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The Orinary Filipino: Rizal and the Making of León Ma. Guerrero as Biographer

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The Originary Filipino Rizal and the Making of León Ma. Guerrero as Biographer

As a crucial step toward a full narrative of Guerrero's life story, this article relies on private correspondences and public papers to retell the evolution of León Maria Guerrero as biographer of Rizal. Guerrero, a noted newspaperman before becoming an eminent diplomat, wrote the prizewinning *The First Filipino* (1963), which represents a significant contribution toward the present understanding of a Rizal human enough to be the national hero. This article traces the construction, appropriation, and reappropriation of Rizal in the context of different phases of Philippine state politics, which influenced the method and strategy that Guerrero used to approach Rizal.

KEYWORDS: NATIONALISM · HERO CONSTRUCTION · INTELLECTUAL HISTORY · TEXTUAL POLITICS · TRANSLATION

Prizewinning Rizal biographer Carlos Quirino dubbed León Maria Guerrero's biography of Rizal as "undoubtedly the best biography of the national hero of the Philippines" (Guerrero 1963/2003, xiv–xv). A first-prize winner out of the seven submissions in the national contest sponsored by the José Rizal National Centennial Commission (JRNCC) in 1961, Guerrero's *The First Filipino* became the standard text, besides other works by other authors, in the Rizal course stipulated in Republic Act (RA) 1425, popularly known as the Rizal Law (Congress of the Philippines Joint Session 1956). Mandated by Executive Order 52, the JRNCC was created to commemorate Rizal's birth centenary seven years after its issuance on 10 August 1954 (Piedad-Pugay n.d.). The Rizal Law, which was approved on 12 June 1956, enjoined all schools, colleges, and universities, public or private, to include courses on the life and works of Rizal. At first glance, these laws provided the initial impetus for Guerrero to become Rizal's biographer. But how did Guerrero come to write *The First Filipino*?

This article discusses the evolution and mutation of Rizal as the national hero in the greater milieu of Philippine legal and political history and in the specific context of the development and transformations of Guerrero toward becoming Rizal's biographer. It situates Guerrero's contact with Rizal in Guerrero's childhood, his Ateneo years, until he became Rizal's translator. It looks at how Guerrero viewed Rizal as biographer and how he arrived at his conclusion, which predictably became controversial, on Rizal's retraction. Divided into eight sections, the article's main parts of discussion are found in the second to the seventh section. It ends with a proposal regarding the writing of another biography, an expansion of this article into a book, which would lead to the making of another biographer so to speak, to understand better Rizal and Guerrero.

The Construction of Rizal as the National Hero

Ordinary Filipinos today generally take for granted that Rizal is the national hero because he is Rizal, ignoring the various factors that led to a construction of Rizal as the national hero. However, every Filipino who underwent or is undergoing state indoctrination through education and propaganda had and has a minimum conception of why Rizal is Rizal. The manner by which Rizal is appreciated by either the elite or the common people is conditioned by the way Rizal suits their motives and agenda. Rizal, the national hero, as

a "cultural artifact" of "nation-ness" was the result of legal and political maneuvers by the ruling elite designed to legitimize the hold of the state over its subjects, unifying them under a national symbol that is said to represent the Filipino national character (Kasetsiri 2003). The nation-state as the artifice of an "imagined community" had to produce in its subjects obedience to and reverence for itself for its own interest (Anderson 2003, 2004). A national hero would symbolize the unity of the state.

It was perhaps in this vein that on 20 December 1898 Pres. Emilio Aguinaldo decreed that the 30th of December be observed as day of national mourning in honor of Rizal and other Filipino patriots (Ocampo 2000). What Aguinaldo did was to recognize in law the acclaim accorded to Rizal, when the revolutionary Katipunan under Andres Bonifacio honored Rizal as its honorary president. It might as well be correct to suppose that the Katipunan, as the first national government, had in fact elevated Rizal while still alive as the symbol of a Tagalog republic, which would culminate in Macario Sakay's Republika ng Katagalugan [Republic of Tagalogland]. Although short-lived, the "First" Philippine Republic under Aguinaldo was able to wear the trappings of an "official nationalism" by commissioning a national hymn; a national flag; an official organ, *El Heraldo de la Revolucion*, which was later changed to *Heraldo Filipino*, *Indice Oficial*, and finally *Gaceta de Filipinas*; and the establishment of a national university, the *Universidad Científica y Literaria de Filipinas* (Agoncillo 1960).

Aguinaldo's decree was a step toward creating a national pantheon of heroes that would be revered and honored by all Filipinos as defined in the Malolos constitution. In Manila the Club Filipino sponsored an impressive program in honor of Rizal on his second death anniversary, while revolutionary newspapers like the *La Independencia* and *El Heraldo de la Revolucion* issued special supplements about Rizal (De Ocampo 1999). The public subscription for the erection of a monument in honor of Rizal in Daet, Camarines Norte, was unveiled on 30 December 1898 (Zaide 1954). Thus elite and people's constructions of Rizal as the national hero were in the beginning never dichotomous; they were one and the same in their veneration of Rizal. However, upon the imperial intrusion of foreign interests, which necessitated Filipino collaboration to succeed, Rizal transmuted, perhaps even transmogrified, to assume binary, even multiple, representations.

With the dissolution of the First Philippine Republic due to American intervention, the American colonial state through the Philippine Commis-

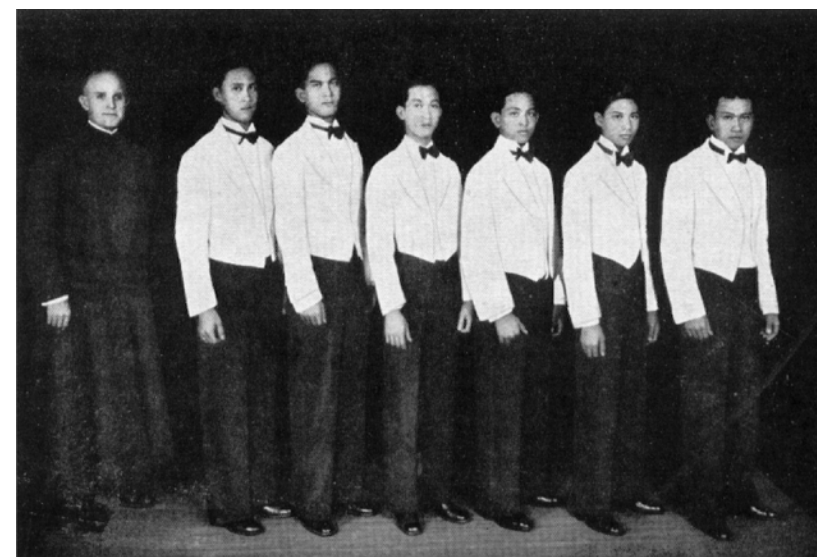
sion passed several laws elevating Rizal as the national hero (Constantino 1970). Act 137 reorganized and renamed the district of Morong into the province of Rizal. Act 243 sanctioned the building of a Rizal monument at the Luneta through public subscription. Taking its cue from Aguinaldo, Act 345 recognized Rizal's death anniversary as a day of national observance. Thus American imperialism reappropriated Rizal to suit its objective, consistent with its imperial policy, that of justifying "benevolent" rule in a period of tutelage (*ibid.*). American colonial policy makers constructed Rizal as "an icon of the imperial nation-building process," erecting a monument, releasing stamps and currency, sponsoring festivities and commemorations all in his honor (Kramer 2006, 334). The success of imperial reappropriation was made possible by the publication of the first American biography of Rizal written by Austin Craig in 1913. Craig, an American professor at the state university, viewed Rizal's life as the culmination in the Americanization and Anglo-Saxonism of Filipinos, mediated only by Spanish colonialism (*ibid.*)

The use of Rizal, however, became highly contested in public consciousness and imperial practice. Rizal had been the rallying point in millenarian movements during the first decade of American rule, which continued in the 1920s and 1930s when peasant leaders proclaimed themselves reincarnations of Rizal (Ileto 1982). Yet Guerrero, born in 1915, two years after the publication of Craig's biography, encountered an Americanized Rizal.

Guerrero Meets an American-made Rizal

The common denominator between Rizal and Guerrero is their Jesuit education obtained at the Ateneo de Manila. Both were outstanding students. In 1877 Rizal graduated with an AB degree *summa cum laude*. In 1935 Guerrero, along with Horacio de la Costa and Jesus Paredes Jr.—the famed trio of the AB class—graduated *summa cum laude* (fig. 1). De la Costa would later become a Jesuit historian and a lifelong friend of Leoni, Guerrero's nickname (Ateneo de Manila 1935).

Like Rizal, Guerrero studied at the prewar site of the Ateneo in Intramuros before the fire of 1932, which forced Ateneo to relocate to the site of the San Jose Seminary along Padre Faura Street (De la Costa 1997). Immersed in the method the Jesuits employed, Guerrero (1963/2003, 44) noted how Rizal "had been subjected . . . to one of the world's most thorough and gripping systems of indoctrination, the Jesuit *ratio studiorum*, under tight and constant discipline, with every incentive of competition and reward." Thus



A. B. Seminar

QUO VADIS?—A Seminar on the Trend of Modern Literature, by Members of the Poetry Class, Ateneo de Manila. So ran the program. On the evening of January the twentieth, these seven Poets, dressed in slender "chaquetillas", stood on the stage of the college auditorium before the largest and most cultured single audience that ever attended any Ateneo affair during the school year. Musical intermissions were provided by Mr. Adolfo Bellotti and Mr. José Legarda.

For the speeches, far from being cold, desiccated lectures, turned out to be magnificent specimens of thoughtful literature. Never was an audience more silent—enthralled by the majesty of flowing periods, the glitter of unassailable reasoning, the sharpness of discerning observation. From Mr. Teodoro Fernando, who introduced the discussion; Mr. Elpediforo R. Cuna, who spoke on the Trend of Modern Literature; Mr. Jesus A. Paredes, Jr., on the Foundations of Modern Tendencies in Literature; Mr. Enrique Quema, on the Characteristics of the Modern Trend—a Revolt from Form; Mr. Gaudencio Besa, on the Internal Characteristics of the Modern Trend; Mr. Horacio de la Costa, on Free Verse; even unto Mr. León Ma. Guerrero, Jr., on Stars of Hope in Modern Literature, the audience laughed, smiled, or was plunged into sudden thought by one of the most sustainedly interesting series of speeches ever held during the past few years.

Gov. Angeles, of Pampanga offered the Gold Medal for Thought and Literary Excellence, which went to Mr. Horacio de la Costa; a Silver Medal was also awarded to Mr. León Ma. Guerrero, Jr., for Oratorical Eloquence.

Great praise and gratitude is due to the Rev. Hugh J. McLaughlin, S.J., Professor of the Poetry Class, who planned out the whole affair, and laid the foundations for it in the daily inculcation of classroom principles.

Fig. 1. A.B. students in 1932 at the Ateneo de Manila, with León Ma. Guerrero third from the left, Horacio de la Costa second from the right, and Jesus A. Paredes Jr. third from the right

Source: Ateneo de Manila 1932, 221

LEON Ma. GUERRERO, JR.

117 A. Mabini, Ermita, Manila

A head taller (literally, figuratively) than our numerous other gifted Guerreros, "Leoni" is a genius. Actor, writer, parliamentarian, cheer leader, etc., etc.! Leoni seems clutched in the Guerrero tradition of medicine, but pen and tongue are his surest road to glory.



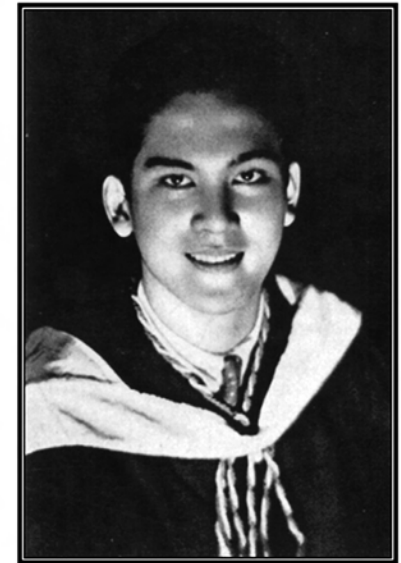
Quirino was right in saying that "Guerrero could not fail to savor the method of instruction and the milieu surrounding the school at the time of Rizal" (1963/2003, xiv), for the Jesuits' pedagogical approach did not change radically during the time of the American Jesuits who arrived in 1921 to replace the Spanish Jesuits (Arcilla 1988; Bonoan 1988).

Guerrero went to Ateneo in 1923 after receiving the first two years of his primary education from French nuns in St. Paul Institution (Alegre and Fernandez 1984). He graduated from the Ateneo preparatory school with honors, ranking second in a graduating class of seventy-four students. He entered the Ateneo High School and graduated with honors along with Skeezix (Horacio's nickname) and Jess Paredes; he then enrolled in the AB course from 1931 until 1935 (Ateneo de Manila 1930; fig. 2).¹ In more than ten years of schooling at the Ateneo, Guerrero could not miss the Ateneo background of Rizal who, at that time, was a state-acclaimed national hero. Rizal was recognized as Ateneo's foremost alumnus and, as such, his works were displayed in the Ateneo Museum and Library, which Guerrero as officer of the Rizal Book Club frequently visited (*ibid.*).

Besides, as Guerrero (1963/2003, xii) admitted in the preface of his book, he knew Rizal: "I was told about Rizal as a child, and to me, like to most, he remained only a name. In school, I learned only that he died for our country, shot by the Spaniards. I read his two novels in Spanish when I was still quite young, only half understanding them, and half secretly because my pious mother feared they would make me 'lose my faith.'" That his image of Rizal had been shaped by Americanized education was telling in the way he remembered Rizal in school as having been killed by the Spaniards, the perspective which the Americans propagated to make Rizal agreeable to them (Constantino 1970).

**Leon Ma. Guerrero
y Francisco
Manila**

<i>Guidon</i>	1-2-3-4
<i>Consul, A. B. Frat.</i>	1-2-3-4
<i>Senior Debate</i>	1-2-3
<i>Cheer Leader</i>	1-2-3-4
<i>Intramurals</i>	3
<i>K. B. S.</i>	1-2-3-4
<i>Promoter, S. H.</i>	1-2-3-4
<i>Varsity "A" Club</i>	3-4
<i>Round Table</i>	2-3
<i>Glee Club</i>	3
<i>A. C. I. L.</i>	3
<i>Ateneo Players' Guild</i>	3



He is an anachronism: a Medieval modern, a youth out of the dialogues of Plato, whom Socrates would have fancied and Pheidias carved out in marble—Catullus in an evening dress. Adept alike at the dance and the disputation, his quick, rapier-like mercurial mind turns now to satire, now to tragedy; mobile, pliant, never at rest, it sallies forth to invade each untried form of literature, from murder mysteries to medication, only to find itself in each conquered citadel at home. He cannot speak on anything without speaking of everything: his elvish fancy connects Cosmology with the Carlo, and politics and poetry alike feel the probing scalpel of his wit.

And thus it might almost be a definition of Leoni to say that he is everywhere at his ease. There is no school activity on which he did not at one time leave his mark. He has made the GUIDON famous with the irrepressible insanity of Totoy to Momoy, managing by sheer brilliance to be the first Freshman to wield the Editorial blue-pencil. Turning his tireless talents to oratory, he warmed a soft corner in the hearts of hundreds for the gallant Dagohoy, and introduced a new idea into Philippine radio entertainment with the humorous interview. Given the stellar role in 'Lear,' he achieved in his portrayal of the stern, pathetic, foolish old man one of the most outstanding characterizations ever seen on the Ateneo stage.

It is the dream of Jesuit education to produce men who are not merely philosophers, not merely gentlemen, not merely poets, but who are in the fullest sense of the word complete. In Leoni that dream finds realization: soul and substance, genius and geniality—the gentleman who is also a man.

Fig. 2. Entries on León Ma. Guerrero in the *Aegis* 1931 (on p. 466) and *Aegis* 1935

Source: Ateneo de Manila 1931; 1935

He obtained copies of Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* (hereafter referred to as *Noli* and *Fili*, respectively) perhaps from the library of his grandfather, León Ma. Guerrero, his namesake, and read them in Spanish for that was the first language a Guerrero would learn in Ermita (Nakpil 1999).

The image of Rizal, however, would mutate during the period of the Commonwealth and the Japanese occupation.

Rizal Reinvented: Guerrero during the Commonwealth and Japanese Occupation

Guerrero graduated from the Ateneo eight months before the inauguration of the Philippine Commonwealth in November 1935. Armed with an AB degree, Guerrero took up law classes at night at the Philippine Law School while working as a staff member of the *Philippines Free Press* for five years from 1935 to 1940. In 1939 he took the bar and passed it, landing among the top fifteen examinees. In the previous year, he had married his long-time friend and companion, Anita Corominas of Cebu and a graduate of St. Theresa's College. In 1940 he decided to work for the government and was employed as assistant solicitor in the Bureau of Justice (Quirino 1963/2003). During all these years, he did not forget his interest in Rizal.

Rizal, however, had to be reinvented along with other cultural symbols, in keeping with the demands of official nationalism. Manuel L. Quezon as president of a semiautonomous government, in view of the forthcoming independence, spearheaded the creation of a national culture through the imposition of a national language, the adoption of a national code of ethics, and the reevaluation of textbooks and the school curriculum, or of the whole educational system to suit the interests of the state, which was to "teach the duties of citizenship" (Hayden 1955, 516). The National Assembly passed a law requiring the observance of a "school ritual" in all elementary and secondary schools, which consisted of singing the national anthem and the recitation of a patriotic pledge (ibid., 517).

The rehabilitation of Rizal as the national hero was a necessary gesture in the state's attempt to reappropriate Rizal. In 1938 the Philippine Commonwealth sponsored a national contest to write the biography of the national hero, which was open to all Filipinos; since almost all of Rizal's biographies had been authored by foreigners, the contest was meant to redress the disparity (Quirino 1997). The venerable former senator and president of the University of the Philippines (UP), Rafael Palma, who was appointed

chair of the National Council of Education in 1936, was awarded the first prize, while Camilo Osias and Carlos Quirino received the second and third prizes, respectively. Written in Spanish, the biography that Palma wrote was through the lens of a contemporary of Rizal.

If we believe an anecdote—of Quezon telling Quirino in a meeting at the presidential palace that the latter's entry was the best of the lot—it would appear that Quezon favored the new image of Rizal as *The Great Malayan*, the title of Quirino's biography (ibid.). It would indeed be an indication of how a pan-Malayan movement, advocated by a young student orator in 1932 whose roots could be traced to Apolinario Mabini's advocacy of a *Federación Malaya* (Malayan Federation)—and even to Rizal himself, a self-professed Tagalog-Malay, whose *Indios Bravos* secretly aimed at the liberation of other Malay peoples—had found a receptive audience among Filipino writers, who claimed Rizal as its icon (Terami-Wada 1984; Salazar 1998; Guerrero 1963/2003). It was ironic that Quezon, a Spanish mestizo, and other members of the Filipino mestizo ruling elite would support pan-Malayanism. Like Rizal and other *ilustrados*, the Filipino elite's claim to Malayness, which had become increasingly racialized, was "a racial strategy" more attuned to their conscious denial of their mixed ancestries than to connecting to a glorious past (Aguilar 2005, 626). It was no surprise that in 1949 the English translation of Palma's biography carried a new title, *The Pride of the Malay Race*.

War came in 1941. Guerrero together with Salvador P. Lopez, a fellow newspaperman and a noted writer, enlisted with the press relations staff of the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFPE). The eventual surrender of the Americans in a failed attempt to save the Philippines from the hands of the Japanese led him to "disenchantment with America's unfulfilled promise to protect the Philippines and this marked the beginning of his pragmatic attitude towards the United States" (Quirino 1963/2003, xvi–xvii). Thus Guerrero, after he was released from Bilibid prison, worked with the Japanese, firstly as technical assistant to Jorge B. Vargas, chairman of the Philippine Executive Commission, and subsequently as radio commentator for the Hodobu (the Department of Information, which was the former Japanese propaganda corps or Sendenbu) in the station KZRH (later named PIAM).

The outbreak of the war caused a political, rather than a cultural, break because the Japanese only reinforced the prewar clamor and fulfilled the need of the Philippine Commonwealth to reorient and chart its national

identity and destiny with Asia. Rizal played a crucial part in the Japanese imperial policy because the Japanese encouraged the veneration of local heroes and support for the rediscovery and development of indigenous Philippine culture, alongside the promotion of Japanization (Terami-Wada 1998). Working for the Japanese as a propagandist, Guerrero (1943) presumably delivered “Rizal and the New Order” as a speech, which placed Rizal in the context of Japanese imperial policy and propaganda, stressing Rizal’s peaceful character, abhorrence of violence, and condemnation of revolution. He saw the aims of Rizal’s La Liga Filipina (The Philippine League) as coinciding with the objectives of the Kapisanan ng Paglilingkod sa Bagong Pilipinas (Service Association in the New Philippines, or KALIBAPI), which was established in December 1942, and the neighborhood associations that were being set up in the country.

Upon the inauguration of the Japanese-sponsored republic, Pres. Jose P. Laurel took up the cudgels by maintaining a semblance of independence before the Japanese military. Because the Commonwealth’s programs in the field of education and culture were suspended due to the war, the Laurel government continued them in the form of reforms in the curriculum that emphasized Filipino identity through a national history and a national language as well as the teaching of Asian history and civilization. To dissociate itself from the Japanese military administration, the Laurel government brought back and reinvented the symbols of the republic (Jose 1998, 236). It issued stamps (one showed a Filipina in traditional dress with the Philippine flag and the Rizal monument hovering behind), particularly a series featuring national heroes. It commissioned a translation of the national anthem in Tagalog, while holding musical contests to provide venues for highlighting local culture. Rizal, for instance, was resurrected in one civic organization that fostered nationalist consciousness among the youth, the Kabataang Pangarap ni Rizal (The Youth in Rizal’s Dreams or KAPARIZ).

Translating Rizal: The Subversive Propagandist

The establishment of the Third Philippine Republic after the war, starting with Pres. Manuel Roxas (1946–1948), necessitated a reimagining of Rizal in line with a national vision and program. Roxas, who paid tribute in a visit to the Luneta monument in 1946 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Rizal’s martyrdom, believed that Rizal advocated neither revolution nor violence because he was a peaceful man (Liang 1971). Roxas faced a

resurgence of peasant rebellion in Central Luzon waged by the Huks, the former anti-Japanese resistance forces during the war. A peace-loving Rizal served the purpose of the Roxas administration, which actively collaborated with the Americans in the fight against worldwide communism. Succeeding Roxas upon the latter’s death, Elpidio Quirino (1948–1953) would continue to invoke Rizal’s peaceful stance, culminating in the surrender of Huk communist Taciano Rizal, a grandnephew of Rizal, who surrendered to the defense secretary, Ramon Magsaysay. With the aid of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Magsaysay managed to contain the Huk communist movement (Lansdale 1972). President Magsaysay (1954–1957) and his spin doctors circulated the idea that he was “Malay” because of his looks and brown complexion, which was a motive to link him to Rizal (Smith 1958; Quirino 1958).

Beginning in 1941, with the exception of 1946, Rizal became part of the presidential ritual following the provision in the 1935 Philippine constitution that set 30 December, Rizal Day, as the start and end of each president’s term. Consequently, in every inaugural address from Quirino to Carlos P. Garcia (1957–1961), Philippine presidents never failed to recognize the significance of the day in relation to their presidential projects. The malleability of Rizal as a state symbol catered not only to presidential articulations but also to all state and nonstate actors and institutions.

Claro M. Recto confirmed in his introduction to Guerrero’s *The Young Rizal* (1950, 1) that by this time Rizal had become the many images his authors wanted him to be:

[Rizal’s] life and writings have become the texts for violently opposed theories, programs and appeals. He is cited and quoted by rival camps. Everyone makes his own Rizal, in his own image. Patriotic veneration and partisan interest have raised him so many altars that the image of Rizal has undergone as many sacrilegious manipulations as there have been literary priests officiating at his rites.

In 1950 Guerrero (1963/2003, xii) was commissioned to translate Rizal’s childhood memoirs to English, which he described later as a “literary exercise.” Included in this work, which was first released as a newspaper serial and later as a book published by Cacho Hermanos, later by Bardavon, were his translations of Rizal’s early poems and other works. The motive

in translating Rizal's memoirs, according to Guerrero, was to allow the next generation of English-educated Filipinos, who were unaccustomed to Spanish, the language of Philippine "nationalistic literature," to read Rizal in his own words away from the biased interpretation of second-hand accounts. Guerrero (1950, 8) recognized the perils of translation because translators were accused of being traducers, but translation with respect to Rizal and his contemporaries was not only "a necessary evil" for it was "even a patriotic duty."

Next to Guerrero's first serious entry into Rizal studies was his article on Rizal's first love (Guerrero 1951a), followed by another on why Filipinos chose Rizal as the national hero instead of Bonifacio or Aguinaldo (Guerrero 1951b). This latter article reflected the general perception of the period, preferring a Rizal who was "a thinker and a writer, with a program of peaceful and loyal reform"; Guerrero argued, "we Filipinos must be one of the most peace-loving nations the way we choose our heroes" (ibid., 14–15).²

Four years later, Guerrero (1957), now Philippine ambassador to London, delivered a speech before a mixed crowd, after which he put up and unveiled a commemorative marker on the house where Rizal lived in Chalcot Crescent. The impact of the speech and his growing reputation as a Rizalist scholar might have influenced Longmans Green and Co. Ltd. to commission him to translate Rizal's novels to English, perhaps toward the end of 1958 or early 1959 as he wrote in a letter dated 20 February 1959 to Skeezix, now Fr. Horacio de la Costa of the Society of Jesus, that he was "doing a translation of the *Noli* and *Fili* for Longmans. . . ." (Guerrero 1959).³ He finished translating the *Noli* on Rizal Day and the following year it was published by Longmans (Rizal 2004a). As quickly as he finished translating the *Noli*, he went on to work on the *Fili*, and finished it in time for the centenary of Rizal's birth in June 1961 (Rizal 2004b). He had plans of entering his translations to the contest sponsored by the JRNCC for there were two vacant slots as he had been informed, but monetary considerations prevailed over the measly prize money offered by the Commission (Alegre and Fernandez 1984).

While Guerrero was in London, the acrimonious debate in the Philippine Senate and the House of Representatives over the passage of the bill on Rizal was raging. This debate took place during the months of April until June 1956, which could mean that the bill's passage was pursued in view of the coming birth centenary of the national hero. But two years earlier, Magsaysay had

created the JRNCC so that the bill was seen as a political gambit to divide the support for Magsaysay coming from the Catholic Church (Locsin 1956). The introduction of the bill was also seen as Senator Recto's revenge against Catholic voters, as a result of Recto's poor showing in the 1955 election that elected the Catholic Action-sponsored Francisco Rodrigo (Constantino and Constantino 1978). The powerful Catholic Church used all its lobbying influence to quash the bill that would require courses on the life and works of Rizal, particularly his novels, to be taught in colleges and universities. The Catholic hierarchy's opposition to the bill, despite the support it drew from its loyal adherents and thus polarizing the Filipino public, only exposed the reality that the church still wielded power in Philippine society and that it had not shed off its shades of friar monasticism and obscurantism since the time Rizal fought them. On 12 June 1956, as if declaring with finality the separation of church and state on the day Philippine independence was declared by Aguinaldo (Recto, the cosponsor of the bill, could not have missed the significance of that day), the bill was approved into law. There was a minor accommodation to the Catholic Church: that of allowing students to apply for exemptions in reading unexpurgated editions of the novels; exemption from the courses was not permitted, however.

RA 1425 mandated "to include in the curricula of all public and private schools, colleges and universities courses on the life, works and writings of Jose Rizal, particularly his novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* . . ." (Congress of the Republic of the Philippines, Joint Session 1956). Under section 2 it also enjoined "all schools, colleges and universities to keep in their libraries an adequate number of copies of the original and unexpurgated editions of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, as well as of Rizal's other works and biography" (ibid.). The law directed the translation of Rizal's novels and his other writings to English and other Philippine languages. This provision gave further stimulus to the growing "Rizal industry," to borrow Guerrero's now worn out phrase (Alegre and Fernandez 1984, 80).⁴ It was also in this context that Guerrero would translate Rizal's novels.

The Rizal Law, as it has been known, was unprecedented in the way the state espoused through legislation the national hero as the embodiment of Filipino selfhood and citizenship. Consistent with the provision of the 1935 Philippine constitution that the state shall regulate and supervise all educational institutions, the law fits well with the injunction in the same provision that: "All schools shall aim to develop moral character, personal



Fig. 3. The soon-to-be biographer, Ambassador to London León Ma. Guerrero, briefing the soon-to-be president, Carlos P. Garcia, then vice president and concurrent secretary of foreign affairs, September 1956

Source: *Manila Daily Bulletin* 1956

discipline, civic conscience, and vocational efficiency, and to teach the duties of citizenship.” It was the climax of the state’s attempts since the First Philippine Republic to appropriate Rizal as one of its enduring symbols. By requiring the reading of Rizal’s novels, as one of its nation-building projects, the state made literature a tool in fostering nationalism among its citizens (Hau 2000), a sort of fulfillment of the prewar Commonwealth writers’ aim, that of forging national identity through literature (Guerrero 1998, 216).

The law only manifested the intention of one actor or institution within the state, in this case Recto and the Philippine congress, as the confluence of various opposing interests, to project nationalism in reaction to the pro-Americanism of the executive branch. Since Magsaysay followed the dictates of the United States in foreign policy, economy, and national security (Constantino and Constantino 1978), Recto and his fellow nationalist legislators perhaps saw the spread of nationalism through education, by canonizing Rizal and his works, in the long run would favor state interest in countering the pernicious effects of neocolonialism. Guerrero himself became a victim of the illusion around Magsaysay as the “president for the people” (Malaya and Malaya 2004, 172) when he, believing that the government was nationalist, enunciated the “Asia for the Asians” policy as undersecretary for foreign affairs, only to be packed off to London (Quirino 1963/2003).

At the time of Guerrero’s translation, Garcia was the president following Magsaysay’s death and his eventual election to office (fig. 3). Guerrero translated the *Noli* and *Fili* when official and nonofficial hours allowed him. The *Noli*, for example, had to be put aside during his visits to his Scandinavian territories, dinner parties in London, or visits to the UN in New York as part of the Philippine delegation. The last in October 1959 got him into a verbal tiff with an American assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern Affairs, Walter Robertson, who made insulting references to Recto and patronizing comments on alleged American altruistic policies toward the Philippines. Guerrero talked back to Robertson, heralding the implementation of the “Filipino First” policy in foreign affairs, a policy giving preference to Filipinos that could have a bearing on Guerrero’s biography of Rizal, as we shall see later (Agoncillo and Guerrero 1970).

But what was Guerrero’s motive in doing the translations? Was he constructing “a reputation as a nationalist intellectual and litterateur” (Anderson 2004, 251)? Perhaps he was, but it was not because he realized he had little role in playing high-level politics due to the “Robertson brouhaha” or the

death of his “patron” Recto in October 1960 (ibid., 250). The immediate reason was his deep-abiding interest in Rizal since childhood, nurtured in the Ateneo, which continued well enough for him to translate Rizal’s boyhood autobiography. As he himself had said in 1950, translating Philippine literature in Spanish, particularly Rizal’s novels, was necessary, even a patriotic task, in an age when Spanish, hence the Filipino’s connection with the Hispanic past, had become unreadable.

Guerrero expected that his translations would meet both praise and condemnation. According to critics, he “desecrated” the language the author used for it “incorporated into the text the unavoidable explanations of historical, local, classical, theological, and other references and allusions,” making it unfaithful to the original (Quirino 1963/2003, xiv; Rizal 2004a, xiii). Guerrero explained that he was uncomfortable with the existing English translations because either a foreigner lacked an understanding of the Philippine background or the Filipinos’ overstated admiration for the novels led them to tortured renderings of the original text. In fact, his *Noli* translation was first published as a serial in the *Manila Times*—a publication strategy he had started as a writer for the *Philippines Free Press* (see for instance his mystery novelette coauthored with Zamora and Reyes, Guerrero et al. 1935a–j), which he resumed when he published his war narratives about Laurel and the USAFFE (Guerrero 1947a–q)—possibly to attract mass readers whose reading times were limited to what a newspaper issue could offer. It was not clear whether the editor or Guerrero himself excluded the debate between philosopher Tasio and Don Filipo about purgatory but people noticed it, decrying the alleged deliberate suppression. Years later he would justify that it “does not help the story along for newspaper purposes” (Alegre and Fernandez 1984, 78), but he could also have thought about the best interest of the church, which was plausible considering he could have watched from afar the controversy surrounding the Rizal Law.

Contrary to the detractors, Ambassador to the United States Carlos P. Romulo, Guerrero’s former boss, wrote to the *New York Times*, as published in the *Philippines Free Press* (1961, 17), a positive appraisal of the *Noli* translation, praising Guerrero as having “succeeded in preserving the original flavor; he has shown a happy faculty for modernizing antiquated and obsolete terms.” One valid criticism, however, was the use of the southern U.S. dialect for Doña Consolacion’s broken Spanish, although Guerrero translated the passage with American readers in mind.⁵

Recently Guerrero’s translation strategies have been identified as “demodernization,” “exclusion of the reader,” “excision of Tagalog,” “bowdlerization,” “delocalization,” “de-Europeanization,” and “anachronism” (Anderson 2004; cf. Anderson 1992a; 1992b; 1994). Why did Guerrero employ such strategies? In his early translation of Rizal’s memoirs, Guerrero (1950, 13) “whenever possible” did not render a literal but rather an idiomatic translation of certain passages because he believed that “fidelity to language is often infidelity to thought and emotion.” Also he modified the paragraphing of the text to suit modern tastes. Did he deploy his translation strategies in both novels to construct a Rizal that would be accommodating to the status quo in “an era in which [nationalism] is partially transformed into a legitimating instrumentality of a new-old state” from “a popular insurrectionary movement” (Anderson 2004, 251)? There was continuity in this nationalism since the time of Aguinaldo, even within an imperial colonial state or even during the Japanese occupation, as evidenced by the malleable character of Rizal’s image to accommodate purposes in the name of either imperialism or nationalism. In short, during the 1950s there was no “fundamental change in the imagining of the Philippines” since the 1880s as both Rizal and Guerrero were nationalists (ibid., 256). To a limited extent Guerrero was responding to the demands of official nationalism and to the exigencies of his loyalty to the Catholic Church, but never entirely to them.

In truth Guerrero was quite explicit in the motive of his translation, aside from providing a new translation to a new generation of English-speaking Filipinos and to the wider Anglophone world. “Each generation, it has been said, needs its own translations, and I have tried in this version to provide *a completely new one that would give the contemporary reader ‘the ease of original composition,’ the Noli as Rizal might have written it if he had been writing in English for the present generation of Filipinos*” (Rizal 2004a, xiii, italics added). Noting the principle that translation should affect the reader in the same way the original had affected its first reader, though admitting the difficulty because the condition of Filipinos “having largely, although not entirely, changed,” Guerrero believed that “it was something to be aimed at” (ibid.). Guerrero knew that the two novels, the loci of contestations and contradictions, would engender varied reactions among its many audiences, particularly Filipinos. He would not succeed in shielding the church, as he himself acknowledged that religious fanaticism had been the object of attack of the *Noli* but “the issue,” he slyly commented, “*let us fondly hope*, has lost its origi-

nal passion and importance” (ibid., xi, italics added). He knew, of course, that this was not true and he was probably hinting at how religious fanaticism had come back with vengeance since the controversy created by the Rizal Law.

The state, instead of encouraging a monolithic appreciation of Rizal, sanctioned the reading of his novels, which were capable of being twisted and turned to suit ideas and prejudices of groups or individuals not necessarily loyal to the state. It is not always true that, from the perspective of official nationalism, heroes like Rizal should only be revered and seen, but they could also be heard and read (Anderson 2004). The law proves this. Guerrero, although a loyal servant of the state, could assume the posture of a subversive translator. Although Philippine society during Rizal’s time had become “unimaginable” in the 1950s, Guerrero as propagandist made Rizal “imaginable” in the context of that period. Thus Guerrero would translate *gobernadorcillo* into mayor, *teniente mayor* into vice mayor, *alcalde* into governor, *alferez* into lieutenant, *convento* into parish house, terms that were familiar to Filipinos then, and even now. It is no wonder that, instead of using civil guard, he used constabulary, a direct reference to the prewar and post-war police force that was supplanted later by another name. In his translation of chapter 11, which he appropriately translated as “The Bosses,” the reader could immediately connect to the characters of the mayor and the priest, even though they were not living in Rizal’s time. Consider, for instance, Charles Derbyshire’s translation (Rizal 1956a): “The religious Acteon stood pale and motionless gazing at the chaste Diana . . .” in contrast to Guerrero’s “The Priestly Peeping Tom was pale and motionless. His eyes, in their sunken socket, devoured Maria Clara’s . . .” Guerrero’s translation was direct, explicit, and appealing to the emotions (quoted in Hosillos 1969, 131). It would be rash to conclude, although the possibility is high, that his subversive translations, which had replaced all older versions since the 1960s and 1970s, had converted students into activists and revolutionaries who would instigate the First Quarter Storm and the complications after that.

Having translated Rizal’s novels, Guerrero would be joining the league of translators who were in the forefront of what he called the “Rizal industry,” with the big difference that he made Rizal’s novels internationally available to both Filipinos and English speakers around the world in time for the birth centenary of the national hero.⁶

From plain reading Rizal’s novels during his childhood to translating Rizal’s memoirs, from translating Rizal’s memoirs to translating Rizal’s

novels—these were the important steps in the making of León Ma. Guerrero as Rizal’s biographer.

A Biographer in the Make, Or How to Write Rizal

A salient advantage of Guerrero over other biographers was his more than average grasp of the Spanish language as it was spoken at home, although somewhat different from Rizal’s time, which Carmen Guerrero Nakpil called “Ermita Spanish.” The first to consider was his Ateneo background. Thus his works of translation were indeed a preparation for the next task of writing Rizal’s biography. As early as February 1959, he was already intimating to write the biography for, in the same letter to his Jesuit friend, he asked for copies of the lectures on Rizal that De la Costa had delivered at UP. However, the decision to really work on it dawned on him when in a letter to De la Costa dated 26 January 1960, after congratulating the latter for his well-deserved election as *Philippine Studies* editor, he revealed that he was “perhaps rashly contemplating a new biography of Rizal for the centennial contest closing the 30th or the 19th of June this year” (Guerrero 1960a). Although it was Guerrero’s own decision to join the contest, the former director of the National Library and member-director of the JRNCC, Luis Montilla wrote to him pressing him to enter (Alegre and Fernandez 1984).

As early as January 1958, the JRNCC announced the biography contest in English and in Tagalog with the deadline set on 30 December of the same year and the results to be released on 19 June of the following year. The move to postpone the deadline to the following year and again to 1960 would explain why Montilla would urge Guerrero to join the contest, perhaps because no one had yet submitted any entry. The JNRCC board even passed Resolution 12 “to encourage good authors and to make the prizes commensurate with the intellectual work involved,” pegging the first, second, and third prizes to P10,000, P5,000, and P2,500, respectively. The low or even nil participation was not limited to the biography contest. Even the deadlines of the contests for the centennial march and the symphonic poem were extended to 31 March and 15 May 1961, respectively.⁷

From late January until 19 June 1960, Guerrero wrote what had been distilled for ten years in his mind since he first translated Rizal’s *Memorias*, interrupted only by the daily chores that he must attend to as ambassador. If one believes his boast that he wrote it in a month “waking up at three o’clock in the morning and working up to seven—every morning” getting him the

“most terrible migraines,” he started writing it on 19 May, the end first (Alegre and Fernandez 1984, 79). However, within this five-month period, he must have read and taken notes from the sources day and night, relying heavily on Rizal himself for, according to him, “the basic source of any Rizal biography is, happily enough, Rizal himself, a conscientious diarist from his earliest days, a tireless and frank correspondent, and a fertile writer” (Guerrero 1963/2003, 512). Thus he found it handy to consult Teodoro M. Kalaw’s edited *Epistolario Rizalino* and other works where one can find Rizal’s own writings. His reliance on Rizal’s works and writings was borne out of his “original desire to write a biography that would not be mere hagiography” (ibid., 512). To do this, Guerrero quoted Rizal extensively for his aim was to let Rizal “speak for himself” (ibid., xiii). After the submission of the five copies of the first of his three-part manuscript to meet the deadline, he began consulting other works to make it suitable to lay readers and scholars.

Included among those he consulted were the basic biographies of Rizal like Wenceslao Retana’s *Vida y Escritos del Dr. Jose Rizal*, Rafael Palma’s *Biografía de Rizal*, Carlos Quirino’s *The Great Malayan*, Cesar A. Majul’s *Critique of Rizal’s Concept of a Filipino Nation*, which he found as having “broke new and fertile ground”; Jose Ma. Cavanna’s *Rizal and the Philippines of His Days*, which according to him “gives the Catholic version”; and Cesar Z. Lanuza and Gregorio F. Zaide’s *Rizal in Japan* (ibid., 509).

To situate Rizal in the context of his times, Guerrero (ibid., xiii) understood the need to “read the history of Spain and to write the history of the Filipinos.” This he did as he managed to read Salvador de Madariaga’s *The Rise of the Spanish American Empire* and *The Fall of the Spanish American Empire*, Melchor Fernandez Almagro’s two-volume *Historia Política de la España Contemporánea*, F. Soldevilla’s multivolume *Historia de España*, Antonio Ballesteros’s *Síntesis de Historia de España*, and Rafael Altamira’s *A History of Spain* for the Spanish side (ibid., 509–10). Two other works, which he found very useful references, were *Enciclopedia Espasa* and *Diccionario de Historia de España* (ibid., 510). These enabled Guerrero to understand Rizal’s life and works in the context of Spanish metropolitan politics and colonial policies.

For the Philippine context, he used Zaide’s two-volume *Philippine Political and Cultural History* and *Jose Rizal: Life, Works and Writings*. Along with *Epistolario de Marcelo H. del Pilar*, Graciano Lopez Jaena’s *Discursos y Artículos Varios*, Mariano Ponce’s *Cartas Sobre la Revolución*, Retana’s edited

Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino, and Mabini’s *La Revolución Filipina*, he considered it “impossible to write the biography without” Jose Alejandrino’s *La Senda del Sacrificio*, Maximo Viola’s *Mis Viajes con el Dr. Rizal*, Antonio Luna’s *Impresiones*, *La Loba Negra*, which he still attributed to José Burgos, and Pedro A. Paterno’s *Ninay* (ibid., 510–11). He also found time to consult José Montero y Vidal’s *Historia General de Filipinas* in three volumes, John Leddy Phelan’s *The Hispanization of the Philippines*, Teodoro A. Agoncillo’s *The Revolt of the Masses*, John Foreman’s *The Philippine Islands*, Kalaw’s *Philippine Masonry*, and eleven other titles, which he deemed “indispensable” (ibid., 511). These Philippine materials provided him with the proper context on how to view Rizal in relation to his fellow propagandists and his overall place in Philippine colonial history.

Next to reading all these sources, either primary or secondary, he translated, in addition to Rizal’s novels, essays, letters, and other documents in Spanish to English. While doing so he, once in awhile, read Theodore H. Savory’s recently published *The Art of Translation*, which gave twelve contradictory norms in translation, whose sixth (“A translation should possess the style of the translator”) and eighth (“A translation should read as a contemporary of the translator”) had likely influenced him. Actually, while doing the biography, he was at the same time translating the *Fili* “off and on,” thus taking him another year for it to be ready for publication (Rizal 2004b, vi). His wife, Anita, was quite involved with the *Fili* as she pointed out his “lapses into hispanisms” and even typed the whole manuscript (ibid., xii).

The craft of biographical writing was not new to him. He wrote about his late grandfather for the *Philippines Free Press* a month after his graduation from the Ateneo (Guerrero 1935). While a member of the *Free Press* staff, his interviews with Filipino politicians (1937) and movie stars (1940) led him to write profiles and biographical articles. His *Twilight in Tokyo* (1946), published in series in the *Manila Times* was partly autobiographical, relating his experiences as second, then first, secretary to the Philippine embassy in Tokyo during the war and an insider’s view of the travails and vicissitudes of Pres. Jose P. Laurel and other exiled Filipino leaders as they confronted the realities of postwar Japan. Likewise, his “The passion and death of the USAFFE” (1947a–q), again published in series in the *Evening News*, was partly autobiographical, which he “chronicled with such gorgeous bitterness,” as Nick Joaquin (1965, 2) aptly described the betrayal of America’s promise to defend the Philippines. He wrote about Claro M. Recto (1949),

his mentor and boss in the law firm where he worked, in which he examined Recto's brand of nationalism. After translating Rizal's boyhood memoirs and follow-up articles on the same subject, he wrote a biographical article on Marcelo H. del Pilar (1952). In 1953 he was given the opportunity to take up his interest in Philippine history, especially Filipino historical figures, when the *Manila Chronicle* agreed to let him have a column entitled "Past and Present" beginning September until December (Guerrero 1953a–i). Yet he was determined to polish his craft, which made him read John A. Garraty's seminal *The Nature of Biography* (Guerrero 1963/2003, 512). Garraty's work, which emphasized the importance of craft in writing lives, firmed up his decision to write a "real" biography, not hagiography, probably in reaction to a dominant trend in Philippine biographical writing (Fernandez 2009).⁸

Although Guerrero wrote the preface on 19 June, a rather uncertain indication that he had already finished working on it, what he wrote was only the first draft, which was submitted on the same day. One detail that he overlooked, which can also be blamed on him or the clerk who typed the first draft of part one, was to have typewritten his initials "L. Ma. G." addressed at the Philippine Embassy in London (Guerrero [Aries] 1960b). A particular judge noticed it such that, even though the archivist of the embassy attested that the real name of "Aries" was enclosed in the sealed envelope as he transmitted the five copies to the JNRCC, at the outset the entry's author was known. The biography contest committee whose members were Dean Conrado Benitez, Dr. Leoncio Lopez-Rizal, Mr. Carlos Quirino, and Dr. Eufonio M. Alip, headed by Supreme Court Justice Alex Reyes who replaced former Justice Roman Ozaeta as confirmed by a letter of Montilla to Reyes dated 27 July 1960, under the auspices of the Centennial Commission, read the manuscript or the first draft. Majority decided that the first prize be awarded to the manuscript bearing the pseudonym Aries, Guerrero's zodiac sign; however a member of the panel, Lopez-Rizal, nephew of the hero, protested strongly, listing a long register of objections as stated in Guerrero's letter to De la Costa on 8 August 1961 (Quirino 1963/2003). Thus Guerrero was compelled to reply with his clarifications sent to Lopez-Rizal, with a copy furnished to De la Costa.

The Other Contestants

There were two categories in the biography contest—in English and in the national language, Tagalog. The decision to declare "unanimously" "The

First Filipino" as the winner over other entries, four of which were written in Tagalog while the other two in English, was somewhat unclear (Quirino 1963/2003, xv). It can, however, be explained. There was no deemed winner in the Tagalog category and it was also decided that the second and third prizes for the English be declared vacant since the other entries did not meet the standard of the judges.

The reason for the twice postponement of the contest deadline as surmised in the preceding section was found to be correct, for the earliest entry with the Tagalog title, "Si Rizal ang Dangal ng Lahing Malayo" (Rizal, the Pride of the Malay Race), whose author's pseudonym was Magat Salamat, was submitted only on 17 June 1959. Paciano Rizafer Blumentritt's "Si Jose Rizal ang Ulingang Mamamayan" (Jose Rizal the Model Citizen) was received five days later. Two entries in Tagalog and two entries in English were received in June of the following year. Entries were Talang-bakero's "Talambuhay ni Dr. Jose P. Rizal: Ang Pangunahing Bayani ng Ating Lahi" (Biography of Dr. Jose Rizal: The Greatest Hero of our Race), which was later found out to be the work of local historian Antonio K. Abad; Elias Isagani's "Si Dr. Rizal, ang Lakan-Bayani ng Buong Lahi: Talambuhay" (Dr. Rizal, the Noble Hero of the Whole Race: Biography), Penitente's "Rizal, the Magnificent," and Ulnoc Otiugap's "Dr. Jose Rizal, The Father of the Philippine Nation." Isagani's work elicited comments from Lopez-Rizal ("It seems to me that the author is an Ateneista and a poet," "Literary not much as a biography," "no illustrations," "no bibliography," "no index"). On the work of Otiugap, from his introduction, an exposition of the title's import resonates with Guerrero's main thesis as can be read from the following: ". . . Dr. Jose Rizal is *the first Filipino* who conceived the idea of creating a Philippine fatherland and founding the Philippine Nation" (*italics added*).⁹

The Lopez-Rizal Annotated Copies

Dr. Leoncio Lopez-Rizal's "long list of objections" as mentioned by Guerrero in his letter to De la Costa was, in fact, the dominant factor that shaped the final form of the biography. As one of the judges, Lopez-Rizal was sent a copy of the three-part entry in two volumes and part of his job was to read the whole 618-page manuscript, which he did—annotating it, underlining some questionable passages, encircling some vague words, writing some notes in the margins, and even suggesting that some passages be deleted.¹⁰

In the 131-page part one, on page 14 of the first chapter and in subsequent pages, Lopez-Rizal encircled in red ink the word “native,” which Guerrero replaced with “Filipino” (Guerrero [Aries] 1960b). Regarding the surnames Mercado and Rizal—on which point Guerrero wrote that there was an official changing of the family name to Rizal “some years before”—this elicited a comment from the doctor who scribbled a marginal notation saying, “Not exactly changed. The fact is that the father, mother and sisters continued to use Mercado.” The critic crossed out Guerrero’s phrase, “some years before,” and suggested a replacement, “who added Rizal to the family name” (ibid., 33). At times he would point out incorrect data such as dates (7 December 1870 instead of 7 December 1871); false attributions, like a poem ascribed to Rizal but which, to Lopez-Rizal, was written by his brother Antonio; improper names (Segunda, not Segundina); Briticisms (civilisation, honour etc.); or he would raise questions on specific passages (“Does the author mean that Rizal was not sincere?”) (ibid., 39, 58, 75, 86, 224).

These objections compelled Guerrero to fine-tune some disagreeable sections, although he would stick to the most controversial, his view on Rizal’s retraction. Lopez-Rizal was to a certain extent antiretractionist as can be seen from his comments (“The family was promised to be shown the retraction but not done. The family did not ask for it. It was offered” and “In all three letters, he did not mention his retraction nor his wedding with Josephine although Rizal mentioned [it] here in the end of the letter”) (ibid., 185, 211). At this point, on 8 August 1961, Guerrero was still requesting De la Costa to send him his studies on Rizal’s trial published by the Ateneo and his recently Harvard-published history of the Jesuits, the last one, he jokingly warned his friend. “I cannot wait [for the local edition], and I am afraid that you will have to send me a duly autographed copy post haste! In fact, I’ll have your head on a silver platter if I do not get it by the next diplomatic pouch” (Guerrero 1961). In this letter he even sent an attachment with a list of seven questions, ranging from the most trivial to the most profound. One dealt with economics: “What would be the monetary value in terms of present day Philippine pesos and Spanish pesetas of the peso, peseta, *duro*, Mexican dollar and *real* in the time of Rizal? What in terms of real value or purchasing power?” Another had to do with the meaning of “Dimas Alang.”¹¹ From this period until its publication in 1963, the original manuscript underwent some minor revisions, with the addition of some new paragraphs about some unclear sections in his magnum opus. The burden of

revising the manuscript had to be carried over from London to Madrid for, in 1962, he was appointed the Philippine ambassador to Spain. He went to the extent of reading another book on biography, the very recently published *Biography as an Art: Selected Criticism, 1560–1960* (Guerrero 1963/2003, 512). Edited by James L. Clifford, the work treats biography as a literary genre and could have balanced Guerrero’s view of biography as a craft, with its treatment of biography as an art (Novarr 1986).

Not One Man’s Masterpiece

Guerrero’s Jesuit best friend was really instrumental in some significant aspects of this biographical project. As early as 3 February 1956, Guerrero told De la Costa in a letter that he would write to him regularly “for a number of reasons. One of them being that I should like to ask your advice on some points of historical research” (Guerrero 1956). Was he hinting at doing a biography of Rizal? Perhaps, because four years would pass and he opted to join the Rizal biography contest, informing De la Costa in a letter dated 26 January 1960 about his rash decision: “I am rather uncertain about the Spanish scene as well as about the Spanish viewpoint of events in the Philippines. Can you give me a bibliography? A bore, I know, but it can’t be helped. Of course, most of the works will probably be out of my reach, so you could suggest where I could find them expeditiously” (Guerrero 1960a). He also told De la Costa that he would have to employ someone to make notes for him “from the Spanish press of Rizal’s time and from the debates in the Senate and the *Cortes* on the ‘Noli’ etc.” Then, he proceeded to ask for guidance on sources. “Where, for instance, can I secure photostats of the ‘Solidaridad’ files? The ‘proceso’ of Rizal and that of Burgos? A good biography of Lopez Jaena? ‘La Senda del Sacrificio’ ‘Frailocracia’ and ‘La Soberania Monacal’? Any other suggestions?” (ibid.). Although the man of cloth was also busy attending to his religious as well as secular involvements being a professor of history at the Ateneo and a journal editor, it can never be doubted that he devoted his time sharing his expertise to a dear friend.

Guerrero sent De la Costa the third part of his work, and when it was announced that it would be awarded the first prize he asked him in a letter on 8 August 1961 to lend the complete work from UP Professor Nicolas Zafra, the head of the revision committee, “as I should very much like your opinion” in the midst of Lopez-Rizal’s objections (Guerrero 1961). Not only

this, he even attached a list of questions, to which De la Costa felt obliged to reply and send his published researches. On Guerrero's posting to Madrid, the process of revising the biography had not yet been completed. Again he would still read Retana, for he wrote De la Costa on 13 April 1962 not to "forget sending . . . the material on Retana" (Guerrero 1962).

Other than De la Costa, the people who contributed to the substance of the biography in one way or another included, as mentioned above, Lopez-Rizal who listed a number of objections to the conclusions of the first draft; and supplied some information about Fr. Pedro Casañas, the godfather who stood at Rizal's baptism, and also about a poem attributed to Rizal, which he resolutely believed was his elder brother's, Antonio (Guerrero 1963/2003, 18, 49). Director Montilla furnished Guerrero the transcript of Rizal's "Datos Para mi Defensa" (ibid., 87). Meanwhile, Mr. Pedro Ortiz Armengol supplied him the academic records of Rizal from the archives of the Academia de San Fernando (ibid., 120). Since he knew nothing about German, an acquaintance, the former Czech ambassador to London, Dr. Jiri Hajek, would furnish him translated materials on Blumentritt and Maximo Viola and Rizal's visit to Leitmeritz (ibid., 194). Navarrete, a possible employee of the embassy in Madrid, did some translations and was responsible for the endnotes, which took Guerrero "some time to realize who the 'Costa' . . . was," as he revealed to De la Costa in a letter of 27 July 1963 (Guerrero 1963). Navarrete, no doubt, was Spanish since in Spain "de" and "de la" are irrelevant to the surname. To Anita, his wife, he expressed his gratitude for her "patience and understanding" (Guerrero [Aries] 1960b, 6). His sister Carmen Guerrero Nakpil did the essential task of sending historical materials from Manila to London, while Ms. Margaret Burke, his personal assistant and secretary, typed and retyped the manuscript (ibid.).

A comparison of the first draft submitted to the JRNCC and the published edition in 1963, which can be done in a separate study, would reveal the revisions made by the author not only to accommodate the objections of Lopez-Rizal but as a matter of refining its substance. Nonetheless, one thing is sure. In the draft's introduction, Guerrero reasoned that he transcribed Rizal's poems for "it is impossible to translate poetry" but "he made a try at it for the benefit of those who do not know Spanish," placing those "in the Notes" (ibid., 6). His "poor efforts" however were nowhere to be found in the book issued by the National Heroes Commission.

Guerrero's Rizal: The Originary Filipino

Each of us has his own image of Rizal as Recto had said. In the preface to his work, Guerrero (1963/2003, xiii) stated unequivocally that his oeuvre was "not a hagiography but the story of a human being who, being human, was afflicted with 'the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to.'" "Rizal was not perfect," he declared, "he was not always right, but I trust that those who read this story of his life will perceive that his humanity is precisely the secret of his greatness" (ibid.). In the end, Guerrero quite succeeded in bringing out in Rizal the humanity in him, which had long been shrouded in myth, by letting Rizal "speak for himself" (ibid.).

Thus, he would write about Rizal's childhood using the latter's memoirs to recount with vivid prose his flirtations with girls; tell the boy's fascination with the muse; describe his close relationship with Paciano as being "more of a second father than an elder brother" or with Ferdinand Blumentritt, the Austrian professor, as "Rizal's dearest confidante and most trusted counselor," recognizing, in their exchange of letters, "the evolution of a purely intellectual friendship"; narrate his voyage outside of the Philippines and describe Rizal lucidly as "a nostalgic young man, not yet twenty-one, a medical student uncertain of his vocation, almost penniless in a new world"; depict him as "the reluctant revolutionary" for his ambivalent attitude toward independence, torn between peaceful reformist struggle and violent revolution; and create other interesting passages weaved into the biography (ibid., 31 and passim).

Consequently, he had an advantage over four earlier biographers of Rizal. Wenceslao Retana, Rizal's former adversary and a paid hack of the friars, later a prolific bibliographer of Philippine history, depicted the hero "as ever loyal to Spain" (Quirino 2003, xv). Austin Craig started canonizing Rizal and elevated him to the pantheon of saints, thus kicking off the hagiographical trend. Rafael Palma, an Ateneo alumnus and a contemporary of Rizal, was "the first to interpret correctly the feelings and aspirations of Rizal," but he was hampered by his Masonic beliefs from giving an unbiased religious account of Rizal's last days (ibid.). Carlos Quirino, biographer and historian, the precursor of Guerrero, was the first to bring down the hero from his pedestal, but failed to let Rizal speak on his own.

How did the author write such an impressive biography? "I should like to place Rizal in the context of his times and contemporaries," he wrote De la Costa on 26 January 1960 (Guerrero 1960a). This he did by using the

voluminous personal correspondences of Rizal and, in doing so, arrived at the conviction, even before the actual writing of the biography, to portray “Rizal, not as he has so often been pictured, almost alone, moving prophetically on a predestined course, but in the context of quarreling and disheartened expatriates, and an ambiguous Spanish policy” (ibid.).

In the same letter to his Jesuit friend, he asked: “What really gives Rizal the primacy?” Then, on his own, he came up with an answer:

When one comes down to it, he wrote the “Noli” and the “Fili” and contributed to the “Soli” and was shot for it, and that, it would seem, was all. It was Bonifacio who made the Revolution; Rizal condemned it after making his astonishing offer to serve the Spanish forces in Cuba as a doctor (was he afraid of being implicated in the uprising that was being prepared?). Plaridel was surely a more effective polemicist, a shrewder politician, a more savage enemy of the friars. (ibid.)

As early as January 1960, he already had a theme to begin with but still unsure as to its import. “I am toying with the idea of giving my biography the theme and the title of ‘The First Filipino.’ But how true is this? Was Rizal really the first nationalist?” (ibid.). He gave his thoughts on it. “The evidence seems to be pretty sparse and much of it is hindsight and straining between the lines. Yet it cannot be doubted that even in his lifetime and even by the Katipunan, Rizal was considered the leader of the Filipinos, or at least of the nationalists. He was not wholly American-made” (ibid.).¹²

Soon after he would maintain his almost unique thesis that Rizal was the first Filipino, not on the basis of a claim to being the first Filipino in its parochial and limited racial sense, for according to him, “it was Rizal . . . who taught his countrymen that they could be something else, Filipinos who were members of a Filipino Nation. . . . the first who sought to ‘unite the whole archipelago’ and envisioned a ‘compact and homogeneous’ society out of the old tribal communities from Batanes to the Sulu Sea . . .” (Guerrero 1963/2003, 501).

Yet, Guerrero’s *The First Filipino* was coldly received. Nick Joaquin (1965, 2) relates how it “managed to offend both Rizalists and nationalists, who punished it with silence”—but on what grounds? Guerrero (1963/2003, xiii) at the outset was aware that “some aspects of this biography will prove to be controversial.” Indeed, this was true. Both camps were unyielding to

an image of Rizal who retracted, was shot, and died a devout Catholic. One gathers this from Guerrero’s biography that the night-till-dawn hours before his execution “some prayer, perhaps the anguished cry of his mother telling her beads as in the moonlight nights in Calamba . . . moved the hand of God to touch with His finger the heart of Rizal” (ibid., 471).

From another perspective, it proved to be a vindication of the Catholic Church’s tarnished reputation as the major actor in the conspiracy to downgrade Rizal’s heroism. *The First Filipino* thus accommodated the interest of the church but still some Catholics, either clergy or lay, were very intolerant of Guerrero’s depiction of the Spanish friars. Nonetheless, at the Ateneo, a Jesuit professor recommended *The First Filipino* as the “only worthwhile biography of Rizal” in teaching the course “Rizal and the Emergence of the Filipino Nation” since he began handling the course in 1966 up to 1969 (Schumacher 2006). It was not, however, used as the basic textbook for he “concentrated more on the primary sources.” At the UP, one copy of the book in its 1963 edition found its way to the Filipiniana and Special Collections Division of the Main Library, marked as a three-day book. Somewhat overused with a lot of scribbles on the margins, it suggests there was a grain of truth to what Edilberto Alegre told Guerrero that the “*The First Filipino* is highly regarded at the UP for its insights” (Alegre and Fernandez 1984, 89).¹³

Guerrero was really convinced even before the actual writing of the biography, as he wrote to De la Costa on 26 January 1960, that “the retraction was genuine” and cared to describe Palma’s arguments as “purely emotional” (Guerrero 1960a). His perception of Rizal, at this time, “before the death-cell debate” was “obviously a deist, a rationalist in a romantic sort of way; his tolerance was born of skepticism or indifference” (ibid.). To him,

To renounce this and to return to the Church, as he [Rizal] did in his retraction, does not seem to me to have involved repudiation of his life’s work, as Palma and others argue. It was not his life’s work to “eclipse ‘in famme’ [sic] [down with infamy]. He attacked the Church and religious dogmas and rituals, (he did, of course, no matter what misguided apologists may claim) but he did so in order, as he himself said, to get at the friars. But here again, the retraction, it seems to me, did not involve a repudiation. (ibid.)

Guerrero was really interested in Rizal's religion "during the interregnum between the Ateneo sodality and the Jesuits' confession." About this time he was sure that it was "not masonry" for "it does not seem to have been very important to him." He engaged himself in a brainstorm, to provoke his friend to think as well about them: "A vague deism? A Catholicism manqué? A sort of Protestantism? Gallicanism?" Was Rizal "playing safe" or did he have "a sentimental nostalgia for the old days of innocence" such that he retracted (ibid.)?

In the final analysis, he believed Rizal was "not only his country's first nationalist but also its first Protestant" (Guerrero 1963/2003, 437). Rizal was a protestant because "he rejected not only the subordination of his people's welfare to that of strangers, but also the submission of any man's reason to the authority of another who claimed to be the unique interpreter of God's will" (ibid.). To him Rizal "was not an atheist, a materialist, or even an agnostic" (ibid.). "He believed in God" although "he was essentially a Protestant" since his stay in Dapitan until the twelve hours before the time he was about to recant (ibid.). In the case of the retraction, he gave credence to Fr. Vicente Balaguer's account; Rizal having endured his case, humbled himself and asked the "poor honest blustering" priest: "What do you want me to do? It seems that I cannot overcome my reason" (ibid., 469). After Balaguer pleaded to him to "ask God for the grace of faith," Rizal caved in, exclaiming, according to Balaguer, "The heart of man is in the hands of God" (ibid.) Thus Rizal, "a man who is about to die," upon receiving the gift of grace, signed the retraction letter, which "cancelled with a stroke of the pen the convictions of his scholarship" (ibid., 471). A resolute rationalist may understand Rizal only if, at the final moment, he himself, just like Rizal, "stands on the brink of eternity, and beating the feeble wings of human reason, wonders if they will carry him safely across" (ibid.).

To Guerrero it was not highly improbable for Rizal to retract. Relying on Quirino's discussion of retraction in the 1940 edition of *The Great Malayan*, he believed as a lawyer that the retraction letter was incriminating because it bore Rizal's own handwriting, as testified by foremost handwriting experts. He would cite that even the anti-retractionist Palma retracted on his deathbed, why not Rizal? After all, Rizal was a condemned man lingering on his mere hours to live before he would be shot. Rizal was only responding to the call of his humanity; he must contend, not with anyone, but with himself

and his own God, his fate, as he would leave behind a grieving family, his unhappy wife, and a nation yet to be born.

Still, why and how did Guerrero arrive at Rizal as the "originary Filipino"? The mark of Guerrero's originality and contemporariness is that, after less than half a century, his work is still provocative in its insights about Philippine nationalism. Rizal became the First Filipino because he spread the idea through his life and works that Pangasinenses, Tagalog, Ilokanos, Bisayas, Moros, and other "tribal" communities—still looked down upon as mere "indios," "salvajes," "piratas," and other pejorative terms—could become members of a Filipino nation, distinct and separate from Spain. This assertion, however, was the way Guerrero interpreted Rizal as Rizal suited his politics, as we shall see later, because Rizal and other ilustrados did not consider the Moros and other tribal minorities Filipinos fit for inclusion in their concept of a Filipino nation (Mojares 2002; Aguilar 2005).

Nonetheless Rizal succeeded in giving birth to this identity as reflected in the 1899 Malolos Constitution. Although Bonifacio in his writings would consciously evade the use of "Filipino" to refer to the inhabitants of the Philippines by collectively subsuming them under "Tagalog" and envisioning a sovereign Tagalog nation (Haring Bayang Katagalugan, or Sovereign Nation of Tagalogland) instead of a Filipino republic (*republica filipina*), Aguinaldo and his compatriots upon the death of Bonifacio would begin using "el pueblo Filipino" and "Filipino" to refer to the Filipino nation and its inhabitants.¹⁴ This is evident in the Spanish text of the Biak-na-bato Constitution promulgated in November 1897 in which "el pueblo filipino" was used to signify the Filipino nation and "Filipinos" to refer to the country's inhabitants. Upon the return of Aguinaldo from Hong Kong to launch the "second epoch" of the revolution, the ilustrados would rally behind the chief of the revolution. Educated in Spanish, the ilustrados would shape and mold Aguinaldo's concept of the Filipino nation. Against the advice of Apolinario Mabini who was enlisted in Aguinaldo's cabinet, Aguinaldo would proclaim Philippine independence on 12 June 1898 in Spanish with the proclamation "Acta de la proclamacion de independencia del pueblo Filipino" written by ilustrado Ambrosio Rianzares Bautista. Aguinaldo's conception of the Filipino nation is revealed in his opening addresses before the inaugural session of the Malolos Congress on 15 September 1898, when he referred to the Philippines as "pangulong bayang Filipinas" (sovereign Philippine nation) and "el pueblo filipino" (the Filipino people) in his Tagalog and Spanish

speeches, respectively (Guevara 1972, 207–9; 211–12). Felipe Buencamino, another ilustrado, wrote the Spanish text. That Aguinaldo had an inclusive view of Filipinoness is revealed in his Tagalog speech of 29 September 1898 before the ratification by the Malolos Congress of Philippine independence, when he declared the Aetas, the Igorots, the Mangyans, and the Moros to be Filipinos; hence, his brothers. Upon the election and appointment of delegates to the Malolos Congress, the deliberations on what constituted the Filipino nation and who would be identified as Filipinos in the constitution (which went against the wishes of Mabini who saw Congress to be an advisory board to the president) were left in the hands of ilustrados like Pedro Paterno, the elected president of the assembly. Although Mabini presented his own draft of a constitution, the congress overruled him and took the initiative of Felipe G. Calderon. From early October to late November 1898, the congress convened to write the constitution. It was only on 21 January 1899 that it finally reached the president for proclamation, owing to the Congress's accommodation of Mabini's objections. Thus, on 23 January, in Malolos was inaugurated the Philippine republic whose citizens were called Filipinos. Under Title IV of the Malolos Constitution entitled, "The Filipinos and their national and individual rights," article 6 had four definitions of "Filipinos"; the first stated that all persons born in Philippine territory were considered Filipinos. That in Rizal's time, from 1896 to 1899, there was no general name among the inhabitants of the Philippines was patently false (Quibuyen 1999; Anderson 2004).

Guerrero astutely observed that the various "tribes" were beginning to call themselves "Filipinos," a name they shared with Spanish, Chinese, or mestizos born in the Philippines. This newly imagined old identity, although interrupted by American imperialism, which through legal instrumentalities reduced it to "native inhabitants of the Philippines," was resurrected in the 1935 Philippine Constitution. By the 1950s, there was a continuity since 1899 in the conception of the Filipino people as an "ethnoracial unity," making the assumption that during this period there was "an immense subterranean shift" untenable (Anderson 2004, 257).¹⁵

In naming Rizal the First Filipino, besides posing a fitting binary opposite to "The Last Spaniard," the friar as the great antagonist of Rizal, Guerrero recognized the paramount stature Rizal deserved, given Aguinaldo's decree of 1898 and the 1935 Philippine Constitution's silent but symbolic affirmation of Rizal in setting the day of his martyrdom as the date of inauguration

of Philippine presidents. This last can be interpreted as the Filipino people's recognition of Rizal's death as having given birth to the Philippine nation and that every president as their representative should consecrate his service to the nation, bearing in mind Rizal's sacrifice. Furthermore, dedicating the book to "all the other Filipinos," Guerrero provided a strong ideological basis anchored on Rizal for the state's attempt to integrate all inhabitants in the Philippines into one cohesive nation. Guerrero might have known about and sought to counter Romulo's disparaging comment that Igorots were not Filipinos, and the impression that abounded in the 1950s that Moros were not Filipinos, the result of an alienating policy during the Commonwealth (Romulo 1943; Malcolm 1951; Blanchetti-Revelli 2003).

Toward this authorial motive, Guerrero underscored Rizal's Filipino-ness rather than his Malayness, as rendered in earlier Rizal biographies, to establish firmly Rizal's rootedness in the Filipino nation and to distinguish this nation from other Malay states, primarily the Federation of Malaya that would soon evolve into the Federation of Malaysia. Influenced by Ferdinand Blumentritt's ethnographic treatise, Rizal claimed Malayness for ancient Filipinos who settled in the lowlands, ancestors of civilized indios like himself but denied this claim to what he called "tribus independientes," those who lived in the mountains (Aguilar 2005). Rizal, however, rejected the idea of a pure "Malay race" because, to him, Malays were subjected to influences from the outside, revealing his own uneasiness over his own hybrid heritage (ibid.). To bring about national consciousness, this Malayness would be subordinated to a "racist" collective identity, that of Filipino; erasing the internal differences of being Pangasinense, Tagalog, Ilokano, Visayan; excluding "uncivilized" tribes; and suppressing hybridities (ibid.). In the 1930s, this claim to Malayness by the Filipino elite would translate into a resurrection of a mythic empire of "Malaysia" (Salazar 1998). The projection of Rizal as Malayan starting in 1940, or even earlier, and thereafter catered to the interest of the Filipino elite to assume a greater role in Southeast Asia. Inspired by Wenceslao Q. Vinzon's vision of a pan-Malayan Union, Quezon in exile thought of a Malayan Confederation out of the debris of the war, with him as the first president (Agoncillo 1965). Guerrero's emphasis on Rizal's Filipinoness struck a familiar chord with Cesar Adib Majul's (1957, 80) belief that Filipinos' Malay consciousness "became lesser with the development of nationalism . . . [and] a central government recognized as distinctly 'Filipino.'" But this Malay obsession, which resulted in a full-blown diplomatic

disaster upon the instigation of Maphilindo, whose real motive was to prevent Sabah from being incorporated to Malaysia (Leifer 1968), showed the prescience of Guerrero's political trajectory; that before assuming a major posture in international affairs, it was better to look after one's own backyard rather than eyeing another territory. This miscalculation led to the failure of the national state from the Commonwealth to the early 1960s to integrate Muslims and other non-Christian "tribes" to the Philippine body-politic, a condition that would escalate in the decades that followed.

Nevertheless, circumstantial as it may seem at first, Guerrero's *The First Filipino* was a characteristic inversion of a nationalist policy, Garcia's Filipino First, which was promulgated in August 1958, less than two years before Guerrero conceptualized the title to his biography, proving once again that any biography, as any history, is a child of its times.

Conclusion

What one can draw from this study is that an examination of the making of Guerrero as Rizal's biographer has to be situated in the context of his times. Guerrero underwent a relatively long process of transformation from a print journalist of the *Philippines Free Press* to a serious writer, a biographer in fact, while he was a busy diplomat as Philippine ambassador to the Court of Saint James and later to Madrid. One should always take note of his Ateneo background, which is both a pro and a con. He understood Rizal's Ateneo background better than anybody else except Palma, but his Catholic background either encumbered or assisted him to present an impartial account of the hero's retraction. However, although he took an unpopular perspective on this issue, as Ambeth Ocampo puts it, "taking one side—rightly or wrongly—is better . . . than being safe and a fence-sitter" (Guerrero 1963/2003, ix). More crucial than this contentious aspect of his biography was his articulation of Rizal as the first Filipino, a truly original concept in contrast to Quirino's Rizal as "the great Malayan" or Palma's Rizal as the "pride of the Malay race" in Roman Ozaeta's English translation. By asserting Rizal's Filipinoness instead of Malayness, Guerrero revised the exclusionary politics of the ilustrado concept of the nation to be more inclusive by enabling the Moros and other "tribal" groups to participate in the incomplete and unfinished project of nationhood.

Since their first publication in the early 1960s, Guerrero's translations and biography had become canonical in Rizal studies. Guerrero's transla-

tions had become standard texts since their publication; only recently were they discredited and forced to compete for readers with the release of Soledad Locsin's (1996, 1997) translations. Although Austin Coates (1968), Jose Baron Fernandez (1980), and Nick Joaquin (1996) had written biographies of Rizal, no biography had commanded both respect and condemnation except Guerrero's *The First Filipino*.

As hinted at earlier, Guerrero's texts, especially his translations, might have inspired an activist rereading of Rizal. The Macapagal presidency spelled the doom for the gains of the Filipino First policy under Garcia, contributing to the realignment and radicalization of the Left and other progressive forces in labor, peasant, and student sectors that continued during the first term of Ferdinand E. Marcos. The academe was never insulated from this nationalist ferment; in 1968 a collection of essays under the title *Rizal: Contrary Essays* was published in which one essay by the soon-to-be founding chairman of the new Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) saw Rizal as "subversive" (Daroy and Feria 1968). Incidentally, Guerrero's American edition of the *Fili* was retitled *The Subversive*. This resignification of Rizal as the embodiment of "subversion" (the English title of the *Fili* published by Longmans in 1965) would have appealed to student activists who would lead in rallies and demonstrations all over the country (Sison 1967). This activism would reach its height in the First Quarter Storm in the early 1970s when students from major universities in Manila rose up in protest of the menacing danger of dictatorship under Marcos and barricaded the UP grounds in a so-called Diliman commune (Lacaba 1982).

In 1980, looking back after many years, Guerrero expressed his dismay over what he perceived to be an anomalous deal with the National Heroes Commission, to which, after he won the first prize with an award of P10,000, he surrendered the copyright, and which then published his biography in 1963, followed by several reprints soon after. Guerrero exclaimed, "after the first prize of P10000, I haven't received a red cent after that" (Alegre and Fernandez 1984, 80).

What has been presented in this article is only a small part of León Maria Guerrero's story. To understand Guerrero's Rizal, one must also understand Guerrero. To understand Guerrero, one must write his biography. Toward this end, a biography is in order.

Notes

An early version of this article was presented at the “National Conference on Rizal Law: RA 1425 after Fifty Years” held on 19–21 June 2006 at Pulungang Claro M. Recto, Bulwagang Rizal, University of the Philippines, Quezon City. I gratefully acknowledge the helpful suggestions and encouragement of Fr. John N. Schumacher, S.J., Dr. Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr., and the anonymous reader in the preparation of the manuscript. I also appreciate the assistance of Ms. Glenda Oris, a classmate in two of my graduate courses, for facilitating access to one of the recent works I consulted for this article and to the librarians of the UP Main Library, especially Mrs. Ma. Wilma S. Azarcon. Permission for the use of photos from the Ateneo Aegis of 1931 and 1935 granted by the Ateneo de Manila University Archives is gratefully acknowledged.

- 1 Fr. John N. Schumacher, S.J., relates to me an anecdote told to him by Fr. John Hurley about Fr. Francisco de Paula Sanchez, Rizal’s favorite professor, who spent his last years at the Ateneo and died in 1928. Fr. Sanchez used to speak to young boys telling them “Que seas bueno como nuestro Pepe Rizal” (Good you are, like our Pepe Rizal). I agree with him that it is possible that one of these boys was no other than Guerrero, who was in his preparatory studies at the Ateneo.
 - 2 Excerpts of Guerrero’s translation of Rizal’s memoirs were subsequently anthologized in *Philippine Prose and Poetry*, vol. 1 (1960) and *Philippine Prose and Poetry*, vol. 3 (1961).
 - 3 The letters of Guerrero to De la Costa are held at the Ateneo de Manila University Archives.
 - 4 Between 1956 and 1959, there were five major publishing houses, which republished Rizal’s novels either in their original version or unabridged English translation. The Philippine Education Company reprinted Charles Derbyshire’s translations, *The Social Cancer* (1956a) for the *Noli* and the *Reign of Greed* (1956b) for the *Fili*. Camilo Osias wrote his English translations of the *Noli* (1956c) for the Asia Foundation for Cultural Advancement and *Fili* (1957a) for the Capitol Publishing. The Capitol Publishing even put out in Tagalog the *Noli* with illustrations (1956e). For his part, Jorge Bocobo made his translations of Rizal’s novels (1956c; 1957b) for R. Martinez and Sons. The latter publisher, however, was not content with publishing these for it reprinted Rizal’s novels in their original texts as “homenaje al heroe nacional Dr. José Rizal por el primer centenario de su natalicio” (1956d; 1958c) and even commissioned Tagalog translations of the same (1958b). The José Rizal National Centennial Commission, meanwhile, made public offset reproductions of the original manuscripts of the two novels (1957c; 1957d). Manlapaz Publishing joined the scene by bringing out Tagalog translations of the novels (1957e; 1958b).
- Other companies ventured into issuing other stuff on Rizal. One published Rizal’s poems (1956i). Another went into publishing some selected works of Rizal beside the novels (1959). Bookman, for instance, put out *Rizal’s Unknown Writings* (1957f) and *Rizal’s Unread Legacy* (1957g). Abiva issued Consuelo C. Banag’s *Playlets on Rizal and Selected Poems* (1956) and a Tagalog version (1958) of Zoilo M. Galang’s *For Dreams Must Die*, which recounted the love story between Rizal and Leonor Rivera. Francisco Villanueva (1958) published his *How Rizal Wrote the “Noli me Tangere” and “El Filibusterismo”* while Joaquin Lim Jaramillo (1957) made public his *Lecturas del “Noli”* for the Alex Book Supply. Some minor publishing companies also began issuing their Tagalog translations of the *Noli* and *Fili* (Rizal 1956g, 1956h; 1958). One must not forget Gregorio Zaide (1957) who published his biography of Rizal.
- 5 I would like to thank Father Schumacher for pointing out the criticism on the use of the southern U.S. dialect in Guerrero’s translation of Doña Consolacion’s broken Spanish.

- 6 Guerrero’s translations of the *Noli* and *Fili*, retitled as *The Lost Eden* and *The Subversive* respectively, were published in the United States in 1961 and 1962 by the Indiana University Press.
- 7 Mimeographed memoranda, as the bulk of the José Rizal National Centennial Commission Papers were consulted at the National Historical Institute. Many thanks to Prof. Ambeth Ocampo, chairman of the National Historical Institute, and Deputy Executive Director Emelita V. Almosara for facilitating my access to these documents.
- 8 Savory’s (1957), Garraty’s (1958), including Clifford’s (1962), were released in London while Guerrero was the ambassador to that capital. He must have been the first among Filipino practitioners of translation and biography to have read them. The UP Main Library has Savory’s 1968 edition in its catalogue while the Ateneo de Manila University’s Rizal Library has Savory’s other publication, *The Language of Science* (1967). Savory’s had become canonical in translation studies, although Susan Bassnett (2002, 147) describes its discussion to be “on a very unsystematic level” approaching “translation studies from the viewpoint of traditional liberal humanism.” In the 1950s, Garraty’s work was contrasted with Leon Edel’s *Literary Biography* (1957); both had become canonical too. Garraty underscores the importance of craft in biography, while Edel considers biography as an art (Novarr 1986). The UP Main Library has a copy of each in their original edition, while the Ateneo de Manila University’s Rizal Library has none.
- 9 All the manuscript copies of the seven entries, including Guerrero’s, were consulted at the Lopez-Bantug Collection, De la Salle University Library, Manila.
- 10 I am grateful again to Professor Ocampo for suggesting that I should go to the De La Salle University Library in Manila, which I did. I looked into the Lopez-Bantug Collection and got hold of the two-volume typewritten copies of “The First Filipino” by Aries, Guerrero’s pseudonym, with Lopez-Rizal’s own marginal notes on what to him were of doubtful, questionable assumptions. At first I was looking for some sort of a document listing from top to bottom all the objections from the work, but I am optimistic that the so-called list actually referred to the notes written within the pages of the two volumes.
- 11 The other major questions were: “What was the real cause of the Cavite revolt?”; “What was the real reason why Burgos, Gomez and Zamora were not unfrocked?”; “Was the Archbishop of Manila actually in Manila at the time of the execution? Did he personally prepare or authorize the issuance of the pastoral letter condemning the three priests?”; “What exactly was the relation between the Albertos (particularly Jose Alberto), the Alonsos and the Realondas?”; and “What is the origin of the ‘Story of my Life’ attributed to Josephine Bracken in ‘100 Letters of Rizal,’ Appendix?”
- 12 The last remark was perhaps made in reaction to Renato Constantino’s provocative and much-disputed essay “Veneration without Understanding” in *Dissent and Counter Consciousness* (1970). However, because the essay was first delivered as “Third National Rizal Lecture” on 30 December 1968, it is inaccurate and misleading to ascribe it to Constantino.
- 13 Thanks to Prof. Floro C. Quibuyen, formerly of the UP Asian Center, for pointing out this angle on the Catholic Church’s accommodation to Guerrero’s *The First Filipino*. At present, the UP Main Library has more or less eighteen copies of Guerrero’s *The First Filipino* in its various editions starting in 1963.
- 14 Please see Bonifacio’s “Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog” circa March 1896 and his “Mararahas na manga Anak ng Bayan” circa March 1897 in Jim Richardson’s fascinating website, <http://kasaysayan-kkk.info/>.

15 As a young boy, Guerrero, although born in 1915 when Americanization had started influencing the Filipino Hispanic elite, was brought up as a Filipino. Carmen Guerrero Nakpil (2006) shares the anecdote that inside the Guerrero compound in Ermita she would observe her elder brothers, Leoni and Mario, horseplaying, playing around, tackling each, and other ending in lumps and bruises; they would stop when a spinster aunt would rush in and shout: “Valientes Filipinos.”

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