

# novel noli me tangere

**Novel Noli Me Tangere** has long stood as a cornerstone of Philippine literature, embodying a profound critique of social injustices and colonial oppression during the Spanish era. Authored by José Rizal, the novel remains an essential read for those interested in Filipino history, culture, and the struggle for independence. Its enduring relevance lies in its vivid portrayal of societal issues, complex characters, and Rizal's masterful storytelling. In this article, we will explore the essence of the **novel noli me tangere**, its historical significance, themes, characters, and its role in shaping Filipino identity.

## Understanding the Novel Noli Me Tangere

### Background and Historical Context

The **novel noli me tangere**, written in 1887, is a social novel that exposes the abuses of the Spanish colonial government and the Catholic Church in the Philippines. During this period, Filipinos faced widespread oppression, corruption, and social disparity. Rizal's work was a response to these injustices, aimed at awakening Filipino consciousness and inspiring reform.

The novel's title, "Noli Me Tangere," which translates to "Touch Me Not," is symbolic. It references a biblical phrase used by Jesus Christ after his resurrection, signifying something sacred and untouchable. Rizal used this title to symbolize the Filipino people's desire to remain untainted by colonial corruption and to preserve their dignity.

### Plot Summary

The story revolves around the life of Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra, a young Filipino reformist who returns to the Philippines after studying in Europe. Ibarra's aspirations for positive change clash with the corrupt colonial authorities and the oppressive clergy. As the narrative unfolds, readers are introduced to a diverse cast of characters representing different facets of Filipino society.

Key plot points include:

- Ibarra's efforts to build a school to improve education for Filipinos.
- The romantic relationship between Ibarra and María Clara, a symbol of innocence and purity.
- The betrayal and conspiracy by local officials and religious figures, including the friar Padre Damaso.
- The tragic downfall of several characters due to societal corruption.
- The climax involving Ibarra's false accusation and exile, highlighting the systemic injustices in society.

The novel ends with a sense of unresolved tension, leaving readers pondering the ongoing struggle for justice and reform.

## Themes Explored in the Novel Noli Me Tangere

### Colonial Oppression and Social Injustice

One of the central themes of the **novel noli me tangere** is the critique of colonial rule. Rizal vividly depicts how the Spanish authorities and friars wield unchecked power, leading to exploitation and suffering among Filipinos. The novel exposes the corrupt practices of officials, the abuse of church authority, and the erosion of Filipino dignity.

### Religion and Morality

Rizal critically examines the role of the Catholic Church, illustrating how religion can be manipulated for personal and political gain. Characters like Padre Damaso symbolize clerical abuse, hypocrisy, and the moral decay within the church hierarchy.

### Education and National Identity

The novel emphasizes the importance of education as a tool for empowerment. Ibarra's dream of establishing a school symbolizes hope for an enlightened Filipino nation. Rizal advocates for education as a means of awakening national consciousness and fostering social change.

### Love and Sacrifice

Love stories in the novel, particularly that of Ibarra and María Clara, symbolize the innocence and hope of the Filipino people. The narrative also explores themes of sacrifice, as characters endure suffering for the greater good of their nation.

## Major Characters in the Novel Noli Me Tangere

### Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra

The protagonist, a young, idealistic Filipino who seeks reform and social justice. His character embodies hope and the pursuit of progress.

### María Clara

Ibarra's love interest, symbolizing purity and innocence. Her character reflects the Filipino virtues and the tragic consequences of societal corruption.

## Padre Damaso

A friar representing the abusive and hypocritical clergy. He is a key antagonist, embodying the oppressive ecclesiastical power.

## Sisa

A tragic character who symbolizes Filipino suffering and madness caused by societal injustices. Her story evokes empathy and highlights the human cost of social inequality.

## Elias

A revolutionary figure and Ibarra's confidant, representing hope, resistance, and the desire for freedom.

# The Impact and Legacy of the Novel Noli Me Tangere

## Inspiration for Philippine Revolution

Rizal's **novel noli me tangere** inspired Filipinos to envision a future free from colonial oppression. Its portrayal of social injustices galvanized reform movements and fostered national identity.

## Educational and Cultural Significance

Today, the novel remains a staple in Philippine literature curricula. It serves as a literary foundation for understanding Filipino history, culture, and the roots of nationalism.

## Adaptations and Continued Relevance

The story has been adapted into various stage plays, movies, and television series, ensuring its message reaches new generations. Its themes of justice, integrity, and social change continue to resonate globally.

## Why Read the Novel Noli Me Tangere Today?

Reading the **novel noli me tangere** offers valuable insights into Filipino identity and history. It encourages critical thinking about social issues, the importance of education, and the significance of standing against injustice. In a world facing ongoing struggles for equality and human rights, Rizal's work remains a beacon of hope and a call for societal reform.

## Key Takeaways for Modern Readers

- Understanding historical struggles can inspire present-day activism.
- Literature as a tool for social critique and change.
- The importance of preserving national identity and cultural heritage.
- Recognizing the power of education in societal development.

## Conclusion

The **novel noli me tangere** continues to be a vital part of Philippine literature and history. Its rich narrative, complex characters, and powerful themes serve as a mirror to the societal issues faced during Rizal's time—and still relevant today. By exploring this groundbreaking work, readers gain a deeper appreciation of Filipino resilience, culture, and the enduring quest for justice and freedom. Whether you are a student, scholar, or casual reader, delving into Rizal's masterpiece offers a transformative experience that underscores the importance of social awareness and national pride.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the main theme of the novel Noli Me Tangere?

The main theme of Noli Me Tangere is the critique of Spanish colonial rule and the social injustices faced by Filipinos during the late 19th century, highlighting issues like corruption, abuse of power, and the need for reform.

### Who is the author of Noli Me Tangere?

The novel was written by José Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines.

### Why is Noli Me Tangere considered a revolutionary novel?

Noli Me Tangere is considered revolutionary because it exposed the abuses of the Spanish colonizers and clergy, inspiring Filipino nationalism and awakening social awareness among Filipinos.

### How does Noli Me Tangere influence Philippine literature and history?

The novel is regarded as a cornerstone of Philippine literature, inspiring future writers and serving as a catalyst for the Philippine Revolution, ultimately contributing to the country's fight for independence.

## **What are some of the key characters in Noli Me Tangere?**

Key characters include Crisostomo Ibarra, Maria Clara, Elias, Padre Damaso, and Sisa, each representing different facets of Filipino society and the colonial oppression.

## **In what ways is Noli Me Tangere relevant to contemporary Filipino society?**

The novel remains relevant as it addresses universal themes of social injustice, corruption, and the importance of education and reform, encouraging Filipinos to reflect on their society and history.

## **Are there adaptations of Noli Me Tangere in modern media?**

Yes, Noli Me Tangere has been adapted into various forms including stage plays, films, television series, and graphic novels, helping to keep its message alive for new generations.

## **Additional Resources**

Novel Noli Me Tangere: A Deep Dive into Its Significance and Impact

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## **Introduction: The Enduring Legacy of Noli Me Tangere**

The phrase Noli Me Tangere, Latin for "Touch Me Not," immediately evokes a sense of mystery, reverence, and historical significance. Originally penned by Dr. José Rizal in 1887, this novel stands as a cornerstone of Filipino literature and a catalyst for the Philippine revolution against Spanish colonial rule. Its profound themes, complex characters, and social commentary continue to resonate today, making it one of the most studied and revered works in Philippine history.

This review aims to explore the multifaceted aspects of Noli Me Tangere, from its historical context and literary characteristics to its themes, characters, and enduring influence. By dissecting each element, readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of why this novel remains a vital cultural artifact and a powerful tool for social critique.

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## **Historical Context and Background**

### **Philippine Society in the 19th Century**

- The Philippines under Spanish rule was marked by social stratification, religious dominance, and

widespread inequality.

- The encomienda system and friar influence created a society where native Filipinos faced discrimination and exploitation.
- Education was limited, often controlled by religious orders, which fostered a climate of suppression and censorship.
- The emergence of a Filipino intelligentsia began to challenge colonial authority, inspired by Enlightenment ideas from Europe.

## **José Rizal's Motivations and Purpose**

- Rizal, educated in Europe, sought to awaken Filipino national consciousness through literature.
- He believed that social reform could be achieved through exposing social injustices and promoting enlightenment.
- *Noli Me Tangere* was written as a critique of Spanish colonial policies, the friars' abuse of power, and societal corruption.
- The novel aimed to inspire reform, foster national pride, and serve as a call to action for Filipinos.

## **Publication and Reception**

- Published in 1887 in Berlin, the novel faced censorship and was banned in the Philippines.
- Despite restrictions, it circulated widely among Filipino intellectuals and reformists.
- The novel's bold critique of the church and colonial government made it controversial but also pivotal in shaping Filipino identity.

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## **Literary Characteristics and Style**

### **Genre and Structure**

- *Noli Me Tangere* is primarily a social novel, combining elements of realism, satire, and romanticism.
- It is divided into 63 chapters, weaving together multiple storylines and characters.
- The narrative employs a third-person omniscient point of view, providing insights into various characters' thoughts and motivations.

### **Language and Style**

- Rizal wrote the novel in Spanish, which was the language of the educated elite at the time.
- His prose is elegant, descriptive, and rich in symbolism.
- The language balances poetic lyricism with sharp social commentary.

## **Literary Devices and Techniques**

- Symbolism: The title itself, *Noli Me Tangere*, symbolizes societal barriers and the need for reform.
- Allegory: Characters and settings often represent larger social issues.
- Irony: Rizal employs irony to highlight hypocrisy, corruption, and injustice.
- Foreshadowing: Events hint at future upheavals and societal change.

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## **Major Themes and Messages**

### **Colonial Oppression and Social Injustice**

- The novel vividly depicts the abuses of the friars and colonial authorities.
- It exposes the exploitation and moral corruption prevalent in the church and government.
- The character of Padre Damaso exemplifies the arrogance and abuse of ecclesiastical power.

### **Religion and Morality**

- Rizal critiques the hypocrisy of the clergy, who often prioritize power over spiritual integrity.
- The novel questions whether true faith is compatible with corruption and greed.
- Characters like Father Salvi symbolize the moral decay within the church.

### **Filipino Identity and Nationalism**

- The story encourages Filipinos to recognize their cultural heritage and to seek independence.
- Characters such as Crisostomo Ibarra embody the awakening of national consciousness.
- The novel advocates for education, enlightenment, and unity as paths toward liberation.

### **Love, Betrayal, and Moral Dilemmas**

- Personal relationships reflect broader societal conflicts.
- The love story between Ibarra and María Clara symbolizes innocence and the desire for a harmonious society.
- Themes of betrayal and sacrifice reveal the complexities of moral decision-making.

### **Reform vs. Revolution**

- Rizal advocates for peaceful reform rather than violent uprising, emphasizing education and

enlightenment.

- Yet, the novel also hints at the inevitable social upheaval resulting from systemic injustice.

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## Character Analysis

### Core Characters

- Crisostomo Ibarra: Protagonist; symbolizes hope for reform, educated and idealistic.
- Maria Clara: Ibarra's love interest; embodies traditional Filipino femininity and religious piety.
- Padre Damaso: A friar representing ecclesiastical tyranny and arrogance.
- Elias: A mestizo who advocates for social change; symbolizes the revolutionary spirit.
- Sisa: A tragic character representing the suffering of the Filipino peasantry.
- Capitan Tiago: A wealthy Filipino who navigates colonial society for personal gain.

### Supporting Characters and Their Roles

- Father Salvi: A friar whose religious fervor masks political motives.
- Doña Victorina: A Filipina obsessed with Spanish status, highlighting colonial identity issues.
- Basilio and Crispin: Orphaned boys illustrating the plight of the lower classes.
- Hermana Bali: A nun who exposes the hypocrisy within religious institutions.

### Character Development and Symbolism

- Ibarra's transformation from naive reformer to disillusioned individual reflects the complexities of social change.
- Maria Clara's tragic fate underscores the destructive power of colonial and religious oppression.
- Elias embodies the revolutionary undercurrent, advocating for justice and societal awakening.

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## Impact and Legacy

### Influence on Filipino Society

- Noli Me Tangere ignited a sense of national identity and pride.
- It inspired subsequent generations of reformists and revolutionaries, including Andres Bonifacio.
- The novel's themes remain relevant, prompting ongoing discussions on social justice, church-state



relations, and national sovereignty.

## Educational and Cultural Significance

- The novel is a staple in Philippine literature curricula, fostering critical thinking about history and society.
- It has been adapted into numerous plays, films, and art forms, broadening its reach.
- Rizal's work continues to be a symbol of Filipino resilience and aspiration.

## Contemporary Relevance

- Amid ongoing social issues, Noli Me Tangere serves as a mirror reflecting persistent inequalities and injustices.
- Its messages about integrity, reform, and national pride inspire activism and civic engagement.
- The novel remains a testament to the power of literature as a tool for societal change.

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## Conclusion: An Enduring Call for Justice and Nationhood

Noli Me Tangere is more than a historical novel; it is a blueprint for awakening consciousness and advocating for societal reform. Through its vivid characters, compelling themes, and masterful storytelling, Rizal crafted a work that continues to inspire Filipinos and readers worldwide. Its bold critique of colonial tyranny, religious hypocrisy, and social injustice underscores the importance of vigilance, education, and unity in the ongoing pursuit of justice.

As a novel noli me tangere, it invites readers to look beyond surface appearances, challenge oppressive structures, and embrace the transformative power of knowledge and moral courage. Its legacy endures not only in Filipino literature but also in the collective consciousness striving for a more just and equitable society.

## [Novel Noli Me Tangere](#)

**novel noli me tangere:** The Social Cancer: A Complete English Version of Noli Me Tangere  
Jose Rizal, 2021-01-01 On the last of October Don Santiago de los Santos, popularly known as Capitan Tiago, gave a dinner. In spite of the fact that, contrary to his usual custom, he had made the announcement only that afternoon, it was already the sole topic of conversation in Binondo and adjacent districts, and even in the Walled City, for at that time Capitan Tiago was considered one of the most hospitable of men, and it was well known that his house, like his country, shut its doors against nothing except commerce and all new or bold ideas. Like an electric shock the

announcement ran through the world of parasites, bores, and hangers-on, whom God in His infinite bounty creates and so kindly multiplies in Manila. Some looked at once for shoe-polish, others for buttons and cravats, but all were especially concerned about how to greet the master of the house in the most familiar tone, in order to create an atmosphere of ancient friendship or, if occasion should arise, to excuse a late arrival. -an excerpt

**novel noli me tangere:** Noli Me Tangere Jose Rizal, Raul L. Locsin, 1997-05-01 Noli Me Tangere is Latin for touch me not. In this modern classic of Filipino literature, José Rizal exposes matters . . . so delicate that they cannot be touched by anybody, unfolding an epic history of the Philippines that has made it that country's most influential political novel in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. José Rizal, national hero of the Philippines, completed Noli Me Tangere in Spanish in 1887 while he was studying in Europe. Rizal continued to write, completing a second novel and many other poems and essays, until he was executed by firing squad in 1896. Since then, Noli Me Tangere has appeared in French, Chinese, German and Philippine languages. Two other English translations have made Noli Me Tangere accessible, but Lacson-Locsin's new translation offered here is the first to work from facsimile editions of the manuscripts and to restore significant sections of the original text. The result is the most authoritative and faithful English translation to date.

**novel noli me tangere:** Rizal's Life, Works, and Writings Diosdado G. Capino, Maria Minerva A. Gonzalez, Filipinas E. Pineda, 1977

**novel noli me tangere:** *Noli Me Tangere* , 2010

**novel noli me tangere: Noli Me Tangere (Touch Me Not)** Jose Rizal, 2006-06-27 The great novel of the Philippines In more than a century since its appearance, José Rizal's Noli Me Tangere has become widely known as the great novel of the Philippines. A passionate love story set against the ugly political backdrop of repression, torture, and murder, The Noli, as it is called in the Philippines, was the first major artistic manifestation of Asian resistance to European colonialism, and Rizal became a guiding conscience—and martyr—for the revolution that would subsequently rise up in the Spanish province. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

**novel noli me tangere:** *Dr. Jose Rizal and the Writing of His Story* Maria Stella S. Valdez, 2007

**novel noli me tangere:** *Philippine History* M.c. Halili, 2004

**novel noli me tangere: Rizal, The Greatest Filipino Hero** Anacoreta P. Purino, 2008

**novel noli me tangere: Bibliography of Filipino Novels, 1901-2000** Patricia May B. Jurilla, 2010 The most comprehensive bibliography of Filipino novels compiled so far, this book lists novels in Tagalog (Filipino), Tagalog (Filipino) translation, and English published in the Philippines during the twentieth century.

**novel noli me tangere: The ISA Handbook of Diverse Sociological Traditions** Sujata Patel, 2009-10-21 A brilliant treasury of wisdom and insight drawn from leading sociologists throughout the world...It is a striking achievement, of which the International Sociological Association can be very proud, to have brought so many independent-minded scholars into so productive a dialogue. - Dennis Smith, Professor of Sociology, Loughborough University Twenty-nine chapters from prominent international contributors discuss, challenge and re-conceptualise the global discipline of sociology, evaluating the diversities within and between sociological traditions of many regions and nation-states. They assess all aspects of the discipline: ideas and theories; scholars and scholarship; practices and traditions; and ruptures and continuities through an international perspective. The Handbook argues that diversities in sociological traditions can be studied at three levels. First, they need to be studied from multiple spatial locations: within localities, within nation-states, within regions and the globe. Second, they need to be discussed in terms of their sociological moorings in

distinct philosophies, epistemologies and theoretical frames, cultures of science and languages of reflection. Third, the intellectual moorings of sociological practices are extensive. The papers discuss the diverse and comparative sites of knowledge production and its transmission.

**novel noli me tangere:** His Life, Works, and Role in the Philippine Revolution , 1996

**novel noli me tangere: The Novel of Justice** N.V.M Gonzalez, 2017-12-02 Since the beginning of Tagal poetry, says the author, marginality has been upon us, standing at our back with more than paternal interest. Although not for long, he points out. The thirteen essays but comprise this volume-apprisements and avowals of our new situation, he calls them-suggest a continuity rather than an inchoateness in the Filipino imagination.

**novel noli me tangere: The Chinese Political Novel** Catherine Vance Yeh, 2020-05-11 The political novel, which enjoyed a steep yet short rise to international renown between the 1830s and the 1910s, is primarily concerned with the nation's political future. It offers a characterization of the present, a blueprint of the future, and the image of the heroes needed to get there. With the standing it gained during its meteoric rise, the political novel helped elevate the novel altogether to become the leading literary genre of the twentieth century worldwide. Focusing on its adaptation in the Chinese context, Catherine Vance Yeh traces the genre from Disraeli's England through Europe and the United States to East Asia. Her study goes beyond comparative approaches and nation-state- and language-centered histories of literature to examine the intrinsic connections among literary works. Through detailed studies, especially of the Chinese exemplars, Yeh explores the tensions characteristic of transcultural processes: the dynamics through which a particular, and seemingly local, literary genre goes global; the ways in which such a globalized literary genre maintains its core features while assuming local identity and interacting with local audiences and political authorities; and the relationship between the politics of form and the role of politics in literary innovation.

**novel noli me tangere: Jose Rizal** Lisandro E. Claudio, 2018-10-30 The global history of liberalism has paid too much attention to the West, neglecting the contributions of liberals from colonial nations. This book mines the thought of Filipino propagandist and novelist, Jose Rizal, to present a vision of liberalism for the colonized. It is both an introduction to Rizal and a treatise on rights, freedom, and tyranny in colonial contexts. Though a work on history, it responds to the illiberal present of rising authoritarianism and populism.

**novel noli me tangere: Noli Me Tangere** José Rizal, 1975\*

**novel noli me tangere: Revival: The Hero of the Filipinos (1924)** Charles Edward Russell, E. B. Rodriguez, 2018-05-08 This book is about José Protasio Rizal Mercado y Alonso Realonda, widely known as José Rizal (June 19, 1861 - December 30, 1896). He was a Filipino nationalist and polymath during the tail end of the Spanish colonial period of the Philippines. An ophthalmologist by profession, Rizal became a writer and a key member of the Filipino Propaganda Movement which advocated political reforms for the colony under Spain. He was executed by the Spanish colonial government for the crime of rebellion after an anti-dd revolution, inspired in part by his writings, broke out. Though he was not actively involved in its planning or conduct, he ultimately approved of its goals which eventually led to Philippine independence.

**novel noli me tangere: Cultural Diversity and Global Media** Eugenia Siapera, 2010-03-08 Cultural Diversity and Global Media explores the relationship between the media and multiculturalism. Summarises and critically discusses current approaches to multiculturalism and the media from a global perspective Explores both the theoretical debates and empirical findings on multiculturalism and the media Assumes the new perspective of mediation of cultural diversity, which critically combines elements of previous theories in order to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the media and cultural diversity Explores media 'moments' of production, representation and consumption, while incorporating arguments on their shifting roles and boundaries Examines separately the role of the internet, which is linked to many changes in patterns of media production, representation and to increased possibilities for diasporic and transnational communication Contains pedagogical features that enable readers to understand and critically

engage with the material, and draws upon and reviews an extensive bibliography, providing a useful reference tool.

**novel noli me tangere: The Canon in Southeast Asian Literature** David Smyth, 2013-10-08 The literary canon is one of the most lively areas of debate in contemporary literary studies. This set of essays is both timely and original in its focus on the canon in South-East Asian literatures, covering Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. They vary in focus, from the broad panoramic survey of trends in a national literature to very specific discussions of the role of individuals in shaping a canon or the place of a particular text within a tradition, and from contemporary to traditional literature. They include discussions of the development of prose fiction, censorship and artistic freedom, the role of westerners in codifying indigenous literatures, the writing of literary history, the development of literary criticism and indigenous aesthetics.

**novel noli me tangere: Under Three Flags** Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, 2005 In this sparkling new work, Benedict Anderson provides a radical recasting of themes from *Imagined Communities*, his classic book on nationalism, through an exploration of fin-de-siecle politics and culture that spans the Caribbean, Imperial Europe and the South China Sea. A jewelled pomegranate packed with nitroglycerine is primed to blow away Manila's 19th-century colonial elite at the climax of *El Filibusterismo*, whose author, the great political novelist Jose Rizal, was executed in 1896 by the Spanish authorities in the Philippines at the age of 35. Anderson explores the impact of avant-garde European literature and politics on Rizal and his contemporary, the pioneering folklorist Isabelo de los Reyes, who was imprisoned in Manila after the violent uprisings of 1896 and later incarcerated, together with Catalan anarchists, in the prison fortress of Montjuich in Barcelona. On his return to the Philippines, by now under American occupation, Isabelo formed the first militant trade unions under the influence of Malatesta and Bakunin. Anderson considers the complex intellectual interactions of these young Filipinos with the new science of anthropology in Germany and Austro-Hungary, and with post-Communard experimentalists in Paris, against a background of militant anarchism in Spain, France, Italy and the Americas, Jose Marti's armed uprising in Cuba and anti-imperialist protests in China and Japan. In doing so, he depicts the dense intertwining of anarchist internationalism and radical anti-colonialism. *Under Three Flags* is a brilliantly original work on the explosive history of national independence and global politics.

**novel noli me tangere: The Routledge Handbook of Comparative Global Urban Studies** Patrick Le Galès, Jennifer Robinson, 2023-09-18 The Routledge Handbook of Comparative Global Urban Studies is a timely intervention into the field of global urban studies, coming as comparison is being more widely used as a method for global urban studies, and as a number of methodological experiments and comparative research projects are being brought to fruition. It consolidates and takes forward an emerging field within urban studies and makes a positive and constructive intervention into a lively arena of current debate in urban theory. Comparative urbanism injects a welcome sense of methodological rigor and a commitment to careful evaluation of claims across different contexts, which will enhance current debates in the field. Drawing together more than 50 international scholars and practitioners, this book offers an overview of key ideas and practices in the field and extends current thinking and practice. The book is primarily intended for scholars and graduate students for whom it will provide an invaluable and up-to-date guide to current thinking across the range of disciplines which converge in the study of urbanism, including geography, sociology, political studies, planning, and urban studies.

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