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REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT

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REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT

JOSE RIZAL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

JOHN NERY

WITH A FOREWORD BY F. SIONIL JOSE

MAGSAYSAY AWARDEE FOR LITERATURE, JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION ARTS



INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

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*For my father and mother
their eightieth*

What [the indio] lacks in the first place is liberty to allow expansion for his adventurous spirit and good examples, beautiful prospects for the future. It is necessary that his spirit, although it may be dismayed and cowed by the elements and the fearful manifestations of their mighty forces, store up energy, seek lofty purposes, in order to struggle against the obstacles in the midst of unfavourable natural conditions. In order that he may progress, it is necessary that a revolutionary spirit, so to speak, should stir in his veins, since progress necessarily requires change, implies the overthrow of the past and there deified by the present, the victory of new ideas over old and accepted ones.

Rizal in *La Solidaridad*, 15 September 1890
(Guadalupe Fores-Ganzon translation)

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Foreword

On the 150th birth anniversary of Rizal, the publication of this stringently researched study enables us to relate with more conviction our pride in having a novelist lay down the firmest and most durable foundation of the Filipino nation. With the journalist's eagle eye, John Nery traces that influence which Rizal wields in Southeast Asia to this very day, when the enduring vestiges of colonialism are still so much a determinant of our future. Rizal did this with his pen as well as with his life; as the American literary scholar Roland Greene said, "he was the first post-colonial writer".

Nery's search confirms the prescience, the brilliance and profundity of Rizal's thinking as also expressed in his letters and articles. For instance, and this has not been clearly understood by many of those who studied his life, though seemingly opposed to revolution Rizal among the early Filipinos who railed against Spanish colonialism was in fact one of its first and staunchest believers.

But it is his novels, his literary creations which gave Rizal his marmoreal reputation; it is to Rizal's credit that he elected to use the literary art. He could just have published those manifestos, those inciting articles as did his colleagues in the Propaganda Movement. But he chose literature to magnify and broadcast his deepest feelings, his dreams for his unhappy country. He saw that literature — the noblest of the arts — would prevail long after the fact, that it is literature that renders history alive.

So many scholars miss this significant distinction; like so many illiterate Filipino leaders, they do not regard novelists and their fictions as the truest building blocks in the foundation of a nation. All too

often, when they exalt Rizal, they forget it is the committed writers who are his real heirs.

Nery discusses yet another novelist who influenced Rizal. In 1860, Eduard Douwes Dekker (pen name: Multatuli), who had served in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), published *Max Havelaar, Or the Coffee Auctions of a Dutch Trading Company*, in Amsterdam. Rizal wrote to his friend Ferdinand Blumentritt how he envied Multatuli whose novel was “so viciously anti-colonial — but was so beautiful”. Two generations later, in that very same setting of Multatuli’s fiction, two Indonesians — the Founding Father of Indonesia, Sukarno, and that country’s foremost novelist, Pramoedya Ananta Toer — also read Rizal.

All too often, writers are judged and admired only for their work. Their peccadilloes, their sins are glossed over by the very fact that their being writers can wipe away their moral lapses. This should not be; writers should also be judged by how they act out their values. If this measure were applied to Rizal, there is no doubt that his resonance and his glitter would even be wider and brighter. As a person, he brimmed with goodwill, compassion and virtue though he was always critical of the vices of his colleagues and countrymen. Unfortunately, such influence did not instruct his foremost Indonesian admirers. Sukarno and his ally Pramoedya oppressed their political critics when both were at the height of their power. Pramoedya burned the books of the writers he didn’t like and withheld jobs from them. Likewise, in the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos and some of the writers who pandered to him extolled Rizal in their speeches but did not follow his humane example as they, too, oppressed writers who criticized them.

Rizal envisioned a just society after the revolution — not the authoritarian regimes that followed, particularly in Southeast Asia. Understand this sequence after the upheaval — chaos first, then iron order, and the darkest night during which Rizal was martyred before that dawn.

The controversies surrounding Rizal's last days in prison continue to this very day. Some think he turned his back on the very ideas he espoused. Nery repeats how Rizal wanted to go to Cuba to work, not on the side of the Cubans who were waging their revolution against Spain, but for the Spaniards. He also recounts Rizal's least known evasions at his trial, the contrary manifesto which he wrote denying the revolution. Indeed, although his biographer Austin Coates said that Rizal did not retract Masonry as claimed by the Jesuits, I can even believe that he did. Poor man — he tried desperately to save himself.

Remember, he returned to the Philippines to pursue the dreams he knew wouldn't be realized if he lingered in Europe. He could have stayed there or elsewhere and would have fared handsomely because he was a doctor and already had an excellent practice in Hong Kong. But patriotism is selfless; no patriot is ever safe or comfortable — he transcends the ego, he gives himself freely, affectionately to the earth — the nation — which sustains him. Rizal couldn't undo his own heroism; by writing those two novels where he expressed his truest feelings, he sealed his fate.

Rizal is read not just in Southeast Asia but, I am sure, more widely in Spanish South America. His *Last Farewell* is included in so many anthologies of Spanish poetry, it is memorized by so many.

In his own country, he should have the most and lasting impact. Every town plaza is adorned by his monument, each main street bears his name. And the Rizal industry continues to thrive, churning out so many books and myriad forms of hossana. But like the rice we eat, Filipinos have made him a mundane habit.

Sure, Rizal is one Indio who is now read universally, translated as he is in so many languages. This knowledge is comforting to Filipinos, a form of national narcotic even. But let us now nurture in our very bones those beliefs that Rizal — the Malay paragon — lived and died for.

Message

19 June 2011 is the 150th anniversary of Jose Rizal's birth. Rizal was a patriot, poet, novelist, scholar and artist. Through his writings, he galvanized the Filipino people into a nation that resisted continued colonization by Spain, although he himself emphasized the difficult tasks of preparation and education, the essential conditions, as he saw them, for personal freedom and national independence. It is because of this that he has been called "the first Filipino".

However, Rizal's influence went beyond the Philippine archipelago. It radiated to other parts of Southeast Asia, inspiring their peoples on the possibilities of hoping and struggling for freedom and independence. Thus, he has also been called "the pride of the Malay race".

It is for this reason that the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies decided to commission and publish this book on Rizal, one not so much on Rizal as a person or his place in the Philippines' history, but on his role on the larger stage of Southeast Asia, at a time when the countries of the region were struggling both against their colonizers and to define themselves as nations.

In this endeavour, ISEAS has asked John Nery to write on Rizal from the point of view of his influence on the rise of nationalism and the movement for independence in Southeast Asia. John is a young Filipino journalist and, therefore, can be depended upon to regard Rizal with a fresh eye and share with us his "take" on Rizal's impact on Southeast Asia in a style that both engages and illumines.

K. Kesavapany
Director
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
Singapore

Preface

In 1986, when Goenawan Mohamad, the prominent Indonesian journalist, was prompted by the post-election turmoil in the Philippines in the last days of Ferdinand Marcos to write an essay on Jose Rizal, he drew a portrait of a conflicted, upper-class thinker, an “anxious Rizal [who] was not the type who would usually go on to become a hero” (Goenawan 2005: 192). A quarter of a century later, when Carlos Celdran, an enterprising social activist, wanted to protest the Catholic Church’s position on the ongoing reproductive health debate in the Philippines, he simply went up the steps to the altar at the Manila Cathedral and held up a sign with a single word, a name, on it: “Damaso”. He was referencing a corrupt friar from Rizal’s first novel, the *Noli Me Tangere*.

I find that the relative silence, even silent agreement, with which Goenawan’s sketch will be received by college-educated Filipinos even today, and the enormous uproar that immediately greeted Celdran’s protest, effectively define the parameters of this study into Rizal’s influence in Southeast Asia. The philosophical Goenawan subscribes to the common mistake of an indecisive Rizal, perhaps undeserving of his pre-eminence but certainly relevant to public discourse in Southeast Asia. The political Celdran proves that, all along, Rizal remains a powerful source of potential subversion.

I could not have known it at the start, but the research into Rizal became an object lesson on the many uses of error. It is possible to gain a clear vantage point of Rizal and the revolutionary spirit with which he infused the struggle to create a Filipino nation in the late nineteenth century, and by which his example invigorated Indonesian

nationalism and Malaysian scholarship, regional political discourse and world literature, in the twentieth — but it is a view overgrown with many obstructions, not all of them deliberately sown. I have used the Introduction to try and clear a path through the bramble.

This approach, I must admit, is congenial to me. It reflects the deepest instinct of my op-ed journalism, which is to engage another point of view. What a pleasant surprise during the research, then, to gain a better insight into it through Syed Hussein Alatas, the trailblazing Malaysian intellectual. Something he wrote pointed me in the direction of the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset, who once proposed that: “all thought represents *thought against*, whether so indicated verbally or not. Our creative thought is always shaped in opposition to some other thought, which we believe erroneous, fallacious, and needful of correction.” (Ortega y Gasset 1967: 74; emphasis his).

That Rizal retains both continuing relevance and political promise I never doubted; I think of Rizal as a revolutionary spirit with an essentially religious (i.e., Catholic) sensibility who strove to create a secular, national community — and who had some impact on the region he learned to call his own. (I have no doubt, too, that the use of his farewell poem during the Indonesian revolution would have gratified him; he had been deeply moved, to both thought and action, by Multatuli’s novel of the crisis in Java in the mid-nineteenth century.)

These, then, are the book’s parameters. The sequence I followed is, more or less, chronological. The first three chapters are an attempt to recover a more accurate sense of Rizal: to see him as he is, and then as the Spaniards and the revolutionaries at that turning point in Philippine history saw him. The last seven trace Rizal’s influence outside the Philippines: in the Dutch East Indies of Ernest Francois Eugene Douwes Dekker, in the exile’s world of Tan Malaka (shaped in part by a politicising labour sector in Manila), in the last year of Japanese-occupied Java, in the first flush of Indonesian independence, in the history-bending sweep of Sukarno’s rhetoric, in the pioneering

and consequential studies of Syed Hussein Alatas, not least in the consuming historical fiction of Pramoedya Ananta Toer. The appendices revisit certain points raised in the preceding discussion, and place them in some relief.

As anyone can readily see, this survey is hardly comprehensive. I did not discuss the millenarian aspects of Rizal's image (for which Reynaldo Ileto's *Pasyon and Revolution* remains the standard text), or the American sponsorship of a Rizal cult of hero worship (Floro Quibuyen's *A Nation Aborted* is the indispensable reference), or even the question of Rizal's re-conversion to Catholicism (for which the relevant books are too many to list, and which for the record I believe did not happen *and* is actually irrelevant to Rizal's achievement). I did not discuss the Japanese appropriation of Rizal (although this policy can be discerned in the numerous stories the censors allowed to run in occupied Indonesia), or the possible connection with Burmese or Vietnamese nationalists, or his impact on the East Timorese struggle for independence.

The book is only meant as a primer, a point of departure. It collects all previously known references to the subject, and adds a few of its own. If it can provoke renewed debate on Rizal, or encourage new research into other aspects of Rizal's influence in Southeast Asia, or advance the discussion on the civic virtues Rizal championed or outline the contours of the ethical community he proposed, then it would have played a modest part in commemorating Rizal's 150th birthday.

In the course of the work, I have accumulated many debts of gratitude. I happily recognize them in the following extended Acknowledgements page. Allow me, on this page, only to give first thanks to five persons (and two institutions) who helped me the most, and who at the same time exemplify the kind of generosity I received over the course of the work: Ambassador K. Kesavapany, Ambassador Rodolfo Severino, and Singapore's iconic Institute of Southeast Asian Studies for tasking me with the challenging, deeply

fulfilling assignment; Sandy Prieto-Romualdez and Jorge Aruta of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* for granting me time off to write and for actively supporting both the research and the writing; and *Pak* Rosihan Anwar of Jakarta, without whom this book, or indeed the Rizal story in Southeast Asia, would have taken a different course.

To Rizal, then: patriot, polymath, and post-colonial poster child.

Acknowledgements

I have benefited greatly from the goodwill of journalists and the generosity of scholars — and from one particular accident of history.

My interest in Rizal dates back to 1977, when my graduation happened to coincide with the centenary of *his* graduation; it was a milestone the school we both went to celebrated with relish. My interest was renewed over the years, when I reread the Leon Ma. Guerrero version of the *Noli Me Tangere* and his Rizal biography in the mid-1980s; when I read the Soledad Locsin translation about ten years later; when I read the Harold Augenbraum translation for Penguin Books as well as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* another decade or so after.

My interest has only deepened since I started writing opinion for the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, in 2001. Because the Philippines does not make sense without reference to Rizal, I thought it was incumbent on me to read as much of Rizal as I could: his substantial correspondence, his essays, and as many translations of his novels as I could find. (For the reader who wants a faithful if sometimes awkwardly rendered version of the Spanish, I recommend Jovita Ventura Castro's translations of both the *Noli* and the *El Filibusterismo*.)

I read the standard biographies too: Guerrero's *The First Filipino*, Rafael Palma's *The Pride of the Malay Race*, Quirino's *The Great Malayan*; Austin Coates' *Rizal: Philippine Patriot and Martyr*, Frank Laubach's *Man and Martyr*, Austin Craig's *Lineage, Life and Labours*; and big chunks of Wenceslao Retana's *Vida y Escritos* — with the help of Elizabeth Medina's selections and through the tedious use of a line-by-line, dictionary-enabled, Google-powered translation.

(My 12 units of Spanish in college should have sufficed to see me safely through, if I had been paying attention.)

Despite the repeated readings, however, none of this was enough to write a book on Rizal's influence in Southeast Asia with. I needed, I learned soon enough, to depend on the work of journalists and scholars.

My overall sense of Rizal was shaped in large measure by John Schumacher, SJ. Some of the best writing on both Rizal and the Philippine revolution can be found in his books, especially *The Propaganda Movement*, the definitive chronicle of the Filipino political campaign in Spain; *The Making of a Nation*, essays that track the emergence of Filipino nationalism in the nineteenth century; and *Revolutionary Clergy*, the still-underappreciated account of the role Filipino priests played in the nationalist awakening. (It is an account that helps explain something I had myself seen up close and been inspired by: the dissident role the clergy performed during the dark days of the Marcos dictatorship.)

I do not agree with all of Father Jack's conclusions, of course, nor would he expect me or any other reader to. But it is a source of continuing amazement to me to find almost every major question I phrase already answered in his work. Even in those points where his research has already been superseded, such as the question of the meaning of "Rd. L. M." and the nature of that secret organization, he readily acknowledges the historiological rigour of other scholars — in this case, Leoncio Lopez-Rizal, the source of the definition now preferred by historians and polemicists alike. His emails are both prompt and thoughtful, and always written with a view to being useful. I cannot thank him enough.

Benedict Anderson, whom I met only once, and only fleetingly, has almost single-handedly been responsible for igniting the current, renewed interest of academics around the world in Rizal and his pioneering work. His explorations in *Imagined Communities* are deservedly influential, and his startling yet deeply satisfying discovery

of Rizal as exemplary — nothing less than the illustration of “homogenous empty time”, for instance — has pushed Rizal studies on to newer, perhaps even higher, ground. Partial proof of this influence can be found, I think, with the use of Googlelabs’ newfangled N-Grams, which shows a new surge in Rizal references in the universe of English books after *Imagined Communities* saw print.

Anderson’s work has provoked exciting new questions about Rizal (his *Under Three Flags*, for example, worries the connection between the Propagandists in Spain and the international anarchist moment) or suggested new lines of inquiry (as we can trace, for instance, in Vicente Rafael’s classic-in-the-making, *Contracting Colonialism*). As a political journalist working in the opinion pages, I have serious questions about Anderson’s notion of “official nationalism”, among other concepts, but there is no doubt in my mind that the fertility of that corner of the academic grove where Rizal is studied today is due in large part to Anderson’s experiments in cultivation. I gratefully recognize my debt to him.

E. Sionil Jose was an iconic writer long before I went to college, when I eagerly consumed his Rosales novels. It is a privilege for me to be able to call him “*Manong* Frankie” now, as many others do. His many responsibilities, as novelist, journalist, publisher (and bookstore owner!), can be read as an essay in continuation — of nothing less than Rizal’s work. He has certainly continued to introduce discomfiting questions into the public discourse, and his use of fiction as the main means for exploring the limits and possibilities of Philippine society recalls Rizal’s own strategy. He has published key works (including the first edition of Father Schumacher’s *Propaganda Movement*), and for a long time edited *Solidarity*, an Asia-wide journal of ideas. I thank him for his time, his graciousness, and especially for the conversations bristling with ideas and the Foreword with which he honours this book.

Without Rosihan Anwar, this book would have taken a different turn. He proved to be the ideal host, strict about parcelling his day

between his many commitments, but totally generous at the appointed time. In two interviews and three phone calls, he deployed his famous memory (“People tell me you have a great memory,” I said once. “It’s a myth,” the 88-year-old veteran journalist replied) to remember as much as he could of the circumstances in which he wrote his translation of “Mi Ultimo Adios” in 1944 and the context in which that translation became not only possible but necessary. It was a pleasure to listen to him in his crisp English, and a greater pleasure to hear him run through his translation, line by line, and rethink it in English. My debt to *Pak* Rosihan is profound; I thank him most sincerely.

Aside from my four formative sources, so to speak, many others also helped.

Of the other eminences who went out of their way to lend me a hand, I am most grateful to the prodigious Anthony Reid — a gentle, generous presence — who spent the better part of a morning walking me through my ideas and suggesting points of further inquiry; Norman Owen, who encouraged me with warm words, ran through a long list of names and references to start me off, and offered sage advice I took to heart; Merle Ricklefs, who pointed out the *Bootsma* book, written in Dutch, and taught me how to negotiate the language barrier, and who also offered a corrective to the “exoticising” tendencies of some culture-oriented political scientists or historians writing about Indonesia; Jim Richardson, who generously set me straight on the Katipunan’s true demographics; Bernhard Dahm, who pointed me in the right direction, and who drew the context in which the attempts of both Sukarno and Rizal to appropriate “elements” of “their respective cultural backgrounds” could be understood; and John Ingleson, who welcomed the project and wrote something that struck me in particular as a forceful and necessary reminder: “We have so often written about colonial nationalism in ‘national’ terms neglecting the fact that most of the key leaders were well aware on what was going on elsewhere in Asia (and Europe for that matter).”

I have learned much from the work of Reynaldo Ileto, whose *Pasyon and Revolution*, while certainly not immune to criticism, dramatically changed the way Philippine history is conceived. I have also greatly benefited from the work and work-related wisdom of Resil Mojares, who gave important suggestions as to both approach and reading list, and whose supple writing is a continuing inspiration; Floro Quibuyen, who offered specific, most useful advice; Rommel Curaming, who among many other favours helped me gain a foothold on the slippery terrain of comparative Indonesian and Philippine history; and especially my friend Patricio “Jojo” Abinales, from whom I drew both practical insight (starting from the proposal stage) and sustained support.

Through Rommel, I was privileged to attend a rousing conference on contemporary classics in Southeast Asian studies, which he organized with Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, an assistant professor at National University of Singapore. It was a revealing look at the academic way of proceeding. At that conference, I was introduced to the exciting new work of Joseph Scalice, heard Ramon Guillermo’s many pointed interventions, and saw the erudite Michael Montesano in action. I also witnessed Tony Reid’s masterly summary of the discussion and his inspired “extraction” of publishable material from the forum.

(The scholars I followed or consulted inspired me, and I held myself to scholarly standards, but I am primarily a journalist, and this book is therefore more journalism than scholarship. I used the author-date citation method because it was the most practical way to handle references, allowing me to limit the number of endnotes to only 70. I also like the fact that it can quickly show up a writer’s weaknesses, source-wise — mine not excluded.)

I conducted several interviews which helped give shape to the book. Aside from the two Rosihan sessions in Jakarta, I also interviewed Max Lane, the English translator of the Buru Quartet, in Singapore. I cannot overestimate his assistance in helping me gain a better understanding of the work (“When I read *Bumi Manusia* there was

this fantastic, very vivid, alive explanation of where Indonesia actually came from, and in that story was an explanation of why humanist and radical values were so difficult to eradicate”), and of Pramoedya Ananta Toer himself (“His attitude was, translation was a completely separate thing.” He didn’t reread his novels, but “10 to 15 years later” after the first two translations in English came out, he “read the second one in English.” He said: “Even re-reading it in English, I cried.” “It was something he said in passing”).

Three other important interviews were also held in Singapore: with Alan Chong and Farish A. Noor, both of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University; and with Syed Farid Alatas, like his iconic father before him the head of Malay Studies at the National University of Singapore. The talks were both to-the-point and wide-ranging, and extremely useful. (Professor Alatas, too, was kind enough to share copies of his pioneering studies on Rizal, including a still-unpublished manuscript.)

I conducted a lengthy and deeply thought-provoking interview with Shaharuddin bin Maaruf in Kuala Lumpur. The author of the unjustly neglected *Concept of a Hero in Malay Society*, Shaharuddin proved to be both a genial host and a radical thinker. I hope conference organizers thinking of commemorating Rizal’s 150th birth anniversary by inviting academic superstars such as Farish Noor and Farid Alatas will make room for him too.

I owe a special thanks to Mairii Victoriano Aung Thwin, who wrote a longish letter suggesting a different direction for the project; Chandra Muzaffar and Bambang Sulistomo, who were kind enough to answer me by email; and Mark Frost, who gave me a grounding in port politics, from the vantage point of Hong Kong, without a doubt one of the greatest in existence.

I must also thank the engineers at Google Translate. (Seriously.) To them I owe in part the experience of reading workable translations off my trusty cellphone while browsing through the Indonesian national library in Salemba (which is not only cosily airconditioned

but outfitted with wifi on every floor). But I have a real debt of obligation to the few who helped me with the translations, especially Hartono Budi SJ for most of the Indonesian and Alain Borghijs for the Dutch. The eminent Otto van den Muijzenberg graciously offered to do some translating too, but because of my schedule I was not able to seize the opportunity. The translations from Tagalog, incidentally, are mine, as are the few unattributed passages in Spanish and a couple of phrases in Indonesian.

I was able to access many old newspapers as well as hard-to-find old books online; I've included those I've found most useful in the References list. It's hard to pick a favourite, but if I had to recommend only one source I would begin with the University of Michigan's archive on the United States and its Territories, especially the collection optimistically dated "1870–1925: The Age of Imperialism".

The greater part of the research, however, took place inside libraries; I was the happy beneficiary of the assistance of helpful staff. At the Ateneo de Manila's aptly named Rizal Library, I found much of what I needed on Rizal (and a surprising amount on Indonesia). At the University of the Philippines Main Library, I found an otherwise difficult-to-obtain selection of Sukarno's speeches. At the magnificent National Library of Singapore, I was able to track down old Malay and English newspapers published on the island, as well as key volumes on Indonesian history. At the Perpustakaan Nasional Salemba, in Jakarta, I found the frayed pages of *Asia Raya* and *Bakti* that I was looking for, among other publications, as well as the impressively minimalist *Het Tijdschrift*, Ernest Francois Eugene Douwes Dekker's nearly century-old journal that would not look out of place in today's newsmagazine stands. I am especially grateful to Ms Atikah on the seventh floor, Ms Anglila Shinta Putranti and Ms Endang Sumarsih on the eighth, and Mr Nasrul on the fifth, for their service-with-a-smile. The library at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies must be one of Singapore's best-kept secrets. I spent countless hours on the nearly always almost-empty third floor, for which privilege I wish to

thank Ms Ch'ng Kim See, the head of the library, as well as Susan Low and Gandhimathy Durairaj.

In ISEAS, I especially wish to thank the unflappable Triena Ong, Head of ISEAS Publishing, and her dedicated staff for their careful, painstaking work on the book; Mark Iñigo Tallara, formerly with the ASEAN Studies Centre and now with ISEAS Publishing, for his unfailing assistance; and the remarkable Mrs Y. L. Lee, who manages ISEAS affairs with both verve and dispatch.

The assistance of Indonesian journalists has been invaluable. Elok Dyah Messwati of *Kompas*, who wrote a profile on Rosihan, helped me arrange my first interview with him. Frans Padak Demon of the Voice of America in Jakarta led me to possibly the most famous Indonesian alive named after Rizal, the prominent playwright Jose Rizal Manua. A conversation with Harry Bhaskara, formerly of the *Jakarta Post*, during a bus ride in Hong Kong on the way to a conference, helped firm up some leads. Samiaji Bintang, then on study leave in Manila, also sent me a tip. (And Chi-Jia Tschang, a friend from Hong Kong, directed me to her contacts in Indonesia.)

I have relied heavily on the supportive environment of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, where I've found a nurturing home in the last ten years. I received the warm encouragement and sustained support of company president Sandy Prieto Romualdez and opinion editor Jorge Aruta (who even subbed for me on certain days, an arrangement that meant I was inadvertently delegating upwards!). Editor in chief Letty Jimenez Magsanoc and the executive committee made a two-month book-writing leave official. Even the newspaper's own research library, under Miner Generalao, proved very useful.

Not least, I was also able to use my column in the opinion page to test certain ideas. Thus, columns on Rizal's influence on Indonesian nationalists appeared on 14 September 2010 ("Aquino and the troublemaker"), 21 September ("Aquino and the evangelist"), and 28 September ("Aquino and the mouthpiece"). A column on the pernicious influence of the great Spanish philosopher Miguel de

Unamuno came out on 19 October (“One who got it all wrong”). A column on the Tagalog correspondence of the three leading Propagandists appeared in two parts, on 28 December 2010 (“A Tagalog conspiracy”) and 4 January 2011 (“Rizal’s open secrets”). A column on Hermenegildo Cruz’s *Kartilyang Makabayan* saw print on 11 January (“Patriot’s primer”). Another two-part column, this time on the mistaken reading of the influential Filipino historian Renato Constantino, ran several months earlier; a revised version can be found in Appendix B.

On Facebook, that final frontier, I have drawn encouragement from the support of friends who have kept partial track of the progress of the book, including Coco Alcuaz, Marvin Beduya, Frank Navarrete, and Ted Sta. Ana in Metro Manila; Almond Aguila in Edmonton; Gigi Santos in Los Angeles; Chandler Ramas in Miami; and Tapi Balce in Sydney.

To three friends, I am especially indebted: Tony de Castro, SJ, who introduced me to Father Schumacher and jump-started my research with judicious links; Maricor Baytion of the Ateneo de Manila University Press, who remained an endless source of grace and encouragement all throughout the project; and Howie Severino, who alerted me to the project in the first place. I still keep his text message — which begins “Wd u be interested in writing Rizal book?” — in my phone’s inbox.

Friends and family helped immeasurably. Rolly and Mabee Unas offered the hospitality of their home in Singapore, again and again; Tim Gabuna allowed me to live in the Ateneo de Manila Residence Halls in the first five, most difficult weeks of writing; my sister Cristy Abasolo tracked down a few more books in Singapore; Gejo Jimenez boosted morale tirelessly, while keeping other book projects tantalizingly in view; Bixie Reyes helped me visualize the manuscript as a book to hold in one’s hands; above all, my wife Paz and children Carmela Isabel, Maria Teresa, and Juan Diego cheered me on, learned to put up with my absences,

forced me to take the occasional break, and created the space for me to write. To them I am grateful beyond words.

It was Ambassador Rodolfo Severino of the ASEAN Studies Centre in ISEAS, former secretary-general of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), who thought of marking Rizal's 150th birth anniversary with a book on the Philippine national hero's impact on Southeast Asian nationalism, and Ambassador K. Kesavapany, Director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) who pushed the project with enthusiasm. I am deeply grateful to them both for pursuing the project, and eventually involving me in it. The work, in large part, was kept honest by Professor Owen's sage advice. It seems to me appropriate to end this series of acknowledgments by recalling it. While Rizal's impact in Southeast Asia is real, he wrote, it is easy to exaggerate. "But still he stands, along with Dr Sun Yat-sen and a few others, as one of the Asians capable of inspiring others. Documenting this, and trying to put it in perspective (not too big, not too small) will be your challenge."

I have tried to measure up to this test; needless to say, all shortcomings are mine.

Introduction

THE USES OF ERROR

I

It may be best to begin with an instructive error. In “The First Filipino,” an essay in the *London Review of Books* occasioned by a new translation of *Noli Me Tangere*, the preeminent scholar Benedict Anderson references Jose Rizal’s encounter with the demon of double-consciousness (Anderson 1998: 229), “which made it impossible ever after to experience Berlin without at once thinking of Manila, or Manila without thinking of Berlin. Here indeed is the origin of nationalism, which lives by making comparisons.”

And then the error:

It was this spectre that, after some frustrating years writing for *La Solidaridad*, the organ of the small group of committed “natives” fighting in the metropole for political reform, led him to write *Noli Me Tangere*, the first of the two great novels for which Rizal will always be remembered. He finished it in Berlin just before midnight on 21 February 1887 — eight months after Gladstone’s first Home Rule Bill was defeated, and eight years before *Almayer’s Folly* was published. He was twenty-six.

In fact, the *Noli*, as it is familiarly, even affectionately known in the Philippines, was published two years before the first number of *La Solidaridad* (the *Soli* in current speak, but just plain *Sol* to Rizal in his time) came off the press. It was primarily because of the *Noli*, and the fame or notoriety that quickly surrounded its author, that Rizal became the lead attraction of the main fortnightly newspaper of the

Propaganda — the campaign in Spain to publicize the need for urgent reform of the Philippine colony. There were others who dared publish their names in full, like the Austrian scholar Ferdinand Blumentritt, or wrote just as well or even better, like the gifted polemicist Marcelo del Pilar — but it was Rizal the daring novelist who attracted the most attention, at least in the two years he wrote for the newspaper.

What explains the error? Anderson may have conflated Rizal's first sojourn in Europe, from 1882 to 1887, with his second, which ran from 1888 to 1891. (Rizal returned to Europe a third time, in 1896, but almost literally only for a day.)

During his first stay in Europe, Rizal studied for his licentiate in philosophy and in medicine in Madrid, assumed a leadership role in the Filipino community in Spain, apprenticed at a famous ophthalmological clinic in Paris and then in another one in Heidelberg, and wrote his first novel in the bleakest conditions: he had meagre funds, went on forced fasting, endured a forbidding winter. The second time he found himself in Europe, he spent a year of research at the British Library in London, copying Antonio de Morga's early seventeenth century history of the Philippines by hand and then annotating it; contributed many articles to the *Soli*, including two historic essays; and wrote his second novel *El Filibusterismo* (better known in the Philippines, inevitably, as the *Fili*).

Anderson's review does not advert to this second stay, and it isn't hard to imagine why. Rizal's formative experiences in Europe seem all of a piece, in the exact same way that Rizal's life seems almost scripted: They fall into the familiar pattern of a hero's narrative. A precocious childhood and a brilliant youth, then a time of struggle and difficult achievement, ending finally in an all-consuming blaze of glory. It is the basic three-act structure of the cineplex movie or the stage play. But while Rizal's gift of presentiment was acute (his accounts of some of his premonitory dreams are almost clinical in their precision), and throughout his short life he

was shadowed by a sense of destiny (one of his pseudonyms was *Laong Laan*, a name often translated as “Ever Prepared” but perhaps better rendered as “Preordained”), in fact life never merely unfolded for him. He had to will himself into becoming Rizal.

The year or so he spent between the two European sojourns was decisive. Despite the grave risk, he still insisted on returning — because he knew, to appropriate a vivid phrase made current a hundred years after his birth, that was where the action was. The half-year he spent home, after the temerity of writing the *Noli*, was joyous but also often tense, his every move fraught with implication. A young lieutenant of the Civil Guard was even assigned to his personal detail. And yet, writing a few years later, he described that idyll as ideal.

Yaong limang buan itinira ko roon ay isang halimbawang buhay, isang librong magaling na di lalo sa Noli Me Tangere. Ang parang na paglalabanan ay ang Filipinas: doon tayo dapat magtatagpo.

[Rizal 1933: 250]

Those five months I lived there are a living example, a book much better than *Noli Me Tangere*. The field of battle is the Philippines: that’s where we should meet.

The most likely date for this letter, of which only a fragment is extant, is October 1891, toward the end of his second European spell. It was not the first time he spoke of the Philippines, or the last, as the arena of engagement. In July 1889, for instance, in a long letter in Tagalog to del Pilar (Rizal 1931: 208–11), he asked for many copies of *Sol* (he was then in Paris), in order to send them to the Philippines. “*Doon dapat itong basahin* — There is where it should be read.” He welcomed the news of an accomplished new Filipino student¹ on his way to Madrid, wishing him the best. “*Dapat lamang bumalik sa Filipinas* — Only, he should return to the Philippines.” And he gave other suggestions for smuggling the newspaper into the country, through the assistance of Filipino seamen² and other means. “*Huag nating limutin na doon tayo dapat mag tanim kung ibig nating pumitas ng*

buñga — Let us not forget that it is there where we should sow [the seeds] if we want to pick the fruits.”

He left the Philippines a second time only when the spectre of consequence threatened to turn solid, and in order, he said, not to shorten his parents' lives (“*di ko ibig paikliin ang buhay ng aking mga magulang*”). But by the time he wrote of the field of battle, he was already preparing to return to the Philippines, via Hong Kong. Denied a corner of the true battlefield the first time around, he was determined on his second return to pitch his tent regardless of the consequences. He knew the risks involved: Before leaving for Manila in June 1892, he left two letters, one for his family and another “*A Los Filipinos*,” with Lourenco Pereira Marques, a Portuguese doctor he had befriended in Hong Kong. They were to be opened, he said, only after his death.

When Rizal arrived in Marseilles on 12 June 1882, to take the train to Barcelona, he was very much the earnest student, the tireless tourist. He had landed in Europe a week shy of his twenty-first birthday. (He actually disembarked the following day, but had spent an hour in Naples the day before. “Greetings to you, O Napoli!” he had written in his diary.) When he returned to the great continent in June 1888, arriving at the port of Liverpool after an eventful detour through Japan and an unremarkable one through the United States, he was much more the reluctant traveller, more critical of Europe (of his compatriots abroad too), and impatiently devising schemes of returning to the battlefield.

The difference, in part, can be traced back to that ideal time, from 5 August 1887 to 3 February 1888, when Rizal found himself back in the Philippines, living the *Noli*. (And it led directly, on his return to Europe, to the forging of his most consequential alliances, with del Pilar and Mariano Ponce.)

We can understand the conflation of the two periods in Europe, then, as a fairly common error, something we can excuse under the label of “European influence,” but it is part of a larger mistake: Call it

the inevitability trap. The sweeping arc of Rizal's biography creates its own momentum, gives even his difficult decisions the air of the inevitable. While his letters written from various parts of Europe in 1887, after the *Noli* had gone to press, have a bittersweet quality to them — he was only too keenly conscious that the freedoms he took for granted in Europe did not exist in the Philippines — he all the same longed to go home. When he had to leave the Philippines again, he at first breathed a sigh of relief — “At last I can write you freely,” he wrote his great friend Blumentritt from Hong Kong — but he could not hide his despair: “They forced me to leave my country” (Rizal 1963c: 161).

Contrary to the popular image of Rizal as a child of destiny, as he whose life was “Preordained,” there were many such turning points in his life: when difficult decisions had to be made, when he accepted a course of action because of circumstance, and when he eventually found a way to do what he thought he ought to do. Reading the many letters and diaries and other notes he left behind, I get the impression, not of a dutiful acquiescence to fate, but of an enormous will at work.

It is my contention that, in truth, there was nothing inevitable about Rizal.

II

A hundred and fifty years after his birth, the truth about Rizal is, more or less, plain to see. Through the first-hand experiences he smuggled into his political fiction, through his topical essays and occasion-specific poetry, above all through his letters and diaries, we can make the case that he was his own best biographer. But a reader who wants to know more about Rizal quickly learns that the view is obscured by a thicket of errors.

This should not come as a surprise. The teeming fecundity of Rizal studies all but guarantees this undergrowth. Even the greatest scholars have done their share of fertilizing. Thus, for example, Anderson. Horacio de la Costa SJ, a true eminence in Philippine

history and literature (in my view he was the best, the most gifted Filipino writer in English), confused the brothers Taviel de Andrade (De la Costa 1996: 113). Jose was Rizal's bodyguard and friend; Luis his lawyer for the defence. The leading Malayist scholar in the Philippines, Zeus Salazar, thought Rizal decided to annotate Morga's history only in January 1889 or "shortly thereafter" (Salazar 1998: 117). In fact, Rizal was done copying and annotating most of the Morga by December 1888. And so on, and on.

A reader of Rizal's can get discouraged. That was where I found myself, a few years ago. It took some time for me to make the liberating discovery that, though the field of study may be error-ridden, these very mistakes can often lead to the truth. Error has its many uses.

We can construct a typology of the most common errors. The *instructive error* may involve either factual mistakes, or mistakes in interpretation, or both; it is an error, as we may see from the Anderson example above or the examples from Apolinario Mabini and Jean Jaures, Asuncion Lopez Bantug and David P. Barrows below, that can throw unexpected light on a detail or an event or a puzzle in Rizal's life. The *unfortunate error* concerns merely factual imprecision: the wrong date or the wrong place, the wrong age or the wrong name, the result possibly of momentary inattention. Thus, de la Costa and Salazar above; Teodoro Agoncillo below. (I hope those I will make, inevitably, fall ever so gently under this category.) Last, there is the *pernicious error*, a gross misinterpretation driven (not necessarily consciously) by ideology, resulting in a serious misunderstanding. I do not have the space to discuss the errors of this kind perpetrated by the biographers Wenceslao Retana and Austin Craig; I have limited myself only to the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno.

None of this is to say that to understand Rizal we must only use the most complete editions, the most faithful renderings, of his life and work. Readers of Rizal can make an even more empowering discovery: He has in fact been well-served by *flawed but fateful* versions of his writings. Indeed, some of these versions have had the most

influence outside the Philippines, including *An Eagle Flight* (a 1900 version of the *Noli*, by an unknown translator) and “*Salamat tinggal, Tanah koepoedja*” (a truncated 1944 translation of Rizal’s famous eve-of-death poem, by the Indonesian journalist Rosihan Anwar, and the subject of Chapter 6 and part of Chapter 7).

Classifying the most common errors helps us clear a path through the thicket; I trust it will help us see Rizal in clearer light.

III

Apolinario Mabini, by popular consensus the Filipino nationalist intellectual second only to Rizal, wrote an account of the Philippine revolution during his Guam exile that privileged the role and especially the novels of Rizal; to the two books he devoted an entire chapter. He wrote *La Revolucion Filipina* in Spanish, and then translated it himself into English, some six years after Rizal’s execution. Much more polished translations have since been completed, but in my view Mabini’s own version, in his self-taught English, best reflects the cut and thrust of his Spanish-inflected argument.

In it, he wrote, quite unaccountably:

It was evident that the articles published in a fortnightly review [he means *La Solidaridad*] was not efficient enough to call the attention of the Spanish government. Seeing that Marcelo del Pilar was conducting the publication with rare skill, aided by competent staff, Rizal ceased to be contributor in order to give his works a more convenient and effective form. It was necessary for the Philippine miseries to have a more pathetic expression, that the abuses and the pains they caused might appear to the public eye with the liveliest colours of reality. Novel alone could offer these advantages, and Rizal set on writing novels. (Mabini 1998: 224–25)

Mabini was involved in organizing support, primarily financial, for the Propaganda in Spain from at least 1892, when he joined the Masonic lodge *Balagtas*. He was hard at work reviving Rizal’s *La Liga Filipina*, a patriotic association that fell dormant after Rizal was

deported to Dapitan, since at least 1893. He was in constant correspondence with del Pilar in Madrid, at least between 1893 and 1895. Not least, several months after the *Noli* first reached Manila in 1887 Mabini was back in the capital as a law student (considerably older than his classmates, because of the interruptions in his schooling); surely he must have been aware of the great controversy that followed in its wake?

“It would have been quite difficult to keep any serious university student unaware of such events,” Mabini’s distinguished biographer wrote (Majul 1998: 16). “And no Filipino sensitive to social discrimination and the nature of the unequal society existing at that time could have disregarded Rizal’s message.”

Perhaps Mabini may have conflated the work of *La Solidaridad* with another, reform-oriented newspaper published in Spain before the *Noli* became famous, and to which Rizal contributed the occasional article. *España en Filipinas* was a monitory example for the *Soli* — riven by racial antagonism, consumed by financial worry, fatally weakened by political fecklessness (“It is all puerility,” Graciano Lopez Jaena wrote Rizal). Though there were many attempts to revive it afterwards, the weekly newspaper lasted only four months, from March to July 1887. To be sure, Rizal finished writing the *Noli* just a few weeks before the newspaper was launched. But as John Schumacher SJ, the definitive chronicler of the Propaganda, notes: “Though its publication early in 1887 slightly preceded the appearance of *España en Filipinas*, [the novel] only began to circulate widely some months later” (Schumacher 1997: 82). It is just possible, then, that Mabini, then teaching at the vibrant provincial centre of Lipa, in Batangas, mistook one newspaper for the other.

Possible, but not likely. In *La Revolucion Filipina*, the chapter on Rizal’s novels is preceded by a chapter on *La Solidaridad* and succeeded by a chapter dealing, in part, with the *Liga* — three reform milestones ineradicably linked to Rizal’s name. (Indeed, Mabini’s insider narrative, like the articles in the only published issue of *Kalayaan*, the newspaper

of the Katipunan revolutionary organization, made the connection between reform and revolution explicit.) He prefaces his account of Rizal's novel-writing with a word about del Pilar's "rare skill" in editing the newspaper (well-deserved praise, in the wake of the abbreviated term of Lopez Jaena, the mercurial, discipline-averse first editor). He speaks highly of the *Soli*'s "competent staff" (one driving advantage *La Solidaridad* enjoyed over *España en Filipinas* was Ponce's central presence in the former and near-complete absence in the latter). And he absolutises Rizal's turn to novels, as though it was the novel-writing that caused Rizal to turn his back on the newspaper: "Rizal ceased to be contributor in order to give his works a more convenient and effective form." (In fact, Rizal was busy contributing articles, among other projects, while annotating the Morga and writing the *Fili*.)

Rizal did, however, stop writing for *La Solidaridad*. He did so about a year and a half before he was shipped off to exile in Dapitan, a rustic town on the northern coast of the great island of Mindanao, in July 1892. He stopped, to use the anodyne language of today's corporate culture, because of personality and policy differences; the difference in strategy, however, was the decisive one. Rizal was a one-front general; he insisted the field of battle was back home. Del Pilar wanted to fight on two fronts, even though the campaign in Spain remained without signal victories and consumed most of the materiel being gathered (by Mabini, among others) back in the Philippines.

Five months after his "field of battle" letter, Rizal wrote to the editors of *La Solidaridad* and the members of the reform-oriented *Asociacion Hispano-Filipina*. By then he had settled down in Hong Kong, and had managed to surround himself with many members of his family, his aged parents included. The practice of the "Spanish doctor" in the Crown Colony was doing well, but his mind remained fixed on the battleground. In his letter (Rizal 1933: 298–300), he thanked del Pilar and the editorial staff for "*la campaña que habeis seguido con motivo de los sucesos de Kalamba* — the campaign you

have waged on account of the events in Calamba.” He was referring to the virtual sacking of his hometown beginning in late 1890; hundreds had been dispossessed, forty heads of family deported, his own relatives scattered. Full of gratitude, the letter was nevertheless written by someone who clearly considered himself a former, not a present, colleague: “*como por algun tiempo he trabajado en sus columnas y con vosotros* — as for some time I worked in its columns and with you.”

In it he offered a simple explanation for his decision to stop writing for *La Solidaridad*. “Here I have also written in English for some newspapers, but it is rather for record purposes and for information and nothing more. Without desiring to counsel either newspaper or the *Asociacion*, I believe that at present little can be expected from public opinion in Spain; there the water is up to the neck and it cannot pay much attention to the Philippines” (Rizal 1963b: 661, but with slight revisions).

The explanation is a little disingenuous; as we can judge from the occasional publication of indignant letters from Manila, written in reply to his pieces, his Hong Kong stories had political objectives too. (Or at least they had political consequences. They eventually formed part of the evidence against him in his trial for rebellion and illegal association.) But Hong Kong was only four days’ journey from the battlefield. Proximity raised both the sense of possibility and the hope of expectation.

Mabini does not say anything about this conflict in strategy. It is possible he did not know about the initial exchange between Rizal and del Pilar, couched in Rizal’s terms of “*paglitaw ng mga bago*” — the rise of the new, hitherto hidden talents among Filipinos (Rizal 1933: 38). Or of the brisk exchange of letters in Tagalog in June and July 1890, discussing Rizal’s plan to stop writing temporarily for the *Soli*. Or of the heated letters in mid-1892 to del Pilar, after Eduardo de Lete had written a satirical piece mocking Rizal right in *La Solidaridad*. But it does not seem likely that Mabini was unaware of

the fatal differences in matters of leadership and direction between Rizal and del Pilar, in the form these had reached the various councils and circles in Manila in 1891. The controversy had thrown the patriotic elements in Manila in turmoil; partisans had chosen sides between Rizal and del Pilar; ultimately, the *Comite de Propaganda* had reorganized itself in an attempt (vain, as it turned out) to satisfy Rizal. By then Mabini was an associate, and later an apprentice, of the lawyer Numeriano Adriano, who supported the *Propaganda* campaign and was executed for it (Majul 1998: 14–16). It beggars belief that Mabini did not know anything about the conflict between the famous doctor and del Pilar, whose brother-in-law Deodato Arellano he was a colleague of. In some of his letters to del Pilar, he had even exchanged news and dispelled rumours about Rizal, who was by then in exile in Dapitan.

At any rate, by the time Mabini wrote *La Revolucion Filipina*, he certainly had command of more facts. I cannot help but think, then, that his account of Rizal's parting of ways with *La Solidaridad*, which he attributes anachronously to Rizal's discovery of the expressive advantages of "novel alone," seems to be a deliberate muting, for patriotic reasons, of the "lively colours of reality." In his view, the conflict between Rizal and del Pilar needn't be part of the narrative of the revolution.

About a year before Mabini was banished to Guam by American forces occupying the Philippines, the spellbinding Jean Jaures — "the grandest orator in French history," in the words of Indonesia's founding president Sukarno, himself no slouch in the charismatic oratory department — had occasion to write about Rizal. In a preface to Henri Turot's life of the Philippine revolutionary leader Emilio Aguinaldo, published in 1900, the French legislator recalled Rizal's life and death as "one of the most touching episodes in human history" (the limpid translation of Mitchell Abidor can be found in <<http://www.marxist.org>>). He praised Turot for including Rizal in his narrative (the account taking up about 30 pages in all).

Turot a eu raison de nous donner le detail de ce drame: la vie et la mort de Rizal laissent dans les ames une sorte de frisson sacre, et il parait impossible que le peuple qui a suscité de tels deuouements, ne soit pas enfin libre. [Turot 1900: ix]

Turot was right to give us the details of this drama: the life and death of Rizal sends a sacred shiver into our souls, and it is impossible that the people who aroused such devotion will not finally be free. [Abidor]

Turot depended on Henri Lucas, one of the translators of the first French version of the *Noli*, for many of the details, some rather imprecise, of Rizal's life (Turot 1900: 62). But in offering a summary of Rizal's work based on Turot's second-hand account, Jaures makes the larger, instructive mistake, and falls into the inevitability trap. He writes:

In Europe [Rizal] fills himself with all of modern science; he returns to the Philippines not to raise it in revolt, but to attempt by a supreme effort to open their master's spirit to the new necessities. But he is seized, judged, and executed ... [Abidor]

Granted, Jaures was writing a preface, and he was under no obligation to sketch "the details of this drama" with a finer pen. But I do not think it would be unjust to characterize his understanding of Rizal's return to the Philippines as the discrete second act of a three-part narrative, instead of the series of false starts and half-measures and eventually resolute decisions that it really was.

Jaures' terms may help make sense of the first homecoming in 1887, but the second return in 1892, prepared in part by several months of patient practice in Hong Kong and anticipated by Rizal's extraordinary attempt to found a Filipino colony — "the new Kalamba" — in Sandakan, in North Borneo, no longer fits his classification scheme. Rizal returned a second time not to "open their master's spirit" (he was done placing his hopes in the reforming capacity of the Spanish), but to open the spirit of his countrymen.

In the “field of battle” letter, Rizal addressed the fundamental condition of the Propaganda: the futility of waging an expensive campaign in Spain without adequate funds. “*Kung walang salapi ay wala tayong malaking magagawa* — If there is no money we cannot do much.” The alternative was clear: “*Ang ating maitutulung sa kanila, ay ang ating buhay sa ating bayan* — We can help them [the people back home] with *our life in the country*” (emphasis in the original).

But in the same way that the country should not place its hopes of reform, of freedom and a better life, on the Spanish government, neither should it place its hopes on the Filipino colony in Europe.

Ang karamihan n̄g mga kababayan sa Europa, ay takot, layo sa sunog, at matapang lamang habang layo sa panganib at nasa payapang bayan! Huag umasa ang Filipinas; umasa sa sariling lakas. [Rizal 1933: 250–51]

Most of [our] countrymen in Europe are afraid, avoiding the fire, and brave only when far from danger and in a peaceful country. The Philippines should not hope [in them]; [it should] hope in its own strength.

Rizal’s second homecoming was against the advice of many, including that of the friend he esteemed the most, Blumentritt. Partly to assuage their fears, he had decided on Hong Kong as a halfway measure. He had even tried to start all over again in North Borneo; the attempt was characteristic of Rizal, a man of projects, and it pleased the most radicalized of his friends, such as Antonio Luna. But throughout it all, his country’s shores beckoned. It was only a matter of time before the prospect of living a life that was more useful than writing the *Noli*, or the *Fili*, would steel his will, and draw him back to them.

IV

When was the *Noli* written? In *Lolo Jose*, an affectionate, candid portrait of Rizal steeped in the colours of family lore, Rizal’s grandniece, Asuncion Lopez Bantug, categorically states that the

Noli was completed in the last week of June, 1886, in the village of Wilhelmsfeld, in the house of the vicar, Pastor Karl Ullmer.

... How strange that it was in this atmosphere of happiness and contentment that he completed his sad novel. In the vicarage gardens, under the trees and among the German flowers he loved so much ... he sat, read and wrote. There and up in his room where he kept a map of the Philippines tacked to the wall, he finished the final chapters of *Noli Me Tangere*, working from the last week of April to the last week of June 1886.

He had just turned twenty-five. [Bantug 2008: 77]

And yet documentary proof exists that the last pages of the novel were completed on 21 February 1887. In the original manuscript, after one last line about “*la infeliz Maria Clara* — the unhappy Maria Clara,” Rizal writes “*Fin de la narracion*” with a flourish, underscores it, and then notes the place, date, and time: “*Berlin 21 de Febrero 1887 11 1/2 Noche Lunes*” (Rizal 1961: unnumbered).

It is possible that he was merely writing a clean copy for the printers; but it seems unlikely that those last pages were based on rough drafts completed from eight months ago. We have Rizal’s own testimony, in an 11 November 1892 letter to a former teacher, the Jesuit Pablo Pastells, that he did a lot of editing in Germany. “I admit that I corrected my work in Germany, making many revisions and shortening it considerably; but likewise I had occasion to temper my outbursts, tone down my language and reduce many passages as distance provided me a wider perspective and my imagination cooled off in the atmosphere of calm peculiar to that country” (Bonoan 1994: 139). Much of that editing took place in the Wilhelmsfeld vicarage; it was there where he was most able to bask in that calming atmosphere.

The extant correspondence after Rizal left the Ullmers in late June 1886 shows him asking around for printer’s cost estimates, and fielding hints from his friends about the book. “I know already that

you have finished the little work,” Evaristo Aguirre writes from Madrid on 15 September. Eleven days later he writes again, “I take into consideration the essence and object of your novel and I cherish the hope that it will answer some of our numerous needs ... That the personages are all taken from life and the happenings are true are circumstances that increase the merit of the work ...” Almost a month later, on 21 October, the medical student Maximo Viola, Rizal’s faithful travelling companion, reported from Barcelona: “Day before yesterday I was at the house of Daniel Cortezo and there I was told that it was not possible to finish the printing of your work in one year. I was at the Ramirez Printing Press this morning and there they asked me for the printing of your work ...” On 24 October, Aguirre writes again from Madrid, “I am really sorry that, on account of the excessive cost of printing your novel there, we are deprived of its immediate publication that we so much desire” (Rizal 1963b: 56; 59–60; 64; 66).

I take all this to mean that Rizal had finished a complete draft of his first novel by at least the third quarter of the year, or enough of a draft for him to write letters to friends loaded with printing specifications (Rizal 1963b: 64). But even Aguirre’s letters suggest that Rizal was not quite done. On 26 September 1886, immediately after talking about his hopes for Rizal’s novel, Aguirre writes, “I am sorry I don’t know of any military prison as I should like to comply with what you ask me ... I believe that in Manila there is no other military prison except Fort Santiago where there are dungeons under the wall towards the river, where it is completely dark and humid because of its proximity to the Pasig that laps its walls ... In one of them the shipping merchant Mr Mourente caught rheumatism which he remembers perfectly even now that he is established in Hong Kong.” Later in the letter, he adds: “Enclosed I send you some scrawled plans of the military prisons of Fort Santiago and of the Bilibid jail. I wish that through them you may form an idea of what those places are” (Rizal 1963b: 60; 62).

And why was that? Perhaps Rizal was at that point in the writing (the last five chapters) where he needed to know where to place members of Manila's moneyed class after the novel's climactic uprising. Or perhaps he had already written the following lines and wanted to expand on them.

... The Authorities could not allow that certain persons of position and property sleep in such poorly guarded and badly ventilated houses: in the Fort of Santiago and in other Government buildings, sleep would be much calmer and more refreshing. Among these favored persons was included the unfortunate Capitan Tinong. [Ventura Castro 1989: 354]

That last paragraph of Chapter 59 segues effortlessly into the first paragraph of the next.

Capitan Tiago is very happy. In all this terrible storm, nobody has thought of him: he was not arrested, not subjected to solitary confinement, interrogations, electric machines, continuous foot baths in underground cells and other more [sic] pleasantries that are well-known to certain persons who call themselves civilized. His friends, that is, those that were (for the man has already repudiated his Filipino friends the moment they were suspected by the Government) had come back to their houses after a few days' vacation in the buildings of the State...

Capitan Tinong went back to his house sick, pale, swollen — the excursion did not do him good — and so changed that he said no word ... [Ventura Castro 1989: 355]

Shades of the rheumatic shipping merchant Mr Mourente!

What does all this tell us about the Bantug account — written in 1936, thoroughly rewritten and first published in 1988, updated in 2008? (The second edition is superb, carefully designed and handsomely produced, and complete with infrequently seen photographs and a compact disk containing copies, among others, of Rizal's correspondence and three major biographies.)

Bantug had been instrumental in the making of other studies of Rizal; the 1968 biography by Austin Coates was especially indebted to her. Through *Lolo Jose*, her lifelong interest in documenting Rizal family lore was itself documented; a good thing, because the value of her research cannot be overestimated. But it may be that, in her recounting of the Rizal narrative, she privileges the memory of the Ullmers, whose descendants she had come to know, at the expense of the documentary evidence. It is pleasing to imagine that the writing of the *Noli* was completed in that two-month idyll in the vicarage, but the conditions under which Rizal wrote, his correspondence with his friends, and not least that notation on the final page of the original manuscript all say otherwise.

The book's cover offers additional confirmation. In an almost microscopic reading of the original manuscript cover of the *Noli*, designed by Rizal himself, Coates intuits "the secret, inner dedication by Rizal to his parents." The dedication is right there on the cover, hidden in plain sight. It includes the date the dedication was written. Coates guesses the month and day: 21 February. But the year is something anyone can see (at least now that our attention has been called to it): 1887.

Another thing. Bantug dates Rizal's request for help from his beloved older brother Paciano in publishing the *Noli* to October — specifically, to one of the most historically important letters³ in the Rizal canon, that of 12 October 1886 (Bantug 2008: 79). Perhaps this reflects the family tradition that Rizal held off asking for more money from his increasingly hard-pressed family as long as he could. But in fact the first request, or hint, must have been made soon after Rizal left Wilhelmsfeld for Leipzig. A letter from Paciano dated 27 August 1886 reads, in part: "I wish to know how much is the cost of printing a work there in Leipzig or anywhere else, so that I can have ready the amount or borrow it, because the situation of our brothers-in-law does not permit them to help you" (Rizal 1963a: 238). The mail between Germany and the Philippines took from one to two months;

Rizal must have finally told his brother about the novel he had been working on since 1884 in a letter (unfortunately no longer extant) written either in June or early July.

But again, this kind of error is instructive; it teaches us to estimate the weight scholars and critics have assigned to certain pieces of biographical evidence, and at the same time to sift through the evidence ourselves. They are lessons in appreciation.

V

An unfortunate error by the influential David P. Barrows recalls those of both Anderson and Mabini.

A political scientist who later served as president of the University of California, Barrows spent a decade in the Philippines; for most of it he was, effectively, the education minister of the new American colony. From 1901 to 1903, on top of his regular duties, he wrote a history of the newly annexed territory that extended over an area only about a third smaller than California itself. Published in 1905, *A History of the Philippines* quickly became a standard reference. A book review in the March 1906 issue of *The Filipino* magazine (25) may have been one of the first to recommend it, primarily on the strength of Barrows' reputation. "Dr Barrows has studied the Filipino people and their past, and he has written a history which, though condensed, is sound, forceful, readable."

Barrows did not make the mistake of collapsing Rizal's European sojourns into one. He speaks, rightly, of a "second return" in 1892 (Barrows 1905: 282). But in his treatment of Rizal and his work, he commits the error Mabini shared with Anderson: Through a momentary lapse, his chronology places the *Noli* after the *Soli*.

It was in this latter country [Germany] that he produced his first novel, *Noli Me Tangere*. He had been a contributor to the Filipino paper published in Spain, "La Solidaridad," and, to further bring the conditions and needs of his country to more public notice, he wrote this novel dealing with Tagalog life as represented at his old

home on Laguna de Bay and in the city of Manila. Later he published a sequel, *El Filibusterismo* ... [Barrows 1905: 281–82]

This error in his Rizal chronology (a mental lapse, as far as I can tell) Barrows corrected immediately in subsequent editions; through deft copyediting, he made the correction without changing the shape of the offending paragraph. The first sentences now read: “It was in this latter country that he produced his first novel, *Noli Me Tangere*. He was also a contributor to the Filipino paper published in Spain, ‘La Solidaridad’” (Barrows 1914: 281).

In 1924, the book was heavily revised, with entire chapters dropped and new chapters included. “This essentially new book brings the story of the Islands down to date,” a publisher’s note declared on the copyright page. But the book’s time was past; by 1926, Conrado Benitez of the University of the Philippines had written the new standard for public-school use, also titled *History of the Philippines* (Ileto 1997: 65). A news item in the July 1925 issue of *The Philippine Republic*, the Washington, D.C.-based “national organ of the Filipinos in the United States,” helps explain the difference in fate between Barrows’ revised edition and the original. Dated Manila, the story on Page 2 announced that “The Government text board has dropped the David Barrows history, a textbook formerly used in the Philippine schools. It was alleged to be anti-Filipino.” (An ethnological expert, Barrows had done extensive work with the so-called non-Christian tribes; he had a reputation for being Filipino-friendly.⁴ I surmise it was Barrows’ vigorous presentation of the argument for continued political union, in the new chapter “Toward Independence, 1914–24,” that may have led to the text board’s decision.)

Between adoption of the textbook and its abandonment, however, were two decades of instruction and influence. (A pervasive, most insidious influence, according to the eminent Reynaldo Ileto.⁵)

Other factual errors are truly unfortunate. In Anderson’s 1997 recounting of the writing of the *Noli*, he placed Rizal’s age at 26. In fact, Rizal was 25 when he completed his first novel. In *Under Three*

Flags (2005: 163), he placed Rizal's age at his death at 36, instead of 35. But Anderson is in good company; the foremost Filipino historian of the nationalist school and arguably still the most influential today, Teodoro Agoncillo, was even more inaccurate. In *The Revolt of the Masses* (2002: 29), he described the *Noli* as "written at the age of twenty-six." As we have seen, the book was written, on and off, over a period of at least two and a half years, and finally completed on 21 February 1887, when Rizal was four months short of 26.

VI

The pernicious error is an exercise in rank speculation. I do not mean a failed attempt at divining a puzzle in the life of Rizal, or a mere error in interpretation — these honest mistakes are only to be expected in any field of study. By base speculative error I mean interpretations not based on facts but on an assumed but often unarticulated ideology. Some of these errors have been hidden in plain view of scholar and reader alike, the eminence of their interpreters serving as cover. Retana's view that Rizal was the ideal Spaniard, for instance, or Craig's thesis that Rizal was the proto-American.

Of these eminent errors, perhaps none is more erroneous, and no one more eminent, than Miguel de Unamuno and his poetic interpretation of Rizal. I do not mean to suggest that there was no real poetry in Rizal; in fact, and as his own writings would show, Rizal was a true poet in both sensibility and achievement. (Though he came late to poetry, Unamuno was a poet of genuine inspiration too.) I only mean that Unamuno's tragic sense of the poetic — as relentlessly romantic, unsoiled by contact with reality — fails signally to do justice to Rizal.

That Unamuno wrote the eight-part epilogue for Retana's landmark *Vida y Escritos* (in two days, according to the epilogue itself) must be considered a coup for the biographer; Unamuno was the dynamic rector of the University of Salamanca, a leading light of the Generation of '98, and the owner of a growing reputation for

literary mastery in all genres. In 1907, the same year Retana's biography came out, he had published his first book of poems. When he wrote the epilogue, his proto-existentialist masterpiece *Del Sentimiento Tragico de la Vida en los Hombres y en los Pueblos* (better known by its influential English version, *The Tragic Sense of Life*) was still six years in the future. But the religious crisis that had changed his outlook, and deepened his despairing view of the eternal conflict between thought and action, had already taken place.⁶

The *Diario intimo* he kept during and immediately after the crisis gives witness to his obsession with mortality (many entries begin with the word "Death," punctuated with a period) and to the great tension that existed between his faith and his reason, a conflict he resolved through an act of will — understood, however, in the specifically Christian sense, as a surrender to God's own will. His last notebook begins and ends with a meditation on Christ's basic prayer: "Thy will be done. This cry encompasses all prayer. God is asked for what must be in any case: that His will be done" (Unamuno 1984: 80–81).

Two years before writing the epilogue on Rizal, Unamuno had published *La Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho*, the first of his books to be translated into another language (Unamuno 1984: 221) as well as an examination of the meaning of Don Quixote's pursuit of spiritual values in the desert of Spain's arid materialism. It was precisely on this point, Rizal as a kind of Quixote, that Unamuno's epilogue begins to engage Retana's biography.

"Quijote oriental" le llama una vez Retana, y esta asi bien llamado. Pero fue un Quijote doblado de un Hamlet; fue un Quijote del pensamiento, a quien le repugnaban las impurezas de la realidad.
[Retana 1907: 476]

Retana also called him an Oriental Don Quixote, and indeed this title describes him aptly; but he was Don Quixote with the substance of Hamlet, a Don Quixote only in thought, who had the greatest repugnance for reality with its impurities. [Unamuno 1968: 5]

This is meant to be praise, but in fact it is a gross misreading of the character of Rizal. Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, the “quintessential ilustrado” (Mojares 2006: 121) whose scholarly work Rizal admired and who knew Rizal on familiar terms, had no patience for this or any other display of “ignorance.” In a lengthy analysis of “The Character of Rizal” in that early high-water mark of Philippine historiography, the bilingual *Philippine Review/Revista Filipina*, Pardo chose to respond to Retana’s “carefully written work” because of a fundamental discovery: “*I have failed to find in it a study of the character of the martyr.*” (Pardo 1917: 41, his italics. Pardo’s Spanish original appeared in the May 1917 issue; the fine English translation, presumably by the review’s redoubtable editor Gregorio Nieva, that unsung hero of Philippine historical research who bridged the Spanish and the American eras, came out the following month. All the quotations I borrow, with their emphases, are from the English version.)

I shall not undertake to attack his detractors who, to be sure, were not all actuated by political or religious hatred or resentments of a political nature. It is clearly to be seen that many of these attacks were the result of IGNORANCE, that IGNORANCE which succeeded in getting him deported, imprisoned and murdered; that IGNORANCE which he fought, which we go on fighting, and which the generations after us will still have to fight. [Pardo 1917: 42]

While making allowances for Unamuno’s good faith (and Retana’s too), Pardo proceeds to wage war on their well-intentioned ignorance. “I can not and must not pass over in silence that which is not only contrary to the real facts brought to the public knowledge by that same book [that is, Retana’s biography], but which attributes to Rizal defects of importance that were never his.”

To Unamuno’s easy view that “Throughout his entire life he was nothing but *an impenitent dreamer, a poet,*” Pardo replies: This “is a figure of speech not based on anything real, a statement unsupported by any act or any moment of the life of Rizal. He desired the

advancement and welfare of the Filipino people. Did he desire anything unrealizable? His dream was to conquer, by reason, an era of liberty and rights for his people. How far is this dream of his unrealizable?”

To Unamuno’s blithe view that “Rizal was a poet, a hero of thought and not of action ... Rizal, the valiant dreamer, appeared to me a weak and irresolute man for action and life,” Pardo replies: “He preached *tolerance* and was *tolerant*; he advocated *study* and *studied*; *sincerity*, and was *loyal*; *valour*, and *died without flinching*; *work*, and *worked* as an author, physician, sculptor, mason, printer, and farmer.”

And to Unamuno’s dreamy view that “He was a Quijote of thought, who *looked with repugnance upon the impurities of reality*,” Pardo replies: “What reality repelled him? ... neither Rizal nor [I] myself understand what the ‘impurities of reality’ are so long as they are not *realities* become *impure after they had ideal life*. Unamuno’s opinions are a complete misrepresentation of the tendencies and character of Rizal and are unsupported by any known fact” (Pardo 1917: 42–43; all emphases are in the Spanish original too).

There is another thing: Unamuno helped Retana decipher the coded language Rizal sometimes used in his diaries, something the university rector took not a little satisfaction in (Retana 1907: 74; 90). It seems astonishing to me that his close study of the Madrid journal — which shows Rizal making a life even under straitened circumstances, doing without food for stretches at a time, scheduling self-improvement sessions by watching Shakespeare’s plays and the like, excelling in his studies and extra-curricular projects despite what was effectively genteel poverty — makes Unamuno conclude that Rizal was not only impractical but irresolute!

Unamuno’s opinions, however, have had a remarkably long shelf life. One of the most intellectually vigorous attempts to investigate the meaning of Rizal, the 1968 anthology *Rizal: Contrary Essays*, edited by Petronilo Bn. Daroy and Dolores Feria, gave pride of place to what it called “Unamuno’s seminal study of Rizal,” six decades after it first saw print. (The English translation by Antolina Antonio,

however, presents only the first three parts of Unamuno's lengthy essay.) Studies on Rizal today continue to reference Unamuno's essay (although I cannot help but think that those who cite it as "Rizal: The Tagalog Hamlet" labour under the misimpression that the Antonio version is complete. The epilogue itself is titled simply "Rizal.")

What explains the continuing influence of Unamuno's erroneous views? Some of it must be due to the Spanish philosopher's great fame, especially in the first half of the twentieth century; his novels and plays had turned out to be a foreshadowing of the modernist advance in literature, his study of Kierkegaard and his exploration of the tragic sense of life a prefiguring of existentialist themes. The citations describing "the famous Unamuno" or some such variation are thus a subtle appeal to celebrity-as-authority. (Even Retana, writing at the turn of the twentieth century, could not stop himself; he refers to "*el ilustre Unamuno*," "*el gran Unamuno*," and so on, in his own text.) But some of it must be due to the ascendancy of the extreme nationalist orientation in Philippine historical studies, which popularized the great divide between true revolutionaries and mere reformers — with Rizal on the wrong side of the divide. Hence, Rizal as the irresolute dreamer, the Tagalog Hamlet.

The vexing biography of Trinidad Pardo de Tavera must have been a factor too. In a hundred years of Rizal studies, his was the most penetrating criticism of Unamuno's perspective — and yet that critique, until today, remains decidedly on the periphery. I fear Pardo's decade of service in the American colonial government, culminating in his years as the senior Filipino member of the Philippine Commission, marked him for life and may have resulted in a drastic discounting of his views.

Mojares, in his magisterial group study of the lives of Pardo, Pedro Paterno, and Isabelo de los Reyes, summed up the matter succinctly: "The pious nationalism of twentieth century Philippine historiography cast him as one of the procrastinators and collaborators in the 'struggle for independence' In the late 1940s and 1950s, in

the context of the Huk rebellion and the influence of Marxism on Filipino intellectuals, class-based interpretations of the national history made Pardo even more unpopular. He was a convenient sign (together with men like Paterno and even Rizal) for a vacillating, opportunistic middle class⁷ ...” (Mojares 2006: 228).

To be sure, Pardo did not think Rizal was ever a revolutionary.

It is true he always feared revolution, and, what is more, he rejected it, as we all know, and it is thoroughly fantastic to say that *in his innermost soul he desired it*. These are gratuitous, unfounded, unlooked for opinions and come as a surprise from him who uttered them. [Pardo 1917: 43]

The words in italics are from Unamuno, but the sentiment is characteristically Pardo's. I will discuss the issue of Rizal as a revolutionary in later pages; may it suffice to say for now that this particular sentiment is more a reflection of Pardo than it is of Rizal, and that nevertheless Pardo was yet right: a man who was fatally aware of the deathly consequences of revolution could not have secretly desired it in his innermost soul. That would be merely poetic.

Pardo criticized both Unamuno and Retana (who was a friend of his and a regular correspondent) not only for their sweeping, rhetorical interpretation of Rizal but also for their selection of detail — the kind that lent itself, precisely, to sweeping, rhetorical interpretations.

The fact that these [virtues] are positively known to have been his qualities of character makes me reject as false two statements attributed by certain persons to Rizal and alleged to have been made by him before his death. One is to the effect that shortly before being executed, he said to his confessor: “My presumption has ruined me.” [Pardo 1917: 52]

To this alleged fact (Retana 1907: 431), Unamuno responds in character, by improvising a rhetorical rhapsody. He begins with a denial: “What is that about presumption? A person admitting that he

is presumptuous has never had that fault.” He becomes indignant: “The presumptuous ones were the others; the presumptuous ones were the barbarians who, over his body, uttered, as an insult to God, that sacrilegious “Viva España.” He waxes expansive, and Biblical: “Yes, his presumption *caused his downfall in order that his race might rise*, because every one who wishes to save his soul will lose it and he who lets it be lost will save it.” He ends by redefining presumption, thus turning the tables on Rizal’s critics: “yes, his only presumption, the consciousness that in him there lived an intelligent, noble race, a race of dreamers...”

It sounds stirring, even ennobling; the momentum of the language carries us away. But to Pardo, the Spanish philosopher was talking through his hat. “Unamuno, inspired by a noble sentiment, errs in pronouncing these words, with regard to which I will say, *basing my affirmation on real facts*, that [Rizal’s] dignity was not presumption, his firmness of character was not presumption, his self-denial was not presumption.” Unamuno’s neat reversal of terms works only if the issue were in black and white. But: “A person can not be PRESUMPTUOUS who acknowledges the shortcomings of his race and proclaims as a remedy for their redemption study, work, and the practice of the civic virtues” (Pardo 1917: 52).

Here we have a clue to the secret of Unamuno’s rhetoric; his antitheses rely on balance, not merely between the sonorous periods but between ideas. But what, in truth, is the opposite of Rizal’s own balanced views: his recognition of “the shortcomings of his race,” his emphasis on the redeeming value of labour and suffering, his belief in the good example?

This first false statement (an absurdity, Pardo calls it) is kin to the second. (Indeed, they share the same source: Pastells’ *La Masonizacion de Filipinas — Rizal y su obra.*)

Nor can we accept as true the other statement attributed to him at that moment: “It is in Spain and in foreign countries where I was ruined.” [Pardo 1917: 52]

Pardo recoils from the implications, not only because Rizal “knew fully well that he had never been ruined,” but also and mainly because the two statements, together, represent Rizal as “a *presumptuous mesticillo*, according to the traditional formula, utterly ruined by the atmosphere of Spain and the foreign countries, because his narrow brain was not made for any climate or civilization outside of those of the Philippines.” The two statements, together, make Rizal “confess in an indirect way *that his execution was just*, because he himself acknowledged that *he had been ruined*” (Pardo 1917: 52–53).

Here, then, are the wages of impenitent lyricism — but Unamuno’s, not Rizal’s.⁸

The philosopher’s own personal courage cannot be gainsaid. When Primo de Rivera (the son and namesake, as it happens, of the man who was twice governor-general of the Philippines) mounted a coup in Madrid in 1923 and declared a dictatorship, Unamuno served as a symbol of resistance. At the height of the Spanish Civil War, he stood up, literally, to the bullying of a Loyalist general.⁹ (The general responded to Unamuno’s courageous admonition by shouting “Death to intelligence! Long live death!”)

But Unamuno’s poetic view of Rizal, like Retana’s, is not only speculative; it is ultimately metropolitan. That is to say, it may have boldly criticized Spanish colonialism, but in fact it shared the assumptions of the former metropole. In that sense, it strips Rizal’s courageous sacrifice, on behalf of a colony, of its full meaning.

VII

In my own view, Unamuno’s worst excess was not his idea that Rizal was repelled by *las impurezas de la realidad* (this is, on reflection, a mere mirroring of the philosopher’s concern about the divide between thought and action); it is his notion (reflecting his own tragic sense of life) that Rizal was a passive participant in his life’s drama.

Rizal previo su fin, su fin glorioso y tragico; pero lo previo pasivamente, como el protagonista de una tragedia griega. No fue a el, sino que se

sintio a el arrastrado. Y pudo decir: Hagase, Señor, tu voluntad y no la mia! [Retana 1907: 477]

Rizal foresaw his end, his tragic and glorious end, but like the principal character in a Greek tragedy, he foresaw it passively. It was not he who was the actor; rather it was as if some undertow had swept him into the role, and he could say, “Lord, Thy will be done, not mine!” [Unamuno 1968: 6]

Rizal’s diaries make clear that he used similar religious phraseology too. But “Thy will be done” — the meaning Unamuno gives to it is nothing more than projection. He is reading his own “inner biography” (a concept he discussed in Unamuno 1921: 38) into Rizal’s tragic life.

It is very likely that Rizal did foresee his end. The order of his arrest, when he was again on his way to Spain to board the ship that would take him to Cuba, came as a real shock; perhaps his four years in exile had dulled his sense of risk. But the day he spent in notorious Montjuich prison in Barcelona, the month it took to return to Manila, the two months he was kept in detention, the fortnight it took for the legal process to find its preordained way to a death sentence, the twenty-four hours he had between proclamation of the sentence and execution — he had plenty of time not only to contemplate his death but also to die on his own terms.

Rizal, however, was no passive spectator. (The Asians who held his “great struggle” up for emulation, such as Sukarno, or Shaharuddin bin Maaruf in *Concept of a Hero in Malay Society*, certainly did not see him that way.) He was a kinetic actor in his own drama, actively working not to avoid the fire, or flee from danger, or seek the solace of life in a peaceful country — to use the terms of his own counsel in his letter about the field of battle. As a consequence, he was perpetually wrestling with his will. To Unamuno, struck by the seeming inevitability of Rizal’s death and conditioned by his own preoccupation with mortality, he was the passive hero in a Greek tragedy. In reality, Rizal’s wilful embrace of an entirely avoidable death was positively, eminently, Shakespearean.

Notes

1. Teodoro Sandiko, the young Latin teacher who taught Spanish on the sly to the now-famous “women of Malolos,” in Bulacan province. In 1888, the women petitioned the governor-general of the Philippine colony for the privilege of learning Spanish; their request sharpened the conflict between the town and its truculent parish priest. In February 1889, Marcelo del Pilar asked Rizal to write the women a message of encouragement; he complied immediately. The result was, after his translation of *Wilhelm Tell*, Rizal’s longest work in Tagalog.
2. A feature in the *Philippines Free Press* of 25 December 1948 tells the story of how Rizal recruited Perfecto Rufino Riego, a cabin boy on a ship that plied the Manila-Hong Kong run, to help smuggle in *huri* sacks full of copies of the *Noli*. Augusto de Viana’s *The I-Stories*, a helpful compendium of “alternative” eyewitness accounts of the Revolution and the Philippine-American war, recounts the interesting details (De Viana 2006: 7–13). There are some inconsistencies in Riego’s account (by the time the story came out he was already in his eighties), but the basic facts seem authentic.
3. In this letter, Rizal searches for the Tagalog for *Freiheit* or liberty; he has just translated Schiller’s *Wilhelm Tell* and confesses to his inadequacy: “I lacked many words.” He mentions del Pilar’s use, in the translation of Rizal’s first essay written in Spain, “*El Amor Patrio*,” of the words *malaya* and *kalayahan* — an indication that the word Filipinos use today to refer to freedom, *kalayaan*, may have been forged in the smithy of the Propaganda. Also in this letter he speaks frankly of his ambition: “It is very painful for me to give up publishing this work on which I have worked day and night for a period of many months and on which I have pinned great hopes. With this I wish to make myself known...” (Rizal 1963a: 243–45).
4. A passage from “A Friendly Estimate of the Filipinos,” an essay Barrows wrote for *Asia Magazine* in November 1921, quoted in Serafin E. Macaraig’s *Social Problems* (1929: 106), is worth reproducing; it turns the whole issue of alleged Filipino indolence upside down. “... Filipinos are willing workers. They are early risers, so that by ten o’clock in the morning they have accomplished the better part of the day’s work; and if, at this period, belated and late-rising foreigners desire to requisition their services, their indifference will give rise to reproaches of indolence.”
5. “Barrows’ *History of the Philippines* exhibits the first textbook plotting of Philippine history along the medieval-to-modern axis. It is, in effect, a narrative of transition that makes the reader see failure, or at least lack and inadequacy, in the thoughts and actions of Filipinos, until their race

has become fully hitched to the bandwagon of European history” (Ileto 1997: 65).

6. Allen Lacy’s introduction to *The Private World: Selections from the Diario Intimo and Selected Letters 1890–1936* (1984) is most enlightening on Unamuno’s religious crisis of 1897. Unamuno’s biography is outlined in that same book, as well as in Salvador de Madariaga’s interesting if somewhat breezy introduction to the 1921 edition of *Tragic Sense of Life*; his philosophy is discussed in great depth in Julian Marias’ *Miguel de Unamuno*, translated by Frances Lopez-Morillas (1966); see, for instance, “Unamuno’s Theme” (11–30). I have also profited from online profiles of Unamuno, especially the one written by Petri Liukkonen available at <<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/unamuno.htm>> and the entry in Britannica Online available at <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/613982/Miguel-de-Unamuno>>.
7. But even the arch-nationalist Agoncillo quoted him when his well-phrased views proved convenient. For instance, in *The Revolt of the Masses* (2002), he quotes Pardo at length, first on the impact the *Noli*’s expose of conditions in the colony had on the “prestige [of] Spanish civilization in the Islands” (29–30) and then in a candid but sympathetic portrait of Aguinaldo (180). But aside from Mojares’ superb *Brains of the Nation*, I cannot find a citation for Pardo’s deconstruction of Unamuno in the major texts.
8. An alternative reading of Unamuno’s antitheses is suggested in a letter he addressed to Jose Ortega y Gasset a year before he wrote the epilogue: “Every day, friend Ortega, I feel more and more impelled to make gratuitous assertions, more given to arbitrary statements, to the passionate stance, and every day I am more rooted in my own form of anarchism, which is the true form If you only knew, my dear Ortega, the travail I undergo to give birth to what they call paradoxes!” (Unamuno 1984: 180). In his Author’s Preface to J. E. Crawford Fritch’s translation of *The Tragic Sense of Life*, Unamuno also said: “The truth is that, being an incorrigible Spaniard, I am naturally given to a kind of extemporization ...” (Unamuno 1921: 34).
9. A moving account of the encounter in the packed Ceremonial Hall of the University of Salamanca between university rector Unamuno and General Jose Millan Astray can be found in *The Private World* (Unamuno 1984: 263–71). The author, Luis Portillo, described the philosopher’s eloquent defiance as “Unamuno’s Last Lecture.” Unamuno died two months later, on 31 December 1936.

A RIZAL CHRONOLOGY

1861*19 June*

Rizal is born in the town of Calamba, in the province of Laguna, on the island of Luzon, to Francisco Rizal Mercado and Teodora Alonso. He is the couple's seventh child; his only brother Paciano turns 10 years old the same year.

22 June

Rizal is baptized as Jose Rizal Mercado, bearing his father's full surname. Rizal was added to the Mercado family name after the Claveria decree of 1849.

1868

Multatuli's *Max Havelaar* (first published in 1860) is translated into English by Baron Alphonse Nahuijs. Twenty years later, Rizal reads Multatuli in London, most probably in the English version. This sweeping indictment of Dutch misrule in Java helps lead Rizal to found a secret society with a pan-Malayan orientation.

1869*17 November*

The Suez Canal is opened. The new passage reduces travel time between Spain and its Philippine colony from half a year to just about a month, sparking a boom in travel from the Spanish peninsula to the islands and vice versa. In time, families of means begin sending their sons to study at the universities in Europe. Rizal crosses the Canal five times: in 1882, in 1887, in 1891, and twice in 1896.

1872*17 February*

The Filipino priests Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora (known to later generations as the martyrs Gom-Bur-Za) are executed, for alleged

involvement in the Cavite Mutiny the month before. The student Paciano Rizal, a *protégé* of Burgos', returns to the province to escape government attention.

26 June Rizal is enrolled at the Ateneo Municipal, the Jesuit school established only two years before he was born. To limit any fallout from Paciano's association with Burgos, he is enrolled as Jose Rizal, without the second family name. He graduates with the highest honours in 1877.

1878 Rizal enrolls at the venerable Dominican University of Santo Tomas, the only school of higher learning in the Philippine colony. It was founded in 1611.

1879
22 November Rizal writes "A la Juventud Filipina" as an entry for a literary competition; the poem, which speaks of the Filipino youth as "*bella esperanza de patria mia* — the fair hope of my country," is used as evidence of Rizal's separatism in December 1896, when he is tried for rebellion and illegal association.

1882
3 May Rizal sails for Spain, with neither his parents' knowledge nor permission. He is to continue his studies in medicine, and to meet a higher purpose. In a letter to his parents, he wrote: "I too have a mission to fill, as for example: alleviating the sufferings of my fellow-men."

9 May He arrives in Singapore; it is, as he dutifully notes in his diary, his first "foreign country."

20 August His first published piece — "*El Amor Patrio*," written soon after he arrived in Spain — appears in the new

bilingual newspaper in Manila, *Diariong Tagalog*. A Tagalog translation is prepared by Marcelo del Pilar.

1884

21 June

Rizal receives his licentiate in medicine from the Universidad Central de Madrid. His licentiate in philosophy and letters is awarded the following year.

25 June

At a special banquet in honour of the prize winning Filipino painters Juan Luna and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, Rizal offers a *brindis* or toast that Madrid newspapers describe as thoughtful and residents in the Philippines see, inevitably, as subversive. Rizal's assumption of the leadership of the Filipino colony in Spain may be said to begin on this day.

1886

31 July

He begins a decade-long correspondence and a lasting friendship with the Austrian scholar Ferdinand Blumentritt. In an early letter, Blumentritt informs Rizal about the existence of a rare copy of Antonio Morga's early seventeenth century history of the Philippines.

1887

21 February

Rizal completes the final draft of *Noli Me Tangere*, his first novel. It would make him the most famous man — and to Spaniards the most dangerous — in the Philippines.

13 May

Rizal, accompanied by his "*landsmann*" Maximo Viola, visits Blumentritt for the first and only time in Leitmeritz (present-day Litomerice). They stay for four days.

26 July On the voyage back to the Philippines, Rizal makes a stopover in Singapore and then, on 30 July, in Saigon (present-day Ho Chi Minh City).

5 August Rizal arrives in Manila; he had spent five years and a month in various parts of Europe. He soon begins a lively medical practice, acquiring a reputation as “the German doctor.”

1888

3 February Under pressure from the colonial government and the religious orders, Rizal leaves for Hong Kong. He writes Blumentritt: “They forced me to leave my country.”

28 February Rizal arrives in Japan. It is a happy interlude. On 13 April he leaves Yokohama on board the *Belgic*, bound for the United States. On the ship, he makes the acquaintance of Suehiro Tetchō, who would later write a Japanese novel set in the Philippines that was influenced by both the *Noli* and Rizal’s own biography.

1 March Local officials in the Manila province issue the Manifestation of 1888, an unprecedented petition seeking the expulsion of the friars from the Philippines. A biographer notes: “It was the first public outcome of the influence of *Noli Me Tangere*.”

28 April Rizal arrives in San Francisco, where he together with other Asians are placed under quarantine. In May he crosses the continental United States via rail. The emerging power leaves him unimpressed. He leaves New York for Liverpool on 16 May.

2 June Rizal arrives in London. He would spend the next several months doing research at the British Museum, and copying the Morga by hand.

6 December An unusually excited Rizal writes Blumentritt to tell him of a wonderful discovery: He has just read Multatuli's "extraordinarily interesting" novel about Dutch misrule in Java, *Max Havelaar*.

1889

15 February The first issue of *La Solidaridad*, the Filipino newspaper founded to advance the Propaganda in Spain, is published in Barcelona. Graciano Lopez Jaena serves briefly as chief editor.

March–May In quick succession, Rizal organizes the Kidlat Club, the Indios Bravos, and the secret society "Rd. L. M." He and other Filipino expatriates attend the Paris Exposition.

October (?) Rizal's annotated Morga, which bears a publication date of 1890, comes off the press. Blumentritt writes: "This edition with your erudite notes will glorify your name."

15 November The first issue of *La Solidaridad* is printed in Madrid, the newspaper's new base. Marcelo del Pilar, the new chief editor, serves in this post until the newspaper's very last issue, in 1895.

1891

September *El Filibusterismo*, his second and "darker" novel, is published in Ghent, Belgium.

October (?) Rizal writes his "field of battle" letter, explaining his decision to return to the country, for good. "The field of battle is the Philippines: that's where we should meet."

18 October Rizal leaves for Hong Kong, where he arrives on 20 November; his second European sojourn had lasted three years and four months.

- 10 November Rizal arrives in Singapore for the third time. "I found Singapore much altered with many jinrikshaws and with a steam streetcar."
- 14 November Back in Saigon, the assiduous correspondent notes: "At 12 o'clock we went ashore and proceeded to the telegraph station to send a telegram to Hong Kong. Four words (2 dollars and 14 cents). Post cards at 2 cents."
- 6 December Most of Rizal's family, including his father and Paciano, reunite in Hong Kong. His mother will follow in several days. He later writes Blumentritt: "Here we are all living together, my parents, sisters, and brother, in peace and far from the persecutions they suffered in the Philippines."

1892

- 7 March Rizal visits Sandakan, in northern Borneo. He makes plans to found a Filipino settlement.
- 26 June Rizal returns to the Philippines a second time. He meets the governor-general that same night, and wins pardon for his father.
- 3 July The organizational meeting of the Liga Filipina, a patriotic association, is held in the residence of Doroteo Ongjunco. The event would later be used in Rizal's trial, as a crucial link in the prosecution's case.
- 6 July Rizal is arrested in the governor-general's palace, and then detained at Fort Santiago for a week; on 15 July, he is deported to Dapitan, in the northern part of the island of Mindanao.
- 7 July News of Rizal's arrest is published in the *Gaceta de Manila*. On the same day, Andres Bonifacio et al found the revolutionary organization Katipunan.

1894

February Governor-General Ramon Blanco meets Rizal in the cruiser *Castilla*, off the waters of Dapitan. He offers the exile the chance to relocate to Luzon.

1895 Rizal meets Josephine Bracken, who would eventually live with him in Dapitan.

1896

3–4 May A grand assembly of the Katipunan, which is under threat of discovery, resolves to consult Rizal about the planned uprising.

1 July Pio Valenzuela, the Katipunan's emissary, confers with Rizal in Dapitan.

6 August Rizal arrives in Manila, from Dapitan. On the same day, the Katipunan attempts to rescue him, but he declines the opportunity.

29 August At nine in the evening, the Katipuneros rise up in arms; it is the beginning of the Philippine revolution.

3 September Rizal leaves for Spain, hoping to serve as a military doctor in Cuba.

8 September Another Singapore stopover. "In the morning we slowly entered Singapore and we docked beside the wooden pier. The peddlers do not go on board but display their goods on the pier. I have observed some changes. There are more Chinese merchants and fewer Indian."

30 September Wenceslao Retana's "Un Separatista Filipino — Jose Rizal" is published in *La Politica de España en Filipinas*, in Madrid. The vitriolic article helps influence the prosecution's case against Rizal, when he is charged in December before a Spanish court-martial.

- 3 October Rizal arrives in Barcelona, but is allowed to disembark only on 6 October; after a few hours in notorious Montjuich prison, he is ordered to sail back to the Philippines on the same day, this time as a prisoner.
- 3 November Rizal arrives in Manila, and is immediately imprisoned in Fort Santiago.
- 15 December Rizal writes his controversial manifesto addressed to “certain Filipinos,” appealing to them to stop the insurrection. The judge advocate-general, however, refuses to allow publication because “far from promoting peace, [it] is likely to stimulate for the future the spirit of rebellion.”
- 19 December An article predicting that if the rebellion in the Philippines were to succeed, the islands would be at risk of Japanese expansionist ambitions is printed in *Java Bode*, in Batavia (present-day Jakarta).
- 26 December The Spanish court-martial finds Rizal guilty of the crimes “of founding illegal associations and of promoting and inciting to the crime of rebellion.”
- 29 December Rizal is informed that he has been sentenced to die the following morning, by musketry. At night, Rizal’s most famous poem, “Mi Ultimo Adios,” is completed.
- 30 December Rizal is executed. The time of death: 7 o’clock in the morning.
- 1897**
- 16 January News of Rizal’s execution reaches Batavia, present-day Jakarta.
- 1898**
- 12 June Emilio Aguinaldo proclaims Philippine independence. On the same day, Apolinario Mabini joins Aguinaldo’s as his chief adviser.

30 December The first official “Rizal Day” is commemorated, following a decree issued by Emilio Aguinaldo, president of the revolutionary government. The year before, Aguinaldo and other revolutionary leaders exiled to Hong Kong marked Rizal’s first death anniversary with simple rites.

1899

3 April Antonino Guevara y Mendoza, the revolutionary known as Matatag (Firm), completes his *History of One of the Initiators of the Filipino Revolution*. In this slim volume dedicated to Emilio Aguinaldo, Matatag pays special tribute to “*el inolvidable Dr Rizal* — the unforgettable Dr Rizal.”

1900

Mariano Ponce writes *History of the War for Philippine Independence*; it is subsequently translated into Japanese in 1901 and Chinese in 1902. The latter version becomes “perhaps the single most influential text” on Chinese interpretations of the Philippine revolution.

1901

23 March After a year and a half on the run, Emilio Aguinaldo is captured by American occupation forces in Palanan, Isabela, in northern Luzon.

The Indische Bond, a mutual aid association said to be inspired by the Philippine revolution, is formed in the Dutch East Indies.

1905

May The Russo-Japanese War ends in Russian humiliation. The victory of the Japanese emboldens Asia’s emerging nationalists.

1912

30 December The now-iconic Rizal Monument in Manila, built at the site of his execution through a public subscription, is inaugurated.

1913

31 March Artemio Ricarte, Filipino revolutionary general and staunch anti-American, completes a proposed Constitution for what he calls the “Rizaline Republic.”

15 May E. F. E. Douwes Dekker’s essay entitled “Rizal” is published in *Het Tijdschrift*. It is the first in-depth look at the Filipino hero in the Dutch East Indies; it also reflects the “Indo” pioneer nationalist’s view at the time, of a nationalist movement under mestizo leadership.

June–July Douwes Dekker’s articles on the Philippine Revolution appear in *De Expres*, in the Netherlands Indies.

1921

30 November The first official holiday to mark Andres Bonifacio’s birthday, mandated by a law sponsored by Senator Lope K. Santos, is celebrated.

1922

Labour leader Hermenegildo Cruz publishes *Kartilyang Makabayan*, a primer on Bonifacio and the Katipunan. The effort to distance the founder and his revolution from Rizal’s legacy is now apparent.

1925

July The Indonesian nationalist Tan Malaka, representative for Southeast Asia of the Communist International,

arrives in Manila. He will be based in the Philippine capital, on and off, for the next two years.

1926

November

The communist uprising in West Java fails.

1927

January

The communist uprising in West Sumatra fails. Tan Malaka had warned his colleagues that an uprising at this time was premature.

Artemio Ricarte, a general in the Philippine revolutionary army, publishes his memoirs in Yokohama. In it, he acknowledges the revolution's debt to Rizal.

Santiago Alvarez, another ranking revolutionary general, begins writing his memoirs.

1938

In what is possibly the first mention of Rizal in a Malay-language publication, nationalist Ibrahim Haji Yaacob references Rizal in *Majlis* (The Council), the newspaper he edits. "He was the father of the Filipino's struggle against western colonialism."

1942

10 October

Sukarno, the Indonesian nationalist leader, speaks of "Jose Rizal y Mercado" for the first time. (At least it is the earliest reference on record.) He would reference Rizal numerous times, especially during his term as Indonesia's first president.

1943

30 December

Asia Raya publishes a front-page profile of "Jose Rizal y Mercado."

1944*7 September*

The so-called Koiso Declaration: Prime Minister Koiso of Japan “announces the future independence of all Indonesian peoples.” It galvanises Indonesian nationalists.

30 December

An Indonesian translation of “Mi Ultimo Adios,” by the young journalist Rosihan Anwar, is published in the Jakarta newspaper *Asia Raya*. At night, Rosihan reads the translation on Jakarta radio.

1945*17 August*

Sukarno proclaims Indonesian independence. On the same day, Jose Laurel issues an order officially declaring an end to the second (Japanese-sponsored) Philippine republic.

10 November

The iconic Battle of Surabaya, between Indonesian rebel youth and British forces protecting Dutch interests, begins. Sent by Sukarno et al to monitor the situation, Rosihan Anwar spends the next three days in the city, at the time of the fiercest fighting. On his way out, he is shown a pemuda magazine printed on “bad paper.” Inside he finds his translation of Rizal’s farewell poem.

1946*July*

Rosihan Anwar’s translation of “Mi Ultimo Adios” is reprinted as part of a special issue on Philippine independence in *Bakti*, a revolutionary magazine published in Mojokerto, in East Java.

1948

Tan Malaka publishes his memoirs; the English translation by Helen Jarvis won’t appear until 1991.

- 1950 *Jose Protasio Rizal: Pelopor Kemerdekaan Bangsa Pilipina* (Pioneer of Philippine Independence) is published in Jakarta as part of a series on heroes (the list includes Kartini, Gandhi, Sun Yat-sen). The Indonesian translation of F. W. Michels' Dutch original is by the poet Amal Hamzah. "Selamat Tinggal," a new, more complete translation of "Mi Ultimo Adios," presumably by Hamzah himself, is included.
- 1956
May Teodoro Agoncillo's *The Revolt of the Masses* is published; it quickly becomes the standard account of Bonifacio and the Katipunan, and while acknowledging a deep debt to Rizal's role effectively damns him as a mere reformer.
- 12 June After prolonged and acrimonious debate, the Philippine legislature passes a law (Republic Act 1425) requiring the study of Rizal. "Courses on the life, works and writings of Jose Rizal, particularly his novel *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, shall be included in the curricula of all schools, colleges and universities, public or private ..."
- 1961
4 December The five-day International Congress on Rizal convenes in Manila, to mark Rizal's centenary. On 7 December, Indonesian journalist Rosihan Anwar presents a paper on "Rizal's Name in Indonesia" and reads his 1944 translation of Rizal's "Ultimo Adios."

1969

30 December Renato Constantino reads “Veneration without Understanding” as the year’s Rizal Day Lecture. It has since become the standard critique of Rizal’s place in the Philippine pantheon of heroes.

1975

Tjetje Jusuf’s translation of *Noli Me Tangere (Jangan Sentuh Aku)* is published in Jakarta.

1977

19 January *The Myth of the Lazy Native*, by Syed Hussein Alatas, is published together with *Intellectuals in Developing Societies*. Both books discuss Rizal’s work as public intellectual and incipient sociologist.

30 December

Chandra Muzaffar, who studied Rizal under Syed Hussein Alatas, founds ALIRAN (the Nationalist Consciousness Movement) on Rizal’s death anniversary. “I chose 30 December, the day of his martyrdom.”

1983

The first edition of Benedict Anderson’s influential *Imagined Communities* is published. It reintroduces Rizal, and especially the *Noli*, to a worldwide audience.

1984

Shaharuddin bin Maaruf publishes *Concept of a Hero in Malay Society*, a courageous survey of pernicious influences on the Malaysian idea of heroism. The book recommends Rizal as one of three ideal heroes to emulate. In 1994, the Malay translation receives a Commendation from the National Book Development Council of Singapore.

1994

Tjetje Jusuf’s translation of *El Filibusterismo (Merajalelanya Keserakahan)*, based on Charles

Derbyshire's English translation (*The Reign of Greed*), is published in Jakarta.

1995*2–3 October*

Malaysia hosts the International Conference on Jose Rizal and the Asian Renaissance, with Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim as convenor and a keynote speaker. "We associate Rizal and his like, such as Muhammad Iqbal and Rabindranath Tagore, with the Asian Renaissance because they are transmitters *par excellence* of the humanistic tradition."

1997*28–30 August*

Jakarta hosts the International Conference on the Philippine Revolution and the First Asian Republic. Rosihan Anwar's translation of "Mi Ultimo Adios" is included in the record of the proceedings.

1999*May*

Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Indonesia's greatest novelist, accepts an honorary doctorate from the University of Michigan. In a post-event interview, he acknowledges the writers who have inspired his work: John Steinbeck, William Saroyan, Emile Zola, Maxim Gorky, and Jose Rizal.