

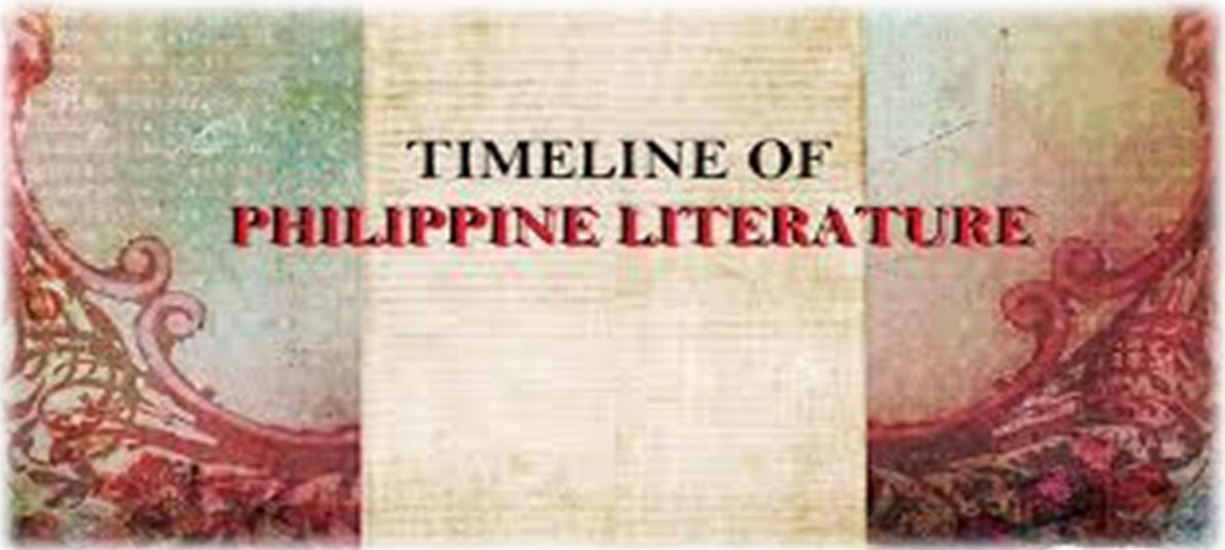


CHAPTER II: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PHILIPPINE LITERATURE



Objectives:

- Demonstrate critical thinking skills in understanding the breadth and depth of Philippine literature.
- Recognize the development of the literary genres of the Philippines.
- Enhance awareness and appreciation of Philippine literature.
- Understand that Philippine Literature promotes and preserves worthwhile and universal values of Filipinos.



Lesson 1: Pre-Colonial Period (--BC to 1564)

Characteristics

- Based on oral traditions
- Crude on ideology and phraseology
- Consisted of early Filipino literature passed down orally; oral pieces have a communal authorship – it was difficult to trace the original author of the piece

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since oral literature did not focus on ownership or copyright, rather on the act of storytelling itself;

- Many oral pieces became lost in the wave of the new literary influence brought about by the Spanish colonization; however, according to the *Philippine Literature: A History & Anthology, English Edition* (Lumbera, B. & Lumbera C.), the pre-colonial period of Philippine literature is considered the longest in the country's history;
- Literature in this period is based on tradition, reflecting daily life activities such as housework, farming, fishing, hunting, and taking care of the children as well;
- Oral pieces told stories which explained heroes and their adventures; they attempted to explain certain natural phenomena, and, at the same time, served as entertainment purposes;
- Pre-colonial literature showed certain elements that linked the Filipino culture to other Southeast Asian countries (e.g. oral pieces which were performed through a tribal dance have certain similarities to the Malay dance);
- This period in Philippine literature history represented the ethos of the people before the arrival of a huge cultural influence – literature as a cultural tradition, than a form of art that had a particular set of decorum.

Literary Forms

- **Oral Literature**
 - a. **Riddles (bugtong)** - battle of wits among participants
 - i. Tigmo - Cebu
 - ii. Paktakon - Ilonggo
 - iii. Patotdon - Bicol
 - b. **Proverbs (salawikain)** - wise sayings that contain a metaphor used to teach as a food for thought
 - c. **Tanaga** - a mono-riming heptasyllabic quatrain expressing insights and lessons on life is "more emotionally charged than the terse proverb and thus has affinities with the folk lyric."
- **Folk Songs**

It is a form of folk lyric which expresses the hopes and aspirations, the people's lifestyles as well as their loves. This is often repetitive, sonorous, didactic and naïve.

 - a. **Hele or oyayi** – lullaby
 - b. **Ambahan (Mangyan)** – 7-syllable per line poem that are about human relationship and social entertainment.
 - c. **Kalusan (Ivatan)** - work songs that depict the livelihood of the people
 - d. **Tagay (Cebuano and Waray)** – drinking song
 - e. **Kanogan (Cebuano)** – song of lamentation for the dead

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- **Folk Tales**

- a. **Myths** – explain how the world was created, how certain animals possess certain characteristics, why some places have waterfalls, volcanoes, mountains, flora or fauna
- b. **Legends** – explain the origin of things
 - i. Why the Pineapple Has Eyes
 - ii. The Legend of Maria Makiling
- c. **Fables** – used animal characters and allegory
- d. **Fantastic Stories** – deal with underworld characters such as “tiyanak”, “aswang”, “kapre” and others

- **Epics**

These are “narratives of sustained length based on oral tradition revolving around supernatural events or heroic deeds” (Arsenio Manuel)

Examples:

- i. Lam-ang (Ilocano)
- ii. Hinilawod (Panay)
- iii. Kudaman (Palawan)
- iv. Darangen (Maranao)

Lesson 2: Spanish Colonization Period (1565-1863)

Characteristics

- It has two distinct classifications: religious and secular
- It introduced Spanish as the medium of communication
- The Spanish culture, as reflected in the works of this literature period, showed a clash with the pre-colonial Filipino literature in the beginning. However, due to the length of stay of the colonizers, the Spanish culture was eventually imbued in the Filipino literature of the period;
- Religion became an important theme that had influenced the early Filipino writings which had the presence of paganism – “Christian Folk-Tale”;
- In addition, the influence of religion, besides on the daily life of the natives, was lead by the friar/missionary/parish priest who were appointed by the Spanish government;
- Despite the goal of the Spanish government to turn the country into a full-fledged European colony, the Spanish influence ironically inspired a reformation from the natives, which eventually turned into a revolution;
- Yet regardless of the conflicts that plagued the relationship between the Spaniards and the Filipinos, a sense of nationalism was formed among the oppressed, and had caused them to rise up to a nationalistic cause;
- The essay genre was recognized amidst the scene of editorial protest – Jose Rizal and Plaridel (Marcelo H. Del Pilar) were among those who opt in using the pen in voicing out the people’s cry instead of the sword;
- Introduction of the roman alphabet that gradually replaced the „alibata”;

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- The Filipino literature of this period became the predecessor of many more literary works to come in the ages, wherein the theme of nationalism and freedom of speech would be evident.

Literary Forms

- **Religious Literature** - Religious lyrics written by ladino poets or those versed in both Spanish and Tagalog were included in early catechism and were used to teach Filipinos the Spanish language.
 - a. **Pasyon** – long narrative poem about the passion and death of Christ. The most popular was “Ang Mahal na Passion ni Jesu Cristong Panignoon Natin” by Aguino de Belen
 - b. **Senakulo** – dramatization of the pasyon, it shows the passion and death of Christ
- **Secular (non-religious) Literature**
 - a. **Awit** - colorful tales of chivalry made for singing and chanting
Example: Ibong Adarna
 - b. **Korido** – metrical tale written in octosyllabic quatrains
Example: Florante at Laura by Francisco Baltazar
 - c. **Prose Narratives** – written to prescribe proper decorum
 - i. Dialogo
 - ii. Ejemplo
 - iii. Manual de Urbanidad
 - iv. tratadoExamples: Modesto de Castro's "Pagsusulat ng Dalawang Binibini na si Urbana at si Feliza" and Joaquin Tuason's "Ang Bagong Robinson" (The New Robinson) in 1879

Lesson 3: Nationalistic / Propaganda and Revolutionary Period (1864-1896)

Characteristics

- Planted seeds of nationalism in Filipinos
- Language shifted from Spanish to Tagalog
- Addressed the masses instead of the “intelligentsia”

Literary Forms

- **Propaganda Literature** - Reformatory in objective
 - a. Political Essays - satires, editorials and news articles were written to attack and expose the evils of Spanish rule
 - i. Diariong Tagalog - founded by Marcelo del Pilar
 - ii. La Solidaridad - whose editor-in-chief is Graciano Lopez-Jaena
 - b. **Political Novels**

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- i. Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo - Jose Rizal's masterpieces that paved the way to the revolution
- **Revolutionary Literature** - more propagandistic than literary as it is more violent in nature and demanded complete independence for the country
 - a. **Political Essays** - helped inflame the spirit of revolution
 - b. **Kalayaan** - newspaper of the society, edited by Emilio Jacinto
 - c. **Poetry**
 - i. True Decalogue - Apolinario Mabini
 - ii. Katapusang Hibik ng Pilipinas - Andres Bonifacio
 - iii. Liwanag at Dilim - Emilio Jacinto

Lesson 4: American Colonial Period (1910-1945)

Period of Apprenticeship (1910-1930)

- Filipino Writers imitated English and American models
- Poems written were amateurish and mushy, which phrasing and diction is awkward and artificial
- The gradual decline of the Philippine literature written in Spanish;
- The English language eventually became the medium of writing and instruction in schools;
- As the Spanish colonizers left the country in accordance with the Treaty of Paris, the spirit of nationalism and the desire to be acknowledged of independence did not disappear just yet. Instead, these uniting forces geared into revolting against the new colonizers;
- During the American colonization period, Philippine literature reflected the ethos of its people under a new role. However, these day-to-day experiences under a new foreign influence, as well as sentiments, were expressed through the English language;
- The Spanish „sarsuwela“ was eventually replaced by the „drama“;
- One major influence of the American occupation on the Filipino literature is its refining in the context of the content and the form. Furthermore, because of this broadened knowledge on the field of literature through the education provided by the American government, Philippine literature has become more than a tradition formed by culture. It has become an art which succeeding poets, fictionists, and playwrights continue to build upon and enrich in every generation;
- Beginning with Rizal's use of social realism as one of the major themes for his two major novels, the literature during the American colonization also became an involvement, not just reflecting the Filipino experience – a strengthened sense of nationalism deeply rooted in the Filipino pride and culture;
- Unlike in the Spanish colonization period wherein female writers (e.g. Gregoria de Jesus) were overshadowed by their more dominant, male contemporaries –

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as a result of the education only being provided to a selected and privileged few – during the American occupation, women have had their opportunity to enhance their talent by being educated on the craft. In addition, the growing popularity of works written by Filipina writers is the result of the growing audience appreciating literature by females.

a. Short Stories

- i. Dead Stars – Paz Marquez Benitez
- ii. The Key – Paz Latorena
- iii. Footnote to Youth – Jose Garcia Villa

b. Novels

- i. Childe of Sorrow – first novel in English, by Zoilo Galang

Period of Emergence (1920-1930)

- Highly influenced by Western literary trends like Romanticism and Realism.
 - a. Short Stories – most prevalent literary form
 - i. Jose Garcia Villa – earned the international title “Poet of the Century”

Lesson 5: Japanese Occupation (1942-1960)

War Years (1942-1944)

- Tagalog poets broke away from the Balagtas tradition and instead wrote in simple language and free verse
- Fiction prevailed over poetry
 - a. 25 Pinakamabuting Maikling Kthang Pilipino (1943) – compilation of the short story contest by the military government
 - i. Suyuan sa Tubigan – Macario Pineda
 - ii. Lupang Tinubuan – Narciso Reyes
 - iii. Uhaw ang Tigang na Lupa – Liwayway Arceo
 - b. Period of Maturity and Originality (1945-1960)
 - Bountiful harvest in poetry, fiction, drama and essay
 - Filipino writers mastered English and familiarized themselves with diverse techniques
 - Literary “giants” appeared
 - Palanca Awards for Literature
 - ✓ Jose Garcia Villa
 - ✓ Nick Joaquin
 - ✓ NVM Gonzales
 - ✓ Bienvenido Santos
 - ✓ Gregorio Brillantes
 - ✓ Gilda Cordero Fernando
 - National Artist Awards
 - ✓ Jose Garcia Villa ii. Nick Joaquin

Lesson 6: Contemporary/Modern Period (1960-Present)

Characteristics

- Martial Law repressed and curtailed human rights, including freedom of the press
- Writers used symbolisms and allegories to drive home their message, at the face of heavy censorship
- Theater was used as a vehicle for protest, such as the PETA (Phil. Educational Theater Association) and UP Theater.
- From the eighties onwards, writers continue to show dynamism and innovation.



EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

For further reading please refer to the link provided:

Philippine Literature History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cveJET2EE4g>

Periods of Philippine Literature

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hGC2ZPm1ug>

Philippine Literature in Progress/The Marriage of History and Literature

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJEQQlvERXc>

Online Source:

- <http://lourdesbraceros.weebly.com/a-brief-history-of-philippine-literature-in-english.html>
- <https://www.scribd.com/doc/234864752/HISTORY-OF-PHILIPPINE-LITERATURE>