose goal was complete independence from Spain through all means, including a bloody confrontation. Even though its aim is to fight, still revolutionist wrote articles and poems. Here are some Filipino Revolutionist during this period: Pedro Alejandro Paterno (February 27, 1858—March 11,

1911) was a Filipino statesman as well as a poet and writer. He was the author of Pacto de Biyak-na-Bato (Pact of Biyak-na-Bato), first published in 1910. Among his other works include the very first Filipino novel written in Tagalog, *Ninay* (1907), and the first Filipino collection of poems in Spanish, *Sampaguitas y poesias* (Jasmines and Poems), published in Madrid, 1880.

Apolinario Mabini is also known as the Sublime Paralytic and the Brains of the Revolution. He drafted the first constitution of the Philippine republic when the revolutionary congress was organized at Barasoain, Malolos, Bulacan. Emilio Jacinto who is good in art of fighting also wrote for the Katipunan newspaper called *Kalayaan*, which translates to Freedom in Filipino. He wrote in the newspaper under the pen name Dimasilaw, and used the alias Pingkian in the Katipunan. Emilio Jacinto was also the author of the *Kartilya ng Katipunan*.

Jose Palma (1876-1903) was a poet and soldier. He was born in Tondo, Manila, on June 3, 1876. He was the younger brother of Dr. Rafael Palma. Palma was also a staff member of *La Independencia*.

He wrote *Filipinas*, a patriotic poem in Spanish, which became the lyrics of the Philippine National Anthem. He died in Manila, on February 12, 1903.

CONCLUSION Literature provides a common knowledge that allows people to talk, share information and experiences. The importance of knowing the indigenous forms of Philippine literature is to gain more knowledge about our own country.

Its aim in general is to announce and flaunt one's culture. And learning the facts from the period may be of great help in enhancing your literary skill.

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Thus, you have to know history before doing your own legacy. Remember the quotation, “ Past literature is present history and past history is present literature. Reference: http://www.globalpinoy.com/ch/ch_literature.php http://www.globalpinoy.com/ch/ch_literature.php http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filipino_nationalism

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