The Afterlives of the *Noli me tángere*

Anna Melinda Testa-de Ocampo

*Philippine Studies* vol. 59 no. 4 (2011): 495–527

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder’s written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

http://www.philippinestudies.net
Filipinos rarely read the *Noli me tángere* in the original Spanish, but it lives on in translation, a second life or afterlife, as Walter Benjamin puts it. During the American period, the first English translation, *An Eagle Flight*, based on the first French translation in 1899, was published in 1900. The second English translation, entitled *Friars and Filipinos*, appeared in 1902, and it was made by Frank Ernest Gannett, then secretary to Jacob Schurman, chair of the First Philippine Commission. Politics intruded in the translations; the omissions and additions recreated a novel suited to the American reader who wanted to gain information about the new colony. Only after the institution of the public school system were Filipinos expected to read the novel in its English translation.

**KEYWORDS: JOSÉ RIZAL · TRANSLATION · AFTERLIFE · PARATEXT · RIZAL LAW**
José Rizal’s novel, *Noli me tángere*, occupies a central place in Philippine literature and history. In *Origins and Rise of the Filipino Novel*, Resil B. Mojares (1983, 137) writes that Rizal is “rightfully the father of the Filipino novel. *Noli Me Tangere* (1887), which has been called ‘the first Filipino novel,’ and *El Filibusterismo* (1891) remain to date the most important literary works produced by a Filipino writer, animating Filipino consciousness to this day, setting standards no Filipino writer can ignore.” Rizal’s writings are considered a “constant and inspiring source of patriotism” for the youth, and therefore the 1956 Rizal Law (RA 1425) mandated that his “life, work and writings . . . particularly his novels . . . shall be included in the curricula of all schools, colleges and universities, public or private, provided That in the collegiate courses, the original or unexpurgated editions of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* or their English translation shall be used as basic texts” (Fabella 1961, 226).

Despite the centrality of the *Noli* in Philippine literature and history, Filipinos rarely read it in the original Spanish. Most read it in translation. Since being translated into French in 1899, the *Noli* has been translated many times over, with the most recent translation being that of Harold Augenbraum’s for Penguin Classics, published in 2006. As a result of the Rizal Law, the *Noli* was translated into seven regional languages (Pampango, Cebuano, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray, Bikol, and Pangasinense) in 1963 by the National Commission for the centenary of Rizal’s birth (see appendix 1).

After the *Noli* was first published in 1887, an abridged French translation was issued in 1899 by Henri Lucas and Ramón Sempau. A note included in the list of *Noli* translations in the 1933 Basa and Benitez translation mentions that, according to Austin Craig, the French translation “passed through four editions in 1899” (cited in Rizal 1933, xvi). The French translation bore the title, *Au pays des moines* (The Land of the Monks) (fig. 1). There is mention of a German translation attempted but never finished by Ferdinand Blumentritt (ibid., xix). Rizal’s brother Paciano was supposed to have attempted a Tagalog/Filipino translation but it was never published.

During the American period, the first English translation, *An Eagle’s Flight*, was published in 1900, based on the French translation in 1899. The second English translation, entitled *Friars and Filipinos*, appeared in 1902; it was translated by Frank Ernest Gannett, then secretary to Jacob Gould Schurman, the chair of the First Philippine Commission. The most reprinted English translation, Charles Derbyshire’s *The Social Cancer: A Complete English Version of the Noli Me Tangere from the Spanish of Jose Rizal* (1912) (fig. 2), was published by the World Book Company, which “published English language educational materials for schools in the Philippines” (Harcourt n.d.). It was republished by the Philippine Educational Company (PECO) in 1927. According to Patricia May Jurilla (2010, 20), the revised edition translated by Derbyshire had several reprints in 1927, 1931, 1937, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1956, 1961, 1966, and 1969 and it was reissued by Giraffe Books in 1990 and 1996. The 1933 English translation by Feliciano Basa and Francisco Benitez, with an introduction by Manuel L. Quezon, was also a complete translation. During the American period, there were also twelve Spanish editions, one Japanese, three Tagalog/Filipino, and four in different Philippine languages (Waray, Iloko, Bikol, and Cebuano) (see appendix 1).
In this article, I explore the notion of the politics of translation as it is illustrated in the history of translation of the *Noli me tangere*. How did the political usefulness of the *Noli* influence the translations made? I limit the study to the first two English translations—*An Eagle Flight* and *Friars and Filipinos*—during the American period. Politics intruded into translation, in how the text was edited or abridged. As I hope to show, the two translations refashioned the *Noli* for it to suit the interests of the target audience, primarily American readers who wanted to gain information about the new colony in the Pacific. While ideally it might have been better to analyze all three translations made by non-Filipinos during the American period, unfortunately there are no data regarding the motivation or target audience of Charles Derbyshire, who was the first to make a complete translation of the novel into English and who indicated in his introduction to *The Social Cancer* dated 1 December 1909 that he also intended to translate *El filibusterismo* (Derbyshire 1912, xxxv).

**The Politics of Translation**

Why translate a text? To what purpose and for whom? Walter Benjamin (1968, 71) wrote that, “a translation issues from the original—not so much from its life as from its afterlife . . . their translation marks their stage of continued life” (italics added). Translated texts have a new life, and the *Noli*, which is rarely read by Filipinos in the original Spanish, lives on in its translations.

Looking at the various translations of the *Noli*, one sees significant differences among them. In *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, translation theorists Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (1992, v) point out that:

> Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of literature and a society.

The effects of these “rewritings” can mean the introduction of “new concepts, new genres, and new devices,” but it can also “repress innovation, distort and contain” or even manipulate (ibid.). Translation theorist Lawrence Venuti distinguished between “domesticating” and “foreignizing” translation, pointing out that Anglo-American translations for the last three centuries have had a “normalizing or neutralizing effect, depriving source text producers of their voice and reexpressing foreign cultural values in terms of what is familiar (and therefore unchallenging) to the dominant culture” (cited in Hatim and Mason 1997, 145). But Venuti argued in *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (1998, 77) that translation “forms domestic subjects by enabling a process of ‘mirroring’ or self-recognition: the foreign text becomes intelligible when the reader recognizes himself or herself in the translation by identifying the domestic values that motivated the selection of that particular foreign text, and that are inscribed in it through a particular discursive strategy.”

Fig. 2. Cover of *The Social Cancer*, English translation of Rizal’s *Noli me tangere* by Charles Derbyshire, 1912.
Looking at the first two English translations of the *Noli*, we will see that the translations were refashioned for the American reading public in order for them to understand the psyche and problems of their new colony, as well as to reflect the idealism and romanticism of the hero figure. The aspiration for freedom and the struggle against the oppression of the friars were ideals to which the American public could relate, but without necessarily going into the long philosophical digressions that Rizal included. Sections considered unnecessary were deleted and only the essential portions were kept. How the Americans of this period read the *Noli* would have been very different from how Filipinos would have read it then—and certainly how they read it now. The *Noli* did not have the same function as Filipinos see it—as a means to develop national consciousness and love of country; for American readers the *Noli* was simply a way to be informed about the problems in the country and the Filipinos’ aspiration for freedom from the friars’ tyrannical practices.

**On the Use of the Paratext**

In the study of the two translations, I include the paratext, an element of the text which is commonly overlooked. For Gerard Genette, it is necessary to look at the paratext, or “the thresholds,” which are “the literary and printerly conventions that mediate between the world of publishing and the world of the text” (Macksey 1997, xvii). The paratext “presents” the text to its audience. Posed on the “threshold” of reading a particular text, the peritext and epitext shape the reception of a text. The “peritext includes the title, preface, and sometimes elements inserted into the interstices of the text, such as chapter titles and notes” (Genette 1997, 5). The epitext would include “all those messages that, at least originally, are located outside the book, generally with the help of the media (interviews, conversations) or under cover of private communications (letters, diaries and others)” (ibid.). The paratext, composed of both peritext and epitext, include not only the title, author’s name, publication data, and size of the publication but also the foreword, preface, notes, additions, or deletions in later editions.

I argue that the paratext of both translations of the *Noli* are crucial in determining the purpose and use of the translations as the translators envisioned it. The translators’ introductions, deletions, and additions are important because they can change how one reads the *Noli*. The introduction by the translator gives an insight into the objectives and target audience of a particular translation. As Philip Lejeune puts it, the introduction is “a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one’s whole reading of the text” (cited in ibid., 2). The elements of the paratext may appear and disappear and reappear over time in different editions of the book (ibid., 6).

Even the title and its changes are important elements to consider in a work. Genette notes that the “functions of a title are (1) to identify the work, (2) to designate the work’s subject matter, (3) to play up the work” (cited in ibid., 76). The title of the *Noli* was changed in both translations to suit the objectives of the translators. From the French title, which meant *The Land of the Monks* (1899), to *An Eagle Flight* (1900), to León Ma. Guerrero’s *The Lost Eden*, the title of the *Noli* has been modified to suit the interest of the translator (see appendix 2). Genette does not include translation in his study, *Paratext*, but in applying the elements of paratext to translation analysis we see that the translator’s introduction or preface gives the reader an understanding as to what objectives guided the translation and if and why omissions were made. Before we delve into the translations, it may be fruitful to first revisit Rizal’s writing and publication of the *Noli me tângere* in 1887.

**Writing and Publishing the *Noli***

According to Fr. John N. Schumacher, S.J. (1991, 93), Rizal had “originally intended to write the novel in French, then the universal language of educated Europe, so as to depict Philippine society for them.” Rizal decided to write it in Spanish, according to a letter to Blumentritt in 1888, because he thought “he had later decided that other writers could undertake that task—it was instead for his fellow Filipinos that he must write” (cited in ibid.). Rizal wrote: “For I must wake from its slumber the spirit of my country. . . . I must first propose to my countrymen an example with which they can struggle against their bad qualities, and afterwards, when they have reformed, many writers will rise up who can present my country to proud Europe” (cited in ibid.). In his award-winning biography of Rizal, *The First Filipino*, León Ma. Guerrero (2007, 149) is of the view that the *Noli* written in French was a better option, something Rizal considered doing in case the *Noli* in Spanish did not work out.

Rizal clarified why he wrote the *Noli me tângere* in a letter that was supposedly written to Felix Resurreción Hidalgo on 5 March 1887. The artist R. Hidalgo had written earlier that he wanted to read a novel by Rizal, not newspaper articles that “live and die within the page[s] of a newspaper” (cited in Zaide 1990, 358), to which Rizal replied:
Noli Me Tangere, words taken from the Gospel of St. Luke [sic. St. John 20:13–17—Z(aide)] mean “touch me not.” The book contains, then, things that nobody in our country has spoken of until the present. They are so delicate that they cannot be touched by anyone. With reference to myself, I have attempted to do what nobody had wished to do. I have replied to the calumnies that for so many centuries have been heaped on us and our country. (ibid.)

In revealing the excesses of the Spanish friars, Rizal writes back to the Spanish colonizer, as he replies to all the insults heaped on the indios and the Philippines through his novel. In describing the political and social conditions at that time, he shows the friars’ use of religion to enrich themselves and their abuse of power and privilege that have resulted in “absurdities”:

I have described the social condition, the life there, our beliefs, our hopes, our desires, our complaints, our sorrows. I have unmasked hypocrisy that under the cloak of religion has impoverished and brutalized us. I have distinguished the true religion from the false, from the superstitious, from that which capitalizes the holy word in order to exact money, in order to make us believe in absurdities of which Catholicism would blush if it would know them. I have lifted the curtain in order to show what is behind the deceitful and glittering words of our government. I have told our compatriots our defects, our vices, our culpable and cowardly complacency with the miseries over there. (cited in ibid., 358–59)

The Noli’s publication in Berlin 1887 was made possible by a loan from Maximo Viola. The initial run consisted of 2,000 copies at a cost of P300. Rizal gave Viola the signed proofs and one of the pens he had used to write the novel. The dedication read, “To my dear friend Maximo Viola, the first to read and appreciate my work—José Rizal—Berlin, such and such a date, 1886” (Viola 1961, 36). After Rizal’s family sent him P1,000, Rizal paid Viola his debt. Rizal sent copies of the novel to his friends and, with a “Voltairean smile,” said he also “sent copies to the Governor General and Archbishop of Manila” (ibid.).

When the book was published, the chief Catholic censor of the time, Fr. Salvador Font, issued a statement against it. In his article, “A Defense of the Noli,” Marcelo H. del Pilar (1961, 1) summarized the words of the critic, Father Font, as follows: “The Book is an infamous libel, full of lies and calumny. In it, the author reveals gross ignorance of the history of this country, completely savage until the Gospel brought in its light; completely degenerate, like the heathen countries that surround it, until the wise love of Mother Spain raised it from its misery and moral prostration.” In a tone that denigrated Rizal’s ungratefulness, Font emphasized that Rizal was a “man who harbor[ed] an ill-disguised hatred for the mother who gave him life; who fed him with the bread of civilization” (ibid.). Font felt that the book “deserve[d] the bitterest and most severe censure,” and should be “subjected to official rebuke and shunned by all honorable persons” (ibid.). In Font’s view Rizal revealed his ingratitude to Mother Spain as he did not recognize the gifts of Spanish colonization such as the Catholic religion, political and social structures, and Spanish culture.

However, Del Pilar argued that Rizal in fact “wrote to criticize for the betterment of the Filipinos, because he loved Spain” (ibid., 4). Quoting the debate in the Noli between Elias and Ibarra, Del Pilar showed that Rizal “condemns his [Elias’] separatist aspirations, putting in Elias’ mouth . . . words that breathe the spirit of wisdom,” but “asks for a little freedom, justice and affection.” Rizal critiqued the “social evils among the people as well as in the institutions,” in his descriptions of Capitan Tiago, cockfighting, and so on (ibid.).

The 1899 French Translation

It is interesting that the first translation of the Noli me tangere was in French given that, according to Viola, “Rizal thought seriously about writing his next novel in French, in the event that the Noli turned out to be a flop among the Filipinos” (cited in Anderson 2008, 28). The French language then was the “primary language of world literary culture” as compared to Spanish, which was “then a second or third class literary language” (ibid.).

In The World Republic of Letters Pascale Casanova (2004, 24) describes Paris as “the capital of the literary world,” which had two significant contributions:

On the one hand, it symbolized the Revolution, the overthrow of the monarchy, the invention of the rights of man—an image that was to earn France its great reputation for tolerance towards foreigners and
as a land of asylum for political refugees. But it was also the capital of letters, the arts, luxurious living, and fashion. Paris was therefore at once the intellectual capital of the world, the arbiter of good taste, and (at least in the mythological account that later circulated throughout the entire world) the source of political democracy: an idealized city where artistic freedom could be proclaimed and lived.

In identifying Paris as symbolic capital, Victor Hugo had written, “What, then, does Paris have? The Revolution . . . Of all the cities of the earth, Paris is the place where the flapping of the immense invisible sails of progress can best be heard” (cited in ibid.). Walter Benjamin reiterates this view in The Arcades Project, where he “showed [that] the historical particularity of Paris was connected with the demand for political freedom, which in turn is directly associated with the invention of literary modernity” (cited in ibid., 25).

The French translation of the Noli brought the book into a wider literary readership and perhaps this explains why it was retitled Au pays des moines. It might have been difficult to market a book with a Latin title such as the Noli to a French readership. As David Coward (1997, 87–88) points out about popular literature in France in this period, “there was a shift in the interest taken in foreign parts which now moved away from the thrilling Africa of Louis Noir, the American romances of Gustave Aimard and travelogues of Pierre Loti, towards a harder anticolonial and antimilitarist stance.” The Noli may have been edited in such a way as to suit the style of the more popular action-driven roman feuilletons (novels published in episodes) in magazines in Paris (ibid., 74). Coward adds: “For most readers, the exotic was less a place than a province of the mind: it was to be found close to home, in the gothic, in social fictions and increasingly in the past” (ibid., 78). Thus there was a market for historical novels such as Hugo’s Notre Dame de Paris (1831), and Alexandre Dumas gave “ordinary French men and women a highly tendentious view of their history which he used as a stick to beat the present” (ibid., 79). The hero of Eugène Sue’s widely read feuilleton Les Mystères de Paris, Rodophe de Gérolstein, “is a Prince in disguise who, to expiate a crime against his father, wanders through the violent, crime-ridden, precarious lives of Paris righting wrongs, rescuing the innocent and punishing the wicked” (ibid.).

Au pays des moines introduced the Noli to a bigger European market, but it did so in the context of reflecting one man’s aspiration for freedom for his country, to which the French could also relate. The introduction by Lucas and Sempau emphasized Rizal’s aspiration for freedom from oppression at the hands of the friars in the Philippines: “whereas here in Europe human thought is free, there it is enchained” (alors qu’ici, en Europe, la pensée humaine est libre, là-bas elle est enchaînée) (Lucas and Sempau 1899, vi). The translation of the Noli was framed in the context of a “cry of pain and protest against the tyranny that enslaves and degrades his race” (cri de douleur et de protestation contre la tyrannie qui asservit et dégrade sa race) (ibid., viii). Lucas and Sempau further stated that the old religious and political system of the sixteenth century still prevailed in the Philippines (ibid., vi–vii). The translators added a quote from Rizal as the first epigraph introducing the novel:

Ne vois-tu pas comme tout se réveille?
Le sommeil a duré des siècles, mais un jour la foudre est tombée et la foudre, en détruisant, a rappelé la vie.
(José Rizal: Noli me tangere, cap. L.) (Lucas and Sempau 1899, v)

Do you not see as everyone wakes up?
The sleep lasted for centuries, but one day the lightning struck and the lightning, in destroying, has summoned back life.

The French translation made the Noli accessible to readers who could be sympathetic to the Filipinos’ spiration for freedom. Rizal’s target readers were not only his own fellowmen, but also the “friend or foe.” As highlighted by Benedict Anderson (2008, 27–28), “as far as the ‘friends’ are concerned, they are sympathetic in principle to Rizal’s cause, they have never been to the Philippines and know little about it, but they are eager to learn; . . . educated people of the kind the author met during his stays and studies in Paris, London, Berlin, and Heidelberg.” Anderson points out that the narrator’s “heavy use of Tagalog (with Spanish paraphrases) shows him in the roles of accomplished ‘tour guide,’ ‘translator,’ and ‘native informant’”
He posits that perhaps Blumentritt had envisioned that the Noli could take its place among the literary novels of the time, which had been translated into “most European languages.” Among the novels mentioned were Hugo’s *Notre Dame de Paris*, Dumas’s *Le Comte de Monte Cristo*, and Sue’s *Les Mysteres de Paris* and *Le Juif Errant*, as well as English language works such as Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (ibid., 29).

**An Eagle Flight, 1900**

It was on the abridged French translation, according to Basa (Rizal 1933, xvi), that the earliest English translation was based. It was published in 1900 by McClure, Phillips and Co. The name of the translator was not given. The title of the book was changed surprisingly to *An Eagle Flight*, although there was no mention of any eagle in the book. Rizal’s epigraph, the quotation from Friedrich Schiller’s *Shakespeare’s Ghost*, and the author’s preface were removed. The book’s cover delineates it as a “Filipino novel” that was “adapted from *Noli Me Tangere*” by José Rizal (fig. 3). The translator added a new epigraph or element of the paratext. Perhaps the translator felt that Shakespeare was more familiar to the American reader than Schiller. He used a passage from Shakespeare’s *Timon of Athens* (act 1, scene 1) to explain the change in the title:

I have in this rough work shaped out a man
Whom this beneath-world doth embrace and hug
With ampest entertainement: my free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of wax; no levell’d malice
Inficts one comma in the course I hold;
But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth on,
Leaving no track behind.

The translator’s introduction explained that the Noli was retitled *An Eagle Flight* because the novel was written with a noble purpose of “lif[ing] a corner of the covering that hides thy sore; sacrificing everything to truth, even the love of thy glory, while loving, as thy son, even thy frailties and sins” (Rizal 1900, xiv). It stated that no malice informed Rizal’s writing, only the need to reveal the truth for the country’s welfare. In the unidentified translator’s introduction, Rizal was presented as an innocent and noble soul who wrote and sacrificed everything, even his death, for his country. The opening lines of the introduction read, “In that horrible drama, the Philippine revolution, one man of the purest and noblest character stands out pre-eminently—José Rizal—poet, artist, philologue, novelist, above all patriot” (ibid., v).

The translator emphasized that Rizal never thought his country was ready for self-government, and all that he advocated were reforms under Spanish rule. He is said to have written the Noli “to plead for the lifting of the hand of oppression from the necks of his people” (ibid., vii). The Spaniards’ “blind and stupid policy brought about the crime of his death” (ibid., v). The introduction included Rizal’s last poem, “Mi Ultimo Adios,” rendering it as “My Last Thought.”

Although the market for this translation was still the American public, it is uncertain if this translation was sold in the Philippines. According to Jurilla's
Tagalog Bestsellers of the Twentieth Century, the Thomasites brought with them “textbooks for their Filipino students,” including The Baldwin Primer by May Kirk. However, a reading public in English would only develop after several years under the American public school system.

According to Vicente Albano Pacis (1961), Rep. Henry Allen Cooper, the “American discoverer” of Rizal, read the book An Eagle Flight in June 1902. He had bought the book earlier because the title caught his attention since “the eagle is the American national bird, and its mention is guaranteed to arouse every American’s interest” (ibid., 8). The poem “My Last Thought” so impressed him that later in the day, he recited the poem from memory in the US Congress, to convince his fellow congressmen that Filipinos were neither savages nor barbarians. Pacis posits: “It seemed that judging from the subsequent events, the congressman had been led to the book by the hand of fate” (ibid.). Cooper emphasized that:

> It has been said that if the American institutions had done nothing else than furnish to the world the character of George Washington ‘that alone would entitle them the respect of mankind. . . . So, sir, I say to all those who denounce the Filipinos indiscriminately as barbarians and savages, without possibility of a civilized future, that this despised race proved itself entitled to their respect and to the respect of mankind when it furnished to the world the character of Jose Rizal. . . . ‘Pirates! Barbarians! Savages! Incapable of Civilization!’ How many of the civilized Caucasian slanderers of his race could ever be capable of thoughts like these, which on that awful night, as he sat alone amidst silence unbroken save by the rustling of the black plumes of the death angel at his side, poured from the soul of a martyred Filipino? Search the long and bloody roll of the world’s martyred dead, and where—on what soil, under what sky—did Tyranny ever claim a nobler victim? Sir, the future is not without hope for a people which, from the midst of such an environment, has furnished to the world a character as lofty and so pure as that of Jose Rizal. (Flores 1958, 25)

Impressed by Rizal’s bravery and idealism, Cooper’s speech supposedly convinced the US Congress to pass the Philippine Act of 1902 or the First Organic Act of the Philippines. This meant the “creation of an assembly composed of elected representatives in Manila, and the appointment of two resident commissioners as representatives to the U.S. congress” (Pacis 1961, 8–9).

**Rewriting the Noli**

An Eagle Flight is a heavily abridged version of the Noli. The chapters are shortened to a few pages. Chapters edited out include: chapter 13, “A Gathering Storm”; chapter 14, “Tasio”; chapters 28–30, “At Nightfall,” “Letters,” and “The Morning”; chapter 42, “Two Visitors”; chapter 47, “The Cockpit”; and chapters 53–55, “The Card of the Dead and the Shadows,” “A Good Day is Foretold in the Morning,” and “Discovery” (cf. Rizal 1996). The translation also excluded the epilogue and the chapter “Elias and Salome” that Rizal had removed before publication but which were included in the centennial translation. With these chapters edited out the novel became a story of how the human spirit struggled against oppression unto death. Also edited out were sections such as the narrator’s remark: “Since no porters or servants ask for the invitation card, let us go up. You who read me, friend or foe, if you are attracted to the sounds of the orchestra, to the bright lights, or by the unmistakable tinkling of glass and silverware and wish to see how parties are in the Pearl of the Orient . . . we mortals of the Philippines are the same as tortoises” (Rizal 1996, 3). The reference to Damaso ordering the body of Don Rafael to be dug up in the cemetery was also removed. While Ibarra remained as the lead character, the portions with political discussions and Maria Clara’s demise in the convent (in the epilogue) were omitted. The novel instead ends when Basilio meets the dying Elias who tells him to burn his body together with his mother’s: “Then, if nobody comes, you are to dig here; you will find a lot of gold, and it will be all yours. Study!” Basilio must not forget Elias who “died without seeing the light of dawn on my country, you who shall see it and greet it, do not forget those who fell in the night!” (Rizal 1900, 256). The translation highlights the heroism of those who had dedicated their lives and died for the country. References to abuses are still present in the novel but are downplayed.

**Friars and Filipinos, 1902**

In 1898 Frank Ernest Gannett was secretary to Schurman, head of the First Philippine Commission, that was sent to the Philippines to formulate recommendations to the US government as to the proper approach to take on its new colony. When Gannett was a student at Cornell University in
In 1894, he was a member of the board of editors of the *Cornell Daily Sun* (Gobert et al. 1987, 2). As a student journalist, he interviewed Schurman, then university president of Cornell. After he graduated in 1898, he returned to Ithaca to “do graduate work in history, economics and literature,” and continued reporting on campus events (ibid., 3). After Christmas, he received a telegram from Schurman inviting him to be his secretary in the Philippine Commission. After the commission finished its work in 1899, Gannett returned to the US and worked as the city editor of *Ithaca Daily News*. He learned Spanish when he was in the Philippines. He made an abridged translation of the *Noli*, which was dedicated to Schurman and published in 1902 (ibid.) (fig. 4). He dedicated his translation to Schurman. His preface described the purpose of the translation:

> While serving on the staff of the first U.S. Commission to the Philippine Islands, my attention was called to the life and writings of Dr. José Rizal. I found in his novel, “Noli Me Tangere,” the best picture of the life of the people of those islands under Spanish rule, and the clearest exposition of the governmental problems which Spain failed to solve, and with which our own people must deal. It occurred to me that an English translation of Rizal’s work would be of great value at the present time. My first intention was to reproduce the entire novel as it was written, but, after careful consideration, I thought best to abridge the story by the omission of some parts which did not seem essential to the main purpose of the work. The present volume is the result. (Rizal 1902, v; italics added)

In changing the novel’s title from *Noli me tangere* to *Friars and Filipinos*, Gannett framed his translation within the context of Rizal’s criticisms against the friar orders in the Philippines. Although he qualified that Rizal remained a loyal Catholic, Gannett emphasized that Rizal also believed that the abusive actions of the friars needed to be criticized. According to Gannett, Rizal showed that the “friars, under cloak of the gospel ministry, oppressed his fellow countrymen, and took advantage of their superstitions and ignorance”:

> Readers should not understand any of Rizal’s references to priests and friars as reflective upon the Roman Catholic Church. He was throughout his life an ardent Catholic, and died a firm adherent of the Church. But he objected to the religious orders in the Philippine Islands, because he knew well that they were more than zealous in furthering their own selfish ends than in seeking the advancement of Christianity. (ibid.)

Gannett’s translation also presented the *Noli* to the new colonizer as an examination of the problems of a new territory. In the translator’s preface, he noted that “Rizal has given us a portrayal of the Filipino character from the viewpoint of the most advanced Filipino. He brings out many facts that are pertinent to present-day questions, showing especially the Malayan ideas of vengeance, which will put great difficulties in the way of pacifying our own islands by our forces” (ibid., vii). He described the five religious orders—the
Dominicans, Franciscans, Recollects, Augustinians, and Jesuits. While Rizal tried to “secure reforms,” the friars, Gannett stressed, were “an obstacle to education and enlightenment of the Filipino people” (ibid., v–vi). Except for the Jesuits, all the other religious orders had members from the “lower classes in Spain, and are on the whole comparatively ignorant and uncultured” and thus, the translator noted, the excesses of these religious corporations in the towns where they were assigned were the “cause of the hatred shown by the Filipinos” (ibid., vi).

In the town assigned to him, the friar had much authority. He was chief adviser in all civil affairs, and, by his influence over the superstitious natives, maintained absolute control in all matters pertaining to the local government as well as the local church. So firm was his hold that he led the Spanish government to believe that the islands cannot be ruled without his aid. Knowing that his power rested on the ignorance of the people, he discouraged education among them. When native Filipinos advanced so far as to prove an obstacle to the religious orders, as did Rizal and many others, the friar sought to destroy them... Forgetting their holy mission, the religious orders became commercial corporations, amassed enormous wealth, and gained possession of the most valuable parts of the islands, though to much of these properties the titles are not clear. (ibid.)

The emphasis in this translation was on the problem of the friars in the country, rather than on the struggle of the Filipinos against Spanish oppression. Rather than seeing the novel as a means of revealing the excesses of the Spaniards, Gannett presented the novel simply as an expression of a fight against the excesses of the friars and not the Spanish authorities in general. He drew a parallelism between the life of Ibarra and that of Rizal. However, he emphasized that Rizal was “no extremist, no believer in harsh and bloody methods, no revolutionist” (ibid., xvi). His only aims, Gannett said, were “to secure moderate and reasonable reforms, to lessen the oppressive exactions of the friars, to examine into titles of their land, and to make possible the education and uplifting of his people. He loved Spain as he did his own country” (ibid.).


While a footnote can clarify the meaning or context of a word or phrase, in Gannett’s translation he used a footnote to interject a personal comment in the section where Ibarra and Elias discuss the evils of the Guardia Civil (ch. 30, “The Voice of the Persecuted”). Ibarra argues that the Guardia Civil may be “imperfect” but “by the terror which it inspires, it prevents the number of criminals from increasing” (Rizal 1902, 194). Elias disagrees that, although there were criminals, they became criminals because of hunger: “They pillaged and robbed in order to live. That famine once passed over and hunger once satisfied, the roads were again free from criminals. It was sufficient to have the poor but valiant cuadrilleros chase them, with their imperfect arms... now there are tulisanes who will be tulisanes all their lives” (ibid.). The abuse of power by the Guardia Civil resulted in “crime inhumanly punished, resistance against the excesses of the power which inflicts such punishment, and fears that other atrocities may be inflicted—that make them forever members of that society who are bound by oath to kill and die” (ibid.). Gannett’s footnote at the bottom of the page reads: “author here shows difficulty in establishing American sovereignty over islands by military forces” (ibid.).

As part of this translation’s peritext, Schurman (1902, 77) mentioned the significance of the Noli in his address to members of the Cornell University on 11 January 1902: “What made trouble for the government was the question of the friars. As a class, they had long been obnoxious to the people of the Philippines... The causes of this antipathy may be read in Rizal’s great novel, Noli...” (ibid.) In his memo as Cornell University president dated 15 May 1902, he said that “Rizal’s Noli Me Tangere is, I believe, the best book ever written on the Filipinos. It lays bare the causes of the revolution against Spain and discloses at the same time the aspirations of the people. It is at once an historical and psychological study of the greatest value, present in the form of an entertaining novel” (ibid., 86; fig. 5). This was a ringing endorsement of Gannett’s translation.
The translations and the target audience reveal that the uses of the *Noli* in translation are very different from the way Filipinos read the *Noli* today. While the Philippine state employs the *Noli* to develop a sense of nationalism and love of country, in the early twentieth century the American reader used the novel to know more about a new colony as well as sympathize with the Filipinos’ aspiration for freedom from the abuses of the friars.

**Later Editions and Translations**

It was highly probable during the American period that most interested Filipinos still read the *Noli* in Spanish because the original text was republished several times in 1899, 1902, 1903, 1908, 1909, 1913, and 1929 by F. Sempere, Ramón Sempau, the Rizal family, and F. Basa (appendix 1). But the *Noli* acquired further afterlives in the several translations that were published in the course of the twentieth century. The American period saw several translations into Tagalog/Filipino coming into print. The earliest Tagalog/Filipino translation was made by Pascual H. Poblete in 1909 and published by Saturnina Rizal. Patricio Mariano’s translation was issued in 1912 and 1923; its fourth and fifth editions were issued in 1948 and 1949, respectively. This translation was also reissued in 1957, 1961, and 1972. The Pedro Gatmaitan translation was published in 1926. In 1950 two other Tagalog/Filipino translations were issued by Bartolome del Valle and Benigno Zamora, and Dionisio Salazar. The longest-running Tagalog/Filipino translation was by Maria Odulio de Guzman, Domingo de Guzman, and Francisco Lacsamana, which was first published in 1950, had several reprints, and was widely used in high schools until the most recent translation by Virgilio S. Almario appeared in 1998 and 1999. The boom in the Tagalog/Filipino translations during the American colonial period reflected the “Golden Age” of the Tagalog novel from 1905 to 1921 (Jurilla 2008, 37).

Alongside the development of the Tagalog novel during this period, there was a gradually growing set of writers who could now read and write effectively in English. Simultaneously, “a new type of Philippine writing was emerging, bred by the American system of education and fostered by the growth of newspapers and magazines in English” (ibid., 38). The Derbyshire translation, *The Social Cancer*, that appeared in 1912, and its several reprints by PECO showed a slowly growing market of readers in English. On the development of the Filipino writer in English, Francisco Arcellana is quoted by Jurilla (ibid.) as stating:
[The Filipino writer] began to learn [English] during the 1900’s. By the teens, he had learned it well enough to teach it. By the early twenties, he had learned it well enough to use it for purposes of reportage. By the later twenties he was beginning to use it for the purposes of literature: poetry (verse), plays, short stories, novels.

In later translations, starting with the Basa and Benitez translation with an introduction by Manuel L. Quezon (Rizal 1933) onward, it is apparent that the value of the Noli in instilling national consciousness was a primary determinant. Caroline S. Hau (2000, 2) has pointed out that “by reading Rizal and his novels as symbols of these nationalist ideals, and above all as exemplary, inspiring stories that could be ‘applied’ to everyday life, the Filipino was presumably inspired to live by these ideals.” A 1956 unexpurgated version by Jorge Bocobo published by R. Martinez, and the 1958 Camilo Osias translation published by the Asia Foundation for Cultural Advancement were other examples of “nationalist” versions of the Noli.

In the University of the Philippines the 1961 syllabus outline of the subject Philippine Institutions (PI), the “Life and Works of Jose Rizal,” the versions of the Noli that were in the reading list were the following: “the Spanish edition (1887), and for the English versions, those by Charles E. Derbyshire, Francisco Benitez and Feliciano Basa, Jorge Bocobo and Camilo Osias are preferred” (Fabella 1961, 228). The two early English translations were not included.

What is interesting is the publication of Leon Ma. Guerrero’s translation, which was entitled The Lost Eden—Completely New Translation for Contemporary Readers published by Longman in 1961. This version was the one that was widely used in Catholic schools, in the wake of the uproar during the deliberations on the Rizal Bill which saw the hierarchy of the Catholic Church arguing that Catholic students should not be compelled to read the Noli and Fili in full. Perhaps the translation was made to be more acceptable to Catholic schools. Anderson’s (2004) analysis of Guerrero’s strategy for translating the Noli may be recommended to teachers who still use Guerrero’s translation as the required text; but the appeal of Guerrero’s work is that both the Noli and Fili are published together in a back-to-back version, making both novels accessible at the same time.


Conclusion

The Noli is a political, historical, and literary text, and is now mostly read in translation even by Rizal’s own countrymen. Over the course of its existence, the novel has lent itself easily to the politics of translation. This study has focused on the two early English translations of the Noli, which are now available online but hardly, if ever, read by Filipinos. After all, Filipinos did not constitute the target readership of these early translations. In the early twentieth century, the objectives of translators and their politics intruded into the text. Aside from considerations of the target audience, readability, and fluency, the uses of the translated work formed part of the objectives of the Noli’s translators. The changes in the titles reflected the thrust of the translators and their strategy of positioning their translation in society.

In 1900 An Eagle Flight, the work of an unnamed translator who relied reportedly on the abridged French translation, Au pays des moines, which appeared in 1899, refashioned the text to portray the soul engaged in a noble struggle against oppression until it ended in the supreme sacrifice. To achieve this end, the translator must have considered the omissions and abridgements of certain chapters as necessary. Thus the plight of Sisa and her two sons and the death of Elias received emphasis, with the ending of the novel cut short and Rizal’s epilogue omitted.

In 1902 Gannett’s Friars and Filipinos appeared as an abridged translation of the Noli. Given the translator’s position as Schurman’s secretary from 1898 to 1899 in the Philippine Commission, it is not surprising that his translation served the purpose of unveiling the problems that the United States confronted in its new colony. Gannett’s translation highlighted friar abuses as a sign of spiritual bankruptcy and the problem of pacifying what the Americans saw as the Filipinos’ insurrection. Gannett showed the political use of translating the Noli for the American reader, who would gain an insight into the difficulties of enforcing American sovereignty over their new colony.
As these translations demonstrate, politics intruded into the text not only in terms of the political context and needs of the time, but also in the use of paratexts, the deletions and additions of the translator and editors, and the “domestication” of the translation. As Venuti (1998) has shown, a text can be translated and in the process domesticated in order to allow the target audience to identify with a familiar cultural value. As these early and the later translations of the Noli show, translating and reading the novel can be done for very different purposes—to emphasize the individual’s quest for freedom, to gain knowledge about the problems and people of a colony to facilitate conquest, or to instill love of country and strengthen national identity. The publication of translations of Noli me tàngere has ensured the novel’s afterlife, but readers do not necessarily grasp all that its author had originally intended.

Appendix 1

Compiled List of Spanish Editions and Translations of the Noli me tàngere

This list has been culled from the initial list in the Feliciano Basa and Francisco Benitez translation, and the card catalogs of the Lopez Museum, Filipinas Heritage Library, and the Filipiniana Section of the Main Library, University of the Philippines. Other renderings of the Noli into plays, poetry, study guides, and others have not been included.

A. Spanish Editions

1887 Noli me tangere: Novela tagala. Berlin: Berliner Buchdruckerei-Actien Gesellschaft. 354 pp. 23 cm. A note from the Basa and Benitez translation (Rizal 1933, xv) reads: “At the end of the dedication: Europa, 1886. Published without imprint date. However, it is safe to assert that the NOLI ME TANGERE was published after February 1887, as on the cover of the original manuscript there appears the following: Berlin, 1887: while on the last page of the same the following, in the handwriting of the author, is found: ‘Berlin, 21 Febrero 1887 11½ Noche Lunes.’”

1899 Noli me tangere: Novela tagala. Manila: Tipo-Litografía de Chofré y Comp. 356 pp., 21.5 cm.


1903 Noli me tangere: Novela tagala. Completa con notas de R. Sempau. 2d ed. Barcelona: Casa Editorial Maucci. 416 pp. 17.5 cm.

1903 Noli me tangere: Noli me tangere. Valencia: F. Sempere y Comp., Editores. 230 pp.


1909 Noli me tangere (novela tagalog). Ilustrada con anotaciones de R. Sempau. Segunda edicion, cuidadosamente corregida y aumentada con interesantes datos del proceso del célebre autor, orden militar para su fusilamiento y otros antecedentes de gran valor histórico. Barcelona: Casa Editorial Maucci. 2 vols. (vol. 1, 256 pp.; vol. 2, 252 pp.) 18 cm. A note in the Basa and Benitez translation (Rizal 1933, xvi) states that “the above edition has been re-issued by the same publishers, without imprint date, and is sold at the present time [1933].”

1911 Parágrafos inéditos del manuscrito NOLI ME TANGERE. [Manila: Oct 16, 1911] 23 cm. “Published in a booklet (p. 5–11) entitled “RIZAL” edited by Prof. Austin Craig. The above consists of passages included in the original manuscript of the Noli Me Tàngere but omitted by the author when the work was being printed.” (Note from Feliciano Basa translation [Rizal 1933, xvi]).

1913 Noli me tangere. 2 vols. Barcelona: Casa Editorial Maucci.

1929 Noli me tangere: Novela tagala. Anotado por Dr. F. Basa. Manila: Oriental Commercial Co., Inc. 8–450–cl., p. pls. 23 cm.

1949–50 Noli me tangere. Edición especial. Manila: Nueva Era, reimpresión de la tercera edición (2 vols.)


1957 Noli me tangere. Special offset reproduction of original manuscript by the Jose Rizal Centennial Commission. 465 pp.

1958 Noli me tàngere (novela tagalog). Homenaje al héroe nacional Dr. José Rizal por el primer centenario de su natalicio. Primera reimpresión en Filipinas publicada (al off-set printing) en Berlin, de la edición princepe. 1886. Quezon City: R. Martinez. 354 pp. (no. 3 de la 6 serie de Escritos de Jose Rizal).

Noli me tangere. Impresion al offset de la Edición princepe. Impresa en Berlín, 1887. Edicion del centenario. Manila: Comision Nacional del Centenario de Jose Rizal. 354 pp. (Escritos de Jose Rizal v. 4)

Noli me tangere. Facsimile of the original manuscript. Manila: Jose Rizal National Centennial Commission with the technical assistance of Robert Martinez Jr. 465 pp.

B. Translations into English

1900 An Eagle Flight. A Filipino novel adapted from “Noli Me Tangere” by Dr. Jose Rizal. New York: McClure, Phillips and Co. xiv, 256 pp. 19 cm. A note from the Feliciano Basa and Francisco Benitez translation states that “this is a retranslation from the French edition” (Rizal 1933, xvi).


1914 Elias and Salome. An unpublished chapter from the original Noli me tangere MS. by Jose Rizal. Printed in Nagasaki, Japan for Austin Craig. 30 pp. front. (port.) 20.5 cm. English translation by Charles Derbyshire.


1956 Noli me tangere (unexpurgated), trans. Dr. Jorge Bocobo from the original Spanish. Quezon City: R. Martinez and Sons. 488 pp.


C. Translations into Tagalog/Filipino

No date Noli me tangere, Tagalog trans. Paciano Rizal. “Mr. Paciano Rizal, brother of the author, submitted his work to his brother for his criticism and revision. Jose Rizal revised and corrected the sheets. But it seems that the manuscript was lost. Epifanio de los Santos” (from Basa translation, [Rizal 1933, xix]).

1909 Noli me tangere. Salin ng nobelang nasa wicang castila ni Jose Rizal na tinagalog ni Pascual H. Poblete. Inilathala ni Saturnina Rizal ni Hidalgo. Manila: Limbagan ni M. Fernandez. 531 pp., 29 cm.


1926 Noli me tangere, isinatagalog ni Pedro Gatmaitan. Maynila: Liwayway. 284 pp. 22.6 cm. “Bound at the end of the book are the following poems of Rizal translated into Tagalog by Pedro Gatmaitan: (1) Pilipinas! and (2) Huling Paalam” (from Basa translation [Rizal 1933, xviii]).

Noli me tangere (Huwag mo akong salingin). Tinagalog ni Patricio Mariano. Ika-
limang pagkalimbag. Quezon City: Roberto Martinez and Sons. 611 pp.

1950

1950

1950
Noli me tangere, trans. Maria Oduio de Guzman, Domingo D. De Guzman, at Francisco Laksamana. Isinawikang pambansa mulá sa orihinal na Kasīla, isinaayos na pampaaralan, nilikipan ng mga talang pangkasaysayan at iba’t ibang apéndisé. Manila: G. O. T. Publishing.

1952
Noli me tangere ni Dr. Jose Rizal. Isinulat sa Wikang Pambansa at isinaayos nina Bartolome del Valle and Benigno Zamora. Manila: Philippine Book. 312 pp.

1956

1956

1957

1961

1970

1972

1972

1972
Noli me tangere, salin ni Angel E. Salazar. Manila: Goodwill Trading Co., Inc. 550 pp.

1981
Noli me tangere. Salin mula sa Español nina Antonina T. Antonio at Patricia Metendrez Cruz. Komite ng Kultura at Kabatiran ng ASEAN. 441 pp. Antolohiya ng mga Panitikang ASEAN. Quezon City: APO Production Unit. 449 pp. 23 cm.

1999
Noli me tangere, salin ni Virgilio Almarino. [Manila]: National Centennial Commission.

1999
Noli me tangere, salin ni Virgilio S. Almarino. Quezon City: Adarna House.

D. The Noli in Other Philippine Languages

1920

1923

No date

1926

1926
Hare aco pag dote. Cobicolon can Noli me tangere ni Dr. Jose Rizal. Sinurat ni Gng. Jose Figueroa. May calaguip na surfat sa Bisikanon ni Gng. Jose O. Vera. Cobiculan asin duang tataramon ni Gng. Tomas Florodeliza. Manila: Imp. Ilayan y Saanga. [4]– 509–7–[3] pp. 21.5 cm. Included at the end of this work are the translations into Bicol of the unpublished chapter of the Noli me tangere, entitled Elias and Salome, and Rizal’s poem “Último Pensamiento.”

1933
Noli me tangere, trans. Vicente Sotto into the Cebuano language. “Mr. Sotto could not finish his work—Letter received from him dated Feb. 10, 1933” (note from Feliciano Basa translation [Rizal 1933, xvii]).

1962

1962

1962
Noli me tangere. Pinatik sa centenario. Manila: Comisión Nacional sa Centenario ni Jose Rizal. 545 pp. Cebuano text. (Mga basahon sa Comisión Nacional sa Centenario ni Jose Rizal, mga sinulat ni Jose Rizal, basahon 4.)

1962

1963
Hare sa sokó pagdoot (Noli me tangere). Edicion kan centenario. Manila: Comisión nin Centenario ni Jose Rizal. 487 pp. Bikol text.
E. The *Noli* in Other Foreign Languages

1933  

1963  

1963  
*Noli me tangere*. German trans., by Ferdinand Blumentritt.[Never finished].

1899  
*Au pays des moines* (*Noli me tangere*) Roman tagal traduction et annotations de Henri Lucas & Ramón Sempau. Duxième Édition. Paris: Ancienne Libraire Tresse & Stock, éditeur. [xvi], 491 pp. 18 cm. “According to Prof. Austin Craig, this French translation passed through four editions in Paris in 1899” (from notes of the translation by Feliciano Basa and Francisco Benitez [Rizal 1933, xvii]).

1903  
*Noli me tangere*. Traducción abreviada hecha por el Sr. Bimyosai Yamada. Tokio, 168–4 p. 18.5 cm. Japanese text. “The translation of the title page into Spanish was furnished by Mr. Minóru Izaua of the Imperial Japanese Consulate of Manila, who donated this work to the National Library” (from the Basa translation,[Rizal 1933, xvii]).

1903  
*Noli me tangere*. Traducion abreviada hecha por el Sr. Bimyosai Yamada. Tokio, 168–4 p. 18.5 cm. Japanese text. “The translation of the title page into Spanish was furnished by Mr. Minóru Izaua of the Imperial Japanese Consulate of Manila, who donated this work to the National Library” (from the Basa translation,[Rizal 1933, xvii]).

1957  

1975  

1976  

1987  
*Noli me tangere* Roman aus dem Philippnischen Spanisch von Annemarie del Cueto-Mörth. Frankfurt Au Main: Insel Verlag. 451 pp. Romanian text.

Appendix 2

**English Translations of Noli me tángere**

- *Au pays des moines*, 1899
  - Henri Lucas and Ramón Sempau
  - *An Eagle Flight*, 1900
    - Trans. unknown
      - Friars and Filipinos, 1902
        - Frank Ernest Gannett
  - *The Social Cancer*, 1912
    - Charles Derbyshire
  - *Noli me tangere*, 1933
    - Feliciano Basa and Francisco Benitez
  - *Noli me tangere*, 1956
    - Jorge Bocobo
  - *Noli me tangere*, 1957
    - Camilo Osias
  - *The Lost Eden*, 1961
    - León Ma. Guerrero
  - *Noli me tangere*, 1967
    - Priscilla Valencia
  - *Noli me tangere*, 1989
    - Jovita Ventura Castro
  - *Noli me tangere*, 1996
    - Soledad Lacson-Locsin
  - *Noli me tangere* (*Touch Me Not*), 2006
    - Harold Augenbraum
Note
This article has benefited from the comments and suggestions of two anonymous referees, and the assistance extended by the staff of Philippine Studies in polishing this article for publication.

References
les+derbyshire+PECO&source=bl&ots=ulY7-xGKyB&sig=zczng5Dh5q4K848f28XYbbWBLrCI&h

Anna Melinda Testa-de Ocampo is assistant professor, Department of English and Comparative Literature, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. Her MA thesis in Comparative Literature deals with the travel narratives of the Magellan expedition. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Comparative Literature, with a dissertation on the travel narratives of three British travelers to Mindanao in the eighteenth century. <poochingtesta@yahoo.com>