

Conference Abstract

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Reflections on the Influence of an International Language & Culture – Spanish – on Philippine Literature

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After Spain's colonisation of the Americas, Mexico became the base for its later conquest of the Philippines in 1565. What followed were 377 years of Spanish rule and at the end of that period, the coloniser left two important legacies: Catholicism and written literature.

This paper reflects on Philippine literary history during the Spanish colonial period. It specifically examines how Spanish language and culture influenced the literature of the country during its colonial rule as reflected in the literary themes of that time, and mentions the leading women writers in Spanish as examples. It also discusses the reason why Philippine literature in Spanish did not fully develop or evolve until towards the end of Spanish colonial rule. The brief discussion of the women writers underscores the fact that previous to known Filipina writers in English, Filipino, or the various vernacular languages, no research is found on the Filipina writers of Spanish. Although the society was decidedly more patriarchal then, it seems unlikely that no works were written by our "foremothers".