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# Backtracking towards a Transformative Rizal Curriculum

Ysabel Julia M. Ortiz

*National Institute of Education (Singapore)*

## Abstract

*Despite their inclusion in the Philippine social studies curriculum to inspire patriotism in the youth, the teaching of Jose Rizal's life and works is often lifeless and barren. In contrast, my experience studying Rizal under Professor Paul A. Dumol was a potent educational experience that led to my firm conviction in my role and duties as a citizen. Merging the autobiographical/biographical and political strands of curriculum scholarship, this paper recounts my lived experience of Professor Dumol's Rizal course to examine its capacity to produce transformation in both the individual and society. My findings reveal that the transformative power of his curriculum lay in its treatment of nationhood as an ongoing project that is continually formed by the individuals that comprise it. Applicable to social studies curricula across different contexts, this principle allows the student to comprehend his or her power as a citizen, inspiring transformation in the self, for society.*

## Introduction

Since 1956, Republic Act 1425, otherwise known as the Rizal Law, has mandated the teaching of the life and works of Philippine national hero, Jose Rizal, in all public and private schools, colleges and universities. Why decree Rizal's ideas of nationhood and citizenship in the Philippine social studies curriculum? Dumol & Camposano's (2018) textbook *The Nation as Project: A New Reading of Jose Rizal's*

*Life and Works* begins with a pithy statement that perhaps expresses the rationale best: "When Jose Rizal was born in 1861, there was no Filipino nation to speak of . . . When Jose Rizal died in 1896, there was still no nation to speak of, but [through his writings, political campaigns, and the reason for his execution] there was a nation to dream of" (p. 3). To examine Rizal's life and works, therefore, is "to discover who we are and where we might go as a nation" (Dumol & Camposano, 2018, p. 3).

But the Rizal Law's lofty directive that his works be an "inspiring source of patriotism" to the youth today is thwarted by curricula widely comprised of a reverential reading of Rizal's life and works (Dumol & Camposano, 2018). As such, his ideas are left decontextualized and are resultantly barren. Without explanation for how Rizal's ideas emerged amidst the social conditions of his time, a central truth—that the individual's thoughts and actions bear weight on the ongoing project of the nation—remains veiled from students.

My experience taking Professor Paul A. Dumol's Rizal course, while an undergraduate student at the University of Asia and the Pacific, was strikingly different. A respected Rizal scholar, Professor Dumol is the recipient of the 2012 Gawad Rizal from the National Historical Commission, as well as a multi-awarded playwright who has written two plays on Jose Rizal. His Rizal curriculum was concerned with discovering the hero-

intellectual's political thought. And as we struggled to understand Rizal's ideas of nationhood and citizenship, our discussions continually situated Rizal in the nineteenth-century colonial context so that his ideas were framed as a man's personal response to contemporary social challenges. Such context gave meaning to Rizal's life and works, and the semester saw in me a marked transformation: from a primitive conception of my social self as solely daughter, sister, and friend, I began to perceive myself as a Filipino citizen with a share in the nation-building project.

The power of the course to effect individual change in an ordinary Filipino like myself makes it worth examining. At a time when the Philippines is in dire need of social upheaval (a 2020 report from the Human Rights Council of the United Nations documents "deep-seated impunity for serious human rights violations" (UN Human Rights, 2020) in the current administration's drug war, which has resulted in the extrajudicial killing of thousands since 2016; and the same report problematizes the increasingly institutionalized "vilification of dissent" (UN Human Rights, 2020) with the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020), revisiting Professor Dumol's Rizal course—its objectives, content, and methods—may serve as an entry point to developing a more transformative Philippine social studies curriculum.

### **Theoretical perspective**

In studying the course's potential for societal transformation, I employ the 'curriculum as political text' theoretical perspective, which has undergone significant development since its appearance in the curriculum field in the 1970s. Recognizing that education has complicated connections to larger society (Apple et al., 2009), it has evolved from the

notion that schools merely serve to reproduce ideology and hegemonic power, to views that accord more agency to educators: schooling is now perceived to hold possibilities for resistance and, ultimately, societal transformation (Pinar et al., 2004).

This transformative potential, observable in Professor Dumol's Rizal curriculum, is captured in the critical pedagogy movement's view of education as counterhegemonic and activist (Apple et al., 2009). Fundamental to this movement is the idea that education is among the multiple dynamics that underpin relations of exploitation and domination in our societies (Apple et al., 2009). Critical education research is thus concerned with exposing relations of power and inequality in education and, above all, exploring the possibilities for counterhegemonic action (Apple et al., 2009). Counterhegemonic action is defined by Apple et al. (2009) as being "against the ideological and institutional processes and forms that reproduce oppressive conditions" (p. 3). At the heart of education's transformative potential is the educator's ideal for a counter-hegemony, a "new cultural vision of a genuinely different way of life" (Wexler & Whitson, 1982, as cited in Pinar et al., 2004, p. 251). Thus, critical pedagogy calls for educators to be "transformative intellectuals" (Carlson, 1987, as cited in Pinar et al., 2004, p. 260) who promote specific changes towards a new vision of a just society.

With my data consisting mainly of my lived experience of Professor Dumol's Rizal course, this paper takes on another theoretical perspective, curriculum as autobiographical/biographical text. Addressing a concern that the field of curriculum had lost sight of the individual and her experience of curricular materials (Pinar, 1995), the autobiographical method

of research motivates students and teachers to perform a lengthy, systematic search of their lived experience of schools. Accessing inner experience allows individuals to “intensify one’s experience of education” (Pinar, 1995, p. 522) by leading them to a deeper understanding of the encounter and, ultimately, to deepened agency over one’s personal development (Grumet, 1976, as cited in Pinar, 1995). Returning to the public realm, understanding private experience allows curriculum researchers to “further comprehend [the roles of curriculum, instruction, and objectives] in the educational process” (Pinar, 1974, as cited in Pinar, 1995, p. 519).

Utilizing the methods of autobiographical/biographical research, this paper examines my lived experience of Professor Dumol’s Rizal course to unravel its power to produce individual change in the student. In other words, I access my inner experience to understand how this curriculum functioned as political text. To justify the merging of these two theoretical perspectives, I refer to Pinar (1995) who writes, “the individual is social and society is comprised of individuals” (p. 565). Autobiographical/biographical scholarship, therefore, may claim to understand curriculum as political text as well (Pinar, 1995). Madeleine R. Grumet (1990, as cited in Pinar, 1995), a pioneer of autobiographical/biographical curriculum research, asserts, “Narratives of educational experience challenge their readers and writers to find both individuality and society . . . in their texts” (p. 565). In analyzing my private experiences, which culminated in a deep transformation, I hope to come to a new appreciation of Professor Dumol as “transformative intellectual,” laying, within the walls of the Rizal classroom, the foundations for a new vision of Philippine society.

Ultimately, Pinar (1995) writes, we

utilize memory as a springboard for change in our individual practices. It is my hope that my personal narrative of my Rizal experience may serve as a guide, not only for my own practice, but for social studies teachers from the Philippines and other contexts in developing a more transformative curriculum at present.

### Findings and Analysis

To contextualize my findings, a description of the course’s objectives, content, and method of instruction is a necessary preliminary.

The course objectives were, first, to determine Rizal’s political thought, a term used broadly by Professor Dumol to apply also to Rizal’s thoughts on Filipinos and Filipino culture; and, second, to reflect on the continued relevance of his ideas for present society. The distinctiveness of Professor Dumol’s course lay in its methodology: we would infer Rizal’s political thought from his two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891), often called the *Noli* and the *Fili* respectively, and officially titled “The Social Cancer” and “The Reign of Greed” in English. Rizal had made it clear in the *Noli*’s dedication that the novel was meant to be a faithful depiction of nineteenth-century Philippine colonial society through which he would expose the societal ills of this period. The *Fili* is its sequel, set thirteen years after the events of the *Noli*. In this light, the two novels may be seen as Rizal’s personal study of Philippine society, making them ideal material for the academic exercise of abstracting his socio-political philosophy.

There was another crucial reason for structuring the course according to a reading of Rizal’s novels: In problematizing nineteenth-century Philippine society, the novels would

present various political viewpoints throughout their story rather than a single, clear political belief held by the author. Thus, the Rizal scholar in Professor Dumol's class must detect a progression in the ideas put forward by the novels that reflects none other than the author's personal journey in coming to his final socio-political philosophy. Looking back, explicating the development of Rizal's ideas, rather than bringing us directly to his final beliefs, was a curious and, I see now, critical aspect of Professor Dumol's instructional methods. Necessarily, class discussions would also tackle the events of Rizal's life to contextualize the changes in his ideas. Our final objective was to uncover the definitive and all-encompassing political thought that Rizal would reveal at the end of his second novel, the final belief he would leave the Filipino people with before his execution in 1896.

With the novels at the centre of the course, we were taught reading principles to interpret the text for Rizal's political thought, guidelines such as to identify passages of social commentary or criticism and to view its characters as archetypes of society rather than as psychologically developed individuals. Assessment then consisted of analysis papers, for which we were to use the reading techniques we had learned in class to draw out Rizal's thought from a chapter of our choice. Taking stock of all his ideas that had arisen throughout the novels (and throughout the semester), the summative assessment was to determine the final belief that he had come to and why this was his conclusion.

### **The Rizal curriculum as autobiography**

My memories have evinced four potent elements of the course that jointly brought about my personal transformation.

1. The course highlighted Rizal's unique view that Filipinos, rather than foreign invaders, were themselves the greater obstacle to self-rule, providing an alternative view to the narrative learned in my Philippine history classes.

During our first session, Professor Dumol handed each of us a copy of Rizal's dedication in the *Noli*, in which he states his intention to expose, through his novel, the social cancer of late nineteenth-century Philippines. Professor Dumol drew our attention to a single line: ". . . I will strive to reproduce [the Philippines'] condition faithfully, without discriminations" (Rizal, 1887/1912, author's dedication). The phrase "without discriminations," Professor Dumol explained to us, displayed Rizal's unique thinking that the social cancer lay not only with our Spanish colonizers but also, and more significantly, with the Filipinos. For students who had undergone the Philippine basic education history curriculum, this was a novel, almost shocking, idea. We had learned for years from our history textbooks that we Filipinos were the victims of foreign colonizers who had taken away our independence. Furthermore, this narrative had taught us that the Philippine Revolution that had reclaimed our independence was inspired by Rizal's writings. Why was this course now recasting the ideas of Rizal, the inspiration behind the Philippine Revolution, to subvert this narrative, the source of our Filipino identity?

As we would come to discover throughout the course, Rizal had a preoccupation with the defects and weaknesses of Filipinos, which distinguished him from his contemporaries. His fellow ilustrados, the class of enlightened Filipinos educated in Europe, were influenced by the prevalent philosophy of progress, which led them to

wage their campaign against the friars in the Philippines, who they saw as the enemies of progress. In the earlier stages of his political thought, Rizal was not entirely free from this mainstream view, with friars cast as the villains in the *Noli*; but Professor Dumol's reading would show us that, above all, the *Noli* displayed Rizal's unique conviction that the mindset of the Filipinos was the greater obstacle to self-rule than Spanish colonization.

This major strand in Rizal's thinking, we learned, was largely found in the minor characters who make up larger society in the *Noli*, a placement that regretfully results most often in its being overlooked in a Rizal education. Inhabiting a town or *población*, the highest socio-political organization during the Spanish colonial era, society in the *Noli* was highly stratified, with each class contributing to the collective social cancer: The rich were concerned only about themselves and their families, and did not bother to enlighten the uneducated. The strong and the powerful marginalized the weak and the powerless. The poor, for their part, were accused of silence and indifference. In addition to these ills, Rizal's narration frequently revealed, in both rich and poor, a streak of cruelty and violence to fellow Filipinos of humbler status, as well as a general toleration of vice. With a complete disregard for the common good among individuals, there was an irreconcilable gap between the rich and the poor. It was a society where Filipinos were against Filipinos, the war of every man against every man.

Along with my compatriots, I have been trained to build a national identity on a historical narrative of revolts and rebellions against foreign oppressors, a legacy difficult to live out as modern citizenship. What duty for my country remains in the age of self-rule with the absence of an external oppressor? Within Professor

Dumol's classroom, this powerful, new idea that perhaps Filipinos had been their own obstacle to achieving self-rule inspired in me more fruitful conceptualizations of nationhood and citizenship: perhaps it was time to take my glance away from historical enemies and to turn inward, to ask how I might overcome this Filipino attitude of self-interest to build a greater love for the common good.

2. The course tackled Rizal's novels as works of continued relevance so that, in the distinctive problems, issues, and social and political situation of nineteenth-century society, I recognized the roots of present societal ills.

Rizal's novels are typically read as literary works, with a focus on their literary qualities, or as historical documents that throw light on Filipinos and the Philippines during the nineteenth century (Dumol & Camposano, 2018). Professor Dumol established from the beginning of our course that we would employ a third way of reading the *Noli* and the *Fili*: as works of present relevance from whose depiction of the nineteenth-century social cancer we might gain deeper understanding of present societal ills. The course posed two questions: Is the social cancer that Rizal wrote about still present today? If so, how may it be extirpated at present?

Challenged to interrogate the text for its relevance to the present, I developed a keener awareness of current Philippine society's most deeply rooted problems. Just as Rizal had posited about nineteenth-century Filipinos, I discovered that a deep-seated attitude of self-interest, which cancels out regard for the common good, stubbornly remains our primary impediment to a functional democracy. Even problems that are structural or political in nature have beneath them an

inward-looking people that account for a lack of action towards solutions. By elucidating the survival of the social cancer into the twenty-first century, the course presented me with the pressing need for individual change in order to bring about social change.

3. The course traced the progression of Rizal's political thought, an exploration that allowed me to form a solid conviction in Rizal's final solution to the social cancer for past and present society.

Throughout the course, we approached the *Noli* and the *Fili*, not as novels of plot or character, but as novels of the author's ideas: while the *Noli* contained the problems that Rizal observed in Philippine society, the *Fili* was his solution to the social cancer. The rationale for Professor Dumol's approach hinged on a line from Rizal's dedication in the *Noli*, which was addressed to the Philippines:

Desiring your health which is ours and seeking the best treatment, I will do with you what the ancients did with the sick: they would display them on the temple steps, so that each person who came to invoke the Divinity would propose a remedy. (Rizal, 1887/1912, author's dedication)

Rizal herein states his intention for the *Noli* and subsequently the *Fili*: he meant to display the societal illness so that remedies might be suggested. His various attempts at a remedy are the ideas that would comprise the two novels.

I have described in my previous point the ills that Rizal saw in society, so malignant that he was led to ask, in a society so unjust that it seemed God was asleep, what was man to do? Under Professor Dumol's careful guidance, we were able to

discern the different solutions Rizal tested throughout the length of his novels: In the *Noli* was Rizal's early endorsement of the anti-friar campaign, carried away as he was by the European doctrine of progress. We saw him toy with the idea of revolution as a remedy, though he struggled with the thought of the innocent lives that might be lost and with the merits of an insurrection carried out for personal motivations like revenge. We also saw how he debated with himself (under the guise of two of his characters) about the right means to achieve civic liberties, such as freedom of speech and the right to vote, for the Filipinos: did one achieve freedom through education or political struggle? And lastly, we saw him hypothesize the destruction of the Filipino race altogether, whom one disillusioned character described as a "slavish people," with the scientific development of bombs. Overall, Professor Dumol's course was a survey of Rizal's hypotheses.

Understanding how extensively Rizal had searched for an answer allowed me to appreciate the depth and substance of his final solution: In the last chapter of the *Fili*, Rizal concludes that, before independence from their colonizers, the Filipino people needed redemption or internal change. The values of a social institution, he explains, can only be upheld if the people that comprise it are willing to defend them. How was a people who did not love the common good to maintain self-rule? Thus, Rizal felt that Filipinos needed to develop a regard for the common good to replace their individualistic and patron-client mindsets, before they could graduate to independence: "What is the use of independence if the slaves of today will be the tyrants of tomorrow?" (Rizal, 1891/1912, chapter XXXIX). God's justice, he concludes philosophically, was to allow the people to suffer and work at present, which would temper the Filipino spirit to develop civic virtue for eventual independence.

Returning to the point, only a Rizal course structured according to his novels of ideas could evince the power of his eventual conclusion.

As history would have it, democracy was thrust on us by our American colonizers so that Filipinos bypassed the period of penance that Rizal stipulated as a pre-requisite for independence. The social cancer thus surviving into a democratic Philippines, the consequent mismatch between democratic values and our Filipino defects may explain the dysfunction of Philippine democracy. The Rizal course's carefully developed conclusion has shaped my conviction that a functioning democracy requires civic virtue to underpin self-governance. This is a belief I had first to enact in my own life.

4. The course framed Rizal's ideas as his personal response to the social conditions of his time, leading me to the truth that the nation is the ongoing project of the individual.

As we considered the progression of Rizal's political thought, Professor Dumol explained the changes and developments in his ideas by grounding them in their wider socio-historical context and in the personal events of his life. Most important to know was the period of Philippine history in which Rizal lived and wrote: a time when Filipinos did not yet conceive of themselves as a nation (with the town being the highest form of socio-political organization) but when a nascent sense of nationhood was palpable after the unjust execution in 1872 of three Filipino priests by the Spanish military tribunal bestowed on Filipinos a common cause. The course, therefore, framed Rizal's political thought as a man's personal response to contemporary social challenges, and he became a shining example of an individual who had dedicated his life to the ongoing project of

the nation.

This depiction of Rizal was likely the course's most compelling element in my personal transformation. It touched me to see how earnestly Rizal sought solutions for the Philippine social cancer, demonstrating a love for nation that prevailed not "because . . ." but "so that . . ." I realized that his heroism, so often equated with his renowned intellect, was firstly the product of deep love. In this way, his heroism became relatable, a task of love attainable for the Everyman. Additionally, in showing me how Rizal sought solutions for his time, Professor Dumol's course taught me that citizenship is one's lived response to contemporary social challenges, a task that continues for us today, with our distinctive problems and conditions.

Distilling my educational experience into these four central points has allowed me to grasp the potency of Professor Dumol's Rizal course: overall, his curriculum gave me a profound sense of the individual's role in the ongoing project of the nation. Studying the *Noli* and the *Fili* taught me that if Philippine society's problems rest fundamentally in the individual, then our solutions must also begin with internal change from the individual. From Rizal's own life, I saw an unparalleled example of a man who had wholeheartedly made the nation his responsibility.

The course's emphasis on the individual's duty towards the nation had profound effects on my twenty-year-old self. As much as I identified as a daughter, sister, and friend, I began to identify as a Filipino citizen. I realized my responsibility towards the nation and could no longer content myself with a life lived only for my immediate circle. These ideas came to influence my personal choices, the most significant being my decision to pursue a



career in teaching. I felt that my capabilities could best be put to service through education, to continue developing a love for the common good in my students.

### **The Rizal curriculum as political text**

Having analyzed its ability to bring about my transformation, I am convinced that Professor Dumol's Rizal curriculum is a powerful form of critical education. In a society where an attitude of self-interest is the most deeply rooted obstacle to achieving justice, education that instills a sense of civic virtue, one individual at a time, is a powerful step towards a new social vision. How the curriculum functions as political text merits its own discussion.

According to Apple et al. (2009), one of the ways critical education targets injustice is to transform assumptions about what counts as "official" knowledge, for such knowledge forces the oppressed to adapt to a reality that retains the power of the oppressors (Freire, 2000). In accordance with this notion, Professor Dumol's course challenges the official Philippine historical narrative taught in schools, which has encouraged superficial conceptualizations of Filipino nationhood and citizenship. At best, these conceptualizations do nothing to ameliorate existing relations of exploitation and domination in Philippine society; at worst, they aggravate and perpetuate injustice. By rectifying certain points in our national narrative, the Rizal course provides an alternative basis for the formation of new conceptualizations of Filipino nationhood and citizenship.

The dynamic between Philippine history education and societal injustice must first be explained further. Historians and sociologists have argued that our local communities are organized politically along patron-client lines, a remnant from our pre-Hispanic past (Dumol, 2004). This

argument reveals the reality of Philippine political structure: a shell of a democratic national government (Dumol, 2004) imposed over a social structure that is highly hierarchical and essentially still segmented into families and tribalistic communities (David, 2018). In consequence of our social structure, sociologist Randy David (2013) writes that Filipinos have an "underdeveloped" concept of citizenship:

While we profess a strong attachment to our country, this is mainly emotional. It has not matured into a commitment to abide by the formal institutions of government. That is why our most basic loyalties and obligations are still reserved to members of our kin group and narrow circle of friends, patrons and dependents. (para. 3)

The patron-client dynamic fosters relations of exploitation and domination in Philippine society. The most glaring example is the mass poverty that compels ordinary people to view politicians as patrons who provide them with access to public services like healthcare, housing, and educational assistance (David, 2018). In their eyes, elections have become the opportunity to vote in personal protectors rather than public servants, allowing seemingly benevolent yet corrupt politicians to remain in power (David, 2018). Evidently, it is impossible to "erect a democracy on the foundations of feudalistic communities" (Dumol, 2004, p. 299).

Philippine history education does nothing to repair our current concept of citizenship, so harmful to democracy. Stemming from the so-called "nationalist" school of Philippine historiography from the 1970s (Schumacher, 2008), the official historical narrative gives the impression that the nation emerged "as a matter of

course—the way for instance a seed eventually becomes a tree” (Dumol & Camposano, 2018, p. 18). It ignores the concrete economic, social, and cultural conditions that made a national identity possible among individuals of diverse ethnicities (Dumol & Camposano, 2018). Treating the nation as a historical and cultural given (Dumol & Camposano, 2018) that existed even before Spanish colonization, the narrative reduces Philippine history to the simplistic story of an already united Filipino people reclaiming an independence that had been seized by foreign oppressors. The climax of this narrative is the 1898 Philippine Revolution, through which the Philippines gains her independence from Spain. Ironically, Rizal, who had died two years before and had opposed revolution, has been claimed as its inspiration, diminishing him in Philippine history as the mascot for the Philippine Revolution.

The national narrative holds consequences for Filipino identity and citizenship and, ultimately, for the nation. John N. Schumacher (2008), one of the most prominent historians of the Philippines, criticizes “nationalist” history thus: “Reconstructing a Filipino past . . . on false pretenses can do nothing to build a sense of national identity, much less offer guidance for the present or future” (p. 13). With the narrative’s primordial representation of the nation, the Philippines becomes a static entity, denying modern Filipino citizens any active role in its formation. Furthermore, the narrative encourages us to build an identity on a series of revolts and rebellions, a legacy that is difficult to live out as modern citizenship. Philippine history education, therefore, promotes a notion of citizenship that is sterile and inactive, leaving patron-client relations to continue festering in Philippine democracy.

Returning to Professor Dumol’s Rizal curriculum, the course’s primary form of counterhegemonic action is to challenge the current historical narrative. In doing so, it provides fresh soil in which new ideas of Filipino nationhood and citizenship may grow.

As demonstrated by my personal experience, the course questioned the narrative on three points: First, by continually situating Rizal’s contributions in the nineteenth-century colonial context, the curriculum taught us that the nation is a work in progress that citizens at every age have the responsibility to mold. Second, by allowing us to reflect on the Noli’s social cancer, the curriculum forced us to reconsider the national narrative’s viewpoint that foreign oppressors were the Filipinos’ sole obstacle to independence. We were encouraged instead to contemplate our own defects as a people so that we could amend our understanding of Filipino citizenship to building ties with compatriots and working towards the common good. Third, the course clarified Rizal’s political thought and effectively overturned his reputation as the inspiration behind the Philippine Revolution. For Professor Dumol’s students, Rizal, as national hero of the Philippines, became a paragon of civic virtue rather than a symbol of revolution.

By challenging these points in our national narrative, Professor Dumol’s Rizal curriculum cultivates in Filipinos a deeper notion of nationhood and citizenship through which a new social vision may materialize: a society where individuals have learned to love the common good above their ties to an immediate few. My own experience has proven the transformation this curriculum is capable of producing. By promoting this social vision, the course labors to dismantle the feudalistic conditions that allow relations of

power and exploitation to prevail in the Philippines. Ultimately, it encourages the building of a civil society upon which a functioning democracy may be erected.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Through the method of autobiographical research, I endeavored to understand how Professor Dumol's Rizal course was transformative for me and, effectually, for society.

My memories have revealed that my personal transformation was propelled by the course's emphasis on the individual's role in the ongoing project of the nation. First, regular contextualization of Rizal's life and works during class discussions, as well as the explication of the development of his ideas, created a compelling portrait of our Philippine national hero: an ordinary man who had searched deeply and earnestly for solutions for the social conditions of his time. Second, Professor Dumol's reading of Rizal's novels conveyed the important lesson that the success of a social institution relies first and foremost on individuals who will defend and uphold its values.

As political text, Professor Dumol's curriculum builds a new social vision by overturning a national narrative that has undermined the role of the Filipino citizen. The narrative represents the nation as a historical given that denies citizens any role in its continued formation. Furthermore, it promotes sterile conceptualizations of citizenship that allow relations of exploitation and domination to continue thriving in Philippine society. With its reading of Rizal's life and works, Professor Dumol's course casts new light on the nation as a work in progress, a political inheritance that Filipinos must continue to mold in the face of present-day challenges (Dumol & Camposano, 2018). The course thus re-defines citizenship as a life of civic

virtue and, on this foundation, builds its counter-hegemony: a democratic institution that flourishes in the hands of individuals who have learned to love the common good above their own interests.

Condensing these ideas, revisiting my lived experience of Professor Dumol's Rizal course has unearthed the following principle: For a social studies curriculum to be transformative for the individual and society, it must explore nationhood as an "artifact of the historical process" (Dumol & Camposano, 2018), an ongoing project that is continually formed by the actions of the individuals that comprise it. When the dynamic between nation and individual is clear to the student, the crucial need for civic virtue will assert itself. Through its portrayal of our national hero as one who had toiled to cultivate salubrious roots for the yet unformed Philippine nation, thus initiating the nationhood project, Professor Dumol's Rizal course deeply impressed in me this relationship between individual and nation. In this way was I roused to continue the project Rizal had started.

The following guidelines may be gathered from Professor Dumol's Rizal curriculum to convey the dynamic between nation and individual. First, frame historical figures as people who had made the nation their responsibility; specifically, situate them in their context to show how they lived in response to the social conditions of their time. Professor Dumol took the time to explicate the journey Rizal underwent, however far he would stray in his ideas, in seeking a remedy for the nineteenth-century Philippine social cancer. In this way, heroes are not cold, marble statues to be worshipped, but real men and women to be emulated simply for the way they attempted to confront contemporary social challenges. Second, conduct the class as an investigation into the notion that the nation is the result of the individuals that comprise

it, making it a tangible phenomenon for students. Studying the survival of the nineteenth-century social cancer into present Philippine society allowed me to understand that our defects and weaknesses as a people have created the structural conditions that make up a dysfunctional democracy today. It must be noted that the interplay between individual actions and structural conditions to make up the present state of the nation will differ per context. As my personal narrative has shown, when a social studies curriculum establishes the individual as active shaper of the nation, the student gains a sense of his or her own power as a citizen, inspiring transformation in the self for society.

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