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Rizal's Novels: A Divergence from Melodrama

Alma Jill Dizon



An ongoing problem in Rizal scholarship is the tendency to read him as a Realist. Why do so many critics do this? For one thing, some view him as belonging to the school of Realism since he came after French Realism and was a contemporary of the Spanish Realists. He also clearly based places, events, and characters in his novels on real locations, happenings, and people whom he knew.¹ There is, however, more to these assumptions in that they reveal a continuing need to bolster nationalism even while indicating a battle with a cultural inferiority complex that is still very much a part of Philippine psyche.²

With its attention on the *Noli*, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* has been crucial in establishing how this novel creates a hitherto unknown sense of Philippine identity. The passage that he studies concentrates on a realistic description of Kapitán Tiago's milieu, and even though he describes the newspaper as a kind of fiction in his discussion of it as another principle instrument of nationalism, this combination may have the effect of leading the unwary reader to the conclusion that Rizal belonged to the Realist school. Anderson does not, however, delve into the various genres and theories of the period within the overall category of the nineteenth-century novel. As a literary critic, Doris Sommer has expanded upon Anderson's theories by observing how desire comes into play in literature. Readers wish to read a novel for its romance, and the drive toward the union of *ilustrado* and ingénue in what she calls the Latin American national romance in turn allegorizes the creation of republican government. Sommer's emphasis on the notion of romance over realism should prove helpful in a study of Rizal's novels as there are intriguing parallels between them and the Latin American works. Moreover, Peter Brooks' study of the French melodrama and its profound effect on the nineteenth-century novel enhances Sommer's paradigm by explaining the function of an exaggerated moral tale. Though not specifically examined in Brooks' study, there is a melodramatic element in works which, like Rizal's

novels, are in the service of political reform and the creation of national identity. The preponderance of critical work attesting to the realism of the *Noli* and the *Fili* have had the unfortunate effect of blinding us to their melodramatic aspects and with these a realm of possibilities. For, ultimately, if we can examine Rizal's novels as belonging to a melodramatic tradition, then we can begin to see how they differ from the genre and what this divergence might indicate for the proto-nationalist novel.

Despite all the factual details of the *Noli* and the *Fili*, the vast majority of the characters lack psychological complexity. Ibarra and Elias debate for pages before a change of opinion, but this scene is primarily an intellectual exercise against a backdrop of victims who fall to flatly drawn villains. When P. Florentino exclaims, "Pura y sin mancha ha de ser la víctima para que el holocausto sea aceptable!"³ (*Fili*, p. 285, Chapter 39), the native priest's exhortation not only speaks of a future, it also calls attention to a motif of pure goodness menaced by evil throughout the novels. And even though he uses the word *holocausto*, this sacrifice doesn't promise a return to a former equilibrium but takes on a quasi-religious sense of moving on toward a new covenant. Taken in the light of this mix of melodrama and Christian tradition, the opening verse of the quote from Schiller's *La sombra de Shakespeare* takes on additional meaning.

Qué? No podría un César presentarse
En vuestras tablas? no más un Aquiles,
Un Orestes ó Andrómaca mostrarse?

At the start of the *Noli*, these lines declare a denial of tragic possibility in the modern age, and considering that the melodrama was the popular theatrical form of the Enlightenment and early Romanticism—the two periods that profoundly affected Rizal's thinking—then it is well worth pondering the significance of the less realist aspects of the *Noli* and the *Fili*.

Romanticism

If a mixture of the popular Sir Walter Scott and the canonical Jean-Jacques Rousseau can influence the Latin American novels of independence, (Sommer 1991, 26–27)⁴ then it shouldn't surprise us that a similar blending of high and low can be detected in Rizal. Within Spanish literary tradition, the high for Rizal would be *costumbrismo* in the style of Larra while the low would be the melodramatic

tendencies gained from Dumas, *père*. Ironically, the need to view Rizal as a Realist stems largely from the prejudices of traditional Spanish literary criticism in that there is an inclination to dismiss almost everything between the Golden Age and Realism. Like the Enlightenment, Romanticism came late to Spain, but the movement had the added misfortune of falling under the shadow of the political turmoil surrounding first Fernando VII and then Isabel II. Recent criticism has given rise to a view of Spanish Romanticism as specific to Peninsular experience and thus no less valid than the period in France and England despite its short existence. It should be noted that in Spain even liberal Romantics expressed scandal when faced with the French drama of the day, the most famous review being the one Larra did of *Antony* by Dumas, *père*. Writers on both ends of the political spectrum looked toward a more Spanish and thus moral form of Romanticism. The canonical Romantics themselves tended to reject much of the writing happening around them, so it's not surprising that we still read mainly what they liked. The fact that Larra's novels never surface on the reading lists for doctoral candidates in Spanish literature should offer us a clue as to the continuing judgment on the period's prose. For it is not Larra's prose fiction but rather his newspaper articles, already anthologized in Rizal's generation,⁵ which have substantiated the idea of costumbrismo as the realism of the Romantics. Ultimately, a preference of historical Romanticism with its medieval and Christian associations came to dominate Spanish literary criticism, pushing aside liberal Romanticism along with the "monstrous" literature that was the Gothic novel and the melodrama (Flitter 1992, 79).

In nineteenth-century Spain, the novel is most associated with the latter half of the century, with Galdós and Clarín as principal authors in the genre. These writers shunned melodrama and pointedly wrote against what they regarded as the false illusions of romance and happy endings. In this way, the tendency to bill Rizal as a Realist stems in part from a dismissal of popular writing by the Realists themselves. Critics who have been more familiar with Spanish literary tradition have tended to compare him with Galdós even though Rizal never mentions him in his journals or letters, instead reading Dumas, *père* and Sue, both of whom Galdós looked down on. Despite the worthwhile nature of examining the many similarities between Galdós' *Doña Perfecta* and the *Noli*,⁶ we shouldn't allow a preference of Galdós over Dumas to keep us from

contemplating the implications of the latter's visible influence on Rizal's manner of presenting a moral tale.⁷

An added twist to this tale of prejudices is the cutting off of Rizal from Spanish literary tradition that occurred so soon after the start of a Spanish-language tradition in Philippine literature. With the entrance of the American educational system came an emphasis on literary models in English and their accompanying criteria. Even as Peninsular critics have tended to separate Rizal from a Philippine reality,⁸ in the Philippines, Rizal has been dislocated from a Spanish literary past, standing often as the lonely creator of Philippine literature without benefit of models. When he has been associated with other writers, the primacy of English-language models as well as Comparative Literature's traditional emphasis on European writers north of the Pyrenees have given rise to the need to put him on the same level with western canonical Realists. And since the Romantics have been taught using Shelley and Lord Byron as central examples, the separation of Rizal's costumbrismo from that generation in Spain came about, causing his parody to appear more realist⁹ and only his lyricism Romantic.

Quite frankly, "realism" is a slippery term that takes us down too many blind alleyways, misdirecting our efforts to understand better how Rizal's novels have influenced history. In arguing over the word and trying to make Rizal fit the criteria of a small group of writers who themselves could not always meet their goals, we are unfair to the texts, and we are unfair to ourselves. We should instead go back to the very idea of fiction as manipulated text and not so different from criticism despite its usually more entertaining nature. As we know from Schumacher's work on the propagandists, "propaganda" in Spanish does not have the pejorative overtones that it does in English. (*The Propaganda Movement: 1880-1895*, p. x) Yet it is still "propaganda" in the sense of trying to sell an idea, of trying to manipulate words to influence the reader or listener. In this way, melodrama is not less valuable than realism but rather better suited to political commentary by infusing narrative with a clear moral code.¹⁰

Melodrama

As Peter Brooks illustrates in *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess*, echoes of the melodrama are to be found even in the canonical Realist novels. It is

intriguingly at moments of great moral clarity that the language in these Realist novels may appear quite melodramatic and lacking in psychological depth. Brooks then goes back to the origins of the melodrama around the time of the French Revolution to examine how tragedy no longer reflected the conditions of a society for whom Church and throne had been cast into doubt. With the changeover from Enlightenment to Romanticism, there was a "renewed thirst for the Sacred," but without the trappings it had once worn. Thus good and evil confront each other through flatly drawn characters since ". . . melodrama represents both the urge toward resacralization and the impossibility of conceiving sacralization other than in personal terms" (Brooks 1976, 16). Ultimately, Brooks (1976, 35) finds that, due precisely to its want of character psychology, the ". . . melodrama exteriorizes conflict and psychic structure, producing . . . what we might call the 'melodrama of psychology.'"

As for the question of genres and periods, a pattern of fluidity arises here in that the melodramatic theater came out of the novel and then later went back into that form during the second wave of Romanticism in France. Osmosis can and does frequently occur between apparently discrete categories. As Brooks notes, "Melodrama pillaged happily in epic, legend, and history for its subjects, but the principal source was probably always the novel, the genre to which it is so closely related, the first medium to realize the importance of persecuted women, struggling to preserve and impose the moral vision" (Brooks 1976, 86). Even while this aspect of pure characterization is readily avoided in the Realist novel, Brooks believes that the moral dilemma still dominates. He draws an historical connection between the popular melodrama and Romantic theater before intuiting how the physical limitations of the theatre compelled Romantics such as Dumas, *père* to change genres, exploring the possibilities of the novel. As he explains, "In the novel, the struggle of ethical imperatives will open up convincing recesses in a world that no longer need be realized through visual simulacra, but in words alone" (Brooks 1976, 108-9).

More so than in the Realist novel, the question of overriding moral struggle as backgrounding a lovers' tale is readily apparent in the political reform or nationalist novel. Ironically, a certain assumption of "realism" accompanies such works in that the action is based on real-life social problems that deserve correction even as the more openly melodramatic qualities of such novels also demand a flattening of psychological realism. In her study of the Latin American na-

tional romances, which are—like the *Noli* and the *Fili*—required reading in their countries, Sommer establishes early on that these works are unlike the European Realist novel. The basic story line differs in that marriage as an allegory for republican government rather than adultery drives the plot, and the characters lack the internal struggle or psychological depth of their European contemporaries. Instead of looking to the melodrama, however, Sommer attributes the two-dimensional heroes and heroines to vestigial aristocratic ideals still found amongst the elite of conservative republicanism (48–49). Considering that the French melodramatic tradition entered Latin America primarily through the novel rather than popular theatre, a connection between elitism and heroism makes sense, but flat characterization also points toward the influence of the melodramatic vision.

Among the works that Sommer studies, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab* (1841) most readily provides evidence of the link between the melodrama and the Latin American national romances. With its noble mulatto slave as title character, many considered *Sab* an anti-slavery novel, and Avellaneda's relatives tried to squash its distribution in Spain. In addition to its reputation as an instrument for political reform, *Sab* serves as a proto-nationalist novel that sets up a specific Cuban identity even though it first appeared in Spain during the colonial period. Strikingly, *Sab* demonstrates the melodrama's drive toward a moral consciousness; there is a strong opposition of good versus self-serving characters while the narrative clearly indicates their hidden motives and spiritual states. The work differs from a true melodrama in that Carlota marries the wrong man, but moral awareness finally arises with the remorse that she and her cousin Teresa experience when they realize their errors in love.

Rizal's Novels

As in works like *Sab*, Rizal's novels present characters whose true selves appear unmistakably to the reader through gesture and physical details. The characters are either good, evil, or hapless victims, so that there is a conspicuous lack of moral gray area.¹¹ While we do not have any evidence directly connecting Rizal to the melodramatic tradition in the theatre, we still have his admiration of Sue and Dumas, *père* as expressed in his letters. With his shift from the theatre to the novel, Dumas remains the clearest link between Rizal and the French melodrama. It is striking that Rizal's novels, like Dumas'

The Count of Monte Cristo, share certain characteristics with the melodrama, such as the confrontation of good and evil, clear physical markings, mute gesture, and melodramatic peripety.

Where the *Noli* and the *Fili* diverge from their model becomes evident through a few private confessions which only the reader recognizes. Melodramatic peripety traditionally calls for some kind of a confession in order to bring about a full recuperation of the moral code. As Brooks expresses it, ". . . melodrama typically, not only employs virtue persecuted as a source of its dramaturgy, but also tends to become the dramaturgy of virtue misprized and eventually recognized. It is about virtue made visible and acknowledged, the drama of a recognition" (27). In *The Count of Monte Cristo*, all goes badly for the protagonist in the early chapters, but the following tale of revenge presents a consistent series of successes. On the other hand, Rizal's novels contain a number of dead ends. Characters who attempt to better their or their children's lives through education and hard work instead lose everything. Although written by an ilustrado and often regarded as valorizing education, the novels time and again offer a completely hopeless view. One might imagine that in a reform novel, a desire to learn plus hard work might enable some to advance as did the Chinese mestizo middle class to whom Rizal belonged. Instead, the novels emphasize the brutalizing nature of the *frailocracia's* brand of education even as only those who exploit succeed. Another clear break with the melodramatic storyline is the separation rather than the reunion of families coupled with the impossibility of marriage between hero and heroine. Children and their elders die, go insane, or become outlaws to the point where social continuity under colonialism comes under question since only collaborators do well. Ingénues become unreachable love objects who die, and strangely they do so in the middle rather than at the end. Their deaths do not figure into a final climax but rather permeate the atmosphere of the novels.

Throughout Rizal's novels, melodramatic characterization and gesture give structure to and flesh out a morality play that condemns the hypocrisy and cruelty of colonial life, and yet the novels differ from the melodrama as well as *The Count of Monte Cristo* in their lack of a happy ending. At the same time, the novels do not present a tragedy that restores society's original balance. The novels read more like incomplete melodrama, as if more should follow about Isagani to bring that final, public peripety.¹² To say that the novels are Realist due to their unideal endings together with close depictions

of human experience is to underestimate the power of melodramatic loss to influence the reader to action. And it is particularly this reaction that has brought the novels into the realm of historical "reality," by provoking revolutionaries to complete the truncated uprising of the *Fili*.¹³ For while Rizal's novels display many of the characteristics of the melodrama, the final moment of complete recuperation is missing. Even when the *Fili* first appeared, López Jaena observed to Rizal "Has dejado en ella sin solución el problema. Como novela política, su final no es digno remate de obra tan hermosa. . . . Pero, ya entiendo, has querido dejar que el pueblo filipino se encargue de la solución del problema social y política que en su seno se agita."¹⁴ (*Fili*, p. iii, Prefacio)

Besides the possibility that Rizal wished for Filipinos to resolve the issue themselves, we are faced with other intriguing possibilities on a literary level, none of which cancels out the other. One is that without having had a revolution as in the case of the French melodrama or the Latin American romance, there was no republic to celebrate with a happy ending, with a marriage of *ilustrado* and ingénue as allegory of republican government. As historically and regionally specific genres, the melodrama in the French tradition and the post-independence Latin American national romance naturally have certain aspects that demonstrate their distinct provenances. In other words, a lack of resolution outside the *Noli* and the *Fili* predicates a lack of resolution within the novels.

Another possibility, while less positive, is nevertheless worth contemplating, and that is a built-in discomfort with desire. Brooks does observe that the Romantics tended to emphasize the strength of evil with tragic endings, (p. 87) but Rizal doesn't do this. Instead of confrontation and climax, the novels have an extenuated ending in the final chapters of the *Fili*. In these pages, Isagani steals the bomb that was to signal the beginning of the rebellion, effectively staving off open violence. Then he returns to the countryside to live with his uncle—a falsely peaceful ending for him as we know from the events of the *Noli* that the province is just as corrupt as and even more brutal than the city. Adding to an overall atmosphere of evasion is the comic moment when Don Tiburcio mistakenly believes that the order to arrest a Spaniard means that his wife Doña Victorina is about to close in on him. P. Florentino fails to persuade him that the message probably refers to Simoun, and so he hides in a woodcutter's house, leaving the impression that his flight will last well beyond the final page like tales of Japanese pilots lost in Mindanao for dec-

ades after WWII. As for Simoun's protracted suicide, this moment of truth in which he confesses his real identity and debates with P. Florentino does not offer a true confrontation either. After the native priest's famous speech on how Filipinos must deserve independence, Simoun falls silent, and a few paragraphs later, we find that he is already dead. The moment has none of the pathos of, for instance, the moment when Don Alvaro hurls himself off the cliff in the Romantic drama *Don Alvaro o la fuerza del sino*. Moreover, the final moment of the *Fili* in which P. Florentino throws Simoun's suitcase of jewels into the ocean suggests an unwillingness to imagine completion as the priest intones, "¡Que la naturaleza te guarde en los profundos abismos, entre los corales y perlas de sus eternos mares! . . . Cuando para un fin santo y sublime los hombres te necesiten, Dios sabrá sacarte del seno de las olas. . . ." ¹⁵ (chapter 39, p. 286) As "fin" here means 'end' in its most basic sense as well as 'goal', it underscores the present lack of a strong ending for the novel. The closing statement "FIN DE EL FILIBUSTERISMO" seems rather ironic after this paragraph, and one might assume that another book should follow if one didn't already know that none appeared in print thereafter. This lack of a true climax to the *Fili*, either positive or negative, demonstrates a central ambivalence, which we cannot help but link to the issue of nationalism. This ambivalence reveals a notion that independence—like the heroine as love object—remains ideal and therefore unknowable, and the unknown—for all its desirability—is unsettling and even fraught with danger. After all, by Rizal's day, revolution no longer held the promise that it once had a century before. The glory of the fall of the Bastille preceded the Terror just as the Latin American wars of independence preceded generations of civil war and *caudillismo*. In other words, a resolution as ideal realized is impossible due to ambivalence and an inability or even refusal to imagine the intangible goal, whether it be marriage or the nation.

For a third possibility, it is useful to consider the melodrama itself as not totally appropriate for a novel that drives toward change rather than assuming that Rizal's works fail to complete the melodramatic trajectory. Here, Pedro Paterno's *Ninay* (*costumbres filipinas*), published in Madrid in 1885, serves as a useful counterpoint to Rizal's work. *Ninay* is more obviously a melodrama with a tale of pure love thwarted by evil ending with the reunion of the lovers just as they die in an epidemic. This novel shares points in common with the *Noli* such as sudden reversals of fortune and a heroic *tulisán*

who, like the protagonist, grew up in a privileged background. However, the similarities are superficial, as Guerrero notes, in that Paterno avoids angering the Spaniards with a Portuguese villain and a noticeable lack of friars (p. 134). Paterno goes even further to placate Spanish readers, particularly those in high places, when, after false charges cause a flurry of arrests within the novel, he interrupts the story with an assurance that such things didn't happen during Fernando Primo de Rivera's term as Captain General (1880-83). *Ninay* beat out the *Noli* as the first novel to portray the Philippines—a portrayal that the author attempts to achieve through numerous footnotes of questionable accuracy on folklore, culture, flora, and fauna. These footnotes take up much more space than the story, and, interestingly, the narration contains phrases that betray an expectation of welcome by Spanish readers. At the wake, the narrator introduces the lovers' tale with the strange statement that "Varios de los concurrentes que la ignoraban también, entre ellos los europeos que habían acudido allí sólo para el estudio de las costumbres tagalas, formaron conmigo un círculo para oír el relato" (p. 16).¹⁶ From the beginning, the first-person narrator posits himself between a native voice who acts as a witness to the events and an audience from the metropole. In this manner, an anthropology essentially in the service of the colonial regime subsumes a story about Filipino lovers. It is this odd combination of anthropological study and romance that demonstrates how a purer melodrama such as *Ninay* ends up supporting rather than questioning colonialism. The villain remains a bad individual who takes advantage of an imperfect system, but the colonial structure itself escapes scrutiny. After the death of the villain and the lovers, one comes away with the notion that all has returned to normal though without catharsis. As a novel that follows more closely in the melodramatic mold, *Ninay* cannot help but equate recuperation with a return to a colonial norm. As Brooks notes in his conclusion:

Melodrama cannot figure the birth of a new society—the role of comedy—but only the old society reformed. And it cannot, in distinction to tragedy, offer reconciliation under a sacred mantle, or in terms of a higher synthesis. A form for secularized times, it offers the nearest approach to sacred and cosmic values in a world where they no longer have any certain ontology or epistemology. (p. 205)

It makes sense that the melodramatic emphasis on a visible spirituality through the struggle of good against evil would appeal to

Rizal, particularly in the issue of reforming society. Yet the melodrama's ending presents us with society reformed, imagining a recuperation that Rizal's novels do not. Rizal's use of biting satire hints at a need for total change, but the fluctuation between satirical and melodramatic moments does not allow for the creation of a new society as in comedy. Ultimately, rather than saying that Rizal failed to control his hybrid of melodrama and satire, stopping with an unfinished product, it stands to reason that the novels, as they stand, have their own integrity. In this manner, killing a heroine rather than allowing her to marry the young ilustrado or, like Nínay, die in her lover's arms, does not simply mark a lack, a falling short of the melodramatic resolution. Instead, such deaths indicate a move toward something beyond the frame, beyond the narrow scope of the melodramatic form with its continuity beneath the appearance of change. In a sense, even though the melodrama serves to voice a need for political reform, a goal of total change proves inadequate the conventional resolution of the melodrama.

Conclusion

In reading Rizal as incomplete melodrama, it is possible to understand the drive to add onto the novels by enacting the revolution that Simoun keeps putting off. The melodramatic characterization introduces and intensifies the social problems of colonial life, with the suffering of the good helping to make notions of morality and responsibility personal for the reader. Intentions aside, the lack of redemption in the novels stimulates a need for action, serving to justify revolution through their inability to present a happy ending under the colonial regime.

Did people like the characters really exist? To a large extent, yes, but on the other hand, we have only to remember a moment in which a character in *The Count of Monte Cristo* says to a friend, "Nobody knows better than yourself that the bandits of Corsica are not rogues or thieves, but purely and simply fugitives, driven by some sinister motive from their native town or village, and that their fellowship involves no disgrace or stigma."¹⁷ (p. 387) Readers tend to favor Elías over Ibarra due to his more heroic nature, and yet, like Paterno's tulisán, he belongs to a European tradition going back to the melodrama and even earlier to ballads such as those about Robin Hood. Popular literature as well as experience engenders Rizal's

novels. And as literature, his novels are more important for the qualifiable than the quantifiable. Whatever Elías' origins may be, his figure has taken on a life of its own in Philippine culture. Thus it is that Benedict Anderson, in writing about the newspaper and the *Noli*, remarks that "... fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality ..." (p. 40). As fiction and therefore in a sense untrue, unreal, Rizal's novels exist as invented memory, helping to shape a sense of national identity that is itself, like any identity, shifting and tenuous yet at the same time powerful.

Notes

1. Ante Radaic's classic study *José Rizal, romántico realista* (1961, 165-66) uses the term "realist" in its most literal sense as based on experience rather than trying to make the difficult connection between Rizal and the Realist movement in Spain. Mojares (1991, 475, 477) also makes a similar argument, separately describing Rizal's realism as experience before giving a list of European authors that Rizal read, all of whom predate the Realist movement.

2. Lucila Hosillos (1991, 559) believes that Rizal could arise as a Realist novelist without indigenous tradition in the Philippines because, as she speculates, he was "... steeped in the Realist literature of Europe." Hosillos' placing of Rizal on an equal footing with European writers apparently stems from the same need that Nick Joaquin has seen to defend the *Noli* from Philippine critics who find fault with it.

3. "The victim must be pure and without imperfection, so that the holocaust may be acceptable!" Spanish texts are from the centennial edition of the original offset with nineteenth-century accentuation and original typographical errors. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

4. In *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*, Doris Sommer (1991) examines how the desire for marriage between *ilustrado* and *ingénue* in the nineteenth-century Latin American novel serves as an allegory for founding republics; a paradigm which finds repetition with Ibarra and María Clara in the *Noli*, and Basilio and Juli in the *Fili*.

5. The tendency to cut out the non-canonical was a problem in Rizal's reading material. He writes repeatedly in his letters that he wants all of Larra's works sent to him. However, it is only known from his complaint that he received an anthology, and whether or not he ever acquired the complete works is uncertain.

6. In *The Propaganda Movement: 1880-1895, the Creators of a Filipino Consciousness, the Makers of Revolution*, John N. Schumacher, S.J. (1973) cites Carlos Quirino's *The Great Malayan* as a source for the speculation that Galdós and in particular *Doña Perfecta* influenced Rizal. Quirino's preference of canonical Realism over lesser writers whom we know that Rizal read comes across when he states, "The idea of writing a novel, after the manner of Pérez Galdós' *Doña Perfecta*, germinated within him. He read Eugene Sue's *The Wandering Jew* but found that, although well-written and conceived, it failed to move him deeply" (75). Quirino's biography has no bibliography, and he has the habit of presenting his speculations in combination with fact. Due to the lack

of evidence in Rizal's diaries and letters of his ever reading Galdós, Schumacher (1973, 81 n.12) hypothesizes that since Paterno read Galdós before writing *Ninay*, which in turn shares many plot devices with Rizal, the influence may have been an indirect one via Paterno. While this theory is not totally impossible, the textual evidence either in journals or letter does not exist. In addition, the similarities between the *Noli* and *Ninay* are not the ones that the former shares with *Doña Perfecta*. Considering also the fact that Paterno was writing in the melodramatic vein which Galdós consciously eschewed (though he could not completely give it up), it is more likely that similarities between this Realist and Rizal say more about shared Liberal concerns of the day than about literary influences. As for *Doña Perfecta*, the novel is set against a backdrop of the Carlist wars of succession and says more about a struggle within Spain between country and city, tradition and modernity, conservative and liberal.

7. Writing in 1955, Nick Joaquin saw the need to defend Rizal from accusations of bad writing and borrowing a preposterous story line from Dumas, saying that if anything Rizal improved on *The Count of Monte Cristo* (264).

8. Since Unamuno's preface to Retana's work on Rizal, Spanish-language critics have tended to view Rizal in terms of Spanish nationalism, that is as a loyalist to a divided Spain. It would be useful at some time to examine Unamuno's writings on Rizal to see how the latter continues to serve as an instrument of Spanish self-examination. For Unamuno's moments of identification with Rizal in combination with his repeated harangues against an anti-intellectual environment betray the critic's own angst. Unamuno's tendency toward identifying with Rizal make sense in that, like him, he felt something of an outsider in the metropole. A Basque, he was a philosopher, fiction writer, and sometime rector of the University of Salamanca, founded late in the twelfth century, and situated, not without irony for Unamuno, in Old Castile. He often had difficulties with various Spanish regimes, culminating in his death under house arrest when he changed his mind about Franco. Some twenty years earlier, Unamuno (1918) had written of Rizal's reputation as a *filibustero* in an essay on patriotism, "Y se lo colgaron porque la amaba con inteligencia, y no con ese amor ciego y bruto que no es sino una energía huera, enamorada de una unidad tan huera como ella; no con ese amor instintivo y que, como el toro, se va tras la capa, ese intinto que al sentir "que tremola sin baldón la bandera roja y gualda, siente frío por la espalda y le late el corazón," según reza la tan conocida como deplorable cuarteta" 'And they called him *filibustero* because he loved her [Spain] with intelligence, and not with that blind, brutal love which is nothing but empty energy in love with a unity that is as blind as itself; not with that love and instinct that, like the bull, follows the cape when it senses "the red and yellow flag waving without shame, shivers, and feels his heart beating" as the famous and deplorable rhyme intones' (Unamuno 1918, 21). It would appear that Unamuno and critics following in his footsteps are talking more about Unamuno's difficult relationship with Spanish caudillos than about Rizal.

9. Without mentioning Romanticism or costumbrismo, Mojares (1991, 475) views Rizal's satire as part of an overall "realist approach" as this was how he "... unmasked the ignorance and pretensions of colonial society." Costumbrismo has no true equivalent in English. It first enters into Spanish literature with *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1545) and generally means any close description of lower and, later, of middle class life. From the beginning, however, it has also contained much humorous social criticism and is often more parody than a simple transcription of daily events. While Radaic (1961, 181-82) recognizes Rizal's satirical tone as aimed toward reform, he uses

the term 'costumbrismo' more in a literal sense as recording local customs. Thus he views Rizal's occasional use of costumbrismo as a kind of cultural anthropology that "... le sitúa en un voluntario y evidente realismo" "... situates him in a deliberate and evident realism' (Radaic 1961, 189).

10. The inclusion of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Rizal's reading points to an awareness of the melodramatic novel's usefulness as a tool for political reform.

11. Vivencio José perceives the significance of the moral clarity with which the narrative depicts characters when he asks rhetorically concerning the characters in the *Noli*, "Who are good? Who are bold and daring? Who are generous? Who are kind? And who are evil?" (588). He stops short, however, of declaring the literariness of the moral struggle, preferring instead the historical basis of Rizal's works as political novels.

12. In *Makamisa: The search for Rizal's third novel* (Metro Manila: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 1992), Ambeth Ocampo (1992) has managed to piece together pages of a Spanish manuscript called *Makamisa* that was apparently the beginning of a third novel in the series. Isagani as well as characters from the *Noli* appear in the fragments, offering a tantalizing hint to a resolution. The fact that Rizal abandoned the project reinforces a notion of resolution as impossible under colonialism.

13. Ambeth Ocampo (1990, 152) argues that Bonifacio's uprising bore a striking resemblance to the character Simoun's aborted plans.

14. "You have left the problem unresolved. As a political novel, its end is not the proper closing to such a beautiful work. . . . But I understand that you wished to let the Filipino people take responsibility for the solution to their social and political problem."

15. "May Nature keep you in the depths, amongst the coral and peals of her eternal seas! . . . When men need you for a holy and sublime purpose, God will know how to lift you from beneath the waves. . . ."

16. "Others there, among them Europeans who had come only to study Tagalog customs, also didn't know the story, and they formed a circle with me to hear it."

17. *The Count of Monte Cristo*, ed. and intro. by Coward, David, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, first translated and published by World's Classics, 1852.

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