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Pathways to Philippine Literature in English

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All this vast material has been printed with meticulous accuracy (we have noted only one misprint, a trivial one) on the best eggshell paper and handsomely bound. Justice J. B. L. Reyes of the Supreme Court has contributed the Foreword. This is a book which no library, law office or judge's chambers can afford to go without, and we are glad to hear that Professor Moreno is now well into his next volume, a similar *Desk Book* on the 1957 *Gazette*.

There is one regret, and it is a serious one. This book has been compiled and seen through the press almost single-handedly by a dedicated man and published at huge expense with private funds. It is perhaps too much to expect that the editor or his publishers could keep this up year after year at such enormous cost to themselves in labor and money. Yet such an index is needed for every volume of the *Gazette*. May we respectfully call the attention of the proper authorities to this need?

Our suggestion is that Professor Moreno, who has done such a splendid job on the 1956 volume and is now well into the 1957, be commissioned by the National Library to complete the index for 1957. The same should be done for succeeding years thereafter, and likewise for volumes prior to 1956. The indices thus compiled should be published at public expense and sold to the public at cost.

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

PATHWAYS TO PHILIPPINE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

PATHWAYS TO PHILIPPINE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH.

An Anthology with Biographical and Critical Introductions.

By Arturo G. Roseburg. Phoenix Press Inc. Quezon City.

1958. Pp. vi, 257. P3.90

FEW people know as much about Philippine literature in English as does Mr. Roseburg who has kept abreast of it for over three decades. He is, of course, a Filipino himself, despite his foreign-sounding name. The best part of his book are the biographical and critical introductions. He knows the authors well and he writes

about them with enthusiasm and warm sympathy, though he is by no means blind to their faults. These introductory essays are themselves a distinct contribution toward a better knowledge of Philippine writing in English.

The anthology itself is likely to be controversial. The selections are bound to please some, displease others—including some of the authors themselves. This of course is a risk which every anthologist has to make. Only nine authors have been included in the anthology, and the exclusion of so many other authors is bound to offend either these authors or their admirers, though the choice of the nine is not without justification, as the foreword explains.

Our impression is that the essays included are pedestrian, the poems indifferent, but the stories are a different matter. They are not only more numerous (seven of the nine authors are short story writers) but they are also, barring a few exceptions, more mature and more competently written. There is an excellent one about prison life by Arturo Rotor—though it is marred by a shift of viewpoint. There is a charming piece by Manuel Arguilla on how his brother Leon brought home to the barrio a city-bred wife. But the best written seem to be those of Alejandro Roces, Bienvenido Santos, N. V. M. Gonzalez and Nick Joaquin. We have already spoken in these pages about Santos and Gonzalez, while Roseburg himself has written at length about Roces, and Father Furay about Nick Joaquin.

The last mentioned author has been acclaimed the best Filipino writer, an opinion apparently shared by Roseburg. We note however a certain theatricality in the style and a certain implausibility in the psychological situations and motivations. The first of his stories included here ("Three Generations") offers a solution morally untenable.

This and the sensuous realism of some of the stories (not to mention the seemingly blasphemous language of some of the poetry) would seem to make this book inappropriate for immature readers. We therefore do not recommend it for high schools. There seems, however, nothing here which the adult reader need fear to read. The mature student will find in this book (especially if he reads it under proper guidance) both the weaknesses and the

strong points of much contemporary Philippine writing. The book is thus true to its title: *pathways* to Philippine literature in English. How refreshingly modest that title is, and how different from the pretentious titles of some Philippine anthologies!

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

FISHERFOLK IN NEGROS

SECURING AQUATIC PRODUCTS IN SIATON MUNICIPALITY, NEGROS ORIENTAL PROVINCE, PHILIPPINES. By Donn V. Hart. Bureau of Printing. Manila. 1956. Pp. iii-84.

THIS is the fourth monograph in a series put out by the Institute of Science and Technology designed to elaborate on various aspects of Philippine culture. The present work, begun in 1951 under a Fulbright fellowship, is introduced thus: "This study describes the methods, equipment, and associated practices of obtaining aquatic products, for subsistence and for commercial purposes, from river and sea in Siaton municipality..."

The town of Siaton is located in the southernmost tip of Negros Island. In the first part of the report, fresh-water fishing is treated. The methods utilized by the townfolk ranged from nets and traps to fish guns and poison. Their catch included, besides fish of the mullet type, a great variety of snails, shrimps, clams and other mollusks which formed a great bulk of the people's daily fare.

While fresh-water fishing was done mostly to meet domestic needs, pelagic fishing paid off commercially for Siaton fishermen. Here again there was a variety of methods employed, but fish traps (*bungsods*) were commonest. Located near the beaches they proved equally productive as deep-sea fishing. Fish caught in the Mindanao Sea presented great diversity; instances were noted when rare or unidentified species have fallen into the hands of Siaton fisherfolk. Boat building too is handled in detail by the author in his penultimate chapter, although these boats are built outside of Siaton.