Historical heritages are mostly known for its aesthetics and instagrammable look, however, some people tend to forget that places like this are home for interesting stories. Historical heritages are part of our national identity as it tells our values, stories, culture, and tradition. In addition, historical pieces which include heritages have all been employed in the analysis and study of history. Hence, it is controversial to demolish a nation’s historical heritage. One of the issues discussed in the documentary is the slowly dismantling for relocation of the ancestral house of Teodora Alonzo, Dr. Jose Rizal’s mother. However, there are different people who shared their researches and opinions regarding the history of the place and why it should or should not demolish the historical landmark.

The documentary is intriguing as many theorists gave their own thoughts on the happenings inside the Alberto Mansion. Starting from the first story that was said by Howie Severino. He reveals the real cause of the family's discord. The quarrel and miscommunication between the Rizal and Alberto families were sparked by Teodora Formoso, wife of Jose Alberto’s stepsister of Teodora Alonzo, whom was said to be allegedly poisoned by Teodora Alonzo. Another theory is that Teodora Alonso and Jose Alberto's father, Lorenzo Alberto Alonso, had a fixed marriage to Ilocana Paula Florentino, a 12-year-old girl in Vigan. As a result, Teodora and her sister were born into the world as illegitimate children, and José Alberto claimed to be Lorenzo Alonso's biological son. However, Dr. Bimbo Sta. Maria is of the opinion that the family's strategy to maintain their position in the government and its relations with the Spanish government included the half-brother issue. According to Barbara Gonzales, the great-granddaughter of Rizal, Jose Alberto and Saturnina engaged in extramarital relations that resulted in a kid, whom they assumed to be Soledad, the youngest sibling of Jose Rizal. (I-Witness, 2022).

Sadly, according to Rappler, it was said that the interior of the mansion is being removed slowly by the Acuzar’s company, whom Gerardo Alberto sold the mansion. And Gerardo’s reason to this is that he did not want the government to handle it and Teodora Alonso did not live there. She lived in Sta. Cruz and the one who lived there was Jose Alonso, the half-brother of Teodora Alonso, concluding that Teodora had nothing to do with the mansion (I-Witness, 2022). This topic is also controversial as it written in the book of Gregorio Zaide is that Teodora and Jose are legitimate siblings. In contrary, Teodora and Jose are half-brother according to the book of Austin Craig and Asuncion Lopez Bantug. The United Artists for Cultural Conservation and Development, is a group that advocate for the preservation of the Alberto Mansion, they opposed to the idea of Acuzar’s “restoration” and “renovation” of the said national heritage. I agree to the group because moving something historical remove some or most of its context making it more unreliable or can change the story.

In the Philippines, it is stated in the Republic Act No. 10066, also known as The National Cultural Heritage Act, article III section 5 that we should protect structures dating at least fifty (50) years old from exportation, modification, and demolition. This applies to the 200-year-old Alberto Mansion as it meets the said condition. However, according to Gerardo Alberto, not all houses in the country are national heritage (I-Witness, 2022). I agree to his statement, however, I do believe that the Alberto Mansion is considered as one of historical heritages of the country as it is the ancestral home of Teodora Rizal whom the mother of our national hero Jose Rizal, therefore, he cannot just demolish the place at his own command. To support my statement, one of the papers written by Rizal located in the Rizal Library in Ateneo de Manila University, it is shown there that Teodora and Jose have the same parents.

In December 15 of 2019, Philippine Inquirer brought good news to the people of Biñan, it was stated in their article that Borja and Rosauro Sta. Maria, Laguna Tourism Chief, started a project that targets the restoration of Alberto Mansion and refused the demolition permit issued by Gerardo. The project was called “Save Alberto House Movement”.

To summarize, it is indeed interesting to study Life and Works of Rizal as we learn the different stories of not only Rizal but also his mother. It is also important to foster nationalism when it comes to this issue at is a form of disrespect when destroying our country’s historical heritage because it forms who we are and it is part of our national identity.

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