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Rizal and the Revolution

Floro Quibuyen



A deep chasm separates our contemporary historians from the nationalist life-world of the nineteenth century. Nothing could have sounded more absurd to the ears of both peasants and *ilustrados* of the revolutionary past than the now taken for granted thesis that Rizal, like the rest of the reformists in Spain, was for assimilation, and that, true to his bourgeois character, he repudiated the revolution. This was certainly not how Rizal was seen by his contemporaries. For example, Galicano Apacible, Rizal's cousin and fellow-expatriate, writes:

I wish to touch on some opinions attributed to Rizal erroneously by some writers who had not associated closely with him in the last years of his life. Among them was the infamous Retana in his book about our National Hero [*Vida y escritos del Dr. Jose Rizal*, Madrid 1907, 512pp]. These writers have affirmed that Rizal was not a separatist and that he was a lover of Spain. Perhaps so, before he had been in Spain, before he had discovered the true situation obtaining in that country, he was not much of a separatist, though I have my doubts about this, because even when he was here, he was truly a nationalist Filipino in his acts and opinions. But in Spain, when I joined him there, I found him a complete and unwavering separatist. I remember that in our first conversation alone, one of the first things he told me was that he was entirely disillusioned at our then called Motherland. At that time the Spanish atmosphere and the predominant Spanish opinions were such, according to him, that the Philippines, our country, could not and ought not to expect anything good under Spanish rule and that only after separation from Spain could we achieve our social, civil, and political aspirations (cited in Alzona, 1971: 233-34).

Jose Alejandrino, Rizal's roommate in Germany who would later figure prominently in the Revolution as a general, concurs with Apacible and finds it strange "that some of his biographers have presented Rizal as completely opposed to the revolution of 1896" (1949:4).

The Katipuneros have even gone farther than the ilustrado colleagues of Rizal. They have venerated Rizal as the symbol and inspiration of the Revolution: Rizal's name was the password used among the higher ranking members, the picture of Rizal was hung in every Katipunan meeting hall, and, according to Emilio Jacinto (Bonifacio's protegee), Katipunan meetings were always adjourned with three cheers: "Long Live The Katipunan," "Long Live Philippine Independence," and "Long Live Dr. Jose Rizal."

This veneration of Rizal continued beyond 1896. In 1898, in commemoration of the second death anniversary of Rizal, the Aguinaldoted Philippine Republic issued a pamphlet which invoked the martyr's name as

The word named *Jose Rizal*, sent down by heaven to the land of Filipinas, in order to spend his whole life, from childhood, striving to spread throughout this vast Archipelago, the notion that righteousness must be fought for wholeheartedly (Ileto 1982, 319-20).

Such was the veneration of Rizal by the revolutionary leadership—from the first phase of the revolution (1896-97) to the second phase (1898-1901) that Ricarte, the one ilustrado revolutionary who refused to concede the defeat of the revolution to the American forces, was inspired to propose changing the name of the country. In a revolutionary constitution he drafted it as "The Rizaline Republic" and its citizens to be called, instead of Filipinos, "Rizalinos" (Ricarte 1963, 139).

Indeed, long after the military forces of the Philippine Republic under Aguinaldo surrendered (in 1901), peasants continued the fight against the Americans in the name of Rizal! Ileto (1982, 323) writes:

In almost every report of "disturbances" during the first decade of American rule, there is mention of Rizal as reincarnated in "fanatical" leaders...in general, as literally the "spirit" behind the unrest. In the 1920's Lantayug proclaimed himself a reincarnation of Rizal and won a wide following in the Eastern Visayas and Northern Mindanao... Other peasant leaders who challenged the colonial order in the 1920s and the 1930s claimed to be in communication with Rizal.

These facts are most crucial in interpreting Rizal. For if Renato Constantino's interpretation of Rizal as a counter-revolutionary is correct, then verily the Katipuneros were guilty of venerating Rizal without understanding. That is to say, they did not have the same

informed and intelligent understanding that Constantino has always had. But during Rizal's time, Constantino's opinion would have been considered extraordinary, if not absurd. The now conventional view of Rizal as a phenomenally gifted reformer whose political goal was the assimilation of the Philippines to Spain and the "Hispanization" of the *indio* was actually propagated by the American colonialists in the aftermath of the genocidal Philippine-American war.

It seems that the American colonizers first learned about Rizal from two sources, both counter-revolutionaries: the pro-American Dr. Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera, and the "infamous" Wenceslao E. Retana. Tavera, a Spanish *mestizo* medical doctor, Sanskrit scholar and ethnohistorian, was one of the first ilustrados who offered their services to the Americans as soon as the Spanish regime collapsed. Retana was an anti-Rizal, profriar journalist who had a change of heart after Spain's defeat and wrote, in 1907, the first documented full-length biography of Rizal, *Vida y Escritos del Dr. Rizal*. To this date, there has been no English translation of this historically important biography. Tavera and Retana shared a common view of Rizal as the multi-talented, liberal and reformist intellectual who opposed Bonifacio's uprising, but who was, nonetheless, the most revered of all Filipino patriots. Notwithstanding the obvious contradiction in this thesis, the American authorities found it most congenial to their colonial agenda. Perhaps the first professional historian to take note of the irony involved in the American colonial appropriation of Rizal is Schumacher. So complete was this American appropriation, notes Schumacher, that post-colonial nationalist historiography has tended to see Rizal's work as an American view (see Schumacher 1991, 117-18).

Tavera provided the American's first image of Rizal. Tavera's version of Rizal can be gleaned from a 15-page (pp. 388-402) transcript of his interview with the Shurman Commission created by President McKinley as a fact-finding and policy recommending mission in the Philippines during the American conquest in 1899 and included in the *Report of the Philippine Commission to the President*, Vol. II (Testimony and Exhibits, 1900), in which he was asked about the "true causes of the revolution of 1896-97," and about "what this man Rizal did, what became of him, and how he attained so much influence here in the Philippines." Tavera obliged "with great pleasure" to provide a capsule biography of Rizal, in which he set forth the now orthodox view of Rizal. It included a subtle disparagement of Bonifacio.

When Bonifacio, the leader of the Katipunan society, asked Rizal if it would be a good plan to start a revolution, Rizal opposed the plan and said it would not be suitable. He said what would do the country most good would be to devote themselves to the improvement and education of the people, and to look for reformation in peaceful ways. Nevertheless, Bonifacio, instead of telling the truth, told the Filipino people that Rizal, instead of advising peace, had advised the revolution. Rizal had nothing to do with the revolution, nor with the Katipunan society. ... [When the revolution broke out, Rizal was court-martialed] and although it could not be proved that Rizal had anything to do with the revolution, as the public opinion among the Spaniards demanded it, he was sentenced and shot.

This version of Tavera has been reproduced down the line, from 1899 to the contemporary period, i.e., in the work not only of Filipino writers and historians like Manuel, Jose and Constantino, but also of virtually all American scholars.

But it was Retana who fully explicated the now taken for granted interpretation that Rizal was an antirevolutionary reformist and that, in the final analysis, he was a deeply loyal subject of Spain. It was also Retana who provided the documentary evidence—primary sources—for Rizal's assimilationist reformism. Retana's biography also started the now standard reading of Rizal's novels, i.e., that the character of Ibarra represents Rizal, and that of Elias, Bonifacio.

Retana's interpretation of Rizal's politics was seconded by the first American translator of Rizal's novels (so far the best English translation), Charles Derbyshire, who reiterated Retana's assimilationist thesis in his translator's introduction to *The Social Cancer* (1912, xi-xii). This thesis was picked up and popularized by the second biographer of Rizal, Austin Craig, an American historian whose widely circulated biographies, *Lineage, Life and Labors of Rizal* (1913), and *Rizal's Life and Minor Writings* (1927), set the official American version of Rizal as a peace-loving reformist who would have applauded, were he alive, America's "benevolent, modernizing, and democratic assimilation" of the Philippines. This view has since become the orthodoxy on Rizal. But on what documentary sources is it based? How valid are these sources? This is the critical historiographic question.

Retana's erroneous identification of Rizal with Ibarra can be easily disposed of, for Rizal himself had unequivocally belied this interpretation twice. First, in his *La Solidaridad* polemic with Barrantes (15 January 1890), Rizal declared that he was not Ibarra, for "I am neither rich nor a mestizo, nor an orphan, nor do the qualities of

Ibarra coincide with mine" [*Political and Historical Writings of Rizal* (centennial edition) pp. 183, 187]. Second, in his conversation with Jose Alejandrino (recounted in Alejandrino's memoir, *La Senda del Sacrificio*), Rizal revealed that his hero was not Ibarra but Elias. As quoted by Alejandrino (1949, 3-4), Rizal declares:

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

Zaide versus Manuel: The Rizal Debate Begins

Of the early Rizal scholars and historians, one who came up with a view contrary to the official American version was Dr. Gregorio Zaide, who asserted that Rizal supported the revolution in his essay, "Was Rizal Against the Revolution?" (1931). Zaide's evidence is the memoir, written on 27 May 1914, by no less than the secretary-general and founding member of the Katipunan, Dr. Pio Valenzuela, who was sent to Dapitan in late June 1896 by the Katipunan Supreme Council (headed by Bonifacio) to consult with Rizal and seek his advice about the planned revolution. Valenzuela was also among the first batch of Katipuneros captured by the Spanish military shortly after the outbreak of the Katipunan. In his memoir, Valenzuela (1978, 92) quotes Rizal's reaction, after being briefed regarding the Katipunan's plans, as follows:¹

So the seed grows. The resolutions of the association are very just, patriotic, and above all, timely because now Spain is weakened by the revolution in Cuba. I approve these resolutions and I suggest that they be complied with as early as possible in order to take advantage of opportunity.

After obtaining the document from Dr. J. P. Bantug, a Rizal scholar who married Rizal's great grandniece, Asuncion Lopez, Zaide sought

Valenzuela for an interview and thereby obtained the unequivocal testimony that "Rizal was in favor of the revolution" and that "Rizal believed that independence is won, not asked for... Rizal's credo was a true revolution—a fight to the last, for the freedom of the Philippines" (Zaide 1931; cited in Manuel 1934, 542).

Alas, this was not to be the last word on the matter, because three years after Zaide's article appeared, E. Arsenio Manuel (1934), then a budding historian/anthropologist, came out with his critique of Zaide, refuting the latter's evidence on the basis of other, allegedly more authoritative, primary sources (from Retana's collection)—all contradicting Pio Valenzuela's memoir and interview with Zaide. These are:

1. Documents written by Rizal himself: Rizal's 12 December 1896 memorandum for his defense in his trial for treason before the Spanish Council of War (*Defensa del Dr. Jose Rizal*); and the 15 December 1896 *Manifiesto a Algunos Filipinos*.
2. The final defense of Rizal's lawyer, D. Luis Taviel de Andrade (*Documento Original de la Defensa de Rizal*) read before the Council of War on 25 December 1896.
3. Dr. Pio Valenzuela's declarations, as a prisoner of war, to Spanish authorities on 6 September 1896; and his subsequent addendum (*Ampliacion a la Declaracion Indigatoria que Tiene Prestada Pio Valenzuela*).
4. Jose Dizon y Matanza's testimony, as prisoner of war, to Spanish authorities, confirming Valenzuela's 6 September testimony.²

Of the above mentioned primary sources, the one document that is generally considered as the definitive evidence for Rizal's assimilationist and antirevolutionary politics is the 15 December *Manifiesto*, written in prison, while awaiting a military trial for the crime of treason. Here is the second paragraph (Austin Coates's translation 1968, 299–300):

Fellow countrymen: I have given many proofs that I desire as much as the next man liberties for our country; I continue to desire them. But I laid down as a prerequisite the education of the people in order that by means of such instruction, and by hard work, they may acquire a personality of their own and so become worthy of such liberties. In my writings I have recommended study and the civic virtues, without which no redemption is possible. I have also written (and my

words have been repeated by others) that reforms, if they are to bear fruit, must come *from above*, for reforms that come *from below* are upheavals both violent and transitory. Thoroughly imbued with these ideas, I cannot do less than condemn, as I do condemn, this ridiculous and barbarous uprising, plotted behind my back, which both dishonors us Filipinos and discredits those who might have taken our part [Spanish liberals, etc.]. I abominate the crimes for which it is responsible and I will have no part in it. With all my heart I am sorry for those who have rashly allowed themselves to be deceived. Let them return to their homes, and may God pardon those who have acted in bad faith. Royal Fort of Santiago, 15 December 1896.

Rizal's *Manifiesto* is consistent with his 12 December memorandum, which makes a reference to Valenzuela's visit to Dapitan, and the opening part reads:

I had no knowledge of what was being projected until the first or second of July of 1896 when Pio Valenzuela came to tell me of an uprising. I told him that it was absurd, and so forth; and he answered me that they could suffer no more, I counseled that they should have patience, and so forth.... Besides, I added they need not think of me, but of the country which is the one going to suffer....

I have always been opposed to the rebellion not only on account of its absurdity and untimeliness, but also because I am hoping that Spain will soon grant us freedom (Teodoro M. Kalaw's translation, cited in Manuel 1934, 565).

D. Luis Taviel de Andrade reiterates Rizal's testimony in the closing statement of his final defense, read on 25 December 1896 before the Council of War (Kalaw's translation, cited in Manuel 1934, 565):

Lastly, regarding the interview with Pio Valenzuela in June of the present year, not a single charge can be deduced against him [Rizal], but that of exculpation, for if he did not approve of the uprising, if he acted to dissuade them from their plans, this proves conclusively and entirely that he did not have any participation and did not sympathize with it. On the other hand, if Rizal were the director and promoter of all this, nobody, without an order of his, will determine the move.

These documents confirm Valenzuela's earlier prison testimonies. According to Manuel, Valenzuela gave two declarations while in prison, portions of which are quoted below.

Valenzuela's 6 September 1896 declaration:

About the month of May last, he [Valenzuela] was commissioned by Bonifacio to go to Dapitan to confer with Rizal on the advisability of raising an armed revolt against Spain. Rizal was tenaciously opposed to it from the beginning and became so enraged when it was mentioned that though the witness had gone to Dapitan to stay a month, he decided to re-embark on the following day and to return to Manila. On his arrival he reported to Bonifacio the result of the conference. Bonifacio flew into a rage on hearing the news, called Rizal a coward and ordered the witness not to say a word to anybody about the bad issue of the conference. (National Historical Institute translation of the original Spanish document, Valenzuela 1978b: 158-59)

Transcript of the prison interrogation of Valenzuela, 6 October 1896:

Witness [Valenzuela] explained to Rizal the object of his visit, but as soon as the doctor understood what he was saying, he exclaimed: "No, no, no, a thousand times no" citing a principle of philosophy [sic] witness did not recall, to prove to him the folly of the project which he declared would be detrimental to the interest of the Filipino people, advancing, at the same time, other arguments against it. (Valenzuela 1978b, 163)

Manuel also mentions the corroborating testimony of a Katipunero, Jose Dizon. Though he does not cite it, Manuel is referring to Dizon's 23 September 1896 prison testimony. According to Dizon:

Pio Valenzuela collected money from wealthy Filipinos gathering, according to Bonifacio's version, over 1,000 pesos to pay the expenses of a trip he intended to make to Dapitan to consult with Rizal. As a pretense he took with him a blind man and a servant and presented him to Rizal for treatment. The motive for the conference was to seek advice concerning the beginning of an armed revolt. When Valenzuela returned he told us that Rizal was entirely opposed to any such thing. As a result of Rizal's action the secret chamber of the Katipunan met and another plan was proposed. Bonifacio's explanation to me of the plan was as follows: they were to embark a number of fighting men as passengers on some steamer going to Dapitan. These men were to be instructed to overpower the crew and to seize the ship as soon as they reached the high seas. They should then go to Dapitan, steal away Rizal and take him wherever they could. (National Historical Institute translation of the original Spanish. Dizon 1978, 202)

These 1896 declarations by the imprisoned Katipuneros Valenzuela and Dizon, notes Manuel, obviously contradict Valenzuela's 1914 memoir. Thus, the researcher is confronted with the problem of which document to rely on. Manuel (1934, 566) opts for the earlier versions, reasoning that:

Because of the length of time that elapsed before the emissary put the conversation on paper, the *Memoirs* suffer from inaccuracies which are anyway inherent in this class of document. Dr. Valenzuela himself was aware of this [in his May 27, 1934 letter to Dr. Bantug]. As Professors Langlois and Seignobos have declared in a joint work: "Memoirs written several years ago after the facts, often at the end of the author's career, have introduced innumerable errors into history. It must be made a rule to treat memoirs with special distrust, as second-hand documents, in spite of their appearance of being contemporary testimony."

But Manuel needs to be reminded that Valenzuela did make a current declaration—affirming his memoir over his prison declarations, and reiterating Rizal's support for the Philippine revolution—when Zaide interviewed him in 1931. At that time Valenzuela was an alert and healthy man in his early sixties. And Valenzuela is not alone in his later testimony—several colleagues of Rizal, as we have mentioned, also vouched for his separatist, prореvolutionary position in their memoirs. But more importantly, Valenzuela later admitted that, because of his fear that his prison testimony might harm Rizal and other Katipuneros, who were also at that time in prison, he deliberately avoided implicating them (Quirino 1978, iii). Nevertheless, with Manuel's seemingly unassailable 1896 documentary evidence coming to light, Dr. Zaide's contrary essay soon became relegated to the dustbin of forgotten historical interpretations, and the Tavera-Retana-Derbyshire-Craig version, reinforced by Manuel's devastating essay—forcefully advancing the thesis that "Rizal did not favor, and could not have favored, the Philippine revolution" (Manuel 1934, 566)—became, until now, the unchallenged orthodoxy.

This "official version" also became the basis, in the late sixties, of the nationalist left's denunciation of Rizal, as articulated most eloquently by Constantino's critique. This anti-Rizalist position has two variants. One, espoused by Teodoro Agoncillo, is the softer or weaker version. The other, propounded by Constantino, is the stronger view. Agoncillo, in his reply to Bonifacio H. Gillego's request for comments regarding the latter's soon-to-be published manuscript on Rizal, is undecided as to whether to call Rizal a "reluctant revolutionary" or

a "revolutionary reformist" or a "reformist revolutionary" (Gillego 1990, 5). Nonetheless, Agoncillo characterizes Rizal as an idealist dreamer who insists on the "impossible" project of educating the Filipinos under Spanish rule. According to Agoncillo, "In a manner of speaking, Rizal was asking the Filipinos to bake bread but without giving them the flour with which to bake the bread!" (6). Moreover, Agoncillo asserts that "Rizal never succeeded in reaching the masses because, first, he wrote in the language of the master which the people did not understand, and second, his ideas were too advanced for the people to understand, assuming that they knew Spanish" (7). It is not clear whether Agoncillo cites any documentary evidence in his reply to Gillego (who reproduced only excerpts of Agoncillo's letter). However, in his widely circulated textbook on Philippine history, Agoncillo cites the same 1896 Valenzuela testimony that Manuel (1934) relies on.

Constantino's version is a total repudiation of Rizal. Ironically, it shares the basic premises of hagiographers like Retana and Craig, i.e., Rizal was a reformist and an assimilationist whose goal was the Hispanization of the Filipino. Only the conclusion of Constantino is different. Indeed it is the only logical conclusion, given the premises. That is why the Constantino line is so powerful when ranged against the hagiographic biographies of Rizal. Constantino's argument, put forth in his influential 1969 Rizal Day Lecture at Fort Santiago, "Veneration Without Understanding," and which became the official line of the nationalist left, may be summarized as follows:

Rizal is a bourgeois reformist, an assimilationist (i.e., he aspired "to elevate the indio to the level of hispanization of the Spaniard") and counter-revolutionary. Therefore, he cannot be our national hero. But the fact that he is our national hero—which makes us unique in the history of free nations—betrays our mendicant colonial mentality, our subservience to the American colonizers who sponsored him. As a first step to decolonizing our minds we must liberate ourselves from the spell of *ilustrados* like Rizal. We should look for those more deserving of the title of national hero. Such a figure is Andres Bonifacio, the founder of the Revolutionary Party (the Katipunan) that initiated the revolution against Spain.

A younger member of the Constantino camp, Vivencio Jose (1979, 155), reiterates the *ilustrado* vs. masses theme. He writes:

the liberal *ilustrados* failed to lead the people in their forward direction towards freedom and independence—the people who have built

societies and made history, the daring heroes who possess a great passion for freedom and an ardent love for the motherland, the builders who nurture high aspirations for independence and a multi-dimensional capacity for struggle: a material force capable indeed of facing in historic confrontation any power that would hinder their forward march.

Jose, however, introduces something original: pitting Antonio Luna and Rizal against each other. The main difference between them, argues Jose, is that Luna had transcended his ilustrado background and, became committed to the people's struggle, while Rizal had not, and therefore remained alienated from his people, whose revolution he "vehemently repudiated" (154). According to Jose, Luna—"who remained anti-imperialist, who stood strongly for national independence and the revolutionary democratic ideals of the Republic, and who reposed confidence in the ability of the people to face in protracted confrontation the might of their imperialist oppressors"—and Rizal, who nurtured "a consistent assimilationist ideal" and "never challenged [the Spanish colonial system's] fundamental assumptions and structures"—"consciously played" respectively positive and negative roles in the Philippine revolution (154-55).

If Jose reiterates Constantino's line, Gillego parrots Agoncillo's. Thus, in his "Personal Preface" to *Requiem for Reformism; The Ideas of Rizal on Reform and Revolution* (1990, 10), Gillego writes:

While [Rizal] agitated, through his flaming words and ideas, the subjugated masses to redeem themselves from Spanish bondage, Rizal remained true and loyal to his class origin. He could not negate his bourgeois heritage and cross the rising frontier of the oppressed peasantry.

Thus, the crucial evidence for Agoncillo, Constantino, Manuel, Jose, and Gillego is not Rizal's correspondence, not what he wrote, not his novels or essays, not his Liga project, not what his contemporaries say, not how the Katipuneros and the masses have perceived Rizal, but what Rizal allegedly said in the last months of 1896, i.e., Valenzuela's prison testimony and Rizal's 15 December Manifesto. These two texts became the bases for a retrospective interpretation of all that was written, said or done by Rizal. It is therefore crucial to examine the last months of Rizal, as well as all the available evidence during this period.

We can resolve this debate by addressing two fundamental issues: 1) the question of historiography, i.e., how valid are the historical sources upon which Manuel, Agoncillo and Constantino base their interpretation regarding Rizal's political stance towards the revolution; and 2) the meaning of Rizal's martyrdom, i.e., what was the impact of Rizal's "voluntary sacrifice" on the revolutionary struggle? To answer this two-fold question, we shall apply our critical hermeneutics on some hitherto unexplored texts, both written and enacted.

Following Constantino's argument, it would appear that Rizal betrayed the Revolution twice: first, by demonstrating his loyalty to Spain when he volunteered to serve in the medical corps of the Spanish army during the Cuban revolution, and second, by condemning the revolution when it finally erupted in the Philippines, exhorting his countrymen to lay down their arms and abandon an uprising that he condemned as "criminal," "savage," and "absurd." To settle this question we shall now turn to the previously cited documentary sources that Manuel, Agoncillo and Constantino have used in their influential critiques.

Valenzuela's memoir provides a direct answer to the first question, i.e., Rizal's volunteering for Cuba. Valenzuela's recollection of his 1896 conversation with Rizal in Dapitan regarding Rizal's plans are as follows:

[Rizal] spoke to me of the letter he had written to the Minister of War of Spain [Marcelo de Azcarraga], through the Governor General [Ramon Blanco] of the Philippines, wherein he applied for a post as military doctor in Cuba, which letter, he said, had not yet been answered. I exercised my objection to his application, telling him that Weyler, the general-in-chief of the Spanish forces in Cuba, might shoot him, being his enemy because of the question arising from the Calamba estate. To this objection he replied that he also might shoot Weyler first. He said that his intention in applying for the post of military doctor was to study the war in a practical way; go through the Cuban soldiery if he thought he would find there solutions which would remedy the bad situation in the Philippines. If he were admitted as a military doctor in Cuba, he explained, he could return to the Philippines when the necessity arose (Valenzuela, 1978a, 97).

But then, as mentioned earlier, Manuel disputes Valenzuela's 1914 memoir as unreliable, inasmuch as it is contradicted by his two prison declarations (6 September and 6 October 1896), which Manuel certifies as more authoritative, considering that they are corroborated by

the prison testimony of another Katipunero, Jose Dizon y Matanza (22 September 1896).

Pio Valenzuela's Testimony

While Manuel et al. are familiar with Valenzuela's two prison testimonies (6 September 1896 and 6 October 1896), and his 1914 memoir, which, they claim, are mutually contradictory, they don't seem to be aware of the third and last sworn testimony given by Valenzuela before a civilian court in 1917, which supports his 1914 memoir.

As a prisoner of the Spanish regime during the outbreak of the Philippine revolution, Valenzuela gave a series of five testimonies from 2 to 13 September 1896; and two more corroborating testimonies on 6 and 7 October 1896. It is from one of these prison testimonies that Manuel, Agoncillo and Constantino derive their evidence. The text, extracted from Valenzuela's response to the question: "If he went to Dapitan [on June, 1896] to confer with Jose Rizal and what was the purpose of their conference, reads:

Witness [Dr. Pio Valenzuela] explained to Rizal the object of his visit, but as soon as the doctor understood what he was saying, he exclaimed: 'No, no, no, a thousand times, no' citing a principle in philosophy (sic) witness did not recall, to prove to him the folly of the project which he declared would be detrimental to the interest of the Filipino people, advancing, at the same time, other arguments against it.

On his return here [Manila] he reported the result of his mission. Bonifacio did not at first credit the report, but when he became convinced he began to pour insults upon Dr. Rizal, calling him a coward and saying other bad things about him. He also prohibited witness [Valenzuela] from repeating Rizal's reply to anyone. But witness did tell Captain Ramon of Pandacan and Emilio Jacinto and others whom he did not remember. When this news got abroad, many became disheartened, especially those who, at the Pasig meeting [sometime in May, 1896 when the decision to wage the revolution was made], had promised to contribute money to the cause. [Excerpts from Statement VII, October 6, 1896 given by the prisoner, Dr. Pio Valenzuela, to the Spanish military court in Bilibid prison, Manila]. (Valenzuela 1978b, Appendix L, 163)

Herein lies the beginning of the academic debate pitting Rizal against Bonifacio, an utterly misleading and counter-productive exercise because it is based solely on one testimony and ignores (suppresses?) the two post-prison testimonies of Valenzuela which are consistently unequivocal in affirming Rizal's support for the Revolution: his 27 May 1914 memoir, typewritten in Spanish upon the request of Dr. Bantug, who, as mentioned earlier, became the husband of Rizal's great grand-niece, Asuncion; and his 12 September 1917 sworn declarations as a witness for the defense of Vicente Sotto in "the case of U.S. vs. Vicente Sotto for Libel."

The libel case filed by Jose Turiano Santiago against Vicente Sotto began after Sotto had published an article (as editor of the biweekly paper, *The Independent*) in which he asserted that Jose Turiano Santiago had been expelled from the Katipunan as a traitor. Being a lawyer, Sotto conducted his own defense, using Valenzuela as one of his witnesses. Valenzuela gave sworn statements about Rizal that flatly contradicted his own previous prison testimony (cited above). To Sotto's question, "Did you meet Rizal?," Valenzuela (1978c, 234) answered:

Yes, in Dapitan in June 1896, and he told me, in a few words, that if it were possible there should be no uprising until they [the *Katipunan*] were provided with arms... And when I objected saying that the *Katipunan* plot might be discovered before the arms arrived, he said that in that case it would be necessary to rise in revolt without awaiting the arms... "You have no resources, Rizal said, but in this case [if discovered by the Spanish regime] you have no alternative but to take to the field without waiting for the arms." He asked me if we reckoned with the aid of Filipinos of influence, money and intellect, and I had to tell him that unfortunately we did not; that we were, for the most part, poor laborers, and belonged to the lower classes of the people, and a few to the middle class.

Rizal then pointed out the necessity of winning over the wealthy and intelligent people to the cause and suggested that we should attract Antonio Luna because he was a man who had come from Europe, had much influence in Manila, and thus we would open the way to secure the sympathy of the men of money and brains. After this conversation, I asked him what we should do and he replied: "Induce Luna to work along those lines, because if you do not win over the leading Filipinos to your side all your labors will be in vain." I then told him the *Katipunan* was in great danger of being discovered because of its great activity. "In that case," I well remember he told me, "you should secure arms and those prominent Filipinos should join you, because otherwise they will become the principal enemies of the

revolution. They will be your greatest enemies when you take to the field. When they find you without arms they will place themselves on the side of the Spaniards and not on your side. With their influence, money and intelligence they can do you great harm and the Filipino people will become divided and you will be conquered."

In this case how shall we solve the problem? I asked him. "If these leading Filipinos do not join you," he replied, "you must at least make sure that those who are very rich are rendered neutral, that is to say that they do not side with either of you." And if they cannot be inutilized, I asked him how we can render them neutral? "That question I cannot answer," he replied, "it depends on circumstances, time, and the opportunity."

On my return I had to report all this to Andres Bonifacio. I told him that Rizal had said that in that case we could take to the field before the time if we were persecuted. That we should kill before allowing ourselves to be killed, but that we should take steps to render the prominent Filipinos neutral and to attract Luna to our side until he could direct the campaign. My testimony would be very long if I narrated everything.

The Fiscal, in turn, interrogates Valenzuela. One of the questions he raises is instructive. The Fiscal asked if there was a division among the Katipuneros regarding Rizal's counsel. Valenzuela (1978c, 234) answers unequivocally:

There was no such division of opinion; all were unanimous in that as soon as the conspiracy was discovered and the members should be subjected to persecution, the outbreak should begin... Dr. Rizal said, "Should the Katipunan be discovered, naturally you would take to the field. Do not allow yourselves to be killed. If they intend to kill you why should you allow yourselves to be killed. In this sense revolution is right."

Valenzuela's sworn statements clarifies two issues, and confirm the basic points of his 1914 memoir:

1. Rizal's three-fold counsel to the Katipunan regarding the Revolution: firstly, that the necessary arms and ammunitions, as well as the cooperation of the wealthy Filipinos, must be assured before waging an uprising; secondly, if the Katipunan is discovered, it would be better to fight than to flee; thirdly, if the rich Filipinos refuse to support the Katipunan, then they should be neutralized.
2. The Katipunan's response to his counsel, i.e., the majority, including Bonifacio agreed with Rizal.

There are actually three subtexts in Valenzuela's sworn testimony: 1) the question of Santiago's being a traitor; 2) the relevance of Rizal's support for the revolution (and his solidarity with Bonifacio's Katipunan) to the libel case filed by Santiago against Sotto; and 3) the Fiscal's interest in pursuing what technically appears to be a separate case, i.e., Rizal's perspective on the revolution and whether this was shared by the Katipunan members. Evidently, in the early years of American rule in the Philippines, the question of Rizal with respect to the revolution was an issue of crucial importance.

Thus, the question now is: if, as provided by the libel case against Sotto, the American regime had access to information regarding Rizal's support for the revolution and the reverence that the Katipunan held for him, why then did they promote the idea, which became the orthodoxy on Rizal's political agenda (shared ironically by both the left and the right), that Rizal was in fact for assimilationist reforms and not for the revolution? The answer to this of course is quite obvious. What is baffling is why nationalist historians like Constantino and Agoncillo had to parrot, validate and reproduce this colonial line, which was totally at variance with popular perceptions on Rizal during his time, as Valenzuela's sworn testimonies and memoir unambiguously demonstrate.

We have seen that the two post-prison testimonies of Valenzuela agree that Rizal was strongly supportive of the revolution. And as mentioned earlier, on top of these written testimonies, is Valenzuela's personal assurance to the historian Gregorio Zaide that he knew Rizal to be for the revolution. The one exception which, instead of being used as the definitive evidence, needs to be explained, is the 6 October 1896 prison testimony of Valenzuela which depicts Rizal as categorically distancing himself from any violent enterprise. About this, the historian Carlos Quirino (1978, iii) writes:

since these declarations were made under *duréss*, they cannot be relied upon implicitly; specially those parts relating to Dr. Jose Rizal and other Katipuneros whom Dr. Valenzuela later admitted he did not want to incriminate because of the natural fear that his statements would harm them.

It is not too farfetched, therefore, that both Dizon and Valenzuela were deliberately misleading the Spanish authorities. Indeed Valenzuela seems to have been citing a passage from *Noli Me Tangere* if we compare Rizal's alleged words to Valenzuela—"No, no, no! A

thousand times no!"—and Ibarra's words to Elias—"Never! I will never be the one to lead the multitude to get by force what the government thinks proper to grant it, no!"

Valenzuela's own admission that he did not want to incriminate Rizal and Quirino's point that declarations made under duress are not reliable become even more persuasive when considered in the light of the hysterical prison testimony of one of the ilustrados arrested and tortured in Fort Santiago upon the outbreak of the Revolution, Antonio Luna, who, among other things, cried hysterically:

No soy rebelde, ni mason, ni filibustero; al contrario, soy delator y creo haber cumplido como hijo leal de Espana. ...El *Katipunan* es la *Liga Filipina*. ... Su autor es D. Jose Rizal.... Vuelvo a repetir: No soy rebelde, ni filibustero, ni mason. (Arch. Fil., IV, 199 [19]; cited in Guerrero 1963, 522, note 24)

Luna redeemed himself later by joining the revolutionary forces and proving himself as (arguably) the most brilliant general in Aguinaldo's army. Another example, albeit more laudable, of the near impossibility of keeping one's lips tight while under military interrogation is provided by Rizal's brother. Paciano was also arrested and interrogated at the outbreak of the revolution in 1896. Because he refused to say a word, Paciano was severely tortured and nearly died. Like Antonio Luna, Paciano would emerge later as a revolutionary general commanding a battalion in the Southern Tagalog region (which includes Calamba).

The 15 December Manifesto

The evidence that Constantino cites to prove that Rizal repudiated the revolution is Rizal's 15 December manifesto (cited earlier) addressed to the Filipino people and presented, for Rizal's defense, during his court trial for treason.

This document is now regarded, largely on account of Constantino's popular essay, as the definitive proof that Rizal was against the Revolution. Though dated 15 December, this manifesto was in fact written at an earlier date, 10 December 1896. Rizal issued a later clarification of his defense, dated 12 December 1896. Here, Rizal laid down his political views before the Judge Advocate General, who was not quite impressed. It is easy to see why if, as

Guerrero (1963, 427) said, we do not "close our ears to the hidden meanings that [the Judge Advocate General] was alert enough to catch." To quote some portions of the memorandum:

Now, then, many have taken my phrase, "to enjoy democratic rights," for "to have independence," two entirely different things. A people can be free without being independent, and a people can be independent without being free.

I have always wanted democratic rights for the Philippines and I have always expressed myself in this sense...

That I have also believed that little by little autonomy would be achieved, and then independence in the course of time, is true.

Spain will abandon this [country] when she becomes convinced that her future lies in Morocco, and that [staying here] involves sacrifices more than anything else, and she will abandon this [country] even though the Filipinos may wish to stop her, as she tried to do at various times in past centuries.

I have also believed that, if Spain systematically denied democratic rights to the Philippines, there would be insurrections, and so I have said in my writings, bemoaning any such eventuality but not expecting it.

This is the sense of what I said: that it was necessary to be self-respecting, to unite, so that when [these] developments occurred, we should not fall into the hands of Japan, or England, or Germany... Quite some time ago, in July 1887, a certain eminent Japanese asked me why we did not rebel, saying that they would help us, etc. etc. I answered them that we were well off with Spain and did not want to be passed from hand to hand... They replied that Japan had no interest at all in the Philippines and would help only for racial reasons; I smiled and showed them from history that their ancestors had not thought the same way....

I wanted the Filipino people to appear [before the world] self-respecting, noble, honest, for a people that make themselves contemptible by their cowardice or vices expose themselves to abuses and impositions. In general, man oppresses whom he despises (424-26).

The Judge Advocate General, writes Guerrero, "was not blind that he did not see the implications of Rizal's manifesto" (426). He refused to approve and issue it, complaining that:

[Rizal] limits himself to condemning the present rebellious movement as premature and because he considers its success impossible at this time, but suggesting between the lines that the independence dreamed

of can be achieved by means less honorable than those used at present by the rebels when the [level of] culture of the people could serve as a most valuable factor in the struggle and as the guarantee of its success. For Rizal it is a question of opportunity, not of principles or objectives. His manifesto can be condensed into these words: "Faced with the proofs of defeat, lay down your arms, my countrymen; I shall lead you to the Promised Land on a later day" (426-27).

The Spanish authorities did not read Rizal's manifesto in the same way that Constantino has read it. They were in fact disappointed that Rizal did not profess loyalty to Spain. Nor did Rizal reject independence as in principle undesirable. Rizal even had the temerity to assert its inevitability. Thus, Rizal's manifesto was never issued to the public. The authorities may have feared that if issued publicly, the manifesto, far from dampening revolutionary fervor, would more likely be read by the Filipinos in a different, more subversive, light, especially in view of the context in which it was written.

It is in this vein that E. San Juan Jr. attacks a shallow, one-dimensional reading of Rizal's text, a misreading that leads Constantino not only to declare Rizal's counter-revolutionary assimilationism, but also to ignore all other evidences to the contrary, i.e., Rizal's letters, his political projects, and specially the testimonies of his contemporaries. This "vulgar empiricism," notes E. San Juan Jr. (1983, ii-iii), writing in behalf of the progressive nationalist movement, "results only in abandoning Rizal to the reactionaries," and is therefore "a disservice to our cause."

Leon Ma. Guerrero has a more casual reading of Rizal's prison declarations. According to Guerrero (1963, 426), we must consider both 12 December memorandum and 15 December manifesto partly in the light of the purpose for which they were written: "Rizal had prepared a brief for the defense, and, like a good lawyer, he was attacking the prosecution at its weakest point, the insufficiency of its evidence on any direct connection between him and the rebellion." Guerrero, however, unwittingly reproduces Constantino's dichotomies (e.g., Rizal vs. Bonifacio; Reform vs. Revolution) when he interprets the 15 December manifesto in the light of what he perceives to be the methodological (or tactical) difference between Rizal and Bonifacio. He writes:

There might be no argument that Rizal condemned Bonifacio's Revolution; it is equally beyond dispute that they both pursued the same end, the independence of the Philippines. The difference between them

lay in the choice of means and opportunity. Bonifacio put his trust in force, and had been driven to take up arms prematurely by the discovery of the Katipunan, Rizal believed in the gradual and natural evolution of the Filipino Nation over the course of years and foresaw the international developments that would make eventual independence an inevitable conclusion on which metropolis and colony would peaceably agree. (427)

Like Constantino, Guerrero seems to construe Rizal's 15 December manifesto as his last will and testament.

Rizal and the Revolution: *Mi Ultimo Adios*

But the 15 December Manifesto was not, and should not be considered Rizal's last word. A more accurate gauge of Rizal's state of mind is his last poem (untitled, later given the rather redundant title *Mi Ultimo Adios* by scholars). Surprisingly, this last poem of Rizal (indeed his final testament) has not been explored for the light it could shed on Rizal's intimate view of the Revolution, as well as its impact on the popular imagination. For unlike the manifesto, it was disseminated to the masses, thanks to Bonifacio.

The second stanza captures the intimate connection that Rizal made between his martyrdom and the Revolution, which the masses perceived and understood, and directly, in no uncertain terms, expose Constantino's utter misreading of Rizal's meaning for the revolutionary masses.

The original reads:

En campos de batalla, luchando con delirio
Otros te dan sus vidas sin dudas, sin pesar
El sitio nada importa, cipres, laurel o lirio,
Cadalso o campo abierto, combate o cruel martirio,
Lo mismo es si lo piden la Patria y el hogar.

Austin Coates's translation reads:

Others are giving you their lives on fields of battle,
Fighting joyfully, without hesitation or thought for the consequence,
How it takes place is not important. Cypress, laurel or lily,
Scaffold or battlefield, in combat or cruel martyrdom,
It is the same when what is asked of you is for your country and your home.

Notice that something has happened in the translation. Rizal's phrase in the second line—*sin dudas sin pesar*—has been translated by Coates into—"without hesitation or thought for the consequence." Contrast this with Nick Joaquin's translation:³

On the field of battle, fighting with delirium,
others give you their lives without doubts, without gloom
The site nought matters: cypress, laurel or lily:
gibbet or open field: combat or cruel martyrdom
are equal if demanded by country and home.

Not only is Nick Joaquin's translation literally closer to Rizal's Spanish, the phrase—"without doubts, without gloom"—better captures the spirit of the poem (at least as read or interpreted by the revolutionaries) than Coates's misleading "without hesitation or thought for the consequence." This is not an entirely innocent stylistic transcription by Coates because, with this twist in translation, he is then able, in a lecture (on Rizal's last poem) he gave during a Rizal Day celebration, to sneak in his liberal and respectable opinion about Rizal's ambivalent attitude to the revolution, to wit:

Now we learn from this [stanza] that a war of some kind is going on. He is in some way connected with it. He admires those who are fighting, but he does not entirely agree with what they are doing. Note the phrase "without ...thought for the consequence" (Coates 1977, 18).

Note however that in Nick Joaquin's translation of *sin dudas, sin pesar*—"without doubts, without gloom"—Coates would not be able to make the claim that "Rizal did not entirely agree" with what the revolutionaries were doing.

Bonifacio's Translation of *Mi Ultimo Adios*

Rizal's last poem was disseminated to the revolutionaries in the form of Bonifacio's vernacular translation (the first Tagalog version), which reads:⁴

Sa pakikidigma at pamimiyapis
ang alay ng iba'y ang buhay na kipkip
walang agam-agam, maluwag sa dibdib
matamis sa puso at di ikahapis.

Saan man mautas ay di kailangan
cipres o laurel, lirio ma'y putungan
pakikipaghamok at ang bibitayan
yaon ay gaon [gayon] din kung hiling ng Bayan.

In Bonifacio's hands, something has happened happily to Rizal's stanza. As Iletto and Mary Jane Po had observed, "Bonifacio not only translated the poem but reconstructed it in such a way that one stanza in the original became two in the Tagalog version. Thus, apart from the nuances imparted by the Tagalog language, subordinate ideas in the original were given their own existence" (Iletto 1982, 337, n. 100).

I would go further. Not only do subordinate ideas come to exist on their own, but also, and perhaps more importantly, implicit ideas or hidden assumptions burst forth with more force. Bonifacio, in fact, has ingeniously added a new phrase not found in the original (and neither in Nick Joaquin's nor Coates's translations) following his translation of "sin dudas, sin pesar," "walang agam-agam, maluwig sa dibdib"—*matamis sa puso at di-ikahapis*.

Bonifacio's Tagalog version is even more joyously affirmative than Nick Joaquin's English version: "walang agam-agam" is equivalent to Joaquin's "without doubts," but "maluwag sa dibdib" goes further than the English "without gloom" for it signifies a whole-hearted acceptance, *sans* misgivings or reservations. But what is even more interesting is Bonifacio's added phrase—"matamis sa puso at di ikahapis"—meaning "a joy of the heart that knows no pain." Thus, Bonifacio's translation—which became the popular version during the revolution—exposes Coates's misreading of Rizal's last poem.

But the most important line is the second part of the stanza (or the second stanza in Bonifacio's two-stanza translation).

Joaquin's translation:

The site nought matters: cypress, laurel or lily:
gibbet or open field: combat or cruel martyrdom
are equal if demanded by country and home.

Coates's version:

How it takes place is not important. Cypress, laurel or lily,
Scaffold or battlefield, in combat or cruel martyrdom,
It is the same when what is asked of you is for your
country and your home.

These crucial lines clarify a double puzzle.

Firstly, if, as Valenzuela had attested, Rizal was willing to support the revolution, why did he not join it when it finally came? He could have escaped from Dapitan, as he in fact had reassured Valenzuela he could do (with the help of the Moros). When the revolution broke out while he was on his way to Cuba to serve as a physician for the Spanish army, he could have jumped-ship at Singapore, as the Roxases did, after they, as well as Rizal, had been warned that they might get arrested.

Secondly, what was the basis of the popular perception that he was the Tagalog Christ? Even the Spanish philosopher Miquel de Unamuno had made this connection, calling him "the Tagalog Christ suffering in the garden of Gethsemane" (cited in Coates 1968, 358). Was Rizal consciously fostering this image, was he deliberately living up to what the anthropologist Victor Turner calls the "*via crucis*" paradigm? The *via crucis* root paradigm is discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of Victor Turner's *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (1974). In Turner's sense, paradigms are "cultural models" in the heads of social actors. "Root paradigms" pertain to "irreducible life stances of individuals" and are sensed as "axiomatic values, matters literally of life and death" (64). An example is the "*via crucis* pattern of martyrdom" drawn from the Christian tradition (84). Turner notes that many Mexican revolutionaries have "walked a *via crucis*—like Christ...they have preached a message, achieved initial success, been disgraced or frustrated or physically suffered, have been betrayed...executed or assassinated...and have then experienced a curious resurrection" in the popular imagination as well as in civic culture (122). Had Turner known of Rizal, he would have spoken of him also as having walked the *via crucis*.

Consider Rizal's actions during his final days and up to the moment of his execution. He had given to his family his sketch of the Agony of the Garden, to Josephine he left Kempis's *La Imitacion del Cristo*, and at his execution, as the order to fire was given, he cried out aloud Jesus's last words, *Consumatum est!* Rizal had been positioned by the commanding officer so that his back was turned to the firing squad, but as the eight Remingtons cracked, he turned around to face the firing squad and thus fell with his face to the sky. This stunning event was witnessed by thousands of Filipinos. Shortly thereafter, the cult of Rizal as the Tagalog Christ arose.

If we view these instances in the light of the second part of the stanza, we find the answer to our riddle: confronted with the option

between Revolution and Martyrdom, Rizal chose the latter. Mabini, the leading intellectual in Aguinaldo's cabinet (later deported to Guam for his refusal to take the oath of allegiance to America after the Revolution's defeat) perceived this and understood the element of will and volition in Rizal's martyrdom. In his memoir, written in the solitude of his exile in Guam, Mabini (1969, 45) remembers Rizal:

In contrast to Burgos who wept because he died guiltless, Rizal went to the execution ground calm and even cheerful, to show that he was happy to sacrifice his life, which he had dedicated to the good of all Filipinos, confident that in love and gratitude they would always remember him and follow his example and teaching. In truth the merit of Rizal's sacrifice consists precisely in that it was voluntary and conscious. He had known perfectly well that, if he denounced the abuses which the Spaniards were committing in the Philippines, they would not sleep until they had encompassed his ruin; yet he did so because, if the abuses were not exposed, they would never be remedied. From the day Rizal understood the misfortunes of his native land and decided to work to redress them, his vivid imagination never ceased to picture to him at every moment of his life the terrors of the death that awaited him; thus he learned not to fear it, and had no fear when it came to take him away; the life of Rizal, from the time he dedicated it to the service of his native land, was therefore a continuing death, bravely endured until the end for love of his countrymen. God grant that they will know how to render to him the only tribute worthy of his memory: the imitation of his virtues.

The revolutionary masses have confirmed Rizal's choice as equally valid. Immediately he became the inspiration of the Revolution, his life and works now viewed as a reenactment of the *Pasyon* (Christ's suffering, death and resurrection), which as Iletto's work (1979) has demonstrated, was the masses' framework of meaning for the Revolution. It was through the perspective of the *Pasyon* that the revolutionary masses perceived Rizal's last poem. Among oral histories of the revolution, one that has not received any serious consideration is the story of how Rizal's poem, as interpreted by Bonifacio, became a rallying cry for the revolution. Indeed it is not even mentioned by Agoncillo and Constantino. It is said that revolutionaries sang the poem in the battlefield. In the context of the poem's millennial meanings, particularly its evocation of the *Pasyon*, this is hardly surprising. As Iletto observes, Rizal's last poem "rivals if not exceeds his novels in popular esteem. Not only is it good poetry, but it contrib-

utes as well to the scenario of his death by repeating the extended *Paalam* (Farewell) scene in the *Pasyon*" (Ileto 1982, 319). The death of the Filipino Christ thus calls upon every Filipino to participate in the national *Pasyon* by joining the Revolution, in which the inspired singing in the battlefield of Rizal's last poem is but one expression of millennial solidarity.

The Meaning of Josephine

Aside from Rizal's last poem and martyrdom, there is a third motif that had stirred the popular imagination, and though, alas, it is now forgotten, it nevertheless speaks eloquently for Rizal's support for the Revolution. It is Josephine's remarkable deportment during Rizal's last hours and immediately after his execution.

On the eve of Rizal's execution, Josephine met with Rizal for the last time. What the two talked about could only be a matter of speculation, though the Manila daily *El Impartial* reports some eyewitness accounts, one of which alleges that in reply to Rizal's question of what will become of her, Josephine answers that she will join the *insurrectos*. As she is forcibly taken away from the teary-eyed Rizal, so the account goes, she is heard furiously stomping her feet, shouting, "Miserables, crueles!"

What is more certain is what Josephine did after Rizal's execution. For one thing, Josephine did not tarry in Manila to witness Rizal's execution and then wallow in misery. She leaves immediately with Paciano to join the revolutionary forces that were then gathering at Imus town, Cavite province, some 50 miles from Manila. In his memoir, General Santiago Alvarez (1992, 171) writes:

At past one o'clock in the afternoon of the same day [30 December 1896], Josefina and Trining, widow and sister, respectively, of Dr. Rizal, arrived at San Francisco de Malabon accompanied by Mr. Paciano Rizal. The Supremo [Bonifacio] received them at the house of Mrs. Estefania Potente. The Rizals had with them two small sheets of folded paper that they found under a burner they took from Dr. Rizal's cell when they last visited him. On one was the "Last Farewell," written in very fine script in Spanish. The Supremo asked to keep it for some time, so that he could translate the poem into Tagalog. His was the first translation of the farewell poem.

Alvarez fails to describe the dramatic impact of Josephine's entry into rebel territory. John Foreman (1899, 536) has a more vivid account:

On her way she was often asked, "Who art thou?" but her answer "Lo! I am thy sister, the widow of Rizal!" not only opened a passage for her, but brought low every head in silent reverence. Amidst mourning and triumph she was conducted to the presence of the rebel commander-in-chief, Emilio Aguinaldo, who received her with the respect due to the sorrowing relic of their departed hero. But the formal tributes of condolence were followed by great rejoicing in the camp. She was the only free white woman within the rebel lines. They lauded her as though an angelic being had fallen from the skies; they sang her praises as if she was a modern Joan of Arc sent by heaven to lead the way to victory over the banner of Castille.

Rebel soldiers must have found the spectacle of a fair-haired Caucasian lady armed with a revolver and a dagger an amazing sight. And because she was identified with Rizal, Josephine's joining the rebel forces would most likely have been interpreted as Rizal's support and blessing for the Revolution. According to Ricarte, Josephine's presence lifted the morale of the revolutionists (1963, 27). Considering her foreign status (British citizen), not to mention her gender, Josephine's participation in the revolution was extraordinary: cheering and nursing the wounded in a field hospital she herself had requested set up in Tejeros town, and teaching English during lulls in the fighting.

Foreman recounts two fascinating anecdotes which give us a glimpse of Josephine's character, or, at least, how she was viewed by journalists and historians like Foreman. One was an incident at the height of the battle of Dasmariñas town when "our heroine sallied forth on horseback with a Mauser rifle over her shoulder" and ended up "shooting dead one Spanish officer" (537). Another was her encounter with the Governor-General. Here is Foreman's imaginative reconstruction of the confrontation:

[The Governor-General] asked her if she had been at the rebel camp at Imus. She replied fearlessly in the affirmative, and relying on the security from violence afforded by her sex and foreign nationality, there passed between her and the Governor-General quite an amusing and piquant colloquy. "What did you go to Imus for?" inquired the General. "What did you go there for?" rejoined Josephine. "To fight," said the General. "So did I," answered Josephine. "Will you leave Manila?" asked the General. "Why should I?" queried Josephine. "Well," said the General, "the priests will not leave you alone if you stay here, and they will bring false evidence against you. I have no power to overrule

theirs." "Then what is the use of the Governor-General?" pursued our heroine, but the General dismissed the discussion, which was becoming embarrassing, and resumed it a few days later by calling upon her emphatically to quit the Colony. At this second interview the General fumed and raged, and our heroine too stamped her little foot, and woman-like, avowed "she did not care for him; she was not afraid of him." (537)

General Ricarte's account (1963, 27), written during his solitary confinement in Bilibid prison, from 1904-1910, perhaps captures most poignantly the heroic and tragic figure of Rizal's *dulce estrangera*:

The widow of Dr. Rizal, born in Hongkong, gave genuine proof of her support of the cause of the country for which her husband gladly gave a life full of vigor and hope, by rendering much service to the insurrection and suffering much want and misfortune. At her request there was installed in the estate house in Tejeros, San Francisco de Malabon, a field hospital. And day and night, she attended and dressed the wounded with every care. She also gave hope to all the soldiers who went to visit their companions lying in the hospital. When the Spaniards captured San Francisco de Malabon, she escaped to Naik and from there to the Maragondon mountains, whence, accompanied by other women and Paciano, her brother-in-law, she left for Laguna, crossing the mountains and plains, oftentimes barefooted, and although the soles of her feet were blood-soaked, she did not stop. At other times she rode a carabao which Paciano led by a rope. Thus she reached the town of Bay where she was received by the Katipunan chief, Venancio Cueto, who put her aboard a boat for Manila, whence she left for Hongkong where she died in 1902 [of tuberculosis of the larynx, at the age of 26].

Josephine's exemplary involvement on the Revolution raises a number of questions. Why did she join the revolution? This is a crucial point vis-a-vis Constantino's assertion that Rizal condemned the revolution. For that matter, why should two of Rizal's sisters join Bonifacio's Katipunan? Did Rizal have anything to do with Josephine's decision? It might be impossible to resolve this question in terms of a positivistic historiography. But from a critical hermeneutic perspective, the question can be framed more fruitfully: how did the revolutionary masses perceive Josephine's political act immediately after Rizal's execution? More significantly, were these extraordinary events, Josephine's participation and Rizal's martyrdom, viewed as linked moments by the masses? The answer may be found in the popular meaning of Rizal's and Josephine's shared dramaturgy.

Both Rizal's death and Josephine's revolutionary participation signify the ultimate sacrifice: the reenactment of the passion of Christ.

From the perspective of the Pasyon, acts of sacrifice, martyrdom, and armed struggle are not mutually exclusive modes of resistance. In the Philippine millennial imagination, from Hermano Pule (1840) to Felipe Salvador (1910) to Tatang de los Santos (1967), martyrdom is the ultimate sacrifice and therefore the struggle *par excellence*. It is for this reason that Rizal's predecessors, Gomez, Burgos and Zamora, the three secular priests executed in 1872 and to whom Rizal dedicated his *El Filibusterismo*, are also venerated as heroes, their martyrdom celebrated in folklore. One popular song during the revolutionary period refers to the martyrs of the nationalist cause as siblings, with Burgos as the eldest and Rizal as the youngest (Ronquillo 1910; cited in Iletto 1979, 132)).

It is no wonder that Rizal's last poem became a rallying cry of the Katipunan revolutionaries soon after Bonifacio circulated his vernacular translation among the rebels. To the revolutionary folk, Rizal's martyrdom marked his apotheosis as the *Tagalog* Christ. He remains so among the millennial folk of Mt. Banahaw today. To fight in the revolution was thus viewed as participating in the national Pasyon. From this Pasyon framework, we can understand why the revolutionary leadership, from Bonifacio to Aguinaldo to Ricarte, and even, sometime later, to the so-called messianic bandits during the American colonial regime, kept invoking Rizal's name in moments of struggle, whether in triumph or defeat. One message that Bonifacio sent to the field, in order to inspire the Katipunan rebels who were suffering a series of set-backs, enjoins them to remember the supreme sacrifice of "our most beloved compatriot, the great Jose Rizal" ["*ating pinaka-iibig na kababayan na si M. Jose Rizal*"] (Bonifacio, 1963: 71).

When Rizal kept hammering on virtue and sacrifice as the prerequisite to any revolutionary undertaking, he was not being true to his bourgeois origins as Constantino erroneously presumes. Rizal's counsels of prudence to the Katipunan were in fact coherent with the Pasyon theme of the millennial imagination.

But for Constantino, this popular perception of Rizal and the Revolution does not matter. What matters to him is the 15 December manifesto which not even the Spanish authorities themselves believed. Hence, the military court decided not to publish it, convinced that Rizal did not mean it and that no Filipino will believe it anyhow. But above all, they feared that the manifesto may exert the opposite effect, that it would inflame the Filipinos even more. This document,

which, unlike Rizal's last poem, had no impact whatsoever, is alas the keystone of Constantino's facetious argument, completely ignoring, indeed suppressing, the indelible imprint that Rizal's last poem and mode of dying left on the hearts and minds of Filipinos at the turn of the century.

Constantino and American Imperialism

We have shown that for both the ilustrados and the peasants, Rizal was the central figure of the nationalist movement. This veneration of Rizal was never contested until sometime later, after the Americans established their rule over the islands. Since then to the present day, the symbol of Rizal has become a "much contested area" (E. San Juan Jr. 1983, iii). In the ideological terrain of hegemony, thus, something has happened that calls for a critical reading.

And so we face the vexing problem: why is there such rabid vehemence on the part of otherwise progressive nationalists, epitomized by Constantino, against Rizal as an assimilationist reformist, when all the relevant evidence point to the opposite conclusion? What is to be gained by cutting off Rizal from the radical nationalist tradition of the nineteenth century? Why insist on the 15 December manifesto and one or two other documents as hardcore evidence, when these in fact constitute the exceptions to the main body of available evidence, and when, furthermore, these textual oddities can be more fruitfully accounted for historiographically—on the basis of the *contexts* in which they arose? Why, in short, the compulsive obsession on the part of the nationalist left to write off Rizal?

This is a serious and urgent problem because writing off a misread and misrepresented Rizal will have the opposite effect of what the anti-Rizalist nationalists intend to accomplish. Such unfounded denigration of Rizal will prevent the present generation, which is in dire need of a robust nationalist imagination, from gaining "a proper understanding" of the nineteenth century nationalist movement.

The answer to this enigma can be found from the anti-Rizalist nationalists themselves. According to Jose (1979, 154–55), "after brutally destroying the First Philippine Republic," American imperialists proceeded to colonize the country by availing themselves of the collaboration of the ilustrados, "from whose ranks the most effective agents of American policy were subsequently chosen." As part of their hegemonic task, "the new rulers enthroned in the public mind personalities not averse to American rule even as they denigrated

those who opposed it." In view of his "highly significant literary, artistic, and scientific achievements," and because he was "a consistent assimilationist" who never questioned colonialism as such, and considering that his dramatic death made him so easily lovable, Rizal, observes Jose, was the perfect hero for reinforcing the goals of the new colonial order. Thus, through "a clever handling of mass propaganda," the Americans promoted the Rizal cult to further their own imperialist ends. The task of the true nationalist, therefore, is to expose and oppose this mass deception. Denigrating Rizal by exposing his reactionary politics is thus integral to the nationalist effort of opposing American imperialism.

Fine! Except that this logic rests on a false premise, i.e., Rizal was an assimilationist reformist who "vehemently repudiated" the Revolution. The fundamental problem here lies in our progressive nationalists' uncritical acceptance of the American representation of Rizal, as a counter-revolutionary bourgeois intellectual, as the correct one. This insidious orientalist construction of Rizal by colonial writers, both Spanish (Retana) and American (Craig, et al.), has never been questioned and seriously critiqued by left nationalists, with the exception of E. San Juan Jr., whose critical cautions to his fellow-travellers remain unheeded. But why?

I propose two possibilities: 1) our progressive nationalists, are themselves cut off from the popular imagination of the nineteenth century, and 2) notwithstanding their Marxist sophistication, or pretensions, they are themselves unwitting victims of American propaganda. If 1) and 2) are correct, then we have to confront the inevitable implication, that American hegemony was successfully established in the Philippines, and that our own revered nationalist writers have been unwitting accomplices to this modern-day imperialist seduction. This unalloyed American success at hegemony building finally explains the failure of the nationalist project that Rizal and Bonifacio embodied.

The publication of Constantino's essay signalled the decentering of Rizal as a nationalist symbol. With the vulgarization of the symbol that resulted from its colonial appropriation by the American regime, that decentering was probably bound to happen with or without Constantino's assault.

Constantino's critique of Rizal, however, served to push further to the fringes the already marginalized millennial consciousness. Unable to understand such peasant consciousness, Marxist proselitizers, laboring from a discourse of modernity—what Setsuho Ikehata terms as the "modernist fallacy" (1989, 80)—simply dismiss it as a case of

uneven ideological development. That is, peasant consciousness is simply a backward consciousness compared to their more advanced "proletarian" and "scientific" consciousness. Hence, the articulation of ideological viewpoints among various segments/classes towards a common counter-hegemonic perspective, the motive force of antiimperialist nationalism in the third world, and which the nineteenth century nationalist movement achieved, could not materialize. The result is a fragmented nationalist movement unable to present a united front against the forces of reaction which are now more entrenched than ever. The Philippine state, after a short-lived euphoria on the democratic space provided by the unceremonious departure of Marcos, is now back in the hands of the traditional oligarchy (Anderson 1988). As the cartoonist Corky Trinidad (1994) observed, the Filipinos woke up the next day "to find the same politicians holding all the highest offices in the land. Filipinos blew their wad to find the only trace of the [1986] EDSA revolution was a commemorative statue" (A-15).

Constantino's move, in decentering Rizal, left a vacuum in the mythological terrain of nationalism. The problem was not Rizal after all. All along, the problem has been with our historians who, in unwittingly reproducing American colonial discourse on Rizal and the Philippine nationalist movement of the nineteenth century, failed to read the popular imagination and the spirit of the times.

Notes

1. Valenzuela's testimonies regarding Rizal's attitude towards the planned revolution are all included in the English edition, *Minutes of the Katipunan* (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1978). These are: 1) Appendix A, "The Memoirs of Dr. Pio Valenzuela" (trans. by Luis Serrano); 2) Appendix L (Appendix No. 77 in the Watson Collection), "Testimony of Dr. Pio Valenzuela y Alejandrino"; 3) Appendix W (Appendix No. 212 in the Watson Collection), "Testimony of Dr. Pio Valenzuela in the Case of Vicente Sotto."

2. This is included as Appendix O (Appendix No. 77 in the Watson Collection), "Declaration of Jose Dizon y Matanza" in *Minutes of the Katipunan* (1978).

3. Both Rizal's Spanish text and Nick Joaquin's translation appear in *Philippine Literature*, edited by Bienvenido Lumbera (Manila: National Bookstore, 1982). Austin Coate's version appears in *Rizal; Philippine Nationalist and Martyr* (1968) and in his *Rizal Lecture* (1977).

4. Bonifacio's Tagalog translation appears in *The Writings and Trial of Andres Bonifacio*, edited by Teodoro Agoncillo (1963).

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