Asia Pacific Journal of Social Innovation

(formerly The Mindanao Forum)

ISSN (PRINT) Journal homepage https://journals.msuiit.edu.ph/tmf

Gazing at the enigma: A study of the contested issues on the socialist Rizal and the 1896 Revolution

Jacinto R. Valila, Jr.

To cite this article: Jacinto R. Valila, Jr. Gazing at the enigma: A study of the contested issues on the socialist Rizal and the 1896 Revolution

To link to this article: https://journals.msuiit.edu.ph/tmf

Published online: 04 December 2024

APJSI
ASIA PACIFIC JOURNAL OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

(formerly The Mindanao Forum)
2024, Vol. 36, No. 2
https://journals.msuiit.edu.ph/tmf

Gazing at the enigma: A study of the contested issues on the socialist Rizal and the 1896 Revolution

Jacinto R. Valila, Jr.

I do not write for this generation. I am writing for other ages. If this could read me, they would burn my books, the work of my whole life. On the other hand, the generation which interprets these writings will be an educated generation; they will understand me and say: not all were asleep in the nighttime of our grandparents.

-Rizal

ABSTRACT

Jose Rizal, the country's national hero, is undoubtedly the most enigmatic figure in Philippine history. His short but riveting life, eloquent writings, and tragic martyrdom are glaring testimonies of his sacrifices and struggles for the redemption of the Filipinos from more than three-century brutal rule of Spanish colonialism. In the throes of the 1896 anti-colonial national revolution, however, Rizal did not simply refuse to join it; he unabashedly condemned the people's revolution that he helped fuel through his incendiary writings— as a despicable act of bandits and criminals. Renato Constantino, through his paper, "Veneration without understanding," brought forth the contradiction to the public, pointing at Rizal's Haciendero-Ilustrado origin, which was opposed to the idea of the erstwhile colony's separation from Spain and the violence in a revolution that went with it. As a result, Constantino reaped a storm of acerbic criticisms and set off enduring acrimonious debates in the past fifty years since the paper's draft was publicly read in 1969 and its subsequent publication in 1972. This study tries to revisit the debates and the contested issues on Rizal and the 1896 Revolution as it grapples with other contentions from foremost scholars on the man, digging deeper into the national hero's sources of profound inspiration from which Rizal's cogent vision for the emergent nation was drawn; his motivations, and his concrete agenda. Consequently, as the product of a review of literature, the paper offers fresh perspectives on the Rizal question apart from popular notions conceived by the Filipinos about him and the simplistic dichotomy of fitting Rizal's class with that of the masses in a Marxist fashion. Finally, the paper attempts to untangle Constantino's contradiction by locating Rizal's influences from liberalism and even from within the radical socialist-anarchist traditions, which may surprise many.

KEYWORDS

Rizal, colonialism, reformism, revolution, socialism, anarchism

CONTACT Jacinto R. Valila, Jr. ✉ jrvalila1@up.edu.ph

INTRODUCTION

As no other academic paper has since spawned a storm of enduring debates on Rizal except the seminal yet controversial work of Constantino (1972) entitled "Veneration without understanding,"— it is perhaps appropriate to revisit the contested issues on the national hero more than fifty years after the author first read his piece to the public in Intramuros, Manila in 1969 and subsequently published it in 1972. Constantino crossed the Rubicon, so to speak, when he suggested such contentious claims that Rizal was a counter-revolutionary, an American-sponsored hero, an Ilustrado who condemned the 1896 Revolution as a despicable act of criminals and bandits, and a non-decolonized hero. His assertions were mainly grounded on the three equally controversial documents that Rizal issued during his brief incarceration and trial for sedition against the Spanish colonial order in the Philippines: (1) Data of My Defense, (2) Additional Data of My Defense, and (3) My Manifesto to the Filipinos.

Constantino's (1972) assertions shocked Filipino conservatives and liberals alike, who were the recipients of American education that immortalized Rizal as the country's premier patriot and father of Filipino nationalism. The national consensus, subsequently, was galvanized early based on a conviction that Rizal's ideas and martyrdom may have inspired a people to rise in a concerted revolution against the obscurantism and bigotry of the Catholic Church and the savage rule of Spanish colonialism in the country from 16th century to 1896. Rizal was raised, as a result, to the highest pedestal in the pantheon of the country's national heroes, looming larger than life and revered as the "First Filipino" and the "Pride of the Malayan Race." On a later date, Leon Ma. Guerrero's (1974) classic "The First Filipino" was published, adding credence to the Filipinos' consecration of Rizal.

Framing his evaluation from the acute social conditions of Rizal's 19th-century milieu, Constantino (1972) deconstructs the man loaded with contradictions about the questions of revolution, independence, and liberty. He avers,

> Rizal lived in a period of great economic changes. These were inevitably accompanied by cultural and political ferment. The country was undergoing grave and deep alterations which resulted in a national awakening. The English occupation of the country, the end of the galleon trade, and the Latin-American revolutions of that time were all factors that led to an economic re-thinking by liberal Spanish officials. The establishment of non-Hispanic commercial houses broke the insular belt that had circumscribed Philippine life for almost two centuries and a half.

> The middle of the 19th century saw 51 shipping and commercial houses in Manila, 12 of which were American and non-Hispanic European. These non-Spanish houses practically monopolized the import-export trade. The opening of the ports of Sual, Cebu, Zamboanga, Legaspi, and Tacloban, all during the second half of the 19th century, enabled these non-Spanish interests to establish branches beyond the capital city, thus further increasing cosmopolitan penetration.
>
> European and American financing were vital agents in the emerging export economy. Merchants gave crop advances to Indio and Chinese-mestizo cultivators, resulting in increased surpluses of agricultural export products. The Chinese received loans for the distribution of European goods and the collection of Philippine produce for shipment abroad. Abaca and sugar became prime exports during this period as a result of these European and American entrepreneurial activities. The Transformation of the sugar industry due to financing and the introduction of steam-powered milling equipment increased sugar production from 3,000 piculs in the mid-19th century to nearly 2,000,000 piculs in four decades (Constantino, 1972, p. 7).

With enormous clarity, there is no doubt that Constantino (1972) is describing the penetration of international capital to the erstwhile decomposing feudal economy perpetrated by the Spanish conquistadors from the 16th century to the early period of the 19th century. Such penetration saw the emergence of the embryonic elite class from which Rizal emerged. Joseph Scalice's (2018) "Reynaldo Ileto's Pasyon and Revolution, a critique" supports Constantino as the latter affirms,

> Relationships among social classes changed dramatically in the nineteenth-century Philippines. The galleon trade between Manila and Acapulco ended in 1815. The Philippines' status as a colonial backwater, no more than an entrepôt hub in trade with China, gradually ended as well. The introduction of foreign, largely British, capital between the first and the second half of the nineteenth century overthrew pre-capitalist relations of production.
>
> By the 1880s and 1890s, Philippine society was awash in class contradictions. Small landholders, tenant farmers, share-croppers, landless agricultural wage workers, an urban proletariat, clerks, and professional wage workers comprised various sections of the oppressed classes in society (Scalice, 2018, p. 37-38).

He further describes the Philippine society's class relations in these terms,

> Actual class relations were exceedingly volatile in the nineteenth-century Philippines. New classes emerged; old classes disappeared. Subsistence agriculture gave way to cash cropping and commodity production. While class consciousness is notoriously vicious and lags behind objective circumstances, the transformations wrought by capitalism in the decades leading up to the Philippine Revolution would have had profound effects on the consciousness of workers and peasants (ibid, 2018, p. 40).

And as the nascent capitalist enterprises of Europe demanded from the colonial Philippines sugar, copra, hemp, tobacco, cacao, coffee, and other raw materials– the Haciendero class, together with the friars, cashed it on with the export of these cash crop products from the middle part of the 19th century. Especially among the Chinese mestizo, these Hacienderos were likewise engaged in the import and distribution of finished products in the colony, reaping windfall profits in the process. They thus emerged as the wealthiest families in the colonial Philippines, enabling them to send their best scions to Europe like Rizal himself, Paterno, Pardo de Tavera, the Luna brothers, Del Pilar, Ponce, Lopez-Jaena, Calderon, Aguilera, Alejandrino, Basa, Gomez, Dimayuga, Sison-Ponce, Regidor, Viola and many others. The land became the most important property in the colony. These enterprising Hacienderos and some Chinese mestizo businessmen gained further fame and wealth as well through sheer onerous cash crop advances to farmers, which afforded them to build more capital for further acquisition and concentration of lands in their hands.

The Haciendero scions were educated in the best universities in Europe. Well-versed in various languages and highly inquisitive, they became intellectuals who saw the evolving ideals of democracy, liberalization, and universal freedom in the fast-modernizing Europe. They began to drumbeat reformist dreams and longings for freedom and equal rights between the colonizers and the colonized people in the Philippines. Later, they became known as the Haciendero-Ilustrado class, leading the Europe-based propaganda movement agitating for reforms in the colonial Philippines.

Nonetheless, because this class envied the grandeur of European civilization, their calls and slogans were aloft to separatism. Such agitations were mainly limited to anti-clericalism. They saw the abusive friars as the most significant impediment to reforms and progress in the colonial Philippines (Constantino, 1972). These Ilustrados, however, failed to read and digest the literature of the French Revolution, except maybe for Isabelo Delos Reyes, who became a socialist. As a whole, the Haciendero-Ilustrado class, as represented by the propagandists and other intellectuals, was hesitant to fight for the complete independence of the archipelago as their families depended on the lands that the friars had leased to them or they

acquired as a result of capital build-up from the export-import trade. They loathed shattering the system, which was giving them much economic wealth and social prestige. But Rizal would breakout from the Propaganda movement eventually, realizing that reforms were impossible which we will discuss late.

It was no coincidence, therefore, that Rizal and the entire propaganda movement merely advocated assimilation, Hispanization, representation with the Spanish Cortes, education, and reforms in commerce and trade as per his program of the La Liga Filipina from the eyes of Constantino (1972). Rizal even killed the revolution in his novel El Filibusterismo (Fili) and extinguished the possibility of such in his Noli Me Tangere (Noli).

After supplanting the earlier encomienda system and because of the export-import trade activities, the hacienda system came to be. It facilitated, fueled by the penetration to the local economy of the international finance capital—the construction of roads and shipping facilities interconnecting the archipelago, and telephone and telegraph systems. Such shaped the material conditions for the people within the islands to communicate and organize among themselves. Coupled with the coming of the multinational and transnational companies from capitalist nations, hence, the penetration of liberal ideas from Europe and America, as well as the agitations of the propaganda movement (Constantino, 1972), the conditions for a bourgeois revolution against colonialism developed rapidly amid the brutal and obscurantist Spanish rule. Such were the acute objective social conditions of the Philippines from which Rizal, the propaganda movement, and even the 1896 revolution emerged. Constantino (1972) appears to have objectively read the very basis of Rizal's motivations and intentions with his call for limited reforms,

> Economic prosperity spawned discontent when the native beneficiaries saw a new world of affluence opening for themselves and their class. They attained a new consciousness and, hence, a new goal - that of equality with the peninsular - not in the abstract but in practical economic and political terms. Hispanization became the conscious manifestation of economic struggle, of the desire to realize the potentialities offered by the period of expansion and progress. Hispanization and assimilation constituted the ideological expression of the economic motivations of affluent indios and mestizos. Equality with the Spaniards meant equality of opportunity. But they did not realize as yet that real equality must be based on national freedom and independence. They were still in the initial phases of nationalist consciousness - a consciousness made possible by the market situation of the time. The lordly friar who had been partly responsible for the isolation of the islands became the

> target of attacks. Anti-clericalism became the ideological style of the period (Constantino, 1972, p. 7-8).

Capitalizing on Rizal's supposed economic position and the sharpening social contradictions in the colonial Philippines, Constantino (1972) counsels that Rizal and the propaganda movement fulfilled the function of articulating the Haciendero-Ilustrado class' position for parity rights with the colonizers and henceforth, a demand for the widest latitude of civil and political rights which were likewise the demand, albeit in inchoate forms, of the Filipino masses. To Constantino (1972), whilst the "aims of this class were limited to reformist measures, he (Rizal) expressed its demands in terms of human liberty and human dignity and thus encompassed the wider aspirations of all the people. This is not to say that he was conscious that these were class goals; rather, typical of his class, he equated class interest with people's welfare. He did this in good faith, unaware of any basic contradictions between the two. He was the product of his society and, as such, could be expected to voice only those aims that were within the competence of his class" (Constantino, 1972, p. 8).

Constantino (1972) thus praises Rizal as a great social critic and commentator during his time who did a remarkable job in "elevating the indio to the level of Hispanization of the peninsular so the country could be assimilated, could become the province of Spain." However, the cries of protests of Rizal and the Ilustrados, which were part of the anti-colonial tradition of the Filipinos, were interpreted by the masses, including the petty bourgeoisie class and the workers– as cogent agitations for revolution and complete independence. Rizal was raised as the titular head of the revolutionary Katipunan, even without his full knowledge (Constantino, 1972, p. 8).

It appeared that both the Spaniards and the Filipinos had misinterpreted Rizal for claiming he was for the revolution. The actions of the Katipunan, as well as the martyrdom of Rizal at the hands of the Spaniards, were both premised on the unfounded assumption that Rizal was indeed for the revolution and his works were designed as stirrings for independence through an anti-colonial uprising. Both the people and the Spaniards could have been surprised, therefore, by Rizal's forceful repudiation of the revolution, as shown in the three documents he issued during his brief incarceration and trial.

Beyond such confusion, Constantino (1972) appraises Rizal's actual contributions,

> Rizal contributed much to the growth of this national consciousness. It was a contribution not only in terms of propaganda but in something positive that the present generation of Filipinos will owe to him and for which they will

> honor him by completing the task which he so nobly began. He may have had a different and limited goal at the time, a goal that for us is already passe, something we take for granted. However, for his time this limited goal was already a big step in the right direction. This contribution was in the realm of Filipino nationhood - the winning of our name as a race, the recognition of our people as one, and the elevation of the Indio into Filipino.
>
> This was a victory in the realm of consciousness, a victory in a racial sense. However, it was only a partial gain, for Rizal repudiated real decolonization. Beguiled by the new colonizer, most Filipinos followed the example of Rizal. As a consequence, the development of the concept of national consciousness stopped short of real de-colonization, and we have not yet distinguished the true Filipino from the incipient Filipino. The concept of Filipino nationhood is an important tool of analysis as well as a conceptual weapon of struggle. There are many Filipinos who do not realize they are Filipinos only in the old cultural, and racial sense. They are not aware of the term Filipino as a developing concept. Much less are they aware that today's social conditions demand that the true Filipino be consciously striving for decolonization and independence (Constantino, 1972, p. 8-9).

Because Rizal effectively voiced the masses' demands and elevated the Indio to the level of the Filipino, he significantly contributed to the 1896 revolution, consciously or unconsciously, and such was the basis of his greatness. However, it has to be pointed out that this was a partial victory; without him, another Rizal would fill out his void. Rizal's refusal to join the revolutionary Katipunan despite several attempts by Bonifacio and Jacinto at offering him the coveted leadership position of the revolutionary organization speaks as well of his Ilustrado mindset that the revolution if it was inevitable, had to be led by the educated Ilustrado class (Constantino, 1972) above from the masses whom the Ilustrados looked down as *"pobres-ignorantes."*

The supposed non-revolutionary stance of Rizal and his ardent advocacy for mass education, as an offshoot, had been capitalized on by the newly colonizing Americans who installed him as the country's official national hero and the model for the supposed aspiration of the Filipinos to be educated under the colonial tutelage. In fairness, Constantino (1972) did not utter "Rizal as a counter-revolutionary" against the Katipunan. Instead, he located Rizal's refusal to join the Katipunan within the hero's ideological orientation and the demands of his Haciendero-Ilustrado class. Several scholars, like Schumacher (1978) and Quiboyen (1998), would argue that Rizal was not himself anti-

revolutionary and that what he vehemently opposed was Bonifacio's unprepared revolution. We shall have more on this later.

Another Marxist in Jose Ma. Sison further supports Constantino's articulation. Sison (n.d) in his paper, "Rizal as a social critic" declares,

> As a leading representative of the enlightened stratum or left wing of the middle class, Rizal easily adopted the liberal point of view and developed his national sentiment and consciousness. What made him a progressive and a radical of his own time was his ultimate recognition that the liberties of the individual could be realized only if the nation as a whole, particularly the masses whom he spontaneously observed, would be uplifted and enjoy more freedom from an overwhelming system of clerical authoritarians and anti-liberals who represented what had long been considered backward in the northern parts of Europe. He saw in the European development that the nation-states arose with the concept of popular sovereignty and republicanism. He pointed out that if no better colonial policies were to serve the Philippines, there would be an increased likelihood of a movement for separation from Spain. For this suggestion of Filipino nationhood, he was called a filibuster or a subversive in the same manner that the advocates of national democracy today are being witch-hunted for asserting the sovereignty of their people (Sison, n.d., p. 1).

Sison (n.d.) acclaims Rizal for his coherent analysis of the social conditions prevailing in the colonial Philippines as outlined in his writings, specifically in Noli and Fili. To him, Rizal was a consummate social critic with unparalleled social sensitivity who advocated reforms within the colony and correctly predicted the outbreak of the revolution should such reforms be frustrated. Akin to Constantino, he sees Rizal's position as incomplete, given the Marxists' belief that national independence was essential in achieving reforms, social justice, and parity of the Filipinos with the colonial powers. Thus, by simply advocating reforms without fighting it out in a revolution for the archipelago's full independence, sealed Rizal's doom. Sison (n.d.) sarcastically points this out when he caricatures Rizal's execution,

> On December 30, 1896, after his exile in Dapitan and after the Cry of Pugad Lawin had been made, he was led like a lamb to Bagumbayan to be killed (Sison, n.d., p. 8).

In affirming Rizal's role as an imminent social critic, Constantino (1966), nonetheless, urges the Filipinos to make Rizal obsolete by putting behind and correcting all Rizal's critiques of the Filipinos' infirmities in character, which the people obtained from more than three hundred

years of servitude to Spanish colonialism. In his "Our task is to make Rizal obsolete," he enjoins the Filipinos,

> The validity of Rizal's teachings today, sixty-three years after his death, is both a measure of his greatness and of our lack of greatness as a nation. The importance of Rizal's ideas for our generation has a twofold basis first, their applicability to present-day problems, and second, their inspirational value.
>
> Rizal holds a mirror to our faces and we see ourselves, our vices, our defects, our meanness. Because the conditions he describes are the very conditions we see around us, and the characters he portrays are people we continue to meet, we readily respond to his earnest desire for basic changes in our society and ourselves. One hand holds a mirror to shame us and the other points the way to our regeneration. Yet, the truth is that the mirror is not meant to reveal our image, but the image of the people and the society of Rizal's time (Constantino, 1966, p. 1).

Constantino (1966) then enumerates the Filipinos' vices, defects, and meanness as shown and depicted by the characters of Rizal's novels. Accordingly, these infirmities are still very much part of the Filipinos' moral fiber in the current milieu. The Ibarras, the Basilios, the Simouns, the Dona Victorinas, the Pelaezes, the Kapitan Tiagos, the Sisas, the Pilosopong Tasyos, and more are still very much alive today whose souls are susceptible to corruption, foreign influences, and mendicancy, helping shape the Philippines as a paradise for foreigners.

The Filipinos' current task, then, is to do away with these moral defects and set forth the national agenda of a decolonized Filipino mind, steadfast in the people's national interests instead of catering to foreign influences, which has put the country in a dismal condition. Constantino (1966), no doubt, refers to the country's strong affinity with the US and other imperialist nations since the turn of the last century. The US has consigned the nation as a mere supplier of raw materials to the capitalist powers and as a dumping site for the imperialist countries' surplus products. Nationalist industrialization and genuine agrarian reform, therefore, have to take the backseats in the national priorities of the state while the land remains concentrated on the Haciendero families, big businesses, and foreign interests.

THE POLEMICS AGAINST CONSTANTINO

The first known salvo of the reviewed literature in the ceaseless polemics against the paper of Constantino (1972) was fired by John Schumacher (1978) in his treatise, "Rizal the revolutionary and the Ateneo." He emphatically declares,

> To be sure, it would be unhistorical to credit Rizal with fully modern notions of a living wage, land reform, etc. In his time, a pre-industrial society, many of the social problems that have become so acute had scarcely begun to surface yet. Nonetheless, the concern for justice, not just for those of his class, but for all Filipinos was there. Among the purposes of his Liga Filipina, that concrete embodiment of his ideas on a national community founded in 1892, were included: "mutual protection in every want and necessity," and "defense against all violence and injustice." These were further specified in the statutes of the Liga to include coming to the aid of any member in need, giving aid to those who suffered misfortune, and especially, defending their rights against the powerful. To the Spaniards who arrested Rizal, the Liga was a subversive organization and nothing more; they failed to appreciate the breadth of vision which was behind it, which looked merely, or even primarily, to independence, but to the creation of a just society in which the rights of all would be respected. In the long run, such a just society was certainly subversive of that Spanish regime, just as it is subversive of other regimes that have succeeded it. That is another reason why Rizal was a revolutionary, and one can even say a radical revolutionary, even though he never did anything that could be legally qualified as a subversion of the Spanish regime. Even though the law enshrined a promise of justice to all men, the existing Spanish regime was incapable of making that promise by the end of the nineteenth century, and it was therefore, in the premises of Rizal, condemned. That is why as long as the writings of Rizal continue to be read, and Filipinos continue to reflect on the kind of society that their forefathers wanted to create, Rizal thoughts will continue to be subversive of all societies that fail to bring justice and freedom to the Filipino people (Schumacher, 1978, p. 236).

Without directly chastising Constantino, Schumacher (1978) tells his readers that Rizal was indeed subversive and a subversive revolutionary at that (seems redundant), for a revolutionary is necessarily subversive as he subverts existing norms, consciousness, institutions, and state to create new ones, which will benefit the majority of his people. In short, Schumacher (1978) appears to be professing Rizal's "revolutionariness" through Rizal's blunt criticisms of the Spanish regime and the acquiescence of the Filipinos (which Rizal had caricatured in his novels) to such a brutal rule without necessarily calling for an outright open revolt against that regime. He agrees with Rizal that the Filipinos were still being prepared for revolution at that time, and they would only be ready for self-determination if they had a profound understanding of the hallowed concepts of freedom, liberty, and social justice.

Schumacher's (1978) view is opposed to Constantino's (1966, 1972) and Sison's (n.d.) notions that freedom, liberty, and social justice were impossible within the social framework of ruthless Spanish colonialism. They could only flourish, accordingly, through the framework of self-determination and national independence. No amount of protests and pleadings could have convinced the friars and the colonial bureaucracy to grant such to the Filipinos, as evidenced by the violently crashed more than three hundred rebellions, the death of Gomburza, and the assassination of Rizal himself.

Colonialism had been built on the daily grind of violence and this colossal structural violence was expressed in the powerlessness of the people, massive poverty and ignorance, deceit of the colonizers, forced labor, insults, rape, and wanton abuse of women, onerous taxation, deprivation of the people of the slightest chance to get their lives better and so on. Colonialism was a violent enterprise; it had to be destroyed by an equally violent means in a concerted action of a people's revolution. Constantino (1972) refers to this revolution when he pontificates,

> In the histories of many nations, the national revolution represents a peak of achievement to which the minds of man return time and again in reverence and for a renewal of faith in freedom. For the national revolution is invariably the one period in a nation's history when the people were most united, most involved, and most decisively active in the fight for freedom. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that almost always the leader of that revolution becomes the principal hero of his people. There is Washington for the United States, Lenin for the Soviet Union, Bolivar for Latin America, Sun Yat Sen, then Mao Tse-Tung for China, and Ho Chi Minh for Vietnam. The unity between the venerated mass action

> and the honored single individual enhances the influence of both (Constantino, 1972, p. 1).

To radical observers, the fact that Rizal was not the leader of such a revolution and, by no means, he condemned the same as the handiwork of criminals and bandits does not speak better of him. Precisely, he vested no respect for the revolutionary leadership of the masses. Rizal urged Dr. Pio Valenzuela (Guerrero, 1974) to convince the elite to join the revolutionary movement before launching the revolution on the battlefield. To Rizal, it appears that the revolution was a futile enterprise without the support and leadership of the nascent elite, the Haciendero-Ilustrado class to which he belonged. To him, his class represented the peak of the educational achievements of his time and possessed the necessary material requirements to finance such a revolution.

On the other hand, Floro Quiboyen (1998, 1997), in his "Towards a radical Rizal" and "Rizal and the revolution," rejects Teodoro Agoncillo's (another nationalist historian) and Constantino's dichotomy between the revolutionary masses led by Bonifacio with that of the Haciendero-Ilustrado class which bannered the propaganda movement. Emphasizing that Agoncillo's and Constantino's brand of nationalist historiography has dominated the discourse on Rizal overtime, Quiboyen (1998) argues that the Agoncillo-Constantino dichotomy is premised on an erroneous assumption that the revolution and the propaganda movement were inextricably disconnected.

Quiboyen (1998, 1997) suggests further that Agoncillo and Constantino may have failed to grasp the mindset of the people in the 19th-century Philippines and that they may simply have applied their vulgar Marxism and class analysis to the specific social milieu of the time. In his detour around Agoncillo and Constantino, he argues,

> What is needed is a "critical praxis hermeneutics" of the nineteenth-century nationalist movement. Rather than reviewing events from contemporary perspectives (whether Marxist or otherwise), this article proposes to judge the *dramatis personne*, the movements, and events of the nineteenth century in the light cultural milieu of the period - the Volksgeist, the standards, and values of the people during that time. This is the critical interpretive (hermeneutic) question.
>
> A critical hermeneutics of the nineteenth-century nationalist movement - one that explores the popular imagination in the Philippine Revolution - makes possible a radical reading of Rizal. This reading requires a critical approach that builds upon the perceptive but

> largely ignored (thanks to the dominance of the Agoncillo-Constantino perspective) scholarship of, among others, Cesar Majul, John Schumacher, Zeus Salazar, Setsuho Ikehata, Austin Coates, and Leon Ma. Guerrero (Quiboyen, 1998, p. 154).

Drawing attention to the authors mentioned above rather than to Constantino, Quiboyen (1998) goes on to claim that the subversion and radicalization of Rizal were not spontaneous but were the products of the events built up by the drama of his life, his intellectual ferment, and the fight of his family itself with the Spaniards which had peaked in the struggles of peasants in Calamba led by Rizal's family. The author identifies the events that profoundly molded Rizal's radical cast, as follows,

> 1861-1882: Formative years - Calamba, Biñan, Ateneo and the Jesuits, GOMBURZA Martyrdom, imprisonment of Teodora Alonzo, literary ventures, encounter with the Guardia civil.
>
> 1882-1887: European sojourn, Enlightenment education, medical studies, patriotism. Noli Me Tangere.
>
> 1887-1888: The turning point - The Calamba Hacienda Case.
>
> 1888-1892: 2nd sojourn - radicalization of Rizal; historical, ethnological, and linguistic studies, Los Indios Bravos, conflict within the break with Del Pilar and La Solidaridad, El Filibusterismo.
>
> 1892-1896: The moment of truth - Rizal and the Revolution. La Liga Filipina and the Katipunan, exile to Dapitan, arrest, and martyrdom (Quiboyen, 1998, p. 10)

Quiboyen (1998) then proceeds with his narration of the supposed radicalization of Rizal and the hegemonic status of the propaganda movement, whose ideas were synthesized by Bonifacio into a revolutionary theory. Placing much emphasis on Rizal, the author affirms that separatism, reform, and revolution were mere strategies and tactics to Rizal, which he would later cap by his martyrdom purposely done to ignite the revolution further. He cites Rizal's two letters to Blumentritt as pieces of evidence of Rizal's separatist dream,

> 21 February 1887
> 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.
>
> 6 January 1887
> A peaceful struggle shall always be a dream, for Spain will never learn the lesson of her South American colonies. Spain cannot learn what England and the United States have learned. But, under the present circumstances, we do not want separation from Spain. All that we ask for is greater attention, better education, better government [officials], one or two representatives [in parliament! and greater security for persons and our properties. Spain could always win the appreciation of Filipinos if she were only reasonable. But, quos vult perdere Jupiter , prius dementat!

Through these letters, Rizal seemed to have been exasperated by Spain's refusal to listen to logic and reason as he appeared to be veering towards revolution and separatism. Quiboyen (1998) predicts, therefore, that in Rizal's mind, there was no question that the ultimate goal of the struggle was independence, yet how to achieve such through workable strategy and tactics was the problem that besieged Rizal. The same may have led to his periodic ambivalence on the issue of reform or revolution from the context of strategy and tactics. Ultimately, Quiboyen (1998) demonstrates that Rizal had finally shifted from reform to revolution like those other Ilustrado-propagandists, e.g., Luna, who later joined the revolution. In offering evidence of this assertion, Quiboyen (1998) cites Rizal's break with the reformist Del Pilar and the La Solidaridad, his return to the Philippines to work on the La Liga Filipina despite the warnings of his friends and family, Rizal's welcoming attitude on his martyrdom, and the eventual joining the revolution later on of Paciano Rizal who became a general, his wife Josephine Bracken and two of Rizal's sisters.

In his other work, "Rizal and the revolution," Quiboyen (1996) argues further that both Agoncillo and Constantino may have fallen victim to the American characterization of Rizal: reformist, pacifist and anti-revolution with a limited advocacy for the masses' education. De-emphasizing and de-centering Rizal in our national history is a disservice to the people and the nation, Quiboyen tells his readers, calling further for a sober appreciation of this hero from a critical perspective.

Another charge against Constantino's Marxist historiography has been laid down by Francisco Jayme Paolo A. Guiang (2016) through

his “Historical distortions and misconceptions: Exploring problems and issues in the use of the Marxist framework in ‘Veneration without understanding’ by Renato Constantino.” Accordingly, Constantino’s application of the Marxist methodology in his analysis of Rizal “produces a historically anachronistic version of the national hero” as it overlooked other lenses from which Rizal could be deconstructed. He suggests that Constantino’s supposedly rigid application of the Marxist theoretical lenses may have resulted in an erroneous analysis of the man. He reproves,

> Noticeably, Constantino delineates classes in Philippine society into opposing sides, the elite, and the masses, with historical figures falling into either one. Constantino takes into account important factors such as historical context and circumstances that serve as driving forces for historical figures to act depending on the interest of their class. This process of creating history in the Marxist sense prompted Constantino to interpret historical figures based on class orientation. It also allowed him to express his views regarding the importance of an alternative perspective on written history. Through the Marxist lens, Constantino believes readers could be liberated from colonial historiography, reoriented towards a “people’s history” that is grounded on an understanding of the Filipinos’ collective struggles in the past, and guided to make the past reusable in the present (Guiang, 2016, p. 148).

Echoing the arguments of Schumacher and Quiboyen, Guiang (2016) proceeds to demolish the supposed Marxist rigidities in Constantino's application of analysis on Rizal. Citing popular sources from the scholarships of Petronilo Bienvenido Daroy, Dolores S. Feria, Claro M. Recto, and even Jose Ma. Sison himself who proclaimed Rizal as a subversive— Guiang argues that these scholars reportedly offered opposing views on Rizal against the interpretation of Constantino. Verily, to Guiang (2016), the supposed severe emphasis by Constantino on class motivations and the struggle of classes in history had engendered him to produce an anachronistic Rizal, distorting the very facts and qualities of his heroism as demonstrated by the above-cited authors.

Among the most vehement critics of Constantino's paper is Armando J. Malay (1970), who sarcastically inverts Constantino's title– "Veneration with understanding". In this paper, the author contends that Constantino single-handedly set forth the standard of a "revolutionary hero" as the country's national symbol, wherein he simply cited a few countries in the US, Vietnam, China, Russia, Latin America,

and Vietnam which proclaimed their national heroes from the leaders of their anti-colonial revolutions. Malay (1970) argues that there are one hundred twenty-five sovereign nations within the fold of the United Nations (during Constantino's time) and Constantino failed to survey this range of nations concerning the question of national heroes.

Malay (1970) forcefully rebukes Constantino's position by positing,

> Two minor themes have been put forward by Rizal's made-in-the-Philippines critics: (1) that Rizal's becoming the national hero was the result of American sponsorship, and (2) that Rizal's patriotic works, including the writing of his two novels, reflected his mestizo or Ilustrado background and were undertaken precisely to protect the interests of the Ilustrado class (Malay, 1970, p. 23).

Like the previously cited scholars, Malay (1970) disputes Constantino by attesting that even before the Americans proclaimed Rizal as the national hero, he was already revered by many Filipinos, even the Katipunan itself. Aguinaldo had set forth December 30 as a national day of mourning before the criminal war of aggression by the Americans. As to the claim that Rizal's works and novels reflected his mestizo or Ilustrado background, Malay (1970) protests further that "the heroes in Rizal's books were not Ibarra, Maria Clara or Fray Damaso and Fray Salvi. In contradistinction, Rizal gave us Elias, a man of the masses; Father Florentino, a Filipino priest; Juli and Sisa, and many others, who all sprang from the masses. Ibarra was drawn as a weak person who came back to start a revolution simply because he wanted to get Maria Clara from the convent. And I do not see by what stretch of the imagination Fray Damaso and Fray Salvi could be regarded as anything else but unmitigated villains" (Malay, 1970, p. 27).

In a caustic tone against Constantino and the critics of Rizal, Malay (1970) appears to be shouting at the top of his lungs, proclaiming,

> Those who would say that our national hero should come from the masses are underestimating the intelligence and understanding of the masses. More than some intellectuals in our midst, the masses know that Rizal lived and died for all of us, not only for an elite class. They know that Rizal fought for the farmers of Calamba; opened a modern school for boys in Dapitan; that he have medical services for free in Dapitan, Calamba, and other places; established a cooperative; suffered moral and physical beatings; that his family and friends suffered much abused—the masses know as well that these were

> not done by Rizal simply to preserve the interest of the Ilustrado class. If some of us today do not accept these truths because Rizal happened to be born into a fairly well-to-do family and went to Ateneo and Santo Tomas University and was able to pay his fare to Spain and back— then I say, you are the ones without understanding. Thank goodness, you are very, very few (Malay, 1970, p. 29).

THE PROFOUND INFLUENCES ON RIZAL'S PHILOSOPHY

Far from the glare of the acrimonious contestations between Constantino and his critics, several scholars (Claudio, 2018; Aseniero, 2013, 2013.; Dumol, 2004.; Abella, and Hila, 2020; and Majul, 1999) were surveyed by this paper. We found a rich treasury of literature on Rizal's scholarship, further deconstructing his intellectual background, inspirations, ideals, and agenda. Questions such as why Rizal refused and condemned the revolution yet displayed a resigned demeanor on his martyrdom, the significance of the La Liga program, the possible influences of European liberalism and socialist-anarchism on him, and the meaning of his works– were thoroughly studied by these scholars offering enormous latitude in subverting simplistic views of the enigmatic Rizal.

For one, Lisandro Claudio's (2018) "Jose Rizal: The radical liberal," which is a review of his book, "Jose Rizal: liberalism and the paradox of coloniality", strongly argues that Rizal was both liberal and radical. He opens his paper with,

> The first thing I want to do is ask a conceptual question, which is: Can we conceive of Rizal both as a radical and a liberal? This is an important question; there are writers like Renato Constantino, who contend that Rizal was counter-revolutionary because he was a liberal. My contention is that this critique would not have made any sense in the 19th century. In that century, liberals were revolutionaries, and they would have been radical amid the clericalism and conservatism of many places in Europe, most especially Spain (Claudio, 2018, p. 1).

Claudio informs that during Rizal's 19th century, liberalism was the prevailing counter-ideology against the status quo and, in fact, insurgent and revolutionary in itself as demonstrated in the American and French Revolutions which also heavily influenced the political tumults in Latin America and the Caribbean. He argues, "The reason was simple: reactionary institutions like the theocratic Catholic church

and the monarchical states remained pervasive in Europe and their colonies like the Philippines, yet such institutions were fighting it off for their survival likewise amid the assaults of the liberals. Therefore, to be a liberal in the Philippines during the heyday of the frailocracy was a radical position. Indeed, it was such a radical position that the demand for liberal rights easily morphed into a demand for independence. For this reason, Vicente Rafael has correctly described the Philippine Revolution of 1896 as a liberal revolution similar to the French and American ones" (Claudio, 2018, p. 92).

The author traces Rizal's liberalism and radicalism to the influences of the Creole (Europeans born in the Philippines) politician named Rodriguez "El Conde Filipino" Varela, who published books on liberalism and in defense of the French Revolution from 1799 and onwards. Claudio (2018) informs that Varela was a significant defender of Spain's liberal Cadiz Constitution, sought the archipelago's representation in the Spanish Cortes, and the establishment of schools outside of the friars' control. He thus asserts, "Many of Varela's advocacies spread through networks of liberal Creole families, mostly in Manila. Eventually, this proto-nationalist liberalism would coalesce into the Comite de Reformadores of 1869, the country's first liberal party, which included luminaries such as Father Jose Burgos. The Comite's youth wing in the University of Santo Tomas, La Juventud Escolar Liberal, included Ilustrados such as Felipe Buencamino and Rizal's older brother, Paciano Mercado" (Claudio, 2018, p. 92).

The Comite was crashed after the 1872 Cavite mutiny. However, some of its members and followers reemerged in the Europe-based "propaganda movement" in which Rizal was the central figure aside from Del Pilar and Jaena (Claudio, 2018). Perhaps Rizal's early motivations for working with the propaganda movement were located within the liberal and radical stirrings of La Juventud. In a sense, Rizal may have already imbibed liberalism before he traveled to Europe, perhaps due to the profound influences of Father Burgos and Paciano, with whom Rizal professed passionate reverence.

Juxtaposing Ibarra and Elias in his study of Noli, Claudio (2018) advocates,

> ...that the reformist Crisostomo Ibarra is not a substitute for the radical Rizal. Indeed, even a cursory reading of the novel shows that the virtuous nationalist capable of self-sacrifice is Elias—a foil to the egoist Ibarra, who is largely motivated by *amor propio*. If there is a character we can learn from, therefore, it is Elias. It was he in his conversation with Ibarra who demanded respect for human dignity, individual freedom, and security, curtailing the power of the armed forces and the expulsion of the friars.

> Elias, who has been portrayed by Rizal as the shadowy figure representing the voice of the oppressed and operating within the interstices of the society, was "defending two principles that all liberals hold dear: civil liberties and secularism. These ideals were radical by the standards of the time— shunned even by a supposedly enlightened figure like Ibarra. In Elias, therefore, we are presented with Rizal's personification of the radical, nationalist liberal (Claudio, 2018, p. 94).

The author concludes that Rizal's political and social milieu overlapped with the tradition of the Creole revolutions in the West from the 1800s to 1900s with that of the Afro-Asian nationalist revolutions of the 21st century, adding the fact that per his study, it would appear that Rizal was closer to the former in terms of politics and temperament.

Tracing deeper the liberal-radical influences on Rizal, Clement Camposano's (2013) "Citizenship and civic education: A critical elaboration on the pedagogy of Rizal's La Liga Filipina" affirms Rousseau's profound clout on Rizal's philosophy as he explains,

> …this article explores Rizal's decisive shift from Voltairean liberalism in favor of Rousseau's vision of a cohesive civic body constituted through the social contract. It contends that the social contract theory and its associated concept of the "general will" could serve as bases for resolving the problem of fractiousness and excessive individualism Rizal observed among young expatriate Filipinos, a problem he became increasingly concerned with and nuanced his commitment to the campaign for liberal reforms. Putting on hold the obsession with a unified Rizal, this article asserts that invoking Rousseau's vision crystallizes the meaning of La Liga Filipina—its place in the trajectory of Rizal's thoughts and the educative role it was meant to play concerning the Filipino nation as an ethical project (Camposano, 2013, p. 1).

Acknowledging the dearth of scholarly literature on Rousseau and Rizal, Camposano (2013) nonetheless invokes references attributed to Quiboyen, Guerrero, Claudio, and Bonoan, who have reportedly expressed affinities between Rizal's thoughts with those of the French philosopher's social contract theory. Rousseau was the originator of a cohesive vision of a civic body under a "general will." According to Camposano (2013), by taking this framework of "general will," Rizal sought to establish an alternative political order through the La Liga Filipina, emphasizing the collective good of the Filipinos. Such would reportedly form a cohesive

social, political, and economic system embodied in the principles and rules of La Liga. Rizal, thus, appeared to have shifted from the fight for individual rights and liberty inspired by Voltaire's liberalism to the ethical nation-building project through La Liga, whose principles came from Rousseau.

Aptly describing the Noli as a compelling description of a social cancer metastasized by the abusive friars, Composano (2013) notes a radical shift of the theme in Rizal's second novel. In Fili, gone were the abusive friars; instead, the focus was on the Filipinos who, because of their vices and weaknesses, were unworthy of freedom and unprepared for the revolution. Henceforth, "Fili was a treatise of sorts on revolution, a lengthy disquisition on how not to have a revolution that leads to genuine freedom" (Camposano, 2013, p. 6).

He informs that by the time Rizal wrote the second novel, he was already far from being a reformer in Ibarra's cast who was looking at assimilation and gradual emancipation. However, at the same time, he was distasteful of a revolution as well, whose consequences could be tragic if such an undertaking happened without fulfilling the moral requirements of the people. This must be the reason why Rizal frustrated the revolution in Fili, killed Simoun, and discontinued Elias' and Matanglawin's characters in the earlier novel, Noli. The admonitions of Father Florentino to Simoun were compelling voices against a revolution with a doubtful moral framework when Father Florentino says, "The glory of saving a country cannot be given to one who has contributed to its ruin."

Camposano (2013) reasons that Rizal was indeed seeking a moral framework for his people's emancipation, given that such a people lacked the moral strength to fight for what was right for them, as demonstrated in Rizal novels' caricatures in Ibarra, Basilio, Simoun, Dona Victorina, Kapitan Tiago, Maria Clara, Sisa, Pelaez, Juli, and others. Consequently, Rizal wanted a cohesive civic community for his people, guided by moral values. His return to the country from Europe became thus imminent. In various correspondences, despite his family's and friends' warnings, Rizal manifested his desire to promptly return to the Philippines, emphasizing that the struggle was not in Spain but in the Philippines because "the medicine should be brought near the patient." In fact, upon his arrival in the archipelago, Rizal immediately organized the La Liga Filipina, an embodiment of the "general will," far from the simplistic view that such was a plain reformist organization whose demands with the local colonial authorities could be simply written off; Camposano (2013) is alluding here to Constantino and Sison.

Camposano (2013) narrates further, "The organization's declared purposes were fairly broad, yet unambiguous: (1) "to unite the whole Archipelago into one, compact, vigorous, and homogeneous body"; (2) "mutual protection in every difficult situation and need"; (3) "defense against every violence and injustice"; (4) "development of education, agriculture, and commerce"; and (5) "the study and implementation of

reforms" (Rizal, 1961c, p. 303). Guerrero's (2007, 331–2) reading of the statutes of the organization points to "an underground government running parallel with the established regime." Cesar Adib Majul's (1959, 14) more perceptive and precise analysis, however, reveals the La Liga program as a blueprint of an alternative political order that "completely disregarded Philippine 'unity' as either a colony or ecclesiastical province" (Camposano, 2013, p. 7-8).

With Rizal establishing La Liga, he had now institutionalized the "specific economic, moral, and social relations" among its members dedicated to forming a fresh community with "both national and Filipino in character." With a united country, Rizal envisions, accordingly, the preparedness of the Filipinos for a revolution or whatever means to achieve independence against the theocratic church and the colonial order. The La Liga, therefore, was the solution to the lack of national sentiment discussed in a lengthy treatise that was the Fili. Rizal was programmatic in his approach to such a revolution if it had to happen. He was also open to reform as he wished to arm his people with organizational cohesion, discipline, virtues, and moral compass. Composano (2013) hints that due to the rigidity and secrecy of La Liga's program and its emphasis on discipline rather than individual rights, it could be construed as a revolutionary organization or perhaps a broader front of another clandestine body organizing and preparing for a revolution.

George Aseniero's (2013, 2013) "From Cadiz to La Liga: The Spanish context of Rizal's political thought" and "La Liga in Rizal scholarship" take new heights in dichotomizing Rizal's influences and the meaning of his political and social philosophy with liberty, civil society, and the colonial Philippines.

Citing the works of the scholar Sarkisyanz, Aseniero asserts (2013) that the "young Rizal met Pi y Margall in Madrid in 1882, at the time when the jurist was writing the constitution for a Spanish Federal Republic. We are told that the newly arrived student frequented the statesman's home where they played chess and he found time to develop a love interest in the host's daughter. Based on these accounts, for which Sarkisyanz cites primary sources, is it reasonable to presume that Rizal profitably used his time reading the books in Pi y Margall's collection, which undoubtedly included Proudhon, among other contemporary works? As a prominent political leader of the Spanish Left and former prime minister, the Catalan had had decades of experience in and against the government" (Aseniero, 2013, p. 145).

Who was exactly this Piy Margall with whom a street in Sampaloc, Manila, was named after him? A theorist of sorts, Margall had written various works in history, finance economics, Hegelian philosophy, and even Proudhonian political economy. On the other hand, Proudhon was a French socialist philosopher noted for his mutualist philosophy and an exponent of anarchism, a variant of socialism. The radical Proudhon

was a contemporary of Marx and Engels, and they were acquaintances but became diverted later due to some ideological differences.

As Margall may have introduced Rizal to Proudhon's works, Aseniero (2013) announces that Proudhon criticized "Rousseau's concept of social contract for being confined to political relations between the ruler and the ruled. In effect, Rousseau's contract was neither an act of reciprocity nor an act of association of free people but the instrumentality for the resignation of the individual's free will to form popular sovereignty. For Rousseau, the idea of the social contract is that each of us places his person and authority under the supreme direction of the general will and that the group receives each individual as an indivisible part of the whole. By contrast, Proudhon's concept of social contract, ever distrustful of State power, explains the organizational principle of La Liga better than Rousseau's" (Aseniero, 2013, p. 142).

The Proudhonian social contract, Asienero (2013) emphasizes requires supreme sacrifice to which all citizens devote their life, intelligence, work, service, and goods in favor of a returned affection on ideas, labor, products, and the general good of all. Closer to communism as Proudhon was a radical socialist, Aseniero (2013) elevates Rizal to the pedestal of socialist anarchism by way of the vision of La Liga. The very motto of La Liga is — *"Unus instar omnium* (one is equal to all); its aim— a compact, vigorous, homogenous civil society arising from a federation of associations all based on the principle of mutualism and animated with a national sentiment; and its preferred form of state— a federal republic. All these terms cohere into one rational whole, revealing its full significance in light of nineteenth-century political thought" (Aseniero, 2013, p.143). *Unus instar omnium,* is synonymous with Marx's "to each according to needs, from each according to his capacity", the central doctrine in Marxist's communism. Will this qualify Rizal to be a communist or socialist in practical politics?

In his other work, Aseniero (2013) suggests as well that Rizal's annotation of Morga's Sucesos, aside from the objective of showing to the Spaniards that the pre-Hispanic civilized polities had existed in the archipelago— was an attempt to impress upon Filipinos the need for civic virtue, inspiration, and community worth by tracing the roots of the nobility of such a race before being bastardized by the Spaniards.

On the other hand, Paul Dumul (2004) in his paper, "Political philosophy in Rizal's Filibusterismo," appears to lay credence on both Compasono (2013) and Aseniero (2013, 2013). Dumol opens up by reading Fili's last chapter on the dialogue between the dying Simoun and Father Florentino. He narrates,

> Rizal's thought is at its deepest in the conversation Simoun and Padre Florentino carry on at the close of the novel. Simoun has just ingested poison; with his life ebbing away, he asks a question, which the priest finishes

> for him: (Simoun) "Is it the will of God that these islands…" (P. Florentino) "….continue in this state which they much bewail?" P. Florentino ponders the question, says he has no answer, and then proceeds to reaffirm his faith in God, in the God who does not abandon those who suffer injustice and place their trust in him. If God be such a God, retorts Simoun, then why did He not bestow success upon my efforts to destroy the Spanish government? P. Florentino's rejoinder: Because you incited the people to hatred. "Only love can accomplish marvelous work, only virtue can save." Simon shoots back: But what about the many innocents who suffer; why did God not bring success to my efforts for their sake? P. Florentino: When a people suffer persecution, that suffering could be providence in disguise. He continues: a government's vices (its viciousness) inevitably destroy it, but the society that practices the same vices is just as inevitably destroyed. Simoun asks: "What is to be done then? P. Florentino responds: "Suffer and Work." Simoun retorts: "What sort of a God is this [who allows the innocent to suffer]!" (Dumol 2004, p. 285-286).

Dumol argues that Rizal, as articulated by Father Florentino, saw the Filipinos' redemption from suffering through work and civil society. Suffering means the people's lack of virtue. At the same time, work constitutes a civic virtue, which could be the key to unity and building a tenable and sustainable civil society. "Work, in Rizal's view, weaves the separate threads that individual citizens are into a single fabric society should be. This is an important point. We tend to think of national unity as based on an idea everyone accepts. However, Rizal was much more down-to-earth: national unity would be achieved through the experience of working together in commerce and industry" (Dumol, 2004, p. 294).

Rizal, therefore, saw the value of collective labor as one fundamental basis of unity among the Filipinos, which could propel the organization of civil society. This could be why he worked hard in his Dapitan exile, establishing a school and a water system, undertaking scientific experiments, and giving out free medical services. His sudden exile, however, decimated his planned organization of La Liga. Under pain of punishment, his Dapitan sojourn was all work without the organizational component as La Liga had demised. Dumol's analysis gives much credence to the assertions of Campasano (2013) and Aseniero (2013) regarding Rizal's putative social and political philosophy, further rendering a coherent understanding of the incantations of Simoun and Father Florentino in Fili.

Emmanuel Jeric A. Albela and Antonio C. Hila (2020), in their "Rizal, the social portraitist," affirm through the dialogues of Rizal's

characters Ibarra and Elias as well as that Simoun and Father Florentino— that Rizal was anti-revolutionary at first glance. "However, he was not totally against it (the revolution), nor would he abandon its possibilities. From the flow of the story, he pointed out that for a revolution to succeed, a nation must first subscribe to the following: clear ideology, enough preparation, and purity of the nation. If these three are absent, a revolution would not be enough for the nation" (Albela and Hila, 2020, p. 170).

The requirements set forth by Albela and Hila (2020), as pointed out in their reading of Rizal, correspond to the influences of Voltaire's, Rousseau's, and Proudhon's ideas and ideologies, which Rizal may have imbibed in his European sojourn. Through the cited influences, Rizal would seem to look for both the material and moral requirements of the revolution within the civil society and national unity before he could accede to such an idea. Without these requirements, his treatise on Fili resonates with how to make a failed revolution. This brings us to the civil society concept of Antonio Gramsci in his "Prison Notebook". Yet since Gramsci lived in the 20th century, Rizal had to contend with Rousseau, Margall, and Proudhon.

In his paper, "Rizal in the 21st century: The relevance of his ideas and text", Cezar Adib Majul (1999) correctly observes that Rizal was obsessed with the concept of the national community to which the Filipinos shall be loyal and one who would discard familial and even regional interests in favor of the common good through the "general will." The same is in response to the Rizal treatise that man is simply an individual in the Philippines, apart from the national society and the general will. Therefore, Rizal had to galvanize national unity and identity by curing the social infirmities of the Filipinos through work and consensus. The organizational shell was the La Liga Filipina.

Majul (1999) continues, "But Rizal was not merely content to have the national community as a concept that could be reified by harking to a precolonial past or by the mere exercise of many wills. He decided to go into the arena of action by organizing the Liga Filipina. This organization aimed to stimulate education, agriculture, and commerce. It was to serve as an agency for mutual protection and necessity. More importantly, it was also to defend against all violence and injustice. One of its moral prescriptions was that its members ought not to subject themselves to any form of humiliation nor treat each other with arrogance. If successful, the Liga Filipina would make obsolete the problems enunciated in his novels, like the educational one represented by the school-master, the economic one represented by Cabesang Tales, the domestic and social ones epitomized by the tragic Sisa, and so on. Defense against violence and injustice and, presumably, the bravery that went with it and the willingness to risk one's life all revealed the inspiration of national sentiment elements. When the Liga Filipina aimed to unite the archipelago into one compact, vigorous, and homogenous body, it was, in

effect, aiming to create a parallel community with a higher good to which the member could sublimate his interests since he was not humiliated in it. National sentiment in this community will constitute a will for the good of the whole people" (Majul, 1999, p. 17-18).

CONCLUSION: THE RESONANT AND PROPHETIC RIZAL

As the most significant reviewed literature would show, Rizal may have already been a liberal and radical before his European journey. Such could be traced to the influences of the Comite, La Juventud, Paciano Rizal, and Father Burgos. His Voltaireian liberalism was very translucent in Noli, which undoubtedly sought reforms in the colonial Philippines. Nevertheless, when he met Piy Margall, who introduced him to the works of the socialist-anarchist Proudhon, Rizal toyed with the idea of revolution, discarding Voltaire perhaps and veered towards the more robust "general will" of Rousseau, highlighting thus, sacrifice, labor and collective empathy as the foundations of national consensus and even national consciousness. This was at the core of La Liga's program. With this, Rizal became a socialist-anarchist, no doubt.

Rizal may have killed Simoun in Fili and discontinued Elias and Matanglawin from Noli (without an explanation) on the premise that his perceived requirement for a revolution, which seemed to be the national consensus at the minimum and national consciousness at the maximum, was still missing considering the corrupted moral fiber of the Filipinos. The dialogue between Simuon and Father Florentino is instructive. Curing the infirmities of the Filipino character through sacrifice, labor, and collective empathy would appear central to his agenda when he hurriedly went home from Europe to organize La Liga. Revolution or reformism to Rizal was secondary; what was imperative when he came back was to unite the Filipinos.

However, the beasts and tyrants of the colonial order would not permit his ideas and organization to flourish. They had to be asphyxiated at once before such were gripped by the people. Rizal had to be exiled to Dapitan, and the La Liga expired. In Dapitan, Rizal showed to the people and the tyrants alike the value of work and sacrifice by building a school and water system, curing the sick for free, undertaking scientific experiments, and further studies. Sadly, the organizational component of his vision in La Liga was gone.

With Rizal's banishment, the members of La Liga, especially Bonifacio, understood well that reforms were impossible within the colonial context. Colonialism was built on the daily grind of structural violence. It had to be confronted by an equally violent undertaking— a people's revolution.

Therefore, Bonifacio, Jacinto, and others had to organize the revolutionary Katipunan (Richardson, 2013) to overthrow the colonial

yoke and liberate the Filipinos from centuries of exploitation and oppression. It ameliorated the French Revolution's ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the teachings of Freemasonry, and the "collective empathy" of Rizal. He was unknowingly proclaimed as the Katipunan's titular head, and his picture was regularly displayed during the organization's meetings and initiation rituals of its recruits (Richardson, 2013).

With the Spanish discovery of the clandestine revolutionary organization, Rizal was arrested, tried, and executed, which further inflamed the resolve of the Katipuneros. His dramatic execution and the discovery of the Katipunan led to the "Cry of Balintawak," opening the floodgates of the spontaneous national revolution.

A nation was conceived.

However, amidst the armed hostilities between the people in revolt and the decomposing colonialism, the most conservative and religious elements of Rizal's own Haciendero-Ilustrado class feared that they could lose possession of the vast tracks of arable land leased to them by the friars or acquired through their capital built up from the export-import trade— launched a counter-revolution in Cavite. They usurped the leadership of the Katipunan at the Tejeros Convention and treacherously murdered Bonifacio (Richardson, 2013; Borromeo-Buehler, 2017), the father of a nation that had just been conceived and was being nurtured by the staccato of fires from Mausers, Remingtons, and revolvers and beneath the piling up fallen bloodied bodies of the martyrs in the horrific battlefields of the revolution.

After the infamy of betraying the Katipunan and murdering Bonifacio, the counter-revolutionary Cavite-cabal, led by Aguinaldo, shamelessly and hurriedly sold the revolution for 800,000.00 Mexican pesos (Ricarte 2021) to the Spaniards, called on all the revolutionaries to lay down their arms and go home, with the blatant call for the cessation of hostilities. At the lapse of a brief interlude, the Aguinaldo cabal returned to Cavite and proclaimed a bogus republic under the "auspices of the benevolent and mighty American nation."

A short Filipino-American war ensued, and the Rizal's class of the Haciendero-Ilustrado capitulated to the Americans finally, helping the new colonizers build the foundation of a neo-colonial state for fifty years before the sham independence was proclaimed by the same class in 1949 after the "benevolent" assimilation and tutelage by the Americans. A capitulationist and weak state came into existence; at the helm of such is the Haciendero-Ilustrado class, whose scions continue to dominate the political and economic life of the nation. They continue to hold a firm grip on the state and its economic apparatuses and are the business partners of the Americans and other foreign interests.

From time to time, this elite class would hold carnival-like elections to pay lip service to democracy, but in truth, only their factions and their factotum celebrities and comedians compete with each other,

leaving the masses as fence-sitter spectators. These elites buy the masses' electoral votes with crumbs from the enormous funds collected by the state from the people's blood money generated by the state through the levied onerous taxation on the workers and the goods and services circulating in the local economy. A sizeable portion of the state funds goes periodically to the pockets of the ruling class in widespread and systematic corruption practices. Meanwhile, the masses wallow in debilitating impoverishment, ignorance, and apathy like in Rizal's time.

Indeed, Rizal may have been a liberal, radical, revolutionary, and even a socialist-anarchist per the perception of the people in the 19th century and as pointed out by the reviewed scholars. However, the behavior of his class of the Haciendero and Ilustrado may have impelled Constantino and Sison to see Rizal within the shadow and cast of his class.

Rizal's ambivalence and even reluctance, in as much as the question of revolution was concerned, could have been premised on a fairly reasonable ground, given the corrupted character of the Filipinos. Like Simoun's revolution, the 1896 Revolution failed, for it was betrayed by Rizal's class, who sold it to the Spanish enemy first and capitulated again with the new American colonizers at the turn of the last century. Rizal had been effectively resonant and prophetic about the revolution going astray. Bonifacio and Jacinto tried to address the worries of Rizal through their ethical writings in the Katipunan's Decalogue, *"Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog"*, and others, exhorting the revolutionaries to be just and ethical in their conduct. But it came too late as the revolution succumbed early to the betrayal of the elite.

Father Florentino counseled that a revolution plotted by impure hearts could never succeed. The 1896 Revolution was doomed after the elite takeover. Moreover, Ibarra's warning to Elias about the slaves of today rising to be the tyrants of tomorrow comes accurate as Rizal's Haciendero-Ilustrado class, who were among the slaves of colonialism became the tyrants and oligarchs today, and their scions and families continue to dominate the Filipinos. Among them are the Aguinaldos, Paternos, Calderon, Aranetas, Osmenas, Abellas, Ocampos Hidalgos Magasalins, Velardes, Quezons, Roxases, Macapagals, Quirinos, Laurels, Benedictos, Romualdezes, Josons, Dutertes, Marcoses, Teveses, Zobel de Ayalas, and many more.

Perhaps another revolution is necessary.

EPILOGUE

The people viewed Rizal's nostalgic death, short but enthralling life, and incendiary work collectively as an eulogy to their sufferings under colonialism—an inspiration of sorts. With the coming of the American colonizers, he had to be presented to the people as a pacifist-reformist, adverse to the people's anti-colonial quest through revolutionary violence. He is dazzled as the model for modernity and

education, stifling the people's instinctive curiosity, critical thinking, and courage to go beyond their lot and personal ambitions. Harnessing mass education as the greatest ideological weapon used by the Americans against the people (Constantino, 1970)— Rizal was then exalted as an antithesis to collective action, civil society, national consensus, nationalism, liberalism, radicalism, and even socialism. The people, through their colonial education, have imbibed thus the American version of Rizal.

Ironically, Rizal fought and worked hard for those values. A very different and inverted Rizal was cast upon by the Americans to the Filipinos' imagination and psyche through colonial education.

Rizal thus becomes an enigma; a paradox.

However, the people would eventually solve that paradox, and they would try harder and harder against the new colonialism and their local cohorts. They would come to learn fearlessness from Rizal himself. He may have been ambiguous at times, but Rizal was fearless from the beginning until his end.

During his execution, he was instructed by the Spanish officers to turn his back on his assassins. Moments later, upon hearing the command *fuego*— in a colossal and poetic display of insolence against colonialism, he twisted his body to face up his executioners with his head up to the sky. Before his body slumps dead on the ground, Rizal shouts:

Consummatum est!

The man is dead; the revolution surges on. Only to be betrayed later by the same class to which Rizal belonged. He proved prophetic in the Noli dialogue between Ibarra and Elias, and in the colloquy between Simoun and Fray Florentino in Fili, stating that without civil society bounded by national consciousness, the slaves (of his class) during his time would rise to be the tyrants and oligarchs they are today.

The people have to rise again; again and again.

REVIEWED WORKS

Albela, E. J., & Hila, A. C. (2020). Rizal, the social portraitist. *Philippine Social Science Journal*, *3*(1), 155-172. https://doi.org/10.52006/main.v3i1.117

Aseniero, G. (2013). From Cadiz to La Liga: The Spanish context of Rizal's political thought. *Asian Studies: Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia*, *49*(1), 1-42. https://www.asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-49-1-2013/From%20Cadiz%20to%20La%20Liga%20-%20Spanish%20Context%20of%20Rizals%20Political%20Thought%20-%20Aseniero.pdf

Aseniero, G. (2013). La Liga in Rizal scholarship. *Asian Studies: Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia*, *49*(1), 139-149. https://asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-49-1-2013/La%20Liga%20in%20Rizal%20Scholarship%20-%20Aseniero.pdf

Borromeo, S. M. (2017) . *Scripted by men, not by fate: Andres Bonifacio in Cavite : an analytical narrative with commentary on selected sources*. University of the Philippines Press.

Camposano, C. (2019). Citizenship and civic education: A critical elaboration on the pedagogy of Rizal's la Liga Filipina. *Philippine Journal of Public Policy: Interdisciplinary Development Perspectives*, *2019*. https://doi.org/10.54096/coap6213

Claudio, L. E. (2020). Jose Rizal: The radical liberal. doi.org/10.54096/JWVH7465

Constantino, R. (1966). Our task is to make Rizal obsolete. In *The Filipinos in the Philippines and other essays* (pp. 137-152). Malaya Books. https://pdfcoffee.com/our-task-to-make-rizal-obsolete-renato-constantino-pdf-free.html

Constantino, R. (1970). The miseducation of the Filipino. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *1*(1), 1-12. https://eaop.ucsd.edu/198/group-identity/THE%20MISEDUCATION%20OF%20THE%20FILIPINO.pdf

Constantino, R. (1972). Veneration without understanding. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *1*(4), 3-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/00472337185390141

Dumol, P. A. (2004). Political responsibility in Rizal's Filibusterismo. *Budhi*, 285-302. https://journals.ateneo.edu/index.php/budhi/article/viewFile/665/662

Guerrero, L. M. (1974). *The First Filipino: A Biography of Jose Rizal*. National Historical Commission. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://www.xeniaeditrice.it/firstfilipinoocrpdf.pdf

Guiang, F. A. (2016). Historical distortions and misconceptions: Exploring problems and issues in the use of the Marxist framework in 'Veneration Without Understanding' (1970) by Renato Constantino. *Philippine Social Sciences Review*, *68*(1), 103-124. https://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/pssr/article/view/5398/4855

Majul, C. A. (1999). Rizal in the 21st century: The relevance of his ideas and texts. *Public Policy*, *3*(1), 1-22. https://cids.up.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Rizal-in-the-21st-Century-vol.3-no.1-Jan-March-1999-2.pdf

Majul, C. A. (n.d.). Social background of revolution. https://asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-09-01-1971/majul-social-background-revolution.pdf

Malay, A. (n.d.). Veneration with understanding. Studocu. https://www.studocu.com/ph/document/university-of-the-east-philippines/life-and-works-of-rizal/veneration-with-understanding-by-armando-malay/11223440

Quibuyen, F. (1997). Rizal and the Revolution. *Philippine Studies*, *45*(2), 225–257. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42634230

Quibuyen, F. (1998). Towards a radical Rizal. *Philippine Studies*, *46*(2), 151–183. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42634256

Ricarte, A. (2012). *Memoirs of General Artemio Ricarte*. National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

Richardson, J. (2017). *The Light of Liberty: Documents and Studies on the Katipunan, 1892-1897*. Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Scalice, J. (2018). Reynaldo Ileto's *Pasyon and Revolution* revisited, a critique. *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, *33*(1), 29–58. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26529796

SCHUMACHER, J. N. (1978). Rizal the revolutionary and the Ateneo. *Philippine Studies*, *26*(3), 231–240. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42632435

Schumacher, J. N. (1964). ON THE GREATNESS OF RIZAL [Review of *THE FIRST FILIPINO: A Biography of José Rizal*, by L. Ma. Guerrero]. *Philippine Studies*, *12*(3), 536–539. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42720557

Sison, J. M. (1967). *Rizal, the social critic*. Studocu. https://www.studocu.com/ph/document/polytechnic-university-of-the-philippines/buhay-mga-gawain-at-sinulat-ni-rizal/rizal-the-social-critic/33460279

Sison, J. M. (1967). *Struggle for national democracy* (3rd ed.). https://aklatangbayan.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/stuggle_for_national_democracy_third_ed_-_book.pdf

NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTOR

JACINTO R. VALILA, JR. obtained both his BA Degree and Master in Philippine Studies from the University of the Philippines where he is currently completing his PhD in Radical Social Movements. He is a lifetime affiliate of UP Diliman's Pi Gamma Mu Honor Society in Social Sciences and is an associate professor of history at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines Manila.