

VISIBILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES IN SELECTED PHILIPPINE MUSEUMS: THE RELEVANCE OF EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS IN HISTORY TEACHING

Dwight David A. Diestro,

Associate Professor,
Division of History, Department of Social
Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, University
of the Philippines Los Baños, College, Laguna.

Roberto C. Mata,

Assistant Professor,
Division of History, Department of Social Sciences,
College of Arts and Sciences, University of the
Philippines Los Baños, College, Laguna.

April Hope T. Castro,

Assistant Professor,
Division of History, Department of Social
Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, University
of the Philippines Los Baños, College, Laguna.

Amelia S. Ferrer,

Assistant Professor,
Division of History, Department of Social Sciences,
College of Arts and Sciences, University of the
Philippines Los Baños, College, Laguna.

Joyce DL. Grajo,

Assistant Professor, Institute of Statistics, College of Arts and Sciences,
University of the Philippines Los Baños, College, Laguna.

ABSTRACT

Museum visits have been integrated to the curriculum as valid activities. They are meant to enhance classroom instruction in the field of history. Recently published textbooks on Philippine History have incorporated in their framework the importance of geography, geology, and the environment in the understanding of the historical process. The environmental shift in historical studies is gaining ground. This paper highlights facets of the history-environment interplay as perceived by History 1 students of UP Los Baños in fieldtrips held during the first semester, 2009-2010. The research problem is focused on the visibility of selected features of the environment, namely: plains, forests, sea, rivers, mountains, and lakes. The museums involved in the study were the Veterans Federation of the Philippines' Museum, Library, Archives and Theatre, the Ayala Museum, the Katipunan Museum, the Manuel Quezon Memorial Shrine, and the Bantayog ng mga Bayani/Heroes Monument.

Majority of the participants acknowledged the efforts of the museums in providing links between history and the physical environment. Of the 265 students, 131 or 49.4% of the participants found the museums successful in showing the connection between history and the environment; 103 (38.9%) very successful; 27 (10.2%) moderately successful; 1 (0.4%) slightly successful and 1 (0.4%) not successful. They also evaluated the importance of the environment in shaping historical events as highly important in both Ayala Museum and Veterans Museum; important for Museo ng Katipunan; slightly important for Quezon Memorial Museum; and not important for the Bantayog Museum. Furthermore, the students made an assessment that the off-campus undertaking was a successful pedagogical strategy.

Keywords: museum, fieldtrip, history, and environment.

INTRODUCTION:

As an academic course, history's relevance has always been affirmed in the curriculum because of its connection with citizenship and identity formation (Diokno 2009). However, it does not always enjoy a high degree of popularity (Galang 1983/1984). The four corners of the classroom appear to be limited to make the delivery of knowledge on Philippine history alive. As part of the revitalization of the General Education courses of the University of the Philippines, the teaching of History 1 (Philippine History) in the Los Baños campus has undergone major changes in the last ten years. One of the distinct features that have been introduced is the one-day off-campus educational trip. Officially, it was incorporated as part of the new course outline for the revitalized History 1 in 2002. The realization that field trips can be important in enhancing historical knowledge was highlighted during the twin centennials of the Philippine Revolution in 1996 and the Proclamation of Philippine Independence in 1998. The University of the Philippines System launched a series of field trips/*lakbay-aral* meant to commemorate these watershed events. Participants were drawn from the faculty and staff of the various campuses of the University. Inspired by this initiative, faculty members teaching History 1 in UP Los Baños decided to incorporate field trips in their syllabi as an optional activity for the students.

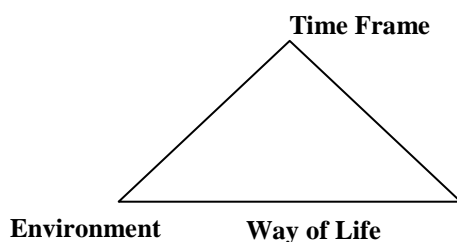
REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Museums have become important learning centers and partners in the educational system (Arinze 1999). There is an increasing need to integrate culture and the arts in the educational process (Nuzzaci 2006). Levesque (n.d.) stressed that visiting museums for purposes of developing students' historical understanding is extremely useful. A museum visit synthesizes three dimensions: the museological, the educational, and the social. According to Allard and Larouche (1998): The museological dimension clearly refers to the museum, as experienced by the visitor and to interactions between the latter and the works and objects exhibited. The educational field dimension refers to the discipline that the museum espouses by choosing to present objects of an artistic, historic, scientific or other nature. The social dimension corresponds to the specific characteristic and demands of the visitor's social group.

The end result is the enhancement of critical thinking engendering pride of one's origins. There is a connection between History 1 (Philippine History) as a national history course with this particular objective. Traditionally, museums describe the "state's style of thinking about its domain" (Anderson 1991). There is intimacy among the following: the state, the museum network, and the educational system as a whole.

The physical environment is an important dimension in the unfolding of historical events. The spatial aspects of life deserve close attention in localizing experience (Veneracion 1987; Chaudhuri 1990; Gripaldo et al 2003). The interaction between a given population and the environment has been the focus of some major writings in the field of history in the past few decades. This was inaugurated by Fernand Braudel's *La Mediterranee et le monde Meditteranean a l'epoque de Philippe II* published in 1946. According to him, "geography in the new scheme of things ceases to be an end in itself.... It helps us to discover the slowest-moving of structural realities, to create a new long term perspective" (in Camagay 1993). Therefore the study of a particular time series has to be situated in a given space. There are entities that move slowly or would hardly change even if studied for long duration of time. Topographic features belong to this category. Political events are in the other extreme because they take place in quick succession. However, to possess a holistic perspective on human history, the historical event and the environment should always be linked with one another (See Figure 1 Gripaldo et al 2003). The general direction in historical studies deals with the diverse activities of peoples and societies. Political history remains an important preoccupation but it is not and should not be synonymous with the discipline of history. In the Philippines, new areas are being undertaken as reflected in the interests of historians on social history, labor history, legal history, family history, military history, demographic history, local history, migration history, and religious history (Philippine Social Science Council 1993). Recently published textbooks on Philippine History (ADHIKA 2002; Gripaldo et al 2003) have incorporated in their framework the importance of geography, geology, and the environment in the understanding of the historical process. The environmental shift in historical studies is gaining ground. This paper will highlight a specific facet on the history – environment interplay in selected Philippine museums.

Figure 1. History-Environment Interplay



The main purpose of the study is to show how the physical environment is configured in the display of historical events by the museums under consideration. Specifically, the study focuses on the following questions: 1. What specific environmental features are given emphasis in the museums visited by the students? 2. Is the connection between history and the environment visible in the presentation of the museum exhibits?

METHODOLOGY:

Every semester the faculty teaching the course decide on the itinerary of the field trip. Sites that are visited vary depending on the focus for the particular semester. Historical places, museums, galleries and other repositories have been explored in the trips. For the first semester 2009-2010, the faculty chose to visit museums located in Metro Manila after an ocular inspection done in May 2009. These were the Veterans Federation of the Philippines' Museum, Library, Archives and Theatre (VFPMLAT), the Ayala Museum (AM), the Museo ng Katipunan (MK), the Manuel Quezon Memorial Shrine (MQMS), and the Bantayog ng mga Bayani/Heroes Monument (BNMB).

A pre-testing was conducted and the questionnaire was revised accordingly. The revised questionnaires were distributed to the 265 students/participants at the start of the trip and were required to answer them during the actual trip. Accomplished questionnaires were collected at the end of the activity. Primary data were studied through frequency and descriptive statistics and correspondence analysis. Secondary data were used in support of the information generated by the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Field trips are intended to provide the students the opportunity to relate with the actual locations and objects associated with the country's past. Retracing and capturing aspects of the past are important activities of the individual itself. These can strengthen the students' bonding with the environment. Space becomes a specific place - the home of collective experience. The students should be made aware that the possession of historical awareness begins with the gaze. Through a careful observation of the surroundings, one can start with the telling of a narrative. The historical process begins.

A series of museum visits were conducted from 25 July to 29 August 2009. The itinerary was the following:

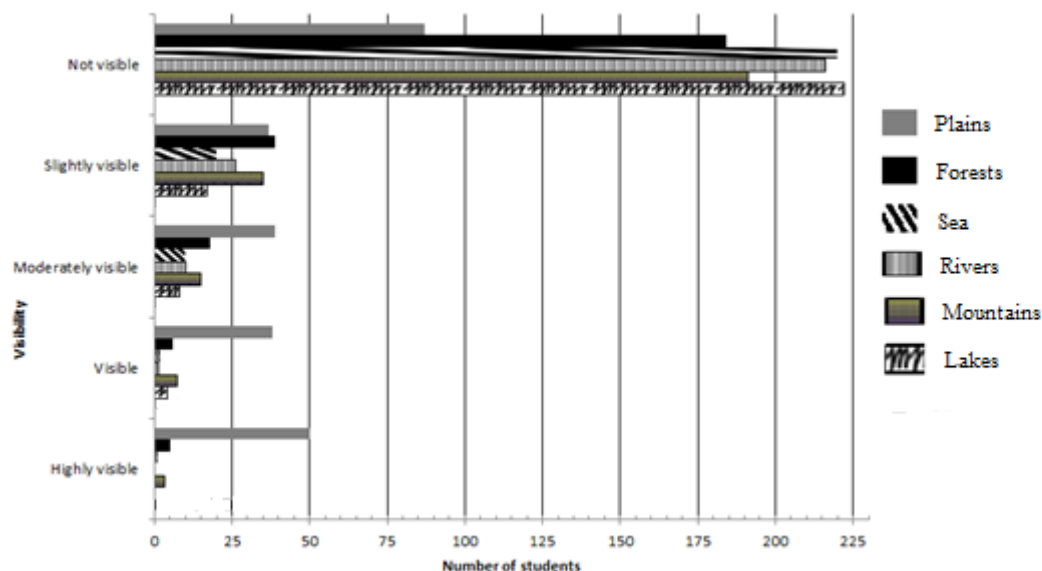
Name of Museum	Location	Profile
Veterans Federation of the Philippines' Museum, Library, Archives and Theatre (VFPMLAT)	Taguig City	It was inaugurated in 1997 and opened to the public in 1998. The museum highlights the struggles of the Filipino people against colonial rule especially during the Japanese Occupation. Thirty-four tableaux comprised the core collection of its exhibits.
Ayala Museum (AM)	Makati City	Its present building, located at Greenbelt Park was finished in 2004. The main attractions are the pre-colonial gold collection, dioramas, porcelain collection, and paintings by Filipino masters.
Museo ng Katipunan (MK)	San Juan City	Located in the historic Pinaglabanan Memorial Shrine and was opened in 1998. It is the only museum dedicated to the exploits of the Katipuneros of 1896. Katipunan artifacts and mementos, cedulas and medals, dioramas and highlights of San Juan local history are underscored.
Manuel Quezon Memorial Shrine (MQMS)	Quezon City	Almost three decades in the making, it was completed in 1978. The remains of Pres. Manuel L. Quezon were interred in this shrine in 1979. Photographs and other mementos are also on display.

Bantayog ng mga Bayani/Heroes Monument (BNMB)	Quezon City	It was opened in 30 November 1992. A memorial dedicated to the martyrs and heroes of Martial Law to EDSA Revolution. The Wall of Remembrance, replica of a prison cell and military tanks are some of the must-see installations of the museum.
---	-------------	---

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES GIVEN EMPHASIS IN THE MUSEUMS:

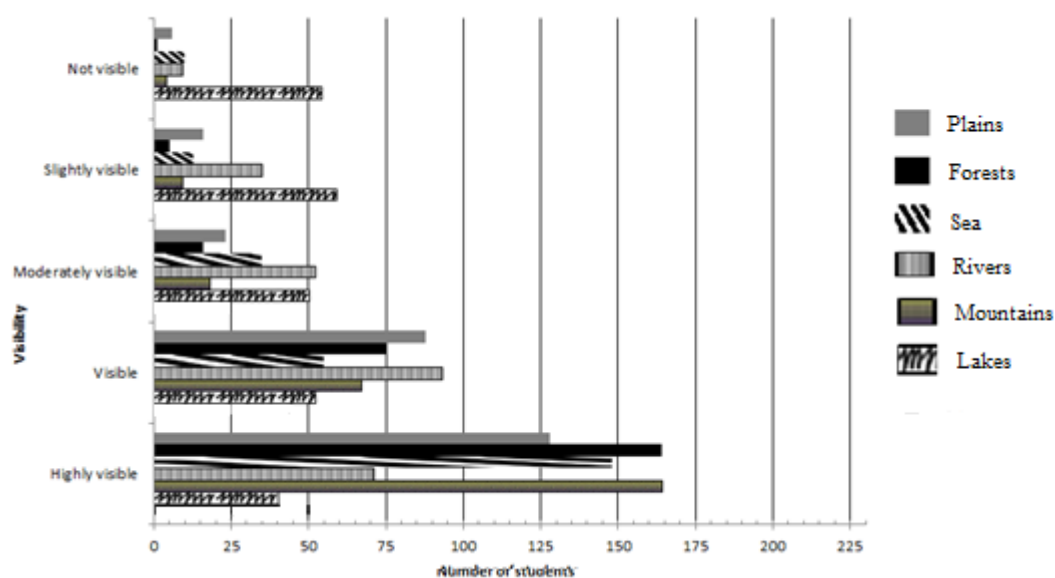
Table 1 shows that most of the respondents find that the different environmental features under consideration are not visible at the Veterans Federation of the Philippines' Museum. Nevertheless, some students observed that the plains are highly visible.

Table 1. Survey Result on the Different Environmental Features at the Veterans Federation of the Philippines' Museum



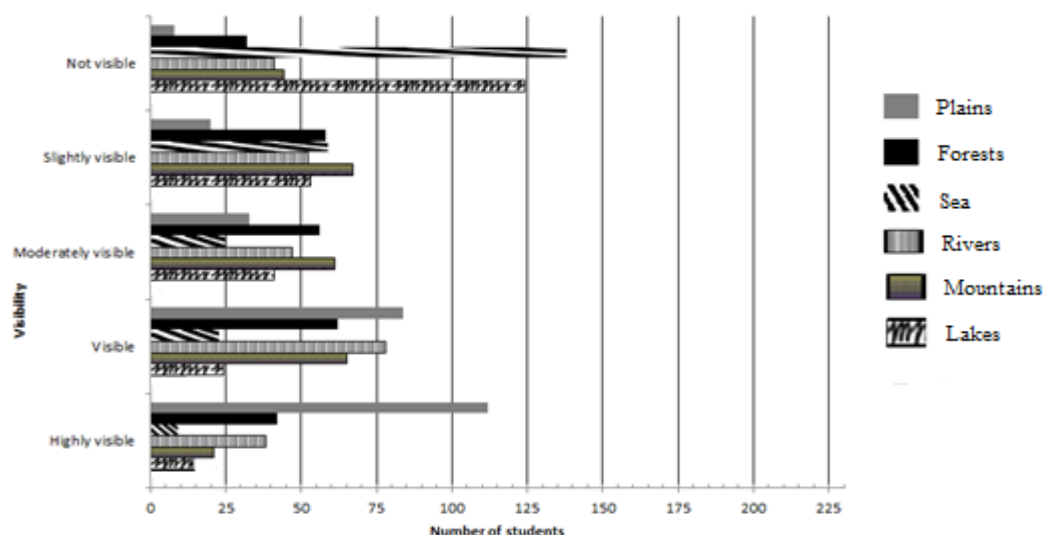
In the Ayala Museum, as shown in Table 2, most of the environmental features are highly visible or visible, except for lakes, where there were varied results. However, forests and mountains were the highly visible environmental features presented according to the students. Rivers are visible.

Table 2. Survey Result on the Different Environmental Features at the Ayala Museum



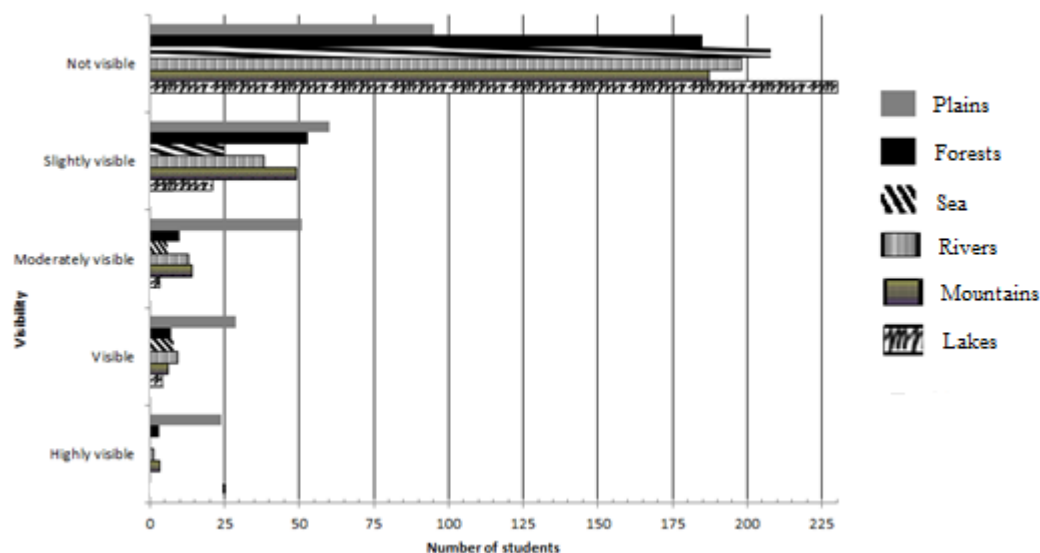
San Juan Katipunan Museum's survey result (Table 3) shows that in this museum, plains are highly visible, rivers are visible, and forests and mountains vary from slightly visible to visible. Sea and lakes are not visible.

Table 3. Survey Result on the Different Environmental Features at the **San Juan Katipunan Museum**



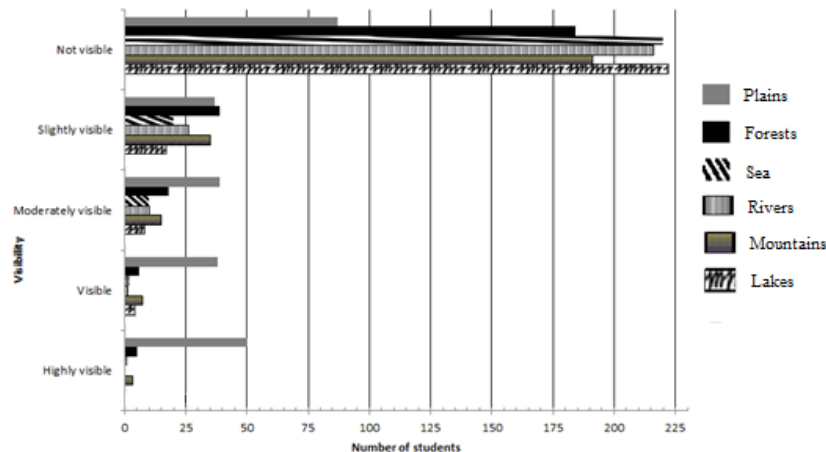
Environmental features are not visible at the Quezon Memorial Museum, as shown in Table 4. However, some students observed that the plains, forests and mountains are slightly visible.

Table 4. Survey Result on the Different Environmental Features at the **Quezon Memorial Museum**



At the Bantayog ng mga Bayani Museum, Table 5 shows that the environmental features are not visible. Some students indicated that plains are highly visible and forests and mountains are slightly visible.

Table 5. Survey Result on the Different Environmental Features at the **Bantayog ng mgs Bayani Museum**



To sum it up, the data shows that **plains** are visible for Veterans Museum; highly visible for Ayala Museum and Katipunan Museum; slightly visible for Quezon Memorial Museum; and not visible for Bantayog ng mga Bayani.

Forests are not visible for Veterans Museum; highly visible for Ayala Museum; slightly visible to visible for Katipunan Museum; and not visible for Quezon Memorial Museum and Bantayog ng mga Bayani.

The **sea** is not visible for Veterans Museum; highly visible for Ayala Museum; and not visible for Katipunan Museum, Quezon Memorial Museum and Bantayog ng mga Bayani.

Rivers on the other hand are not visible for Veterans Museum; visible for Ayala Museum and Katipunan Museum; and not visible for Quezon Memorial Museum and Bantayog ng mga Bayani.

Mountains are not visible for Veterans Museum; highly visible for Ayala Museum; ranges from slightly visible to visible for Katipunan Museum; and not visible for Quezon Memorial Museum and Bantayog ng mga Bayani.

Lakes are not visible for the Veterans Federation Museum; with varied results for Ayala Museum; and not visible for Katipunan Museum, Quezon Memorial Museum and Bantayog ng mga Bayani.

CONNECTION BETWEEN HISTORY AND THE ENVIRONMENT:

Most of the students-participants acknowledged the efforts of the museums in providing links between events and the physical environment. Of the 265 students, 131 or 49.4% of the participants found the museums successful in showing the connection between history and the environment; 103 (38.9%) very successful; 27 (10.2%) moderately successful; 1 (0.4%) slightly successful and 1 (0.4%) not successful. (See Table below)

Table 6. Success in Showing the Connection between History and the Environment

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Very Successful	103	38.9
	Successful	131	49.4
	Moderately Successful	27	10.2
	Slightly Successful	1	.4
	Not Successful	1	.4
	Missing Values	2	.8
Total		265	100.0

The above quantitative data were validated by the qualitative responses of the students. They highlighted the role played by the environment in the progression of history, as one student put it, *“through this field trip, we can see the role played by the environment as stage where history happens”*. To emphasize this special relationship, the following are some of the student’s comments:

“Even before the arrival of the Spaniards, Filipinos use their environment in their everyday needs. During the revolution, mountains and other land forms were used by the Filipinos as hiding places. They also use the environment to fight the colonizers.”

“Many of the histories of the Filipino were formed because of the environment. Example of this is the vast amount of spices to be found and the gold-rich environment. Another is that there is a great amount of natural resources to be found throughout the Philippines”.

“Each historical event has its own setting; images of the environment remind us of the important events that happened there.”

“The actions of the Filipinos depend on their environment. Their lifestyles are primarily affected by the environment, because here is where they get their resources to survive.”

The students also evaluated the importance of the environment in shaping historical events as highly important in both Ayala Museum and Veterans Museum; important for Katipunan Museum; slightly important for Quezon Memorial Museum; and not important for Bantayog Museum.

Some of the student reactions on this relation reveal the following:

“The relationship between people and history is evident. For example, some important historical events during the revolution are named after their settings, such as the Battle of Tirad Pass.”

“It’s true that one of the important elements of history is the setting, because after you have seen the place, you may imagine things that cannot be expressed through words.”

“With the trees and the rugged terrains, invaders were able to hide and launched their attack against the Filipinos.”

CONCLUSION:

In view of the precarious state of Philippine and global environmental conditions, museums should consciously incorporate nature in their exhibitions. Through this effort, the educational content is made more relevant. On the other hand, faculty members who bring students to the museums, at the very least, should be concerned with the pertinent intellectual preparation of their students prior to the visit. It is interesting to determine if in the classroom setting, the teacher clearly illustrates the interplay of event and the physical setting. Actual historical narratives should be contextualized where “the cast will alter, but the set remains broadly the same” (Braudel 1993). Therefore, museum managers should be aware that when they exhibit their collection, the environmental is important as the locus of the historical process.

REFERENCES:

- [1] Allard, Michel and Marie Claude Larouche. (1998). *Experimental Modelling of Museum Education in the Context of Cultural Diversity*. Canada: University of Quebec and Montreal. Retrieved December 19, 2011, from <http://www.unites.uqam.ca/grem/pdf/australia.pdf>
- [2] Anderson, Benedict. (1991). *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso.
- [3] Arinze, Emmanuel N. (17 May 1999). “The Role of the Museum in Society”. Lecture delivered at the National Museum, Georgetown, Guyana. 17 May 1999. Retrieved December 19, 2011, from http://www.maltwood.uvic.ca/cam/activities/past_conferences/1999conf/CAM'99-EmmanuelArinze.GuyanaFinal.pdf
- [4] Braudel, Fernand. (1993). *A History of Civilizations*. New York: Penguin Books.
- [5] Camagay, Ma. Luisa. (1993). “Annales School and New History” in *Philippine Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Quezon City: Philippine Social Science Council.
- [6] Chaudhuri, Kirti N. (1990). *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [7] Diokno, Maria Serena I. “History in Basic Education” in *Inquirer.net*. Retrieved December 19, 2011, from <http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view/20090905-223619/History-in-basic-education>
- [8] Galang, Ricardo A. (1991). “Making Philippine History Alive” in *Historical Bulletin*. Quezon City: Philippine Historical Association.. Vols. 27-28, 28-35.
- [9] Gripaldo, Eden M, et. al. (2003). *Kasaysayan ng Filipinas at mga Institusyong Filipino*. Quezon City: UP-Sentro ng Wikang Filipino.
- [10] *Kasaysayang Bayan: Sampung Aralin sa Kasaysayang Pilipino*. (2002). Quezon City: ADHIKA ng Pilipinas, Inc.
- [11] Levesque, Stephane. *Integrating Museum Education and School History: Illustrations from the RCR Museum and London Museum of Archaeology*. Retrieved on November 23, 2011, from <http://www.heirnet.org/IJHLTR/journal11/Levesque.pdf>
- [12] Nuzzaci, Antonella. (2006). “General Education and Museum Education: Between Singularity and Plurality” in *Revista Complutense de Educacion*. Vol. 17, Num. 1, 65-75. Retrieved December 19, 2011, from <http://www.ucm.es/BUCM/revistas/edu/11302496/articulos/RCED0606120065A.PDF>
- [13] *Philippine Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. (1993). Quezon City: Philippine Social Science Council.
- [14] Veneracion, Jaime. (1987). *Agos ng Dugong Kayumanggi (Isang Kasaysayan ng Pilipinas)*. Quezon City: Education Forum.
