

RIZAL: THE FIRST EMO?

Simple Life Lessons from The Extraordinary Story of José Rizal

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Note: Xiao Chua, a faculty of the History Department at the De La Salle University and a member of the Sucesos Chapter of the Order of the Knights of Rizal, presented this paper during the exhibition “Through The Looking Glass: José Rizal” at the Manila Contemporary on 9 June 2012, Whitespace, Chino Roces Ave., Pasong Tamo Ext., Brgy. Magallanes, Makati City in the presence of the Supreme Commander of the Order of the Knights of Rizal, Sir Reghis M. Romero II, KGCR. In the spirit of Rizal’s annotations to Dr. Antonio Morga’s “Events in the Philippine Islands,” Dr. Floro Quibuyen, author of A Nation Aborted: Rizal, American Hegemony, and Philippine Nationalism, gives his expert annotations to the lecture in footnotes which will enhance or even give a contrary opinion to what the author wrote. This conversation between a young history teacher and a retired UP Professor may well represent the different and even fresh views on Rizal. Edited by Ms. Iris Angela Ferrer, Project Manager of Manila Contemporary.

Introduction

Jose Rizal is everywhere yet many think he is not relevant anymore. His monuments, built as reminders of his heroism, stand distant and unreachable on his pedestal, as if deliberately exaggerating our insignificance. It even comes to a point that one may say “I can’t be like him.”

The western construct of a *hero* originated from the Greeks. It points to a strong-willed and supernatural character who consciously directs his abilities for the good of the people. More often than not reduced to titles and merits, a hero’s humanity may end being forgotten. The Filipino term *bayani*, on the other hand, depicts the same values but is attributed to someone more grounded. Coming from the Visayan term for warrior or *bagani*, one immediately finds a totally different perspective. This time, the persona serves others without expecting in return, despite being ordinary.¹

Historian Zeus Salazar classifies Rizal as a *heróe*, shaped by Western sensibilities and consciousness, as he was, in many ways, separate from the people. The mythic proportions of his character made it impossible for people to relate to him. He became a symbol, and more often than not, the *only* hero, of the revolution.²

Nothing new about Rizal is going to be introduced in this paper. Instead of adding another academic treatise to the Rizal industry, I aim to give my take on his story by drawing simple life lessons to what many see as an extraordinary life. It is high time that we search our humanity in Rizal, and in turn, find Rizal in ourselves.³

The First Emo: Biography of Rizal as a Romantic

Rizal has been given many labels. He has been called a *Philippine Nationalist and Martyr* by British biographer Austin Coates, *The Great Malayan* by historical writer Carlos Quirino and even *Kristong Pilipino* by the Rizalist Religious groups, now appropriated as title of the new book by mountaineer

and historian Nilo Ocampo. Diplomat and writer Leon Ma Guerrero poses a bolder claim in naming Rizal *The First Filipino*.

Why was he first? During the Spanish regime, the *creoles* or Spaniards-born living in the Philippines were the ones called Filipinos, and not the brown man. Rizal, with his fellow reformists or *indios bravos*, insisted that the *indios* must have the same rights as a Spanish citizen. As one of the first *indios* who insisted that we are also Filipinos, for Guerrero therefore, he was *The First Filipino*.⁴

However, none of the names we called him stuck as much as *babaero*. He gained a reputation of a womanizer, a “Papa Pepe” perhaps, but even that I believe is an exaggeration.

As a young student in Manila, Rizal was more or less faithful to his engagement with Leonor Rivera. But unfortunately, Rivera ended up marrying an Englishman. It was then that he decided to consider the gorgeous British-Filipina in France Nelly Boustead (rebound huh?). This didn’t last either. His last love, his *dulce extranjera*, was no other than Josephine Bracken. Other women linked to Rizal may be considered in today’s terms as MUs (mutual understanding) and flings, consequences of his travelling. As Rizal enthusiast and member of his 1961 Centennial Commission, Vicente del Carmen, wrote:

Rizal’s relationship with women embodied a wholesome philosophy of life. He was a lover of beautiful women but no one could say that he took liberties. His friendships were joyous and worthwhile experiences without any trace of deception.

...it is pleasing to note that there was never any sources of scandals, heartbreaks and disappointments.⁵

Then, I dared to call Rizal *The First Emo*.

This statement is one of my most *benta* jokes during my lectures, on a subject many perceive as boring. I discussed this with the people from Rock Ed Philippines, Aiza Seguerra and Gloc-9, among others, and researchers from the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) during a consultation about the Rock Rizal Album in April 2011. One of them, Mona Lisa Quizon, agrees in an article for *Philippines Free Press* that came out on the week of Rizal’s 150th birthday:

Many of the youth today are crazy about *emo*, a fad that started in the 80s. According to them, *emo* is a person who is emotional or *may pagka senti*, meaning sentimental in many ways and loves to wear black. Being a passionate and sensitive person ...Rizal could have been an emo today.⁶

I have always said that the number one evidence of this was his signature one sided hair.⁷ There were also his emotionally-charged writings. For example, this is what he wrote when he left Ateneo:

*Paalam, magandang panahong di ko malilimot. Sa karimlan ng aking bubay, ikaw ang sandaling bukung-linayway na hindi na muling babati. Paalam, maliligayang oras ng aking naglahong kamusmusan.*⁸

On the other hand, this is what he wrote in his diary when he left his Japanese flame Seiko Osui (O Sei San):

Walang sinumang babae ang nagmahal sa akin tulad mo. Hindi magmamalinw sa aking alaala ang iyong larawan. Ang pangalan mo ay mananatili sa aking labi sa bawat buntung-hininga. ...Sayonara, sayonara!

Like the prevailing romanticism of that period in Europe, as scholars Ante Radaic and Nilo Ocampo point out, his writings, including his essays and novels, were focused on strong emotions rather than documenting reality. However, it is more important to note that, other than having an interesting but trivial fascination about his love story, his passion was for the people and those principles that he lived by. He was focused and tireless, despite homesickness and frustrations, which all paid off as it ignited the fire of nationalism in his community.

Not Born a Hero: It All Begins at Home

Rizal was able to give so much love because he received a lot of it at home.

His father, Francisco Rizal Mercado, was a great provider. He was the stereotypical father figure, strict and silent. Although, behind this façade was nothing but pure concern for his family. Biographers have written about the library of a thousand books in their home and how he would construct nipa huts that became playhouses for his children, particularly a sanctuary for little Pepe's experimentations in art.

His mother, Teodora Alonso Realonda, graduated from Colegio de Sta. Rosa— a rare feat for native women in that time. The home that she built encouraged learning and was founded on a deep faith in God. This can be seen in how Rizal, in spite of his questioning, never denied the existence of a Supreme Being.¹⁰

Paciano Mercado, the eldest male among Rizal's siblings (second of eleven Mercado children), was an influential force in their family's and in Jose's future. Father José Burgos, who was later garrotted with two other priests for leading the secularization of Philippine parishes, was once his housemate and mentor.¹¹ Being involved in various nationalistic movements himself, especially after such incident, inspired young Jose to love the motherland as well. It was also through his connections, funds and efforts that Rizal was able to study at Ateneo and in Europe. So much of the happenings in Jose's life was being guided by Paciano that it would be safe to say that there would be no Rizal the National Hero without him.

During the revolution, Paciano became a member of the Katipunan, the general of the Philippine Revolution, and treasurer of the Revolutionary Government under Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo. Even their younger sisters, Trinidad and Josefa, became members of the women's chapter of the Katipunan, the latter becoming its first president.

Aside from their immediate family, one overlooked influence to young Pepe would be his *yaya*. Fondly writing about his *yaya* in his memoirs, he would recall how she would tell him tales about

supernatural beings such as the *aswang* and the *nuno* and how she used to bring him as a young boy to the woods at night. This exposure to folklore was later utilized in writing his novels. His love for nature was also seen early on in his childhood. Growing up in Calamba, right in the middle of Mount Makiling and Laguna de Bai, became sources of inspiration in terms of its rich environment, history and culture.

Not to say that it was all love in their home. Like any other family, it was not perfect and there was also a lot teasing that happened among the siblings. Author Ante Radaic claimed one of the reasons for Rizal's inferiority complex can be attributed to his having a big head, highlighted by his tiny body as a kid.¹² His grand niece, Asuncion Lopez Bantug, even told a story about how young Pepe kept on falling as he tried to walk.¹³ There was another supposed anecdote about how Jose was sculpting a figure of Napoleon Bonaparte when his sisters started teasing him about how he had a big head, much like his work. To this, he gave the retort, "Laugh now. When I die, they're going to create monuments of me."¹⁴

Several scholars have debated about his height. However, based on the measurements of his clothes, Ambeth Ocampo authoritatively claims that he is 5'2", average in comparison with his contemporaries.¹⁵ Regardless, what Jose lacked in appearance, he compensated with wanting to have not just a sound mind but a sound body. He was an able fencer, a chess player who made his own sets, a body builder who trained with a dumbbell, which fitness experts proclaimed as being too heavy for his built, and an expert marksman.

In spite of these petty tauntings, the support for each other and the *bayan* always remained, especially when it mattered most. Teodora Alonso, when offered a pension by the Americans after her son's death, refused and said, "The Rizals offered their lives to their mother country because of their inherent patriotism and not because of money." The Rizals teach us how learning about the good starts at home, not only in principle but by example.

Eyes Wide Not Shut: Developing Love of Fellowmen at a Young Age

To have the Rizalian heart is to be aware of the injustices around us.

His initial encounter with injustice happened in 1871, when his mother was unjustly taken away by the authorities and jailed for two years. He was eleven years old. She and her half-brother, Jose Alberto, was accused of poisoning her sister-in-law. The friars and friends, who they thought were close to them, left in this time of need. Teodora Alonso was only released by the governor-general after petitioning for two years.

Another was when Rizal won a prize for his play *The Council of the Gods*. Spaniards refused to clap for a brown boy. The only sound heard was of mockery. Then one night, while walking in his hometown, Calamba, he passed by the lieutenant of the *guardia civil*. When he was unable to salute, Rizal was whipped. He tried petitioning at the office of the governor-general, but to no avail. These personal experiences, alongside the suffering of others, instigated his novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, which were cited by Penguin Classics as the first major artistic manifestations of Asian resistance against European colonialism.

He also joined the propaganda movement in Spain, which lobbied for the colonized Philippines to be considered as Spanish citizens. This meant having representation in the Spanish parliament or the *Cortes*, and also the power to expel the friars from Philippine lands. They were young students in a foreign land, yet they were not afraid to think big. Spain did not listen to their proposals, but the noise that they produced resonated all the way home.

From this, Rizal teaches us that it's okay to leave the country in order to get the appropriate intellectual capital, but only in order to be able to come back and return the favor to one's motherland. Though he was just one person, his determination and passion for his country drove him to greatness.

Heroes Just Want to Have Fun: Rizal's Parisian Life

In 1885, while in Paris, studying ophthalmology under Dr. Louis de Wecker, and in all his subsequent travels there, Rizal never forgot to have fun. With his best pals and multi-awarded painters, Juan Luna and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, he would discuss sentiments about the country, and at the same time, goof around like any other *barkada*.

For instance, the controversial painting *Parisian Life* by Juan Luna actually includes Physician Ariston Bautista Lin, Luna himself and Rizal taking notice of a very beautiful coquette in a café. A series of photographs of Rizal in costume were particularly interesting, a precursor of today's cosplay. In an 1889 photograph, they were recreating Luna's masterpiece *The Death of Cleopatra* as a tableau with Rizal wearing an Egyptian hat in front of Cleopatra, played by Juan Luna, in her deathbed.

There's also a photo of Juan Luna, Hidalgo, Trinidad Pardo de Tavera and Rizal playfully posing inside an empty picture frame. Another image shows them playing different musical instruments: Juan Luna on the viola, Hidalgo on the violin and Rizal, wearing an old Spanish *conquistador's* hat and uniform, playing the flute. Two more photographs of the same group sit in what appears to be a Parisian Restaurant, but was actually Luna's studio. On the first one, they were all seriously discussing, while Luna looks at the camera with a foolish grin. The next frame shows Hidalgo and an unknown companion drunk, while Rizal was about to throw something at Pardo de Tavera who was on the floor. A number of photos kept by his family and his friends' families depict Rizal in a foolish and mischievous manner, a total opposite to how we see him today. One photograph, kept by the de Tavera's, is, according to Ambeth Ocampo, the only one which shows Rizal to be smiling. Howie Severino says, he was smiling for one reason and that is the presence of his love (at that moment), the British-Filipina Nelly Boustead.¹⁶

The Same 24 Hours: Rizal Used His Time Wisely

The greatness of Rizal is also seen in how he used his time.¹⁷ Father of Modern Philippine Sculpture José Abueva installed the *Rizal and Josephine in Bed* for the Rizal@150 exhibit at the Yuchengco Museum. It shows the couple making love, and upon reaching climax, Rizal thinks of an idea and reaches out to his side to write. This is, of course, not historically proven, but it shows his sense of

urgency in accomplishing what was needed to be done.¹⁸

As part of his being detail-oriented, he taught himself how to draw. Self-sketches show him as a teenager and as a young adult. The latter was sent to his pen pal Austrian Filipinologist Ferdinand Blumentritt, so he can be recognized on the train station on their first meeting. Some noted how he painted himself like a gentle and even feminine guy, which in my opinion is a portrayal of his conscious feminine side. He also liked preserving his memories of Manila, especially during his first trip to Europe in May 1882. Sketches of the Intramuros skyline and different mountain ranges can be seen in his file. He is also regarded as the *Father of Filipino Komiks*. His different projects include drawing the fable *Monkey and the Tortoise* for Juan Luna's sketchbook for kids; doing a rendition of his German host Pastor Karl Ullmer in a strip about two friends crossing the river; and drawing about *kulam* or indigenous witchcraft and exorcism while in exile in Dapitan. He also had a collection of drawings about a guy who farted so hard that it blew people and animals away, and illustrated and translated to Tagalog Hans Christian Andersen's fairytales, including *Thumbelina*, which he translated as *Gabinlalaki*, for his nephews and nieces.

Aside from sketching, Rizal was also a sculptor. He made busts of loved ones, and of the ordinary people around him, drawing inspiration from Greek Mythology and other classical themes. For me, the most striking pieces are the diptych titled *Triumph of Death Over Life* and the *Triumph of Science Over Death*. In the former, a naked woman representing life is being embraced by a skeleton representing death. The latter shows a naked woman above a skull. The base of the statue shows a book with an inscription that says *SCIENTIA*. Ambeth Ocampo clarifies that in Latin this word doesn't only mean Science but Knowledge. This gives deeper meaning to the second statuette. This means that all knowledge surpasses death, which is not just physical but can also pertain to poverty and enslavement. Another meaningful statue was one made by Rizal in exile, which shows his affinity to animals. One day, he heard that a puppy of his dog Syria was eaten by a crocodile. He was so grief-stricken that he sculpted Syria attacking the crocodile. This became known as *A Mother's Revenge* and is now displayed at the National Museum.

He is also the most famous Filipino lottery winner. Early in his exile in 1892, he picked and bought a lotto ticket numbered 9736 with the military commandant of Dapitan, Don Ricardo Carnicero and another friend. He won second prize and got a share of Php 6,200.00. He paid his debts, purchased land for farming, and founded a free school and a public clinic. The rest he left to his family. He dabbled in engineering as well. Rizal constructed the dam and waterworks for his land which he called Talisay, and even created a relief map of Mindanao, which eventually became the inspiration for the relief map of the entire country.

As his earnings increased from farming, he created a cooperative for abaka trading. This taught them farm technology that eventually led to an increase in production and profit of those in Dapitan. In between his public service, he would get bored, and document and collect various species of animals and insects around him. These species which he sent to European friends in the scientific community were eventually named after him: *Draco rizali* (Rizal's lizard/ dragon), *Rhacophorus rizali* (Rizal's frog) and *Apogonia rizali* (Rizal's beetle). His Dapitan years are overlooked but they are actually his most productive years. In Dapitan, he showed how he would work if given a chance to be a public servant. He literally became a one-man NGO.

Rizal developed many talents because he used his time wisely. He was able to balance his time for his interests with his time for serving others. The good news is, like Rizal, we also have the same 24 hours which we can easily discipline ourselves to make use of properly.¹⁹

Time well spent can easily turn you to a *bayani*, as assured by Emilio Jacinto who talked about time management in the seventh Kartilya ng Katipunan, “Huwag mong sayangin ang panahon; ang yamang nawala’y mangyayaring magbalik; ngunit panahong nagdaan na’y di na muli pang magdadaan.” and Gregoria de Jesus, wife of Andres Bonifacio, presenting ideals about developing your interests, “Pagsikapang magkaroon ng anumang karunungan na tumutugon sa kanyang hilig upang pakinabangan ng bayan.”

Rizal Controversial: Questioning Rizal’s Heroism

Despite his many admirers, Rizal’s heroism has been continuously questioned on both historically probable and extremely crazy grounds.

For instance, some have suggested that Rizal is the biological father of Adolf Hitler, leader of the German People and the architect of the holocaust that killed millions. This is based on the similarity of their *emo*-hairstyles and moustache, and the fact that Rizal studied in Heidelberg University where he would have met and had a one night stand with Hitler’s mother Klara Pölzl Hitler, as he was considered a *babaero*. But truth is, Hitler was born in Austria, not Germany, and was probably conceived in June 1888. By that time, Rizal was in London, busy copying with his own hand Morga’s *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* for his own annotated version. However, this rebuttal brings up another crazy conspiracy. This time, he is suspected to be the one responsible for the serial murders with the use of medical equipment or better known under the name of Jack The Ripper. True, during the time of the killings, Rizal was indeed in London and was studying to be an ophthalmic surgeon. Oh and, hold your breath for this, Rizal’s initials are **JR**—Jack the **Ripper**!

Leftist writer Renato Constantino presented strong and valid points on Rizal’s heroism in his pamphlet *Veneration Without Understanding*, written during the time of great nationalist fervour in the 1950’s. He questions the following: Why was Rizal named the National Hero when he was made as such by the initiative of American colonizers, done not in proclamation but with a series of decrees such as naming the province of Morong as Rizal, the erection of monuments in all town plazas and by initiating a contest for the design of the national monument at the Luneta. In fact, the Philippine Commission was said to have chosen him due to his non-radical ways and his giving great importance to education, a significant program for the Americans.

Rizal’s first biographers, a Spanish enemy who turned to be an admirer in his death named Wenceslao Emilio Retana and American professor named Austin Craig, emphasized that Rizal’s campaign for reforms with the propaganda movement aimed for Hispanization of the Philippines and not for complete separation from Mother Spain. If he was not for the formation of the Philippine nation, then why is he the national hero?

Especially since looking at the different national heroes of other countries, one realizes that they were all leaders of the revolution. Rizal, on the other hand, can even be considered as anti-

revolution, opposing the clamor of the people for change that would lead for the formation of the first democratic constitutional republic in Asia. In an unpublished manifesto, dated 15 December 1896, to a certain group of Filipinos, he wrote:

Fellow countrymen: Upon my return from Spain, I learned that my name was being used as a rallying cry by some who had taken up arms.... Now, rumors reach me that the disturbances have not ceased. It may be that persons continue to use my name in good or in bad faith; if so, wishing to put a stop to this *abuse* and to *undeceive the gullible*, I hasten to address these lines to you that the truth may be known. From the very beginning, when I first received information of what was being planned, I *opposed* it, I *fought* against it, and I made clear that it was *absolutely impossible*.... I was convinced that the very idea was *wholly absurd -- worse than absurd -- it was disastrous*.... For I was convinced of the *evils* which that rebellion would bring in its train, and so I considered it a privilege if at whatever sacrifice I could ward off so much *useless suffering*....

Fellow countrymen: I have given many proofs that I desire as much as the next man liberties for our country; I continue to desire them. But I laid down as a prerequisite the education of the people in order that by means of such instruction, and by hard work, they may acquire a personality of their own and so become worthy of such liberties. In my writings I have recommended study and the civic virtues, without which no redemption is possible. Thoroughly imbued with these ideas, I cannot do less than condemn, as *I do condemn*, this *ridiculous* and *barbarous* uprising, plotted behind my back, which both *dishonors* us Filipinos and discredits those who might have taken our part. I abominate the *crimes* for which it is responsible and I will have no part in it. With all my heart I am sorry for those who have rashly allowed themselves to be *deceived*. Let them, then, return to their homes, and may God pardon those who have acted in *bad faith*.

Then why is he the National Hero?

This initially brought me confusion, as with any other Filipino who comes in contact with these facts. Ironically, Constantino does not question his love for country or his contributions. What he brings up is his position as the top hero of our country:

Today, we need new heroes who can help us solve our pressing problems. We cannot rely on Rizal alone. We must discard the belief that we are incapable of producing the heroes of our epoch, that heroes are exceptional beings, accidents of history who stand above the masses and apart from them. The true hero is one with the masses: he does not exist above them. In fact, a whole people can be heroes given the proper motivation and articulation of their dreams.

My confusion was cleared when I met Dr. Floro Quibuyen, through my teacher, Dr. Jaime B. Veneracion. His book entitled *A Nation Aborted: Rizal, American Hegemony, and Philippine Nationalism* answered in detail points posed by Constantino and other historians.

On his being an American-Sponsored Hero, Quibuyen agrees with other historians who say that Rizal was already a figurehead in his lifetime. His name was used as password and his photo displayed in meetings of the Katipunan. More so, even if the *indios* were not able to read his novels, for it was originally aimed at a Spanish audience, they talked about his inspiring and brazen acts against the Spaniards. When he eventually returned to the country, after finishing his first novel, the locals stood in awe of him, not only for the already circulating stories but also for his ability to make the blind see. In their consciousness by reading the *Pasyon*, the only one who was able to do that before him was Jesus Christ. So, the common folk who reverently practiced Catholicism looked up to him as a Messiah. Rizal became the Tagalog Christ, the reincarnation of Jesus, who would save the country from Spanish bondage.

Next, on Rizal's wanting hispanization, similar to what Father John Schumacher wrote in his opus *The Propaganda Movement, 1880-1895: The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness, The Making of the Revolution*, Quibuyen summarized this point²⁰ in his book:

...in Rizal's discourse, assimilation does not mean Hispanization; it simply refers to a non-violent, legal, gradual process that would lead eventually to independence." In short, to be Hispanized is the logical first step so that Spain would eventually peacefully let go of the Philippine nation.

In after, upon completion of his first novel, a letter to Ferdinand Blumentritt dated 21 February 1887 says, "The Filipinos had long wished for Hispanization and they were wrong in aspiring for it. It is Spain and not the Philippines who ought to wish for the assimilation of the country." Even in his second novel, *El Filibusterismo*, he expressed the consequences of Hispanization through the character of Simoun:

A, kayong mga kabataan! Nanaginip pa rin kayo! ...Gusto n'yong maging mga Kastila din kayo, pero hindi n'yo nakikitang ang pinapatay n'yo ay ang inyong pagkabansa! Ano ang inyong magiging kinabukasan? Isang bansang walang pagkatao at kalayaan? Labat sa inyo ay biniram, pati na ang inyong mga depekto. Mamamatay kayo bago pa man dumating ang inyong kamatayan!

Quibuyen pointed out that his ideas of a nation came from Johann Gottfried von Herder who wrote about the nation not based on race but on everyone sharing a national, cultural and moral sentiment. Rizal ideal nation is explicitly written in his aims for *La Liga Filipina*, established after returning from abroad in July 1892:

- (1) To unite the whole archipelago into one compact, vigorous, and homogeneous body;
- (2) Mutual protection in every want and necessity;
- (3) Defense against all violence and injustice;
- (4) Encouragement of instruction, agriculture, and commerce;
- (5) Study and application of reforms, motto: *Unus instar omnium* (One like all.)

This shows that for Rizal, it is necessary that one builds the nation using grassroots movements, particularly in the shared intentions of each individual. This proves that in fact, Rizal's *La Liga Filipina* and Andres Bonifacio's revolutionary movement, *Kataas-taasang Kagalang-galang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* were motivated by the same principle. As one would notice, Bonifacio was present during the first meeting of *La Liga*. Unfortunately, Rizal got arrested and eventually was

thrown in exile in Dapitan three days after. Due to the sudden turn of events, Bonifacio, frustrated about the entire thing, ended up formally establishing the Katipunan, an organization they have been planning to organize since January of 1892.

Many stereotype the Katipunan as an organization of uneducated masses, who without strategy, fought and attacked. Accusations were hurled to its founder for being a man of violence and barbaric means. This was in comparison with Rizal, who was considered a man of sophistication and peace. However, the only real difference is in how Rizal was grounded on Western ideals, while Bonifacio based his views on more indigenous consciousness.

Bonifacio was to continue Rizal's project, only with a more radical approach.

But a closer look at the literature produced by the Katipunan will provide a more rounded view of their concept of a nation: Under the mother country (*Inang Bayan*), we are all brothers and sisters (*kapatiran*), bonded by one blood (*sandugo*: ancient ritual denoting that datus or chieftains constructing the *bayan* based on brotherhood of all). We are not just mere citizens. Freedom (*kalayaan* or *katimawaan*) means not only political freedom as expressed in the West, but is a prerequisite to well-being (*kaginhawaan*). A man with civil liberties and can vote but can't eat three times a day is not really free. In Filipino psychology, *kaginhawaan* can only be attained if you have good intentions (*matuwid* or *malinis na kalooban*). With this stance, the *Katipunan's* constitution, written by Emilio Jacinto, talked more on discipline and values, rather than legality. As with Rizal, the *Katipunan* aimed for social justice and enlightenment through unity among countrymen:

Ang kabagayang pinag-uusig ng katipunang ito ay lubos na dakila at mahalaga; papagisabin ang loob at kaisipan ng labat ng tagalog () sa pamagitan ng isang mahigpit na panunumpa, upang sa pagkakaisang ito'y magkalakas na iwasak ang masinsing tabing na nakabubulag sa kaisipan at matuklasan ang tunay na landas ng Katuiran at Kalivanagan.*

()Sa salitang tagalog katutura'y ang labat nang tumubo sa Sangkapuluang ito; samakatuwid, bisaya man, iloko man, kapangpangan man, etc., ay tagalog din.*

Lastly, Rizal's attitude towards the *Katipunan* and the Philippine Revolution of 1896 was more often than not inconsistent and ambivalent. Sometimes, he would side with Hispanization, condemning all types of revolutions. Other times, he would claim to prefer a separation from Mother Spain, even to the point of strategizing taking arms with his friends. To this, some would use Rizal's *El Filibusterismo* as proof of his anti-revolutionary inclination. But José Alejandrino, his roommate in Belgium, would claim otherwise. He quotes Rizal upon finishing his second novel:

*...I regret having killed Elias instead of Crisostomo Ibarra; but when I wrote the *Noli Me Tangere*, my health was badly broken and I never thought that I would be able to write its sequel and speak of a revolution. Otherwise, I would have preserved the life of Elias, who was a noble character, patriotic, self-denying and disinterested—necessary qualities of a man who leads a revolution—whereas Crisostomo Ibarra was an egoist who only decided to provoke the rebellion when he was hurt in his interests, his person, his loves and all other things he held sacred. With men like him, success cannot be expected in their undertakings (Alejandrino 1949, 3-4).*

All things considered, his final statement upon death can easily be surmised as a reflection of his real intentions. Quibuyen recounts that Rizal praised the revolution and the revolutionaries, which included his brothers and sisters, in the second stanza of his farewell poem:

In barricades embattled, fighting with delirium,
others donate you their lives without doubts, without gloom,
The site doesn't matter: cypress, laurel or lily;
gibbet or open field, combat or cruel martyrdom,
are equal if demanded by country and home.

Clearly, we see that Rizal did not want unnecessary bloodshed to attain independence, with unnecessary being the key word.

Rizal's Death: Conscious Hero

The first time I went to the Rizal Shrine at Fort Santiago was in October 1994. I was ten years old. I saw National Artist Carlos "Botong" Francisco's 1961 wall painting of Rizal being shot at his back. This was of course very intriguing for a ten-year old! At that time, I read books that said that he intended to face the firing squad before the bullets reached him because he would not allow a traitor's death, falling face down. These, with seeing the brass representation of his final footprints added to the interest that I was slowly having on his venerated person named Jose.

It was 6:30AM of December 30, 1896 when Rizal began his final walk from Fort Santiago. Quibuyen, in his talks, always emphasized that Rizal chose to walk rather than be brought to the execution place in a carriage. He wanted his death to dramatic and walking would give it better theatrical momentum. In his 20 June 1892 letter, meant to be opened only after his death, Rizal said "I wish to show those who deny us patriotism that we know how to die for our country and convictions. What matters death if one dies for what one loves, for native land and cherished ones." He did not want to die like Father Burgos who was crying before the garrote.

To his companions Father Vilaclara and Father March, his former Jesuit teachers at the Ateneo, he would mutter while in exile, "What a beautiful morning! On mornings like this, I used to take walks here (the beach) with my sweetheart....Is that the Ateneo? I spent many happy years there." Rizal would continue to try to lighten things up with jokes, but none of them would laugh.

An overtly familiar scene to all Filipinos, recounted numerous times by biographers and historians alike, is the walk to his death:

Rizal arrives. Many are waiting, as executions were considered a past time in the time of the revolution. He asks the captain if he can face the firing squad. The captain declines, saying that this is unacceptable for he was a traitor. Rizal argues that he is neither traitor to his motherland nor Spain, but eventually agrees to be shot at the back as long as his head is spared. Even if it was customary at that time, he refused to be blindfolded or to kneel down. Why should he? He was wearing his Sunday best, complete with coat, tie and hat.

A curious medical doctor took his pulse for posterity. It was normal. He was not afraid to die. This is it. This is the moment he has been waiting for. He was being brave for all Filipinos, so as to prove Spain wrong about his countrymen being cowards.

And the captain raised his sword and shouted “Preparen!” Eight *indio* soldiers loaded their guns ready to shoot their *kababayan*. At their backs, eight Spanish soldiers ready to shoot the *indio* soldiers if they hesitate to shoot the traitor. The captain shouted “Apunten!” Soldiers take their aim. The crowd holds their breath. Rizal shouts “Consummatum est!” His mission is done. The torched had been passed.

With a drop of the sword, the captain shouted “Fuego!” Shots are fired. At the last moment, he resists and turns himself to face his executors. He falls down, and dies facing the sky...

It was 7:03 AM.

Towards A Rizal We Can Emulate

A well-meaning Ambeth Ocampo once wrote that Rizal was a *conscious hero*.²¹ He planned everything, even his death. This apparently offended some in the Rizal family because *nagpakabayani* has negative connotations, as it presents a guy who does heroic acts or who offers his life for an unworthy cause.

To this, I respectfully disagree. Being a *conscious hero* is not a bad thing. Rizal consciously and sincerely chose to offer his energies for his countrymen. Yes, he did not see the fruits of his efforts, but the nationalistic spirit and the revolution that he ignited is priceless. Rizal was a man full of love who harnessed all his passions and emotions into actions. Although always branded as an elitist hero, one can never deny that love transcends class. Nationalism is not a monopoly of the poor. Even if he was not a member of the working class, one cannot deny his love for the country, to the point of offering his life for it. A lot of other people in his time were more brilliant than him, but they were all forgotten. It is not in the number of languages that he can speak, his accomplishments, or the talents that he had. He was a hero because he gave it all for the *bayan*.

Andres Bonifacio, the father of the Filipino *Sambayanan*, saw that our greatest resource is love. In Jacinto’s *Kartilya*, they envisioned a country where the first priority is “ang tunay na pag-ibig sa bayang tinubuan at lubos na pagdadamayan ng isa’t isa.” Bonifacio, Rizal, and countless other

Filipinos have proven this to be true. This country may not be wealthy with material things, but we are overflowing with *pag-ibig*, especially when it comes to people loving and caring about each other.

How do we prove it? The next time you see your mom, dad, a sibling or a loved one, give them a hug. You’ll see that no family or people have the greatest capacity to love but the Filipino.

Bottomline, Rizal exemplified this great emotion of love and this is something each one of us can emulate. If every Filipino did the same, a better future would be more concrete. To harness this

resource for the development of our nation, by loving our work and dedicating every action to the service of others, will be our greatest sesquicentennial birthday gift to Jose Rizal, *Indio Bravo*, *Heroé Nacional*, *The First Emo*.²²

For Ambeth Ocampo, Nilo Ocampo and Floro Quibuyen, June 2012

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¹ FQ: Hero vs. Bayani—this sounds to me like a false dichotomy created by Zeus Salazar (note the irony of being named after the paramount Greek god). Greek gods, as Salazar is fully aware, were not distant gods—they intervened in the everyday affairs of the mortal Greeks. Secondly, the word hero, as used in “national hero” by many countries like the US refers to a hero of the people (for example, George Washington) and, thus, pretty much means the same as Salazar’s constructed meaning for “bayani”. This is my problem with Salazar’s perspective on Pantayong Pananaw—false dichotomies are set up between the native/indigenous/vernacular and the foreign—Tayo vs. Sila—to construct an essentialist identity for the native—which as Arnold Azurin has repeatedly pointed out, leads to an insidious nativism, and, dare I say, in its most extreme perverted form, can lead to ethnic cleansing.

XC: Dr. Zeus Salazar’s dichotomy on the *héroe* vs. *bayani* is based on his general assumption on the great cultural divide among those that were acculturated by Western colonialism and its ways and those that remained in the culture of the bayan. You have a point that the difference is not that glaring among the Western concept and the ancient Philippine concept but Salazar always points out to me that in all dichotomies it is given that there would be nuances and even exceptions. For example, I always tell him that the epic “bayani” like Lamang may well be like the Greek heroes. But there is one valid point I believe. His emphasis on the individualism and persona of the hero. The Greek gods may be one fighting with the people but he wants to be distinct and recognized as a hero (Hero’s welcome) with a conscious persona of a hero (posing like Napoleon for example) while the bayani gives service to the people even if he would not be recognized for it like the Katipuneros. I see this again as a useful concept because our bayanis were made heroes by the colonial education and we always look up to them like heroes, failing to see that in our our conceptualization, to see the *bayani* in them is to see *kabayanihan* in our own ordinary selves.

FQ: You present well Salazar’s concept of bayani—and its contrast with the Greek god. Indeed the Greek gods were flawed gods suffering from hubris (just like ordinary mortals). However, there is no real dichotomy between the Western concept of “hero” and Salazar’s concept of “Bayani” because even in the western tradition, a hero—like Washington or Bolivar or Joan of Arc or the mythical Robin Hood, or, for that matter, the fallen soldier(s) of WWI or WWII—is a hero precisely because he is willing to sacrifice his life for his people/nation without thought of any reward. Indeed, even in the Western tradition, someone’s heroism is diminished or put in question, if he/she was motivated by the need for recognition or adulation.

² FQ: See what I mean?—Salazar constructs an image of Rizal that was actually created by the Americans—which Constantino picks up and repudiates in his “Veneration without

Understanding’, and which Constantino, Salazar et al then use to perpetuate the false dichotomy of Bonifacio vs Rizal!

³ FQ: Yes, and the best way to do this is to get out of the Pantayong Pananaw false dichotomies of Salazar.

XC: Pantayong Pananaw is a school of thought in Philippine historiography which would like to look at Philippine history and culture in terms of perspectives and concepts found in the Philippines as against the colonial perspective of traditional history found in written records made by the foreigners and those that were able to be educated, for example, the elite. And that we should write Philippine history in the lingua franca of many Filipinos, which is not English but the flawed yet widely-used National Language Filipino, so that the ordinary folk, not just the educated, can understand the past and his culture. Its basic assumption is that the hundreds of years of colonialism made the Filipinos culturally divided into the elite and the poor, hence the dichotomies. There may be nuances in the dichotomies but that there’s a divide between the rich and the poor is really there, as according to Mareng Winnie Monsod, “dalawang klase lang naman ang tao sa Pilipinas, kung hindi ka mayaman, mahirap ka.” For more on Pantayong Pananaw, visit: <http://bagongkasaysayan.org/artikulo/index.html>.

FQ: If our goal (whether we are from the academe or the media or the government) is to communicate with the masses, we, of course, need to talk or write in the language that they will understand. Though I will go further and say, ideally, it would also be good to use Bisayan to the Bisayans, Ilocano to the Ilocanos, Pampango to the Pampangans, etc (I can use Ilocano and Pampango—I notice that native speakers’ response to me is warmer and more open when I use their native language, instead of Pilipino, in my conversations with them).

But this is not to say that when we use English with fellow Filipinos who understand English, we, somehow cannot fully represent our true “Filipino essence.” We have great Filipino literature in English, such as the works of Nick Joaquin, Leon Ma. Guerrero and Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero, Recto or the former “*L’enfant terrible*” of Philippine literature in English, Ninotschka Rosca (and many others). Are we then to say that these are not truly “Filipino” because the masses can’t understand them? Teodoro Agoncillo and Renato Constantino championed a decolonized history of the Philippines from a Filipino point of view, but, as you well know, wrote their major works in English!

I’m not too sure if your citation of Monsod’s distinction between *mayaman* and *mahirap* supports Salazar’s pantayong pananaw perspective. Monsod’s distinction is about class and economic status, though it is simply not true that if one is not rich, then one is poor—unless we subscribe to the unwarranted assumption that there is no middle class (where you and I supposedly belong) in the Philippines.

On the other hand, Salazar’s distinction is not about class but about ethnicity—I have no problem with this; my problem is that he puts it in dichotomous terms—“tayong mga Pilipino” vs “silang mga Inglisero na hindi tunay na Pilipino”. But what exactly does it mean to be a tunay na Pilipino? For me, following Rizal’s lead, what ultimately matters is not so much whether one is a true Pilipino or not; the more important issue is whether one is a good human being or not. People who equate moral goodness with ethnicity could end up, if they are given the power,

engaging in ethnic cleansing—and history, down to contemporary times, abound with examples.

That’s why I’m wary of people who insist on using only Pilipino (“Ba’t nag lingsh ka, di ka ba Pilipino?”—as Salazar once chided an unfortunate Inglisero student who went to consult with him in his “Dean’s Office”—having just returned from Hawaii, I was visiting him at that time, paying my respects to the master, as it were). Indeed, one can use the national language exclusively and still have a colonized mentality, or be a corrupt person and promote vested or personal interests to the detriment of the common good—as the case of Erap demonstrates (Salazar, by the way, looks up to Erap as the epitome of the true “punong-bayan”).

But since you are a true believer of Pantayong Pananaw—and you could be right and I could be wrong—I won’t debate with you any longer on this; let us just, as they say, agree to disagree, and put the matter at rest (while holding each other with regard and respect, as did Rizal and Fr. Pastells, or, for that matter, Bomen and Zeus Salazar).

⁴ FQ: Not exactly true—the first to write and advocate for the idea that the Indio was a Filipino equal to the Spaniard was Fr. Jose Burgos. Thus, it is more accurate to call Burgos the First Filipino. What differentiates Rizal from Burgos, as you know, is that Burgos’ Filipino was, like himself, “a loyal subject of Spain”, whereas Rizal’s Filipino was (and is) a citizen of a sovereign nation.

⁵ FQ: Although this is a trivial point, I will take issue with del Carmen: It’s not too important or relevant for me whether Rizal was a “chick boy” [a term very much in use when I was a young faculty member at UP Manila—apparently, it’s not current anymore?] or not—but we should refrain from constructing a disembodied, romantic, all-too-perfect image of Rizal, like del Carmen does—there is no such animal! It may be more truthful (and therefore more honest) to regard Rizal as a “lover boy” or “lover of women”—he could love truly, honestly two women simultaneously. Remember O’ Sei San in Rizal’s Diary? Rizal describes O Sei San in very loving terms—and that was at a time when he was still engaged with Leonor Rivera!

Here’s a psychoanalytic aside: some men who are very close to their mothers tend to be “chick boys” or “lover boys” or “lovers of women”—and Rizal was, as you know, very close to his mother. Another psychoanalytic lesson: Women who feel truly loved, love back—and that’s why Rizal was almost always—with one exception (Consuelo Ortega y Rey, who chose Eduardo de Lete over Rizal, but then, Rizal had not been intensely pursuing Consuelo as he was too busy completing his two licentiate degrees at the University of Madrid, now called the *Complutense*; nevertheless, Consuelo wrote in her diary that she was always moved and felt intensely whenever Rizal, the poet, talked to her!)—loved fully by the women he loved. But I’m deviating from our topic.

⁶ FQ: I didn’t know that Emo is still current in the Philippines. Emo was current here in Sydney (and the USA) over five years ago—but not anymore. Your reference to Emo shows how we Filipinos tend to borrow or adopt concepts/terms/usages from the culturally hegemonic West and how we lag behind in the very process of borrowing/imitating. The usage catches on in our Bayang Sawi at a time when the usage has disappeared from its original source. This is true also of intellectual fads—academics, literature profs, had joined the bandwagon of

poststructuralism and deconstruction at a time when it has lost its appeal in the land of its birth, France—a lag of over a decade!

XC: The “emo” fad here in the Philippines started about six years ago and that’s probably how old my joke was about Rizal being the “First Emo.” Yet, people still laugh at this joke and so I used it still as a “come on” title to the lecture.

⁷ FQ: The ‘signature one-sided hair’ had been adopted by Rizal only when he lived in Europe (certainly not in Ateneo or UST when he was a teen-ager). But it is a well-coiffed or well-combed wave of a hair-do—not the careless hanging-down Emo hair-do that usually covers the eye. Rizal’s hair-do (like his moustache) is a European bourgeois hair-do, not an Emo hair-do.

XC: My “fault” really is to make this “first emo” joke the main title of the paper so people can be interested in reading this paper. In the end I intended the emo to be defined, as you will see in the conclusion, not the technical emo but emo as being at tune with his emotions of love in everything he is doing.

⁸ FQ: As you well know, the juvenile Rizal wrote this in Spanish—in a Romanticist; somewhat Baroque style

⁹ FQ: NOTE that Rizal wrote this at a time when he was still engaged with Leonor!

¹⁰ FQ: Rizal’s notion of God was that of the Deists like Voltaire and Jefferson—not the Three Persons in One Personal God of traditional Christianity. Therefore, one can know God through Reason (and through studying Nature)—and not through the Revelation (the Gospels). Another important point, in Rizal’s perspective, Jesus Christ was a man and not God—in one of his letters to Blumentritt, Rizal referred to Jesus as “the grand genius...who preached truth and love, who suffered because of his mission, but on account of his suffering, the world had become better, if not saved” (Evidently, Rizal’s conception of Jesus is closer to that of the Iglesia ni Cristo than to that of Catholicism; but, apparently, neither the INC nor the Catholic Church seems to be aware of this). Thus, Rizal eventually deviated from the Catholicism of his mother. When his mother noticed this, she chided Rizal. Rizal replied by affirming his new-found position—which he maintained in his debate, by correspondence, with the Jesuit Superior Fr. Pastells. I discuss this in my *A Nation Aborted*

¹¹ FQ: Burgos was not merely a housemate—he was a Mentor—in the sense of Socrates being a mentor to Plato who was a mentor to Aristotle who was a “mentor” to St. Thomas Aquinas, or, for that matter, Salazar being a mentor to practically all ADHIKA founding members!—exerting a deep-seated influence in the thinking of Paciano. But this is not to say that Paciano never went beyond Burgos. Disciples, if they are intelligent, learn much from, but sooner or later go beyond their Mentors—as the cases of Jimmy Veneracion or [Ramon] Bomen Guillermo demonstrate.

XC: I super agree, as I myself have many differences with my mentors Dr. Zeus A. Salazar and even Dr. Milagros C. Guerrero. Going beyond mentors may not necessarily mean cutting ties with the mentor as many such relationships happened in the historical discipline here in the Philippines. Take for example the good and respectful relationship between Dr. Salazar and Dr. Bomen Guillermo.

FQ: We are in full agreement compañero! But my good friend, sometimes (to put a psychoanalytic spin on this), the sons have to kill the father in order to assert their identity and

virility! Hence, as you must have witnessed, former disciples can become the severest, most unforgiving of critics. Thus, the most hostile, vociferous critics of Freud were his former disciples. “Masyadong malaki at mayabong ang puno, nayuyunyan ang umuusbong pa lamang na mga halaman; kaya kailangan pututlin at paliitin ang matayog na puno para naman magkaroon ng pagkakatanong lumago ang mga munting halaman”—if you know what I mean (wink, wink).

As for my part, I have the highest respect for Salazar’s erudition. Truth to tell, I decided to pursue a graduate program in anthropology after being with Salazar for about 3 days in a UP team that was constituted by then UP Vice President Oscar Alfonso (just days before Ninoy Aquino was assassinated) to explore the ancient burial sites of Mankayan, Buenguet. Those were memorable 3 days of learning for me. I don’t hesitate to say that the European-educated Salazar towers above most, if not all, history/politics /philosophy professors in the Philippines—with the exception of Onofre D. Corpuz and Cesar Adib Majul, the ultimate bright stars in the UP firmament). But, with due respect, I much prefer the left-leaning, quasi Marxist, anti-Marcos “revolutionary” Salazar (in pre-Martial law days, we were comrades in SAGUPA [Samahan ng mga Guro sa Pamantasan], which counted among its members Temy Rivera and Ed Maranan) to the post Martial law, pantayong pananaw founder and pro-Marcos and Erap-fan Salazar.

¹² FQ: I have lambasted this crude psychoanalytic reductionism of Radaic in some of my recent lectures in Manila.

XC: You may well have a point citing Rizal’s height not really being short but for me Radaic’s thesis of Rizal compensating for his inferiority complex and insecurity, whether true or not, serves a very good lesson for most people who undergo the same feelings, which included myself.

FQ: My point is that, whatever motivated Rizal to develop himself to the fullest, it definitely was not due to any psychological inferiority complex regarding his height. Let me stress this crucial point—Rizal had no need to compensate for any inferiority complex. What motivated him and provided the energy to drive him on to accomplish so much in such short time was love—the love that his mother first nurtured in him, and sustained by Paciano and his elder sisters—a love that was expressed in his love of knowledge and, finally, his nation. This may sound corny to people who have not experienced the true love of a mother, or whose love has not been fully nurtured to grow into an inner strength.

The fundamental error of Radaic is to look for the explanation of Rizal’s greatness in negative terms, in what he lacked; whereas a more fruitful way of approaching Rizal is to find the key to his *èlan vital* in positive terms, in what he had in abundance—this was the love that sustained him to the very end, so that he could write a beautiful farewell poem without bitterness, without hatred, and be at peace with the world, and relish his last moments with joy and wonder and care and affection, reminiscing about his Ateneo days, nodding his head to Tavera with that unmistakable goodbye gesture as he walked passed Tavera’s house in Intramuros, graciously greeting people along the way, as he walked steadily to Bagumbayan, his final destination. No Pinoy actor in any movie or re-enactment has ever captured the loving tenderness of that moment!

¹³ FQ: This happens to most toddlers learning to walk—note how we tend to romanticise, idealise, every little thing that Rizal has done. Ambeth Ocampo has even written about where Rizal’s “cargada” lay or what he ate for breakfast. All this cultist “rock star” trivialities must stop—if we want to study Rizal seriously.

XC: The useless information, in the words of Dr. Ambeth Ocampo, I believe do serve a big purpose—to humanize our heroes so we can relate more to them. With this hopefully people would notice history as something that is interesting, and hopefully, will bring people to a more serious study of Rizal. One reason I became a historian is because of Dr. Ocampo’s writings. The interest he generated brought me to the experts, to Agoncillo’s works, to my teachers in UP Department of History, to Zeus Salazar and eventually to you.

FQ: Thank you for counting me in the illustrious company of Ocampo and Salazar (I probably don’t deserve this honor), but there is enough humanity and human interest in the life of Rizal, if one really cares to read about his life and works, that we are better off not wasting our time about Rizal’s *cargada* or the *tuyò* that he ate for breakfast (I must confess ignorance about these matters—Ocampo will easily beat me hands down in any trivia quiz about Rizal). As for me, I became interested in Rizal, early in my youth, after reading about his life and writings, and this interest became more intense after I visited the Rizalista sects in Laguna, Pampanga, Cavite, Rizal and Mt. Banahaw.

I was intrigued by the stark contradiction between what Constantino and practically all my UP teachers and nationalist/natdem comrades were declaring about Rizal, and what Bonifacio and the Katipuneros, and the Rizalistas of Mt. Banahaw had been saying about Rizal since the late 19th century. Surely, somewhere along the line, someone must have become mis-educated and ended up misrepresenting Rizal. I later realized that it was not the Katipuneros or the Rizalistas who have been mis-informed and miseducated—rather, it was Constantino and the UP nationalist; they were mis-educated by the American-constructed and propagated image of Rizal, and, thus, reacted vehemently against that image. What they didn’t realize, and to this day refuse to admit, is that the Rizal they were reacting against was not the real Rizal; rather, it was a phantom Rizal conjured by the American master-magicians in the aftermath of the genocidal American conquest of the Philippines at the turn of the century (it was in affirmation of this utterly destroyed Filipino nationalist life-world that I wrote my *A Nation Aborted*—to “sing and to remember”, as Bitoy Camacho pledges in the last scene of Nick Joaquin’s *Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*).

¹⁴ FQ: This is one of those anecdotes that I’m very suspicious of—probably invented after Rizal had become a national icon.

XC: This story came from the family of Rizal, I believe coming from the sisters of Rizal. That alone makes it a very important story. But we also know that family reminiscences can be the most problematic source of history many times especially without corroboration from documents.

¹⁵ FQ: Goodness gracious—one has only to look at the group photos of Rizal—he was not short—he was even taller than Marcelo H. Del Pilar and several other ilustrados. How can Ocampo estimate Rizal’s height through his clothes—Rizal’s trousers and jacket were made of wool—which shrink over time, especially when they are exposed to moisture. The best way to

estimate Rizal's height is through the group photos—which clearly shows that, compared to his contemporaries, he was NOT short. If we go by historical anthropometrics (apparently unknown to Ambeth), the average European height in the early 19th century was 5.4 ft. I agree with Leon Ma. Guerrero's estimate that Rizal was 5.4—average by European standards at that time, and slightly above average by 19th C Filipino standards. So much for Ante Radaic's inferiority thesis—which most Filipino authors unconscionably perpetuate! I have pointed this out in a lecture which you graciously (thank you) attended!

XC: Indeed I was in that enlightening lecture that refreshed me with the main points of your book. Ambeth Ocampo's 5.2 feet is actually taller than the other estimate I hear from my mentors in UP: 4.11 feet. So in citing Dr. Ocampo I really believed I agreed with your conclusion that Rizal was not that short.

¹⁶ FQ: I'd like to know how Howie knew this? There is a photo of an apparently malnourished Rizal (he was at that time eating only biscuits, which he shared with Jose Alejandrino—for the funds from Paciano have not been forthcoming) standing shoulder to shoulder with Nellie Bousted—this was a group photo of the Taveras. Rizal had an impish smile. Is this the photo Howie is talking about?

XC: There are actually two photographs with almost the same set of people but wearing different set of costumes. Howie Severino in his documentary "Ang Mahiwagang Ngiti ni Rizal" was referring to the photo of Rizal, the Pardo de Taveras and Nelly Boustead wearing odd costumes. Rizal was wearing what looked like a turban. For many people, Rizal was naughtily smirking in this photo more than smiling. On the other hand, Dr. Ocampo was referring to the other more formal photograph where Rizal was obviously really smiling, showing his cheekbones. And Sir, your observation was really correct. He was thin in these two photos.

¹⁷ FQ: SPOT ON!

¹⁸ FQ: A bit naughty of Jose Abueva—the image is quite original, and very possible! Creative thinkers/writers (be they gay or straight) do this—instead of falling asleep after climaxing, they reach out for a pen and paper to write on something that had nothing to do with the previous frenetic earth-shaking and mind-blowing exercise. Indeed, the rush of adrenaline and release of mind-stimulating and pleasure-inducing hormones like Dopamine, as well as heightened circulation of the blood/oxygen in the brain could produce sudden brilliant insights on matters that one has been thinking about for some time. My congratulations to Abueva for his naughty insight into Rizal—and thank you Xiao for sharing this with us. Moral of the story: It's good to make love when one is engaged in creative/intellectual work!

¹⁹ FQ: Working the way Rizal did is—as the latest research in the psychology of aging, shows—a good way to healthy longevity. The Longevity Project, an 80-decade study of the full life of 1,500 individuals (from aged 10 to their death), which involved several researchers (starting with Dr. Terman) has determined that the crucial factors to a long, healthy, productive and prosperous life are: 1) conscientiousness; 2) sustained, meaningful work, and 3) love, compassion and generosity. Note that all three factors characterise the personality of Rizal. Had not Rizal been executed at the age of 35, the odds are that he would have lived a long and productive life. Imagine what more he could have achieved in the arts and sciences! I'm reaching the conclusion that his early death—which he could have avoided by simply jumping

ship at Singapore as the Roxases did in 1896—was, in the ultimate analysis, a big setback for the Filipino nation. I think that, while we rightly commemorate Rizal's martyrdom (as the Katipunan of Bonifacio and the Revolutionary Government under Aguinaldo did), we should now pay equal, if not more attention to how he lived—especially his momentous 4 years in Dapitan. We—including the Knights of Rizal—should be celebrating more the day of Rizal's arrival in Dapitan, than the day of his execution. See my latest article in the Social Sciences Diliman—"Rizal's Legacy in the 21st Century: Progressive Education, Social Entrepreneurship and Community Development Dapitan: <http://www.journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/socialsciencediliman/issue/view/309/showToc>.

²⁰ FQ: You should read my critical exchanges with Schumacher in the *Philippine Studies* and in the *Kritika Kultura* to see how we differ fundamentally on a number of crucial issues. He and I agree on one fundamental point—that Rizal was a separatist who advocated and campaigned for the formation of an independent Filipino nation, and that Rizal ultimately supported the Revolution. But I go beyond Schumacher's *Propaganda Movement*. We differ on a number of fundamental issues: 1) on Burgos (was he a separatist who advocated for an independent Filipino nation and was he the inspiration for Rizal's concept of the Filipino nation? Schumacher says YES, I say NO); 2) on Marcelo H. del Pilar (Schumacher argues that Del Pilar was ultimately a separatist; I argue on the other hand that Del Pilar was basically an assimilationist and was the precursor of what an American scholar called "bi-nationalism", and that the main enemy for him was *frailocracia*, whereas for Rizal, the principal problem was Spanish colonialism, to which the only viable solution was separation); 3) on how religious orders acquired land and on Schumacher's claim that before the religious orders arrived, there was no agriculture in the Philippines--irrigation was in fact introduced by the friars (I dispute this citing Chirino himself); 4) on the Calamba hacienda incident (I called it a "horror story of Dominican greed"--which Schumacher vehemently denies); 5) on the American conquest (Schumacher prefers the term "intervention" to my preferred term "conquest"; I consider the conquest "genocidal" which Schumacher disputes).

But discussing the arguments at length would be a distraction or deviation from your essay. At any rate, all these points are threshed out in detail in my "How are historical texts to be read? My final rejoinder to Schumacher", published in *Kritika Kultura* (Ateneo English Dept's refereed ejournal) and "Critical Perspectives on Rizal and Filipino nationalism" (published in *Philippine Studies*, v.5, no.2, 2002—this may be accessed online at <http://philippinestudies.net/ojs/index.php/ps/article/viewArticle/376>). My "How are historical texts to be read" can be accessed and downloaded from <http://kritikakultura.ateneo.net/images/pdf/kk5/kolum.pdf>. For a summary of my main argument in ANA, see my "Constantino as Dogma: reply to Simbulan (which appeared in the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the UP newsletter--and may be accessed at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FP-Rizal/message/8014>, and at <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2518&dat=20060919&id=JExaAAAIBAJ&sjid=ESgMAAAAIBAJ&pg=1501,13022586>.

²¹ FQ: Can you cite the relevant text from AO? In "Josephine, the reluctant heroine" (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 26 March 1997), AO wrote, "like Rizal, Josephine was a reluctant

heroine and placed in a position she did not seek nor want.” This contradicts the statement you attribute to AO that Rizal was a “conscious hero.” For the record, it was Apolinario Mabini who wrote in *The Philippine Revolution*, “In truth the merit of Rizal’s sacrifice consists precisely in that it was voluntary and conscious.”

XC: Dr. Ocampo wrote in one of his *Inquirer* series for Rizal’s Martyrdom Centennial in 1996 entitled “Was Rizal prophetic or a conscious hero?”: “There is much to uncover beneath Rizal’s overcoat. It is clear from Rizal’s letters, diaries and other writings that he meticulously planned both his life and death down to the last detail. Nothing was left to chance, not even the choreography of his death. In a sense, we could say he wilfully became a hero.” (Ocampo 2012, 219).

FQ: So we have two opposing opinions of Ocampo: one, written in 1996 (which you cite) and the other, written in 1997, which I cite. His 1996 *Inquirer* piece was re-published in 2012—well, to his credit, he must have seen his initial error.

²² FQ: Given your title, I take it that this is your main thesis? Even granting *arguendo* that Rizal was the “first emo”, why should this be so important or significant? What’s the big deal about being an “emo”? From your discussion, I take it that “emo” refers to someone who is deeply emotional or sentimental or sensitive. But then most creative writers, especially poets, would fall into this category. In this sense, in the case of the Philippines, the first (critically acclaimed and nationally admired) emo would have been Francisco Balagtas—not Rizal! But then again, how would calling Balagtas (or Rizal) an emo add to our understanding of his life and works? Or of Philippine literature? Or of Philippine nationalism?

XC: Again, this being not really a very strictly academic lecture and doesn’t really present a new understanding of the hero, this paper which is my own repackaging of the Rizal story and also reflecting my own biases and even personality, would like to just teach people that one way to be like Rizal is to be at tune with your loving emotions and harness it to everything that we are doing. I think that is the simple life lesson I would like to impart on the readers along with the other simple lessons from his extraordinary journey. Many writers and artists are already emos, I am calling on every Filipino to do the same. To take down the culture of apathy and replace it with love of country and fellowmen as Rizal and Bonifacio taught us.

FQ: But these are minor points. Overall, I enjoyed reading your well-written essay. Keep writing, and best wishes to your scholarly endeavours!