

what is said, and therefore may refrain from making any response or, in their eagerness to please others, make responses that are unacceptable and erroneous.

Certain pupils may appear to have inadequate ability to do school work successfully when in reality they are handicapped by hearing loss to the extent that they hear only a small portion of the teacher's instruction and of class discussions. They appear reluctant to participate in class activities and unwilling to make contributions when they do participate. Or they may be eager to participate in class activities and go constantly attempting to make contributions, but their participation is unusual in type and are not in keeping with those made by other pupils.

#### Assignment of Pupils To Remedial Classes

Whether pupils should be assigned to special classes must be determined after a thorough study has been made of their needs. The length of time children will restrain in the special class depends upon their ability to profit from the instruction given in ways of overcoming their handicap. The purpose of special instruction is to help children overcome their handicap to the extent that they can participate successfully in activities that are common to children of their age. When those assigned to special day classes have attained this goal, they should be enrolled in regular classes and provided in remedial classes the special instruction they need to work successfully with children who have normal hearing.

In assigning pupils to special day classes, it is imperative that they be assigned to classes operated at the proper grade level. This type of assignment makes it possible for the pupil to bridge the gap between the instruction he receives in special classes and the instruction that he will receive in regular classes with a minimum of disruption in learning after the transfer

has been made. It also gives the pupil the advantage of being associated with others of his age, with similar interests and educational achievements.

Children who have very slight hearing impairments may be successfully placed in regular classes without being given special instruction in ways of overcoming their handicap, provided their teachers give them every advantage possible. To give such advantages, teachers of regular classes should be informed regarding the hearing of each pupil in their classes.

A child who was born deaf or one who became deaf before he acquired any language facility and has had no special instruction in ways of overcoming his handicap should be assigned to a special day class for the deaf at an early age as appropriate. If, however, he has had special instruction in ways of overcoming his handicap, and has become reasonably proficient in so doing, he may be enrolled in a regular class and with the assistance of the special class teacher he can progress to a point commensurate with his ability.

For the welfare and interests of the aurally handicapped children, especially those in the elementary grades, every school should have a hearing-impairment detection program which comprehensively includes:

- a. hearing tests in all schools;
- b. referral to an ear specialist or deafness prevention clinic when any deviation from normal hearing is discovered;
- c. favorable seating in the schoolroom and lip reading instruction for the slightly hard of hearing;
- d. lip reading lessons, speech correction, and amplified sound for the severely hard of hearing; and
- e. correct vocational guidance, based on the medical prognosis of the impairment as well as on personal aptitudes.

# The Rizal Novels: Genuine Works of Art?

By Romeo M. de Rosas

THE teachings of Jesus Christ are subject to different interpretations among Christian churches throughout the world. Dr. Jose Rizal, like Jesus Christ, preponderantly presented in his novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, poignant orchestration of significant incidents and ideas that gave birth to a raging controversy: Are his novels genuine works of art or propaganda? Proponents of both sides have claimed time and again to have done exhaustive analysis of Dr. Rizal's literary works. How-

ever, those in favor of the artistic and cultural significance of his novels won so far the favor of Congress by its approval of Republic Act 1425. Now, the question of whether the novels of our hero are genuine works of art or propaganda remains wanting of a truthful, satisfactory and unequivocal answer.

As embodied in Republic Act 1425, which requires all students of both private and public schools, colleges and universities in the Philippines the compulsory reading of Dr. Jose Rizal's life and works, the need

for knowing the facts about his novels is indispensable. Misinterpretation of their contents is obvious because the great majority of our school population are misinformed particularly as to the true objectives of the author in writing them. Out of prejudice and preconceived conclusion, many of our fellow countrymen judge our hero. The rationalization of facts, as a means of checking any chauvinistic tendency in this critical analysis of Dr. Rizal's novels, has been taken deeply into consideration. To be better understood, we have tried to simplify our explanation as much as possible to humanize the author's intricately-woven-into-the-plot philosophical divagations which may in one way or another mar the truth. To achieve this, the study of the novels has been narrowed down chiefly to the proposition: Prove whether or not the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* are genuine works of art by analyzing them as either *propaganda* or *ideological* novels.<sup>1</sup>

According to Mr. Webster, the word *propaganda* means "a scheme or plan for the propagation of a doctrine or system of principles." In the light of this definition, a *propaganda* novel is a novel written primarily for the dissemination of the doctrines and principles propagated by a group of people or concerted movement. As the author was a member of various organizations of Filipino patriots working for the emancipation of their country from Spanish domination, there are sufficient grounds therefore to analyze his novels not as literary works but as *propaganda* materials.

On the other hand, in any reputable dictionary, we read *ideology* as "the body of doctrine, myth, and symbols of a social movement..." A novel which unfolds the truth about some contemporary social problems and may be considered as a treatise in the form of fiction about the real conditions obtaining in a country within a particular period can be regarded as an *ideological* novel.<sup>2</sup>

*Noli Me Tangere*, as the title implies, is a sadistic yet graphic picture of life in the Philippines during Dr. Rizal's time. With some exceptions, all the characters and incidents in the novel have their own respective historical identities. For example, that whimsical, pretentious, snobbish Doña Victorina was characteristically in real life a first cousin of the author.<sup>3</sup>

The touching effectiveness of every characterization in the *Noli Me Tangere* makes every phase of its plot sparkle with an overwhelming variety of impressionistic significance. The details of character-portrayal add color and meaning to every situation or incident which were taken undoubtedly from the writer's own personal observations. Furthermore, Dr. Rizal studied not only the language of every country he toured but also their cultural, spiritual, and economic

background to find out which of their customs, and what lessons from their history, might be of help to the Filipinos.<sup>4</sup>

The complex development of a weak plot magnificently magnified the *Noli Me Tangere's* moving realism. The subtle revelation of our people's apathetic attitude to progress brought about by a very defective education, the expose of those who use holy words to cloak their lustful and egomaniacal desire for wealth and power vividly flash upon the screen of the reader's imagination a life-lasting impression of the true significance of Spanish rule in the Philippines.

At times, Rizal put his ideas into the mouth of a character. Nevertheless he did present other characters with their own distinct qualities as individuals. There were flesh and blood in his presentation of Sisa, Ibarra, Capitan Tiago, Doña Victorina, Friar Damaso, and Maria Clara. In fact, there are still Filipinos who act and think like Capitan Tiago and Doña Victorina.

The ironic influence of the *Noli Me Tangere* upon the Spanish authorities was overtly expressed by Governor-General Terrero who was so fascinated by the novel that he interviewed Dr. Rizal. For his personal safety, the Governor-General assigned a young Spanish lieutenant to act as the writer's bodyguard.<sup>5</sup>

*El Filibusterismo*, in contrast with the picturesque dramatic context of the *Noli Me Tangere*, is an allegorical presentation of two alternatives to be employed in securing the independence of the Islands — by a peaceful crusade for reforms, or, by revolution. The author made a philosophical expose of the unbearable abuses of church and government officials, thereby making it paradoxically impossible to reconcile the group of revolutionists led by Simon with the Spanish administrators. The convincing description of the severely retarded mind of the Filipinos along economic and cultural lines, aggravated by the continuous devil-may-care procedures of the Spanish government, seems to give way to the inevitable shedding of blood to weed out all the cancerous elements that play havoc among our people. Granted that thousands of innocent women and children would be killed, still after the successful termination of the revolution, the eventual resurgence of a new progressive Filipino race would follow.

That is one side of the picture. Ironically, the author did not wish to set his country free by shedding innocent blood. Simon's revolutionary scheme did not successfully materialize. This may be explained by Dr. Rizal's great concern about the gruesome effects of a revolution on our people. Though he was aware his struggles might cost him his life, that would not matter if he could see to it that our people would get free through peaceful means.<sup>6</sup>

Coming to the question of whether the novels of Dr. Rizal are genuine works of art or propaganda, we stand firmly with the former — they are genuine works of art. The literary qualities of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* rank high among the literary works of other Filipino writers. There has never been a Filipino novelist in any language able to impress our people to such a degree that up to the present our hero's literary works are used as effective and authoritative references in the solution of national problems.

To say that Dr. Rizal's novels are by their very nature propaganda materials, requires a bit of explanation. In some respects, it can never be denied that the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* contain propaganda lines. But that does not mean they have lost the literary qualities of a good novel.

Unlike the short story, which by its very size tends to limit the complexity and development of the communication, the novel allows room for the full elaboration of not one but frequently several ideas. The short story is severely restricted in time, place and action, character portrayal and emotion, the novel ranges far and wide, spans centuries, circumnavigates the globe, may portray a score of realized characters and dramatize a wide range of emotion.<sup>7</sup>

In the preceding quoted paragraph, the qualities that differentiate a novel from a short story clearly indicate that the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* are novels beyond doubt. They have no restricting unity of thought, tone, time or action but they do have a wide range of legitimately beautiful ideas which are woven into colorfully-developed dramatic incidents and do portray a score of believable important characters.

Granted that the literary works of Dr. Rizal are such kind, still one has good reasons to regard them as propaganda novels. As a propaganda novel is one written primarily for the dissemination of the doctrines propagated by a group of people or concerted movement, we cannot beg to differ from the fact that in some respects again the literary works of Dr. Rizal have a great deal of propaganda leanings.

However, the apparent propaganda references to the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* are overwhelmed by the painstakingly artistic orchestration of significant details of character-portrayal and plot development which realistically portray the sadistic picture of life in the Philippines at that time.<sup>8</sup> This more than qualify the literary products of our hero as examples of the so-called *ideological* novel whose subject is a fictionalized treatise on important current social problems.

The ideological novel... is... a tract in the form of fiction, its usual subject is some contemporary social problems. Robert Bage's *Hermesprong* and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, both attacks on the evils of English society at the end of the 18th century, are gaudies of the genre.<sup>9</sup>

This is a crystal-clear definition of what kind of novels Dr. Rizal wrote. His superb style of characterization, his magnificent narrative portrayal of life in his homeland are qualities of his literary works which we, without blushing, show to any foreigner. His *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* intrigued the enemies of his country, thus making them run after his scalp. Above all, his novels did not only inspire his compatriots to give up their lives in the name of our country; they also serve as a shining example for us of our "faith in the uplifting and salutary power of freedom in its various aspects — intellectual, political, and religious."<sup>10</sup>

In a higher sense, the novels of Dr. Rizal can be regarded as literary products of a philosopher-novelist. To support our contention, a word from Professor John Dewey is hereby quoted:

What serious-minded men not engaged in the professional business of philosophy most want to know is what modifications and abandonments of intellectual inheritance are required by the newer political, and scientific movements.... The task of future philosophy is to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strifes of their own day. Its aim is to become, so far as is humanly possible, an organ for dealing with these conflicts.... A catholic and far-sighted theory of the adjustment of the conflicting factors of life is philosophy.<sup>11</sup>

In conclusion, we repeat the question: Are the novels of Dr. Rizal genuine works of art or propaganda? Your answer is as good as ours.

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- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 123.
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