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2010-06-24T11:26:39Z
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Ambivalence and Ambiguity in the Formation of Identity:

A Reading of José Rizal's *El Filibusterismo*

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A Research Report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in European Literature

Johannesburg, 2008

ABSTRACT

This study examines the manifestation of ambivalence and ambiguity in the formation of identity as read in José Rizal's *El Filibusterismo*. The location of the study within a colonial novel using elements of fiction such as the roles of the narrator, reader and author, characters, and the plot as sites of examination is intended to trace the source of ongoing manifestations of ambivalence in identity in post-colonial societies.

The study indicates that national identity formation in societies where injustice and oppression is present is necessarily intertwined with struggle. In light of this, the research attempts to examine the psychology behind the fight for independence and demonstrate the ambivalent and ambiguous response of the subject to separation, which is viewed as a natural progression of identity construction. The examination of ambivalence serves to indicate the consequences of the subject's internalization of the colonial framework which manifests itself to this day in post-colonial societies.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in European Literature at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

Michelle Aldana-Heinermann

2 August 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am hugely indebted to Professor Kathleen Thorpe for her supervision and relentless encouragement in the making of this research report. Acknowledgement must also go to the professors in the Department of European Literature for deepening my appreciation of the novel genre. Their gems of knowledge and immeasurable zeal for the genre helped me remember what it is I love about nineteenth-century novels. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their patience and invaluable support, particularly during the difficult phases in the creation of this project.

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"…In the Philippines all those are *filibusteros* in the towns who do not take off their hats on meeting a Spaniard, be the weather that it may; those who greet a friar and do not kiss his sweaty hand, if he is a priest, or his habit, if he is a lay-brother; those who manifest displeasure at being addressed by the familiar *tu* by anyone and everyone, accustomed as they are to show respect and receive it; those who are subscribers to some periodical of Spain or of Europe, even if it treat of literature, the sciences, or the fine arts; those who read books other than the novenas and fairy-stories of miracles of the girdle, of the cord, or the scapular; those who in the election of the *gobernadorcillos* vote for the one who is not the candidate of the parish priest; all those, in a word, who among normal civilized people are considered good citizens, friends of progress and enlightenment, in the Philippines are *filibusteros*, enemies of order, and like lightning rods, attract on stormy days wrath and calamities".

(José Rizal—*El Filibusterismo en Filipinas*: in Constantino, Renato. *Neocolonial Identity and Counter-Consciousness.* 1978. London: The Merlin Press Limited.)

Introduction

El Filibusterismo, the last published novel by the nineteenth-century Filipino writer, Dr. José Rizal, is credited with having sparked the fires of the so-called Philippine Revolution of 1896, which fought for the liberation of the archipelago from Spanish colonial oppression.[1] For this reason, the novel is hailed as one of the greatest Filipino novels of all time. Up to the late nineteenth-century, the name Filipino was used to denote Spaniards born in the Philippines. The "natives" of the islands were referred to as *Indios*, literally meaning of natives of the Indies or the ethnic Malays. In Europe however, where Rizal studied and wrote his novels, "these distinctions were unknown or seen as irrelevant. No matter what their status was back home, here (in Europe) they were all *filipinos*".[2] Thus began the development of the awareness in the "native" and the formation of his consciousness of a national identity.

The aim of this research is to examine the presence of ambivalence and ambiguity in the formation of identity, as portrayed in José Rizal's *El Filibusterismo*. Rather than basing its origin on markers such as colour, blood relation or territorial boundaries, the concept of a Filipino first came about amidst a context of oppression and struggle. Thus, the first Filipino's identity is necessarily entwined with this awareness of the "Other". The

[1] For a more comprehensive list of the author's works, as well as further biographical and bibliographical information, refer to the José Rizal homepage at http://www.joserizal.ph/in01.html. An online version of *El Filibusterismo* is also accessible through the Gutenberg website: Derbyshire, Charles. *El Filibusterismo: The Reign of Greed*. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10676/10676-h/10676-h.htm.)

[2] Anderson, Benedict. *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination.* 2007. London: Verso. Pp.62-63

research sets out to prove that oppression and struggle are necessary evils in the formation of identity and that the idea of separation from the colonizer is a natural and organic development in a nation's maturity as shown in the context of the novel.

"*El Filibusterismo*" or "filibusterism" in today's definition applies to the use of obstructive tactics in parliamentary proceedings. In the nineteenth-century, the word evolved from its seventeenth-century definition pertaining to the acts committed by pirates or freebooters, and became a politically-loaded terminology. At that time, the term *Filibusteros* was used to designate bands originating from the United States, who defied international law by invading and inciting revolutions in several Spanish-American territories to insure their annexation by the United States. [3] This definition is the closest to the author's description of the *filibusteros* in the novel.

In *El Filibusterismo*, the *filibusteros* are represented by the characters of Simoun, who epitomizes the radical elements in Philippine society; Cabesang Tales *aka* Matanglawin, who symbolizes the outlaws; and Isagani, who represents the ideals of the progressive Filipino students. The representation of the different *filibusteros* in the novel is of crucial importance in its analysis because they portray the varied responses meditated upon by the author to the injustices and oppression suffered in the hands of the colonizer. The novel is set in an era of unrest and agitation, generally believed to be during the rule of

[3] Brewer noted the most notable of those filibusters: those led by Narciso Lopez against Cuba (1850-1851) and William Walker against Sonora (1853-1854). (Brewer, Ebenezer C. *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. 1977. London: Cassell & Company Ltd. Pg.411). Benedict Anderson provides a more detailed explanation on the terms political evolution quoting from the essay of Fernando Tarrida del Mármol and from Raynard and Diderot's *Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Établissements & du Commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*. (Anderson, Benedict. *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination.*2007. London: Verso. Note 11, pp.59-60.)

Governor-General Valeriano Weyler in the Philippines (1888-1891). The man referred to as *Su Excellencia* in the novel epitomizes the abuses of the colonial government in the archipelago exacerbated by the political intrusions of the Church Orders.[4] The stories of the different *filibusteros* mentioned above, form the plot and subplots of the novel. The idea of inequality and the stultification of the minds and spirits of the young people through the withholding of proper education, primarily by denying the understanding and acquisition of the language of the colonizer, are brought out in the tale of Isagani and his other student friends. Their campaign to have a state-sponsored, non-clerical, student-run academy for the teaching of Spanish established reflects the microcosm of the tactical assimilation movement organized by the Filipinos in Spain as an initial solution to the injustices and oppression suffered by the colony.[5] The students' proposal is granted but not to the spirit of the letters. The students hold a mock celebration in a noodle-house and are arrested and imprisoned thereafter. A surreptitious court hearing echoing the dubious trial of the three priests to whom the author dedicates the novel follows, where ironically, one student who is not party to the affair ends up serving the longest time in prison. This incarceration puts an end to his medical studies and consequently, his future. This particular story is taken by the author from an actual source. A medical student in Manila was arrested and imprisoned without a trial after a copy of the author's first novel,

[4] Weyler, dubbed "the butcher" in the American newspapers for inventing concentration camps in Cuba while he was the governor there, was reported to have relied heavily on the clerics for political advice and support while governing the Philippines. (Coates, Austin. *Rizal: Philippine Nationalist and Martyr.* 1968. London: Oxford University Press. Pp.165-166). This close alliance with the clergy may very well have been born out of fear. Encounters with religious corporations in the nineteenth-century were known to result in officials' dismissals engineered by the clergy in Madrid. At the time, the crown was reliant on the political support of the church. This gave the clergy too much power that they often resorted to insubordination when their interests were endangered.

[5] The Filipinos in Madrid, known as the *Ilustrados* or the "enlightened ones", were the purveyors of the notion that freedom from oppression could be attained initially through the hispanization of the people of the Philippines. Rizal was part of this group in the beginning but eventually lost his faith in the idea due to personal circumstances that will be discussed later on. (*Ibid.* Pg.163)

Noli Me Tangere, banned by the colonial government due to its "anti-clericalism", had been found in his lodging.[6]

While the students agitate for integration through a Spanish language-based system of education, another form of *filibustero* appears in the novel. This is personified by Cabesang Tales, a small landowner who loses his land to a religious corporation and becomes a feared outlaw known as *Matanglawin*.[7] His tale illustrates the many injustices suffered by those who are poor and uneducated in the Philippines at the hands of the rich and powerful Church Orders. The story is the closest to the author's heart, for, as will be shown later on, it is a fictionalized version of an historical event which involved the author and his family.

Simoun's tale occupies the central plot. The cynical jewel merchant is the young Crisostomo Ibarra of *Noli Me Tangere*,[8] who, after many years of wandering in Cuba and Europe, and having earned the trust and friendship of the Governor-general, comes back to the Philippines calling himself Simoun, to incite a bloody revolution. As Blumentritt puts it, the mysterious jeweller:

> has bewitched the league of friars and reactionaries, so that following unconsciously his inspirations they would favour and promote that policy which only aspires to one aim: to spread the idea of subversion throughout the entire

[6] The banning of *Noli Me Tangere* was orchestrated by the religious Orders in the Philippines who felt they were the direct target of the novel. The Church officials initially lost their petition but Weyler's arrival in Manila gave turned the tide to the clergy's favour. (*Ibid.* Pg.166)
[7] Matanglawin translates to "hawk's-eye" in English.
[8] The cruelty suffered by the young *mestizo* and his father before him, at the hands of the Church Orders forms the plot of *Noli Me Tangere*. An understanding of the full motivation for Ibarra/Simoun's rage requires a reading of this novel.

> country and to convince the last Filipino that no other salvation exists outside of separation from the Motherland.[9]

Using his power over the authorities and his wealth to promote corruption within the ruling class, Simoun envisions the quick and resounding downfall of the tyrants. His conviction is that by instigating greed and multiplying injustice, the oppressed will finally be aroused from their servility and precipitated into action. He recruits students and oppressed "natives" like *Matanglawin* to carry out his scheme. His plan to detonate a bomb to signal the revolution fails twice, and in the end, this lonely figure takes his life, but not before confessing his sin to a "native" priest and entrusting the latter with the riches which had aided his malevolent design. The priest throws this treasure in the sea and relinquishes the future to the hands of nature.

The "vigilante" element of the narrative echoes the anarchic events that reverberated all over Europe from Russia and the islands in the south of America in Rizal's time. These events were manifestations of extremist rebellion against the Tsarist monarchy and colonial imperialism. Rizal, who through his sojourns in Europe was exposed to these ideas, transposed them into the novel in order to represent the radical elements in Filipino society who were contemplating violent means to gain separation from Spain.

As already mentioned above, the portrayals of the different *filibusteros* in the novel are crucial in its analysis because they give the reader a glimpse into the experiences and events in Rizal's life which influenced the state of his mind at the time of writing. The

[9] The quote is taken from the epigraph of *El Filibusterismo*, as written by the well-known authority on the Philippine islands in the nineteenth-century, Ferdinand Blumentritt. The Sudeten-German professor was asked by his friend, the author José Rizal, to write the foreword to the novel.

relevant insinuations emerge in the novel via the many authorial intrusions which serve as "clues" to guide the reader in solving a mystery. This system of construction coerces the reader to participate fully in the reading process (Iser) by searching the text for "keys", which turn out to be factual historical events, and using them to unlock the mystery of the author's intention in writing the novel.

The inseparability of the text from actual historical facts shows that *El Filibusterismo* is used by Rizal as a site for his "confessions", which has obvious implications in the evaluation of the novel as a work of fiction, as stated in the "fictional contract" (Assmann) between the reader and the author. An exploration of the rules of this agreement provides insights into Rizal's motivations and shows the development of national consciousness in the author. In other words, the medium of fiction is employed by the author as the stage for his "interrogative meditation" (Kundera) on the most suitable solution for the Philippine situation. This meditation, as will be observed, is laden with ambivalence and ambiguity. It appears to propose no concrete solution to the question of the best way to liberate the Filipino people from colonial oppression. An attempt to resolve this ambivalence is undertaken through the identification of the author's intended reader (Iser).

While the nation called Philippines exists, the definition of what a Filipino is remains ambiguous. One major problem is the lack of a cohesive national language that binds a nation and helps form a so-called national consciousness. Though this is partly touched on in my research, a more profound examination of the development of national identity

through socio-linguistic framework requires a separate study. Instead, this paper focuses on the psychological aspect of identity formation, using the analogy of the nation as a child and its eventual maturity leading to its struggle for independence from the parent.

This is not the first research attempted on the question of identity or colonialism in the Philippines. Many of those investigations are reflected in this study. Anderson's book, *Under Three Flags,* which deals with the history of anarchism and anti-colonialism, contributed largely to this research by way of its analysis of José Rizal's life *vis a vis* the political climate in Europe and its influence in the young mind of the author. The theme of revenge in the novel is examined in this study but is more profoundly explored in Vicente Rafael's essay titled, "Foreignness and Vengeance: On Rizal's *El Filibusterismo*". In reverse, Rafael partly touches on Rizal's intended reader in the essay while the researcher of this report uses this particular element of the novel to analyze the author's intention in writing his work. Finally, the concept of ongoing colonial mentality in post-colonial Philippines owes its analysis to the research done by Renato Constantino in his book, *Neocolonial Identity and Counter Consciousness*. Constantino concentrates his research on Filipino nationalism as a response to American colonialism, but his exploration of this consciousness traces its roots as far back as to the Spanish colonilization. This study uses his findings and explores them within the framework of *El Filibusterismo* in order to trace the root of the ambivalence towards national identity in post-colonial societies.

Chapter One: Identity Formation: The Making of A Filipino

Freud, in his theory of psychoanalysis, establishes and identifies specific stages in the development of identity in a child. The first stage, which he calls the Pre-Oedipal state, is characterized by a symbiosis between the child and the parent's body, usually the mother's breast.[10] At this stage, the child is yet to possess an Ego. Freud places Identity in the centre of conflict between the Ego and the Id.[11] The Ego develops out of the Id's—the unconscious source of sexual drives, (sexual or non-sexual) instincts and irrational impulses—interaction with the "Umwelt".

Freud's theory in the development of the "I" in a child is relevant in analyzing *El Filibusterismo* because the various stages of a child's acquisition of the "I" are analogous to the development of national identity in Rizal as reflected in the novel. In the beginning of *El Filibusterismo*, a symbiotic relationship is presupposed between the colony and the colonizer where the Philippines is seen as an infant, dependent on Spain, the mother, for support. This support is extended by the mother through her colonial government in the Philippines. This view is shared by some of the characters in the novel, particularly the Europeans and the students who are campaigning for the establishment of a state-sponsored Spanish academy.[12] In an extemporaneous speech during the students' discussion of the Philippine situation, the peninsular student Sandoval proclaims:

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[10] Freud, Sigmund. *A General Introduction To Psychoanalysis.* 1938. New York: Garden City Pub. Co. Pp.275-308
[11] *Ibid.* Pg.308
[12] See Introduction Pg.9

> "The Spanish government…has given you everything, has not denied you anything. We had absolutism in Spain, and you have absolutism; the friars covered our soil with convents, and convents occupy a third part of Manila; in Spain, the garrotte reigns, and the garrotte here is the ultimate penalty; we are Catholics and we made you Catholics".[13]

One of the most important elements of this novel which shall be discussed in the following chapters is irony. Often, the characters are made to speak lines which are far too absurd to be taken seriously. As we shall see more later on, it is at those moments that the most important messages are delivered by the author either through the narrator or as in this case, the characters. The *peninsulares*' assertion that there is equality between the colonizer and the colony simply because Spain suffers the same backward beliefs that the Filipinos are made to suffer is bitterly humorous. Moreover, the mention of the garrotte is a clever inclusion by the author to call to mind the slow and cruel method of torture of the Middle Ages still being practised by the colonizers. This resembles the cruel and oppressive rule being suffered by the natives under the colonial rule.

Sandoval's claim that absolutism, religion and punishment are beneficial to the development of a healthy Philippines is met with a silent response by his fellow students. This raises a suspicion that these purported "advantages" are not perceived by the natives as as favourable to them as it is perhaps for Spain. This supposed beneficence plays a very important role not in elevating the *Indios,* but rather in subjugating them. The

[13] Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion, A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere*. 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Pg.114

teaching of the church which emphasizes the virtues of "humility, submissiveness, and respect" [14], is a ploy to indoctrinate the natives into the colonial concept of inferiority and obedience in order to facilitate their control. Passivity and blind acceptance of the rulers are not only important in laying the foundations of a colonial framework but also in protecting the colonizer's economic interests in the country. [15] The irony of the statement thus places into question the supposed symbiotic relationship between the Philippines and Spain. The reader realizes that these "benevolent acts" are flawed because they are advantageous only in the eyes of the colonizer or the parent.

As the Spaniard continues, "…we were scholastics and scholasticism shines in your school halls", the concept of education also lends itself to critique.[16] While the establishment of schools in the Philippines may be construed as a generous act by the colonizer, the whole dynamics of education in the colony is far from ideal.[17] The narrator criticizes the mode of learning, which is reduced to reciting lessons from memory. In the schools, the students come not to learn but to be marked as present and recite the lesson word for word like "recorders".[18] To be present in class is carefully noted but it does not

[14] *Ibid.* Pg.97

[15] According to Juan Medina, as quoted by Constantino in his work, "of crucial importance is the fact that the friars concentrated their attention on the children". This meant that the subjugation of the natives is ensured for generations to come. Constantino observed that "within a few years these children grown to adulthood under the new dispensation were so thoroughly brainwashed that they became the foundation stone of a new colonial establishment with the accompanying negative virtues that supported the stultification of mind and spirit". (Constantino, Renato. *Neocolonial Identity and Counter-Consciousnes.* 1978. London: The Merlin Press Ltd. Pg.33)

[16] Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion, A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere*. 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Pg.114

[17] Education was an anomalous concept under the Spanish government. According to Constantino, the goal of the primary schools is to enable the children to learn their catechism and secondary schools were open only to students of Spanish origins. (*Op.cit.* Pg.33)

[18] *Op. Cit*. Pg.101. The reference to a recording machine reminds one of the dehumanization techniques employed by Zola in *Germinal*, where he compared the miners to cattle and other animals. (Cf. *Germinal,* 2004) The French author's intention is of course to point out that the inhuman treatment of the workers is a

necessarily entail learning because the day's lesson is learned at home by memorizing the required books, which are in Spanish, a language exclusive to the *Peninsulares*. What is then termed as "studying" is nothing but memory work because the students' understanding of the language is very shallow. Thus, it becomes impossible for those pursuing higher education to understand the books because the materials are all in Spanish. The result is a mere regurgitation of the written text without absorbing the edification it is meant to provide. This is clearly another tactic of the colonizer to maintain the level of ignorance in the colonized society and thus ensure its subservience.

Apart from the interspersed references to this topic, the author dedicates two entire chapters of the novel to elucidate on this inadequacy in education. Chapter Thirteen, titled "A Class in Physics", starts with a description of a laboratory in the Dominican University of Santo Tomas de Manila, scantily equipped with scientific instruments from Europe.[19] The instruments are displayed on a cabinet, never to be touched by the students, and serve only to impress guests visiting the University. As the narrator opines:

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psychological method employed by the capitalists to ensure the miners' subjugation. This parallels Rizal's intention of drawing attention to the "stultification of the mind and spirit" (Constantino, Renato. *Neocolonial Identity and Counter-Consciousness.*1978. London: The Merlin Press Limited. Pg.33) of the students by the Church Orders in order to maintain their level of ignorance hence facilitating submissiveness.

[19] The Universidad de Santo Tomas in Manila was the first university established in Southeast Asia. (Anderson, Benedict. *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination.* 2007. London: Verso. pg.23). There were also several colleges like the Ateneo and San Juan de Letran. Rizal was a student of the Jesuit-run Ateneo before proceeding to take up Medicine in the Dominican controlled Santo Tomas. The author's preference for Ateneo's practical method of teaching is shown by the comparative line preceding the above-quoted passage: "...but (for) the majority of these students coming from the Ateneo of the Jesuits, where the science is practically taught in the laboratory itself..." (Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion, A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere*. 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Pg.99). It also shows an attempt to "genuine learning", albeit by the minor and marginalized Jesuit group, during colonial time.

"…its (the laboratory's) value does not come as great as it would have if taken advantage of by the two hundred and fifty who pay their matriculation, buy their books, study and spend a year only to know nothing afterwards."

The chapter proceeds to describe the classroom dynamics (or lack thereof). The professor, a progressive in comparison to his colleagues, who do not share his interest in deepening their knowledge of the sciences, nevertheless compromises his liberal ideas because of his religious fanaticism. The young Dominican's rapport with the students also shows racial discrimination and contempt. Padre Millon condescendingly uses a Spanish melange with Tagalog, or spoken with a Chinese accent to insult or make fun of the students, who are predominantly *Indios* ("natives") and Chinese *mestizos*.[20] It was obviously another way of maintaining social distance and putting the "native" in his place. By way of example, one student's frustration is detailed by the author in a chapter bearing the scholar's name. Placido Penitente, a bright student, is disillusioned by the obvious disregard by the Spanish teacher for "native" students like himself. Despite his attempts to gain attention through European styling and clothing, he has not had a chance to recite in class. In a classroom of over a hundred and fifty, it is next to impossible to be noticed, and recognition is equated to passing the class. Placido, realizing that the year is almost over and desperate for attention, enters the classroom noisily. Here is a suggestion that, in order for those in power to take notice, it is sometimes necessary to resort to subversive actions. The indifferent system coerces the people to adopt a

[20] The Chinese *mestizos* were children of Chinese traders with a native woman. According to Constantino, this "economically dynamic group" would "subsequently displace the local elites or link up with them through intermarriage". They played a prominent role in the struggle for liberation because of their awareness that despite their relatively economically elite position in the society, they will never be treated as equals by the Spaniards. (Constantino, Renato. *Neocolonial Identity and Counter-Consciousnes.* 1978. London: The Merlin Press Ltd. Pp.49-50)

disruptive tactic in order to break through the status of invisibility and establish its presence. This brings to mind the title of the novel and highlights the approach which the "natives" are forced to adopt in order to move forward or break through to establish a presence. [21]

The author, in criticizing the system of education in the Philippines, underscores its value in the development of a progressive nation. It shows Rizal's belief in education as the *via regia* to the emancipation of the people, not only from ubiquitous physical oppression but from the subject-internalised discourse of subjugation as well.

It cannot be said however that the colonial regime is altogether unaware of its flaws. During a meeting regarding the construction of proper elementary schools to replace existing inadequate educational housing, an unnamed Spanish official empathetically comments:

> "What is certain...is that education is not at all well-tended to..."[22]

This well-meaning official will continue to defend the "natives" and speak on their behalf in several occasions.[23] These actions have repercussions as he will be dismissed by the Governor-General from his position and sent back to Spain. Absolutism manifests itself here, where the colonial regime radically suppresses criticism from any quarter, whether it comes from the people or from the colonial government itself. Remarkably, a member

[21] Cf. Introduction
[22] Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion, A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere*. 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Pg.83
[23] The portrayal of the liberal-minded unnamed High Official is said to be sketched after the Manila civil governor Centeno. (Anderson, Benedict. *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination.* 2007. London:Verso. Pg.108)

of the clergy comes out only lightly scathed when he opposes others in his Order who are working against the petition of the students for an establishment of a Spanish academy. Padre Fernandez suggests that:[24]

> "The teaching of Spanish can be conceded, without danger whatsoever...we Dominicans should make efforts to be the first to celebrate it: this should be our policy. Why should we be in continuous tension with the people, when after all, we are few and they are many, when we need them and they do not need us...Let it pass that the people are weak, and unlettered, I also believe that, but that will not be so tomorrow, nor after then...they will be stronger, they will know what suits them and we cannot prevent it as we cannot prevent children, reaching a certain age, to get to know many things..."[25]

The potentially subversive statements of the priest could have sent him to jail, had he been an ordinary person. But whereas the unnamed official mentioned earlier on is dismissed, Padre Fernandez is only opposed by his colleagues and his insights drowned-out by the opinion of the majority. This illustrates the power wielded by the church in influencing administrative and judicial decisions.[26]

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[24] It is remarkable that contrary to his first novel, which is staunchly anti-clerical, Rizal has a friar speak for the welfare of the *Indios* in *El Filibusterismo*. It may be argued that this is Rizal's propaganda of appealing to the priests and advising them on how they can participate in the progress of the nation from a state of infantilism to that of maturity. In order for the separation to be more palatable to the colonizer, the author tactically uses one of the major forces in the country to articulate his vision.
The figure of Father Fernandez is believed to have been based on Rizal's chemistry teacher, Professor M.L., while studying higher medicine in the University of Santo Tomas. (Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion, A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere*. 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Note 7 on pg.325)

[25] *Ibid.* Pg.87-88.

[26] Religion assumed a political dimension on the islands whereby the Spanish government controlled the colony through the clergy. Its special role placed the Church Orders in a position to influence judicial and administrative decisions.

The words of Padre Fernandez predate Freud but can be interpreted through the psychoanalyst's framework of child development. The children, in other words the Philippines, have reached a state where they want to be independent of the mother and see to their own development. They are beginning to articulate their identity and separateness from the parent. Thus, the author, through one of his characters, sends the message that it is natural and inevitable for the Philippines to mature into a nation and seek independence from its colonizer. This clearly exhibits the beginning of national consciousness in Rizal as a Filipino or the start of Identity acquisition.

Freud's disciple, Jacques Lacan, refers to this state, when the formation of the "I" transpires, as the mirror stage.[27] The function of this stage in Freudian terms is to establish the relationship between the child's "Innenwelt" and "Umwelt". In the mirror stage, unable as yet to stand up and held by some support, human or artificial, the child recognizes its image in the mirror. The moment of identification is a moment of jubilation since it leads to a sense of mastery, albeit illusory. But this joy is curtailed, and leads to what Lacan terms as "primordial Discord", because the child's perception of the image's wholeness does not correspond to his still uncoordinated and incomplete self. In structural terms, the jubilation experienced by the child, or the subject, in seeing his own image in the mirror, the small "other", is arrested when it realizes that it is still dependent on the big "Other", which is usually the parent, for support. The aggressive tension between the "fragmented" subject (the child) and image (the 'other') is resolved through initial identification. This marks the development's entrance into the symbolic matrix in

[27] Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits.* 1977. London: Tavistock. Pp.1-7.

which "the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form".[28] Hence, a child's first articulation of the "I" arises from its initial identification with the image in the mirror.

Analogously in the novel, identification with other nations is seen as the catalyst for the formation of an identity as a Filipino. When the narrator comments:

> "...Some two hundred fifty students annually study this course, and whether by apathy, indolence, limited capacity of the *Indio* or some other ethnological or inconceivable reason...up to now there has not flourished a Lavoisier, a Secchi nor a Tyndall, even in miniature, in the Malay-Filipino race!!!"[29]

the authorial intrusion once again becomes perceptible. The mock dismay underscores the narrator's contempt for the source of the deliberate deadening of Filipino intelligence. By enumerating successful scientists from other nations, the narrator guides the reader into noting the 'other' nations' purported "wholeness" and simultaneously perceiving the infantile state of his own land. The reader begins questioning his inadequacy and asks himself what causes this lack. Is the Philippines limited because the people are lazy or stupid or apathetic? Or is this limitation not his of own doing? His confusion as to why his nation has not reached the status of other nations before him is conjoined by a suspicion that this incompleteness is caused by an external force, which remains "inconceivable" at this point.

In Structuralist terms, the subject, or the colony, is contemplating its role in the "Umwelt" and is painfully aware of his restrained state. The subject senses the

[28] *Ibid.* Pg.2.
[29] Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion, A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere*. 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Pg.99

omnipotent presence of the "Other" (i.e. the parent), which emerges as a tyrannical figure instead of a benevolent provider or support. According to Lacan, this "Innenwelt" conflict can only be resolved by an initial identification with the "other".[30] This means that the subject must see itself as the image it sees in the mirror. A good example of this psychological association can be found in the conversation between the student Isagani and his sweetheart, Paulita. As the young man describes his town of Los Baños:[31]

> "It was for me a delight to wander through the thickets, sleep under the shades of trees, to seat myself upon the summit of a cliff, to contain with my gaze the Pacific rolling below me, its blue waves bringing back to me the echoes of songs learned on the shores of free America…"[32]

one's attention is immediately arrested by the student's reference to the United States. For the Filipino, America with its independence from the British Empire and its emancipation of the slaves is the universal sign of freedom and liberty. [33] By recreating its image on this passage, the subject imagines an "illusory" identification with the independent nation. Hence, the subject projects a free image of itself, which albeit misleading, resolves the conflict it has with the image in the mirror for the time being.

The declamation of the native, who has never been outside the country and yet talks about "songs" learned on foreign shores, is anomalous. The author seems to forget

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[30] Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits*. 1977. London: Tavistock. Pg.2

[31] Los Baños is a town in the province of Laguna, the author's place of birth.

[32] Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion, A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere*. 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Pg.207

[33] Rizal's idealization of America may be traced back to the origins of the novel's title, where the annexation of Cuba and other latter-day Spanish American countries to the United States was the "filibusteros" main goal. (Cf. Introduction pg.8) Sadly, the tragic irony of this idealization can only be felt by the Filipinos of today and not by Rizal. After the Spanish-American war, the Philippines passed on to the hands of the Americans. The emerging imperialist was to be the next lords and masters on Philippine soil for over half a century.

himself and becomes Simoun, the intruder or the *filibuster* who insinuates ideas in the story. It is Rizal, who—through his acquaintance with liberal ideas abroad—is meditating on the ideas of freedom. His usage of the adjective "free", leads to a conscious introspection, thus calling to the mind of the reader the lack of freedom in the Philippines. The ending of the statement with an ellipse is a signal for the reader to contemplate on that freedom and all that it entails. It is also interesting to notice that, contrary to most anti-colonial writers who excise the sea from their text owing to its complicity in bringing the colonizer to the land, Rizal uses the sea almost as a medium of hope.[34] This idea will be discussed more thoroughly later on in this research report when Rizal's motive for writing the novel is examined.

Identifying the Philippines with other nations shows the important part the "other" plays in the development of the self or "I". The existence of the "image in the mirror" brings about self-awareness in the subject. The significance of this primary identification must be underlined, for Lacan promises a future "wholeness" out of this, which involves an ideal Ego.[35] An ideal "I", necessitates this "mirroring" which brings about the rupture of the symbiotic relationship the child has with the 'Other' (i.e. the parent).

The ideas of Simoun in the novel are possibly the best example of what I call a "negative mirroring", which leads to the severance of the bond between parent and child. It is the

[34] In a recent lecture at the University of Witwatersrand entitled, "Besides Empire and Nation: Rethinking the History of Colonial India", Dilip Menon, a visiting scholar from Delhi University observed the psychological manifestation in most anti-colonial writers of excising the sea from their text. (May 27, 2008). This is attributed to the blame given to the waters for bringing in the colonial oppressors. An economic manifestation of this in the Philippines is that the inhabitants, who were once great sea-farers and shipbuilders, abandoned their trade and turned instead to the inland industry for survival.
[35] Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits.* 1977. London: Tavistock. Pg.2.

subject verifying its image in the mirror and associating itself with it but in a critical manner. As already mentioned, Rizal's revolutionary thoughts are represented in the novel by this merchant, who brings home liberal ideas from his wanderings abroad.[36] Simoun's nihilistic ambition is reminiscent of Bazarov in Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*.[37] Their plan hinges on their frustration with the system but does not propose any alternative solution except complete destruction. Simoun's anarchistic ideas are clearly the radical thoughts prevalent in most nations immersed in revolution such as Russia and the islands in the south of America as can be observed from the following statements to a student:

> "What will you be in the future? A people without character, a nation without liberty. Everything in you will be borrowed, even your very defects. You are asking to be Hispanized and you do not blanch with shame when it is denied you! Even if it is conceded, what would you want? What would you gain? At best, to become a country of *pronuncamiento*, a country of civil wars, a republic of the rapacious and discontented, like some republics of South America...
>
> I need you to help me; that you may use your influence on the youth to fight those senseless yearnings of Hispanization, of assimilation, of equal rights...
>
> What you should do is to take advantage of their prejudices and to use them for your own purposes...

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[36] Simoun is sometimes referred to in the novel as the "Brown Cardinal...or Black Eminence" because of his power over the Governor-General. It is a parody of the French general Richelieu who had a Capuchin adviser, called the Gray Eminence. (Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion, A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere*. 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. pg.16). The different nationalities in the novel, allusions to rapidly industrializing nations (France and America) and the reference to the liberation of other Spanish colonies, signify what Rizal calls *el demonio de las comparaciones* in *Noli Me Tangere*. This "spectre of comparisons" or what we refer to in this paper as the "image in the mirror", is what Anderson observes as the "double consciousness", which made it impossible for Rizal to experience Berlin ever after, without once thinking of Manila, or Manila without thinking of Berlin."(Anderson, Benedict. *The Spectres of Comparison: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World.* 2002. London: Verso. Pg.229).

[37] Cf. Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons. 1985.* Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd. Pg.5

The less rights they give you, the more rights you will have later to shake off their yoke and return evil for evil...[38]

Not unlike Isagani, who meditates on the "songs learned on the shores of free America", Simoun calls forth the image of Cuba. But instead of musing on independence, he reminds the student of the fragmentation and discontent in that country due to assimilation. It may be remembered that before finally staging a revolution to overthrow the Spanish colonizer, Cuba conceded to becoming a province of Spain.

In other words, Simoun (the Filipino) sees the other colony, which represents the image in the mirror in our discussion, and identifies with it but with an enlightened awareness of the "other's" flaws or failure. He sees the predicament of the colony, whose dependence on Spain, the parent, causes more harm than good and rejects this idea for the Philippines. His only solution is total independence from the colonizer, notwithstanding violent means. Simoun's last word is therefore "separation". How does this development fit in our discussion?

A modern interpretation of Freud's psychoanalytic theory known as the "object relations theory" places more emphasis on the relationship of an individual with other human beings in the development of the child. According to this theory, the first three years of a child's life are characterized by (1) a symbiotic relationship with the primary caretaker (Cf. Lacan and Freud) and (2) the subsequent dissolution of that relationship to form a core identity. Fairbairn believes that human development is a life long breaking away

[38] Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion, A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere*. 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Pp.52-54

from the dependent bonds of early childhood to reach the autonomy of adulthood.[39] The process used to attain this autonomous state is called "separation-individuation".[40] Separation is seen as the process of differentiating oneself from the caretaker (usually the mother). During this time, the child explores and continually develops its separateness, while constantly returning to the mother because of the symbiosis internalized in infancy. This constant back and forth leads to ambivalence with the child wanting to return to its former state of dependence while fearing for its autonomy. This type of ambivalence manifests itself in the novel in the case of the students who seek to break the cycle of oppression through assimilation, yet because they have profoundly internalized the colonial mentality, work for emancipation within the framework of colonialism. The separation-individuation process ends in identity formation, which when achieved becomes one of the basis for a healthy relationship with others.[41]

Separation therefore, using the psychoanalysts' theory, is not a violent rejection of the parent but a natural and necessary development, enabling the child's participation in the social community.[42] In other words, the Philippines does not reject Spain, the colonial mother, but is asking for a change in Spain's parental function, as with maturity, the needs of the "emerging nation" have changed, echoing Rizal's own words. In an article in the newspaper *La Solidaridad*,[43] he wrote:

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[39] Fairbairn, W.R.D. 1952, *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality,* Tavistock, London. Pg.19

[40] Kernberg includes this "sub-phase" as described by M.S. Mahler in the primary stage of self-object representation. (Kernberg, Otto F. *Contemporary Controversies in Psychoanalytic Theory, Techniques, and their Applications*. 2004. USA: Yale University Press. Pp.43-45)

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] Freud, Sigmund. A *General Introduction To Psychoanalysis.* 1938. New York: Garden City Pub. Co. Pg.295

[43] A fortnightly newspaper launched by an organization of Filipinos in Spain bearing the same name. The association pushed for the assimilation of the Philippines to Spain. (Cf. Introduction, note 5, pg.9)

> "There is no instance in history that can be cited where a people on the way to enlightenment has ever been made to retrogress. Decline does not come till after the summit is reached. The waterfall does not rise; the fruit does not revert into flowerhood. Does the government wish to assure to itself the love of the Philippines? Give her liberties; treat her as she deserves. Does it wish to lose her? Then let it continue with its unjust repressions, close its ears to the clamours of the people, and condemn them to slavery".[44]

These lines expose the author's nascent knowledge of the natural evolution of things which seems to encompass even the birth of a Filipino nation. However, the end of the paragraph does not give a specific solution on how this state is to be achieved. He begins by pandering to the Spanish government by offering the emerging nation's loyalty. This manifests the author's plea for reform and consequently, the desire for a continued dependence on Spain, the parent nation. In the end however, he postulates an alternative, which reads almost as if it were an ominous warning that if the need for reform is ignored, then the people's consciousness of their deplorable condition will be the catalyst for a violent separation. The ambivalent attitude of the author towards full independence from the colonizer, at once inciting it and dreading it is obviously a result of the profound internalization of colonialism, traces of which are still very much tangible in post-colonial Philippine society.

[44] From the pages of Rafael Palma's *Biografia de Rizal* as quoted by Coates in his own biography of Rizal. (Coates, Austin. *Rizal: Philippine Nationalist and Martyr.* 1968. London: Oxford University Press. Pg. 173)

The above analysis of the text using psychoanalytical theories was beneficial in ascertaining the development of the author's consciousness with regards to the formation of an independent nation state. An evaluation of the text showed that, although the concept of identity in psychoanalysis was yet unknown in the late nineteenth-century, the dynamics in the novel were already informed by these ideas. The analogy between the identity construction of a child and that of a nation was illustrated through various passages in the novel and showed that the criticism of the presupposed symbiotic relationship between the Philippines and Spain indicated the emergence of the young nation from a state of dependence to maturity. It was also revealed that the first response to this new development was to identify with other independent nations and that, although this identification led to the contemplation of independence, separation was nevertheless approached with uncertainty and permeated by ambivalence and ambiguities.

The following chapters will further illustrate this phenomenon through a more technical evaluation of the novel, using its elements as the site for examination. By exploring the features of the novel such as: the reader's part in the production of meaning in the text; the role of the narrator; and the plot; we shall see that although severance of the bond of dependence is the natural and thus normal stage in (national) identity construction, the author is of two minds on the subject. The next chapter will show the text's inseparability from reality and how the events in the author's life contributed to the awakening of national consciousness in him.

Chapter Two: The Reading of History

José Protacio Rizal y Realonda was born on 1861 in Calamba, Laguna,[45] a province famed for its wild beauty and precious natural resources. With its rich history and vast diversity, it is no wonder that the author chose this town as the setting for his novels. As Calamba occupies a significant position in the novel, an abbreviated history of the province might be useful to the reader.

In the eighteenth century, attempts were made by the Jesuits to clear the wilderness that was Calamba and make the land more productive.[46] They paved the way for the development of large estates or the so-called *hacienda* agriculture from the former jungle.[47] When the Jesuits were expelled in 1770, the hacienda was confiscated by the government and was taken over by the Dominicans.[48] To recruit settlers who would help clear the jungle and till the soil, the Dominican lay brother who managed the hacienda, offered an arrangement to the natives from neighbouring towns. One of those who

[45] Laguna, Spanish for lagoon, refers to the impressive lake which borders the north of the province. It is a tributary of the Pasig River, the famous river that crosses the capital and empties itself into Manila Bay. The town of Calamba acquired great significance in the 19th century, when it was used by Chinese traders as the entrepot or trading centre of the Southern Tagalog region. Ships plied the lake, carrying passengers and goods from Manila to the lake towns and vice versa. (Joaquin, Nick. *Rizal In Saga.* 1996 Philippines: Philippine National Centennial Commission, Rizal Martyrdom Centennial Commission and GMA Foundation Inc. Pg. 16)

[46] In the time of Felipe II, the aging monarch, weary of reports of the conquistadores' inhuman treatment of the colonies, decided to entrust the conversion of the natives of the subsequently conquered colonies to the religious Orders instead. This explains the unique status and position of power which the Church Orders held in the Philippines. As a reward for their service to the crown, land was distributed to them. These land grants included not only the land but also the people living on them, which became serfs to the new landlords called *hacenderos.* In exchange, the religious Orders "helped save the souls" of these people and became their "protectors".

[47] *Op.cit.* Pg.11

[48] The expulsion of the Jesuits was a result of pressures from monarchies of Spain, France, Portugal and Naples on Clement XIV to suppress them worldwide. Pius VII brought them back in 1814 but they did not reappear in the Philippines until 1859, and were poor relations of their cleric rivals for a long time. (Anderson, Benedict. *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination.* 2007. London: Verso. Note 49 on pg.86)

volunteered was Rizal's father. The pioneers were allotted land to cultivate without paying rent for three or four years. Payments of five sacks of rice a year were exacted from each field thereafter.[49] Thus, the anachronistic situation placed men, once free and some even from noble families such as Rizal's father, in the position similar to that of a serf, mere vassals to the feudal landlord. This was at a time when serfdom had been abolished for almost a century in most of Europe.

In the nineteenth century, land acquired great significance on the islands. The industrial revolution in England had reached Spain and encouraged a rethinking of the former restrictions it had set on the trade between the Philippines and its neighbours.[50] The production of export crops such as sugar, indigo, hemp and tobacco was encouraged and the Philippines became part of world commerce.[51] These products were gathered by Chinese middlemen from all over the country for British traders; in exchange, British products were sold in those towns. The economic life of the self-subsisting people was radically altered by the demand for cash or export crops. Since they no longer planted food crops, small landowners became very vulnerable to the rise and tide of commerce. Most of them lost their plots due to questionable mortgage arrangements, mainly with the Chinese middlemen to whom they sold their harvests, in what was called *pacto de*

[49] Joaquin, Nick. *Rizal In Saga.* 1996. Philippines: Philippine National Centennial Commission, Rizal Martyrdom Centennial Commission and GMA Foundation Inc. Pg.12

[50] Fearing the awakening of independent thoughts in the Philippines, the natives were discouraged from trading with people from the free and self-governing neighbouring islands. According to the records of Antonio de Morga, the government acted severely and with distrust towards these men until they finally ceased to come to the country. The only two countries with which the Philippines continued to have relations were China and Mexico, or New Spain, "and from this trade only the Chinese and a few private individuals in Manila got any benefit". (Rizal, José. *The Indolence of the Filipino*. November 2004-last update. Online: Homepage of Project Gutenberg EBook http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext04/8indf10.txt)

[51] Constantino, Renato. *Neocolonial Identity and Counter-Consciousness.* 1978. UK: The Merlin Press Ltd. Pp. 48-49

retroventa.[52] Government officials and the *principalia*[53] also took interest in acquiring more land and often took advantage of the peasant's vulnerable position. Thus, the small landowner was reduced to tilling the land he once owned for somebody else.

As noted earlier, Rizal's family land was leased from the Dominican hacienda in Calamba. During the economic depression between1863-1866, the friar *hacenderos* started steeply raising the rents even as world sugar prices collapsed.[54] The people consequently protested and exposed tax fraud committed by the *hacenderos*. It emerged that the hacienda had unjustly appropriated more pieces of land in the last fifty-four years but was only paying the government taxes for the original plot they took over from the Jesuits.[55] At this time, Rizal was in Europe completing his education. In 1886, he published his first novel, the staunchly anti-clerical, *Noli Me Tangere*. When he came home less than a year later to Calamba and was asked by the tenants to draft an appeal for a formal contract between them and the hacienda administrators to stop abuses and arbitrary dicta, it was thus inevitable that he and his family became the main target of the friars' fury. Over the next four years, they were embroiled in legal actions against the

[52] This system involved a loan secured by a deed of sale in favour of the creditor with right of redemption in a given period. Since the creditor became de facto owner from the date of mortgage, the debtor lost the produce of his land, or, if he worked for his creditor, he received only a tenant share. Under these circumstances, it is very seldom that a mortgagor can pay back his debt. (*Ibid.* Note 62 on pg.87)

[53] The term *principales* or *principalia* was applied to the ruling chiefs and their families prior to colonialization. With the coming of the colonizer, the once unified local communities were profoundly stratified with the colonizer assigning certain administrative duties such as tribute (a form of tax) collection and the organization of forced labour to these rulers. By becoming "executors of colonial policy", these ruling families alienated themselves from the rest of the people and resulted in the formation of classes in colonial society. (*Ibid.* Pp .41-42)

[54] Anderson, Benedict. *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination.* 2007. London: Verso. Note 49 on pg.93. The source of income in Calamba was the sugar industry. Thus, fluctuation of sugar prices had severe economic implications particularly on the farmers who were only tenants and had to pay rent notwithstanding their losses.

[55] Coates, Austin. *Rizal: Philippine Nationalist and Martyr.* 1968. London: Oxford University Press. Pp.140-141

Dominicans, which ended in his family's (and that of other recalcitrant neighbours') eviction.[56] The house of the Mercados (Rizal's family) was stripped of its roof, the property allowed to be sacked by looters and eroded by the elements.[57] His mother, aged and half-blind by then, was maliciously accused of falsifying her identity and publicly humiliated by making her march 50 kilometers under the tropical sun to the provincial capital for the court hearing.[58] This was the second time in her life that she was falsely accused of wrongdoing by the local government and cruelly made to march the same roads. The first was in June of 1872. The colonial government and the clergy, for reasons that will follow shortly, had had their eyes on Rizal's family and jumped at the opportunity of putting Rizal's mother, Doña Teodora, in jail.[59] She was imprisoned in the provincial capital while they heard her case, which ended in acquittal after two and a half years![60]

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[56] The insistent demand of the church in the Philippines to arrest and jail the author of *Noli Me Tangere* made the liberal Governor-General Emilio Terrero ask Rizal to leave the country for his own safety. At about the same time (1888) the Captain-General's term of office ended and he was replaced by Valeriano Weyler whose rule (as already mentioned) relied heavily on clerical advice. As a result, the petition of the Calamba dwellers was rejected outright and the Dominicans, to make sure no one dared once again question the illegal ownership of the land, had the antagonistic families evicted. (*Ibid*. Pp.165-167)

[57] In 1849, the Claveria dictum decreed that a new surname must be chosen by the native population from a list of family names issued by the government. The Mercados, José Rizal's family, found no surname suitable for them on the list and opted for the unlisted name Rizal, meaning rice field. When this was granted to them, they nevertheless continued using the surname Mercado. Apparently, this was a practice adopted by many. Thus, many families ended up with four names: the old and new patriarchal family names and the old and new family names of the mother. The complete legal name of José Rizal would therefore be: José Protacio (his baptismal names) Rizal Mercado y Realonda Alonso. (Joaquin, Nick. *Rizal In Saga.* 1996. Philippines: Philippine National Centennial Commission, Rizal Martyrdom Centennial Commission and GMA Foundation Inc. Pg.26)

[58] Coates, Austin. *Rizal: Philippine Nationalist and Martyr. 1968.* London: Oxford University Press. Pp. 211-213. The abusive treatment of Rizal's family is only a small yet concrete example of colonial oppression.

[59] *Op. cit.* Pg.95

[60] Joaquin, Nick. *Rizal In Saga.* 1996. Philippines: Philippine National Centennial Commission, Rizal Martyrdom Centennial Commission and GMA Foundation Inc. Pp.96-99

1872 was a crucial year for Rizal's family and the origin of his second novel. On the 28th of February that year, three Filipino priests had their necks broken by the garrotte for putatively conspiring with eminent laymen and clerics to overthrow the colonial government.[61] It subsequently emerged that the brief mock trial and execution was staged to arouse fear in the hearts of the Filipinos and to deter them from rebelling against the Spanish administration.[62]

The martyrs must have acquired iconic status of resistance for Rizal, who was only eleven years old at the time of the execution, for him to dedicate his novel to them nearly two decades later.[63] Another reason for his intense interest in this event was surely the

[61] As mentioned in the introduction, the noun Filipino was originally used to refer to the *Criollos* or Creoles. Fathers José Burgos and Jacinto Zamora were Creoles, and Father Mariano Gomez was a Chinese *mestizo*. Constantino explains that "the economic ascendancy of the Chinese *mestizos* and urbanized natives in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gave them the opportunity to acquire education and Hispanic culture" which made them socially acceptable to the Creoles. (Constantino, Renato. *Neocolonial Identity and Counter-Consciousness.* 1978. London: The Merlin Press Ltd. Pg.51). It might be worth mentioning that independence from Spain had been orchestrated by a Creole-led uprising in Cuba and Puerto Rico less than a decade earlier and clearly sensitized the colonial government in the Philippines to any form of protest headed by this group.

[62] Joaquin postulates: "The truth may be that the plot was rather a machination against them—against the bourgeoisie in general and Burgos in particular." Burgos was one of the organizers of the Committee of Reformers, which campaigned for more liberal laws, particularly for the rights of the native clergy against the dominance of the Spanish friars. The committee was not only composed of Filipinos from all sectors of society (business, agriculture, clergy, et al) but also implied the growing solidarity between natives, Creoles and Chinese mestizos. "*Filipinas para los Filipinos!*" was the battle cry raised by the Creoles, who proclaimed themselves "*Hijos del Pais*". This name will be taken up by the Revolutionaries (*Anak ng Bayan*) by the end of the century, demanding not only recognition as a province of Spain but a nation on its own. In order to arrest the growing popularity of the group, a plot was contrived to destroy Burgos and frame other agitators. (*Op.cit.* Pp.86-89)

[63] See also Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles.* Hardy witnessed the hanging of Martha Brown, in 1856. Thirty-five years later, the story of the last execution of Dorchester was published at the same time as Rizal's *El Filibusterismo* came into print. In the dedication prefacing *El Filibusterismo*, Rizal wrote: "To the memory priests: Don Mariano Gomez…, Don José Burgos…, and Don Jacinto Zamora...The Church, in refusing to degrade you has placed in doubt the crime imputed to you; the Government, in shrouding your cause in mystery and obscurities, creates belief in some error committed in critical moments, and the whole Philippines, in venerating your memory and calling you martyrs, in no way acknowledges your guilt. As long therefore as your participation in the Cavite uprising is not clearly shown…I have the right to dedicate my work to you, as the victims of the evil I'm trying to fight. And while we wait for Spain to reinstate you and make herself jointly culpable for your death, let these pages serve as belated wreath of dried leaves laid on your unknown graves; and may your blood be on the hands

direct involvement of his own family with the incident. [64] Paciano Mercado, José Rizal's brother, had been living under the same roof with Father Burgos and was consequently implicated in the insurgency. His interactions with the activist students of the Universidad de Santo Tomas, who were denouncing land-grabbing by church Orders and demanding the assimilation of the Philippines, no longer as a colony, but as a Spanish province, was noted as collaboration. He was blacklisted by the colonial government and had to forgo further formal education.[65]

The above stated history is important in the discussion of this novel as we shall see later. Rizal's history is so closely entwined with the text that it is impossible to understand the author's real motivation for writing the novel without it. One only needs to look at Rizal's own definition of the word "filibustero" in order to discern the fiction's inseparability from reality. When asked by his Austrian friend Ferdinand Blumentritt, about the title, the author explained:

> „Das Wort Filibustero ist noch auf den Philippinen sehr wenig bekannt worden; die niedrige Bevölkerung kennt es noch nicht. Als ich dieses Wort zum ersten mal hörte, war es in 1872, wenn die Hinrichtungen stattgefunden haben. Ich erinnere mich noch an das Erschrecken welches dieses Wort weckte. Unser Vater hat uns verboten dieses Wort auszusprechen, ebenso wie das Wort Cavite,

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of those who, without sufficient proof, assail your memory!"(Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion :A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere.* 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Dedication, page unnumbered)

[64] According to Joaquin, Rizal started conceptualizing his second novel while in Hongkong. His encounter with the survivors of the *Motin de '72* (Creole Revolution) there clearly influenced the plot of his novel and his inspiration for writing it. (Joaquin, Nick. *Rizal In Saga.* 1996. Philippines: Philippine National Centennial Commission, Rizal Martyrdom Centennial Commission and GMA Foundation Inc. Pg.259)

[65] The students were the sons of the rising middle class who were being recruited by the Creole Revolution and staging protest rallies in the campuses of Manila. Because of this incident which made the last name Mercado notorious, Paciano decided to enroll his younger brother José in Ateneo, under the last name Rizal. The author is thus popularly known as José Rizal to this day.

> Burgos, (die hingerichteten Priester) etc. [...] Die Bedeutung dieses Wortes ist von den eingebildeten Klassen sehr gefürchtet: free booters ist nicht mehr seine Bedeutung, sondern so was wie ein gefährlicher Patriote, welcher in junger Zeit aufgehängt wird, oder ein eingebildeter Mensch! ...in unserem Dorfe, sind wir noch wenig die mit dem Namen Filibustero getadelt sind: fünf oder vier Familien."[66]

The letter clearly indicates that the inspiration for the novel comes from definite historical facts. At the onset of the novel, the reader is alerted to the historical relevance of the work by the commemoration of actual events and might—in spite of the work being classified as a work of fiction—search for clues. As with other historical fiction, the reader is inclined to search for the verification of historical facts in the novel even though the work should be viewed as a work of fiction, and therefore, as a specially created space for fact and fiction to be of equal value in the work subject, of course, to the demand for plausibility as stated in the "fictional contract" (Assmann).

In populating *El Filibusterismo* with well-known events and personages of the time thinly veiled in fiction, Rizal presents his reader with a type of *roman à clef*. This can be rationalized by using Iser's discussion of the "author-reader relationship".[67] In his chapter on "The Reader and the Realistic Novel", Iser explains that the so-called 'realistic novels' of the nineteenth-century, to which *El Filibusterismo* belongs, virtually mark a halfway-point in the stages of transition of the novel. In the eighteenth-century, the reader was assisted by the author through a variety of devices in unravelling the author's

[66] Ferdinand Blumentritt and José Rizal, *The Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence*. 1961. Manila, Philippines: José Rizal National Centennial Commission. 6th and 7th unnumbered pages from page 65.
[67] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader.* 1974. Baltimore, USA : John Hopkins University Press. Pg.102

purpose of writing the novel. In the age of the modern novel however, such aid was no longer available to the reader. Iser puts forward the nineteenth-century novel *Vanity Fair* as an example, where, in contrast to the eighteenth-century 'dialogue' which mediates the "author-reader relationship", or to the twentieth-century "demand that the reader find for himself the key to a many sided-puzzle", the reader of Thackeray's novel does not have to make his own discoveries, but is provided by the author with "unmistakable clues to guide him in his search".[68] The novel *El Filibusterismo* engages the reader in a similar manner. But what mystery are the clues provided by Rizal trying to reveal? Answer: His purpose for writing the novel.

The main plot of the novel deals with the idea of revolution and revenge. The protagonist Simoun returns to the Philippines from his wanderings abroad to exact vengeance by agitating for an armed uprising against the people and institutions who robbed him of his life. If one parallels the humiliations and personal suffering of the author to that of his creation, one is likely to conclude that the author's intention for writing the novel is to seek retribution by inciting a bloody revolution. The inseparability of the novel from the history discussed above warrants this suspicion. Rizal's decision to deal with the state of affairs through the medium of the novel rather than a factual document has implications for the evaluation of the genre as a vehicle for social and political change. Thus, it is necessary to look at the canons of fiction and the "contract" (Assmann) between the author and the reader in order to determine the true value of this novel. An examination of the basic elements in a novel (i.e. reader, author and narrator) will demonstrate the decisive roles they play in the production of meaning in *El Filibusterismo*.

[68] *Ibid.* Pp.102-103

Chapter Three: The Reading of Fiction

To the Filipino People and their Government

> So often have we been haunted by the spectre of *filibusterismo* which, with some fostering has come to be a positive real being. Setting aside…the old custom of respecting myths…we look at it face to face instead of fleeing, and with assertive though inexpert hand, we raised the shroud in order to uncover before the multitude the structure of the skeleton.
>
> If at the sight, our country and her government reflect, we would consider ourselves happy. It matters not if they censure our audacity; it matters not if we must pay for our boldness, as did the young student of Sais who wished to penetrate the secret of priestly deceit.
>
> On the other hand, if before reality, instead of changing, the fear of one is increased, and the confusion of the other exacerbated, then they may have to be left in the hands of time, which teaches children, and in the hands of fate, which weaves the destinies of peoples and governments with their deficiencies and the mistakes they commit each day.

The Author

Europe, 1891

Thus reads the foreword to *El Filibusterismo* as penned by the author. Beginning the novel with an address to its intended reader illustrates the desire for control. It shows that Rizal not only makes certain that his work reaches its targeted audience but also that his

purpose in writing the text is understood. Identifying his intended reader is integral to the process of Rizal's work production.

As noted, Rizal addresses two audiences: Firstly, he speaks to the Filipinos.[69] But in 1891, with only 3 percent of the Philippine population able to read and speak Spanish, the language in which the novel was written, it is thus implied that the author addresses the educated few, who are privileged to read and understand the text. These "enlightened" few were called the *Ilustrados*. By the end of the 18th century, facilitated by the transport of liberal ideas from Europe, a new class distinction had emerged in a country which used to only have the aristocrats and the common people as strata of society. These were the *Ilustrados*, who inserted themselves between these strata thus forming a seedbed for the development of the middle-class *Weltanschauung*.[70]

Secondly, Rizal appeals to the Spanish government in the Philippines. In writing "their (to the Filipinos') government" in the foreword, the author not only addresses the colonial regime but also the friars and lay officials who exert significant influence over the governance of the islands as already mentioned in Chapter One of this report. His reference to the "old customs" draws attention to the absolutism and anti-liberalism still practiced by the Church Orders and the reactionary government, which were long considered backward in the northern parts of Europe.

[69] This view is confirmed not only by his foreword but as Anderson notes, by Rizal's decision to send only a few copies of the novel to personal friends in Spain and elsewhere in Europe and sending "the rest of the entire edition to Hongkong, where he intended to settle until the rule of the autocratic Weyler was over". This was in contrast to his first novel which "targeted multiple audiences in Europe and the Philippines". (Anderson, Benedict. *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination*. 2007. London: Verso. Pg.103)

[70] (Cf. Introduction, note 5, pg.9)

Iser highlight's the significant role of the reader in his book, *The Implied Reader*:

> "The phenomenological theory of art lays full stress on the idea that, in considering a literary work, one must take into account not only the actual text but also and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to that text."[71]

Thus, Iser surmises, "a literary work has two poles: the artistic and the aesthetic". The artistic refers to the work of the author while the aesthetic is the "realization accomplished by the reader".[72] The literary work is therefore only said to be fully accomplished, however virtual it may be, when the cooperation of the reader is obtained. Thus, the collaborative effort of the reader is necessary in the production of meaning in a text. This appeal of the novel echoes Horace's famous dictum: "*Prodesse et delectare*" which leads to action or *movere*.[73]

Rizal, in suggesting the need for the readers to "reflect" on the sight of the "skeleton", provokes a sense of discernment. This is to be considered as a pleasurable experience because in identifying the clues in the text connected to history, the reader will be able to test his knowledge and participate in the "work production". In effect, the act of reading becomes a process of discovery and creativity because it engages the reader's imagination in the task of working things out for himself.

Iser continues,

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71 Iser, W. 1974, *The Implied Reader*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, USA. Pg.274
[72] *Ibid.*
[73] The exact lines in *Ars Poetica* read: "aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitae". (Horatius. Q. Horati Flacci Opera. 1971. Torino: Italy. Paravia. Lines 333-334, pg.299)

> "As the reader uses the various perspectives offered him by the text in order to relate the patterns and the 'schematized views' to one another, he sets the work in motion, and this very process results ultimately in the awakening of responses within himself".[74]

In other words, the reader undergoes a process of transformation during the act of reading. How is one to describe this psychological process?

The starting point for Iser's "phenomenological analysis" begins with the examination of the sequent sentences and how they act upon one another. To further clarify this method, he invokes what Roman Ingarden called "internationale Satzkorrelate":

> "sentences link up in different ways to form more complex units of meaning that reveal a very varied structure giving rise to such entities as a short story, a novel, a dialogue, a drama, a scientific theory…"[75]

These sentences though, remain only as "component parts", which "only take on their real meaningfulness through the interaction of their correlatives".[76] For this connection between correlatives to take shape, the text requires the reader's imagination. Thus, what seem to be simple sentences become loaded with meaning and leaves the reader with a feeling of expectation. The text is set in a context, which is dependent on the reader's experiences, memory or recollections and judgement, and this in turn produces for each reader a different interpretation.

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[74] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader.* 1974. Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press. Pg.275
[75] Iser quotes from Roman Ingarden's *Vom Erkennen des literarischen Kunstwerks*, pg. 29. (*Ibid.* Pp.276-277)
[76] *Ibid.* Pg.277

If we apply this theory to the second stanza of the author's foreword to *El Filibusterismo*, we can certainly imagine varied reactions arising from Rizal's intended audiences. The Spanish government and the Church Orders were not likely to have viewed the statements as an urge for reflection as the Filipinos might have read it, but rather as an affront and a challenge to their authority. As Iser observes:

> "the (reading) process is virtually hermeneutic. The text provokes certain expectations which in turn we project onto the text in such a way that we reduce the polysemantic possibilities to a single interpretation in keeping with the expectations aroused, thus extracting an individual, configurative meaning".[77]

For this reason, a particular literary work is potentially capable of several interpretations. The fact that different readers can be affected in different ways by a particular text is "ample evidence of the degree to which literary texts transform reading into creative process that is far above mere perception of what is written".[78]

In other words, it is the recollections of things experienced and their association with the text that forms the reader's impression of the novel. In addition, Iser points out to another important element in the production of meaning found in the novel. He speaks of omissions which interrupt the flow of the text and provides the reader with an opportunity to bring into play his own faculty for establishing connections.[79] To illustrate, here are the final lines of the novel where Padre Florentino, a native priest watches the sea swallow up the treasure chest he just hurled into it:

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[77] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader.* 1974. Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press. Pg.285
[78] *Ibid.* Pg.279
[79] *Ibid.* Pg.280

> "May Nature guard you in her deep abysses among the corals and pearls of her eternal seas!" the cleric said solemnly, extending his hand. "When for a holy and sublime end men should need you, God will draw you from the breast of the waves...Meanwhile there you will do no evil, you will not distort right, you will not foment avarice...!"[80]

The presence of the ellipse leaves the reader to fill in the blanks. This technique provides a different effect on the process of anticipation and retrospection, and consequently to the "gestalt" of the "virtual dimension".[81] Thus, it can be said that the story gains dynamism from these omissions. The responses generated by the unwritten part transforms the text into an experience for the reader. The dynamic of interpretation is set into motion and provides the statement with far greater significance than it might have seemed to posses on its own. Rizal exploits this element considerably. By leaving his reader to fill in the gaps, he employs the medium's potential for bringing about action, i.e. *movere*.[82] The appeal for reflection thus becomes an appeal for an intervention not mainly against the "filibusterismo" but against the causes necessitating this subversion.

The manipulations by the author lead us to consider the ethical rules governing fiction. There are those, particularly the historiographers, for whom the division between historical fact and works of fiction was very pronounced. Fiction was there to provide entertainment and history's purpose was to instruct. Yet, even as early as Horace, these

[80] Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion: A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere.* 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Pp.315-316
[81] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader.* 1974. Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press. Pg.280
[82] Cf. Horace Chapter Three, note 73, pg.40

intentions had already been joined together to create the most exemplary type of fiction.[83] Assmann sees it differently, in her book *Die Legitimität der Fiktion*, she writes:

> „Aufgabe des Dichters ist es, die Lethargie der Gewohnheit zu durchbrechen und den Schleier des Altbekannten zu zerreißen, um den Blick neu für das zwar Sichtbare, jedoch noch Ungesehene zu schärfen. Die imaginative Eroberung von Neuem bedeutet nicht Konflikt mit der Wahrheit, sondern im Gegenteil Entdeckung von Wahrheit.“[84]

The use of fiction therefore is merely an appeal to the reader's intelligence and sense of discovery. This contradicts the former observation that Rizal uses the novel as a tool for agitation. The ending of the novel suggests that Rizal sees hope for the Philippines, however utopian it may be. The presence of the native priest shows that the novel does not criticize religion *per se* but the people who use it to perpetuate ignorance for selfish ends. Moreover, it seems to imply that religion is necessary in accomplishing the "sublime end".

The blurring of the line dividing fact and fiction became more pronounced in the age of the novel, where absolute definitions had to give way to the changes occurring in society. As Lukács points out,

> "the essence cannot build a tragic stage out of the felled trees of the forest of life, but must either awaken to a brief existence in the flames of a fire lit from the

[83] Cf. Horace Chapter Three, note 73, pg.40
[84] Assmann, Aleida. *Die Legitimität Der Fiktion.* 1980. München: Fink. Pg.150

> deadwood of a blighted fire, or else must resolutely turn its back on the world's chaos and seek refuge in the abstract sphere of pure essentiality".[85]

Because of the genre's ability to narrate actual events without having to deal with details and chronology, the novel has become the elected medium for the author who seeks to entertain without losing sight of its social or didactic function. Writers such as Dickens, Fontane, Hardy and Dostoyevsky were inclined to use this approach. They used actual people and events, and transposed them into the pages of fiction.

Thus, reality assumes the same status as fiction within the confines of the novel. However, the reader's ability to confirm the historical "reality" of certain characters and events greatly increases the plausibility of the novel's plot and can thus lead to the reception of the author's intention with regard to encouraging social or political change in society. With regard to history, it is important to note that it is always narrated and is thus open to the same manipulative devices as are employed in the writing of narrative fiction. Indeed as Assmann maintains:

> "Die Fiktion ist als Instrument für den Historiker unentbehrlich, weil er ohne sie der Realität keine Gestalt zu verleihen vermag".[86]

Though the novel deals with historical events, this does not mean it simply reproduces them. A process of selection is therefore inherent in the creation of the novel in order to produce a more coherent narrative. One outstanding example of this in the novel is the omission of the painful suffering and humiliation of the author's own mother in his depiction of the Calamba hacienda dispute in Chapter IV of the novel. The chapter titled

[85] Lukács, George. *The Theory of the Novel.* 1971. London: Merlin Press. Pg.42
[86] *Op. cit.* Pg.130

"Cabesang Tales" is the story of an honest peasant who works a small piece of land in the fictional town of San Diego.[87] The figure of speech, tilling the soil with "sweat and blood" becomes literal in his story when his wife and eldest daughter die cultivating the land. As he is about to reap the first fruits of his harvest, his peace is shattered by an announcement from the nearby hacienda that his land falls within its legal boundaries requiring him to pay rent if he wants to stay on. Tales, being a simple man, decides that having almost no knowledge of Spanish, it is difficult for him to argue with the administrator of the neighbouring land. He also surmises that paying a lawyer will be more expensive than the trifling twenty or thirty pesos the oppressor is asking for. So he pays the rent and stays on. Year after year, the rent is steeply raised by the neighbouring hacienda, which belongs to an unnamed Church Order. One day, the rental reaches two hundred pesos and Tales decides he cannot and will not pay any more. The friar *hacendero* threatens him with eviction and discloses that there is already a tenant waiting to cultivate those lands.

Tales resorts to consulting lawyers and other government officials who only exploit his ignorance and bring him to destitution. As a result, he loses all his money and cannot save his only son from being conscripted. When Tales is abducted by the outlaws and held for ransom, his remaining daughter decides to sell her services as a maid to a neighbour in order to pay the outlaws' demand. Tales' old father becomes mute from all the misery and agony. Above all these, the court justices (who are under the friars' control), decide against Tales and award his land to the religious corporation. Tales

[87] Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion: A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere.* 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Pp.25-34, 66-75

comes home to see his land taken over by a new tenant. Stripped of his property, family and dignity, Tales takes up arms and becomes an outlaw. The town awakes to the corpses of the new land tenant and the friar in charge of rents, their heads blown up and mouths stuffed with soil. The tenant's wife is also found in town with her throat cut, her mouth also filled with soil and with a fragment of paper beside her bearing the name "TALES" written in blood.[88]

The above story is a very personal one to the author when paralleled to the story of his family in Calamba. And yet, in omitting particulars in his depiction of his family's suffering, the "author-historian" was able to concentrate his narration without having to concern himself with details. What emerges is a concentrated "truth" behind the façade of fiction or as Assmann puts it:

> „Fiktion im Sinne von künstlerischer Wahrheit. Fiktion—und das ist ihre raffinierteste Verkleidung—gibt sich hier als Gestalt der Realität."[89]

In "dressing up reality", the author is able to extend his depiction to encompass the suffering of all Filipinos as represented by the characters rather than simply chronicling an event that has already passed. In so doing, he transcends personal suffering and the possible desire for retribution. This is what initially emerges when reading Tales' tale. But at the end of the act, the author anomalously steps out from behind the mask of the narrator and gives personal testimony to his own suffering:

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[88] A probable source for this story might be the mid-18th century agrarian revolts in Manila and its periphery. An uprising led by Galvez and delos Reyes resulted in the slaughter of the administrators of big haciendas in the north of Manila and the destruction of their buildings and properties. (Veneracion, Jaime *Agos ng Dugong Kayumanggi.* 1990. Quezon City, Philippines: Abiva Publishing House, Inc. Pp.101-102)

[89] Assmann, Aleida. *Die Legitimität Der Fiktion.* 1980. München: Fink. Pg. 129

"Do not be alarmed, peaceful citizens of Calamba. Not one of you is called Tales, not one of you has committed the crime. You are called Luis Habaña, Matias Belarmino, Nicasio Eigasani, Cayetano de Jesus, Mateo Elejorde, Leandro Lopez, Antonino Lopez, Silvervestre Ubaldo, Manuel Hidalgo, Paciano Mercado—you are called the whole town of Calamba! You have cleared your own fields, you have spent on them the labor of a lifetime, savings, sleepless nights, privations, and you have been deprived of them, expelled from your own homes and they have forbidden the rest to give you hospitality. They were not content with violating your justice; they stepped on the sacred traditions of your country...You have served Spain and the King and in their names you asked for justice and you were exiled without due process of law, you were snatched away from the arms of your spouses, from the kisses of your children...Any one of you has suffered more than Cabesang Tales and nevertheless no one, not one has had justice...There was neither pity nor humanity for you, and you have been persecuted beyond the grave like Mariano Herbosa.[90] Weep or laugh in the lonely islands where you roam useless and uncertain of the future! Spain, generous Spain, watches over you and sooner or later you shall obtain justice!"[91]

Nothing would perhaps be stranger to a reader unacquainted with the author's history than to read the lines above. As already mentioned, Paciano is Rizal's brother, while Silvestre Ubaldo and Manuel Hidalgo are his brothers-in-law who took the hacienda case to court. Nowhere in the novel were their names mentioned other than in this soliloquy.

[90] Mariano Herbosa is Rizal's brother-in-law whose remains were denied a Catholic burial by the Church because of Rizal's involvement in anti-clerical agitation.

[91] Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion: A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere.* 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Pg.75

The weight of the atrocity perpetrated against his family propelled Rizal to radically break the pre-established code between author and reader and address a historical event that existed on the pages of a purported fictional work. The author steps forward to reveal himself not only as the omniscient narrator but also as one of the victims of oppression and directly confronts the reader. In exposing himself, he takes on the shame and assumes responsibility for the reprisals taken against family because of the role he played in the Calamba hacienda dispute. But in doing so, he also endangers his work from being viewed no longer as a work of fiction but rather as a historical document with an obvious intention. Assmann negates this view and maintains that:

> „Die Dialektik von Täuschung und Wahrhaftigkeit, Schwindel und Ehrlichkeit ist eine Grundbedingung der Fiktion, die für die Kommunikation fiktionaler Texte ihre Konsequenzen hat. Selbst Texte, die Faktizität mit Fiktivität vermengen oder sich in der Travestie eines authentischen Tatsachenberichts geben, vermögen dieser Grundbedingung nicht wirklich zu entgehen. Das geschlossene Bezugssystem des fiktionalen Mediums läβt sich nicht an einzelnen Stellen aufbrechen, und alle Beteuerungen, die die Fiktion gegen sich selbst richtet, werden verstanden als >>words of course, to which nobody pays any regard<<.[92]

The author is thus at liberty to insert actual facts or events and still get away with it as part of fiction, as long as it is plausible within the framework of his narrative. But in stating the name "Calamba" to replace the pre-established setting of San Diego in Tales' story, the reader cannot simply take the words of the narrator as part of fiction and consequently becomes aware of the manipulative technique of the author. Rizal's family's sufferings are too overwhelming to the novelist and thus break through the

[92] Assmann, Aleida. *Die Legitimität Der Fiktion.* 1980. München: Fink. Pg.151

carefully maintained façade of fiction. Thus, it appears that the novel is indeed conceived to be an act of revenge and an incendiary manifesto as maintained by some, the purpose of which is to incite the Filipino people in rebellion.[93]

Ambiguously, at the end of the passage, we read the narrator appealing to Spain, as if addressing a benevolent protector and entreating it for help. This puts the novelist's intention in an ambivalent light. The ambivalence is partly resolved by recalling the author's intended reader. In addressing what he has written to an audience who is already familiar with the historical events, Rizal exposes the fact that his intention transcends the aesthetic sphere of literature and uses the medium of the novel to act as a plea not to repeat past mistakes. By simply narrating and commenting on events and not putting forward a concrete solution to the situation, it appears that the intention of the novel is to appeal for a re-evaluation of the socio-political situation in the Philippines and to generate a debate as to the best steps to be taken in liberating the colony from oppression.

The question of the separation of fiction and reality is a tendentious one. We live in a world where every event is marked as history. The novel, to be realistic, cannot divorce itself from this natural law. The distinction therefore should not reside on the source of the narrative but on how it is translated into the novel genre. As Kundera puts it:

[93] Cf. Vicente Rafael's paper, *Foreignness and Vengeance: On Rizal's "El Filibusterismo"* (http://repositories.cdlib.org/international/uclacseas/colloquium/vrafael_filibusterismo 2002. Pg.6), and Jose Maria Sison's essay, *Rizal the Subversive* (*Nationalist Literature*: A Centennial Forum. 1996. Philippines: University of the Philippines Press and Panulat. Pp.17-23).

> "there is on the one hand the novel that examines the historical dimension of human existence, and on the other the novel that is the illustration of a historical situation."[94]

Rizal's portrayal of the *filibustero* nineteenth-century Philippine society fits both categories. The "meditative interrogation"[95] of the author questions his response to the demands of the events in his society. It can be said therefore, that the idea of *filibusterismo* or subversion is dealt with by Rizal as a means of illuminating the problems in the Philippines and not as an end in itself. Having concluded thus, it emerges that *El Filibusterismo* is not an incendiary document but rather a consciousness-raising manifesto and, consequently, an appeal for the change of direction in the system of governance in the country. Accordingly, it illustrates that the subject or the emerging Filipino is still forging his identity within the framework of colonialism.

In the succeeding chapter, the narrator returns to his role as a storyteller as if nothing had happened. However, a feeling of uneasiness permeates the work, and the reader who is now alerted to his role as a partner in the production of meaning will inevitably try to unravel the mystery behind the author's true intention. The ambivalence mentioned above, which is produced by the anomalous passage, is only partially resolved and thus lingers in the mind of the reader. To try and understand this confusion, the next chapter will examine the role of the author and the narrator in the novel which will further clarify Rizal's intention in writing his work.

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[94] Kundera, Milan. *The Art of the Novel.* 1988. London: Faber and Faber Limited. Pg.36
[95] *Ibid.* Pg.31

Chapter Four: The Spectre of the Author

One very striking element of *El Filibusterismo* is its style of narration. The all-seeing narrator of the novel is a self-assured commentator who frequently emerges and breaks into the scene to provide his own interpretation of situations and events. These comments are often steeped either in sarcasm or irony and hint at a deeper meaning behind the seemingly simple sentences. The opening paragraphs of the novel illustrates this:

> "One December morning the steamship TABO was arduously sailing upstream through the winding course of the Pasig, carrying numerous passengers to the province of Laguna.[96] It was a ship of heavy build, almost round like the *tabú* or water-dipper from which she derives her name, rather dirty despite her pretensions to whiteness, majestic and solemn in her slow calm. For all that, the region had a certain fondness for her, perhaps for her Tagalog name, or for exuding a character peculiar to things native, something akin to triumph over progress—a steamship that was not quite a steamship, a changeless entity, imperfect but indisputable, which when she wanted to pass herself off as progressive was proudly content with a new coat of paint.
>
> And yes indeed, the lucky steamship was genuinely Filipino! With a little bit of goodwill she could be taken for the Ship of State, constructed under the supervision of the Most Reverend and Illustrious personages.[97]

[96] Cf. Chapter Two, note 45, pg.30

[97] According to the notes of Soledad Lacson-Locsin, the novel's translator, a warship named the *Crucera Filipina*, was constructed in Hongkong under the supervision of ecclesiastical authorities. Rizal is said to have used this to comment on the state of the Philippine ship of state. (Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo:*

> …And if her similarity to the Ship of State still seems incomplete, look at the array of passengers. From below deck loom brown faces and black heads, all types of *Indios*, Chinese and half-breeds, jammed among merchandise and trunks, while up there on deck, under a tarpaulin that protects them from the sun are seated on comfortable armchairs a few passengers dressed like Europeans, friars, and office workers, smoking cigars and contemplating the countryside, seemingly without perceiving the skipper's and the sailor's efforts to negotiate the difficulties of the river."

The narrator's description of the ship is clearly a strategy to describe the state of affairs in the Philippines. The details of the description provoke thought and leave the impression that something else of importance is being described other than the steamship and its passengers alone. These details highlight the division between black and white or between the natives and the Europeans. Racial discrimination and the difference in the economic circumstances dividing the rich and the underprivileged is cleverly presented through the simple use of the ship's compartmentalization. In addition, the critical tone lampoons those who glorify the colonizer and style themselves as "white", although they are in fact natives of the land or products of intermarriages between the locals and Europeans. It also criticizes the tendency to be content in an outward display of "progress" rather than genuinely trying to improve oneself and move forward, perhaps through the help of education. This style of narration occurs predominantly in the novel, which makes one question the nature of the role the narrator plays in the text.

Subversion: A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere. 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Note 1 on page 317). This validates Joaquin's claim that the novel's inspiration started when Rizal came across the exiles of the unsuccessful Motin de '72 in Hongkong. (Cf. Chapter Two, note 64, pg.35)

The advent of the so-called "realistic novels" in the nineteenth-century has caused the author to seemingly disappear from the novel.[98] The narrator's function was relegated to simply describing and linking together situations and conversation without offering any interpretation. By virtue of being a character himself in the story, the narrator was easily distinguishable from the author and from the "implied author" who is, according to Iser: "the man whose attitudes shape the book".[99] To further clarify who this "implied author" is Iser quotes Wayne Booth in his *Rhetoric of Fiction*:

> "The implied author chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read;…he is the sum of his own choices…This implied author is always distinct from the 'real man'—whatever we may take him to be—who creates a superior version of himself, a 'second self', as he creates his work".[100]

Thus, to understand a nineteenth-century novel where *El Filibusterismo* is supposed to belong requires not only an examination of the author's intention through the understanding of the messages delivered by the narrator but also, by analyzing the choices made by the implied author.

But *El Filibusterismo*, though written in the late nineteenth-century exhibits most features of the eighteenth-century novel, particularly in the presence of the omniscient narrator, who is yet to be distinct from the "implied author" of the text and become a character in the novel. In *El Filibusterismo*, the narrator plays the role of the "implied author" in that he is the "supreme version" of Rizal; all-seeing and all-knowing. In addition, devices

[98] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader.* 1974. Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press. Pg.103
[99] *Ibid.* pg.104
[100] Booth in: Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader.* 1974. Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press. Pg.103

used by the eighteenth century writer to assist the reader in unravelling "the mysteries of a sometimes strikingly obscure composition" ranging from "earnest exhortation to satire and irony" are present, and observably the most prominent features of the novel.[101] Observe this passage taken from the first chapter:

> "And Doña Victorina, the only woman seated among the European group, is able to say if the Tabo is idle, disobedient and wayward.[102] Doña Victorina, always high-strung, hurls invectives against ships, bancas, coconut rafts, boats, *Indios* who travel, and even against the laundresses and bathers who upset her with their merriment and din.[103] Yes, the Tabo would go on very well if there were no *Indios* in the river, *Indios* in the country, yes, and if there were not a single a single Indio in the world, not noticing the helmsmen were *Indios*; the crewmen, *Indios*; the engineers, *Indios*; and she herself, Indio, if her make-up were scraped off and her showy gown shed".[104]

The use of irony and sarcasm situates *El Filibusterismo* in the category of an eighteenth-century novel. These "devices" are used by a discerning author who understands that the reader is more likely to respond to the dynamic process of "puzzle solving" rather than a passive acceptance of mere "preachy" narratives. To illustrate this point, let us take the above passage as an example. The irony of the statement suggesting that the Tabo or the

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[101] Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader.* 1974. Baltimore, USA: John Hopkins University Press. Pg.103

[102] The inimitable character Doña Victorina, is transposed to *El Filibusterismo* from the pages of Rizal's fist novel. (Cf. *Noli Me Tangere*). She represents the Filipino attitude of veneration for anything European or Western. According to the translation of *El Filibusterismo* by Soledad Lacson-Locsin, Rizal patterned this character after the owner of Teatro Zorrilla; a rich proprietress by the name of Doña Augustina Medel. (Rizal, José. *El Filibusterismo: Subversion: A Sequel to Noli Me Tangere.* 2007. USA: University of Hawai'i Press. Note 7 on pg. 317)

[103] From its original meaning, the term *Indios* was used by the colonizers with contempt and evolved to mean "ignorant and indolent people".

[104] *Op.cit.* Pg.3 The anachronistic reference to the Philippines as a country prior to the development of the concept has been overlooked by most of the translators of the novel. (Cf. Derbyshire, Charles. *El Filibusterismo: The Reign of Greed.* October 10, 2005-release date. Online:Homepage of Project Gutenberg EBook http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10676/10676-h/10676-h.htm.)

world will fare better without the *Indios* cannot be regarded as a mere reversal of that statement but elicits further reflection on the part of the reader. By affirming the opinion of the *Doña*, the narrator gives the impression that he is in agreement that the *Indios* are worthless. But this is merely a trap inciting the reader to react against the narrator's derision and with sympathy to the maligned *Indios*. The reiteration of the noun *Indio* calls to mind the intended readers, who are the Filipinos (i.e. *Indios*), and reminds them that this is an address to them. The readers are forced to discover for themselves the intended meaning of the derision, which is clearly a disapproval of the contemptuous behaviour against Filipinos, whether by the author's own countryman or by the colonizer. Such ridicule is an exhortation to recognize the Filipinos' own capabilities and develop national pride. In stating that the ship is virtually run by *Indios*, the narrator underscores the capacity of the Filipino people to run their own country.

The authorial intrusions thus show that the author's intention in writing the novel is to agitate for the direct participation of the Filipinos in the nation's administration or possibly, the separation of the Philippines from Spain. Events in the author's life surrounding the completion of the novel support this assumption. After leaving the Philippines for the second time in 1888 because of the clerics' demand for his imprisonment, Rizal had chance meetings and other associations which contributed not only to the novel's plot but to foment separatist feelings in him. His first stop, which was Hongkong, acquainted him with José Maria Basa, an exile from the failed revolution of

1872.[105] This man became a very good friend of Rizal and helped him later on in the dissemination of his works in Manila. It was in London, the second stop of his voyage aimed for Madrid where Rizal started writing *El Filibusterismo*. In Madrid, the growing disunity of the Filipinos in the Spanish capital deepened national sentiments in Rizal and made him turn for Barcelona where he joined and became president of an "association of a masonic character" called *La Solidaridad*.[106] The aim of this organization was very much similar to the goal of the Creole Revolution in 1792, which was the assimilation of the Philippines to Spain. Concurrently, as Coates noted, "Rizal's personal life and thoughts were being influenced in ever-deepening degrees by concern for the fate of his family enmeshed in the problems of the Calamba hacienda".[107] He felt critically responsible for the Pandora's Box he opened in Calamba and tried to rectify this by setting out the facts of the case in the pages of *La Solidaridad*. It was in this periodical that he openly expressed his change of heart towards assimilation and pushed for independence. One of his most radical articles read:

> "If a colonizing nation cannot bring happiness to her colonies, she must either abandon them or give them their liberty…"[108]

These lines clearly express the author's view that it is time for the Filipinos to stand for themselves and "run their own ship". It is the same message that the narrator of *El Filibusterismo* voices out. It is no great wonder therefore that the novel has been elevated to national literature status. Rizal's belief in the Filipino's readiness to function

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[105] Coates, Austin. *Rizal: Philippine Nationalist and Marty.* 1968. London: Oxford University Press. Pp.150-151. Joaquin's claim that the idea for the novel came to Rizal's mind and was largely influenced by his association with the exiles of the *Motin de '72* is once again validated. (Cf. Chapter One, note 29)
[106] Coates, Austin. *Rizal: Philippine Nationalist and Martyr.* 1968. London: Oxford University Press. Pg.162
[107] *Ibid.* Pg.165
[108] Cf. Rafael Palma's *Biografia de Rizal* as quoted by Austin Coates (*Ibid.* Pg.173)

as an independent nation, capable of governing its own people and his efforts in raising national consciousness earned him the title; "The First Filipino".[109]

How was this consciousness formed in the author? His work gives us the clues. The formation of the Filipino identity in Rizal, as illustrated in *El Filibusterismo*, is a product of the struggles against colonial oppression. This is shown by the portrayal of the different *Filibusteros* and their reaction to the injustices they are subjected to. Kundera believes that the creation of characters in the act of writing is the author's way of testing "experimental selves" [110] so that he may examine them through what he calls, "revelatory existential" situations and actions.[111] Thus, the characters in the novel (such as Tales) are the manifestations of Rizal's experimentation with the different solutions to the injustices plaguing his society. That they are responses worked out within the framework of colonial mentality, is what gives them the appearance of an ambiguity. Nevertheless, they are products of an effort to articulate his identity as a Filipino.

[109] "The First Filipino" is the title of the 1963 biography of Jose Rizal written by Leon Ma. Guerrero authorized by the National Heroes Commission
[110] Kundera, Milan. *The Art of the Novel.* 1988. London: Faber and Faber Limited. Pg.31
[111] *Ibid.* Pg.36

Conclusion

The discussion in the preceding chapters was aimed toward illustrating how ambivalence and ambiguity pervades the formation of identity in José Rizal's *El Filibusterismo*. The site for this discussion was located in the analysis of ideas present in the novel particularly relating to independence.

The events in the author's life and in the world at large, surrounding the creation of the novel, provided valuable insights into the emotional motivations and the intellectual developments of the author which influenced the unique construction of the novel. What it showed was that Rizal used the novel as a form of non-activist or meditative propaganda in order to generate awareness of the socio-political situation in the Philippines. It was a plea to re-assess the situation and generate a response that will eventually lead to the liberation of the nation from colonial oppression.

By identifying and addressing his intended audience from the start, it became clear that other than the aforementioned intentions, the author's motivation is simply to raise national consciousness in the Filipino people. But the frequent contravention of the fictional contract also exposed the author's desire for revenge and his use of the novel as a medium to agitate for the separation of the Philippines from Spain. Thus, the formation of national consciousness was shown as suffused with ambivalence.

The psychological analysis of the novel proved that oppression and struggle were the catalysts in the formation of identity and that the separation of the colony from the colonizer was a natural development in an emerging nation's road to maturity and not a violent rejection of the colonist. This was supported by the failure and death of the radical characters in the novel. The author's ambivalent attitude toward political violence showed that no matter how strong the lure of revenge is, the fundamental values of a functional society anchored his beliefs.

Accordingly, the failure of all proposed solutions and the ambiguous ending showed that Rizal had no plans for the consequences the publication of the novel entailed. Not unlike his character Simoun, his plan hinged on a dream which was without form and utopian content. He placed his faith in a minority of enlightened natives like himself, who through genuine interest in education and selfless dedication would deliver the nation from oppression. The importance of genuine education in the development of national consciousness was heavily underscored. Therefore, the peaceful struggle is part of a larger programme which emanates from having quality education and leads to the healthy development of national consciousness. Rizal proposes a middle-path, not without contradictions, anomalies and ambiguity but workable, nevertheless, within the framework of his novel.

The concept of identity has always been a problematic one for Filipinos. Having been a Spanish colony for over three hundred years, with British, French and Dutch intrusions in between, occupied by the Japanese and the Americans for another half a century, the

Filipinos find it difficult to articulate who they truly are. That the Philippines spearheaded the anti-colonialist movement in Asia is a proud history that this study wants to celebrate. In the same breath, it accepts that the burden of colonialism was a necessary evil in the awakening of nationalist sentiments in this country. It is the simultaneous rejection and acceptance of this inherited past that led to the ambivalence and ambiguity examined in this study.

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