

PRESS RELEASE

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2330 Roxas Blvd., Pasay City, Philippines

Tel. No. 834-4000

www.dfa.gov.ph



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PENGUIN CLASSICS PUBLISHES *NOLI ME TANGERE*



Sir Roger Alama, Mr. Harold Augenbraum, Consul General Rebong, Consulate Assistant Carissa Villacorta, Penguin Associate Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Penguin Books Ms. Elda Rotor, Deputy Consul General Melita S. Thomeczek, Mr. Joe Ramos and Consul Ed Badajos attend the Consulate's celebration of the publication of Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* by Penguin Classics.

8 December 2006 — Consul General Cecilia B. Rebong of the Philippine Consulate General in New York, USA reported to the DFA Secretary Alberto G. Romulo that the Consulate hosted a reception to celebrate the publication by Penguin Classics of the new English translation of Dr. Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*.

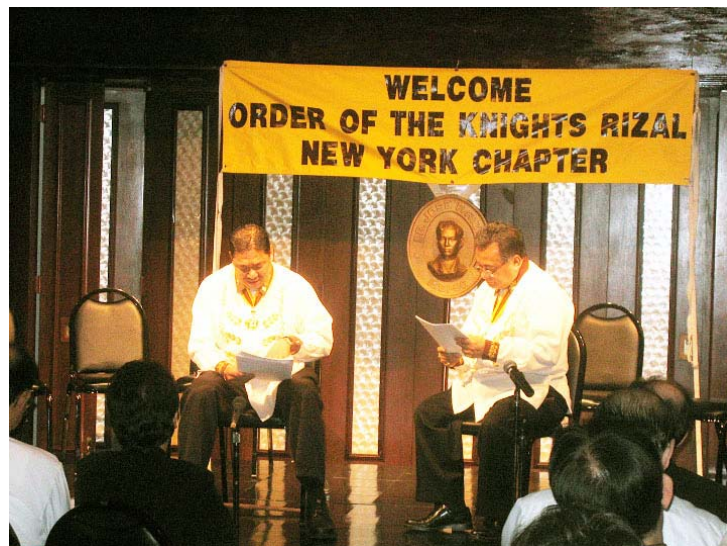
The event dubbed "*Alay Kay Gat. Jose Rizal*" was held on 29 November 2006 at the Philippine Center in New York, and attended by some 500 guests.

Special guests included Mr. Harold Augenbraum, who translated the novel from its original Spanish text into English for Penguin Classics; Mr. Roger Alama, Knights of Rizal Immediate Past Regional Commander, USA who gave a summary of Rizal's life and importance in the Philippines; and Penguin Classics' Executive Editor of Penguin Classics Elda Rotor.

Associate Publisher Stephen Morris, and Filipino-American Executive Editor of Penguin Classics Elda Rotor.

"Harold Augenbraum's new translation of the *Noli* represents Penguin's commitment to publish the major literary classics of the world. For me, it's particular joy to place Rizal on the same shelf as Dickens and Austen, to share a classic that is read, studied and celebrated in parts of the world, yet unfamiliar to a wider audience," Ms. Rotor said.

She added, "Penguin Classics will continue to publish new translations and international rediscoveries to bridge this gap and to share literary treasures globally."



Knights of Rizal Sir Raul Estrellado and Sir Prospero Lim as Pilosopong Tasio and Crisostomo Ibarra in the novel reading

According to Penguin Classics Executive Editor Elda Rotor, Rizal's novel *Noli* has become part of literature studies and a required reading of 15 universities in the United States, including Harvard University, the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA), San Diego State University, Texas A&M, State University of New York in Buffalo, University of Illinois at Chicago, and the University of Hawaii.

Mr. Augenbraum, who is also Executive Director of the National Book Foundation and has translated several Latino books, shared with the audience his encounter with Dr. Jose Rizal and the *Noli*.

Translating the novel and having it finally published took Mr. Augenbraum 15 years: "The process began with my chance reading of a book by NVM Gonzales. At that time, I was working on another project dealing with Latino-American writers and didn't know anything about the Philippines. NVM Gonzales turned out to be a Filipino writer whose book mentioned Dr Jose Rizal thrice."

Intrigued as to whom Rizal was, Mr. Augenbraum read up on him, starting with Rizal's autobiography. 'I visited the New York public library and borrowed the only available copy of the English translation of the *Noli* by Leon Ma. Guerrero," he narrated. "I was so fascinated by Rizal's thoughts, ideas and style of writing that I began entertaining thoughts of doing an entire project on the *Noli*."



New York-based Filipino-American writer Luis Francia encouraged Augenbraum to write his own translation. He proposed the publication of his translation to several publishers. Receiving no positive response, the project was put aside until, 15 years after, Penguin Classics invited him to have any of his translated works published. He offered to Penguin his translation of *Noli*.

Consul General Rebono noted, "Clearly, Rizal is very important to the Filipinos, but for him to be acknowledged by non-Filipinos as an important leader and writer is a great accomplishment for Filipinos."

Mrs. Loida Lewis (4th L), National Chair of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations graces the affair and meets with Penguin Classics Editor-in-Chief Stephen Morrison (3rd L) and new Consul in New York Leandro Lachica (6th L). They are joined by members of the Filipino-American Community of New York.

The *Noli* now sits in the roster of Penguin Classics collection alongside such titles as Leo Tolstoy's "War and Peace," Fyodor

Dostoyevski's "Crime and Punishment," and other world literary masterpieces, and can now be bought anywhere books are sold around the world. END