

Filipino people and rizal

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Ateneo De Naga University Naga City Rizal on Filipino Women Identity Today
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— 2010 Title: Rizal on Filipino Women Identity Today Introduction: During
Rizal's time, he showed us what a real character of a woman is on those
times. He told in one of his letter that from his infancy woman are with
agreeable manners, beautiful ways, and modest demeanor. But he also told
us that there was in all an admixture of servitude and deference to the words
or whims of their so-called " spiritual fathers", due to excessive kindness,
modesty, or perhaps ignorance. They seemed faded plants sown and reared
in darkness. The woman of Rizal's time responded to the first appeal in the
interest of the welfare of the people. Rizal said: now that you have set an
example to those who, like you, long to have their eyes opened and be
delivered from servitude, new hopes are awakened in us and we now even
dare to face adversity, because we have you for our allies and are confident
of victory. This term paper will discuss what are the identity of Filipina from
the past and the women identity today. The significance of woman from the
past who followed Rizal's bravery to fight for their right and their characters,
will also try to see what kind of woman identity should a Filipino have, the
Filipino women in Rizal's novel or some of our woman leaders of today's.
What is a Filipina? Is she Asian or Western? Is she the reluctant leader
Corazon Aquino, or is she the self-proclaimed " symbol of beauty for her
people" Imelda Marcos? Is she the modern-day Gabriela Silang who envisions
and works towards cross-sectoral changes, or is she one of the millions of

faceless and nameless struggling multitude who does anything just to put rice on the table, the ordinary Juana de la Cruz? The implication of an early paradigm of gender character and equality may have, to some extent, begun the process of identity formation. On the surface, the Philippine myth does not seem to introduce the notion of conflict. What is projected is compatibility and harmony. Just when and how, then, did the problems of identity conflict for the Philippine woman come about? The language of the colonizer is found to not only serve as a vehicle for literary expression, but also for setting forth the idealized image of a Filipina from a male perspective. A brief glance at literature shows an evolution of sorts of the Filipina from the pre-colonial Maganda of indigenous folklore, to the early 1800s Laura who epitomizes beauty and faithful acceptance of her role as prescribed by culture, religion, and society; and to the fictional characterization of womanhood drawn from two works of historical fiction by José Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. Although Rizal's central protagonists in both novels are men, the significance of the women characters lies in their symbolic portrayals of a people of many images, of a country torn apart by race, culture, and class. In Rizal's attempt to define a nation's identity by addressing the need for national reforms and by exposing the evils of colonialism, he may have also encouraged the need to demystify the Filipina. The colonial Spanish period's desired image of a Filipina is embodied in the character of María Clara--beautiful, demure, modest, patient, devoutly religious, cultured, submissive, and virginal. The blood that runs through her veins is more European than native. Her ancestry is noted since it has a bearing on the idealized model of a Filipina,

the Roman Catholic's Virgin Mary, and European and foreign. MarÃa Clara belongs to the elite; her kindness is not to be equated, however, with social awareness. She is a repressed woman and her weakness and despair over a lost love overwhelm her, enabling powerful and sinister forces to slowly drive her to death. Perhaps, to a certain degree, this "ideal" is still upheld today, contributing to the confusion of identity formation, for the original application of the character "Filipino" was only for Spaniards and their descendants who lived on the islands; the indigenous natives were simply called "indios." The 19th century saw a character reversal process: the latter ("indios") who have capitulated, are now called "Filipinos" while the former, mostly direct descendants of colonizers, now prefer to call them "Spanish." The character DoÃ±a Victorina is a reflection of the triumph of colonialism--the alteration of behavior and thinking patterned after the character's perception of a superior race. One hundred years ago, there was a DoÃ±a Victorina. Today, the trappings of a colonial mindset persist, and are expressed in the attraction to look Western and to consume Western goods. DoÃ±a Victorina is a characterization of lost identity. Her frivolity, and that of Paulita GÃ³mez, who is greatly enamored by the trappings of the elite, who loves the man who could maintain the needs of her class, and who is a vain and flighty version of MarÃa Clara, may be seen today in the persona of Imelda Marcos. The likes of Imelda Marcos also mirror, ironically, another Rizal character, DoÃ±a ConsolaciÃ³n, who can be described as an interesting specimen of colonial deformation. She may serve as an example of "the dehumanization of the indio," a case of total alienation from her original self, or from her potential self. The character Sisa also represents the opposite

image of Paulita, a contradiction of the so-called high status and the liberated label describing the Filipino women today. She is the woman Mary Hollensteiner speaks of in her article, "The Wife": quietly suffering from subjugation, sacrificing to put food on the table, living only for her sons. Sisa represents the silent victims of an oppression which drove her to madness and death. There are millions of Sisas in the Philippines today: the unfortunate women who are scavenging for food in the mountains of trash, the degraded women whose bodies are used as commodities, and the abused wives who are repeatedly beaten by their husbands. The other woman, Juliã, emerges as the one character that chooses death over a life in shame. She suffers abuse and humiliation working as a servant to pay her family's debt. She brings to mind the women of today who work for starvation wages. Juliã refuses to be coerced; her death liberates her from oppression. Among these characters, perhaps Juliã best characterizes a sense of purpose and identity. In Rizal's characters, the women who seem to be able to obtain their desired needs no matter the consequences are Doña Victorina, Paulita Gómez, and Doña Consolación. On the other hand, misfortune seems to be the fate of the women whose consciousness could be raised to levels higher than that of self-sacrifice. The all-giving attitude of María Clara, Sisa, and Juliã leads them to their deaths. Within their social strata, each character is confronted with varying degrees of oppression which in turn defines the parameters of liberation. In their ambition to hold on to the symbols of the ruling class, the former group has made themselves seemingly strong and highly visible handmaidens of a system which feeds on varying levels of coercion and subjugation. The latter group's retreat into

death or madness carries two concurrent views: 1) the strength to exercise a final liberation as a form of defiance to oppression, and 2) the weakness and inability to confront any form of injustice. Who is more oppressed? Who has really liberated herself? Perhaps, what we are seeing is the notion that oppression has slowed down the process towards a national identity in general and towards a Filipina identity in particular. The reality is that the Philippines is a country still going through the throes of colonization. Indeed, there are those who have catapulted to the highest ranks, such as Corazon Aquino and Imelda Marcos, who embody differences in substance, style, and character. However, there are contradictions. Corazon Aquino's high visibility, status, and power contradicts the image of a meek and subservient wife loyal to the memory of her husband; while Imelda Marcos, the "Iron Butterfly" of unparalleled extravagance, is a drastic contrast to the image of a once dutiful and subservient wife. Despite the fact that both overcame the traditional roles assigned to women of their social class by reaching positions of political power, they remain subservient to the memories of their husbands, but exemplify the interests of the class they represent. Class interest is perhaps the overriding difference between highly visible women, such as Corazon Aquino and Imelda Marcos, and the fervent activist women carrying the legacy of an intellectualized Gabriela Silang. While women in power and women working for empowerment both assert a heritage and demand a platform, the contradiction probably lies in the former's subservience and the latter's ability to address issues that cut across class lines. But class again diametrically separates political women from those who suffer in silence, such as the patient and self-sacrificing women who toil

to feed their families, work in sweat shops, as vendors, scavengers, and prostitutes. There are also those who come faceless and nameless for they may flit and slide and go seemingly where the wind blows, all these, indeed a kaleidoscope of conflicting Filipina identities. Not only do Rizal's novels provide a matrix for identity and conflict, they also allow a rare view of a people's past which formed their culture today, and of a social cancer of which, up to the present, " the best cure" is still to be found. In the process of identity formation or perpetuation of identity conflict, the women in Rizal's novels best serve as bridges in the development process, allowing the flow from the early 1800s mythical formation to the current emerging identity. The social, cultural and political context of both past and present are mirrored in the novels. The myth of the " high status" of the Filipina has caused Philippine women, wittingly or unwittingly, to become at times participants in their own oppression. This " containment by elevation" has allowed the essence of womanhood to be subjected to and dictated by rules and regulations formulated by and for the satisfaction of a colonial society. Philippine women find themselves attempting to wade out of a quagmire of confusion over their identity. Remembrance of Rizal is fast disappearing when it ought to be cherished and honored by all Filipinos. It was he who, more effectively than anyone else among his compatriots, unified the disparate inhabitants of our archipelago into one nation. It was he who made them share a common rage against the foreign intruder and a common aspiration for the freedom of their land. Rizal awakened the national conscience from its lethargy not through the force of arms but with the armies of his pen. These were the " Noli" and " El Filibusterismo, " his "

Letter to the Women of Malolos, " his youthful poems for the Motherland, his " Mi Ultimo Adios" that he secreted in a lamp in Fort Santiago hours before his death, and other irrefutable accusations against the Spaniards. His words were like mighty legions that won for our country the freedom we now enjoy.

Summary As we all see, that woman of today are very different from the past. Filipino women today are brave and strong enough just like Rizal to fight for what they think is right. There also some women from the past who fight for their rights like education but as compare today woman are more confident to stand. There are woman activist who really do what a Filipino woman can do to make a stand for their fellow poor Filipino people especially those people who are uneducated, they take everything to achieve their goals. Nowadays, we are now equal with man in almost everything most especially in terms of education, all people in our country, man and woman, rich and poor are now equal in getting education. Because of it we are now challenge to face the adverse circumstances and continued to fight for changes, not just to limit our roles as housewives but also to continue fighting for what is right, and that's what a real Filipino woman identity today. Just like Rizal, he focused on self-improvement, showing to Spain and the rest of the international community that, given the opportunity to achieve their full potential, Filipinos could stand alongside the best in the world and were eligible for self-rule. Then he set out to apply what he had learned as an ophthalmologist, providing a basic service that was badly needed by his impoverished compatriots. In his writings he emphasized the importance of education, seeing it as the path to national progress rather than armed revolt. We all know that prudence does not consist in blindly

obeying any whim of the little tin God, but in obeying only that which is reasonable and just, because blind obedience is itself the cause and origin of those whims, and those guilty of it are really to be blamed. Rizal said that God gave each individual reason and a will of his or her own to distinguish the just and the unjust, all were born without shackles and free, and nobody has a right to subjugate the will and the spirit of another. I hope we can revive the reverent sentiments of gratitude to him for his efforts in releasing us from foreign bondage. Political rhetoric is not enough to keep his heroism alive. Let us remember that he forsook the enticements of his youthful and gifted life and embraced instead the ultimate sacrifice for the welfare of his country. That is the best homage we can pay the greatest hero of our race.

Conclusion The issue of racial equality is today hardly disputed in intellectual circles. During Rizal's time, however, the claim that "all races are essentially equal" was a highly debated topic among anthropologists, biologists, and philosophers. The readers of his novels, essays, and letters are familiar with his portrayal and denunciation of Spanish colonial rule. His insistence on the education of the native Indios, the representation of the Philippines in the Cortes Generales, and more so the recognition of the civil rights of the Filipino are all based on the belief that there are neither "essentially" superior nor "essentially" inferior races. In this belief stems the conviction that his fellow Filipinos had the capacity for autonomy and enlightenment. The present Filipino youth must know that in order to make their presence felt, they must understand Rizal. To understand Rizal, they must have the spirit and motivation to do so. Without such spirit or motivation, they will never be able to understand Rizal's objectives or even the other heroes who

fought for equality and freedom for the sake of the Fatherland. I believe that the Filipino youth will be able to move the society through these implied teachings of Jose Rizal that will sprout a new love to the Filipino Hero, I admit that I only considered Rizal's Life and Works as another general education subject that is needed to be taken. But what I get is more than just knowing Rizal, but also knowing my Filipino identity and that I must fight at all cost to defend my identity. A lot of what Rizal had dreamed of has now come true for many people in the state. He was already a modern democrat when he advocated participation in the state and society with education. Today, education is no longer a privilege among the small elite, for everybody's participation in all public matters has become a right and duty. " One's right to express him or her in all matters is founded on compulsory education with the required quality standards. References: Jose Rizal's Writings in Europe and its message to the Filipino Youth Today Zaide, Gregorio F. & Zaide, Sonia M. 1998. Jose Rizal: Life, Works and Writings of a Genius, Writer, Scientist and National Hero. Capino, Gonzales and Pineda: Rizal's life, works and writings: their impact on our National identity Colonization: It's Impact on Self-Image Philippine Women in Rizal's Novels and Today By Linda Acupanda McGloin