
I. Introduction

Most of the time, when a Filipino asked who is the national hero in the Philippines, they will say Jose Rizal's name more often. Jose Protacio Rizal Mercado Y Alonso Realonda is the national hero of the Philippines. He is a great poet, a journalist, and a doctor. Jose Rizal was a very brilliant student who's proficient in multiple languages. He studied medicine in Manila and finished his medical degree in Spain then lived in Europe, while he's staying in Europe he started to write about the unfair treatment of the Spanish to the Filipinos during the Spanish Colonization, that's also the time when Jose Rizal became the part of the propaganda movement who also wanted a reform. He wrote his first novel *Noli me Tangere*, about the dark aspects of the Spanish colonization and the Catholic friars in the Philippines. *Noli Me Tangere* was banned in the Philippines, but some original copies were secretly moved into the other countries. He tried to go back to the Philippines, but he was targeted by the police and was forced to stay and go back to Europe. Then, he released his second or the continuation novel of *Noli Me Tangere*, which is *El Filibusterismo* it conveyed the message of the corrupt government because of the friars during the Spanish colonization in the Philippines can lead to the downfall of Spain. The novel was dedicated to the three martyred priest of the Cavite Mutiny. Jose Rizal is not advocating to have independence but to have equal treatment to the Filipinos. He returned to the Philippines in 1892 to know if there's an effect change, but unfortunately, he was still exiled to Dapitan. In 1896 Andres Bonifacio founded Katipunan and revolted, although the Philippines did not have independence until World War II, yet he was considered as a great nationalist because he decided to take the first step towards independence. Jose Rizal supported peaceful change, but he still was convicted of sedition and executed on December 30, 1896, at the age of 35.

II. Evidences

After the death of Jose Rizal, many controversies arose because of the inconsistency in the information regarding his last farewell and the so-called retraction. There were pieces of evidence found 39 years after Jose Rizal's execution that many historians believed the retraction document of Jose Rizal. In the present, many historians thought that Jose Rizal retracted and some did not find because there's an inconsistency with the information. The Controversy about Jose Rizal's Retraction is all about him withdrawing all the negative things that he said to the Catholic Religion. The first evidence was started when Fr. Manuel Garcia found a so-called original document that contains the retraction of Jose Rizal in May 1935 that was 39 years after Rizal's Execution. It was still being debated because some historians believed that it is just reproduction and not the original because it was not shown to the public before May 1935. Now, There were primary arguments that

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support Rizal's retraction and those are: The retraction document found by an archivist Fr. Manuel Garcia was

considered very important and the second one is there were eyewitnesses closely associated with the events. According to Ricardo P. Garcia's published book entitled *The Great Debate: The Rizal's Retraction*, there were two (2) eyewitnesses whose associated with what happened to Rizal before his execution. The two eyewitnesses were Fr. Vicente Balaguer and Former Lieutenant of the infantry, Mariano Martinez Gallegos. Fr. Vicente Balaguer released testimonies about the acts of Jose Rizal before his execution some of those are his confession, communion, celebrated mass and also he prayed four times with the rosary. Another eyewitness was Mariano Martinez Gallegos who is a Former Lieutenant of the infantry he is the one who confirmed that Jose Rizal signed a document that contains his retraction with his eyewitness Juan del Fresno and Eloy Moure and to support the arguments new interpreted documents were released, and those are "The Cuerpo de Vigilancia, which is the testimony of the guard whose in charge of guarding Jose Rizal, Jose Rizal's short writing in Josephine Bracken's Copy of *De la Imitation de Cristo* and his final writings which frequently mentions the word cross. In *Cuerpo de Vigilancia*, the person whose guarding Jose Rizal at the time before his Jose Rizal's execution he released a statement that people believe it is the retraction document of Jose Rizal. Josephine Bracken's Copy of *De la Imitation de Cristo* is also one of the supporting documents for the retraction of Jose Rizal because there are short writings inside of the book that says "to my dear and unhappy wife, Josephine. December 30, 1896. Jose Rizal." Josephine Bracken wrote a handwritten autobiography that says "Before his execution, he married me at 5 o'clock in the morning" 2 hours before his execution. The Pieces of evidence that supports the side of anti Jose Rizal's retraction is an article written by Gabrielle Paul Pascual stated that the priest had motives for making Jose Rizal retract, and some of the reason is that if Jose Rizal retracted earlier before his execution it can be a defense to change his verdict and can save his life and the document found by Fr. Manuel was fraud and forgery because according to the book titled *The Great Debate* was written by Ricardo Pascual there were comparison between the way that letters were formed and the retraction is not in keeping with the character and faith of Jose Rizal as well as inconsistent with his previous declaration of religious thoughts.

III. The Stand

Positive Stand

After examining the first evidence presented by Fr, Manuel Garcia I think it is possible that Jose Rizal retracted because according to the document found by Fr. Manuel Garcia Jose Rizal wrote that he is claiming that he is a Catholic himself, and that is he is retracting all the things he said and wrote against the catholic religion and that Jose Rizal is asking to release the retraction letter to the public to repair all his scandal and also to seek forgiveness to the people and God for the un-appropriate acts that he caused. The evidence was believed

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authentic as it is signed by Jose Rizal. Another Evidence that I examined is that there were eyewitnesses that are

closely associated with the events and those are Fr. Vicente Balaguer and Mariano Martinez Gallegos, who is a former lieutenant of the infantry. Fr. Vicente released a testimony about the status of Jose Rizal in the cell before his execution, he stated that at in the early morning of December 29 to 6:30 in the morning of December 30 Jose Rizal experienced a rude awakenings, he also confessed to the priest and celebrated mass, had communion and prayed to the rosary 4 times. Then the former lieutenant of infantry also released a testimony regarding the retraction and he is the one who confirmed that Jose Rizal signed a document that they called Jose Rizal's retraction it is also believed as an authentic evidence because Gallegos also confirmed it in his statements that there were eyewitnesses and those are Juan Del Fresno and Eloy Moure. The third evidence also made me side with the controversy of Jose Rizal retraction because the person whose guarding Jose Rizal also released some statement that contains the things that Jose Rizal did before his execution and Jose Rizal is the one who's assigned to guard Jose Rizal. According to the testimony, at early 7:50 when Jose Rizal entered death row was accompanied by Senor Andrade but left at 10 and then March and Vilaclara came in the death row with a prepared a retraction on his life and deeds and it seems that Jose Rizal refused to sign it, but they argued until 12:30, but then Jose Rizal asked them to leave so that he can write for a long time by himself. 3 o'clock in the afternoon Jose Rizal handed what his had written to Senor Del Fresno and Senor Maure and then it seems like it is the retraction letter of Jose Rizal. Fourth evidence is the written autobiography of Josephine Bracken which she stated these phrases "before his execution he married me at 5 o'clock in the morning" and it seems that it is 2hours before Jose Rizal execution he married Josephine Bracken although there was no evidence that supports these statements because there was no certificate of marriage found that shows they married at the time of the stated. Also, the last evidence was the final writings of Jose Rizal which is his farewell letter it became one of the pieces of evidence because Jose Rizal frequently mentions cross in his writings and the historians believed that he died as a catholic and it seems that he retracted his writings against the catholic religion.

Negative Stand

By thorough examination and studying of the pieces of evidence given by the historians who is an anti retraction, there were still flaws that cannot support that Jose Rizal's retracted. The first flaw is that the priest who gave Jose Rizal a prepared retraction letter is because they had motives where the friars may not change the verdict to Jose Rizal just because he wrote a retraction letter. The second flaw is that they say that there was inconsistency in the released statement regarding the way of the message was formed, and from that, I can say that it is a flaw because forms of handwritten can be changed in different ways because the penmanship of every person may vary according to their moods. Moreover, the results of the comparison of Rizal's writings are not released in public, and there are still missing details regarding that supports the anti retraction.

At this part of my position paper, I believed that Jose Rizal retracted because there was a lot of evidence that supports the retraction and also the document that is found by Fr. Manuel Garcia is already examined by the archivist and historians. I do believe in the document found by Fr. Manuel Garcia because it is signed by Jose Rizal himself and also the evidence that made me side with the pro retraction is that the former lieutenant Gallegos released his testimony regarding the retraction of Jose Rizal that's why I do believe that it is possible that Jose Rizal retracted maybe because he thinks that retracting may save his life and maybe he can prepare for a marriage certificate for the wedding of him and Josephine Bracken. The only evidence that this side made very strong is the document found by Fr. Manuel Garcia that many historians also believed is very authentic.

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Abstract

Ever since Spain colonized the Philippines, we adapted so many things in them, such as their words, foods, and even their culture. Filipinos experienced discrimination in their own country; that is why Jose Rizal and Other National hero fought for our rights and independence. Our national hero who fought for the Filipinos rights and freedom experienced much struggle when he is still alive, and as of now, I think that Jose Rizal is being disrespected because of his controversies and these are the controversies regarding his retraction. The controversy aroused because of the document found by Fr. Manuel Garcia that is the so-called retraction letter of Jose Rizal. The Retraction document is still being debated by many historians and even searching many pieces of evidence to support their claims and sides. There were many parts of evidence arouse after the document found by Fr. Manuel Garcia and some of those are the testimonies of the eyewitnesses associated with the event and also the testimonies of the person who was guarding Jose Rizal at the time of his stay in the cell, those testimonies were used to support the claim or stand of the pro-retraction. Some of the articles and books are also published to support the anti retraction, and still, the truth is unrevealed. It's up to a person if they'll believe whether Jose Rizal Retracted or not. This paper's purpose is to inform people about the right information regarding the controversy.

KEYWORDS

Retraction – statement that something you said or wrote earlier is not true or correct

Execution – act of killing someone as a punishment for a crime

Testimonies – Proof or evidence that something exist or true

Controversy – Argument that involves many people who strongly disagree about something

Archivist – a person who has the job of collecting and storing the materials in archive

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