

Unveiling the views of students on the selected novel of Jose Rizal: A historical approach

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Abstract

The views of students on the novel of Jose Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere* had an impact on how the students give value to the works of Jose Rizal. This research was conceptualized to analyze the different perspectives of students and their challenges in understanding the novel. This study employed phenomenological study among the 14 students who already took up the literature subject. The result revealed that the novel helped them remember past events, uncover the social issues of the past and as their guide in understanding present and the future. This result helps the teacher on how to deal with students who have different views and opinions about the novel.

Keywords: views of students, *Noli Me Tangere*, criticism, opinions, comprehension, Philippines

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1. Introduction

Millennials nowadays have different opinions especially if it concerns about the history and literature since they have so much ideas and information as to what happened in the past. Most of the millennials are eager to learn and understand about the history since they believe that it is essential to anyone who has never experienced things like colonialism. In the United States, millennials have been widely studied with numerous surveys highlighting ways in which they differ from older generations. More than anything, millennials are confident, as much of the research supports. This confidence comes from their trust and optimism that they have gained from understanding past generations (Guha, 2020; Kowske, Rasch & Wiley, 2010).

In the Philippines, millennials' views and opinions are very necessary since Filipinos believe that they are the Philippines' hope for succeeding unto what the past generation wanted to aim, this is one of the reasons why the Philippine government mandated R.A. No. 1452 in accordance with the requirements of the Rizal Law which is to enroll the subject named the life and works of Rizal. In addition, Filipino millennials are even more interesting with regards on how their opinions, beliefs and values may be correlated to their profiles together with the environment they live in, economic status, family background, education, and their own circle of influencers (Alba, 2019).

In locality, students enrolled in the history subject introducing the life and works of Rizal have widen their knowledge and understanding to the importance of knowing how, what and why the author created such masterpiece. Therefore, researchers figured out the same study which would also give perception about how millennials view the novel of Rizal.

1.1 Research Questions

- What are the views of millennials on the Novel "Touch Me Not"?
- What are the challenges faced by students in understanding the novel?
- What are the insights of the readers on the novel?

1.2 Theoretical Lens

This study is anchored on the concept of Mallari (2014) who states that the novel was a nationalistic form stating the need and the situation of the country back in time, it was direct and genuine power to make the Spain understand the demand to cure the social cruelty curse the Filipino society. Many people appreciate the novel as a heroic act of Jose Rizal because of its critique in Spanish unjust ruling before. The context of the novel shows disapproval of the brutality and supremacy of Spanish people in the Philippines. Furthermore, the Theory of Social Awakening(Wood,2010) among Filipinos also supported this study which asserts that millennials are expected to learn from their ancient and colorful history as to what, how and why they had existed and destined to make major differences.

1.3 Review of Related Literature

The Noli Me Tangere is a picture of the abundant fiesta showed the comic antics at church and the outlandish expense for one day of festivities (Granada, 2015). However, Nolo Me Tangere stays within the area of romance and hope for change and perhaps salvation (Relos, 2014). In addition, the main theme of the novel portrays the different aspects of attaining independence. This gives emphasis on social climbers, violence, family

devotion, self-sacrifice, and purity and faithfulness (Tenorio, 2015). However, Dante (2012) supposed the grief that the Filipinos in Rizal's time experienced was simply imposed by the friars and Spanish. There was an exchange of the above factors. It is agreed that many of the friars were corrupt, hypocritical and violent but many of the common people were not entirely blameless. Many of the Filipinos were also submissive and coward when they witnessed injustices done to their fellow indios, they did nothing out of fear. He asserts that Noli does not really indict religion or Catholicism itself it only brings out as ugly, dangerous, and destructive corruption and hypocrisy.

The novel is really a thing of contravention, but it is his way to arouse the consciousness of the Filipinos in the reign of Spanish in our country. It insists on the need to education, dedication to the country and of absorbing aspects of foreign cultures that would enhance the native traditions (Cupin, 2011). Noli Me Tangere is a satirical novel exposing the arrogance and despotism of the Spanish clergy, Jose Rizal shaped the minds and opens the eyes of his fellow Filipinos to the abused they suffered at the hands of tyrannical Spanish authorities. He only proves that knowledge is mightier in any battle (Ramos, 2010).

With regards to Rizal's novel, Luna (2015) also asserts that the novel presents a worrying situation of the sufferings of his country, expresses directly not just to Filipinos but the in the whole. It does not merely dissecting the malevolent state of the society under Spanish rule, he also declares the issue of a new nation from the fallen of colonial society (David, 2011). Furthermore, by understanding today's learners, it is evident the role of the educator must change. No longer is education given to the students for recitation through text and lecture style model. This generation is a collaborative and social generation that has a focus on understanding and building their knowledge through various forms of medium to discover the answers (Barton, 2015).

1.4 Methodology

This study employed qualitative phenomenological study. There were 14 participants from who comprised the in-depth and focus group discussion.

2. Results

1. What are the views of students on the novel, Noli Me Tangere?

There were three major themes emerged from the data collected on the experiences of the participants. The first theme is, **helps remembering past events**. The novel allows the students to revisit the historical past of the country. The second theme that emerged is, **guides in understanding present and the future**. Participants create a wide ranged understanding why Jose Rizal wrote such masterpiece like Touch Me Not. It allows them to be guided to understand the present and the future. The third theme that emerged is, **shows social issues of the past**. Reading the novel reveals some social issues that happened during the time it was written. Readers identified some of those issues and considered those issues a guide as it is revealed in the novel.

2. What are the challenges of the readers in understanding the novel, Noli Me Tangere?

Based on the interview conducted by the researcher, there are two themes that emerged, these are, difficulty in understanding vocabulary/words and reading hurtful emotions. The first theme is difficulty understanding words/vocabulary. The participants disclosed that they have experienced difficulty in understanding the words. Maybe due to translation issues would be the reason they have difficulty in understanding the texts/words of the novel. The second theme is reading hurtful emotions. Despite the difficulty in reading the novel of Rizal, most of the readers felt the emotion contained in the novel. The felt the pain, happiness and other emotions.

3. What are the insights of the readers on the novel?

Based on the conducted interview, there were four themes emerged. The first theme is **valuing the life and sacrifice**. This theme surfaced during the interview. The participants revealed their insights that we need to value

life and sacrifices of our heroes as they fought for the restoration of our freedom. The second theme *is Patronizing Philippine History*. Some of the informants passionately share their feelings regarding on how they value their own culture and literature. The third theme *is Reading novel helps in learning history*. Through reading the novel, it allows them to be more appreciative about the richness of our culture and even our history. The *last theme that emerged is Books can preserve culture*. It was emphasized by the participants that in order to make the historical facts be remembered or recalled, books have the ability to preserve and perpetuate culture by containing those historical facts.

3. Concluding Remarks

From the results of the study, we can say that reading about the different works allows to recall important events. We can safely say that the novel of Jose Rizal depicted the historical accounts of our past. It is vital for students and even teachers since they have influences to others in terms of writing a novel. They would be able to inspire and give all the qualities and values to others. From the findings, I have felt the happiness and their sincerest feedback to the questions given to them which I also felt. Through this novel, they felt a sense of victory, freedom and satisfaction. The willingness and eagerness of the teachers in teaching a novel with historical approach.

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