

GERIZ: Life and Works of Rizal – Final Examination Reviewer

I. Rizal's Novels, Life, and Historical Context

Noli Me Tangere* was **not dedicated to GOMBURZA. Instead, Rizal dedicated the novel to “**My Fatherland (A mi Patria)**”, offering the work to the Philippines as a reflection of its social ills. Although GOMBURZA profoundly influenced Rizal—especially in shaping his nationalist consciousness—the three priests were **not explicitly named in the dedication** of *Noli Me Tangere*.

In *El Filibusterismo*, **Simoun's ultimate goal** was to overthrow the Spanish colonial government through a violent revolution. He believed that oppression could only be ended through force, showing Rizal's darker and more critical view of colonial society.

The town of **San Diego** in Rizal's novels is a **fictional representation of Calamba**, his hometown. Through this fictional setting, Rizal safely criticized social, political, and religious abuses without directly naming real places.

Rizal wrote the “**Letter to the Young Women of Malolos**” after being informed of their struggle to establish a night school for Spanish. Encouraged by Marcelo H. del Pilar, Rizal praised the women's courage and emphasized education, moral strength, and critical thinking for Filipino women.

During his exile in **Dapitan**, Rizal lived a productive life. He practiced medicine, taught young boys, conducted scientific research, engaged in farming, and contributed to community development, reflecting his belief in service to society even under punishment.

The character **Basilio** in *El Filibusterismo* is a **medical student** whose experiences reflect the hardships faced by educated Filipinos under colonial rule. His transformation mirrors Rizal's warning about frustration turning into radicalism.

Rizal's final poem, later titled “**Mi Ultimo Adios**,” was originally written **without a title**. The poem expresses deep love for country, readiness to sacrifice, and hope for national freedom.

Although Rizal inspired the **Katipunan**, he was **not a member** and did not approve of violent revolution. He believed reforms should be achieved through education, enlightenment, and peaceful means.

El Filibusterismo was printed in **Ghent, Belgium**, where Rizal struggled financially. The novel was completed with the help of Filipino friends who supported him during this difficult period.

The character **Isagani** represents the **idealistic Filipino youth**—passionate, patriotic, and hopeful—yet prone to emotional decisions. Through him, Rizal shows both the strength and weakness of youthful idealism.

In his essay **Sobre la Indolencia de los Filipinos**, Rizal argued that Filipinos were **not naturally lazy**. Instead, indolence was caused by colonial oppression, forced labor, lack of opportunities, and social injustice.

Spanish authorities condemned *Noli Me Tangere* as **heretical and subversive** because it exposed friar abuses, corruption, and inequality in colonial Philippine society.

Rizal was executed at **Bagumbayan (now Luneta)** on **December 30, 1896**, an event that transformed him into a symbol of peaceful resistance and national martyrdom.

In *El Filibusterismo*, **Father Florentino** throws Simoun's treasure into the sea, symbolizing Rizal's rejection of violence and his belief that freedom must be achieved through moral means.

Republic Act **1425**, also known as the **Rizal Law**, mandates the teaching of Rizal's life and works in all public and private schools in the Philippines.

II. Important Characters, Symbols, and Events

In *Noli Me Tangere*, **Sisa** symbolizes the suffering **Filipino motherland**. Her madness represents the cruelty and injustice inflicted upon the people under colonial rule.

In *El Filibusterismo*, Simoun planned to ignite the revolution during the wedding of Paulita Gomez and Juanito Pelaez through an **exploding lamp**, symbolizing accumulated anger ready to erupt.

The title **Noli Me Tangere** literally means "**Touch Me Not**," a biblical phrase referring to a painful wound, symbolizing the sensitive social realities Rizal exposed.

While printing *El Filibusterismo* in Europe, Rizal received crucial help from **Galicano Apacible**, who supported him financially and morally.

Cabesang Tales represents a victim of injustice who, after losing his land and family, abandoned formal life and eventually became a **bandit leader**, illustrating how oppression breeds rebellion.

Rizal traveled from Dapitan to Manila aboard the **SS España**, marking the beginning of his final journey.

The **Talisay School** established by Rizal in Dapitan reflects his belief that education is the foundation of national progress.

Rizal lived with **Josephine Bracken** in Dapitan, who became his common-law wife and supported him during exile.

To reduce printing costs, Rizal removed the chapter “**Elias and Salome**” from *Noli Me Tangere*.

The term “**Social Cancer**” refers to the widespread corruption, abuse, and injustice within Philippine society under Spanish rule.

In *El Filibusterismo*, **Makaraig** emerged as the student leader advocating for the establishment of the **Academia de Castellano**.

Simoun’s revolutionary plan failed when **Isagani threw the lamp into the river**, choosing conscience over violence.

Rizal wrote *El Filibusterismo* to warn that continuous oppression could lead to violent rebellion if reforms were ignored.

Before his execution, Rizal secretly entrusted his final poem to **Trinidad Rizal**, hiding it inside an alcohol stove.

During his trial, Rizal was defended by **Nicolas de la Peña**, though the verdict had already been decided.

Rizal was charged with **rebellion, sedition, and illegal association**, reflecting Spanish fear of his influence.

The Council of War sentenced Rizal to **death by firing squad**.

The codename “**Taimis**” was associated with **Suzanne Jacoby**, one of the women linked to Rizal.

Rizal’s last spoken words, “**Consummatum Est**,” expressed the fulfillment of his mission.

The term **Ilustrado** refers to the educated Filipino elite who led reform movements during the Spanish period.

Rizal pursued studies abroad to gain **academic freedom and advanced education** unavailable in the Philippines.

The **Propaganda Movement** aimed to achieve reforms through peaceful, intellectual, and legal means.

In *Noli Me Tangere*, **Padre Damaso** represents the worst abuses of the friar system.

A **Filibustero** during the Spanish period referred to a dangerous patriot or suspected rebel.

Rizal requested to face the firing squad, but this request was denied, and he was executed **facing away**, which he resisted by turning his body at the moment of death.

III. Synthesis and Critical Understanding

The endings of *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* reveal Rizal's evolving views on social change. *Noli Me Tangere* ends with hope in reform and education, while *El Filibusterismo* ends in tragedy, showing the destructive effects of violence. Through both novels, Rizal ultimately promoted moral awakening, education, and national consciousness as the true path to freedom.

Rizal's belief that "the youth is the hope of the fatherland" reflects his vision of educated, disciplined, morally upright, and socially responsible Filipinos. He envisioned youth who think critically and act selflessly for the nation. The relevance of this ideal today depends on how the youth use their knowledge, freedom, and influence for the common good rather than personal interest.