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## José Rizal: A Complete Overview

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### Basic Information

- **Full Name:** José Protacio Rizal Mercado y Alonso Realonda
  - **Born:** June 19, 1861
  - **Place of Birth:** Calamba, Laguna, Philippines
  - **Died:** December 30, 1896 (aged 35)
  - **Place of Death:** Bagumbayan (now Luneta Park), Manila, Philippines
  - **Cause of Death:** Execution by firing squad
  - **Occupation:** Writer, physician, nationalist, revolutionary, polymath
  - **Languages:** Fluent in Spanish, Tagalog, English, French, German, Latin, Greek, and several other languages
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### Early Life and Education

- Rizal was the seventh of eleven children born to a wealthy Filipino family.
  - His father, Francisco Mercado, was a tenant farmer and his mother, Teodora Alonso, was well-educated and a strong influence on him.
  - He showed exceptional intelligence and skill in the arts and sciences from a young age.
  - Studied in Manila at Ateneo Municipal de Manila, excelling in literature, philosophy, and the sciences.
  - Studied medicine and ophthalmology at the University of Santo Tomas and later at Universidad Central de Madrid, Spain.
  - He also studied philosophy and letters in Madrid and traveled extensively through Europe and Asia.
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### Major Works

- **Noli Me Tangere (Touch Me Not)** — A novel published in 1887 that exposed the social injustices and abuses of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines. It was critical of the friars and the corrupt government officials.
  - **El Filibusterismo (The Reign of Greed)** — The sequel to *Noli Me Tangere* published in 1891, which continued to criticize Spanish rule and called for reforms through more radical means.
  - **Mi Último Adiós (My Last Farewell)** — A poem written on the eve of his execution expressing his love for the Philippines and his hope for its freedom.
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### Contributions and Legacy

- **Propagandist and Reformer:** Rizal was the leading figure of the Filipino Propaganda Movement, advocating for peaceful reform of Spanish rule rather than outright revolution.
- **Martyr for Philippine Independence:** His execution by the Spanish colonial government for alleged rebellion, sedition, and conspiracy turned him into a martyr and inspired the Philippine Revolution.
- **Nation's Hero:** Recognized as the national hero of the Philippines; his life and works symbolize Filipino nationalism, reform, and independence.

- **Influence on Philippine History:** Rizal's writings inspired the revolutionaries like Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Aguinaldo.
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## Personal Life

- Rizal had several love interests but never married.
  - He had a close relationship with Josephine Bracken, whom he met in Dapitan, where he was exiled. She stayed with him until his execution.
  - He was also a skilled artist and sculptor, a linguist, and an inventor.
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## Exile and Death

- Due to his reformist ideas, Rizal was arrested and exiled to Dapitan (1892-1896), a remote town in Mindanao.
  - In Dapitan, he practiced medicine, taught, and undertook community projects such as building a water system and a school.
  - After the outbreak of the Philippine Revolution in 1896, Rizal was arrested again, charged with rebellion, and despite lack of evidence, was sentenced to death.
  - He was executed by firing squad on December 30, 1896, at Bagumbayan Field (now Luneta Park). His death galvanized the revolutionaries.
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## Quotes by José Rizal

- *"The youth is the hope of our future."*
  - *"I die without seeing the dawn brighten over my native land. You, who have it to see, welcome it — and forget not those who have fallen during the night!"*
  - *"He who does not know how to look back at where he came from will never get to his destination."*
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## Commemorations

- **Rizal Day:** December 30, a national holiday in the Philippines to commemorate his death.
- **Monuments and Statues:** The most famous monument is the Rizal Monument in Luneta Park, Manila, which marks his execution site.
- **Places Named After Him:** Numerous streets, schools, towns, and institutions bear his name throughout the Philippines and abroad.
- **Legacy in Education:** Rizal is studied in Filipino schools as a symbol of nationalism, courage, and patriotism.