A sequel to the *Noli Me Tangere*, the *El Filibusterismo* is a book for all seasons for peoples existing under oppressive regimes. It begins where the *Noli* leaves off, where love, romance, heroism, idealism and tragedy turn to hate, bitterness, anger, disillusionment and vengeance.

Unlike the *Noli*, which is largely a narration of events and the softer emotions, the *Fili* is dominated by dialogue, ideology and the angrier passions. How to capture the nuances of a language of almost a century gone by, in today’s English and with the same rage, is itself a story.

The *Fili*, according to the preface of the centenary edition published by the National Historical Commission, was written after Rizal returned to Europe in February 1888. He was then somewhat disappointed at the reaction of his fellow Filipinos as well as of the Peninsulars to what he had written in the *Noli*. For Rizal, as Retana said, “wrote not only for the Filipinos but also for the Spaniards, not only for the colony but also for the Peninsula.
as well,” to call attention to the abuses of the government so that they might see these defects. It was his belief that his book would open the eyes of the Filipinos and at the same time awaken the national conscience of the Spaniards. It was also an appeal to both to improve strained relations which, if not enhanced, would redound to national failure.

In a way the author identified himself with Ibarra, who desired to reconcile the situation and to harmonize conflicting interests. However, he noted that if something had been achieved, at least in part, by what he was proposing to his countrymen, it had produced a counter-productive effect among the Peninsulars. Rizal began to see the futility of expecting a change in the system of government, and wrote his second novel, *El Fílibusterismo* (The Subversion), which sees the savage mutation of the ambivalence of Ibarra, or Rizal, in the *Noli*.

Simoun in the *Fíli* is Ibarra transformed into a revolutionary, ruthless and implacable, radical and vengeful, as seen in his words: “...Today I have returned to destroy this system, precipitate its corruption, push it to the abyss where it runs insensate, even if I have to spill torrents of blood and tears...It has condemned itself and I do not wish to die without seeing it dashed to pieces at the bottom of the precipice!...Summoned by the vices of those who rule, I have returned to these islands...With my wealth I have opened the way and wherever I have been, greed in the most execrable forms, now hypocritical, now shameless, now cruel, feeds on a dead organism like a vulture devouring a cadaver. And I have asked myself: why does the poison not ferment in its guts, the toxin, the venom of the graves, kill the loathsome bird? The corpse is left destroyed, the vulture is satiated with flesh, and since it is not possible for me to give it life so that it would turn against its executioner, and since corruption sets in gradually, I have incited greed; I have favored it; I have multiplied the injustices and the abuses; I have fomented crime, acts of cruelty to accustom the people to the prospect of death; I have encouraged anxiety so that flight from it would lead to any solution whatever... driven the vulture itself to degrade the same cadaver that gives it life and corrupts it...I am the Judge come to punish a social system through its own crimes....”

The *Fíli* is just another story to tell, but in its intensity lie the thoughts and the soul of a people, their hopes and their future, the sweep and shape of their destiny, forming part of the parcel.
of a national heritage. But then, the reader must judge for himself, like Simoun, whether indeed the ends justify the means, and finally agonize like Shakespeare’s Casca that the fault may “…not be in our stars but in ourselves, that we are underlings.”

As in the Noli, the dilemma confronted me: to hew closely to the original, the way Rizal wrote it, or freely and more closely to the semantics of today? I wrote then that “Spanish is a beautiful language; but translated into English literally, it becomes florid and clumsy with its long periodic sentences, shifting tenses and wandering modifiers and, therefore, less comprehensible. On the other hand, the sparse clarity of English often robs translated Spanish of its original ambience and precision.” In both translations, the decision of how to structure the sentences was controlled by the thought that, after all, I was doing a translation of Rizal’s own version of his work, and not my own version of Rizal. But Rizal also has to be understood in English.

Thus, I have again taken the “liberty of cutting the long sentences by just converting them into more, but shorter ones; and of rearranging some of the adjectives and adverbs to bring them closer to the words they modify; of adding or cutting words here and there but taking care not to enlarge or diminish the original, while attempting to preserve the cadence of Spanish in the English translation. Again, I must apologize to the reader if I have inadvertently made some slips in this balancing act.”

Also, some words in the Fili “have their modern equivalents in English but do not have connotations similar to those endowed them by the social and political structures then. I have retained some of these in the original Spanish. Many of these words are still used in the Philippine national language with the same gist. For those who have but a faint recollection of Philippine history, some of the annotations of the Fili as compiled by the National Historical Commission from various sources and editions already published are appended and, at times, elaborated upon.”

The Translator