

Philippine History

Controversies and Conflicting Analysis for Selected Primary Resources

MODULE 10

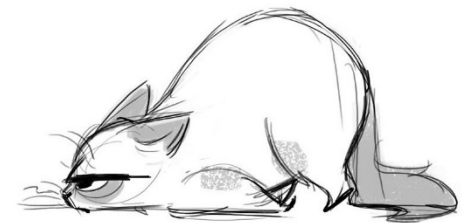
DOES RIZAL RETRACT?



DOES RIZAL RETRACT?



Jose Rizal is well-known as a hero of the revolution for his writing that centered on ending colonialism and liberating Filipino minds to contribute and create the Filipino nation mindset. The great volume of Rizal's lifework was committed to this end, particularly the influential ones, ***Noli Me Tangere*** and ***El Filibusterismo***. His essays criticize **not the Catholic Religion**, but the **friars**, the main agents of inequality in the Philippine Society.



Does Rizal Retract?

It is understandable, therefore, that any piece of writing from Rizal that recants everything he wrote against the friars and the Catholic Church in the Philippines could deal heavy image as a prominent Filipino revolutionary. Such document purportedly exists. Allegedly signed by Rizal a few hours before his execution, this document, referred to as “**The Retraction.**” It declares Rizal’s Belief in the Catholic Faith, and retracts everything he wrote against the Church.



Does Rizal Retract?

The primary source from Rizal's retraction translated from the document found by Fr. Manuel Garcia, C.M. on 18 May 1935.



Does Rizal Retract?

The primary source
from the document
on 18 May 1901

translation translated
el Garcia, C.M.

Me declaro católico y en esta Religión
en que nací y me educó, quiero vivir y morir.
Me retracto de todo error de
cuento en mis palabras, escritos, impresos
y conducta he habido contrario a mi capaci-
dad de hijo de la Iglesia Católica. Respon-
do y profeso cuanto ella prescribe y me manda
y cuanto ella manda. Aborro de la
Masonería, como enemiga que es de la Iglesia,
y como sociedad prohibida por la Iglesia.
Puede el Prelado Diocesano, como Autoridad
Superior Telesistémica hacer pública esta
manifestación espontánea mía para exponer
el escándalo que mis actos hayan podido
causar y para que Dios y los hombres
me perdonen.
Manila 27 de Diciembre de 1890

Yo José Rizal
El Jefe del Departamento
Manila el 27 de Diciembre de 1890

El agente de la
Manila



Does Rizal Retract?

“I declare myself a Catholic and in this religion in which I was born and educated I wish to live and die.”



Does Rizal Retract?

“I retract with all my heart whatever in my words, writings, publications and conduct has been contrary to my character as son of the Catholic Church. I believe and I confess whatever she teaches and I submit to whatever she demands. I abominate Masonry, as the enemy which is of the Church, and as a Society prohibited by the Church. The Diocesan Prelate may, as the Superior Ecclesiastical Authority, make public this spontaneous manifestation of mine in order to repair the scandal which my acts may have caused and so that God and people may pardon me.”

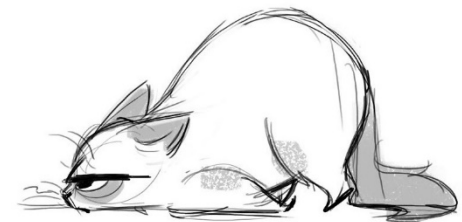


Does Rizal Retract?

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Manila 29 December 1896

Jose Rizal



There are four iterations of the text of this retraction:

1. The First was published in La Voz Española and Diario de Manila on the Day of execution, 30 December 1896.
2. Second Text Appeared in Barcelona, Spain, in the magazine La Juventud.



There are four iterations of the text of this retraction:

3. Few months after execution 14 February 1897 from anonymous writer but later on revealed to be Fr. Vicente Balaguer.
4. Original text was only found in the archdiocesan archives on 18 May 1935. After almost four decades of disappearance.



Does Rizal Retract?

THE BALAGUER TESTIMONY



Doubts on the retraction document abound, especially because only one eyewitness account of the writing of the document exists – that of the Jesuit friar Fr. Vicente Balaguer. According to his testimony, Rizal woke up several times, confessed four times, attended a Mass, received communion, and prayed the rosary, all of which seemed out of character. But since it is the only testimony of allegedly a “primary” account that Rizal ever wrote a retraction document, it has been used to argue the authenticity of the document.



Does Rizal Retract?

THE TESTIMONY OF CUERPO DE VIGILANCIA



Another eyewitness account surfaced in 2016, concluded the research of Professor Rene R. Escalante. In his research, documents of the Cuerpo de Vigilancia included a report on the last hours of Rizal, written by Federico Moreno. The account details the statement of the Cuerpo de Vigilancia to Moreno.



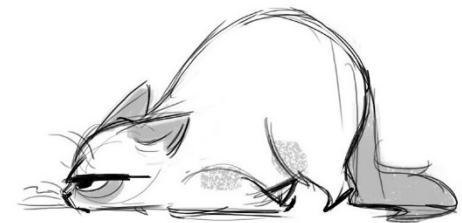
From the primary source: Eyewitness account of the last hours of Rizal, source: Michael Charleston Chua, “Retraction ni Jose Rizal: Mga Bagong Dokumento at Pananaw,” GMA News Online, published 29 December 2016. Most Illustrious, the agent of Cuerpo de Vigilancia stationed in the Fort Santiago to report on the events during the illegible day in prison of the accused Jose Rizal, Informs me on this date of the Following:



“At 7:50 yesterday morning, Jose Rizal entered death row accompanied by his counsel, Señor Taviel de Andrade, and the Jesuit priest Vilaclara. At the urgings of the former and moments after entering, he was served a light breakfast. At approximately 9, the Assistant of the Plaza, Señor Maure, asked Rizal if he wanted anything. He replied that at the moment he only wanted a prayer book, which was brought to him shortly by Father March.”



“Señor Andrade left death row at 10 and Rizal spoke for a long while with the Jesuit fathers, March and Vilaclara, regarding religious matters, it seems. It appears that these two presented him with a prepared retraction on his life and deed that he refused to sign. They argued about the matter until 12:30 when Rizal ate some poached egg and a little chicken. Afterwards he asked to leave to write and wrote for a long time by himself.”



“At 3 in the afternoon, Father March entered the chapel and Rizal handed him what he had written. Immediately the chief of the firing squad, Señor del Fresno and the Assistant of the Plaza, Señor Maure, were informed. They entered death row and together with Rizal signed the document that the accused had written.”



“At 5 this morning of the 30th, the lover of Rizal arrived at the prison... dressed in mourning. Only the former entered the chapel, followed by a military chaplain whose name I cannot ascertain. Donning his formal clothes and aided by a soldier of the artillery, the nuptials of Rizal and the woman who had been his lover were performed at the point of death (in articulo mortis). After embracing him she left, flooded with tears.”



This version corroborates the existence of the retraction document, giving it credence. However, nowhere in the account was Fr. Balaguer mentioned, which makes the friar a mere secondary source to the writing of the document.



The retraction of Rizal remains to this day, a controversy; many scholars, however, agree that the document does not tarnish the heroism of Rizal. His revolution, which eventually resulted in Independence in 1892.



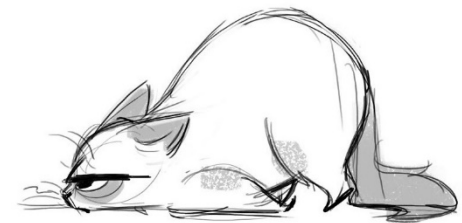
Rizal's Connection to the Katipunan is undeniable--in fact, the precursor of the Katipunan as an organization is the *La Liga Filipina*, an organization Rizal founded, with Andres Bonifacio as one of its members. But La Liga Filipina was short-lived as the Spaniard exiled Rizal to Dapitan. Former members decided to band together to establish the Katipunan a few days after Rizal's exile on 7 July 1892.



Rizal may not have been officially part of the Katipunan, but the Katipuneros showed great appreciation of his work toward the same goals. Out of the 28 members of the leadership of the Katipunan (known as the Kataas-taasang Sanggunian ng Katipunan) from 1892 to 1896, 13 were former members of La Liga Filipina. Katipuneros even used Rizal's name as a password.



In 1896, the Katipuneros decided to inform Rizal of their plans to launch the revolution, and sent Pio Valenzuela to visit Rizal in Dapitan. Valenzuela's accounts of his meeting with Rizal have been greatly doubted by many scholars, but according to him, Rizal objected to the plans, saying that doing so would be tantamount to suicide since it would be difficult to fight the Spaniard who had the advantage of military resources.



He added that the leaders of the Katipunan must do everything they could to prevent the spilling of Filipino blood. Valenzuela informed Rizal that the revolution could inevitably break out if the Katipunan were to be discovered by the Spaniards. Rizal advised Valenzuela that the Katipunan should first secure the support of wealthy Filipinos to strengthen their cause, and suggested that Antonio Luna be recruited to direct the military movement of the revolution.

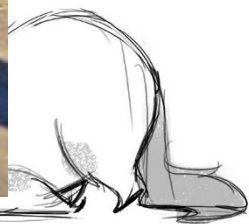


Does Rizal Retract?

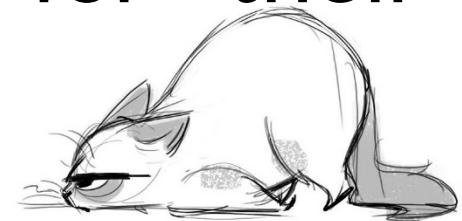
WHERE DID THE CRY OF REBELLION HAPPEN?



Does Rizal



Momentous events swept the Spanish colonies in the late nineteenth century, including the Philippines. Journalist of the time referred to the phrase “**El Grito de Rebelion** or **Cry of Rebellion**” to mark the start of these revolutionary events, identifying the places where it happened. In the Philippines, this happened in August 1896, northeast of Manila, where they declared rebellion against Spanish colonial government. These events are important markers in the history of colonies that struggled for their independence against colonizers.



The controversy regarding this event stems from the identification of the date and place where the cry happened. Prominent Filipino Historian Teodoro Agoncillo emphasizes the event when Bonifacio tore the cedula or tax receipt before the katipuneros who also did the same.



Some writers identified the first military event with the Spaniards as the moment of the Cry, for which Emilio Aguinaldo commissioned a “*Himno de Balintawak*” to inspire the renewed struggle after the pact of the Biak-na-Bato failed. A monument to the Heroes of 1896 was erected in what is now the intersection of Epifanio de los Santos (EDSA) Avenue and Andres Bonifacio Drive-North Diversion road, and from then on until 1962, the cry of Balintawak was celebrated every 26th of August. The site of Monument was chosen for an unknown reason.



Accounts of the Cry

Guillermo Masangkay

The source from the works of Guillermo Masangkay, “Cry of Balintawak” in Gregoria Zaide and Sonia Zaide, *Documentary Sources of Philippine History*, Volume 8 (Manila: National Book Store, 1990), 307-309.



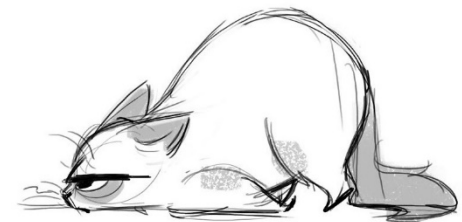
“On August 26th, a big meeting was held in Balintawak, at the house of Apolonio Samson, then cabeza of that barrio of Caloocan. Among those who attended, I remember, were Bonifacio, Emilio Jacinto, Aguedo del Rosario, Tomas Remigio, Briccio Pantas, Teodoro Plata, Pio Valenzuela, Enrique Pacheco, and Francisco Carreon. They were all leaders of the Katipunan and composed the board of directors of the organization. Delegates from Bulacan, Cabanatuan, Cavite, and Morong were also present.”



“At about nine o'clock in the morning of August 26, the meeting was opened with Andres Bonifacio presiding and Emilio Jacinto acting as secretary. The purpose was to discuss when the uprising was to take place, Teodoro Plata, Briccio Pantas, and Pio Valenzuela were all opposed to starting the revolution too early.. Andres Bonifacio, sensing that he would lose in the discussion then, left the session hall and talked to the people, who were waiting outside for the result of the meeting of the leaders.”



*“He told the people that the leaders were arguing against starting the revolution early, and appealed to them in a fiery speech in which he said: “You remember the fate of our countrymen who were shot in Bagumbayan. Should we return now to the towns, the Spaniards will only shoot us. Our organization has been discovered and we are all marked men. If we don't start the uprising, the Spaniards will get us anyway. **What then, do you say?”**”*



"Revolt!" *the people shouted as one.*



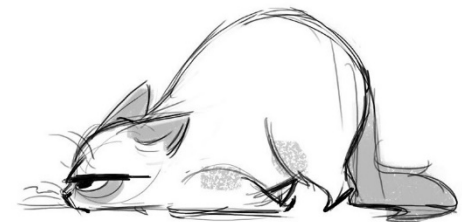
*Bonifacio then asked the people to give a pledge that they were to revolt. He told them that the sign of slavery of the Filipinos were (sic) the cedula tax charges each citizen. **“If it is true that you are ready to revolt... I want to see you destroy your cedulas. It will be a sign that all of us have declared our severance from the Spaniards.”***



Accounts of the Cry

Pio Valenzuela

The source from the works of Pio Valenzuela, “Cry of Balintawak” in Gregoria Zaide and Sonia Zaide, *Documentary Sources of Philippine History, Volume 8* (Manila: National Book Store, 1990), 301-302.



“The first place of refuge of Andres Bonifacio, Emilio Jacinto, Procopio Bonifacio, Teodoro Plata, Aguedo del Rosario, and myself was Balintawak, the first five arriving there on August 19, and I, on August 20, 1896. The first place where some 500 members of the Katipunan met on August 22, 1896, was the house and yard of Apolonio Samson at Kangkong. Aside from the persons mentioned above, among those who were there were Briccio Pantas, Alejandro Santiago, Ramon Bernardo, Apolonio Samson, and others.”



“Here, views were only exchanged, and no revolution was debated and adopted. It was at Pugad Lawin, the house, store-house, and yard of Juan Ramos, son of Melchora Aquino, where over 1,000 members of the Katipunan met and carried out considerable debate and discussion on August 23, 1896. The discussion was on whether or not the revolution against the Spanish government should be started on August 29, 1896... After the tumultuous meeting, many of those present tore their cedula certificates and shouted,”



***"Long live the Philippines!
Long live the Philippines!"***



Does Rizal Retract?

From the eyewitness accounts presented, there is indeed marked disagreement among historical witnesses as to place and time of the occurrence of the cry. Using primary and secondary sources, four places have been identified: Balintawak, Kangkong, Pugadlawin, and Bahay Toro, while the dates vary: 23, 24, 25 or 26 August 1896.



Valenzuela's account should be read with caution: He once told a Spanish investigator that the "Cry" happened in Balintawak on Wednesday 26 August 1896. Much later, he wrote in his Memoirs of the Revolution that it happened at Pugad lawin on 23 August 1896. Such inconsistency in accounts should always be seen as a red flag when dealing with primary sources.



Does Rizal Retract?

According to Guerrero, “Encarnacion and Villegas all these places are in Balintawak, then part of Caloocan, now, in Quezon City. As for the dates, Bonifacio and his troops may have been moving from one place to another to avoid being located by the Spanish government, which could explain why there are several accounts of the Cry”.



