

**Module 8****EL FILIBUSTERISMO**

This module presents the background and summary of *El Filibusterismo*. It highlights the symbolic representations used by Rizal in showing the cultural, social, and political issues during the Spanish colonial Philippines. It also shows the ideologies presented in the novel specifically the importance of the participation of youth in nation building.

At the end of this module, the students should be able to:

1. compare and contrast the characters, plot, and theme of the *Noli* and *El Fili*; and
2. value the role of the youth in the development and future of society.

**Pre-Test Activity:**

Using the Internet and the library, determine and evaluate the motivation of Rizal in writing *El Filibusterismo*. Provide one motivation only.

**El Filibusterismo**

*El Filibusterismo*, the second of José Rizal's novels of Philippine life, is a story of the last days of the Spanish régime in the Philippines. Under the name of *The Reign of Greed* it is for the first time translated into English. Written some four or five years after *Noli Me Tangere*, the book represents Rizal's more mature judgment on political and social conditions in the islands, and in its graver and less hopeful tone reflects the disappointments and discouragements which he had encountered in his efforts to lead the way to reform. Rizal's dedication to the first edition is of special interest, as the writing of it was one of the grounds of accusation against him when he was condemned to death in 1896. It reads:

*"To the memory of the priests, Don Mariano Gomez (85 years old), Don José Burgos (30 years old), and Don Jacinto Zamora (35 years old). Executed in Bagumbayan Field on the 28th of February, 1872.*

*"The Church, by refusing to degrade you, has placed in doubt the crime that has been imputed to you; the Government, by surrounding your trials with mystery and shadows, causes the belief that there was some error, committed in fatal moments; and all the Philippines, by worshipping your memory and calling you martyrs, in no sense recognizes your culpability. In so far, therefore, as your complicity in the Cavite mutiny is not clearly proved, as you may or may not have been patriots, and as you may or may not have cherished sentiments for justice and for liberty, I have the right to dedicate my work to you as victims of the evil which I undertake to combat. And while we await expectantly upon Spain some day to restore your good name and cease to be answerable for your death, let these pages serve as a tardy wreath of dried leaves over your unknown tombs, and let it be understood that every one who without clear proofs attacks your memory stains his hands in your blood! – J. Rizal*

### **Publication of *El Filibusterismo***

Rizal finished *El Filibusterismo* in 1891. It was printed at F. Meyer Van Loo at No. 66 Vlanderstraat and was released on September 18, 1891. He sent two copies of it to Hong Kong, one for Jose Ma. Basa and the other for Sixto Lopez. Valentin Ventura, friend of Rizal in Paris, helped him with the book's printing and was given the original printed copy. Rizal also sent complimentary copies to Blumentritt, Mariano Ponce, Graciano Lopez-Jaena, Pardo Te Tavera, Antonio and Juan Luna, and his other friends.

### **Plot of *El Filibusterismo***

*El Filibusterismo* continues the story of *Noli Me Tangere*, where Crisostomo Ibarra survives the dramatic chase at the open lake, leaves the Philippines, and wanders around the world and amasses great wealth.

In *El Filibusterismo*, he returns to the Philippines after a 13-year absence in the person of Simoun, a jeweler passing for a British Indian, a Portuguese, an American, a mulatto, a brown cardinal, his black eminence, and the evil genius of the captain-general.

Returning with the new captain-general, who is under his sway, Simoun has one sole purpose: the subversion of the regime. He plans to do by using his wealth and influence to encourage corruption in the government, which he expects to cause such economic distress as will drive the people to take up arms against the regime. The biggest obstacles to his plans turn out to be the young native intellectuals, who are dedicated to a program of reforms leading to the assimilation of the Philippines into the Spanish nation. Among such reforms is the establishment of an academy of the Spanish language under lay control.

Simoun has another purpose, to take Maria Clara away from the nunnery and to avenge the wrongs that were done to him and his lady love. He makes two attempts to do so, but both fail. In the first, he plans to seize Manila with the help of disaffected Filipino regiments and a band of outlaws. On the very eve of the uprising, though, he is told that Maria Clara had died; in a frenzy of grief, he abandons his allies and is almost killed by them.

In the second, he returns to anarchist techniques. All the rulers of Manila, from the governor-general to the provincials of the orders and the men with the widest properties and influence in the colony are expected to attend the nuptial feast of Paulita Gomez, the richest heiress of the city. He plans to send as his wedding gift to her an elaborate lamp which in reality is a bomb. The lamp will hang over the main table of the feast. The house itself, Captain Tiago's old mansion, has been mined. At a decisive moment, the lamplight will flicker, and when the wick is raised, the bomb will explode. Simoun takes one last look at his beloved. Isagani is warned not to go anywhere near the place where the tragic incident was to occur, but when he learns the details of the plot, he rushes to the house instead, and seizing the lamp, jumps and throws it into the river. Simoun, now a grievously wounded fugitive from justice, takes refuge in the solitary mountain retreat with Padre Florentino, a virtuous Filipino priest, and dies there before the authorities can arrest him. The priest takes the dead man's treasure chest and hurls it into the sea.

## **Characters of El Filibusterismo**

### **Simoun**

Simoun, the alter ego of Crisostomo Ibarra from *Noli Me Tangere*, is a wealthy jeweler who disguises himself after being presumed dead. With his tanned skin, sparse beard, long white hair, and blue-tinted glasses, he's a mysterious and sometimes confrontational figure. Although he appears arrogant, he secretly plans a violent revolution to avenge his past and accelerate Elias' reformist goals.

Simoun symbolizes revolutionaries who advocated for a bloody revolt against the Spanish government, but his death in *El Filibusterismo* shows Rizal's disapproval of armed rebellion.

### **Maria Clara**

Love interest of Ibarra-Simoun who suffers from physical and spiritual abuse for 13 years, which eventually leads to her death.

### **Senor Pasta**

An affluent lawyer who was once a servant of the friars and who now acts as a consultant for them; concerned only with his own interests, he refuses to help the students petitioning for the opening of an academy for the teaching of Castilian.

### **Isagani**

Isagani, Basilio's friend and aspiring poet, is the passionate and idealistic nephew of Father Florentino. He values his principles above all else, even when it costs him his relationship with his girlfriend, Paulita Gomez.

Isagani embodies the youth with great love for their country, willing to stand up for their beliefs.

### **Placido Penitente**

A University of Santo Tomas student, Placido Penitente reluctantly continues his studies at his mother's request. After clashing with his physics professor and meeting Simoun, he becomes a devoted follower of Simoun's revolutionary cause.

His name, which translates to "silent suffering," reflects his temperament and struggle.

### **Paulita Gomez**

Isagani's girlfriend and Doña Victorina's niece, Paulita eventually breaks up with Isagani to marry Juanito Pelaez, believing she has no future with Isagani.

### **Basilio**

Basilio, the son of Sisa from *Noli Me Tangere*, is a hardworking student on the verge of earning his medical degree. As Captain Tiago's protege, he dreams of a better future through education. Despite his success, he remains indifferent to society's needs.

Basilio represents the youth striving for personal advancement but lacking social awareness.

### **Don Custodio**

Custodio de Salazar y Sanchez de Montereondo is a contractor tasked with developing a proposal for a Spanish language academy. An opportunist and social climber, he is portrayed as incompetent and laughably ineffective.

**Kabesang Tales**

Telesforo Juan de Dios, also known as Kabesang Tales, is a former cabeza de barangay of Barrio Sagpang in Tiani who becomes the bandit leader Matanglawin. After losing his land to the Dominicans and facing countless hardships, he joins the bandits to fight back.

Kabesang Tales symbolizes Filipinos who were driven to rebellion by injustice and land seizure.

**Quiroga**

A Chinese businessman aspiring to become a consul for China in the Philippines. Simoun coerces him into hiding weapons in his warehouses for the planned revolution.

**Ben-Zayb**

A patriotic and jingoistic journalist, Ben-Zayb writes for the Manila Spanish newspaper El Grito de la Integridad under the pen name Ybañez. He is unscrupulous in his storytelling, often distorting facts to make stories more appealing.

**Father Florentino**

Father Florentino, Isagani's uncle and a retired priest, is a respected figure despite his past romantic entanglements.

Having chosen priesthood over love, he represents the secular Filipino priests of Rizal's time. His character also emphasizes Rizal's opposition to a bloody revolt.

**Post-Test Activity:**

Using the chart below, compare and contrast the characters, plot, theme, and values learned from *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*.

	<b>Noli Me Tangere</b>	<b>El Filibusterismo</b>
Characters		
Plot		
Theme		

Values Learned		

**References:**

Duka, C. & Pila, R. (2010). *Rizal: His legacy to Philippine society*. Pasig City: Anvil Publishing, Inc.

The Reign of Greed translated by Charles Derbyshire

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/10676/10676-h/10676-h.htm>

<https://noypi.com.ph/el-filibusterismo-characters/>

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiyC3ODSVCwzpJptbyvet\\_AMCnMaCpd0q](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiyC3ODSVCwzpJptbyvet_AMCnMaCpd0q)

Review by Barbara Celarent of Noli and El Filibusterismo

<https://home.uchicago.edu/aabbott/barbpapers/barbrizal.pdf>