

that, in practice, the former cannot really be eradicated by a single habit alone. One needs to tap the other angelic virtues to ward off the demonic vices, always trusting in God's heavenly aid to sustain one's spiritual journey while on earth.

*Angelic Virtues and Demonic Vices* gives a glimpse of the inner battle transpiring within the hearts of every individual striving to find happiness and holiness. With this book, Fr. Cole exemplifies the understanding that Christian morality is not so much what man does for God, but what God does in man who freely cooperates with his grace.

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**Alaurin, Edgardo D. O.P. *Sports in the Philippines: History, Values, Spirituality*. Manila: The University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2021. pp. 244. ISBN 987-971-506-877-2.**

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Sports occupies an intriguing niche within the Philippine society. The conventional wisdom of the Filipinos about sports is that it emphasizes competitive activities that could be for leisure or recreation, or even a professional occupation. Thus, the ramification of such viewpoint was that it permeates a myopic and trivial view of sports instead of using it as a lens to probe the Philippine society in a myriad of ways. Ergo, Fr. Alaurin's *Sports in the Philippines: History, Values, Spirituality* is deemed as a trailblazing effort as it attempts to drive the field of sports and sporting culture out of intellectual backwater in the Philippine setting.

The strength of the book lies on two aspects: First, the author has used simple, precise, and straightforward wordings. Devoid of any verbose or complex terminologies that could hamper the transfer of ideas between the author and the reader, the book is now easily comprehended for both general populace and the people in the scholarly fields. The presence of terms borrowed from foreign languages (be it in Latin, Spanish, or any other language of etymological origin) is deemed as an unavoidable feat but it must not be treated as an obstacle for there is a provided English translation of such terminologies to guide the reader.

Second and more importantly, the discussion of the three distinct aspects specified in the sub-title namely: History, Values, and Spirituality was organized in a manner that the reader could not get a feeling of confusion. The author devoted the first three chapters of the book in the discussion of 'history,' wherein he conspicuously utilized a worldview approach that positioned the development of Philippine sports as a byproduct of the historical and ongoing development of numerous sports and its subsequent propagation hailing from both the Western and Eastern world. The foray of 'sports' in the Philippines came during the Spanish colonial period, not during the pre-colonial period nor the American colonial period, with the introduction of games and activities that are uniquely Spanish in origin, such as but not limited to *jai-alai*, *corrida* (pp. 38-39), *karéra* (p. 40-41), *esgrima* (p. 42), and games played at *férias* (p. 41). However, Fr. Alaurin should clarify as to the differentiation of the operational meaning of the terms, *sport* and *games*, during this period, and how he would historicize such activities, as it might

appear confusing and anachronistic to the readers. In the American period, through the increment of public educational institutions that cultivated vigorous sport-physical activities and the participation of the country in regional and international sporting tournaments, the Filipinos' encounter and partaking in sports is simply undeniable, from which accrued the formation of the notion of which sport should be heralded as the "nation's premiersport," as the contemporary period came. The author cited an instance of the intersection of sports and religion within the context of Philippine history through the form of sports rivalry between the teams run by Religious Orders and Congregations in the NCAA and UAAP wherein the 'prestige and pride of the school' is fought for that started with the formation of inter-collegiate sporting tournament in the 1920s which is still continuing up until the present (pp. 53-54). Moving forward, the author's educational background gives a sense of credence and assurance to the information being relayed in terms of 'values and virtues' in sports, come chapter four to seven, is accurate and intellectually grounded. Like the skills gotten from sports training, the belief of sports as an avenue of "holistic formation of individuals" that transforms one for the better is cogently discussed in these chapters. This, in itself, is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the capability of sports in the society. Notably, chapter nine was devoted to explain the remarkable coexistence of the three seemingly distinct topics of History, Values, and Spirituality, in the form of sports personalities, respected both in the domestic and international arena. The author argues that these personalities became 'role models' that exude inspiration and encouragement for people, especially the youth. (p. 199) Though, pondering deeper to such contention also comes with the discomfiting fact of the idea of idolization is a paradox, lurking in plain sight, that has the provocative ability to make someone felt empowered to achieve more what they can do as their idols have done, but at the same time, restrain the logical and critical thinking and judgment of a person that could lead to a blind imitation of their so-called 'idols,' simply because they could relate and commiserate with their idol's life. Such a paradoxical yet realistic ponderance remained mute within the chapters of the book, thereafter it became a missed opportunity for the author to dwell deeper.

If the strengths of the book are well-articulated, then so should be its shortcomings. As an ambitious book that dwelt on the interconnection of history, values, and spirituality in the Philippine setting, it inevitably invites critical introspection and questions.

From the packaging, it is but well-understood and expected from the title and sub-title that the book will have a core goal: advance an understanding of sports within the confines of the "Philippines" which will be dissected and discussed through the crucial lens of 'history,' 'values,' and 'spirituality.' This was not the case for this instance, to a certain extent. Instead of eliding the international backdrop as historical context so as to make the discussion straightforward to the Philippine setting, the book explicitly, in great detail at Chapter One, discusses the history of sports in general, from the ancient times (such as sports played in the concurrent civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt) towards the present period, so as to make necessary appraisal and connection with its local development. While there is truth clutched on the statement that giving a worldview historical precedent as context is necessary, there is the impression that Fr. Alaurin is

trying to elucidate too much on a topic that is somewhat unnecessary to be discussed in the extent he did in the book.

In any matter dealing with history, referring to historical references is paramount. It is noteworthy in the provided references list that the oft-cited sources in relation to history are to be categorized as secondary and even tertiary sources, wherein it tends to ground that the presented information was heavily sourced from such materials. The replete of primary sources underpins the lack of substantiated claim that permeates the growth of a cloud of dubiousness to the veracity of the data presented. This writer will cite an instance in terms of the said weakness. The inclusion of *arnís* as a game that became prevalent in the Spanish colonial period (p. 38) needs to be grounded better in a historical way, as the term itself and its origins is a convoluting one which generates confusion. Corroboration is lacking so as to prove his assertion. In short, subjecting all sources in a critical, thorough, and exhaustive criticism is a must for all endeavors.

And also, to add to the list, it would be better for the overall visual flow of the book if the photographs or visual representation shown side-by-side with the discussion of a period is actually coming from the same period of discussion. This reader will cite an evident instance. Side-by-side with the discussion of the growing sporting rivalry within the NCAA and UAAP in the decade of the 1930s, the author opted to put photographs of basketball players playing in the NCAA and UAAP to have visual representation (p. 53), but the problem is that the photographs were of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not in the 1930s. In general, such a minor drawback would not influence the overall validity of the information presented, but it is a missed opportunity to include visual reality that existed and captured at the same moment as the information is trying to convey to its reader.

The reader also felt a sense of insufficiency in expounding the interweavement of history, values, and spirituality in the Philippine setting. The author might have been unfamiliar with the historical precedents that existed locally; thus, such a struggle was compensated with reference to the Olympic Games as the paradigmatic example of such interweavement (pp. 178-180). The discussion could have included more localized examples such as but not limited to: the ‘Muscular Christianity’ movement that started in the United Kingdom by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a relevant backdrop to the way the Americans have introduced their sports as a colonizing effort, or the persisting concern with regards to game-fixing, sports betting, and other related activities that could be deemed as immoral which naturally becomes anathema to the overall cause of values and spirituality.

To end, Fr. Alaurin’s *Sports in the Philippines: History, Values, Spirituality* is a courageous attempt in filling a huge gap in understanding sports in the country. Despite the shortcomings mentioned, it should not warrant detraction of it being a quality work which makes sports a worthy avenue of academic discussion.

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