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nography, biography, and theory into a revised Polanyian framework that scholars from a wide range of fields will certainly find useful. It is thoroughly researched and deftly theorized, advancing our understanding of labor, institutions, social movements, politics, and power in China. This book is vital reading for anyone interested in labor, globalization, transitional societies, and inequality more broadly.

*Noli me tângere.* By José Rizal. Translated by Harold Augenbraum. New York: Penguin, 2006 (in Spanish, 1887). Pp. xxix+444.

*El filibusterismo.* By José Rizal. Translated by Harold Augenbraum. New York: Penguin, 2011 (in Spanish, 1891). Pp. xxiii+339.

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Like biography, fiction can be a form of social analysis. Both view the social process from the life position of the individual, focusing on individual consciousness and experience. Unlike scientific social analysis, both explore a purely local world. In that world, they see different people and groups, each in its complex particularity, each from a particular and inevitably limited point of view that is itself within the flow of interaction. By contrast, scientific social analysis generally sees abstractions—properties of social beings—and from a position outside the flow of interaction. Even its models of action imagine abstract beings making isolated and formalized decisions in formal structures, not particular beings struggling in a loosely woven mesh of possibility and constraint.

The individual standpoint makes fiction and biography very persuasive to readers, who after all are particular individuals themselves. But it can hide the social forces and implicit connections that are so often invisible to individuals. Explicitly scientific social analysis has precisely the opposite virtue. By looking at social categories, or social groups, or even social properties, it easily finds the hidden forces and structural constraints so invisible to actors. But it does so at the price of irreality. The social process does not happen in abstractions, but in complex experiences. Abstractions do not act.

Yet sometimes there is fiction whose abstract, almost scientific focus is plain to see. Writers like Anthony Trollope, Émile Zola, and R. K. Narayan created entire worlds of activity in linked series of novels, ranging across characters and classes to represent whole societies. Novels like *Sasame Yuki* of Tanizaki Juni'chiro, *Hongloumeng* of Cao Xueqin, and

\*Another review from 2054—*Ed.*

*Cien años de soledad* of Gabriel García Márquez trace in detail the rise and fall of large and complex families. Writers like Chinua Achebe anatomize the colonial experience. Indeed, some writers have turned social analysis into fiction in order to intervene politically. Political analysis of social class took fictional form in the work of Upton Sinclair and Elizabeth Gaskell, for example, while feminism produced Mariama Bâ, Teresa de la Parra, Rosario Castellanos, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Nationalism also has presented social analysis through activist political fiction, as in Alessandro Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*.

Among the most politically successful examples of such work are the novels of José Rizal. Although there is continuing debate about Rizal's brief, complicated, and much-mythologized life, the main outline is well known. José Mercado was born in 1861 in Calamba, a small city south of Manila. After 1872, José used an alternate family name, Rizal, on the advice of an older brother distantly connected with an earlier rebellion against the Spanish authorities. (Rizal would later claim that association outright, by dedicating his second novel to the three priests executed for that rebellion.) The Mercado family was of high social status: Rizal's grandfathers had held local government posts; his father was a well-to-do planter renting lands from the Dominican order; the household was well staffed with nurses and other servants. Ethnically, the family had Philippine, Chinese, Spanish, and even some Japanese roots, a combination not unusual in an archipelago that had seen repeated immigrations. As tenant farmers, the Mercados stood near the top of local hierarchies and could afford to educate their sons well. But this did not protect them from harassment, and Rizal saw his mother imprisoned and, later on, his family's tenancy revoked and his parents ejected from their house because of a complicated lawsuit with their Dominican landlords.

Rizal took his first degree at Manila's Jesuit school in 1877 and matriculated at the Dominican University of Santo Tomas, where he quickly turned to medical studies even while beginning to write for publication. In 1882, he met his uncle Antonio Rivera, who became a helpful adviser. More important, he fell in love with Rivera's daughter Leonor, then 13 (to Rizal's 21). But at the urging of Rivera as well as of his own brother, Rizal left for Europe. While he pursued further medical education in Madrid, he organized expatriate political groups and began to write the novel *Noli me tângere*. Rizal finished his novel while studying ophthalmology in Paris and Heidelberg.

In 1887, Rizal returned to the Philippines, his novel (already published in Berlin) preceding him by some weeks. The book created a furor. His parents and brother expected his momentary arrest, and the Spanish governor, hoping to find out more about him, insisted that he have a personal bodyguard. The groups that were attacked in the book protested

vigorously, the lawsuit about the family land reached a new stage, and the Spanish governor, realizing he could not protect Rizal, soon advised him to leave the country.

Rizal left in 1888, not to return until 1891. During his brief Philippine stay, he had been unable to see Leonor Rivera. He went to Europe via the Pacific, enjoying a brief sojourn in Japan before crossing the United States and then the Atlantic. Working in the British Museum, he undertook a revision of Anotonio de Morga's 17th-century study of the Philippines and began a sequel to *Noli me tángere*. He moved to Barcelona, where he helped animate the so-called propaganda movement, which aimed to enlighten the Philippine population about themselves. He then moved on to Paris, where his political views steadily radicalized: Rizal was now explicit about Philippine independence from Spain. But drastic personal events seized his attention. His family was evicted from its farm. Leonor broke off their engagement (her mother had been intercepting both their letters, it seems; Rizal had in any case had some affairs of the heart in Europe). Rizal printed the final version of his second novel, *El filibusterismo*, in 1891 (in Belgium). During its writing, the work had been darkened as Rizal reacted to the drift of Philippine politics toward crisis. In late 1891, he sailed for the Philippines, seemingly committing himself to fate. In Hong Kong he found his entire family, which had fled (or been exiled) from the country. He negotiated vaguely with the British about Filipino colonies in North Borneo. In June 1892, he returned to Manila and was almost immediately sent as a political prisoner to the southern island of Mindanao. There he ran an eye clinic, while others, inspired in part by *El filibusterismo*, created the secret societies that would soon revolt against Spain. In 1896, once the revolution got under way, he volunteered to do medical service in Cuba—site of a similar revolution. After various maneuverings by the authorities he was executed on December 30, 1896, at age 35.

An ideal martyr—he saw himself as a Tagalog Christ—Rizal proved invaluable to generations of radicals, apologists, and even colonialists. The new American overseers of the Philippines, for example, happily furthered the Rizal myth, which helped conceal their hijacking of the Philippine revolution. Indeed, there would eventually be groups worshiping Rizal as an incarnation of Christ or, in some cases, as an independent god. But the stories of Rizal were many and conflicting. For a century and a half, scholarship has swirled around the minutest details of his life. There is little agreement, perhaps because of the qualities of indecision that once led Miguel de Unamuno to say that Rizal was not a Tagalog Christ but a Tagalog Hamlet.

But our concern here is not with the mythologization of Rizal but with the novels that led to his execution. The two are such central texts of Philippine nationalism that they even have standard nicknames (the *Noli*

and the *Fili*), which I shall use here. Completed when Rizal was 26 and 30, respectively, the novels chronicle the two returns to the Philippines of Crisostomo Ibarra, a European-educated *ilustrado* (an educated man of purely Filipino ancestry).

In the *Noli*, the Ibarra character is in fact little more than a projection of José Rizal into a series of possible events—family matters, romantic relationships, political life—that are used to examine the internal structure of Philippine society from the *ilustrado* point of view. Ibarra returns to his homeland seeking to help it develop and to marry his beloved sweetheart, but is on the one hand thwarted by malevolent friars and corrupt merchants and on the other aided by dispossessed poor people and fallen *ilustrados*. Although he radicalizes slowly, he is hounded by the authorities for the tame reformism that he has in fact left behind, and in the end barely escapes with his life. Around this simple plot swirls a gothic melodrama, complete with madwomen, imprisoned maidens, devilish villains, elaborate tortures, and incredible coincidences. The tone of the text varies between gothicism, didacticism, parody, allegory, and—occasionally—straight narration. The book is extremely rich in local references (almost enough as to be unreadable for a nonlocal without notes), but also has a surprising number of biblical allusions, chief among them the Christlike character of the hero, which itself follows a long-standing tradition of Philippine interest in Christ's Passion.

In the *Fili*, which is modeled more or less directly on Alexandre Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo*, the Ibarra who fled at the end of the *Noli* returns as a fabulously wealthy merchant determined to lure the Spanish colonialists toward destruction by encouraging and exacerbating their evils. Inwardly corrupted by his own vengefulness, he foments hatred on both sides and plans a spectacular bombing to ignite a revolution. But the bombing is thwarted by one of his student acquaintances, who has retained the purity of soul that Ibarra has lost. Ibarra flees, is injured, and dies, reconciled to death by a retired and godly priest. The *Fili* is a more disciplined novel, shorter and less meandering than the *Noli*. Its tone is more consistent as well, although the earlier parody and gothicism do recur occasionally.

Rizal's purpose of social analysis is evident in the fact that in both books, nearly half the chapters serve not to advance the plot but to describe and analyze Philippine society. This is accomplished by two means. The first is by creating stock characters reminiscent of the fiction of Charles Dickens, characters whose sole purpose is to represent some group whose view of the situation is contrasted with that of Ibarra or some other character. Thus, the *Noli* features a "philosopher" Don Anastasio, who gives a detached philosophical analysis of the events in the novel. There is also Elias, who, like his biblical namesake, is active in prophecy and revolutionary work, preparing the way for the messianic revolution (and saving Ibarra's life at

the cost of his own.) There is the quietly reformist deputy mayor, the sycophantic newspaperman, and various impotent military figures. And there are, above all, a large gallery of evil clerics: some loud and assertive, some quiet and nefarious, some guilty and tortured, some cynical or defeated. With few exceptions, they and their *ilustrado* allies and dependents are portrayed as systematic conspirators oppressing the Philippine people. Long chapters anatomize their evils in detail, in a broad variety of voices: Father Damaso's sermon in chapter 31 is a masterful mixture of description, parody, accusation, and a dozen other things.

Alongside these characters, who deliver the ideology of their class or type, is a second type of social analysis, which is much more ethnographic. There are long chapters that describe in loving detail this or that Philippine village festival or procession or meeting. Often these are reported through the eyes of different types of onlookers such as women in religious sodalities, poor people, *ilustrados*. This device provides a balanced but individualized overall picture. Similarly the various negative ceremonies—arrests, meetings, conspiracies—are also characterized quite deliberately by similar onlooker types: Civil Guards, victims, priests. These chapters on festivals and other spectacles are quite evidently the wistful remembrances of a Rizal lonely in Europe, and they have a warmth and a wealth of detail that are extremely persuasive. The chapters on oppressions are equally emotional and in a curious way equally European.

What is missing analytically from the *Noli* is found in the *Fili*, which moves the action from the local town of San Diego (Rizal's hometown of Calamba) to Manila. Here the focus is on the students whose dissatisfactions are the great hope of Ibarra (who returns under the name Simoun; he is assumed by the authorities to have died). In the *Fili*, long chapters pillory the educational system, while new stock characters walk the stage: the old and timid lawyer, the corrupt Chinese merchant, the ambitious liberal friar. But again even the major characters are simply voices for particular social positions. The transformation of the noble Ibarra into the vengeful huckster Simoun is never really motivated. The tortured minds of Father Salví and Father Dámaso—the two principal villains—are never examined. The students are the most realistic people in either novel, as one would expect given Rizal's own experience. But even they do not develop and change as characters. In both novels, then, the story is thus purely social, an allegory of social life, populated by social types.

The women are particularly allegorical. The elite girls are all rich and beautiful but nonetheless individualized—one pampered, another faithful, one coquettish, another mercenary. The poor girls are less individualized, but uniformly noble and oppressed. The adult women are also types: the poor mother driven mad, the termagant wife of the brutal lieutenant, the obnoxious social climber, various types of excessively religious

women. All the adult women are faintly or overtly ridiculous, and at one point in the *Noli* a chapter describing a literal cockfight is immediately followed by a chapter describing an exactly parallel fight between the termagant and the social climber just mentioned. Rizal understands the social position of women only from a male point of view.

All this tells us what is already automatic in the genre of fiction-as-social-analysis: Rizal's novels are intensely positioned. Not only do they portray the social process from only one point of view, their young and inexperienced author has not the ability of a Bâ or a Tanizaki to see the complexities of others' worlds. So the novels become almost explicit representations of their author's immediate perceptions of the social process around him. They are thus doubly ethnographic—first in their own would-be ethnography of the Philippines of their day and second in their exposition of that ethnography from so particular a point of view.

But if we locate these novels as analyses of the social history of their time, we see that Rizal has analyzed one of the many versions of agricultural commercialization characteristic of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Landlordism spread worldwide in this period. It is a story we have often encountered in this cycle of readings—in Fukutake on rural Japan, in Fei on village China, in da Cunha on the backlands of Brazil, Flores Galindo on the Andean utopia, Plaatje on South Africa. The process through which commercial agriculture replaced subsistence throughout most of the world took several human lifetimes and obliterated many lives. In the Philippines, the friar orders were among the chief landholders who emerged in this transformation, and their tenants—often *illustrado* families like the Mercados—bore the brunt of their attempts to maximize output as the Philippines moved away not only from subsistence, but also from local commercial agriculture, toward an export economy based on tobacco and sugar.

Karl Marx and Adam Smith would both have thought that this worldwide process was in some sense grand and inevitable, although they would have differed on the reasons for the inevitability. But the great political and moral question is really less about the process's inevitability than about whether it could have occurred in some way that would not have ruined millions of human lives. By presenting his analysis of the capitalist transformation of agriculture in a pair of allegorical novels, Rizal poses that question much more effectively than can an abstract treatise. For whatever the abstract analyses may tell us, history is always experienced in a particular place and time, by particular people and groups.

For Rizal, the most important force in this history is organized religion. Yet there is in his novels a profound ambivalence about this central phenomenon in human experience. Some of the most comic passages in the books concern the economies of salvation: the exact cost of a dispensation

to purchase eternal rest for a husband or parents (*Noli*, chap. 16) or the precise number of plenary indulgences to free one's husband from purgatory (*Noli*, chap. 18). And the friars are relentlessly portrayed as corrupt, worldly, lustful, and simply evil. Yet Ibarra in the *Noli* continually admires real faith, and the Simoun of the *Fili* has become corrupted in part because he has lost such a faith. Moreover, the *Noli* is clearly organized around the Christlike Ibarra, and the *Fili* ends with a passionate exposition of God's justice as understood by Catholic theology and with an explicit warning against daring to question God's motives or acting as God oneself. Rizal surely had no illusions that this orthodox peroration would gainsay the incendiary quality of his books, so it is clear that he meant this as a personal statement—perhaps a Hamlet-like confession of his own Christ complex as mere vainglory.

To be sure, one has only to say such a thing to know that millions of people will dispute it. For interpreting Rizal eventually became a way of talking about the nature of the Philippines. His near deification in the decades after his death eventually culminated in a law requiring that his books be taught in every high school in the nation. But that inevitably meant that widely differing views had to be accommodated within his writings. People do not forget their differences because of the facts they read, but rather read their differences into those facts themselves.

In this lies the danger of fiction as a mode of social analysis. On the one hand, fiction can present the real experience of individuals with a level of detail and a penetration of insight that can come only in the rarest ethnographies and microsociologies. Fiction takes us inside experience, giving us the emotions of the actors themselves—their anger or amusement, joy or sadness. And this can be coupled with the separate judgments and emotions of an author who stands slightly apart. On the other hand, a reader cannot check the insights and data of the fiction writer, nor easily correct for his or her own biases. Perhaps more important, the writing of fiction is itself a difficult art. Steering a complex narrative between the dangers of repetitiveness and vagueness is a hard-won perfection, as the more compact and stylized *Fili* shows. Yet in the end it is the *Noli* that persuades, with its exuberance, its flaws, its uncontrolled and even narcissistic passion. A nation that produced such a book was indeed a nation.