

# Novels and Scholarly Writings of Jose Rizal

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## Background

Jose Rizal wrote many poems, essays, and novels to help open the eyes of Filipinos during the time of Spanish rule. Through his writings, he showed the unfair treatment of the people and encouraged them to fight for their rights in peaceful ways. From his school poems to famous novels like *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, Rizal used simple but powerful words to share his love for the Philippines. His works continue to inspire people to this day to value freedom, education, and justice.

## Four novels of Jose Rizal

1. *Noli Me Tangere*-
2. *El Filibusterismo*
3. *Makamisa* (Unpublished)

## Noli Me Tangere

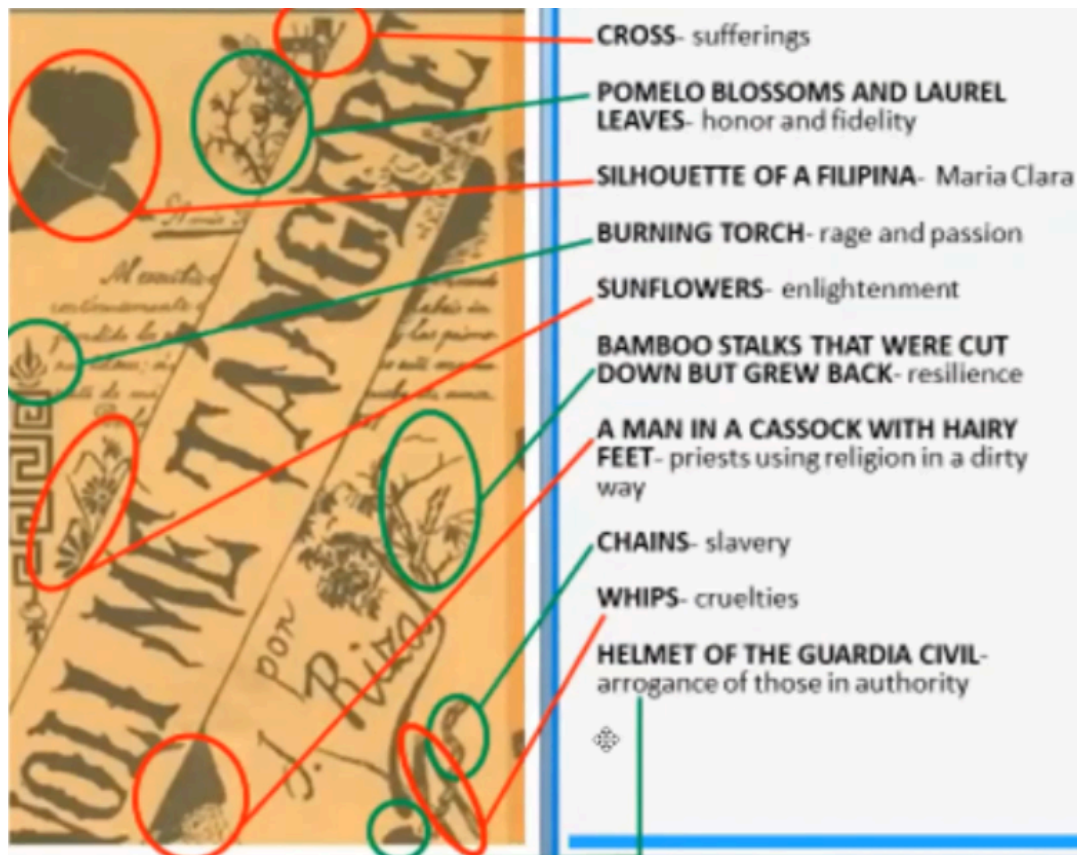
- *Noli Me Tangere* is Latin for "**Touch Me Not.**"
- The novel was completed in 1886 and published in **March 1887** in Berlin, Germany, with financial assistance from **Maximo Viola**, who became the savior of *Noli Me Tangere*.
- The title *Noli Me Tangere* originates from the Gospel of John (20:17), though Rizal initially mistakenly attributed it to Luke in his 1887 correspondence with Resurrección Hidalgo.

## Major themes Noli Me Tangere

- *Noli Me Tangere* exposes the systemic oppression under Spanish colonial rule, revealing the social injustice inflicted upon Filipinos through the unfair treatment by authorities.
- The novel highlights the abuse of power by friars and officials who exploited their positions, while also unmasking the religious hypocrisy of corrupt and immoral leaders.
- It shows how the government and the church worked together to control the people and take advantage of them for their own benefit.
- **Education as a Tool for Reform** – Emphasizes the importance of learning to bring change.
- **Love for Country (Nationalism)** – Encourages pride in being Filipino and fighting for justice, Jose Rizal dedicated the novel to the Philippines

The story shows that women and poor people suffer the most because the system is unfair and they are the easiest to hurt. Ibarra's journey helps show that Filipinos need to understand who they are and where they belong in society. The novel also compares two ways to fight unfair treatment: changing things peacefully like Ibarra or using force like Elias.

## Noli Me Tangere Cover Page Designed by Jose Rizal



## El Filibusterismo

Written in **1891** and published in Ghent, Belgium, El Filibusterismo is a sequel to Rizal's first novel, Noli Me Tangere. Thirteen years after the events of Noli, the story follows Crisostomo Ibarra now disguised as Simoun as he returns to the Philippines with a new identity and a desire for revenge. While Noli promoted peaceful reform through education and awareness, El Fili presents a darker and more urgent call for change, reflecting Rizal's growing disappointment with the worsening social and political conditions under Spanish rule.

Due to financial struggles during its publication, Rizal was unable to continue printing the novel until **Valentin Ventura**, a friend and fellow patriot, stepped in to fund the remaining costs. Just as **Maximo Viola** helped bring Noli Me Tangere to life, Ventura became the savior of El Filibusterismo, ensuring its completion and distribution.

## Major Themes

### Fighting for Freedom

- The novel calls Filipinos to stand against colonial abuse and oppression. It presents revolution as a potential answer to injustice when peaceful reform fails.

### Corruption and Abuse of Power

- Through the corrupt friars and government officials, Rizal shows how authority can be misused for personal gain, harming society as a whole.

### Social Injustice

- The novel reflects the deep divide between the rich and the poor, the privileged and the powerless, and the educated and the uneducated.

### **The Importance of Education**

- Rizal emphasizes that education is a tool for empowerment—but in the novel, it is tightly controlled by the elites to maintain ignorance and dominance.

### **Failure of Reform**

- Unlike *Noli Me Tangere*, which hoped for peaceful change, *El Fili* expresses Rizal's doubt that reform is possible under an oppressive regime.

Rizal wrote *El Filibusterismo* to awaken the Filipino spirit and inspire collective action against oppression. He believed that a better and more just society could be achieved through unity, education, and courage. The novel reflects his disillusionment with peaceful reforms and serves as a powerful call for Filipinos to recognize injustice and fight for meaningful change.

## **Makamisa: Rizal's Unfinished Third Novel**

Written in **1892** while in exile in **Hong Kong**, *Makamisa* was intended to be Dr. Jose Rizal's third novel, a sequel *El Filibusterismo*. Originally written in Tagalog and later restarted in Spanish, the unfinished manuscript centered on the corrupt Padre Agaton, the town's parish priest. The draft, later rediscovered by historian Ambeth Ocampo in the National Library, was hidden among pages titled *Borrador del Noli Me Tangere* and only spanned a single chapter of 10 pages, ending abruptly mid-sentence.

- Shows Rizal's intent to shift toward writing in Tagalog to reach and awaken the common Filipino.
- Highlights the continuing critique of clerical abuse, echoing themes from his earlier novels.
- Demonstrates his unwavering commitment to exposing social injustice through literature, even in exile.

## **Scholarly Writings**

**Mi Primera Inspiración** - was the first poem Jose Rizal wrote at Ateneo, and he dedicated it to his mother for her birthday. It shows his deep love and gratitude using simple, joyful images like flowers and birds to celebrate the special day.

**Un Recuerdo di me Pueblo (In memory of my town)** - In 1876, 15-year-old Jose Rizal wrote the poem "In Memory of My Town" as a tribute to his hometown, Calamba. It shows his love and gratitude for the place where he grew up and made happy childhood memories.

**Al Nino Jesus (To the Child Jesus)** - This religious poem was written by Jose Rizal in November 1875 when he was 14 and a student at Ateneo de Manila. It shows his strong Catholic faith as a boy and how religion helped shape his beliefs and character.

**To the Virgin Mary (A La Virgen Maria, To Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage) -**

This religious poem reflects Rizal's deep Catholic faith and devotion to the Virgin Mary, showing how his spirituality shaped his ideals of peace and hope. It also reveals the role of religion in Filipino identity and Rizal's personal strength during the struggle for freedom.

**Through Education Country Receives light** - This poem, written by 15-year-old Rizal in 1876 during his Ateneo studies, stresses education as the key to national progress, wisdom, and Filipino empowerment. It passionately conveys his conviction that learning is essential for both personal success and the Philippines' development.

**The Intimate Allegiance Between Religion and Good Education** - At fifteen while studying at Ateneo, Rizal wrote this poem advocating that education must blend with moral and spiritual values to build virtuous individuals, reflecting Jesuit teachings. The work reveals his early conviction that faith and learning together shape character and intellect—a foundation for personal and societal growth.

**Felicitación (1875, Dec 5)** - Written in 1875 when Rizal was 14, this poem was dedicated to his brother-in-law, Antonio Lopez. It shows Rizal's love for family and his talent for expressing sincere feelings through poetry, even at a young age.

**The Embarkation, A Hymn to Ferdinand Magellan's Fleet (El Embarque: Himno A La Flota De Magallanes)** - Written in 1875 while studying at Ateneo, this was likely Rizal's first poem read in public. It honors Magellan's voyage and shows Rizal's early interest in history and awareness of Spain's role in colonizing the Philippines.

**And He Is Spanish: Elcano, The First To Circumnavigate The World (Y Es Espanol: Elcano, El Primero En Dar La Vuelta Al Mundo, December, 1875)** - Written in December 1875, this poem honors Juan Sebastián Elcano's role in completing the first trip around the world after Magellan's death. It shows Rizal's early interest in history and his admiration for great explorers.

**The Battle: Urbiztondo, Terror of Jolo (El Combate: Urbiztondo, Terror De Jolo)** - Written in December 1875, this poem praises Governor-General Urbiztondo's victory over the Moros of Jolo. It shows Rizal's early admiration for bravery and his talent for turning historical events into poetry.

**The Tragedy of St. Eustace (La Tragedia De San Eustaquio)** - Written in June 1876, this poem tells the story of St. Eustace's faith and sacrifice. It shows Rizal's respect for courage in suffering and his interest in religious history even as a young student.

**Education Gives Luster To The Motherland (Por La Educacion Recibe Lustre La Patria)** - Written in 1876 when Rizal was only fifteen, this poem shows his strong belief in the power of education. He encouraged Filipinos to study hard, believing that knowledge could help the country grow and succeed.

**The Captivity and the Triumph: Battle of Lucena and the Imprisonment of Boabdil (El Cautiverio y el Triunfo: Batalla de Lucena y Prision de Boabdil, December**

1876) - this poem tells the story of Boabdil, the last Moorish king of Granada, and his defeat. Rizal used this theme to explore ideas of lost power, cultural pride, and the effects of conquest, which later connected to the Filipino experience under colonial rule.

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**Triumphant Entry of The Catholic Monarchs Into Granada (Entrada Triunfal De Los Reyes Católicos En Granada, December 1876)** - this poem tells the story of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella's triumphant entry into Granada in 1492. Rizal used this historic event to explore themes like conquest, national pride, and the power of unity.

**The Heroism of Columbus (El Heroismo De Colon, 1877)** - this poem honors Christopher Columbus for his bravery in discovering America. Rizal admired Columbus as a hero who followed his dreams and changed the world, showing Rizal's interest in global history and courageous leaders.

**Great Solace in Great Misfortune (Gran Consuelo En La Mayor Desdicha, 1878)** - this poem tells the tragic story of Christopher Columbus's later years, showing that even great heroes face hardship. Rizal admired how Columbus found comfort in his legacy, reflecting his belief in staying strong despite life's struggles.

**A Farewell Dialogue of the Students (Un Dialogo Alusive A La Despedida De Los Colegiales)** - this was Rizal's farewell poem to his classmates before graduating from Ateneo. It shows his deep friendship with them, his love for learning, and his readiness to begin a new journey in life.

**Abd-El-Azis and Mohammed (Abd-El-Azis Y Mahoma, December 1879)** - Written in December 1879 and performed at Ateneo, this poem tells of the battle between Spaniards and Moors. It highlights Rizal's talent in using poetry to share powerful historical stories and inspire pride in cultural struggles.

**Al M.R.P. Pablo Ramon, 1881** - Written in 1881 as a birthday tribute to Father Pablo Ramon, this poem reflects Rizal's deep respect for his mentor at Ateneo. It shows his gratitude and emotional connection to the school and its teachers who helped shape his values.



**Goodbye to Leonor, 1882** - this poem was Rizal's heartfelt farewell to his beloved Leonor Rivera as he left for Spain. It shows the pain of parting and the sacrifice he made for his country, even when it meant leaving someone he loved deeply.

**The Song of Maria Clara** - Written in 1887, this poem appears in *Noli Me Tangere* and is sung by Maria Clara while playing the harp. It shows the ideal Filipina's purity, deep emotions, and quiet strength during the difficult times under Spanish rule.

**To Miss C.O. y R., 1883** - while in Spain, this poem was dedicated to Consuelo Ortiga y Perez, whom Rizal admired. It shows his emotional honesty and loyalty, as he chose not to act on his feelings out of respect for Leonor Rivera and his friend Eduardo de Lete.

**To My Muse (A Mi, 1890)** - while Rizal was in Brussels, this poem expresses his sadness and emotional pain during a difficult time. He found comfort in his muse, using poetry to cope and continue creating despite his struggles.

**Water and Fire (El Agua Y El Fuego, 1891)** - Written in 1891 as part of *El Filibusterismo*, this short poem uses water and fire to symbolize conflict and hope. Rizal expressed his dream for the Philippines to become free and progressive through unity and knowledge.

**Song of the Wanderer/Traveler (El Canto Del Viajero, 1896)** - This poem was written by Rizal while in exile in Dapitan, after hearing he could leave to work as a doctor in Cuba. It shows his excitement to travel again, his hope to serve others, and his strong love for his country even while far away.

**Junto Al Pasig (Along the Pasig)** - is a one-act play written by Jose Rizal in honor of the Virgin of Antipolo, showing the deep Catholic faith of Filipinos and the conflict with old native beliefs. Rizal's devotion to the Virgin began from a promise made by his mother during childbirth and continued throughout his life, even as he included her in his writings and remembered her during his travels.

**Los Viajes (Travels)** - Published in *La Solidaridad* in 1889, this article explains how traveling helps people become smarter and understand other cultures better. Rizal believed that by seeing other countries, Filipinos could learn new ideas to help improve the Philippines.

**Revista de Madrid (Review of Madrid)** - Written in 1882 while in Spain, this article was meant for *Diariong Tagalog* but was returned to Rizal because the paper ran out of money. Even though it wasn't published, it shows how Rizal wanted to share important news and ideas with Filipinos to help the country.

**My Retreat (Mi Retiro, 1895)** - while in exile in Dapitan, this poem was sent to Rizal's mother to show how he lived a simple but meaningful life. It tells how he continued to help others through teaching, farming, and serving the people, even far from home.

**Los Agricultores Filipinos (The Filipino Farmers)** - Written in 1889, this was Rizal's first article in La Solidaridad and talked about the unfair treatment of Filipino farmers. He believed that helping farmers have better lives was important for the progress and strength of the whole country.

### **A La Defensa (To La Defensa)**

- Written on April 30, 1889, this article was Rizal's response to an anti-Filipino piece by Patricio de la Escosura, published in La Defensa on March 30, 1889. Rizal strongly defended the Filipino people and exposed the harmful role of the friars in the country.
- Insights:
  - Defends the dignity and rights of Filipinos against racist and biased accusations.
  - Exposes the negative impact of friar control over Philippine society.
  - Encourages Filipinos to recognize and resist oppression through knowledge and unity.
- This article shows Rizal's courage in standing up against false accusations and fighting for justice through his words and intellect.

### **La Verdad Para Todos (The Truth for All)**

- Published on May 31, 1889, in La Solidaridad, this article was Rizal's response to Spanish claims that Filipinos were ignorant and morally weak. He defended the dignity, intelligence, and potential of the Filipino people.
- Insights:
  - Refutes racist stereotypes used to justify Spanish rule.
  - Highlights the intelligence, capability, and humanity of Filipinos.
  - Advocates for equal treatment and recognition of the Filipino people's worth.
- Through this article, Rizal stood up for his fellow countrymen and used truth and logic to fight colonial prejudice and uplift Filipino pride.

### **“Una Profanacion” (A Desecration/A Profanation)**

- This article was written by Rizal to criticize and mock the friars who denied Christian burial to his brother-in-law, Mariano Herbosa, who died of cholera on May 23, 1889. Herbosa, married to Lucia Rizal, was refused burial in the Catholic cemetery because of his ties to Rizal and alleged non-practice of Catholic rites.
- Insights:
  - Exposes the cruelty and abuse of power by the friars.
  - Highlights the injustices suffered by Filipinos under religious authorities.
  - Calls for reform and justice in the face of religious discrimination.

This emotional article reflects Rizal's personal pain and strong criticism of clerical abuse, showing his courage in fighting for truth and dignity for every Filipino.

- **“Crueldad” (Cruelty)** - Written on August 15, 1889, "Crueldad" showcases Rizal's sharp wit as he defends his close friend Blumentritt against slanderous attacks. The poem reveals both his loyalty to allies and his fearless stance against injustice.
- **“Diferencias” (Differences)** - Published on September 15, 1889, "Diferencias" was Rizal's rebuttal to La Patria's "Old Truths" (August 14, 1889), which mocked Filipinos seeking colonial reforms. The article defended reformist ideals and challenged prejudiced narratives, showcasing Rizal's role as a critical voice against Spanish colonial dismissiveness.
- **“Inconsecuencias” (Inconsequences)** - Rizal wrote "Inconsecuencias" (November 30, 1889) to defend Antonio Luna after Pablo Mir Deas attacked him in El Pueblo Soberano, showcasing his loyalty and sharp critique of Spanish detractors. The article highlights Rizal's readiness to challenge injustices and defend fellow reformists.
- **“Llanto Y Risas” (Tears and Laughter)** - Published on November 30, 1889, "Llanto y Risas" condemned Spanish racial prejudice, as Rizal recalled winning a literary contest in 1880 only for applause to fade when audiences saw his brown skin. The article exposed the hypocrisy of colonial racism while highlighting Rizal's personal experience with discrimination.
- **“Filipinas Dentro De Cien Anos” (The Philippines within One Hundred Years)** - Serialized in La Solidaridad (1889-1890), "Filipinas Dentro De Cien Años" predicted Spain's colonial collapse and a Philippine revolution, foreseeing U.S. intervention—while exposing Spanish oppression and rallying Filipinos to reclaim their rights. Rizal's essay, blending historical analysis and prophecy, declared that "no domination of one race over another lasts forever," a vision fulfilled posthumously with Philippine independence.
- **“Ingratitudes” (Ingratitude)** - Published on January 15, 1890, "Ingratitudes" was Rizal's defiant response to Governor General Weyler, who denounced Calamba's "ungrateful sons" for supporting his North Borneo resettlement plan for displaced tenants. The article exposed colonial hypocrisy and reaffirmed Rizal's commitment to defending oppressed Filipinos against unjust accusations.
- **“Sobre La Nueva Ortografia De La Lengua Tagala” (On The New Orthography of The Tagalog Language)** - Rizal supported a new Tagalog spelling system in his April 15, 1890 article, giving full credit to Dr. Pardo de Tavera for creating it. He explained the spelling rules and humbly called himself just a promoter of Tavera's work.
- **“La Vision Del Fray Rodriguez” (The Vision of Fray Rodriguez)** - Rizal penned "La Visión del Fray Rodríguez" under his alias "Dimas-Alang" as a satirical rebuttal to the friar's attacks on his Noli Me Tangere, staging a fictional dialogue where St. Augustine condemns Rodríguez to eternal ridicule for his ignorance. This pamphlet showcased Rizal's theological erudition and razor-sharp wit in defending his work against clerical criticism.



- **“Ang Mga Karapatan Ng Tao” (The Rights Of Man)** - Rizal translated "The Rights of Man" into Tagalog to spread the French Revolution's ideals of liberty and equality among Filipinos. This work reflected his mission to educate his people about universal human rights and inspire reform under Spanish rule.
- **“A La Nacion Espanola”(To The Spanish Nation)** - Rizal appealed directly to Spain to address the injustices inflicted by colonial authorities and friars upon Calamba's tenants. The work combined a call for reform with a warning that continued oppression would fuel unrest.
- **“Una Visita A La Victoria Gaol” (A Visit To Victoria Gaol), March 2, 1892** - Rizal documented his observations of Hong Kong's British-run prison, highlighting its humane treatment of inmates as a stark contrast to the brutality of Spanish colonial jails. The article subtly criticized Spain's oppressive systems while advocating for modern, ethical governance.
- **“Colonisation Du British North Borneo, Par De Familles De Iles Philippines” (Colonization Of British North Borneo By Families From The Philippine Islands)** - Rizal outlined his proposal to resettle displaced Filipino families in British North Borneo, presenting it as a solution to landlessness and oppression under Spanish rule. The project reflected his pragmatic approach to seeking justice and better opportunities for his persecuted countrymen.
- **“Proyecto De Colonization Del British North Borneo Por Los Filipinos” (Project Of The Colonization Of British North Borneo By The Filipinos)** - Rizal's article detailed his plan to resettle Filipinos in North Borneo, offering an escape from Spanish abuse and a chance for self-rule. It expanded his earlier proposal with practical steps for establishing these new communities.
- **“La Mano Roja” (The Red Hand)** - Rizal's Hong Kong article "La Mano Roja" exposed the suspicious Manila fires, implying Spanish sabotage. The pamphlet condemned these destructive acts as tools of oppression against Filipinos.
- **“Constitution of The La Liga Filipina”**- Rizal drafted the La Liga Filipina constitution in Hong Kong, transforming Basa's concept into a formal platform for peaceful reform. This groundbreaking document outlined a united Filipino movement for progress, education, and civic empowerment under Spanish rule.
- **Specimens of Tagal Folklore** - Published in May 1889, this article featured Filipino proverbs and riddles that Jose Rizal collected. It aimed to highlight the richness of Filipino culture and preserve native wisdom through traditional folk expressions.
- **Two Eastern Fables(June 1889)** - This essay by Jose Rizal compared the Filipino fable “The Tortoise and the Monkey” with the Japanese fable “Saru Kani Kassen” (Battle of the Monkey and the Crab). He noted their similarities in theme and form, suggesting a shared Malay origin, and highlighted how both stories reflect moral lessons about the struggle between the weak and the powerful.
- **“Pensamientos De Un Filipino” (Reflections of A Filipino)** - Written in Madrid, Spain, this piece reflects the thoughts of a liberal-minded Filipino who opposed the abuses of the friars. Rizal portrayed the struggles and sacrifices—like exile—faced by Filipinos who dared to stand for truth and reform.

- **Por Telefono (By Telephone, 1889)** - Written in 1889 using the pen name “Dimas Alang,” this short funny book made fun of Father Font and the friars who didn’t like Noli Me Tangere. Rizal used a pretend phone call to show how unfair and silly the friars were, using humor to tell the truth.
- **“La Instruccion” (The Town Schools In The Philippines)** - Written under the pen name “Laong Laan,” this essay criticized the poor quality of elementary schools in the Philippines during Spanish rule. Rizal suggested better teaching methods and wanted native languages used in class so students could understand lessons more clearly.