

## ***Ex Libris Ad Urbe: Urban Portrayals in José Rizal's Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo as Indicators of Past Landscapes and Affections***

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### **ABSTRACT**

While works of literature draw profitably from urban reality as a source of setting, it may be argued recursively that the city-as-lived and built may, in turn, be understood and transformed by literature and the selective perceptions of authors who were once a part of the history of these places. This study analyzes the settings and frames found in Filipino nationalist José Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* in order to first uncover and match past scenes, features, and location-names to present-day urban geography. Second, this exposition derives an understanding of the extent of Rizal's Manila and its environmental conditions. Such an analysis could be used to inform technical studies of urban planners and heritage conservationists. Moreover, analyzing the novels by locating and relating important sites and identifying the qualities of their characters during the Spanish colonial period reconstructs a "novel" city and allows it to reemerge from layers of commercial and ahistorical urban sprawl that characterize parts of contemporary Manila. At the same time, the study allows for an appreciation of places that Rizal and his contemporaries grew fond of or associated good memories with, developing what the author refers to as "affections," connoting, in the archaic sense, feelings that could be elicited by, or directed to, a setting. In undertaking this research, the author hopes to bridge the disciplines of urban studies and the humanities. This will lead to a more nuanced on-the-ground development that flourishes because of the actual and the imagined past, rather than allowing unenlightened building practitioners to efface the symbols and edifices that make for a Filipino literary cartography.

*Keywords:* *Noli me Tangere*, *El Filibusterismo*, urban landscape, symbols, city, setting

## DERIVING THE CITY FROM LITERATURE

Along with plot and characters, the main setting of a narrative, which may conjoin other named but subsidiary settings, as well as its extensions (e.g., places recalled or imagined by the characters), is, in most cases, necessary to situate, precondition, and enable its development and appeal.<sup>1</sup> While settings that focus on physical surroundings tend to be distinct and may be described as they are, settings that depict socio-cultural and mental aspects of the world are often described gradually (Pitkänen iii) and usually placed in or related to the presence of a city. Indeed, after the word “city” gradually came into use around the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries (“City”), it may be observed that at least since the 1800s, novels and other forms of literature have included the urban setting as a relatively fresh resource, although one that soon lent itself to writing that was critical of the locationally-fixed injustices, inefficiencies, and unpredictabilities of urban life. In some cases, such city life was also rooted in the colonial experience that brought urbanization to many non-Western cultures, such as in the genesis of Intramuros in Manila and the residential suburbs adjacent to it, specifically Binondo, Tondo, and Ermita. Writers and commentators who lived during this time drew inspiration from and created facsimiles out of such urbanizing neighborhoods that were just beginning to turn agricultural lands and forests into clusters of familiar buildings. At the same time, these authors, during the time they inhabited these cities, could have grown fond of certain places or associated good memories with particular sites, developing what the author refers to as “affections,” connoting, in the archaic sense, feelings that could be elicited by, or directed to, a setting. Such affections shaped the way these authors wrote about the city in their work.

Given the way that literature, among other fields in the humanities, draws profitably from the *urban condition*, might it not also be said upon reflection that an understanding, and subsequent (re)construction, of city life and its spatial relations may be derived from literature? This study recognizes this counter-possibility, wherein literary works inform urban scholarship, and asserts that such reflexive research is important when the physicality of the past no longer exists to inform and enrich the present, just as the citizens of today can no longer perceive certain structures and landscapes with the same importance as their forbears did. Indeed, the legibility of the encoded cityscape stresses how images condition the responses of urbanites to the city and play an important part in shaping the understanding of the metropolis. As Nora Plesske puts it, “fiction shapes our understanding of the city while simultaneously generating an idiosyncratic knowledge on the urban” (11-12).

## RESEARCH FRAME

In pursuit of the aforementioned possibility, this research contributes to bridging the disciplines of geography, urban studies, and Philippine literature by examining the city and urban components of setting in José Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* (1887, the *Noli* hence) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891, the *Fili* hence). The analysis of the novels proceeds by identifying passages that show a correspondence between the novels' settings and probable actual sites in Manila. More importantly, the texts of the novels have been finely perused to enumerate passages that enable the author to locate probable actual sites in Manila corresponding to the novels' settings, and more importantly, to analyze the implications of the novelist's choices and/or implicit selective perception of sites, given the political and social conditions then prevailing. The phenomenological assumption of urban studies (de Lima Amaral 130, 132; Lynch 2) is that people who inhabit the city (including, of course, novelists), do not—indeed cannot—apprehend the entirety of buildings, streets, and interacting elements, but rather only perceive them in a partial, fragmentary, sometimes distracted manner, focusing mentally on that which impinges on the senses or that which possesses relevance to the literary *persona*. Therefore, the novels of Rizal, a visitor-from-Laguna, flâneur, and later subversive author, would also have been selectively informed by his position, allowing the readers of these novels today to derive a picture of the city then and tell present-day scholars more about the importance of places precisely because of its incompleteness—a subset of a plethora of urban details in the 19th century. By examining the setting of the novels, and at that a specific thematic setting (i.e., “urban”), the research contributes to the paucity of works on literary cartography that find practical use in the reconstruction of heritage zones and, prospectively, to the narratives of more sensitive tourism versus commercial development that has rendered the city historically illegible to younger generations, for whom the the *Noli* and the *Fili* are but required high school readings seemingly distant from their lived experiences. As a response, the author will show that the bases of Rizal's settings persist, even if partly effaced by new constructions, therefore becoming a sort of cultural palimpsest.

Using a qualitative, historicist approach, the author primarily drew from the *Noli* and the *Fili* in the original Spanish, downloaded from *Project Gutenberg*, and then cross-referenced these with the English translations by Maria Soledad Lacson-Locsin, in order to enumerate all references to urban setting, proximate or remote to the characters. As a form of textual analysis, the passages were grouped, compared, and interpreted for geographical meaning; this was followed by an on-site verification of corresponding sites—or locations that seem to have served as

models of the settings used in the novels, especially in the City of Manila itself. In a few cases, old-timers (relatives and erudite acquaintances of the author) were asked informally where certain locations in the novels might have been. Using GIS-referenced maps from Google Earth, along with an analysis of the novels derived from collected excerpts pertaining to urban settings, the author interpreted how the cityscape might have been perceived according to Rizal's point of view. This interpretation was enriched by inferences from the rest of the narrative of each novel, as well as other writings from the Spanish colonial era in the Philippines that had been influenced by the eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment. The resulting knowledge, transmitted from the literary to the urban-spatial, is expected to be useful to heritage conservation practitioners, as well as to urban historians, in so far as it contributes to varied appreciations of the culturally valuable semiotics of the landscape.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **The Spatial Turn in Literature and the City as Mother to the Novel**

Researchers in the humanities and related fields have long cited the “spatial turn” in literature, which had already become distinct as both an ideological and instrumental concept beginning in the twentieth century. This phenomenon emphasized the notion of space as *lived* by literary characters in relation to society and power and not just designated by coordinates on a map to indicate neutered setting. In some cases, the spatial turn was also seen as concomitant with the “linguistic turn,” wherein urbanite characters, through their speech and actions, are read as linguistically *performing the city* (Klooster and Heirman 3; Vuolteenaho, et al. 2). In a similar fashion, critical researchers of the urban condition, like Edward Soja, have defined the spatial turn as “a response to a longstanding ontological and epistemological bias that privileges time over space in the human sciences, including spatial disciplines like geography and architecture” (Soja 11). Indeed, some would even go so far as to assert that humanity's resources are in the city—and no longer in nature only as an older source of inspiration, angst, and actual material support, for which modern literature has been telling the story ever since, thereby allowing the novel to mature with urban culture and its success in turn creating an urban form of poetry (Doody 36). The city, with its dynamism and unpredictability, as well as the intellectual ferment and conflict that were inevitable results of people from different walks of life mixing in the city's public spaces, has become a setting for literature. At the same time, literature has colored the ways in which readers perceive realities and urbanity's essence in various countries and epochs.

## Differences Between Urban Space and Literary Space: Selecting from the Limitlessness of the Physical

It is also important here to underscore that while there may be a considerable degree of verisimilitude between literature and on-the-ground conditions, textual portrayals of the urban or the city per se also have certain limitations and functions. In the first place, literary images of the city are derived from and structured around character, as in the narrative-based perception of Rizal's Ibarra and Simoun of colonial Manila. As Daniel Paul McKeown writes, "the literary city and the influences it has over a character and reader can be likened to an actual city and the effects it has upon society: the literary city spatially prescribes parameters for sociological and psychological movement" (8). Moreover, he asserts that "in some cases, a subtle struggle against the city does exist within the mind of an individual and it is indeed a telling characteristic of some urban literature" (18). In this sense then, "setting in the urban area becomes a meaningful blueprint for a 'complex' of interrelations in space and time" (Parker 75), but one which is more or less bound by the author's fiat. This is unlike the open-endedness of actual urban space, wherein a multiplicity of experiences intersect and may or may not be strung together as narratives by the commuter/resident/wanderer.

Urban space, on the other hand, may go undescribed and unnoticed, especially if not considered worthy of the agent's attention or concern. As Daniel Alves and Ana Isabel Queiroz remind us, "literary space is not an exact overlay of the urban space, and the city is neither less than nor exactly what writers have told us" (458). It is a denser reality, where the palpable and the imagined intersect, in a sense, echoing Henri Lefebvre, who points out that a true history of space (he was witness to the urbanization of rural France) is also a history of representations. Urban researchers, moreover, have shown us that despite the plethora of suggestive features of a cityscape, its inhabitants tend to perceive selectively from the richness of three-dimensional space, often focusing on intersections and path sequences, with corresponding emotional reactions as they go along (Xin et al. 15). In this way, desire-paths are created in the midst of the impossibility of fully representing the city, and become sources for writing about the urban experience, or using the urban as a setting for fiction. Hence, in this sense, the writer and the architect (and the urban planner) are mark-makers (Bryden 25), or even creative foragers of the built-up environment. All of this relates closely to the classic distinction, as elaborated by Yi-Fu Tuan, between "space" and "place," where the former broadly refers to locations with no social connections to the human perceiver, while the latter is given distinct identity by human sensual experience and symbolism, either by the habitué, the designer, or the writer (387).

## **Experiencing the City: of Historical Narratives and Psychogeography**

Hence, more than being a mere source of ideas for setting, the city becomes a place, or a multitude of places in which experiences lend themselves to the construction of the city's historical narratives (even prior to the possibility of fictionalization), revolving around built heritage and to a certain extent dependent on the language of a particular culture (Busby et al. 20, 23). Since time immemorial, the city has offered the vastness of experiences it contains as a liberating medium, hence the oft-quoted medieval aphorism *stadtluft macht frei*. The city becomes even richer when its raw, un-lettered physicality is interpreted by literature and the recordings or musings of its inhabitants and visitors at various points in time. Indeed, the right of unfettered access to and passage in the city was—and remains—crucial to urban life, especially where and when towns were large enough to comfortably accommodate strangers, allowing the city streets to confer a certain universality to walking, which made it “not only a utilitarian necessity, but an agreeable form of entertainment in its own right” (Corfield 2, 5-6). In the case of Rizal and other Filipino students in Manila or in Europe during the colonial period, there was likely no other choice but to walk, given their modest stipends. Consequently, this became a means to experience the city on its own terms, to embed its structure, landscape and even its intangible qualities in their individual or collective psyches, whether one was concocting a novel in mind, comparing the a finished novel's setting to actual reality, or simply “hanging around” with fellow citizens.

In terms of humanistic methods, there is no more practical and visceral way to experience an urban area (indeed any human settlement) than by walking. It is out of this tradition that approaches like literary psychogeography were derived. In 1955, psychogeography was defined by Guy Debord as “the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals” (23), which, in contemporary practice, always interweaves the playful (re)discovery of roads-less-travelled and places yet commoditized (Löffler 42). Walking, in contemporary literary psychogeography, is mainly directed against the dominance of modern means of transportation; it makes use of the emotional and communal aspects of the persona in experiencing various locations in the reading material. Those who make use of such empirical methods know that the geographical appreciation derived by careful observation *in media res* is, in turn, indispensable to providing effective cartographic frames for literary genres. Similarly, intricate settings found in the pages of a masterful oeuvre may themselves impart significance to what might otherwise be a dull walk through a nondescript part of the city.

## **Urban Design and Perceptions of Geographic Space: Intersections of GIS Technology & Literature**

This takes us then to the more praxis-oriented realm of the city planner, where urban design and perceptions of space can draw from a variety of sources for inspiration, including of course, literature. The ongoing work by Barbara Piatti et al., which uses Geographical Information System software to derive a literary map of certain destinations in Europe to be used by tourism and heritage conservation institutions, is one example of the success in using the literary imaginary to enhance on-the-ground realities. This is similar to the work of Anne-Kathrin Reuschel et al. on the Literary Atlas of Europe. As Piatti explains, “writers choose settings for their stories which have a ‘real-world counterpart,’—and they design these settings in a rather realistic way, sometimes even so realistic that one could use the novels in question as guidebooks to the described region or city” (“Mapping” 180); ultimately, though, the resulting geography is imprecise, because for every character strolling through a city, there are dozens of options to experience (184-190). Other examples of such projects include: Patricia Murrieta-Flores et al.’s topographic and narrative analysis of the Lake District in England and David Bodenhammer et al.’s exposition on mapping in the humanities. Such grounded applications enrich the representations of a landscape that may speak to generations of readers, tourists, etc. They also offer alternatives to impersonal, mechanistic, and unimaginative approaches to way-finding, place-naming, street layouts, and placement of signs and monuments, among other concerns of urban design and planning.

This realm of practice is also related to the emergent arena of geohumanities, which is strongly connected with the extraordinary growth of new geographical technologies that allow scholarly studies, say by literary critics, to explore the intersections between literature, music, dance, and theatrics (e.g., street performance and protest) and geographic space, often in specific places in the city (Rossetto 513). In addition, Tania Rosetto tells us that geohumanities may be approached from the more technical side by “critical cartographers [who] problematize maps as cultural texts” (517) or even by urban managers who are looking for ways to creatively repackage their cities for investors and tourists, especially by utilizing literature, even if others may cry out against this more banal intent, amalgamated as it may be with pecuniary and political interests.



## Philippine Literature and Its Urban Context, with Focus on the Colonial Hispanic Influence

Finally, in this paper, the intersection of literature and the city must also be understood within the context of Rizal's time. Rizal and his contemporaries were among the first to benefit from Spanish educational reforms that had begun in the 1860s and rapidly benefitted the members of the *ilustrado* class who were already prosperous in the major towns and suburbs near Manila. However, full literary fruition did not take place until the "Golden Age of Philippine Literature in Spanish," which took place, by most estimates, right after the Spanish withdrawal in 1898 and lasted, at the most optimistic extent, to the 1940s (Monsod 60-61). Building on a tradition that had exported and grafted the European humanistic canon to native literary practices that were eventually subdued and subsumed under the colonial project (Donoso 407), the literate Filipino youth of the late nineteenth century began inserting themselves in social and political discourse through works in Castilian, sometimes in literary formats that obscured subversive intent. This phenomenon, as historian Resil Mojares observed, was the creation of a space for the flowering of ideas and protest. This "space of literature is not fixed and immutable, it is a site of incessant struggle, innovation, and challenges to authority" (91). Hence, histories of Philippine nationalism built on neatly segmented, dichotomous understandings of history—assimilationist/separatist, reformist/revolutionary, or prenational/national—misrepresent a complex and dynamic continuum in which ideas can simultaneously exist and one position is already prefigured in another. In nearly all such cases, the urban figured as the incubator of ideas or as a setting for this kind of discourse which found its way into artistic expression, whether such an urban locus was in the Philippines or abroad, given that the Filipino intelligentsia had already sojourned widely in Madrid, Barcelona, Paris, and other major European cities.

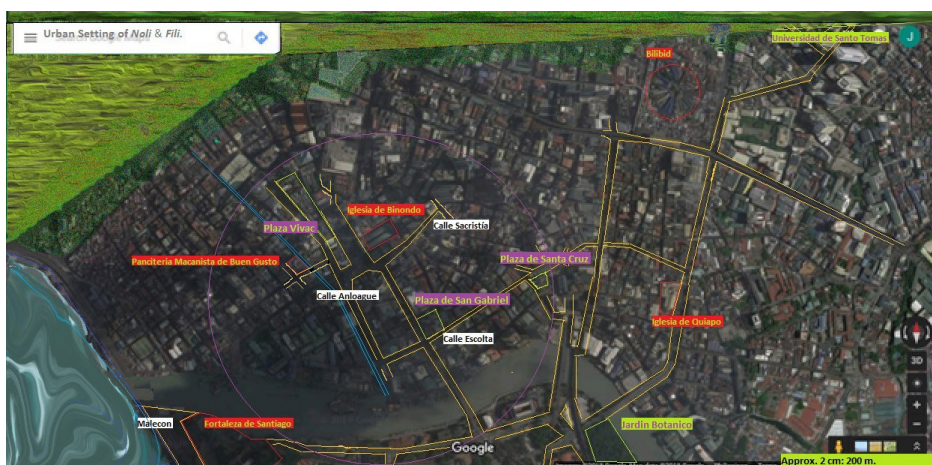


Fig. 1. A sketch of the main setting of the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* overlaid on a Google Earth/Google Maps satellite image of Manila.



## GETTING A DEEPER SENSE OF THE TEXT, APART FROM THE WALKAROUND

The *Noli* and the *Fili* are both set in the Philippines under conditions that more or less mirror the late nineteenth century, and provide an essentially bi-polar placement of events between Manila and the fictional town of San Diego, which, by various textual descriptions, seems to represent most of the rural settlements (i.e., semi-urbanized) along the shores of Laguna de Bai.<sup>2</sup> By reading Rizal's biography, one can get the sense that San Diego could easily be associated with Biñan, Calamba, or other locations he frequented during his childhood. Given that Rizal left for Europe around the age of 21 and wrote the *Noli* during his half-decade first sojourn there, it would be safe to say that he could not have traveled far beyond the Southern Tagalog region beforehand, not only because of his minority status, but also because of the poor quality and unsafe conditions of Spanish colonial road networks among other infrastructure (De Las Alas 95; Morley 116). Hence, it is not just an assumption, but a probable hypothesis that his mental model for the fictional town of San Diego was derived from the towns familiar to him as he was growing up. The analysis that follows allows the reader to walk through various settings in both of Rizal's novels, which have been translated, analyzed, and rendered graphically by the author (see fig. 1) as one cartographic possibility among many.

### *Noli Me Tangere*

*Noli Me Tangere* opens almost movie-like, with the unseen but imaginable swirl of gossip through the houses of upscale Binondo, one of the genteel suburbs of Manila, and Intramuros, occasioned by the announcement of a dinner to be hosted at Capitan Tiago's house. The initial fleeting description of the house on Calle Anloague ("Carpenter Street")<sup>3</sup> in the third paragraph quickly slips into a matter-of-fact yet subtly critical description of a part of the Pasig river, whose multiple usages would be familiar even to today's readers, for whom the river has remained little more than a sewer:

Es ello un edificio bastante grande, á estilo de los muchos del país, situado hacia la parte que da á un brazo del Pásig, llamado por algunos río de Binondo, y que desempeña, como todos los ríos de Manila, el multiple papel de baño, alcantarilla, lavadero, pesquería, medio de transporte y comunicación y hasta agua potable, si lo tiene por conveniente el chino aguador.

It is a rather large building, in the style of many others of that country, located in the part that forms a tributary of the Pasig, which is called by

some Binondo River, and which, like all the rivers of Manila, performs the multiple role of toilet, sewer, laundry-area, fishing grounds, means of transport and communication and is a source drinking water, if the Chinese water carrier deems it convenient to use it as such. (author's trans.)<sup>4</sup>

Rizal piles on the irony by remarking at how the only wooden bridge that connects the neighborhood to the other bank (where Intramuros stands) is reduced to a one-way traffic route for six months, and is impassable to vehicles the rest to the year due to inundation by the river's overwash. In the details of this setting, fiction departs from reality, as the stone *Puente de España* nearby had already been constructed in the 1860s and was probably sturdier than the text purports to decry.

The reader then encounters another description of the setting in which the urbanscape comes alive with carriages like flashes of lightning versus the moribund pace of *calesas* and foreign pedestrians, moving on both sides of the pensive Crisostomo Ibarra as he speeds towards Calle Sacristía (nowadays Ongpin Street), the cloud of worry blown away by “the night breeze which, at that time of year in Manila, is usually cool” (Lacson-Locsin, *Noli* 21):

Pasaban coches como relámpagos, calesas de alquiler á paso moribundo, transeuntes de diferentes nacionalidades. Con ese andar desigual, que da á conocer al distraído ó al desocupado, dirigióse el joven hacia la plaza de Binondo<sup>5</sup>, mirando á todas partes como si quisiera reconocer algo. Eran las mismas calles con las mismas casas de pinturas blancas y azules y paredes blanqueadas ó pintadas al fresco imitando mal el granito; la torre de la Iglesia seguía ostentando su reloj con la traslúcida carátula; eran las mismas tiendas de chinos con sus cortinas sucias y sus varillas de hierro, una de las cuales había él torcido una noche, imitando á los chicos mal educados de Manila: nadie la había enderezado. (Rizal 40)

Coaches passed by like lightning bolts, horse-carriages for rent passed lethargically, and so did passers-by of different nationalities. With an irregular pace, by which one recognizes the distracted or the unemployed, the young man went to the Plaza de Binondo, looking in every direction as if he would like to recognize something. They were the same streets with the same houses of white and blue paint and walls whitewashed or frescoed in a bad imitation of granite; the church tower still held its clock with the translucent face; there were the same Chinese shops with their dirty curtains and iron rods, one of which he had twisted one night, imitating the ill-educated boys of Manila: no one had straightened it.

Through Ibarra's subsequent exclamation about the Chinaman on the street being the same man he had seen seven years ago, one gets a sense that time has stood still in the Philippines, that it is a place in suspended animation, where nothing has progressed. It is Ibarra himself who says that he could have been asleep and dreaming (of Europe) those past seven years, just as he is contemplating what the narrator calls "maravilla de la estabilidad urbana" ("*marvel of urban stability*"; 41). The protagonist's spatio-temporal displacement is confirmed yet again, humorously, as the chapter closes, when Ibarra asks to be dropped at the old Fonda de Lala hotel, and the carriage driver mutters to himself that his passenger must have just come out of jail. The footnote too, in the closing page is telling: Binondo is identified as an *arrabal*, hence away from the true urban center. In the next chapter, it is revealed that the Fonda de Lala hotel (in San Nicolas, Manila) has a room with a view—not of the Pasig, but of the Estero de Binondo. It is here that a crucial juxtaposition takes place: the illuminated revelry in the house across the waterway, soon to be graced by Maria Clara's presence, against the dark vision of the imagined jail cell of Ibarra's father. The chapter once again ends with a suggestive scene: of a star and the moon growing pale in the sky as dawn breaks over the field of Bagumbayan, the nearby sea still asleep.

The subsequent description of Capitan Tiago's properties and business interests suggests a geography linked to the commerce of Manila: lots on Santo Cristo, Anloague, and Del Rosario streets are prime properties; the town of San Diego, among his many holdings in Pampanga and Laguna, is also mentioned. The reader gets a sense of Capitan Tiago's prosperity in general, for which he is devoted to the Virgin of Antipolo. This latter description indirectly brings into focus the former remote pilgrimage site, which is described later as a place for ritual bathing. It is here, too, that the reader encounters for the first time a complete description of Maria Clara, who, upon maidenhood, was sent to the Beaterio de Santa Catalina which was then in Intramuros and later moved to Legarda Street in Manila. Soon enough, in Chapter 7, the reader is caught up in her anxious anticipation of Ibarra's visit, then bears witness to their idyll on the porch, which, as a scene-setting, is perhaps best pictured in the oil painting *Tampuhan* (1865) by Juan Luna, a contemporary of Rizal. Here, Ibarra waxes romantic (and one gets the sense that he is bragging indirectly) about the places he has been to—Italy, Andalusian Spain, the Rhine, the physical features of which reminded him of Maria Clara's beauty. In turn, Maria Clara responds by saying that, in all honesty, she knows only three towns: "Yo no he viajado como tú; no conozco más que tu pueblo, Manila y Antipolo" ("I have not traveled like you; I do not know any other [places] than your town, Manila, and Antipolo"; 66).

As Chapter 8 opens, the reader encounters a description of traffic back in Rizal's day, a lively scene wherein *carromatas* and *calesas*<sup>6</sup> are moving in all directions amid a throng of European, Chinese, and native pedestrians. Here, Rizal once again creates a contrast by counterposing the hurried carriages against the slow bullock cart pulled by a philosophizing and lethargic carabao, as the wistful Ibarra passes by and is thrown into the past by the sight of chained prisoners tamping down the soil of the unpaved road. They awaken in Ibarra the memory of a corpse dumped in a bullock cart, its half-dilated eyes, ignored by pedestrians, causing Ibarra to muse about man's indifference, as if they were saying: today such a fate may happen to you, while the same may befall us tomorrow. Embellishing the narrative with such details of place is important as because they serve as signifiers of the protagonist's angst, in so far as fixtures of the landscape trigger feelings of nostalgia. The superimposition of an even more remote geography from Ibarra's past, before he left for Europe to become a cosmopolite of sorts, gives depth to the setting. For instance, the pontoon bridge over the Pasig River that was the Puente de Barcas no longer exists; the almond<sup>7</sup> trees in the Plaza de San Gabriel (now Plaza Cervantes in Binondo) have not grown; Escolta seems a tad bit shabbier; and, as he crosses the bridge, he remembers the baths of Uli-Uli.<sup>8</sup> On the opposite bank of the river, after his carriage passes through the Paseo de la Sabana (the vicinity of Plaza Lawton, or now Liwasang Bonifacio) where the cigar factory was, he cannot help but smile as he recalls the kindred odors of the neighborhood of Lavapiés in Madrid.

It is the sight of the botanical garden (where it still stands, at a southwest bend of the river's edge and where the cigar factory used to stand—now Arroceros Forest Park) that upsets Ibarra because the “demon of comparisons” reminds him how much funding and tending is invested to coax the blossoming of plants in European gardens, while the well-tended ones in the colonies are cared for and open to the public. And yet to his right, the old city of Manila looks like a pallid lass dressed in her grandmother's hand-me-downs from a better era. Suddenly, sweepingly, as Ibarra's carriage proceeds southwards, the sight of the sea (there was no Roxas Boulevard yet, the shoreline then being closer, as depicted by the fig. 1) is brought before the reader, and a deluge of memories overtakes Ibarra's mind until he arrives at the hillock near Bagumbayan. Lost in reflection about an old priest who had helped to open his youthful mind, Ibarra does not even notice the village of Ermita (which, it is implied, rose from a fire that razed the previous settlement), now painted in blue and white, with red zinc roofs, nor the rest of Malate, nor the cavalry headquarters and the rest of the thatched village hidden behind lush vegetation. Focus then shifts, in Chapter 9, to the mutterings of the antagonists about the state. On the whole, the sequence of descriptions in the first nine chapters gives us insight into Rizal's worldview, or at least his affective comprehension of the colonial

environs and its meanings, as shared in varying degrees by his contemporaries. In so doing, the novel becomes what can be called a “culture-specific code for space, and symbolic space in literature as a result of culturally specific uses of signs” (Hess-Lüttich 2).

At this point, the novel shifts to the other “pole” of setting, so to speak—San Diego on the shores of the lake, which in a physical sense is a town that contrasts with the capital. Entitled “El Pueblo,” Chapter 10 provides a largely rural description of the town, which thus lies outside the urban focus of this article. Moreover, except for a few characteristics which fit the description of a *población* area—such as the poor condition of the tribunal headquarters in Chapter 20, or the cockpit as a Sunday getaway place in Chapter 47—there is little else that can be matched to a modern-day equivalent. Given the wholly fictional nature of the area, most lakeside towns of Laguna province might do just as well. As the haughty Doña Victorina so disparagingly observes, the houses of the *indios* are ugly, although the point of such a comment is more to highlight the irony of her being a native herself than to merely describe the state of the town.

The novel proceeds apace, building up to the thwarted uprising in which Ibarra will be implicated. By Chapter 59,<sup>9</sup> readers are brought back to the urban center of power, Manila, where it took thirty-six hours for news of the trouble to arrive despite the use of the telegraph. From this point forward, rumors begin to spread. Rizal intentionally distances the reader from the rising action by returning him, anticlimactically, to the city, to a gathering of the hoary gentility, not too ruffled as they speculate on the news: “Cuatro ó cinco horas más tarde, en una tertulia de pretensiones en Intramuros se comentaban los acontecimientos del día. Eran muchas viejas y solteras casaderas, mujeres ó hijas de empleados, vestidas de bata, abanicándose y bostezando.” (“Four or five hours later, in a social gathering of some pretensions in Intramuros, the events of the day were discussed. There were many old and unmarried old ladies, women or daughters of employees, dressed in coats, fanning themselves and yawning.”; Rizal 493).

This return to the city allows the reader to become a spectator—that is, until two hours later, when the dramatic crackdown begins: persons-of-interest are awakened and hauled off to Fort Santiago, just as Ibarra is making his way back to the capital as a fugitive to see Maria Clara in the sanctuary of Capitan Tiago’s house, who, by virtue of being well-connected and conveniently absent during the fallout, cannot himself be arrested. In contrast, there is only silence in Chapter 60: “La ciudad dormía; sólo se oía de tiempo en tiempo el ruido de un coche, pasando el puente de madera sobre el río, cuyas solitarias aguas reflejaban tranquilas la luz de la luna” (“The city slept; only the sound of a coach could be heard from time to

time, crossing the wooden bridge over the river, whose solitary waters were calmly reflecting the moonlight"; Rizal 507).

In the final chase described in Chapter 61, the urban setting comes to the fore again as Elías tries to flee with Ibarra and suggests Mandaluyong as a temporary hideout. It is here that geography lends itself to creating the tension and drama of the scene, as the fugitives make their way eastwards upriver, passing the unwitting guards at the powder-magazine<sup>10</sup> to Pandacan, through the Beata River (which today seems little more than a forgotten tributary of the Pasig River). The site of Malapad-na-Bato is most probably in the Makati stretch of the river, although it could not be verified by this author, as even local authorities in Makati were uncertain. As Ibarra and Elías make one last desperate attempt to flee to Talim island, the reader is once again carried away from the colonial city, leaving Maria Clara to face the terrors of the cloister there, setting the premise for Rizal's next novel.

### ***El Filibusterismo***

Somewhat less emphatic about place descriptions than its predecessor, *El Filibusterismo* seems to have been written under the assumption that many of its readers would have perused *Noli Me Tangere*. From the very first page of the *Fili*, the reader is introduced once again to a familiar scene: the same Pasig River through which the ill-fated Ibarra fled at more or less the same time of the year (it is December, but thirteen years after the close of the *Noli*. The ferry *Tabo*, at present, is making its way upriver, its exertions mirroring the colonial ship-of-state. It is here that one meets Simoun the Jeweler, in the company of other gentry on the upper deck. Belowdecks are Basilio and Isagani, also protagonists of the novel.

Unlike the first ten chapters of the *Noli*, most of the development in the *Fili* takes place in and around San Diego, where Basilio heads home, to stay in the house of Capitan Tiago in the same chapter (5) that the coachman gets a beating. The town of San Mateo is also mentioned in connection with the belief of its inhabitants that a king, Bernardo Carpio, was chained in a cave in the town and would cause earthquakes. Also mentioned is the nearby town of Tiani, where both Cablesang Tales and Simoun have transactions (Chapters 4 and 7). In a sudden aside, Rizal also directly addresses his readers, the citizens of Calamba, who are named and assured of their innocence as loyal subjects, unlike (perhaps ironically) the luckless Cablesang Tales who had lost everything due to unjust treatment. Beyond these, no other urban or quasi-urban settings are mentioned.

Urban setting is brought to the fore when the reader meets another hapless victim of Spanish maltreatment, the student Placido Penitente, from Tanauan Batangas. In Chapter 12, Placido Penitente makes his way through Escolta to get to the University

of Santo Tomas (UST), where different types of students pass by him. He remains downcast in the capital and, soon enough, walks out on the priest who is insulting his intelligence. Elsewhere, Makaraig and his classmates are naively hatching their plans to build a Spanish-language academy.

Other scenes that show the tragicomic nature of urbanity in Manila follow. In Chapter 16, the unctuous Chinaman Quiroga gives a banquet, which even his detractors attend, taking advantage of the émigré's hospitality (including, later on, Simoun, who compels Quiroga to store firearms):

La noche de aquel mismo sábado, el chino Quiroga que aspiraba á crear un consulado para su nacion, daba una cena en los altos de su gran bazar situado en la calle de la Escolta. Su fiesta estaba muy concurrida: frailes, empleados, militares, comerciantes, todos sus parroquianos, socios ó padrinos, se encontraban allí; su tienda abastecía á los curas y conventos de todo lo necesario, admitía los vales de todos los empleados, tenía servidores fieles, complacientes y activos. Los mismos frailes no se desdeñaban de pasar horas enteras en su tienda, ya á la vista del público, ya en los aposentos del interior en agradable sociedad. (Rizal 150)

On the night of that same Saturday, the Chinaman Quiroga who was aspiring to create a consulate for his nation, gave a dinner at the top of his great bazaar located on Escolta street. His feast was well-attended: friars, bureaucrats, military men, businessmen, all his customers, business partners and patrons were there; his store supplied the priests and the convents all that was necessary, and admitted the vouchers of the bureaucrats; he had faithful, obliging and active servants. The same friars did not disdain from spending whole hours in his shop, sometimes in public view, sometimes in the inner chambers with agreeable company.

By Chapter 17, Rizal resumes his flourishing style of depicting urban life:

La noche era hermosa y la plaza ofrecía un aspecto animadísimo. Aprovechando la frescura de la brisa y la espléndida luna de Enero, la gente llenaba la feria para ver, ser vista y distraerse. Las músicas de los cosmoramas y las luces de los faroles comunicaban la animacion y la alegría á todos. Largas filas de tiendas, brillantes de oropel y colorines, desplegaban á la vista racimos de pelotas, de mascararas en sarta das por los ojos, juguetes de hoja de lata, trenes, carritos, caballitos mecánicos, coches, vapores con sus diminutas calderas, vagillas de porcelana liliputienses, belencitos de pino, muñecas extranjeras y del país, rubias y risueñas aquellas, serias y pensativas estas como pequeñitas señoras al lado de niñas gigantescas. (162)



The night was beautiful and the plaza presented an animated aspect. Taking advantage of the freshness of the breeze and the splendid January moon, the people filled the fair to see, be seen, and to amuse themselves. The music of the cosmoramas and the lights of the lanterns conveyed everyone's animation and merriment. Long rows of booths, brilliant with tinsel and colors, exposed to view clusters of masks strung by the eyes, tin toys, trains, little carts, mechanical horses, coaches, steamboats with their diminutive boilers, Lilliputian porcelain tableware, little creches made of pinewood, dolls both foreign and domestic, the former blond and smiling, the latter serious and pensive like little ladies beside gigantic children.

This was the Quiapo fair, just a few kilometers to the northeast of Intramuros, where even the friars lose themselves in the merry-making, and Mr. Leeds' magic show gives Padre Salvi a fright. It appears, too, based on the novel, that the area was a safer, more orderly destination than present-day Quiapo.

Almost simultaneously, it would seem, the reader is back in Escolta, alongside Placido Penitente as he returns home in a huff, past Quiroga's bazaar. However, if one follows the place names, it would seem that Placido Penitente is going around in circles: Sibakong<sup>11</sup> (probably in the Santa Cruz area, or southwest of UST), Tondo (further west), San Nicolas, (turning south to the banks of the Pasig), and Santo Cristo (back east, into the interior of Binondo). Taking such a tortuous route is plausible, given his state of mind, which Simoun took advantage of when the two characters came into contact. Breaking off from his winding path, Placido boards the coach headed to Iris Street (now Recto Avenue), and from there disembarks to follow Simoun into the maze of alleys and huts that make up the poorer residential neighborhoods of Manila. Simoun is plotting openly, and in stopping to coordinate with various accomplices refers to Cablesang Tales, waiting that night in Lamayan, Santa Ana (on a bend of the Pasig river); then Simoun proceeds to Trozo (now Bambang Street) to confer with a lame Spaniard who is part of the plot. Such movements not only emphasize the urban setting but also impart a sense of urgency to the characters' actions, especially since Placido Penitente is a silent witness, implicitly surprised and morally torn by what he sees.

Once again, Rizal defers the sinister build-up, and two chapters later (Chapter 21) takes the reader to the *Teatro de Variedades* (approximately behind Mehan Gardens) where *Les Cloches de Corneville* is being performed. Here the vagabond persona of Camaroncocado is introduced—a bum of a Spaniard indifferent to all the conspiring, even from among the Spanish officers and soldiers whom he overhears. In terms of particular place-scenes, the text moves on to the description of another urban scenario: coaches pulling up at a dizzying pace, from which the gentry alight in

shawls and coats. Still, Camaroncocado retains his insouciance until Chapter 23, and is used as a foil to Simoun's vigilance outside of the Santa Clara convent, near the street of the hospital, which was probably the original San Juan de Dios. Simoun, as the reader learns through his dialogue with Basilio, arrives too late the hero, as Maria Clara, whom he had intended to rescue while Manila burned, has just passed away, leaving him bitter and agitated.

The scene shifts again, this time to a more pleasant part of the setting: the Paseo de Maria Cristina, or the walkway leading to the Malecon, along the coastal walls of Intramuros, where the idealistic Isagani passed by what he perceived to be haughty gentlemen and mischievous youngsters along the beach (yes, Manila had a beach!). Isagani mourns the city, although it seems that Rizal might as well be the one speaking to the reader when he refers to Manila as a bastard child that has caused its people so much grief: "El puerto, ¡ah! el puerto de Manila, ¡bastardo que, desde que se concibe, hace llorar á todos de humillacion y vergüenza! ¡si al menos despues de tantas lágrimas no saliese el feto hecho un inmundo aborto!" ("The port, ah! The port of Manila, a bastard that since its conception has made everyone weep from humiliation and shame! If only after so many tears, the fetus would not come out as such a filthy abortion!"; Rizal 235.

And yet, in the final pages of the chapter, Isagani, while talking to Paulita, waxes poetic about his aspirations for the future of the archipelago: an urban future with railroads, towns of factories, and edifices like the then-progressive Mandaluyong;<sup>12</sup> the ports shall be filled with ships, and the city turned into an industrial machine. Isagani, so taken by his dreamy monologue, hardly notices that he has already gone down the Paseo de la Sabana (probably Padre Burgos avenue today, the north edge of Rizal Park) and across the Puente de España. Isagani has to be reminded that the carriage he was riding has arrived at Plaza Santa Cruz, where he shall part ways with Paulita and her chaperone, the irascible Doña Victorina.

The somber Isagani soon finds his way to a mock banquet not far away, where boisterous students are making fun of the friars near the Plaza de Vivac (now Plaza San Lorenzo Ruiz), specifically at the Panciteria Macanista de Buen Gusto (once located on San Fernando Street fronting the Binondo church) which had a balcony with a view of the Pasig River, or, just as likely, the Estero de Binondo. This small detail tells us that there were no buildings to block the view from the plaza yet, as the distance is at least 300 meters to the Pasig's edge. The next morning, the reader follows yet another serious medical student, Basilio, on his way to San Juan de Dios hospital to do the rounds of his patients before proceeding to the Ateneo Municipal, where he is finishing medicine. In the wake of the crackdown after the discovery of the seditious posters (Chapter 28), a general panic ensues throughout

Manila: Quiroga's bazaar is shuttered, and the well-to-do citizens take no visitors. The attentive reader of Rizal's novels may at this point experience a sort of *déjà vu*, for the tendency of the colonial authorities in Manila to overreact at the slightest whiff of insurrection is once again played out in an urban setting, just as in the final crackdown in the *Noli*. If anything, the narrative reveals the fragility of the town, and how the colonial city is prone to the rumblings of discontent and the spread of rumors. In Ermita a case of mistaken identity leads to the shooting of a veteran guard, and in Dulumbayan (near Antipolo) an old man is shot for failing to hear and respond to the question "Quien vive?" ("Who goes there?"). Artillery men are posted at the gates facing Luneta, where a woman is found dead the next morning. As a further consequence, exams are suspended in Chapter 32, which affects the hapless Basilio,<sup>15</sup> who had been preventively incarcerated in (Old) Bilibid Prison. And yet, the novel proceeds to show that all of this is merely the penultimate stroke, a false climax leading to the final discovery of Simoun's plot.

Two months later, all troubles are forgotten, and Manila returns to its blithe quotidian, preoccupied only by the upcoming wedding of Don Timoteo's son, Juanito. At this point, Santa Mesa is mentioned as a point of invasion by insurgents who have been living in caverns and forests around the city. As Simoun tries to convince Basilio to join his cause, he is able to highlight the smallness of Manila as an urban center surrounded by semi-wilderness. Simoun temporarily succeeds in persuading the hesitant Basilio, telling him to rendezvous at the Church of San Sebastian, and warning him to distance himself from Anloague Street after 9:00 P.M., when the bomb is set to explode. Again, as in the opening of the *Noli*, the reader returns to the familiar house on Anloague Street in the closing of the *Fili*. Under the new ownership of Don Timoteo, it is now decorated with flowers and vases, as well as mirrors, carpets, and furniture after the style of Louis XV. While the final indictment against the friars is made here, the final plot is also thwarted. In Chapter 36, Ben Zayb, the press censor, writes his account of the previous night's drama by casting the friars in a favorable light, but, alas, the same dispatch is suppressed by the Governor-General.

Subsequent news of a failed raid of a friar's villa in Pasig provides consolation to the gossip-monger Zayb, as through this turn of events, Simoun is revealed as mastermind of the whole conspiracy. The latter's complicity is confirmed by a raid of his house in Escolta, where munitions and gunpowder were found. As usual, incomplete news and rumors soon reach the public, and Manila is once again abuzz with stories. At this stage, Manila ceases to serve as the urban center of action, allowing for the bittersweet denouement in the last two chapters. The insurgency spreads through Luzon like wildfire and leads Tano (a.k.a. Carolino) to unwittingly

kill his grandfather in an armed encounter. In a rural refuge, the dying Simoun reveals his identity to Padre Florentino.

The discussion above highlights the settings and the names of places in the novels that either serve as backdrop to actions of the characters, or are themselves vehicles for conveying a geographically-symbolic message, such as the contrast between the pretentious airs of households in Binondo and the rural simplicity of San Diego. Working from a geohumanities perspective, these passages will be further synthesized in the next section, which presents the following propositions: that setting in the novels is tied intimately to Rizal's experience of urban landscapes; that these same places continue to exist, albeit under newly-constructed layers and symbols; and that there is potential for revitalizing such places from the points of view of literature and urban studies. The following discussion also endeavors to show that there is logic in the choice of settings, whether historical, hierarchical, or affective, which could be helpful to those who wish to plan for and design, or even politicize given locations.

### **WHAT THE GEOGRAPHIC ASPECTS TELL US, PICTURED ONE WAY OR ANOTHER**

The preceding analysis shows that the core of urban life in both novels is confined to an important constellation of colonial institutions, buildings, and geographic features (e.g., the Pasig River, Laguna de Bai). This is largely derived from Rizal's own experience as a scion of the provincial *principalía* who was educated in the capital before he made his way abroad to acquire a more liberal (and subversive) education, eventually becoming a member of the expatriate ilustrado class. We see how places in the minds and dialogues of the characters become settings, or rather, extensions of the settings of the novels and vice versa (Piatti et al., "Dreams" 12). These include the foreign capitals of Madrid and Paris, towns like Pandacan and Mandaluyong, the provinces of Pampanga and Laguna, the fictional towns of San Diego and Tiani, and even popular sites of retreat, such as Antipolo and Boso-Boso, and hideouts like Talim Island and Binangonan.

At this point it is useful to employ the concept of the "frame," which shall be used to precisely denote the sub-settings, or descriptions of places that constitute the immediate overall setting, remote places relevant to the latter, and recalled or imagined places. As Ruth Ronen explains: the frame is "a strictly spatial concept, designating the location of various fictional entities" (421). Ronen also echoes the limitation of the study in choosing among a wide array of setting-elements: "A place, like any other real entity, is inexhaustible insofar as it comprises a virtually infinite number of aspects, features, and properties..." (430). Hence, the creation and sequencing of frames is a deliberate act, constructed as a vehicle for the narrative.

The frames of the overall setting can be summarized and grouped as follows:

Table 1. Specific Locations in the Setting of the *Noli* and the *Fili*.

Location(s), Frames & Key Physical Infrastructure		Proximity or Centrality to Plot (following Waldo Tobler's near-to-far logic, or Walter Christaller's small-to-large place hierarchy)	Rizal's Affections or Connotations	Present-Day Understanding
From the Novels	Equivalent Non-Fictional Area			
Binondo: Calle Anloague, Calle Sacristía, Calle Santo Cristo, Calle (Del) Rosario, Calle Escolta; Universidad de Santo Tomas, Ateneo Municipal, Plaza de San Gabriel, Plaza Vivac, Pandacan, Mandaluyong, Quiroga's Bazaar, Panciteria Macanista de Buen Gusto, Hospital San Juan de Dios, Fort Santiago	Binondo: Juan Luna street  Ongpin street, Santo Cristo street, Quintin Paredes street, Escolta street, the University of Santo Tomas, (formerly along Santa Lucia St., Intramuros), Plaza Cervantes, Plaza San Lorenzo Ruiz, Pandacan, Mandaluyong, (old shops along Escolta), (decrepit building along Juan Luna St.); Lyceum of the Philippines. University, Fort Santiago	Primary – most of the novels' scenes unfold in these places, between residences of the elite, places of commerce, and schools of the religious. The physical center of the novel may be located just north of the Pasig.	"Binundok" was a residential area for Filipino (mestizo) gentry, not then necessarily all of Chinese descent. Most institutions were still located in or near Intramuros, and the Pasig River as a center of life was a multipurpose waterway.	Binondo is nearly synonymous to Chinatown in Manila, though it has patches of native neighborhoods, especially of laborers; the Pasig River is slowly being revived and is still a multi-purpose water way.
Fonda de Lala, Beaterio de Santa Catalina, Convento de Santa Clara, Botanical Gardens, Puente de España, Bagumbayan Field, Baths of Uli-Uli, Ermita, Tondo, Sibakong, Lamayan-Santa Ana, Trozo – Manila, Malecon, Mandaluyong, Pasig, San Mateo, Beata River, San Sebastian Church	(west of Juan Luna St., somewhere in Brgy. San Nicolas), Letran Univ., near Sta. Clara cor. Cabildo, near Arroceros Park, Jones Bridge, Rizal Park, possibly in San Miguel, Manila, Tondo, possibly in Santa Cruz, Santa Ana, Bambang St., Manila, Roxas Blvd., Pasig, Mandaluyong, San Mateo, Beata Creek, San Sebastian Church	Secondary – important landscape markers or triggers of memory for the characters. Areas through which the main characters pass en route to visit others, or to rendezvous/retreat.	Civic spaces like parks and promenades were located in Ermita, and most areas were probably still open and walkable. Bridge infrastructure was wanting, and traffic consisted of horse-drawn carriages, different from the fast-paced motor vehicles of today.	Intramuros is a historical-cum-tourist and educational site, while many of the Manila neighborhoods are mixed small-scale commercial and residential areas. Bambang for instance, is known for sales of medical supplies.
Lavapies – Madrid, America, Africa Germany, Poland, Aden, Port Said, Paris		Reference to places abroad visited by well-traveled characters.	Treatment by the characters is superficial, yet hints at the character of old European cities as well.	All still exist, as even Lavapies, in Madrid appears to be more a tourist area now than industrial.
Tiani, San Diego		Important semi-urban locations in rural areas in the Philippines.	Representative of towns in his youth, outside of Manila as capital in the 19th century.	Excepting larger populations now, could still be any lowland Christian rural settlement in the Philippines.
Tanauan – Batangas, Boso-Boso, Talim Island, Dulumbayan, Binangonan, Islas Carolinas		Remote areas, often of provincial origin, for recreation, escape or banishment.	Remote areas that speak of the far reaches of the Spanish colonial empire in the Asia-Pacific region.	Still in existence as remote areas, though Batangas has urbanized as a province.

If one were to plot out the various locations just summarized, one would notice that the concentration of frames falls easily within a circle with a maximum diameter of 3 kilometers—between 3.1 to 3.4 km., to be more precise. By even present-day urban planning standards, this distance encompasses both the commonplace and probable maximum range for walkable cities,<sup>14</sup> at least for city centers. Such areas, like the complex of places cited in Rizal's novels, naturally contain the most dynamic space for interaction in colonial Manila, where all sorts of citizens could encounter one another and converse. Such a compact setting suggests options for present urban renewal of the same run-down neighborhoods today that have seen better days.

As for the other locations, one might imagine how they are positioned in concentric circles around the core of the novels' settings—from the physically remote frames like Antipolo and Laguna, to the mentally remote (i.e., recalled or imagined by the characters) places like Madrid and the fictional town of San Diego. Such concentrics are not only useful categorization devices, but also serve to show the contemporary reader how the notions of suburbia and exurbia have changed and expanded over the last century, for in fact, present-day Binondo is no longer a suburb, but is part of the metropolitan center, and Antipolo, arguably its periphery, with the farther towns of Rizal province consisting of the new exurbia, lying outside contemporary urban dwellers' zones of familiarity.



Fig. 2. A collage incorporating a GIS-map of Manila and the Southern Tagalog region. The hierarchy of settings (near-far, intimate-detached) is portrayed by concentric lines.

## **Projecting Forward: Lessons from the Noli and the Fili for Urban Renewal, Tourism, and Heritage Conservation**

Over a century since the publication of the novels, what then do the physical portrayals of such literature imply for present shapers of the built-up environment? This is the Manila still decadent and dilapidated in parts, with the wen of Tondo still synonymous with poverty and violence at the waterfront, and lately afflicted by a rash of pricey condominiums, as well as the scattering of pedicabs and peddlers. And yet it is also the Manila with a growing, if still modest, array of historic sites and cultural tours.

The urban scholar, who is sometimes too steeped in technical work, unable to value what literary and history buffs appreciate, is made aware of the persistence of rich historical narratives that are present in existing buildings, which can be restored with careful planning, extending the already successful walking tours between Intramuros and Binondo. The locations plotted based on the novels are, expectedly, imprecise, in so far as it often suffices for authors like Rizal to state a general location or route that suggests many possibilities. (For example Placido Penitente's path to and from the university and his subsequent angry ramblings through Tondo and San Nicolas could have meandered through hundreds of paths.) This is what researchers call the fragmentation of fictional spaces, left to be completed by the imagination of the reader (Reuschel et al. 294), but which serendipitously also leaves leeway for the urban planner and restoration architect to lay their own storied paths through present-day Manila. Secondly, the novels also describe and hint at ancient verdure. Manila was a place where rivers and *esteros* flowed cleanly and were not forgotten, and therefore could be held up as a standard for present-day efforts to revive metropolitan waterways, notwithstanding the already-extant Supreme Court continuing mandamus.<sup>15</sup> For instance, the Estero de Binondo, which is nowadays photographed as a filthy and clogged canal, was once the backdrop for restaurants, plazas, and residential neighborhoods on the eponymous island that it surrounded. And lastly, today's city builders are reminded that the cityscape is just as much about literary geographies, in which the past and its symbolisms and narratives resurge and can be employed as a critique of the present. Such a past, even if imagined, demands to be documented through its physical persistence and the inexorable accumulation of stories passed on from generation to generation. Such geocriticism allows one to emphasize the ways by which literature interacts with the world, as well as ways of dealing with the world that are somewhat literary (Tally x). Furthermore, this tells us that Manila, despite its ragged edges, may still be considered a literary city, perhaps not yet to the same degree of refinement as Edinburgh or Paris, but a repository-in-landscape and physical fount of Philippine literature nonetheless.



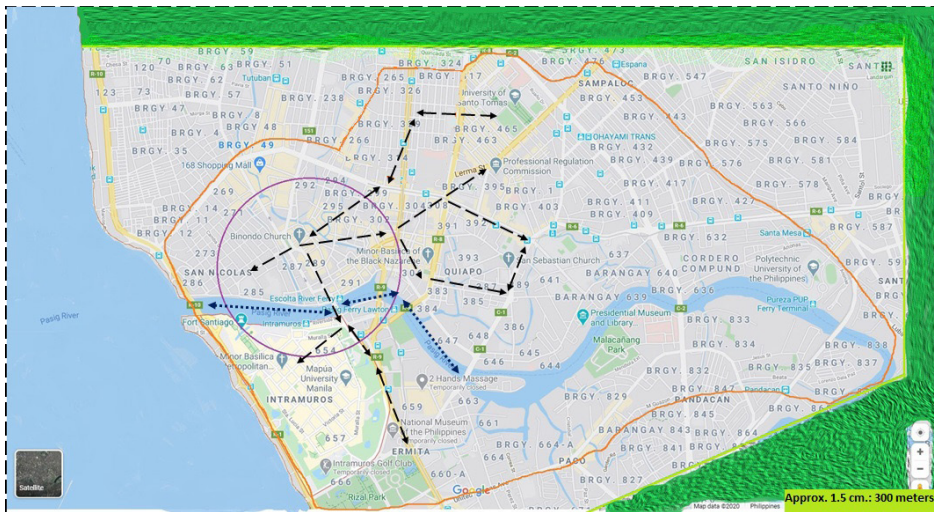


Fig. 3. Rizal's Walkable Manila. Author's estimation, based on the text and assumed walk of two kilometers, round-trip, of the *Noli* and the *Fili* Manila settings, with arrows suggesting "Literary Walking Trip" directions over present barangays. Source of image: Google Earth/Google Maps.

## CONCLUSION: The Physical City as Literary City

This study has endeavored to contribute to a layered, and hopefully richer understanding of physical urbanity by calling upon and analyzing sources not usually preferred by more technically-inclined urban scholars, but familiar to researchers in the humanities. Although the study is limited to the analysis of two representative novels, the author acknowledges that similar studies can be done on other Philippine literary texts in Spanish. In consonance with other cross-disciplinary studies, this research has shown how space and the world in which it unfolds are the fruits of a symbolic system, of a speculative movement, which is also a glimmer of the beyond, and (let us venture the word) of the imaginary (Westphal 1). In particular, the elaboration and analysis of setting in José Rizal's novels have shown that despite the selective perception of the urban environs by the novelist—or any novelist for that matter—such literature remains a useful index and record of past urban realities. Present or future generations of citizens and urban-shapers may be called upon to recognize, respect, restore, or possibly rework this record into the expanding physical complexes that characterize present urbanization in the Philippines.

## NOTES

- 1 It is acknowledged that other authors or teaching professionals may include additional “essential” elements like conflict, central theme, etc., but these are not necessary to this introductory section.
- 2 Also “Laguna de Bay,” the last word pronounced “Ba-ee,” referring to the still-existent town of the same name.
- 3 By many historians’ footnotes, now a part of Juan Luna Street in Binondo, Manila.
- 4 Unless otherwise noted, all translations of excerpts from the Noli and the Fili are the author’s.
- 5 At that time, Plaza Calderón de la Barca (after a Spanish playwright), then renamed Plaza San Lorenzo Ruiz in the 1980s.
- 6 The definitions online vary somewhat, but essentially, “carromatas” and “calesas” were four- and two-wheeled horse-drawn carriages, respectively.
- 7 Probably not “almond” in the European sense, but tropical trees resembling it.
- 8 It is difficult to place this nowadays, but considering that distances of other sites mentioned were not more than a few kilometers apart by today’s standards, it would be reasonable to surmise that the Uli-Uli baths were within the Manila area, or within a day’s reach upriver. Fieldwork showed that there is in fact a street in San Miguel, Manila called Uli-Uli, exactly where the shrine of Saint Jude Thaddeus is located, which may be a candidate for the location.
- 9 This is chapter 60 in the translation of Lacson-Locsin because she inserted the unpublished text on Elias and Salome as Chapter 25, moving succeeding chapters one count up.
- 10 This may or may not have been the same maestranza of Intramuros today, where the artillery and gunpowder were stored. Considering the proximity to Capitan Tiago’s house in Juan Luna, Binondo, it probably was the same location.

- 11 Again, available references from the web point to a riverside or creekside location for Sibakong ([traveleronfoot.wordpress.com/2010/10/12/sta-cruz-manila/](http://traveleronfoot.wordpress.com/2010/10/12/sta-cruz-manila/)), as on-foot/driving inspections by fieldwork showed no street or district by the name.
- 12 From the translation by Lacson-Locsin (endnote 6, Chapter 24, p.337): In the town of San Felipe Neri, now Mandaluyong City, there existed factories of brick, clay, and tile.
- 13 In Chapter 30, there is the brief narration of the sad fate of Juli, who is forced to ask for intercession from the lecherous Padre Camorra in the town of Tiani. It is implied that, refusing to surrender her dignity, she meets death in the convent there, and the news is brought to Basilio by a coachman whom he meets in jail. Not being an urban center, the fictional Tiani is not discussed in this article.
- 14 See Iderlina Mateo-Babiano's study of Quiapo, which cites 1.2 km. under poor conditions in Manila (108), or Kevin McNally's manual, which, using American standards, cites 0.5 km. under ideal Western conditions (3).
- 15 The Supreme Court-rendered decision in G.R. Nos. 171947-48 in 2011, mandating specific agencies to clean up Manila Bay (including the Pasig River), or their officials would face severe penalties.

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