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## Forms of Consciousness in *Noli me tangere*

Benedict R. O'Gorman Anderson

*This article is based on a quantitative analysis of the deployment of key racial, ethnic, and political terms, as well as of Tagalog, in José Rizal's Noli me tangere. Special focus is on the peculiar distribution of the use of these terms by the novel's characters, and by the Narrator. The analysis highlights and attempts to explain: (1) the complete absence of "Chinese mestizos" and Manila's huge Ilokano servant class in the novel; (2) why the main deployer of Tagalog is the Narrator, while the hero Elias never uses it; and (3) why the ambiguities surrounding the term "filipino" can only be explained by juxtaposing different cultural practices in the colony and in metropolitan Spain.*

KEYWORDS: Rizal, race, Filipino, Chinese, nationalism

For some years now I have been struck by some odd features in much of the critical literature on José Rizal's two extraordinary novels. For example, it is quite surprising that so few people have considered seriously the identity of the author's intended audience(s). Even fewer have looked carefully at how the complexities of race and ethnicity are played out in their pages.<sup>1</sup> There has also been a common tendency to quote phrases or passages as directly expressing Rizal's often contradictory opinions, as if the novels were really political-ethical treatises, without paying careful attention to the distribution of key terms—which characters use the terms, how often, and to which interlocutors. I should add immediately that I in no way exempt myself from the above criticisms.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, it seemed a good idea to attempt a systematic, quantified study of significant elements of vocabulary, style, and

context in both novels, treating them above all as novels. The present article is devoted to the *Noli*, while a second one, on the *Fili*, is in preparation.

The following analysis is divided into two distinct, but related, parts. The first considers the words used in *Noli me tangere* to refer to (a) “racial” groups, and (b) political concepts; the second explores the usage of words or phrases in Tagalog.

## Part 1

Category A (“racial” groups) includes the nouns *peninsular(es)* and the adjective *peninsular*; the nouns *criollo(s)* and *criolla*; the nouns *mestizo(s)*, *mestiza*, and *mesticillo(s)*; the nouns *sangle(s)* and *chino(s)*, and the adjective *chino*; as well as the nouns *indio(s)* and *naturales*, and the adjective *india*; the noun *moros*, the noun and the adjective *bisaya*; and the noun *tribus*. Category B (political concepts) includes the nouns *nacion(es)*, *nacional(es)*, and *nacionalidad(es)* as well as the adjective *nacional*; the noun *español(es)* and the adjective *español(a)*; the nouns *Filipinas* and *filipino(s)*, and the adjective *filipino/a*; *patria* as both noun and adjective; and, most complex of all, *pueblo*.

### Category A: Spanish-Colonial Racial Strata

Peninsular, as noun or adjective, crops up only four times in the novel, twice in the mouth of the elderly (and peninsular) Teniente, and twice in the commentary of the Narrator (the peculiarity of whose voice I will discuss in the second part of this essay). The use of *mestizo* and its variants is almost as rare.

*Mestizo(s)* occurs four times only, mostly qualified by the adjective *español(es)*. (No mention is ever made of the big late-colonial stratum of *mestizos chinos*. But the fact that *mestizos* cannot stand alone, but needs the adjective *españoles*, underlines the absence of a second type of *mestizo*. Possible explanations of this lacuna will be discussed later on.) Three of these mentions come from the Narrator, one from a panicked anonymous voice in the crowd as rumors of Ibarra’s “conspiracy” spread in San Diego. *Mestiza* occurs just twice, in the voice of the Narrator paraphrasing the thinking of Don Tiburcio. The contemp-

tuous form *mesticillos* also occurs only twice, both in the mouth of Father Dámaso.

*Criollos* is used once, by an unnamed friar, while *criolla* also occurs just once, in the commentary of the Narrator. We will find the evidently obsolescent *sangleyes* only once, again used by the Narrator.

If these are all rarities, *chino(s)* as a noun, shows up 35 times, and its use is distributed very widely: by the Narrator 18 times; *el filósofo* Tasio 5 times; anonymous voices 4 times; the gravedigger 2 times; anonymous pious women 2 times; the satirized *Diario* of Manila 2 times; and Capitan Basilio and Iday 1 apiece. *Chino* as an adjective is used 3 times by Tasio, and 1 time by the Narrator.

The noun *indio(s)* is the most frequently used "racial" term, and its distribution is also the widest. Of 43 mentions, 13 are by Father Dámaso; 7 by the Narrator; 5 by an unnamed friar; 4 by Doña Victorina; 3 by Elias; 3 by the *Diario* in Manila; and 1 each by the Teniente, Tasio, Ibarra, the Alferez, the Provincial, an unnamed youth, an anonymous peasant, and an unspecified voice in a crowd. *India*, as an adjective, is used once only—by Doña Consolación. The noun *naturales* occurs 5 times, distributed between the Narrator (3), Don Filipo (1) and the *Diario* of Manila (1).

*Moros* are mentioned only 3 times, and only by the Narrator; the word does not refer to the Muslim populations of the southern Philippines, but merely to "Moors" in the *moro-moro* play put on by local Catholics for the fiesta in San Diego. *Bisaya* is used 4 times as a noun, and once as an adjective, in chapter 52 ("La Carta de los Muertos y Las Sombras"), of a lowly member of the Guardia Civil searching for Elias.<sup>3</sup> A very striking absence is any reference to Ilokano migrants to Manila, who formed a large part of the class of domestic servants, coachmen, workers, and artisans. Rizal himself was perfectly aware of this fact. In a letter to Blumentritt from Berlin, dated 21 March 1887, just a month after he finished *Noli me tangere*, he commented with characteristic Tagalog and *ilustrado* hauteur:

Das tagalische Stück von Riedel, lässt mich glauben, dass der Mann der es ihn dictiert hat, kein Tagalo ist, sondern ein Ilocaner; so sprechen die Ilocaner tagalisch. Es ist noch möglicher, da die Dienstleute in Manila fast alle Ilocaner sind.

Riedel's Tagalog piece makes me believe that the man who dictated it to him was no Tagalog, but an Ilocano; such is the way Ilocanos speak Tagalog. This is all the more probable in that in Manila almost all the servants are Ilocanos.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps this is why name-identified servants do not appear in the novel! But in general the novel ignores the huge ethnolinguistic diversity of even the Catholic Philippines. As for the Cordillera, Elias speaks once of finding refuge among the *tribus infieles é independientes*.<sup>5</sup> What is immediately eye-catching is that the only "person" who uses almost all the terms above is the uneasy Narrator.

We can view the above data synoptically by putting them in tabular form, as follows:

Table 1. The mention of "racial" terms in *Noli me tangere*

	Total frequency of mention	Narrator's use of term	No. of characters that use term
Peninsular(es)	4	2	1
Mestizo(s)	4	3	1
Mestiza	2	2	—
Mesticillos	2	—	1
Criollos	1	—	1
Criolla	1	1	—
Sangley(es)	1	1	—
Chino(s)	35	18	7
Chino (adj.)	4	1	1
Indio(s)	44	7	14
India (adj)	1	—	1
Naturales	5	3	2
Bisaya (n., adj.)	5	5	—
Tribus	1	—	1
Ilokano(s)	0	—	—

It is necessary to note that these categories are usually unambiguous. The one possible exception is chino, all the more so in that, as noted above, the novel never speaks of Chinese mestizos as such. But there are many strong contextual indications that chino typically refers to recent, culturally unassimilated immigrants from China. It is, for example, striking that Tasio affectionately refers to his own mother as belonging

to the category chino, but no one, including el filósofo himself, refers to him as a Chinese mestizo.<sup>6</sup> Beyond that, one can speculate that the rarity of reference to traditional Iberian-colonial "graded" racial stratification—twenty-five mentions (if we leave chinos and indios aside) spread over 354 pages—indicates that Rizal was already in the process of transcending it.

### Category B: The Political

If the terms used in category A are clear-cut, the opposite is almost always the case with those we will look at in B.

One might think, for example, that the noun/adjective español had an obvious and unambiguous connotation. But what I have found is the following: Of the 55 mentions of the noun, 18 very clearly refer to people born in Spain; 3 equally clearly refer to such people plus local Spanish creoles and mestizos; and 34 cannot be determined exactly.

The distributions look like this. Of the 18 mentions of español in the first group, 9 come from the Narrator; 2 from the Teniente; 2 from the Capitan-General; and one each from Father Dámaso, an unnamed doctor, an unnamed friar, and an anonymous peasant. Of the three in the second group, two come from the *Diario* in Manila, and one from the Narrator. The spread of the remaining 34 is Narrator 12; the *Diario* 9; the gravedigger 4; the Teniente 2; Father Salvi 2; and 1 time each for the Alcalde, Capitan Tiago, the Capitan-General, Elias, and the gravedigger's unnamed friend.

Since the Narrator shows up in each group, and he is usually regarded as Rizal's mouthpiece, it may be helpful to give an example of each usage from his commentary. In the opening chapter, describing the elite party guests at Capitan Tiago's house, the Narrator describes the girls present as *unas cuantas jóvenes entre filipinas y españolas* [A few young ladies, a mixture of creoles and peninsulars].<sup>7</sup> But later on, the same Narrator notes that, for Maria Clara's wedding,

ahora sus invitados son únicamente españoles y chinos; el bello sexo está representado por españoles peninsulares y filipinas.

This time his guests were restricted to Spaniards and Chinese, the fair sex being represented by peninsulars and creoles (and perhaps mestizas).<sup>8</sup>

The second quotation refers to two kinds of *españoles*, those from the Peninsula, i.e., full Spaniards, and those who are (adjective) *filipinas*, i.e., plainly *criollas*, and perhaps also *mestizas*. Creoles are thus one kind of Spaniard. This quotation explains the first: Here *españolas* are peninsular girls, while *filipinas* are local *criollas* and perhaps *mestizas*, but they are here *not* included among the Spaniards. No question of any *indios*, in any case. Finally, when in chapter 29 ("La Mañana") the Narrator speaks of *el Alcalde, Cpn. Tiago, Maria Clara, Ibarra, varios españoles y señoritas* [The Alcalde, Capitan Tiago, Maria Clara, Ibarra, and various male Spaniards and young ladies], readers cannot be sure what kinds of people these *españoles* are—except that they are male.<sup>9</sup>

The difficulties are comparable when it comes to the variations on *Filipinas*, *filipino*, and *filipina*.

The place *Filipinas* itself might seem unambiguous. *Filipinas* is mentioned 49 times, and with a quite wide distribution. The Narrator uses it 19 times; Ibarra 10; Tasio 6; the Alferez 4; Elias and the Teniente twice each; and the Alcalde, the Capitan-General, the schoolteacher, an anonymous friar, and the mothers at the lakeside picnic each once. But it is not in fact clear if it is always used to include the region of the Moros, or even the region of Elias's *tribus infieles é independientes*. Nonetheless, it is significant, as I shall argue below, that if we exclude the peninsular Alcalde, Alferez, Teniente, Capitan-General, and friar (9 cases), of the remaining 40 mentions, fully 38 are confined to the small "politically conscious group" of the Narrator, Ibarra, Tasio, and Elias.

The noun *filipino(s)* is much rarer. It occurs a total of 21 times, distributed between the Narrator (18), the Capitan-General (1), Ibarra (1), and an unnamed journalist (1). The same pattern is evidenced in the use of *filipino/a* as an adjective, sometimes attached to people, but just as often to physical objects. Out of the 12 occurrences, 7 come from the Narrator, 4 from the satirized procolonial *Diario* in Manila, and 1 from the Teniente. The obverse of this distribution is just as striking. The novel's first hero uses the terms only once, the second hero Elias never, and the wise mentor of the two, Tasio, not at all. When Elias describes himself, what he says is *soy un indio* [I am an indio], not *soy un filipino*.<sup>10</sup> It is also necessary to underline that certainly in the case of the *Diario*, and at least in some instances (as cited above) of the Narrator,

filipino clearly means criollo and/or mestizo. This in turn means that in the novel's 354 pages, the use of *filipino* to mean something not confined to creoles and mestizos occurs only about fourteen times, and never from the mouths of either Elias or Tasio. If, as some have argued, the use of *filipino* in the modern national sense was already normal at the time of *Noli me tangere*'s publication, this whole pattern becomes completely incomprehensible.

We can consider synoptically the information provided above by representing it in the same tabular form offered for the hierarchy of legal-racial groups:

Table 2. The mention of "Spanish" and "Filipino" terms in *Noli me tangere*

	Total frequency of mention	Narrator's use of term	No. of characters that use term
Español(es) (Iberian)	18	9	6
Español(es) (+ criollos)	3	1	1
Español(es) (vague)	34	12	9
Filipinas (place)	49	19	10
filipino(s) (n.)	21	18	3
filipino/a (adj.)	12	7	2

Next, we turn to a group of words which usually, or sometimes, are political. In the *Noli*, by comparison with the *Fili*, the variety is very small: the nouns *nacion(es)*, *nacional(es)*, and *nacionalidad(es)*, with the adjective *nacional*, as well as *patria* and *pueblo*. Of these the last two are overwhelmingly the most important, the most frequently used, and the most ambiguous.

In considering the various Spanish terms based on the Latin root *natio*, the most jarring presence in *Noli me tangere* is an absence: the words *nacionalismo* and *nacionalista* occur nowhere in the text. *Naciones* occurs 7 times, used 4 times by Ibarra, and 1 time each by the Narrator, Elias, and Tasio. *Nacionalidades* occurs just twice, used once by the Narrator and once by Elias. The noun *nacionales* is used once, by Ibarra, while the adjective *nacional* appears just twice, once in the mouth of Ibarra and once in that of Elias. Before turning to what appears to be meant by these terms, I would like to underscore that,



of the innumerable actors in the drama of *Noli me tangere*, only Ibarra and Elias use any version of a natio-based word, and then *only* 9 times.

The meaning of *nacion(es)* most frequently corresponds to the now obsolete meaning of "nation" that we find in the King James Bible, and was still predominant when Adam Smith wrote his great work *The Wealth of Nations*: in effect, a word with a broad and vague semantic range covering "people," "country," even "ethnic group." For example, in chapter 46 ("La Gallera") the Narrator comments transhistorically on the analogies between cockfight aficionados and *naciones*:

Tal sucede entre las naciones; una pequeña que consigue alcanzar una victoria sobre otra grande, la canta y la cuenta por siglos de los siglos.

So it is with nations. A small nation which wins a victory over a large one, sings of it and recounts it for century after century.<sup>11</sup>

Tasio uses the word in the same way in chapter 32 ("La Cabria").<sup>12</sup> Sometimes the meaning seems closer to the modern meaning of nation as shorthand for nation-state. In chapter 8 ("Recuerdos"), for example, Ibarra contrasts *Europa con sus hermosas naciones agitándose continuamente, buscando la felicidad . . .* [Europe with her beautiful nations in constant agitation, searching for happiness . . .] with the *naciones espirituales* of the Orient.<sup>13</sup> As for Elias, he seems to use the word the same way in chapter 49 ("La Voz de los Perseguidos"), when he speaks to Ibarra of Spain's European neighbors.<sup>14</sup> The word is *never* used in the novel to refer directly to the Philippines.

Next: the one use of *nacional(es)* as a noun comes in chapter 7 ("Idilio en Una Azotea") where Ibarra, talking to Maria Clara about Europe, makes it mean a member or members of a *nación*.<sup>15</sup> Its adjectival form is used by Ibarra to speak in chapter 3 ("La Cena") of the *orgullo nacional* [national pride/arrogance] of different European countries, and by Elias in chapter 49 to speak to Ibarra of the Arabs, who gave Spain

cultura, ha sido tolerante con su religion, y ha despertado su amor propio nacional, aletargado, destruido casi durante la dominación romana y goda.

culture, were tolerant of her religion, and awakened her personal national pride, dormant and almost destroyed under Roman and Visigothic dominion.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, in chapter 4 ("Hereje y Filibustero") the Narrator uses nacionalidades to describe the different ethnic-racial groups crisscrossing the streets of Manila; by contrast Elías uses the word, once, in a quite modern sense, and in direct relationship with the Philippines, when he claims that for "us" Catholicism is too costly (*cara*) *pues por ella hemos renunciado á nuestra nacionalidad, á nuestra independencia* [because in exchange we have given up our own nationality, our independence].<sup>17</sup>

I conclude this section of the essay with a consideration of two words that crop up in dozens of places in the *Noli*, but with various, quite different, meanings, to which we should pay careful attention, namely, pueblo and patria. These words are notoriously difficult to render stably in English. Pueblo can refer to a place of small-scale human habitation, something like "town," to the human beings residing in that place (perhaps "townspeople"), and also to both at once; it can be used for much larger units like "countries," "lands" (Switzer-land, Ireland), and the "peoples" living in these lands or countries. It can also denote "nation" and "the common people." Patria has a comparably wide semantic range—from home-town, to native-land, to mother-country. It is also used quite often in a general sense, so that a speaker can talk of other peoples' "motherlands," not merely his or her own.

In *Noli me tangere*, the noun patria appears with three reference points. The first of these is quite general. For example, in chapter 25 ("En Casa del Filósofo"), Ibarra says to Tasio that *todo hombre debe amar su patria* [Every man ought to love his home-country].<sup>18</sup> I have noted 6 cases of this generalized sense, 3 coming from Ibarra, and 1 each from the Narrator, Tasio, and Elías. The second refers to Spain, and is indicated in 5 places, 3 in remarks by Ibarra, and 1 each by the Teniente and an unnamed friar. The Ibarra cases include the famous sentence in chapter 3 ("La Cena") where the young mestizo speaks of *España, mi segunda patria* [Spain, my second home-country].<sup>19</sup> He is addressing the party guests, so that he may be being tactical-political rather than sincere. The third reference point is Filipinas, and there are 12 instances of this

usage in the novel, divided between Ibarra (7) and Elias (5). It is also remarkable that the Narrator *never* refers to the Filipinas as his patria. There is one instance where patria appears in quasi-adjectival form in the phrase *historia patria* (Ibarra) with the clear general meaning of “belonging to the motherland.”<sup>20</sup>

In table form these instances can be figured as follows:

Table 3. The mention of “Patria” in its various senses in *Noli me tangere*

	Total frequency of mention	Narrator's use of term	No. of characters that use term
Patria (general)	6	1	3
Patria (Spain)	5	—	3
Patria (Filipinas)	12	—	2
Patria (adjective)	1	—	1

On the other hand, pueblo occurs far more often, with more different meanings, and over a wider range of voices. First of all, there are at least 32 places where the reference is to some usually unnamed township(s) in the Philippines, by implication mostly in the area around San Diego or near Manila. For example, in chapter 50 (“La Familia de Elias”), the hero, describing his early youth, tells Ibarra privately that he *huyó de pueblo en pueblo* [fled from town to town].<sup>21</sup> The distribution of this meaning is wide: Elias 14 instances; Father Dámaso 4; the Alcalde 3; Tasio, Ibarra, Father Sibyla, Capitan Pablo, and the Teniente 2 each; and the Narrator 1.

Then there are 53 places where the word refers explicitly or by direct implication to the physical township San Diego, perhaps also its townspeople. Again a wide distribution: the Narrator 22; Ibarra 7; the *Diario* of Manila and Don Filipino 4 each; Father Sibyla, the schoolmaster, and an unnamed old peasant 3 each; and Capitan Tiago, Elias, Hermana Rufa, Sisa, the *gobernadorcillo*, a young local politician, and an anonymous woman 1 apiece. There are a further 5 cases where it is the people of San Diego, rather than the place that is referred to: 4 uttered by the Narrator, and 1 by the cook of the Alférez.

We find pueblo connoting a “people” in general, comparative terms in 10 instances. For example, in chapter 9 (“Cosas del País”), the

Capitan-General reflects that *cado pueblo merece su suerte* [every people deserves its fate].<sup>22</sup> The distribution is Elias and Ibarra 3 each; Tasio 2; and the Capitan-General and Laruja 1 apiece.

Finally, there are 21 instances where pueblo pretty clearly means the people of Filipinas. Those who use the word in this sense are Elias (8 times); Ibarra (6); Tasio (5); the Narrator (1); and the Capitan-General (1). In chapter 49 ("La Voz de Los Perseguidos"), for example, Elias says to Ibarra: *En nuestro país, como no hay sociedad, pues no forman una unidad el pueblo y el gobierno* [In our country, as there is no society, the people and the government do not form a unity].<sup>23</sup> Finally there are 4 instances, all in the discussion between Elias and Old Pablo in chapter 45 ("Los Perseguidos"), when the meaning of pueblo is ambiguous—i.e., it could refer to a township or to the people of Filipinas.

In tabular form, we get the following picture:

Table 4. The mention of "Pueblo" in its various senses in *Noli me tangere*

	Total frequency of mention	Narrator's use of term	No. of characters that use term
Townships in Filipinas	32	1	8
Township of San Diego	55	22	13
People of San Diego	5	4	1
Peoples in general	10	—	5
People of Filipinas	21	1	4
People (unclear)	4	—	2

These figures show us some important features of *Noli me tangere* and of the society it describes. We can see that patria is used in several senses by different characters, so that it is quite misleading for anyone to claim that it only means one, very nationalistic thing. In fact, it is used with reference to the Philippines in only half the instances, and the number of people who use it this way are only two—Ibarra and Elias; furthermore, both of them use the same word on occasion to mean something not-the-Philippines. In the case of pueblo, almost 75 percent of the time the word is used either for San Diego or for townships near it and around Manila. In only 17 percent of the cases does it refer to the people of the Philippines, and if we exclude the

rather sympathetic Iberian Capitan-General, the users are only Ibarra, Elias, Tasio, and the Narrator.

If we combine this analysis with the fact that no one beyond the Narrator uses the noun *filipino* more than once to refer to what today we could call the Filipino people, it seems indisputable that, at least in the time of *Noli me tangere* (1887), there was no “generally used” term—in the Philippines (Spain is another matter, as we shall see)—covering all the people of the archipelago. It is also absolutely clear that the only persons in *Noli me tangere*, other than a few peninsular Spaniards, who use a clearly nationalist vocabulary are the three main heroes, Ibarra, Elias, and Tasio, while the single biggest user is the Narrator. This indicates that any widespread “Filipino nationalist consciousness” in the modern sense had not as yet come into existence. Nothing shows this more clearly than the fact that Elias refers to himself as an *indio*, not as a *filipino*.

## Part 2

It is now time to turn to the interesting question of how Tagalog is used in *Noli me tangere*. If we set aside a few lines of Balagtas and a fragment of a children’s song sung by Crispin (neither of which are translated into Spanish) we can count approximately 127 Tagalog words, mostly nouns, which are introduced into the Spanish sentences of the novel. I say “approximately,” because I am referring to words said explicitly to be Tagalog, and usually italicized. There are a number of unitalicized words, unmarked because they had become Hispanized in the Philippine version of Spanish, while there are also italicized words in which the Tagalog clearly originates from Spanish, for example, *saragate* from *zaragate*. Formally, the distribution of these Tagalog words looks like this: Exactly half (63) come from the Narrator, followed by 12 in anonymous voices, 7 for Ibarra; 6 for Father Dámaso and for Ñor Juan; 5 for Tia Isabel; 3 each for Tasio, La Consolación, an unnamed peasant, and some anonymous soldiers; 2 each for Hermana Rufa and an unnamed child; and 1 apiece for the Teniente, Crispin, Sinang, Doña Victorina, Tarsilo, Iday, Don Basilio, Petra, Tasio, a guard, a “newcomer,” a friar, and an anonymous pious woman.

Twenty-three characters in all, aside from the Narrator, use Tagalog words. At first sight this is an astonishing distribution, across the whole social gamut from peninsulars to the poorest, purest indio. But the distribution is even more surprising when we notice that the indio Elias *never* uses a single word of Tagalog.

In the paragraph above, I was careful to emphasize the word "formally." For one could say that the high figures for Ibarra, Ñor Juan, and Tia Isabel are a mite misleading. Ñor Juan's Tagalog words all come in one paragraph, and are simply a list of the Philippine hardwoods he uses in his work. Tia Isabel's Tagalog also comes from one paragraph where she lists a set of edible freshwater fish. Likewise, Ibarra's high total partly comes from a single paragraph where he reminds Maria Clara of the names of various children's games they once played together. If we set these figures aside, the curious fact is that the character in the novel who uses Tagalog the most—laughably badly to be sure—is the peninsular Father Dámaso!

But the formal numbers conceal something else. Most of the characters who use Tagalog typically do so in the form of exclamations or ejaculations: *aray! abá! nakul! susmariosep!* and the like. The most brilliant and searing use of Tagalog comes, oddly enough, in the terrible scene where Doña Consolación's shrivelled heart is softened by the sound of Sisa's *kundiman*.

"No, no cantes!" exclamó la alféreza en perfecto tagalo, levantándose agitada; "no cantes! me hacen daño esos versos!" La loca se calló; el asistente soltó un: "Abá! sabe palá tagalog!" y quedóse miranda á la señora, lleno de admiración.

"No, don't sing!" exclaimed the Alferez's wife in perfect Tagalog, rising to her feet in agitation. "Don't sing! Those verses hurt me!" The madwoman fell silent. The aide blurted out: "*Aba! So she palá knows Tagalog!*" and stared at the lady, full of wonder.<sup>24</sup>

La Consolación's "perfect Tagalog" is given in perfect Spanish, but we can hear it like the gaping aide, who responds appropriately with the beautiful "Taglish" of *sabe palá tagalog*. The curious thing is that earlier in the chapter Rizal has the Alfereza bark at Sisa "*Vamos, magcantar icau!*" [Come, sing now!] without anyone seeming to notice this "Taglish!"<sup>25</sup>

(Carelessness??) But La Consolación is the great exception. Generally, Tagalog exclamations are there only for comic effect and local down-home color.

We are thus left to reflect on the strange fact that it is the Narrator who is overwhelmingly the biggest user of Tagalog words. Guerrero, in his version of *Noli me tangere*, had already noticed this oddity with discomfort and incomprehension. Since he wanted to get rid of Tagalog altogether, one of his solutions was to translate the Narrator's Tagalog words into a weird kind of English, for example rendering *salakot* as "a native hat," as if Rizal had written, in Spanish, *un sombrero nativo* or *indio*.<sup>26</sup> (It is only in footnote 6, p. 27, of the *notas* provided by the Centennial Commission to the centennial edition of the novel that *salakot* is explained.) Yet the fact is that for most of the Tagalog words (usually nouns) he includes, the Narrator also adds a Spanish paraphrase, except where the context makes the meaning plain.

The obvious question that arises is this: If the primary intended readers of the *Noli* were Rizal's fellow Filipinos, why did he feel he had to paraphrase terms like *bátis* into Spanish? Most of the Filipinos who could read Spanish at all were either Tagalog or people like the Luna brothers, who, even if they were ethnically Ilokano, had been raised in Manila where Tagalog was the everyday lingua franca among the "natives." The perhaps surprising answer is that there is a good deal to suggest that his fellow-Filipinos, while obviously important, were not at all the only targeted readership.

Evidence for this proposition can be found both in the text of *Noli me tangere* itself and in Rizal's correspondence with friends in the period following the novel's publication in the bitter Berlin winter of 1887. In the truly brilliant opening chapter, Rizal wrote:

oh! tú que me lees, amigo ó enemigo! si es que te atraen á tí los acordes de la orquesta, la luz ó el significativo clin-clan de la vajilla y de los cubiertos, y quieres ver cómo son las reuniones allá en la Perla del Oriente

You who read me, be you friend or foe, if you are attracted by the sounds of the orchestra, by the lights, or the unmistakable tinkle of glass and silverware, and want to see what parties are like *over there* in the Pearl of the Orient.<sup>27</sup>

In this first passage (within the novel) where Rizal/The Narrator addresses his intended readers directly, we notice that (1) they are divided between friends and foes, not between Filipinos and Spaniards, nor between fellow nationalists and colonialists; (2) they may well be curious to learn something about how parties are organized in Manila (something with which Spanish-reading Filipinos and many Spaniards would know well without opening the novel at all); and (3) most important, Manila, Pearl of the Orient, is situated *allá* (yonder, way over there, on the other side of the world) not *aquí* (here, in Manila). The imagined readers, like the Narrator/Rizal, are in Europe, not (at least in this passage) in Filipinas. We can thus conclude that, certainly as far as the "friends" are concerned, they are perhaps sympathetic to Rizal's cause in principle, they have never been to the Philippines, and they know little about it, but are hopefully eager to know more. People like the German ethnologists and linguists to whom Rizal was introduced by Ferdinand Blumentritt, educated people of the kind the author met in his stays and studies in Paris, London, Brussels, Berlin, and Heidelberg. Seen from this angle, the Narrator's heavy use of Tagalog words (with Spanish paraphrases) show him in the roles of accomplished "tour guide," "translator," and "native informant." He *really* is a Native Tagalog, despite his Spanish name and his writing in Spanish, and he can guide his readers reliably through the exotica of a remote "Oriental" culture and society. Tagalog is thus a warranty for the author/Narrator's authenticity.

These inductive conjectures can be confirmed from Rizal's correspondence. We know, from Máximo Viola, his constant companion from mid-December 1886 to mid-June 1887, that he thought quite seriously about writing his next novel in French, in the event that the *Noli* turned out to be a flop among the Filipinos.<sup>28</sup> In this plan—which in the end he never carried out—he found an eager supporter in Blumentritt, who believed (rightly) that if the second novel were indeed written in French, then the no. 1 world language of literary culture, it would reach a far bigger international audience than was possible with Spanish (then a second- or third-class literary language). In a letter dated 2 July 1890, the ethnologist wrote enthusiastically:



Ich sehe mit Sehnsucht dem Buche entgegen, dass Du französisch schreiben wirst, ich sehe voraus, dass es ein ungeheures Aufsehen erregen wird

I eagerly await the book that you are to write in French; I foresee that it will provoke a colossal sensation.<sup>29</sup>

Blumentritt was probably thinking of the huge success of such French novels as Victor Hugo's *Nôtre Dame de Paris*, Alexandre Dumas, Père's *Le Comte de Monte Cristo*, and Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris*, and *Le Juif Errant*, as well as English-language works, like Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which were quickly translated into most European languages. (To these huge international successes there had been no Spanish equivalent since the distant days of *Don Quixote*.) But, as mentioned above, Rizal did not follow through on the plan. Already in a letter from London to his Austrian friend, dated 26 August 1888, he had written to Blumentritt from London that

Ich gedachte vorher auch in französisch zu schreiben, aber ich glaubte, es is besser für meine Landsleute zu schreiben; ich muss den Geist meines Vaterlands aus seinem Schlummer aufwecken.

I used to think of writing also in French, but I came to believe that it is better to write for my fellow countrymen; I have to arouse the spirit of my fatherland from its slumber.<sup>30</sup>

Still, it is worth thinking about the implications of an *El Filibusterismo* written in French. In 1891, probably less than a hundred of Rizal's compatriots would have been able to read it. On the other hand, we must also recognize that no nationalism exists by itself, each always wants to be recognized by the collectivity of its fellows. Since all nationalists want to tell the rest of the world's nations about themselves, the idea of a French *Filibusterismo* simply shows the permanent cosmopolitan side of any nationalism.

At this point we can turn back to, and perhaps resolve, two puzzles that concerned us earlier. The first is the simpler. Why does the indio Elias, representative hero of the most oppressed and persecuted stratum of colonial society, never speak a word of Tagalog, indeed speaks a

Spanish as good—or perhaps, better put, as pure—as the Narrator’s? He is certainly never allowed by the author to speak the “perfect Tagalog” of which La Consolación reveals herself capable. I think there are several related answers. I noted earlier that when Rizal puts Tagalog words in the mouths of his characters—Father Dámaso using *bata* rather than *muchacho*, Sinang exclaiming *Aray!* the Bisayan soldier whispering *Susmariosep*, or La Consolación insulting La Victorina with *Puput!*—the intended effect is almost always satirical or humorous. But Elias is a profoundly serious, noble, and long-suffering hero, and, therefore, to be protected from any whiff of comedy or sarcasm. “Mixed speech” in the *Noli me tangere* is usually a sign of coloniality—from Dámaso’s ludicrous creolized Tagalog phrases to La Victorina’s absurd affectation of Andalusian Spanish. Elias, however, is a man outside coloniality and points beyond it. So he must speak purely; and since the novel is written in Spanish, not Tagalog, his words must be in “perfect Castilian.” Furthermore, the question of “who” he is is one that his actions in the narrative answer with complete clarity. In this sense he needs no linguistic guarantees of his authenticity. Even his single name, that of the ancient prophet Elias, stands outside Spanish colonialism, in a way that “José Rizal” does not. The Narrator, however, is in exactly the opposite position to that of Elias. He knows everything, and can comment on anything, but he cannot “act” within the narrative, and so cannot guarantee his authenticity in the same style as his indio hero. Tagalog must come to his rescue.

The second of the two puzzles raised earlier is the remarkable absence of any explicit reference in the novel to the Chinese mestizos, a large social stratum with representatives all over the Catholicized parts of the Philippines, and in the second half of the nineteenth century increasing its economic power, level of education, and political aspirations all the time. It is not that the reader cannot infer from various indications that characters like Capitan Tiago and el filósofo Tasio are in fact Chinese mestizos, but rather that the narrative always avoids naming them as such. There are also plenty of characters whose “racial” classification is deliberately left obscure. This obscurity, of course, is also shared by both the Narrator and, for the purposes of *Noli me tangere*’s general readership, “José Rizal” himself.

There is no doubt that Spanish dislike of, anxiety about, and especially racist contempt for, "the Chinese" and "Chinese culture," had a profound effect on colonial society. In the name of "classical" aristocratic Castilian culture and values, the Chinese were to be despised, not merely as nonwhite, but also as irreligious, ignorant, money grubbing, dishonest, cunning, and vulgar. Traces of this contemptuous anti-Sinicism are visible in both *Noli me tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, and in the correspondence of the ilustrados among themselves (Quibuyen 1999, 89, 156–57, 160). Small wonder then that ambitious and upwardly mobile Chinese mestizos deemphasized, and even worked to conceal, what was residually "Chinese" about them. Like ducks to water, they took to calling themselves Don and Doña, and enjoyed such titles as capitan when they could obtain them. Quite often the most visible nonphysical traces of their ancestries were their surnames, which typically combined a clan name with the Hokkien honorific "ko" (or "co" in Castilian orthography) to create eventually such well-known rich families as the Tiangcos, the Cojuangcos, the Sycos, and the Tanjuatcos. At the same, the first part of their members' names were typically "classy Spanish," like Josefa or Sergio. What is striking in *Noli me tangere* is the total absence of "Chinese" surnames, while at the same time a good number of named characters are given no surnames—we do not know the last names of premarriage Doña Victorina, Don Basilio, Tia Isabel, Hermana Rufa, and others. This odd pattern is reason for a certain suspicion. If one was, in 1887, inclined to start thinking in the classical anticolonial "binary" form of us-natives vs. them-colonialists, the "Chinese," pure or mestizo, were an uncomfortable "third party," neither native nor colonial; almost all of them, too, dated their origins in the country to a time after the arrival of the Spaniards.

But the resolution of this problem actually requires a wider angle of vision. Floro Quibuyen cites, as evidence that a noncreole conception of the meaning of the noun "Filipino" already existed widely in 1887, a passage from an English translation of a letter Rizal wrote to Blumentritt in German on 13 April 1887: "All of us have to sacrifice something on the altar of politics, though we might not wish to do so. That is understood by our friends who publish our newspaper in Madrid. They are creole young men of Spanish descent, Chinese mes-

tizos, and Malayans; but we call ourselves only Filipinos" (Quibuyen 1999, 76). The German original, however, reads

wir müssen alle der Politik etwas opfern, wenn auch wir keine Lust daran haben. Dies verstehen meine Freunde welche in Madrid unsere Zeitung herausgeben, diese Freunde sind alle Jünglingen, creolen, mestizen und malaïen, wir nennen uns nur Philippiner.

We must all make sacrifices for political reasons, even if we have no inclination to do so. This is understood by my friends who publish our newspaper in Madrid; these friends are all youngsters, creoles, mestizos, and Malays, (but) we call ourselves simply Filipinos.<sup>31</sup>

Note first that Quibuyen inserts the word "Chinese" before mestizos, which is not there in the original German letter. (His historical instinct is quite right, but he does not seem to notice what has been suppressed.) Next, although these sentences might seem straightforward at first glance, they become somewhat less so if looked at comparatively.

We may start by looking back at the historical experience of Latin America in late-colonial times. In *Imagined Communities* I discussed the widespread belief in the imperial centers (England, Spain, and Portugal, above all) that the natural environment in distant, strange, and tropical colonies had a degenerating effect, visible even among the children of settlers from the metropolises if they were born "overseas" (Anderson 1991, 57–60). There was also the widespread belief that open or hidden miscegenation with indigenes or African slaves meant that the "blood" of these colonials was likely to be racially contaminated. Such people could, therefore, not be fully trusted. (Hostile reaction to this prejudice was one reason why so many creoles and mestizos became leaders of independence movements in the Americas.) Under these conditions, people in the imperial centers had very little interest in the niceties and distinctions of the various social orders in the colonies. Already toward the end of the eighteenth century, wealthy young men sent to Spain for higher education found themselves referred to with contempt as *americanos*. No one in Madrid cared whether they were creoles or mestizos, whether they came from Valparaiso or Guadalajara, or whether their parents made their living within the Viceroyalty of

Peru or that of Mexico. They were all merely "Americans." It did not take too long for many of these resentful youngsters to turn a term of contempt into one of pride. (In any case, the very small numbers coming from any one place in the huge empire at any one time made exclusive "homeboy" social circles quite unviable.) When the anticolonial revolution eventually broke out (in Mexico, as it happened) it was initially regarded by such young men as an American, rather than as a Mexican, insurrection.

It is more than likely that this history was replicated when young men from rich families in the Philippines started to go to Spain in significant numbers—in the 1880s. People in Madrid and Barcelona could not care less whether they came from Batangas or Iloilo, whether they were speakers of Tagalog or Ilokano, or whether they were Malaysans, creoles, or mestizos.<sup>32</sup> They all came from Las Filipinas, they looked different, they spoke an odd form of Spanish, sometimes incorrectly, they liked "weird" food, and the like, and that was sufficient. They were, in the manner of late-eighteenth-century *americanos*, simply *filipinos* (guys from the Philippines). One would expect, therefore, that, sooner or later, they would assume this name with a hostile pride—and a new solidarity. We should not be surprised that the famous journal eventually produced by some of these youngsters was given the name *La Solidaridad*—a name of obvious relevance in Spain, but unlikely to have been a first choice for a comparable journal in Manila. (Were they aware that *La Solidaridad* was the name given nineteen years earlier to the briefly legal organ of the First International's Spanish branch?)<sup>33</sup> Rizal's words underscore this point, since he told Blumentritt that although his friends actually *are* creoles, mestizos [not Chinese], and Malaysans [not indios!] they "call themselves" (in Spain) "simply *Filipinos*." A strategic political decision in fact. We know from the existing correspondence that people in the circle of *La Solidaridad* did not hesitate to speak and write *among themselves* of the creoles and mestizos in their midst;<sup>34</sup> which means—no great surprise—that "*Filipinos*" was what they called themselves *in public*. One notes that Rizal describes this aptly as a political "sacrifice"!

On the other hand, if in Spain no one cared a hoot if a *filipino* was a creole or a mestizo or a Malayan, this was by no means the case

in the colony, where these distinctions were of everyday importance, and materialized in colonial law, in dress codes, tax burdens, and so on. Thus, in the colony, the word *filipino* for a considerable time meant something quite different from what it denoted in the metropole. If we understand this essential difference/contrast we will see that, if it was eventually natural for the overseas youngsters *allá* in Spain to call themselves "simply Filipinos," there is no reason to believe that people living in the Philippines would do so either as naturally or as promptly. It would take time, and a lot of effort and sacrifice, to effect this cultural-political change.

Another kind of comparison, just as illuminating, can be described more briefly. In 1908, students originating from the Dutch East Indies (Nederlandsch Indië) formed in Holland an association called the Indische Vereeniging. This association took its name, which we can translate as Indies Association, from the geographical term for the vast colony, and was the first to do so, well before anything similar developed in the colony itself. Its members were, at one level, a mixed lot: Javanese, Minangkabau, Menadonese, and others, in ethnic terms, "native" and "mestizo" by racial category, and Christian and Muslim (of different types), religiously speaking. What they initially had in common was privilege. They had had the best education then available in the colony, and their parents were well-off, or well connected to people in the colonial regime. In these terms, they looked very much like the students from the Philippines arriving in Spain a generation earlier. Although, on the whole, they were well treated in Holland, and enjoyed touring around, drinking in bars and pursuing working-class Dutch girls, they felt their separateness—their skins' different shades of brown, their Dutch with funny accents and sometimes shaky grammar, their "weird" tastes in food—*collectively*. They all had the common experience of ordinary Dutch people's complete lack of interest in what island they came from, which town they grew up in, which local language they used at home, or what type of ancestry they could claim. They were all simply "Indies" youngsters. This sense of the near-absolute irrelevance—in Holland—of distinctions of great importance in the colony explains the earliness of their self-organized solidarity on a colonywide basis.

The parallel with Rizal and his friends in Spain is again very close: especially if we realize that the adjectives *indisch* and *filipino* were structural analogues, based on political geography more than anything else. Over the course of the decade after 1908, the Indische Vereeniging shifted from being largely a social club to something self-consciously political. By 1922, it had become sufficiently radicalized and nationalist to change its name from the Dutch Indische Vereeniging to the Malay-Indonesian Perhimpunan Indonesia, which we can translate as Indonesian Association. The language shift was important in itself, but so also was the pioneering break with the word "Indies," in favor of the till then hardly used term Indonesia—a strange amalgam of Latin (India) and Greek (*nesos*, meaning island) coined by a sort of German Blumentritt some fifty years earlier. No matter, it was not a colonial word, and the Dutch colonial regime hated it. In this way the mixed bag of ilustrado youngsters in Holland became the first substantial group to "call themselves simply Indonesians."

In all these cases, the Philippines, Latin America, and Indonesia, we can thus see the structural reasons for a historical progression from an early cultural and emotional identification with *place*—Rizal's *mi patria adorada*—a familiar hometown or region initially, later, in Europe, with the extension of the metropole's geography of contempt, a "home-colony"—toward a solidarity between *persons* from within the abstract space of the colony. This is the progression from local patriotism to modern nationalism, from geocultural sentiment to political program. I think we can take the *Noli me tangere* of 1887 as a milestone on this "progression" for the Philippines. It is an enormously powerful evocation of an abused patria and pueblo (words in which geography still reverberates more strongly than anthropology). But the anthropological-political nación is there only in sparse and scattered places; the fully political nacionalismo is still absent. But one feels, as one reads, that they are just over the novel's horizon.

## Notes

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comments and criticisms. They bear no responsibility, however, for whatever errors and simplifications it undoubtedly contains.

1. A striking exception here is Jun Aguilar's brilliant article, "Tracing Origins" (Aguilar 2005).

2. In particular the essay "Hard to Imagine," originally composed in 1992, and, in a slightly improved form included in my *Spectre of Comparisons* (1998), chap. 11. I should say that the present text was partly stimulated by Floro C. Quibuyen's criticism of "Hard to Imagine" in his *A Nation Aborted* (1999). I do not at all agree with Quibuyen's general argument, but am grateful for his pushing me to more serious reflection.

3. Rizal 1978, 287–88.

4. *The Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence* 1992, 59ff.

5. Chap. 45, "Los Perseguidos," in Rizal 1978.

6. In *Noli Me Tangere* (Rizal 1978, 64 [chap. 14, "Tasio El Loco ó El Filósofo"]) where Tasio says: *Por las gotas de sangre chino que mi madre me ha dado, pienso un poco como los chinos; honro al padre por el hijo pero no al hijo por el padre.* [Because of the drops of Chinese blood that my mother has given me, I think a little like the Chinese; I honor the father in the son, not the son in the father.] This is not a public declaration, but a humorous moment in a chat with his good friends Don Filipino and Doña Teodora.

7. *Ibid.*, 3 (chap. 1, "Una Reunión").

8. *Ibid.*, 329 (chap. 60, "Maria Clara Se Casa").

9. *Ibid.*, 165.

10. *Ibid.*, 275 (chap. 49, "La Voz de los Perseguidos"). His interlocutor in private conversation here is Ibarra, who is a mestizo—a distance of which Elias is quite conscious. He never says *somos filipinos* [we two are Filipinos], either.

11. *Ibid.*, 259.

12. *Ibid.*, 178.

13. *Ibid.*, 43. Ibarra is talking to himself.

14. *Ibid.*, 272.

15. *Ibid.*, 36.

16. *Ibid.*, 16 and 273.

17. *Ibid.*, 17 and 273. He is speaking, tête-à-tête, to Ibarra.

18. *Ibid.*, 141.

19. *Ibid.*, 16.

20. *Ibid.*, 273, chap. 49 ("La Voz de Los Perseguidos").

21. *Ibid.*, 278.

22. *Ibid.*, 48.

23. *Ibid.*, 269.

24. *Ibid.*, 219, in chap. 39 ("Doña Consolación").

25. *Ibid.*, 216.

26. This is his version of what Rizal wrote in *ibid.*, 41, chap. 8 ("Recuerdos").



27. Ibid., 2, emphasis added.

28. The Spanish text reads: *Y cuando quise saber la razón de ser de aquel lujo innecesario del francés, me explicó diciendo de que su objeto era escribir en adelante en francés, caso de que su Noli me tangere fracasara, y sus paisanos no respondieran a los propósitos de dicha obra* (see Viola 1961, 316). No exact date is given for Rizal's remarks, but it is likely they were uttered early in 1887 before *Noli me tangere* began to circulate seriously.

29. This letter can be found on p. 677 of the *Cartas entre Rizal y el Profesor Fernando Blumentritt, 1890–1896*.

30. This letter can be found on p. 339 of the *Cartas entre Rizal y el Profesor Fernando Blumentritt, 1888–1890*.

31. See *The Rizal-Blumentritt Correspondence*, vol. 1, 1886–1889, p. 72. Note that the German *Philippiner* has almost none of the ambiguities surrounding “filipinos.”

32. Guerrero quotes a letter Rizal wrote to his family from Marseilles, on 3 June 1882, as follows: “I went for walk along those wide clean streets, macadamized as [in] Manila, teeming with people. I attracted the attention of all who saw me; they called me Chinese, Japanese, American, etc., but no-one Filipino! Poor country—no-one knows anything about you!” (Guerrero 1961, 95). (Guerrero inserts the word “Our” before “poor country.”) We should understand “Americans” as meaning *americanos* rather than people from the U.S.A. We will recall that Mr. Leeds, the ventriloquist who collaborates with Simoun (in the *Fil*), is referred to as *un verdadero yankee*.

33. See Scott 1992, 6. Scott observes that the first issue, appearing on 15 January 1870, made special mention of “virgin Oceania, and you who inhabit the rich, wide regions of Asia.” The Spanish section was legally banned in November 1871, but when the first major strike occurred in the Philippines ten months later (at the Cavite arsenal), Captain-General Izquierdo was convinced that the “black hand” of the International was behind it.

34. See, for example, the evidence offered in chapter 4 of *The Propaganda Movement, 1880–1895* (Schumacher 1997).

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