Indigenous art at the Philippine Exposition of 1887: Arguments for an ideological and racial battle in a colonial context


PDF (Arte "indígena" en la Exposición de Filipinas de 1887)
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Resumen

The Philippine Exposition was held in Madrid in 1887 with the aim of increasing commercial and economic relationships between the archipelago and the metropolis, but also with the objective of showing its indigenous population to the Spaniards. In this sense, one of the exposition sections was devoted to Philippine fine arts. Artistic quality of works of art exhibited was subjected to very dissimilar interpretations. For conservative Spanish critics—and even for some liberals—woodcarvings limited artistic level was a consequence of scarce Filipinos abilities and capacities, and this circumstance was merely explained by ethnic reasons. However, for some liberal Spanish critics and, above all, for members of Filipino intellectual elite—the ilustrados—, the responsibility of this artistic underdevelopment relapsed into the Spanish colonial system, and more specifically into the Spanish regular clergy, whose educational practice had as a basic repression the repression of Philippine intellect.

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The obvious argument in disfavour of people being indifferent to the extinction of living creatures is that every species contributes towards the balance in the ecosystem. To illustrate, if there were no bees, plants would suffer; if plants' cultivation were confined, people and other animals would starve. This makes it evident that people being on the top of the food chain should take responsibility to prevent animals from becoming extinct. In conclusion, although species become extinct regularly, this may strongly affect the balance in the environment in a negative way at some point; thus, our society should take action. Also, people often create life-threatening conditions for animals, and therefore, ought to proactively prevent their extinction.