

- a. Is the teaching of Rizal's Life and Works course realistic given the dangers and sensitivities of literature as a means of communication in learning nationalism, patriotism, and virtue of Filipino?

No, because Rizal's contributions to the Philippines' current state have had a significant impact. Literature, as a vehicle, helps to express nationalist ideas particularly well. It gives nations and nationalist movements a voice to speak. Filipino literature is an important part of Filipino culture and identity (Borla, 2023).

According to research by Borla (2023), schools reflect the dominant society. Borla also states that back in Jose Rizal's time, his works amongst hundreds of other literary pieces by known and unknown authors that speaks about the injustices, cruelty, and inhumane acts towards Filipinos under the Spanish colonization are burned to the ground. The colonizers did this to prevent the proliferation of "propaganda" against them. Comparatively relevant to this day, where journalists and advocates are being silenced and killed along with their spirits for rightful journalism (Borla, 2023). Dirar (as cited in Borla, 2023) states that clear manifestation of how colonialism reconstructs the national identity, political, and social movements of a country. Blakemore (as cited in Borla, 2023) states that their articles and editorials are consistently being censored and non-stop media blackout for coverages that speak against and/or reveals the ill corruption and injustices of the administrations in the country.

Luis V. Teodoro, a distinguished Filipino journalist and academic, has written extensively on various topics including Philippine history and national heroes like José Rizal. One notable written work where he addresses Rizal is his essay "Rizal and the Philippine Revolution" (1961), which appears in the book "Rizal: A Centennial Tribute" (1996). Rizal was faced with the difficult but important decision to decide between a violently committed Revolution and a methodical approach to agitating for changes inside the existing social structure. The problem for a liberal is that, while he knows that calling for reforms within the bounds of the law is nearly impossible, he also believes that his people are not ready for the sacrifice and chaos that inevitably accompany the collapse of the social order. However, Rizal would not give up his spirit; instead of suppressing his liberalism, he chose the surefire route to disaster. Because Rizal opted to acknowledge and uphold the unrestricted freedom of the intellect, even though he and his family had direct experience with the cruelty of the social order, it is likely that he was aware of the penalty for open inquiry.

We need to gain insight into what he has done for our country, as well as what it was like to be in his shoes throughout his lifetime and go through his experiences. Rizal's works and life narrative are fundamental to Philippine history and identity. His writings have the power to arouse feelings of nationalism and patriotism in students and encourage critical engagement with their past. Teaching these books can encourage conversations on culture, identity, and the principles of freedom and democracy. Through his writings, Rizal demonstrated how patriotism has always existed and will persist in all situations. Filipinos are known for

their strong sense of voluntarism. The willingness of the Filipino people to study Rizal's works is enough to validate his contributions.

b. How important are literary criticisms in the study of Rizal's Life and Works?

Diving into José Rizal's writings through literary criticism unveils the beating heart of Filipino identity and nationalism. His novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* don't just tell stories – they're biting takedowns of Spanish colonial rule and Church abuses. When we peel back the layers of these works, we see Rizal holding up a mirror to the raw injustices Filipinos faced under Spanish thumb.

Take Ambeth Ocampo's *Rizal Without the Overcoat*. He digs into how characters like the idealistic Crisostomo Ibarra and the corrupt Padre Dámaso paint a messy, true-to-life picture of colonial society. It's not black and white – it's all shades of gray.

And Rizal's symbolism? It's a goldmine. León Ma. Guerrero, in *The First Filipino*, argues that María Clara isn't just a love interest – she's the embodiment of how Filipino women were crushed under colonial rule. Every character, every scene seems to whisper a deeper truth about life under Spanish control.

But here's where it gets interesting: Rizal's work doesn't sit still. It evolves, just like the man himself. Gina Apostol's *The Revolution According to Raymundo Mata* points out how *El Filibusterismo* has a revolutionary fire burning under its surface. Watch Simoun's journey from starry-eyed idealist to hardened radical – it's like watching Rizal's own views on independence shift in real-time.

Bottom line? We need literary criticism to really get Rizal. It's our decoder ring for his ideas, his symbols, and his lasting impact. By wrestling with his words, we keep finding new ways Rizal speaks to us about who we are and how to stand up against oppression. The guy might be long gone, but his voice? It's still loud and clear.

Reflecting on the importance of literary criticism in understanding the life and works of Rizal, it is obvious that it has an important role in exposing the various intricacies present in his writings. Through thorough analysis of *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, it helps me to form a stronger connection with these pieces. Critique requires a thorough analysis of not only the historical and political aspects of these pieces, but also Rizal's intricate depictions of colonial society, social disparities, and the complex connections between his characters and broader societal establishments.

The transition of Crisostomo Ibarra from being an idealistic reformer in *Noli Me Tangere* to the vengeful Simoun in *El Filibusterismo* represents Rizal's disappointment with peaceful reform under Spanish authority. Simoun's persona gives an insight into Rizal's transition toward revolutionary ideas, which I may not completely understand without the interpretive insights offered by literary scholars. Reading historians like Ambeth Ocampo provides Rizal's impatience with sluggish reform and understanding of the necessity for drastic change.

Furthermore, literary analysis emphasizes Rizal's symbolism, which is easy to ignore without more exploration. Some people argue that María Clara is portrayed as a passive love interest that represents the Filipino people's suffering under colonialism, particularly among women. Critics such as León Ma. Guerrero shows Rizal's conscious use of symbols to reflect on the social and political impacts of colonialism.

In addition, literary criticism keeps Rizal's work current and relevant. It opens possibilities for reinterpreting his works by present frameworks like postcolonial and feminist views. In doing so, we continue to discover new meanings in his pieces and apply them to modern challenges of oppression, identity, and government. For example, analyzing *El Filibusterismo* now may raise questions about the morality of revolutionary violence or the limitations of nonviolent activism—issues that remain vital in the global political discussion. Through literary criticism, Rizal's work relates to modern difficulties of nation-building and resistance, rather than remaining restricted to its historical setting.

In conclusion, exploring the works of Rizal through literary criticism is not only essential but also required for properly appreciating his contributions to Filipino nationalism and the greater discussion on freedom and independence. We can better understand the impact that Rizal left and how it continues to inspire fights for justice and self-determination across the world by evaluating his works' symbolism, characters, and bigger issues. Upon this reflection, I've realized that Rizal's books are more than simply historical artifacts; they're actively molding our collective future.

One of the greatest works of Rizal's is *Kundiman*, one of the less popular yet powerful works of José Rizal. The first thing I noticed was when he turned an old Filipino love song to a touching appeal — for the one true country of his heart. *Kundiman* is a love poem song by form however Rizal redefined it to symbolize his love for the Philippines. The poem is not merely about romantic love, but it is a hopeful hymn, an appeal to freedom and a proclamation of the Filipinos undying spirit amidst colonial oppression.

That is the simple beauty of *Kundiman*. As a love song as it may be, his is a love for the country and before the sweetness of the melody did come to a heavily bitter sweetness in his take of wanting its freedom as heard through every note. In the closing lines, "But O the sun will shine again! Itself the land shall dischain and once more round the world with growing praise shall sound the name of the Tagalog race." actually, this line deeply resonated with me, bringing out a strong feeling of hope and showing Rizal's steadfast dream for the future of the Philippines, even in the face of great suffering.

Literary criticisms in the study of Rizal's life and works are relevant and beneficial for the long-term use in educating the youth on how to be responsible citizens of society. Analyzing his work is essential, especially since nowadays society has forgotten the value of being a Filipino. Reading and pondering his works

enables every Filipino to look back on the past. It also reminds us that we should not be parted from our roots.

They help us understand Rizal's ideas and writings better. By looking closely at Rizal's novels and essays, we can learn more about what he thought about society in his time. His stories, like "Noli Me Tangere" and "El Filibusterismo", show problems in the Philippines when it was under Spanish rule. There are different types of literary criticism. Some look at the author's life, some compare different books, and others look at how the book shows ideas about society or psychology. People who study books and writing look closely at José Rizal's work. This helps us understand what he thought about society and the time he lived in. Rizal wrote stories that showed problems in his country. He used his writing to teach people about being good citizens. By looking at his books carefully, we can see how Rizal helped create a Filipino identity when other countries were in control. Some people think we spend too much time studying his writing and should focus more on other parts of his life, like his work in politics. These studies also help us understand why Rizal's ideas are still important today. For example, his thoughts on education and being a good citizen are still relevant. However, some people think we might focus too much on his writing. They say we should also look at other parts of his life, like his work in politics, to get a full picture of who Rizal was. Literary criticisms are a key tool for understanding Rizal's impact on Philippine literature, history, and culture.

- c. If a given a chance to deconstruct one of Rizal's written works (both well-known and obscure),  
What would it be and what is its relation to the analysis and understanding of nation-building.

"Noli Me Tangere, which translates to "Touch Me Not" in Latin—the first of Rizal's two novels—is my choice. DeStephano (2011) notes that "Noli Me Tangere" was completed on February 21, 1887. As a result of his extensive exposure to European ideas and culture when he was living overseas, Rizal was able to critically analyze Spanish colonialism and develop his vision for a reformed Philippines. Examining the power, sacrifice, social, political, and religious issues that the Philippines experienced throughout the Spanish colonial era is his most well-known and important work. Through its narrative, the book reveals the various forms of oppression and exploitation that the people of the Philippines endured. It also delivers an angry expose of the corrupt practices of the Spanish colonial government and Catholic Church, as well as the difficulties that people faced in surviving in this harsh environment.

The novel "Noli Me Tangere" gives us a thorough analysis and understanding of the realities of the development of nations in the Philippines during Rizal's lifetime. These realities include social and political structures, which show how the Spanish controlled the country and the issues people faced, cultural and religious changes brought about by Spanish rule, personal struggles, which describe the difficulties Filipinos faced on a daily basis, and the beginning of the revolution, which describes how Filipinos began to want independence from Spain, including social injustice, corrupt governance, and cultural imperialism. The relevance of these issues is still present today, as several countries face similar challenges in their pursuit of national development.

in connection with the understanding and analysis of nation-building: Social inequality: "Noli Me Tangere" demonstrates how the importance of some people was increased throughout Spanish reign. Political corruption: The book describes the dishonesty and misuse of power by Spanish authorities, a problem that continues in many nations even today. Cultural imperialism: Spanish attempts to impose their culture on the Filipino people can be learned from this. Many nations still struggle with this issue today. Rizal thought that a strong nation could only be built via education. It is still the case today. We can better understand Rizal's views on the difficulties experienced by the Filipino people throughout the period of nation-building by deconstructing "Noli Me Tangere". In-depth analysis of the social, political, and historical complexity of Spanish colonial power is provided in Rizal's work, which also provides light on the challenges and goals faced by the Filipino people at this time.

If I will be given a chance to choose what to deconstruct in Rizal's work, I would choose his novel "Noli Me Tangere," which means "Touch me not." Touch me not" means that the book contains things that need to be discussed but nobody dares to talk about it. These things were delicate matters that nobody dare to

touch it; hence, “touch me not” or “don’t dare to discuss about it.” Published during the Spanish colonial period in 1887, this novel is about unmasking the corruption and brutality of Spanish rule in the Philippines and the struggles of individuals.

One of the protagonists in this novel is Crisostomo Ibarra, who advocates for the freedom of Filipinos during that time. Rizal analyzed the social and political problems in 19th-century Philippine society to transform the Filipino nation. Such transformation can only be realized if the root causes of all the problems are unearthed and exposed, and if the Filipino people will be enlightened about their miserable situation. This novel not only entertains the readers but also challenges them to confront the harsh realities faced by Filipinos during the colonial period.

According to Bustamante (2018) Ferdinand Blumentrit, Rizal’s closest friend wrote that Rizal’s objective in his *Noli Me Tangere* was “to give ‘plastic form to the abuses of the administration, to the neglect of political prisoners, accused rightly or wrongly, to the inhuman harshness and cruelty that the more ambitious among the friars used in all their actions” which means Rizal intend to create a vivid picture of the wrong doings and the corruption of the Spanish government in the Philippines. He wanted the readers to see that the Spanish abuse the Filipinos using the story. It also means that Rizal highlighting the people who stand for their beliefs and opinions are often misjudged and mistreated during that time. Spanish, specifically the Spanish priest are the ones who are using their power to abuse Filipinos using a harsh method in treating them. Additionally, “*Noli Me Tangere*” conveys a powerful message about the empowerment that comes through education. Rizal emphasized the role of education in helping Filipinos develop critical thinking and civic responsibility, which are vital for building a strong nation. The novel’s significance lies in its ability to serve as a catalyst for the movement for independence in the Philippines, revealing the customs and values of both the Filipino populace and the Spanish colonizers while accurately depicting and criticizing the prevalent vices in Philippine society (Albela & Hila, 2020).

If given an opportunity to deconstruct one of Jose Rizal’s written works, it must be “*Noli Me Tangere*”. Jose Rizal published it in 1887, it serves as a mirror, reflecting the Philippines’ sociopolitical reality during colonial control (“*Noli Me Tangere (Touch Me Not)* by Jose Rizal.,” 2006). Using satire brilliantly, Rizal creates other memorable characters whose lives manifest the poisonous effects of religious and colonial oppression. In Jose Rizal’s “*Noli Me Tangere*” he disaffected peasants forced to become outlaws: in sum, a microcosm of Philippine society in the afflictions that plague them (“*Noli Me Tangere (Touch Me Not)* by Jose Rizal.,” 2006). Rizal paints a harrowing picture of his beloved but suffering country in a work that speaks eloquently not just to Filipinos but to all who have endured or witnessed oppression.

And all throughout Jose Rizal’s work about the novel “*Noli Me Tangere*” it tells the story about the social injustices, the reflection and yearning for freedom (Green, 2024). The novel tells the story of Crisóstomo

Ibarra, a young Filipino who returns to his homeland after studying abroad. He dreams of improving the lives of his countrymen by using the knowledge and skills he has acquired overseas. Through its characters and plot, "Noli Me Tangere" exposes the injustices and corruption under Spanish rule, including the abuses of the friar orders, the discrimination against native Filipinos, and the flaws in the colonial administrative system (Green, 2024). This novel is one of the famous written novel works of Jose Rizal.

Furthermore, by deconstructing Jose Rizal's novel, we can have a better knowledge of the realities of nation-building in the Philippines during his time, as well as the impact on the nation's identity. "Noli Me Tangere" is a novel that was an advisory for the Filipinos to fight against the colonizers and today's reminder of our history (Clarisse, 2021). The characters and the events in the story resemble our life, culture, and beliefs of Filipino people. This literary piece will mark in our hearts the values that the novel tells us to be a good role model that will benefit our country. Reading this literary piece will make us realize the true meaning of nationalism and be a catalyst for change.



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