



LIFE AND WORKS

OF
Rizal

GEED 10013



POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
College of Social Sciences and Development
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



**INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR
GEED 10013: Life and Works of Rizal**

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NATION, HEROES AND NATIONALISM

Overview

What is a hero? The American social scientist, Arthur Bernstein defines this noble figure as “an individual of high moral stature and superior ability who pursues his goal indefatigably in the face of a powerful antagonist. Because of his incomparable devotion to the good will, no matter the opposition, a hero attains spiritual greatness even if he fails to achieve practical victory. Jose Rizal and other Filipino histories are important source for capturing our own concept of heroism. By analyzing the life and ideas of Rizal and other Filipino heroes, we affirm that our race possesses the spirit necessary to move this country forward. The important thing is to rise to the moment, selflessly and individually. In that instant, our separate actions are embraced and broadened into a collective drive for a national interest.

According to Pablo S. Trillana III, Rizal’s unbroken devotion to the goodness led to the building of our nation out of a colonized race. In word and deed, he lashed at the injustice and oppression of Spanish authorities. This will fall with Bernstein’s definition of a dying hero is not a criterion of heroism and is not a static concept, it is more like a spectrum with overlapping degrees and nuances in between. Rizal’s moral ideals and devotion as well as his narratives of life are still in the hearts and minds of many people not just Filipinos.

In this unit, students will have the opportunity to distinguish the importance of concept such as Nation, Heroes, and Nationalism by studying the lives and ideas of selected Filipino heroes, in particular Jose Rizal. In commemorating and realizing the martyrdom of these heroes, we are, therefore, essentially asserting that our race possesses the spirit necessary to move this country forward.

LESSON 2

Philippine Nationalism: Heroes and their Ideas

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson the student should be able to:

- ☐ Relate Rizal's life to the life of the nation.
- ☐ Assess what characterizes a hero.
- ☐ Analyze the life of various Filipino heroes

There is something unique and fascinating about Philippine nationalism. The concept is very complex and full of ambiguities that's why many historians and scholars are still challenging the notion of Philippine nationalism. Filipinos are always proud in taking pride in the fact that our nationalistic and revolutionary traditions are the oldest in the region, particularly from the vantage point of overt systematic efforts designed to expel the colonizers and in gaining our independence. Therefore, the fact that there has been a resurgence of Philippine nationalism in the past years in one sense should not have been unexpected in view of its relatively long history. Beyond the pragmatic and sensible nature of Philippine nationalism is the perennial reinvention of different set of discourses and traditions that has intrinsic value to nation-state formation and maintenance. For much of the 20th century, nationalism was the inherent ideological option among individuals and groups who are against western colonizers, and somewhat paradoxically the moral cement of the newly established but still politically unstable post-colonial states. In this regard, nationalism exemplify evolutions of thoughts and characteristic ethos that gave birth to revolutions (1896, 1986, etc.) in relation to State and nation in the Philippines. While state-induced nationalism and associated rituals are inescapably present, these fail to evoke the essence of belonging to a shared civil world.

The story of Philippine nationalism is more intriguing during the time of the Americans. If one can recall the central role portrayed by the global hegemon in the Philippine soil in terms of its military presence, political interference and communication bases. The Philippines is indeed a complex signifier of a modern nation-state. Because many Filipinos are deeply aware of their peculiar trajectory in terms of colonial past, as a modern nation-state and its precarious position, the dominant discourses of the Philippines was not an easy task among many scholars. Filipinos are still problematic in terms of giving definition as well as understanding of the concept called nationalism. Perhaps, one of the many reasons that we can forward in this chapter is a close reading of heroism and significant heroes in the past to construct a common underground to lay an understanding about Philippine nationalism and its roots from the past.

Heroes are critical mechanisms of the identity axis of nationalism. An individual's veneration of national heroes enhances the individual's sense of belonging to the national collective. By creating a sense of national kinship, heroes facilitate a person's internal allegiance to the nation, the awareness of citizenship and belonging to "the people", an element of what Benedict Anderson has called the "imagined community" that constitutes nationalism. To discuss heroism in the Philippines is to offer a long history marked by rebellion, resistance, idealism, and men and women with a powerful love for our country. It is with the sacrifices and stories of human struggle that made these names important to instill nationalism and to further our understanding in our identity as a people. According to Sharon Delmendo's *The Star-Entangled Banner: One Hundred of America in the Philippines*, the Americans played an important role in the construction of Philippine nationalism. Her depiction of nationalism with a similar look from Benedict Anderson, provided an excellent foundation for the concept of nationhood. Additionally, Greg Bankoff and Kathleen Weekley in their novel, *Post-Colonial National Identity in the Philippines*, explore the "theoretical and historical relationship

between nation and state” and how idea of Filipino identity has developed over time. They saw an important question about the absence of important Muslim figures from Philippine nationalistic celebrations as well as in Literature. This analysis creates an opportunity to revisit our measures and provide answers for the lack of representation of the “non-traditional” such as Sultan Kudarat, Lapu-lapu, etc. and its impact on creating a general appropriate representation of nationalism for the whole Philippines. In essence, diversity and many other factors are attributed to the development of the Philippine’s national identity. One example is the colonial regimes of both Spain and the United States who triggered many reactions from the local that resulted to the shaping of Philippine nation. Nevertheless, the narratives and stories from the past which are being examined and studied by historians and scholars are important for us to recognize the role heroes play in establishing a national identity and collective aspiration for citizens of the Philippine nation to recognize as well as relate to. This analysis focuses more on the role of individuals in shaping and promoting a sense of pride in the Philippines.

Admiration to saints, politicians, artists, and even vloggers or tiktokers is common thing among Filipinos. Since the declaration of Philippine Independence, many have been recognized as Filipino heroes. From the traditional notion of death for the love of our country to invaluable services rendered by our Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) abroad, we were able to locate and recognized individual who has become so popular or the main character in any particular event has given the title “hero”. In all honesty, there’s no law declaring Rizal or whoever names in history as Philippines national hero. We don’t have one single national hero; it’s just by acclamation. But we do have a long list of names and people whom we called as national heroes. Filipino heroes all contributed to the freedoms, the rights, and the democracy that we are somewhat enjoying today and the democracy that we are still fighting to improve. In the past, the essence of the word “hero” is diminishing and losing its impact. Today, we find ourselves questioning the role of heroes in our national collective aspirations towards nation building, but what does it mean to be a hero? Esteban de Ocampo, a well-known historian, stated that a hero means a prominent or central figure that plays an admirable part in any remarkable action or event; a person of distinguished valor or enterprise in danger or fortitude in suffering; and a man honored by public worship after his death for an exceptional service to mankind. The true heroes of Philippine history deserve to be called and studied because they had no idea that one day they would be measured, they just act upon their principles. It was during the time of the Philippine Commission headed by William Howard Taft when the concept of honoring heroes came and developed in the Philippines. As one of the major colonial policies and cultural legacies of American administration in the Philippines, the commission adopted Act No. 137 combining the districts of Morong and Manila to be named as “Province of Rizal” in honor of the “Renaissance man” and the “pride of the Malay race”. Since then, heroes have been celebrated here and there, citing their names in every politician’s speeches, declaring holidays, naming streets, building monuments, etc. in their honor. Until one day, realizing that so many names were recognized as heroes, there was a need to assess the situation. During Marcos’ presidency, he asked the National Heroes Commission to come up with the criteria for a national hero. On March 28, 1993, by Executive Order No. 75 of the President, the National Heroes Committee was established, commissioned to study, evaluate and recommend historical figures to be declared national heroes. The Committee composed of worthy members, with a series of discussions, has come up with the new criteria.

A series of meetings from June 03, 1993 to November 15, 1995 were done by the Technical Committee of the National Heroes Committee in order to define, discuss and deliberate upon the merits of the various definitions and criteria to set. The committee adopted a short list of criteria and was able to give basis in determining who among the great Filipinos will be officially proclaimed as national heroes:

Criteria for National Heroes

(Directly adopted from the website of the National Commission for the Culture and the Arts (NCCA), The work of the Technical Committee of the National Heroes Committee on June 3, 1993, Manila. Members of the Committee included Drs. Onofre D. Corpuz, Samuel K. Tan, Marcelino Foronda, Alfredo Lagmay, Bernardita R. Churchill, Serafin D. Quiason, Ambeth Ocampo, then known as Dom Ignacio Maria, Prof. Minerva Gonzales and Mrs. Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil)

1. Heroes are those who have a concept of nation and thereafter aspire and struggle for the nation's freedom. Our own struggle for freedom was begun by Bonifacio and finished by Aguinaldo, the latter formally declaring the revolution's success. In reality, however, a revolution has no end. Revolutions are only the beginning. One cannot aspire to be free only to sink back into bondage.
2. Heroes are those who define and contribute to a system or life of freedom and order for a nation. Freedom without order will only lead to anarchy. Therefore, heroes are those who make the nation's constitution and laws, such as Mabini and Recto. To the latter, constitutions are only the beginning, for it is the people living under the constitution that truly constitute a nation.
3. Heroes are those who contribute to the quality of life and destiny of a nation. (As defined by Dr. Onofre D. Corpuz)

Additional Criteria for Heroes

(Adopted by the Technical Committee of the National Heroes Committee on November 15, 1995, Manila)

1. A hero is part of the people's expression. But the process of a people's internalization of a hero's life and works takes time, with the youth forming a part of the internalization.
2. A hero thinks of the future, especially the future generations.
3. The choice of a hero involves not only the recounting of an episode or events in history, but of the entire process that made this particular person a hero. (As defined by Dr. Alfredo Lagmay)

Today more than ever, being mindful with the abovementioned criteria is important for all Filipinos. The criteria for national heroes will not only be checked against historical figures but can also apply for us to be vigilant voters against the politicians to whom we will entrust the power to lead our country. We have different expectations for our public officials but to include these criteria before electing important government positions will make a huge change towards the maturity and advisability of our generation to elect the rightful leaders.

Today, it is important to recall their most significant acts of patriotism, which have led to the birth of generations of free and proud Filipinos. Below are the names of nine (9) historical figures in the Philippine history selected as national heroes:

Jose Rizal (1861-1896):

Rizal was the author of some of the most important writings about the aristocracy and colonization of Spain in the Philippines. He was known to many Filipinos and foreigners all over the world and was considered as one of the forerunners of establishing early Philippine studies in Europe when he was actively participating in the so-called propaganda movement.

Andres Bonifacio (1863-1897):

Bonifacio led the Katipunan, a secret revolutionary society that fought against Spanish oppression and colonial rule in the Philippines. A patriot (not communist) who spearheaded various military campaigns during the Philippine Revolution as acts of rebellion against the ruling of Spanish colonial government. He also envisioned the establishment of a Tagalog republic in which the locals will be united and organized through attaining a single vision for the homeland anchored from our rich values and cultural identity.

Emilio Aguinaldo (1869-1964)

Aguinaldo is one of the most fascinating revolutionaries in the Philippines who were able to witness the Philippine campaigns for Independence under three eras of colonization from Spain, America, and Japan. He was considered as a brave general in many revolutions and was recognized as the First President of the Philippine republic. Aguinaldo was also known for several successful encounters and guerilla movements that he organized to campaign for the independence of the Philippines.

Juan Luna (1857-1899):

Luna was one of the greatest Filipino artists of all times and considered as genius painter who advocated for the Philippine reformation in Europe. He was the artist who created the world-famous magnum opus, *Spoliarium*, which was awarded a first-class medal in the 1884 Madrid Exposition of Fine Arts. He was born in Badoc, Ilocos Norte on October 23, 1857 and died in Hongkong on December 07, 1899.

Marcelo Del Pilar (1850-1896):

Del Pilar was a Political analyst and writer of various issues in the Philippine society during the peak of Spanish colonization in the country. In 1882, he founded the nationalistic newspaper, *Diariang Tagalog* and circulated progressive and patriotic writings in Europe. The newspaper as well as the thoughts of the writers such as Rizal and other Filipino nationalists became the inspiration behind the creation of the propaganda movement.

Melchora Aquino (1812-1919):

Aquino is one of the two females among the nine historical figures recommended as heroes. She was better known as “Tandang Sora”, “Mother of Balintawak”, and “Mother of the Philippine Revolution”. Born in the city of Kalookan, Aquino’s home became an important location and venue for several secret meetings of the katipunan. Here, she helped the revolutionaries by feeding and providing medical attention to the revolutionaries. She also carried many secret tasks such as recruitment of other members and encouraged them to join the struggle with maternal advice and prayers.

Apolinario Mabini (1864-1903):

Mabini was one of the foremost of the Philippine revolutionary heroes. He was considered as the “brains” of the revolution because of his role as the architect of the 1898 Philippine revolutionary government. Under Aguinaldo’s revolutionary government, he served as the first legal and constitutional adviser and then as the first Prime Minister of the Philippines upon the establishment of the First Philippine Republic. Mabini performed his entire revolutionary and governmental activities despite losing the use of both his legs to polio shortly before the Philippine Revolution of 1896. He was also the author of a unique draft constitution that labelled the woman as great partners in nation building.

Sultan Dipatuan Kudarat (1581–1671):

Kudarat was the most powerful Sultan of Maguindanao in the Philippines. He successfully repelled Spain's conquest to subdue Mindanao. He was also a hindrance to the Christianization of the Mindanao Island much like the other Muslim rulers of the Southern Philippines. Mohammad Dipatuan Kudarat was a direct descendant of Shariff Kabungsuwan, a Malay-Arab missionary who brought Islam to the Philippines between the 13th and 14th centuries.

Sultan Kudarat also forged an alliance with the Sultanate of Sulu, a neighboring maritime sultanate, by marrying its sultan's daughter. The Sultanate of Sulu was one of the most powerful sultanates in the prehistorical Philippines and situated east of the territories of the Sultanate of Maguindanao, and its territory stretched to the northern part of Borneo.

Gabriela Silang (1731-1763):

María Josefa Gabriela Cariño Silang was a revolutionary fearless female warrior and a great leader of the Filipino people to fight for independence from Spain. She took over the revolutionary movement of her husband Diego Silang after his assassination in 1763 and became a military general in the resistance who led the longest sustained revolt to counter the colonizers. Her actions inspired both men and woman to continue in the struggle against western imperialism. She also mobilized the Indigenous peoples in the north such as the Tingguian community to fight the Spaniards and resists until they were executed by the colonizers on September 20, 1763.

Despite the recommendations, no action has been taken as result of the possibility of triggering debates on historical controversies. However, the qualifications of the National Heroes Commission, historians and researchers reflect the continued quest to remember significant personalities who have made a difference in Philippine history.

Course Materials:

1. Readings: National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). 2015. Selection and proclamation of national heroes and laws honoring Filipino historical figures (1995). Online, <http://ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/culture-profile/selection-and-proclamation-of-national-heroes-and-laws-honoring-filipino-historical-figures>. 2. Joaquin, Nick. 2005. Anatomy of the anti-hero. In *A question of heroes*, 50–64. Mandaluyong City: Anvil. Anderson, Benedict. 2004. 3. The first Filipino. In *Specter of comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the world*, 227–34. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press. 4. Constantino, Renato. 1966. Our task: To make Rizal obsolete. In *The Filipinos in the Philippines and other essays*, 137–52. 5. Lahiri, Smitha. 1999. Writer, hero, myth, and spirit: The changing image of José Rizal. *SEAP Bulletin*. Fall bulletin. Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University. Online, http://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/sites/seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/files/1999f_2.pdf.

Assessment

Instruction: Discuss the item thoroughly. Write the question before each answer. Each answer should contain at least three (3) paragraphs of not less than four (4) sentences each. You may write your answers in Filipino.

1. Create a list of at least three (3) local heroes that you personally admire and consider to be important figures in your local history. Justify your chosen list.