

CHRIS

The first thing I noticed in Dr. Jose Rizal's life was that he lived a simple one. He did not choose to have a luxurious life like the most of us have wanted. Even before he became under surveillance by the Spaniards, he had lived his life as simple as possible. I think it was the work of his parents that made him lived like this. I strongly believe that one's lifestyle is influenced mostly by their parents. I learned from the life of Rizal the importance of taking part of the parents to their children's morals.

The second thing that I observed from the life of Rizal was his calmness and ability to think rationally even in the most complicated circumstances. His advocacy of Philippine Independence is by legal and peaceful way that is why he wrote many books in order to fire-up the revolutionary spirit of the Filipinos.

As an educated man...

Rizal's philosophy of education centers on the provision of proper motivation in order to strengthen the great social forces that make education a success, to create in the youth an innate desire to cultivate his intelligence and give him life eternal. In this philosophy, I learned the value of education as a stepping stone towards gaining success for myself and for my country. Since there is an enough motivation to study and explore by wisdom, I made this an encouragement to myself that education shall not only stop within the corners of classrooms but shall also extend until the corners of the world. Rizal's belief that waking up the innate desire of every Filipino youth to cultivate his intelligence is such a great thing that every individual has to ponder. His philosophy was affirmed by his educational attainment, thus giving a strong support of his educational philosophy and giving him the credibility to talk such path towards educational success.

As a religious man...

Rizal did not believe in the Catholic dogma that salvation was only for Catholics and that outside Christianity; salvation was not possible even if Catholics composed only a small minority of the world's religious groups. Nor did he believe in the Catholic observation of fasting as a sacrifice, nor in the sale of such religious items as the cross, medals, rosaries and the like in order to propagate the Faith and raise church funds. He also lambasted the superstitious beliefs propagated by the priests in the church and in the schools. It only shows that Rizal has really taken hold of salvation as a free gift to everyone. This also shows that he opposes the Catholic teaching of money indulgence for the forgiveness of sins. Though Rizal was born from a closely-knit Catholic Family, he still fought for what is true. His religious philosophy approves a part of our Wesleyan beliefs and that is a good thing that we should be happy about. Furthermore, I learned that eventhough he has gone that far in his attainments, he did not lose his humility and his faith to God.

As a political man...

Rizal's guiding political philosophy proved to be the study and application of reforms, the extension of human rights, the training for self government and the arousing of spirit of discontent over oppression, brutality, inhumanity, sensitiveness and self love. Rizal cried out for the independence of his own

country and his fellow men. In his cry, he made reforms, he plead through his writings and he courageously laid his opposition against the inhumane and brutal management of the Spaniards over the Filipinos. One thing I learned from his life is that he was not terrified with the strong power of the Spaniards but instead he let himself shine and speak up on the issue that he and his country is facing. This could be a strong passion and determination to set free a country that deserves liberty. I also observed on my readings that Rizal never craved for political power, but instead he served as a catalyst that silently works great in his own ways. At the end of his life, he has remained fighting for freedom, and until his last breath, he has fought a good fight even though it cost him his life.

As a socially-equipped man...

Rizal's social philosophy dealt with;

1. man in society;
2. influential factors in human life;
3. racial problems;
4. social constant;
5. social justice;
6. social ideal;
7. poverty and wealth;
8. reforms;
9. youth and greatness;
10. history and progress;
11. future Philippines.

Basing on these philosophies, I can say that Rizal is a very humane, compassionate and benevolent citizen. He has dealt with social problems thru his popular books *Noli Me T'angere* and *El Filibusterismo*. He is an ambassador of social justice and equality, which is a very good thing that we should follow. If there were only thousands of persons like Rizal, I believe our society will be at good condition. I always hope I could be like him in some areas of his life, but I know that it is far from reality to happen. But what I am doing is that I am performing at my best, making every effort to become a productive individual in different aspects of life.



The life of Jose Rizal was a truly inspiring story. Not just as an ordinary story of a Filipino but a story of a very intelligent and talented Filipino, who is ready to sacrifice his whole life just to give freedom and peace to his family, and own nation.

For one semester, I've known who really Rizal is. It might not all about him, but those learning's and knowledge I learned, is enough to say to myself and to other Filipino and even not, that he deserves to be what he have known for today. And that is, the National Hero of the Filipino. His life was truly amazing and colorful for the hero's experiences mold him to what God purposely do to him.

Jose Rizal, for my own insights, tells me the value of certain things which is important for the success of his life. That is God, Family, Country and Self. He could not reach as that far without God. The Lords is the most important one who could determine our success, just like as Rizal feared God and in return, he have been bless abundantly not by material things only but a spiritual one. That is intelligence, skills, love, and compassion. Also the role of family is next important for Rizal had been blessed with a family who could guide him to what he really aims. Even nowadays, family is one of the foundations of a person's character. Next one is country! For Rizal's portray the love of the country as a means of loving his fellow Filipino, thus helping them to attain justice from the evil and corrupt priest and Spaniards who are mistreating them in their own land for God has created us to extend our help with our fellow as a symbol of glorifying Him. And last is Self. I have learned from Rizal's life that you should make yourself fruitfully. He makes himself grow to wisdom and knowledge to use it in God's purpose. He did not say to himself that he is not worth enough and live blind for what is happening in his environment. Thus, he is knows that he is a child of God.

Moreover, Rizal proved that pen is mightier than a sword. For his expertise in writings enable him to convince his whole fellowmen to attain justice, thus destroying an empire. For words flies wherever and ignites every man's feelings. Just like as a saying says that word is powerful, there comes positive and negative in it. It could heal one's heart but also harm another like a double edged sword. Rizal have a God fearing heart so that he have ignite change and peace and thus mean we Filipinos should have a good conscience and God fearing heart to impose positive changes.

If Rizal still lives in our generation, he will sure that all Filipino has an inspiration like him by learning that knowledge is everything that all Filipinos were educated even though they were poor, he will also not teach but he will let us understand what is with being Nationalistic and the importance of loving our own language. Rizal is the hero that is brave, he'll fight for everything even for his own life and work, in the film I watched, he said that we do not need to shed blood, we can fight them with our own knowledge thus showing that we are equal to them.

Thanks to Rizal for he inspires me and thanks to our professor who imparts and explains all this knowledge for us to better understand it.

POLVS

MARTYRDOM HAPPENS only once in a lifetime. And lucky are those whose lives are given for the sake of their countries. History elevates them to the bastions of immortals to be long remembered by their people as inspirations and models to be emulated and idolized by mankind.

One among them was Dr. Jose P. Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines. A glimpse of his life showed he was born in Calamba, Laguna on June 19, 1861, as the seventh child of Francisco Mercado Rizal and Teodora Alonzo Realonda. He was a novelist, a poet, historian, linguist, athlete, medical doctor, dentist and ophthalmologist. He showed love for his country at an early age which he nurtured until his death. Notwithstanding the perils and dangers of protests and exposes during his time, he manifested his dissent in his two great novels, the *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, which embodied the frictions and antagonism during the Spanish rule, the resentment against Friar abuses, and the harsh conditions suffered by the Filipino people. He was greatly touched by the death of three famous priests, Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora, to whom his novel *El Filibusterismo*, was dedicated.

A peaceful reformist, Pepe, as Rizal was commonly called by his close associates, opposed taking arms against Spain, realizing that it would spell disaster for his people and could bring nothing but misfortune upon them. Instead, he opted for peaceful reforms. Based on his experience as a member of the *La Solidaridad*, a Filipino reform movement newspaper, he founded the *La Liga Filipina* with Andres Bonifacio who later founded the *Katipunan* as a radical offshoot of this movement after Rizal was exiled to Dapitan. However, because of alleged "rebellion and sedition" charges against him by the Spanish authorities, he was executed by the Spaniards in the early morning of December 30, 1896 at Bagumbayan, now Luneta or Rizal Park. His death triggered many revolutionary movements and fired up the growing *Katipunan* rebellion that showcased Filipino valor against all odds. The love for Rizal and his ideals was a battlecry the Spaniards did not want to hear during their rule of the Philippines.

Dr. Jose P. Rizal was a brilliant individual. He served as an inspiration to me as an overseas Filipino. During his lifetime, he spent many years outside the Philippines, enriching himself through education, especially in Madrid, Spain. The distance did not diminish nor reduce his love for his country. Far from his motherland, he looked across the seas to find its strength, as well as its weaknesses, in order to uplift it from the abuses of foreign rule. My mind was too naive at the time I read about him. It never occurred to that we are alike in some aspects... that of being overseas Filipinos here in the United States.

At one point in time, he was in San Francisco, California, and occupied a room at the former Palace Hotel (now Sheraton Palace Hotel) overlooking the Bay Area. Like him, I also want to be a doctor. We shared the same belief that students must be urged by patriotic ideals and by their passionate love for their country, the Philippines, love for truth and proper values of education. Dr. Jose P. Rizal had given proof of desiring liberty for his country, and he set down as a premise, the education of the people. His teachings greatly influence me, while I am here in the United States. Like him, I believe in people power and consider myself a modern Rizal youth of today, as the hope of my fatherland's tomorrow.

Whatever the truth may be, we must not lose sight of the fact that we are Filipinos, in thought, word and deed, and I am proud to be one. I was raised in the United States for the past fifteen years, and have

partly adopted the American way of life. But still, I love my country, a dignified, free and prosperous Philippines. I would not let my character and integrity be overpowered by foreign culture. I still admire and praise whatever is foreign; however, I will never give up Filipino traditions, beliefs and moral values instilled in me by my parents. I will never degrade nor become ashamed of what was my own.

As the hope of tomorrow, and being at the prime of my life, I would like to be a role model for teenagers for the upliftment of their educational values. This was our national hero's dream about the youth: to be the future of tomorrow, the future leaders. I would volunteer to lead them, to sponsor symposiums through the help of the Philippine Consulate and the Filipino-American communities and other organizations interested in joining hands to make this dream a reality. Most of the youth here in the United States enthusiastically embrace foreign culture. Precious few have knowledge of our Filipino ways, mores, traditions and culture. In truth, the United States half-consciously helped the Filipinos to grow toward maturity, progress and advancement but it would be abnormal without progress in other directions, like awakening. Education and the raising of the standard of living is an important factor.

Like Dr. Rizal, we must grow through our own struggle. He did it by himself, and did not reckon of course nor ask for help from across the sea. As overseas Filipinos, especially the youth, we must help each other. Let us restore in our minds a sign of hope for the others, who have not yet progressed as far as becoming model Filipinos here and in other parts of the world where we are regarded as immigrants, aliens, TNs, contract or domestic workers, etc.

Filipinos, like Dr. Rizal, must look for the spring of national strength for the restoration of Filipino moral values. They must learn before it is too late what it means to be truly Filipino. Away from our country, from our national traditions, hopes and dreams, Filipinos must do what they can to prove their worth and make themselves useful as members of the community. Loyalty to the Philippines is one of the traits that must be strong and active among us. Dr. Jose Rizal should be our inspiration while we are away from our homeland, and we must succeed in influencing Filipinos to look back and be united in foreign lands.

In this age of immigrant-bashing and racial discrimination, Filipinos, like Rizal, should strive hard to be good examples of law-abiding citizens in their adopted country. We should excel in every aspects of our lives and professions. Our people are known in many field of endeavor. Others even intermarried with Americans. Many foreign professionals, doctors, engineers and lawyers prefer to marry Filipinos. Famous immigration lawyer Attorney Michael J. Gurfinkel, an advocate of Filipino-American rights, paid tribute to our womanhood by marrying the former Millie Sta. Ana. Atty. Gurfinkel, many say, is an American but more Filipino at heart. Businesses and corporate entities prefer Filipino workers because they are hardworking and show loyalty to the company they work for.

In closing, I believe that the present and future youth leaders must move on. There are the liberated minds of courageous intellectuals who are prepared to maintain and keep alive the principles and ideals for which our national hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal, had fought at great odds. We should strive more for recognition and unity. Every overseas Filipino should have a bit of Rizal, our national hero, in himself.

TASH

Tiny Dancer Hero

There is this idea that heroes inevitably reflect their country. When you think about it historical heroes exist as receptacles of a nation's hopes and dreams. They are the guiding lights, the individuals who helped shape the nature of a people. Heroes are, in other words, can be considered the soul and conscience of a country. Their philosophies, ideals, and examples acting as the benchmarks for right collective action. That, as well, is why each generation must recast their nation's heroes in new forms and view them in new perspectives. Heroes and their actions, much like all of history, are consistently up for reinterpretation. Without that process they will never be relevant. A disturbing question to ask is if our heroes are really relevant today.

As a result, studying how our heroes are approached and constructed in the public sphere gives a country an understanding of who they are as a people. Heroes are a reflection of the values of a people. And if that is the case, as I strongly suspect it is, then the way we currently construct Jose Rizal (the way we approach him and his legacy) does not speak too well of us.

There is something faintly disturbing about the fact that more is written, and known, in popular society (and pop history) about how many languages Rizal spoke (and how many women he supposedly bedded) than the importance of his annotated Morga. Or even that there is this pervasive sense of Rizal the Reformer, without understanding that his reforms were designed to lead to a successful revolution. Oh yes, with Jose Rizal we have turned one of our greatest heroes, one of the great men in history, into a small man; composed of tiny insignificant details that does little to deepen, challenge, or broaden our understanding of Rizal in his (and our) milieu.

If our heroes are a reflection of our society, then how we approach Rizal is all the more damning for how small it makes us look. Maybe Nick Joaquin was right, maybe we have become a nation of minutia.

Personalizing Rizal

There is an interesting ancillary thought when it comes to heroes. More often than not, their importance rests on how an individual approaches and engages with their legacy. We often like to think of heroes in how they changed a society, or how they rebelled against the circumstances of their day. But, the importance of those events and actions lies in how they resonate with the individual. How someone like Rizal, through his words and deeds, will inspire a young Filipino to lead a life dedicated to service, or to benefit their fellow man, or to help the less fortunate. Or even to fight for a collective ideal.

My experience with Rizal, in many ways, I think differs from the norm. I did not actually learn that much about Rizal in a formal educational setting (a by-product of where I went to school). Instead, my discovery of Rizal was shepherded by three of our greatest Rizalistas. So, instead of learning about Rizal through the interpretations (misguided in many cases) of writers like Agoncillo, or Constantino, or Zaide,

I read Rizal. I read his essays, his novels, his poems, and his speeches. This began when I was a kid. You could say I was brainwashed to adore Rizal. And quite frankly, I would not disagree.

It goes without saying that I was singularly lucky in how I learned about Rizal. And I do not say this to 'brag' or 'boast' about the experience. But, when I read some of the more flagrantly disturbing interpretations of Rizal it is shocking. For example, Constantino and his reformist trope. The fact that Constantino had to stoop to carefully editing Rizal's words so they would fit his preconceptions is practically scandalous. Yet, in many ways, Constantino's vision of Rizal is broadly accepted.

One of the problems, and this I feel strongly, with our current approach to Rizal is that it removes him from our ability to relate. Yes, it's fantastic and all that Rizal learned 23 languages (yeah...whatever). But to continue to hold that up as a reason why he should be admired is kind of ridiculous. It's the aggrandizement of minutia. Of little pieces of flotsam and jetsam that basically add up to something ephemeral.

Because of how we approach Rizal, with all these misguided attempts at humanizing him, we (individually and collectively) fail to approach him as he would have wanted: Through his ideas. His dreams. His hopes. His understanding of the Philippines. It's his words that should inspire. His real words, not those carefully edited and culled by colonially deficient pseudo-historians. Not the number of women he supposedly slept with. And most definitely not in the number of languages he spoke.

Yes, Rizal's words. How novel.

The Three Parts of Rizal's Writings

One of the saddest parts of how we have let Rizal down is with regards to his three great works: *Noli Me Tangere*, *El Filibusterismo*, and his annotated *Morga*. We all know the *Noli* and the *Fili*, few know the *Morga*. Which is sad, because while the *Noli* and *Fili* reflected his criticisms and worries about the present and future, the *Morga* is where his passion for the Filipino comes shining through.

The story of the *Morga* is almost romantic: Rizal sitting in the vastness of a library in London, painstakingly hand copying Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*. Rizal went on to review and read every historical account of the Philippines he could get his hands on. Using those materials, he combed through the entire *Morga* line by line, offering up pointed criticisms of Morga's history of the Philippines. In those notations we discover Rizal's unwavering belief in the goodness and nobility of the Filipino; even if the scholarship upon which those notations were made was questionable at best. Rizal firmly believed that the study of history must be in service of the needs of the present. This was history as pure propaganda. Rizal's purpose was to ignite the spirit of the Filipino by 'showing' them what was lost. In terms of the scholarly study of history, this type of myth-building is unacceptable. But, for a man who was fighting to preserve the soul of his country, it is perfectly acceptable and understandable. Sometimes you need collective myths to inspire a slumbering people.

Father John Schumacher makes the point that the *Noli*, *Fili*, and *Morga* offer up Rizal's pathway to nationalism for the Philippines. The *Morga* was the historical foundation upon which the new Philippine nation was to be built; the *Noli* a searing criticism of the current ills of colonial society; while the *Fili* was a warning against certain actions that had no hope (at that time) of proving to be successful.

Last year, as we all well remember, was Jose Rizal's 150th birth anniversary. There was the expected pomp and circumstance necessary for such an august occasion. And this year is the 151st celebration of his birthday. I wonder...do we know him any better? For all that has gone on in the last year, are we any closer to understanding what he hoped and dreamed of for the Philippines?

The answer is easily found actually. Just take a look at how his popular image is used and abused. It is almost disturbing how many people seem to speak on behalf of Rizal nowadays.

Broadly, we lack critical engagement with Jose Rizal's actual words. Too much of his writings are filtered through almost perversely erroneous ideology. It is...unfortunate. And it seems that as the years pass by we are leaving Rizal further and further behind.