

Textbook Case: A Colonial History Book's Influence (or Lack Thereof) on the Miseducation of the Filipino

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Abstract:

An influential Filipino essayist once wrote that "With American textbooks, Filipinos started learning not only a new language but also a new way of life... alien to their traditions and yet a caricature of their model." This paper complicates assumptions related to this now-dominant view by examining the publication and adoption history of David Barrows' History of the Philippines (1905), a textbook printed in the United States and which was allegedly used by Filipino students for more than two decades. Using evidence related to a little-known controversy that took place between American Catholics and Protestants in the predominantly-Catholic Philippines in 1906, this paper argues that the use of history books in Philippine public school education was neither as straightforward nor as uncontested as it has been portrayed by Filipino intellectuals and historians.

Keywords: Philippines, history textbooks, book history, miseducation.