

RIZAL'S ROLE IN FOUNDING THE NATION

RAUL J. BONOAN, S.J.

For the three long centuries of Spanish rule, the Philippines was merely a geographic expression. There was strictly speaking no nation, since Spain imposed political unity, by force of conquest with the cooperation of the Church, on the disparate tribes, village clans, petty kingdoms, and linguistic groups, to which the inhabitants belonged. But by the late 19th century, the reality of the Filipino nation was emerging, and Rizal played a crucial role in this historical development.

Rizal's idea of the *patria* began early enough when he was a student at the Ateneo Municipal de Manila. Later in life, while he would criticize his Jesuit mentors for not instilling in them love of country, he was all praises for the Jesuit education he received at the Ateneo, "they taught us *das Schöne und das Beste* (the beautiful and the best)." In his youthful journal he recorded how literature, in particular, the works of Virgil, Cicero, and Horace, "showed me a new direction where I could pursue my aspirations" and how in his last year, 1876-77 he began "to experience immense patriotic sentiments and a refinement of sensibilities." In 1881, two years after graduating from the Ateneo, he wrote a prize-winning poem, *A la juventud filipina*, wherein Spanish commentators sharply noted that his use of *patria* no longer referred to Spain. His concept of nationhood and ideas on the means of achieving it were to develop in the course of his career as political ideologue and activist until his

death in 1896.

Rizal was faced with three options. The first was assimilation, the incorporation of the Philippines as province of Spain, and reform, the proper implementation of just laws and policies and the institutions of new ones to safeguard the rights and welfare of the Filipinos. This option is exemplified in the person of Crisostomo Ibarra in the *Noli*. Some writers and historians look upon this option as subservience on the part of Rizal and the *ilustrados*, comparing it to the statehood status pushed by the *federalistas* and bizarre politicians like Moncado. But what Rizal was advocating was that the Philippines be treated no longer as a colony but as a province of Spain on the basis of the principle that Filipinos must be accorded equal rights as Spaniards. His early assimilationism found expression in his toasting speech in honor of Luna and Ressurección Hidalgo.

The glorious achievements of Luna and Hidalgo illumine the opposite ends of the globe: East and West, Spain and Philippines. As I pronounce their names, I see two columns rising, each from either end, and forming in an arch up in the sky to join two peoples with lasting bonds, two peoples whom the seas and distance strive in vain to separate, two peoples among whom seeds of discord blindly sown by certain despots fail to grow. Luna and Hidalgo are both Spanish and Filipino in their glorious achievements. Born in the Philippines, they could well have been born in Spain, because genius knows no country, it grows everywhere, genius is the patrimony of all, like light and air; cosmopolitan as space, as life, as God himself.

By the standards of the 19th century colonial Philippines, Rizal's idea of *dos pueblos* was most radical and made him a marked man in the colony. He affirmed the equality of the *indio* and as proof pointed to the two paintings which won over European entries.

Rizal never felt completely comfortable with assimilation. As Simon pointed out: "What is to become of you? A people without a soul, a nation without freedom; everything in you will be borrowed, even your own defects." The loss of the Calamba land dispute which Rizal brought all the way to the Supreme Court in Spain in the belief that as Filipino subjects they would get a fair hearing convinced Rizal of Spanish intransigence and the futility of assimilationism and reformism. For one thing, he pointed out, the inexorable law of history dictates that colonies eventually declare themselves independent.

The other option was violent revolution, of which the principal protagonist among his fictional characters was Simoun. It was rejected by Rizal as being of questionable morality. His views on this matter are expressed in the words of Fr. Florentino to the dying Simoun, which count among the noblest passages in our national literature. Simoun asks: How could a just God make his just cause to fail? The priest replies:

Because you chose a means of which He could not approve. The glory of saving a country cannot be given to one who has contributed to its ruin. You believed that what crime and iniquity had stained and deformed, more crime and more iniquity could cleanse and redeem. This was an error. Hate only creates monsters; crime, criminals; only love can work wonders, only virtue can redeem. If our country is someday to be free, it

will not be through vice and crime, it will not be through the corruption of its sons, some deceived, others bribed; redemption presupposes virtue; virtue, sacrifice, and sacrifice, love.

Rizal espoused a philosophy of non-violence, though not as sophisticated as that which would be developed by his contemporary and younger man, Mahatma Gandhi.

I do not mean to say that our freedom must be won at the point of the sword; the sword now counts for very little in the destinies of our times; but I do not say that we must win our freedom by deserving it, by improving the mind and enhancing the dignity of the individual, loving what is just, what is good, what is great, to the point of dying it. When a people reach these heights, God provides the weapon, and the idols and tyrants fall like a house of cards, and freedom shines in the first dawn.

Moreover, revolution was not radical enough for easily "the slaves of today would be the masters of tomorrow."

Founding the Nation

In 1891 he decided on a different strategy. He abandoned *La Solidaridad*, disagreeing with its objective of influencing Spanish and European public opinion. He was now urging his fellow Filipinos to go back home and work directly with the people.

Kung ang inaasahan ng ating mga kababayan ay tayo rito sa Europa ay totoo silang

namamali. Ako'y ayaw magdaya sa kanino man. Kung walang salapi ay wala tayong malaking magagawa. Ang atin maitutulong sa kanila, ay ang ating buhay sa ating bayan. Yaon kamalian ng lahat, na tayo ay makakatulong dito sa malayo, ay salang sala man din. Ang gamot ay dapat ilapit sa may sakit. Dangan ay di ko ibig paikliin ang buhay ng aking mga magulang, di ako sana umalis sa Filipinas anomang mangyari. Yaong limang buan itinira ko roon ay isang halimbawang buhay, isang librong magaling na di lalo sa Noli me Tangere. Ypalayo ng Dios at huag mamatay ang aking mga magulang at muling makikita ninyo ako sa ating bayan. Doon tayo magtulong-tulong, doon tayo samasamang magdusa o magtagumpay kaya.

Ang karamihan ng mga kababayan sa Europa, ay takot, layo sa sunog, at matapang lamang habang layo sa panganib at nasa payapang bayan! Huwag umasa ang Filipinas; umasa sa sariling lakas.

He believed that the time for writing was past. It was now time for action.

In June 1892 he return to the Philippines, and shortly after arrival attended the organizational meeting with the *Liga Filipina*, whose statutes he had drawn up. At his trial Rizal was accused of rebellion for founding the Liga, which the prosecutors claimed was the Katipunan. Rizal countered that the Liga was not subversive and that its aim was the development of industry, culture, and the arts. True, the Liga was not the Katipunan. But the very wording of the statutes suggests that it was no mere civic organization. Listen to the Liga's purpose as stated by Rizal:

“unification of the entire archipelago into a compact, vigorous, and homogeneous body; mutual protection in time of need and necessity; defense against every form of violence and injustice; the development of education, agriculture and commerce; and the study and implementation of reforms.” What could such broad and far-reaching aims mean but that Rizal was going about laying the foundations of the new nation? This was the option he chose. Even in extreme circumstances it had priority over revolution: for a revolution might succeed, but without a nation with a sense of purpose, then the slaves of today would be the oppressors of tomorrow. Legally, Rizal might have been truly innocent for it was not the Liga which rebelled but the Katipunan, the Liga's successor. But the judges knew better. And Rizal himself knew that he had lit the flame, the fire could not be put out. The logic of the Liga, and in fact, of everything he said, wrote and did, was independent nationhood. In real, if not legal terms, Rizal was responsible for the revolution and the birth of the new nation. Thus the development of the national consciousness became complete in Rizal: from assimilation and reform through revolution to the founding of the nation - from the *Noli me tangere* (called in the frontispiece, *novela tagala*) through the *El Filibusterismo* (*novela filipina*) to the *Liga Filipina*.

Benedict Anderson has said that a nation is an “imagined” community. Not that a nation is a work of fiction, but that in the minds of the people there lives the image of their national community. A nation exists when a significant number of the people consider themselves and act as a nation, and believe themselves to be in communion with hundreds, thousands, nay, millions and millions of persons they have never seen or will ever meet; in fact, with millions now long dead and many more still unborn. When Magellan came upon these islands and for the next three centuries, there was no nation for the simple reason

that the inhabitants were not one people with a common political allegiance. For that is what a nation is, and that allegiance is based on three things: a tradition or shared historical experience, a consensus or a shared understanding of what a nation is all about, and a compact or shared agreement among the citizens based on the national tradition and consensus. But by the late 19th century the reality of the Filipino nation was beginning to surface. In this awakening of the national consciousness by reason of his outstanding personal qualities and exceptional talents, Rizal played an unparalleled role.

Rizal's novels occupy a primary place in shaping and sharpening the image of the nation. Rizal wrote for the Filipinos, imagined them reading his books, and addressed them with a sense of familiarity and bonding. His characters- the subservient businessman Capitan Tiago, the coy Maria Clara, the voluble Fray Damaso - were recognizable figures in contemporary society. The inner world of the novels fused with the world of the readers' day-to-day life. The characters, the readers, and the writer are all presumed to be one people.

Equally important are Rizal's historical works. In the “*Sobre La Indolencia de los Filipinos*” he deplored the lack of sense of nationhood, *La Falta De Sentimiento Nacional*. “The human being in the Philippines is merely an individual, not a member of a nation.” The notes to Morga he wrote to study the past, awaken the people's historical consciousness, and recapture “the last moments of our ancient nationality.” His lifelong obsession was *redención nacional*, for which was needed a historical awareness. Rizal extolled the ancient Filipinos for their high civilization, active commerce with neighboring peoples, and thriving industry and manufactures, including shipbuilding, agriculture, mining, cannon foundry and silk production. But under the Spaniards, neighbors which had long traded with

Filipinos, were prohibited entry. Government collected taxes and instituted monopolies. The famous Galleon Trade carried few Philippine products. Colonial policy constricted development and drove inhabitants to indolence and impoverishment. Moreover, conscription of Filipino males to fight Spanish wars against the Muslims, the Dutch and the British radically reduced the population.

Is it strange that the Philippines remains poor in spite of its rich soil when history tells us that the economies of advanced countries took off and were on their way to progress and development the day their civil liberties were restored and restrictions were lifted? The countries with the most active trade and industries are those that are most free, like France, England, and the United States. And Hong Kong, which compares poorly with the smallest of our islands, has more commercial activity than the entire archipelago, because it is free and well administered.

What Rizal strove to show was that the Filipinos had a history quite apart from the Spanish conquest and an "ancient nationality" quite apart from the communities *bajo la campana* set up by the peculiar alliance of Cross and Crown. In the pursuit of their destiny, it was imperative to recover from this collective amnesia and revive consciousness of their pre-colonial roots.

Rizal's new historical perspective quickly became an essential element in Philippine nationalist discourse and found its way into the initiation rites of the Katipunan. The neophyte was asked to answer three questions: 1) *Ano ang kalagayan nitong katagalugan noong unang panahon?* What was the condition of the country in early times? 2) *Ano ang kalagayan*

ngayon? What is her condition now? 3) *Ano ang magiging kalagayan sa darating na panahon?* What will she be in the future?

It is the characteristic of the nation that it inspires so many not so much to kill as to die for it. It is hard to imagine anyone dying for Rotary or Lions Club or a political party, least of all LAMP (or LAMMP) or Lakas. And dying for one's country assumes a grandeur which cannot be matched by dying for Communism or Democracy or even Amnesty International. Dying for the country is in fact the incontrovertible proof of the living image of the national community, that the nation exists. Thus with Rizal's *Ultimo Adios* and death, the birth of the nation was complete. It now remained for others whom he left behind to constitute it into an independent and sovereign state.

Agoncillo, Constantino, and some other newspaper columnists have held to the radical opposition between Rizal and Bonifacio. But perceptive historians have indicated the complementarity of their roles: Rizal led to Bonifacio and independent nationhood; on the other hand, Bonifacio looked up to Rizal, asked for his support, and wanted him rescued at all cost. While Rizal as prisoner condemned the Katipunan on the basis of information supplied him by the Spanish military, he never rejected in principle the necessity of rebellion. In his farewell poem, he appeared to have acknowledged the validity of this option.

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

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

Rizal's conscious choice was *cruel martirio* at the scaffold
 in the field of Bagumbayan. Bonifacio's was combat in the open
 battlefield, *combate en el ocampo abierto*.

Education as Means for Nation-building

For Rizal the distinctive means for building the nation
 and national redemption was education. His dream was to build
 a school of his own in Manila built on the German model. He in
 fact wrote the statutes and curriculum for this projected *colegio
 moderno*. This consuming desire to educate his people was
 fictionalized in the *Noli* in the episode of schoolmaster and
 Ibarra's project of a school house in honor of his father.

We might say that all his writings were intended to
 educate his people. But let me cite Rizal's letter to the Malolos
 women, an important work but not appreciated enough. As Rizal
 saw it, the problem was that colonialism had kept the Filipinos
 ignorant, immature, and dependent on their colonial masters.
 The Filipinos then must learn to use reason and think on their
 own.

*Ang kamangmanga'y kaalipinan, sapagka't kung
 ano ang isip, ay ganoon din ang tao, taong walang
 sariling isip, ay taong ualang pagkatao; ang bulag
 na tagasunod sa isip ng iba, ay parang hayop na
 susunod-sunod sa tali.*

*Ignorance is slavery inasmuch as a human being
 is measured by his thinking. People who do not
 think on their own are devoid of humanity. One
 who follows blindly the thought of another is like
 an animal tied to a leash.*

The letter was the first attempt to translate philosophical
 ideas into Tagalog, grappling with words like *matuid, loob, bait,
 isip* which have their own peculiar meaning without exact
 equivalents in Western languages. This brief work assumes
 importance in the light of today's effort to articulate a Filipino
 philosophy and deserves greater attention and study from
 historians and philosophers alike. Three centuries under Spain
 had conditioned the Filipino to a climate of dependence and
 patterns of behavior and thought designed to preserve colonial
 rule. It was Rizal's intention to break this mold. Filipinos must
 think on their own without reliance on their colonial masters,
 and develop a new philosophy and new ethos for themselves.
 He echoed Rousseau's startling statement in the Social Contract
 that whereas all human beings were born free they were
 everywhere to be found in chains,

*Pare-parehong pinanganak ng walang tanikala
 (ang bawat tao), di malaya, ang loob at
 kaluluwa'y walang makasusupil, Bakit kaya
 ipaaalipin mo sa iba ang marangal at malayang
 pagiisip?*

All were born free without chains, nothing can
 subject one's interior and soul. Why will you then
 allow someone else to enslave your mind?

True holiness consists not only in long novena prayers
 and wearing scapulars, but in *magandang asal, malinis na loob*

at matuid na isip. The new morality is not individualistic but has a social and political dimension: *ang tao...ay hindi inianak para mabuhay sa sarili, kundi para sa kanyang bayan.* It calls for solidarity: the individual is helpless against oppressors, but not a people bound by their high destiny and firm purpose: *ang isa-isang tingting ay madaling baliin, nguni't mahirap ang isang bigkis na walis.*

Rizal's All-Pervasive Nationalism

Without a doubt Rizal's singular prominence in the development of the nation owed much to his brilliance of mind, facility of language, boldness of expression, gift of wit and satire, and the sheer magnitude of his literary production. But the uniqueness and distinction of Rizal's nationalism stems from its all-embracing and all-pervasive character. Far from being compartmentalized and confined to political activities, his patriotism permeated all aspects of his existence. It was a calling, mission and way of life. Joined to his brilliance of literary expression and borne witness to by his courage and forthrightness and the nobility of his martyrdom, it awakened the sentiments of his people, from the cane-wielding, carriage-driven *ilustrados* in Manila to the sunburnt, barefoot peasants of Mount Banahaw.

Let me illustrate this all-pervasive character of Rizal's nationalism.

1. First, Rizal's nationalism meant necessarily a deep and burning love of country, often expressed with strong romantic sentiments. Patriotism was not a question of cold intellectual political analysis, but a love affair, a matter of the heart. And as he indicated so often, but especially in his farewell poem, this love was unto death. Let me quote from a speech he delivered

at the New Year's Eve Banquet of 1883:

If when I return home, my country were to ask me, my country, so-called uncivilized, where hospitality is not bought nor sold but offered freely and fulfilled as a duty... if this country, uncouth and barbaric, I admit, because she harbors fewer criminals and riotous mob, uncouth and barbaric... because mothers do not allow their daughters to traffic in places of prostitution, because there children kiss the hand of their parents...if this beloved Philippines would ask me...what have I done in my travels abroad; this shall be my answer: In my heart of hearts I have suppressed all loves except the love of my native land, from the tablets of my mind I have erased all thoughts except those that signify her progress, and my lips have forgotten the names of all the other races in order to be able to say only one – the name of Filipino.

Secondly, for Rizal true Filipino art must convey Filipino culture and the artist's love of it. His two novels and his poems, including his famous *Ultimo Adiós* are expressive of his love of country and intense patriotic sentiments. Whether or not Luna and Resurrección Hidalgo meant their prize-winning paintings to express nationalist sentiments, Rizal interpreted them as expressing such.

So it is that in Luna we find the shades, the contrasts of colors, the fading lights, the mysterious, the terrifying, like echoes of the dark tropical storms, of thunder from the skies, and disastrous volcanic eruptions. In Hidalgo, on the other hand, everything is light, color, harmony,

feeling, clarity, like the Philippines on moonlit nights or tranquil days when her horizons beckon us to silent meditation and to the infinite beyond. Though they differ in appearance, yet both are fundamentally one, in the same way that our hearts beat in unison no matter how strikingly we differ. By the strokes of the brush both have transformed the dazzling rays of the tropical sun into rays of unfading glory that surround the fatherland. Both give expression to the spirit of our social, moral, and political life: humankind subjected to hard trials, humankind unredeemed, reason and noble aspirations in open combat with prejudices, fanaticisms, and injustices; because sentiments and conviction break through the thickest walls; because for both all substance is porous, everything is transparent. And if they cannot wield the pen and the printed word does not come to their aid, then their palette and brush shall not only delight the eye but speak eloquently as advocates of their cause.

Thirdly, nationalism demanded of the Filipino moral regeneration and ethical behavior. While Del Pilar and the other propagandists could not be bothered by the conduct of their fellow Filipinos, Rizal stood up to their easy-going confreres in Spain and much to their annoyance, preached like some priest and prophet against their favorite past times, namely, gambling and fooling around with women. Rizal wrote Del Pilar from Brussels:

I am afraid we are playing into the hands of the friars. Is there anything over there to remind them that the Filipinos comes to Europe not to gamble

or have a good time but to work for the liberty and the dignity of his race? To gamble, there is no need to leave the Philippines...I appeal to the patriotism of the Filipinos to give proof to the Spanish people that we are superior to our misfortunes, that we cannot be made into brutish beasts, that our sentiments cannot be numbed by corrupt ways.

Fourth, most important of all, Rizal's all-consuming love of country penetrated to the deepest and most personal level of his consciousness, the inner sanctum of his religious beliefs. And it is here that he came in conflict with the friar orders and the Catholic Church.

Listen to what he has to say to the Malolos women:

Liningin ninyong magaling kung ano ang religiong itinuturo sa atin. Tingnan ninyong mabuti kung iyan ang utos ng Dios o parangal ni Cristong panglunas sa hirap ng mahirap, pangaliw sa dusa ng nagdudusa. Alalahanin ninyo ang lahat ng sa inyo'y itinuturo, ang pinapatunguhan ng lahat ng sermon, ang nasa ilalim ng lahat ng misa, novena, cuintas, kalmen, larawan, milagro, candila, correa, at iba't iba pang iginigiit, inihihaw at isinusurot araw-araw sa inyong loob, tainga, at mata at hanapin ninyo ang puno at dulo, at saka iparis ninyo ang religiong iyan sa malinis na religion ni Cristo, at tingnan ninyo kung hindi ang inyong pagka kristiano ay paris ng inaalagaang gatasang hayop, o paris ng pinatatabang babuy kaya, na di pinatataba alang-alang sa pagmamahal sa kanya kundi maipagbili ng lalong mahal at ng lalong masalapian.

No professional philosopher or theologian, Rizal was primarily a political ideologue and activist. His principal concern was "national redemption." What Rizal was looking for was a theological and philosophical framework for the social, political and cultural transformation he dreamt for his people.

It is my considered view that Rizal was in search of intellectual support, a political theology if you will, for the social, political, and cultural transformation of his people. He wanted for his people liberties, freedom of expression, representation in the Cortes, economic development, justice for the oppressed, and a sense of the past and appreciation of their own culture. Unhappily, the Church in Rizal's time had an unholy alliance with colonialism and held in suspicion the freedoms espoused by the French revolution and the democratic principles of 19th century liberals. Finding none but hostility in the Church and the religious orders, he turned to the Enlightenment philosophies, which provided him with a rich armory of idiom, imagery, principles, concepts and ideas for the ongoing discourse on "national redemption." Rizal's crisis of faith must be laid at the door of the institutional Church for her closedness to his legitimate aspirations and those of his people. And the Jesuits, by reason of their role as his teachers and close relationship with him, must bear a large portion of the blame. Shut in within their narrow theology and Spanish loyalties, they failed to show Rizal how his political involvement and espousal of separation from Spain were the dictates of a genuinely Christian conscience; how his attacks against Spanish colonial rule and even those against the ministers of the Church would not necessarily impugn the essence of the Church and the Catholic faith; and how work toward progress and development could be in keeping with gospel values.

Conclusion

In closing let me make three remarks.

1.) Rizal's concept of nation.

Some nationalist movement in 19th century Africa and Asia assigned primacy to the state, often viewed as a means toward nationhood. Witness the conflict in Rwanda between the Hutus and the Tutsis! By way of contrast, Rizal gave priority to nationhood over the formation of the state, for he asked, "What is the use of independence if the slaves today will be the tyrants of tomorrow?" It is the observation of the French historian Georges Fischer that in Rizal the basis of nationhood is not race, ethnic origin, religion or language, but a commonality that derives from education. The binding factor is the broadening of the mind. What is particularly distinctive in Rizal's concept of the Filipino nation is its emphasis on education.

2.) Rizal's perspective in the solution of the Muslim problem.

Rizal's political thought is crucial to the current peace process in Mindanao, as my friends Filipino Muslim scholars, Datu Michael Mastura and Dr. Nagasura Madale of Mindanao University have pointed out. His search for the common past, what Filipinos had been before Spain stopped the advance of Islam and instructed the Christianized inhabitants to view the Muslims as their mortal enemies, provides a historical perspective within which to search for a common ground between Muslims and Christians. What is the East Asia Growth Area but the modern revival of precolonial trade relationships among the population in this part of the globe?

3.) The role of Rizal's death in imagining the nation.

What was peculiar about Rizal was that he bequeathed to his people his last will and testament in the form of a poem. As we all know, he inserted the poem written in a small piece of paper into an alcohol lamp, which he handed over to his sister saying in English, so as not to be understood by the Spanish guards, "There is something inside." The poem immediately enjoyed a wide circulation among the people and did much to build the image of the nation in their minds. In it he speaks of the "essence of faith" in terms of dying for his country.

*¡Salud! ah, que es hermoso caer por darte vuelo,
Morir por darte vida, morir bajo tu cielo,
Y en tu encantada tierra la Eternidad dormir.*

To your health! O lovely: how lovely: to fall that
you may rise to perish that you may live! to die
beneath your skies! and upon your enchanted
ground the eternities to sleep!

The young writer Jose V. Palma (1878-1903), like so many writers of his generation, was much influenced by Rizal. In 1899 Palma wrote in Spanish the lyrics to the tune of Juan Felipe's *Marcha Magdalo*, which became the *Himno Nacional Filipino*. Because of the disappearance of Spanish as the language of daily communication and culture, few Filipinos today recognize the echoes of the *Ultimo Adiós* in the Philippine National Anthem.

The anthem rises to a rousing finale which captures the "essence of Rizal's faith"—service of country unto death, *morir por darte vida*. Some scholars, according to Hila, have noted

the likely influence of the Spanish and French anthems on the music of Juan Felipe. But more significantly, I believe, the lyrics of Palma bear comparison with those of other national anthems.

The Marseillaise cries for battle: *Aux armes, citoyens/ Formez vos bataillons!* The Star-Spangled Banner, which for almost five decades of the American regime Filipino children sang in school, is a victory song: "And the Star-Spangled Banner in triumph shall wave/O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave." But what is distinctive of the Philippine Anthem is that it is essentially a call to the supreme sacrifice of life in death:

*Buhay ay langit sa piling mo
aming ligaya na pag may mang-aapi
ang mamatay ng dahil sa'yo.*

This is a clear echo of Rizal's nationalism, *morir por darte vida*, his love of country unto death.