

COMPLETION REPORT

Images of Japan in Filipino Spanish-Language Newspapers, 1900-1910

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Images of Japan in Filipino Spanish Language Newspapers, 1900-1910 is a study on the representations of Japan found in select Spanish-language newspapers during the first decade of American colonial rule. It is also the period when Spanish-era educated Filipino intellectuals -- the generation which fought the revolutionary wars against Spain (1896-1898) and America (1899-1901) -- looked at Japan as a model of an Asian nation they would like the Philippines to be.

The research revealed perspectives not usually found in primary materials accessed by non-Spanish-reading Filipino historians. Articles from *La Solidaridad*, the Filipino reformists' organ showed favorable representations of Japan.

Japan's emergence as a regional power was capitalized by the *Katipunan*, the independence movement founded in 1892, when it misled Spanish authorities into thinking that Tokyo had a stake in the anti-Spain revolution by making it appear that their newspaper, *Ang Kalayaan*, was being published in Yokohama.

During the war with the United States, the Philippine government sent Mariano Ponce as diplomatic representative to Yokohama. Ponce's correspondence with leading Japanese figures documents his insightful observations on Japanese culture. Ponce eventually married a Japanese woman.

During the American colonial period, Fil-hispanic literary production, which first came out in newspapers, projected images of Japan as a model Asian country to be emulated by a nascent Philippine polity. This is seen particularly in the works of Jesus Balmori and published speeches of T.H. Pardo de Tavera.

Microfilmed copies of select newspapers were read during the data-gathering process, which centered on the coverage of the Russo-Japanese War happening at the middle of the decade under study.

Most of the texts read were pick-up stories (stories earlier published in other newspapers and then republished in the Philippine newspapers which "picked up" those news items) from European or American newspapers. Other sources for images came from letters to the editor and other opinion pieces.

An important insight from the readings: with the coverage of the conflict principally done by Europeans, a racist tone permeates the discourse. Russia is unabashedly favored, and even predicted at the start of the conflict as a sure victor. But reports of Japanese battlefield victories dampen this perspective and generate much interest to look at the Japanese military, an attempt to explain Japanese military successes.

The articles compared Russian and Japanese forces and battlefield strategies. There is a marked preference as well for biographical profiles of Japanese field commanders, and Philippine newspapers unwittingly transmitted the European press' Orientalist attitudes, presenting Japanese military personalities as objects both of curiosity and of admiration.

While Philippine newspapers abstained from making any judgments on the Japanese, a triangulatory exploration of the writing in Spanish reveals that Filipino writers did have favorable ideas, attitudes, and opinions about Japan. A good example is Jesus Balmori's novel, *Los Pájaros de Fuego*.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

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Department of European Languages, College of Arts and Letters, University of the Philippines,
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“Evolving Images of Japan in Fil-hispanic Writing (1882-1945) and Post-War Philippine Television.”

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Preliminary Notes to a Study of Japan Images in Philippine Writing in Spanish until 1945

Wystan de la Peña

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National Museum of the Philippines,

Unang Pandaigdigang Kumperensiya sa Araling Pilipino sa Pilipino (1st International Conference on
Philippine Studies in Filipino)

“Ang Nawalang Tahanan at ang Nabigong Japanofilia sa Nobelang Pájaros de Fuego (2010) ni Jesús
Balmori.” (The Disappeared Home and the Failed Japanofilia in Jesus Balmori’s Novel ‘Pajaros de
Fuego’)

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Public Lecture

*Ilustrados Enamorados del Japón, or La Tierra del Sol Naciente in the Filipino Hispanic Elite's Imagining of a
Post-Colonial Philippines.*

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Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)