

Rizal as a deist essay



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The Foremost Filipino Deist The national hero of the Philippines was actually a deist but this fact is not widely known among Filipinos. Tags: deism, deist, filipino, jose rizal, Religion Published by joemar taganna in Religion on September 23, 2006 | 126 responses There are so many things that ordinary Filipinos do not know about their national hero. Even if his two novels (Noli Me Tangere and El Filibusterismo) is being studied in high school and his life and works in college as part of the curriculum, many things have been left out of importance.

Many details in the novels have been omitted and some aspects of Rizal's life have been neglected if not concealed for some reasons.

For instance, it is little known that Rizal was actually a deist. He had a firm belief in God but he rejected revealed religion. When we say revealed religion, it refers to a religion that bases its teachings on a supposed revelation from God contained in “ holy books” and/or traditions handed down from generations to generations. One can read Rizal's exposition on this subject in his correspondence with a Jesuit priest, Fr.

Pablo Pastells, who was actually his spiritual director during his youthful years in Ateneo.

The exchange occurred when Rizal was in an exile in Dapitan and when Fr. Pastells was already the Superior of the Philippine Mission of the Society of Jesus. In his third letter to Pastells, our national hero explained: “ Through reasoning and by necessity, rather than through faith, do I firmly believe in the existence of a creative Being. Who is he? I do not know. What human

sounds, what accents are we to use in pronouncing the name of this Being whose works overwhelm the imagination?

Can anyone give him an adequate name, when a small creature on this earth with power so fleeting carries two or three names, three or four surnames, and many more titles and designations? We call him Dios but this only comes from the Latin *deus* and ultimately from the Greek Zeus.

What kind of being is he? I would attribute to him, to an infinite degree, all the beautiful and holy qualities my mind can think of, but the fear of my ignorance constrains me. Someone has said that everyone conjures up his own God in his own image and likeness.

And if my memory serves me right, it was Anacreon who said that if a bull could form an image of God, it would imagine with horns and mooing in a superlative degree. Even so I venture to think of him as infinitely wise, mighty, good (my idea of the infinite is imperfect and confused), when I behold the wonders of his works, the order that reigns over the universe, the magnificence and expanse of creation, and the goodness that shines in all. ”
Read more in Religion « You Might Be a Deist Without Knowing It We Need God in America Again » Unable to pass judgement on what surpasses my powers, I settle for studying God in his creatures like myself and in the voice of my conscience, which only can have come from him.

I strive to read and find his will in all that surrounds me and in the mysterious sentiment speaking from within me, which I strive to purify above all else. ” Thus, Rizal’s belief in a Deity was based on reasonable reflection of nature as well as from conscience and not on faith or divine revelation. On <https://assignbuster.com/rizal-as-a-deist-essay/>

the same letter, Rizal expressed his disbelief on the teachings of ancient sacred books.

He writes: “ The various religions claim to have God’s will condensed and written in books and dogmas; but apart from the many contradictions, conflicting interpretations of words, and many obscure and untenable points I find in them, my conscience, my reason cannot admit that he who like a wise father had provided his creatures with everything necessary for this life, proceeded to bury what was necessary for eternal life in the obscurities of a language unknown to the rest of the world and hide it behind metaphors and deeds that go against the very laws of nature.

Is it possible that he who makes the sun rise for all and the air to blow everywhere to give life, he who has endowed everyone with intelligence and reason for life here on earth, has also hidden from us what is most necessary for our eternal life? What shall we say of a father who heaps candies and toys on his children, but gives food only to one of them, educates and rears him alone? And what if it so happens that this chosen one refuses to eat while the others die looking for food? ” But Rizal goes to qualify his denial of revelation. He only denied special revelation that came through ancient books or traditions.

He pointed it out in his fourth letter to Fr. Pastells that: “ I believe in revelation, but in the living revelation of nature which surrounds us everywhere, in the voice speaking out through nature – powerful, eternal, incorruptible, clear, distinct, and universal as the Being from which it comes. It is this revelation that I believe in, which speaks to us and penetrates our

being from the day we are born to the day we die. Can any other books reveal to us more faithfully God's work, his goodness, his love, his providence, his eternity, his glory, his wisdom? The heavens tell the glory of the Lord, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Ps 19: 1' Must humanity look for other gospels in order to love God?

Do you not believe that men did wrong when they looked for God'd will in scrolls and temples instead of the wonders of nature under the majestic canopy of the skies? Instead of interpreting obscure passages or phrases which provoked hatreds, wars, and dissensions, would it not have been preferable to interpret the facts of nature the better to shape our lives according to its inviolable laws and utilize its resources for our perfection? It is then obvious that Rizal was neither Catholic nor Protestant or any other religion you know. He just came to the conclusion that God exists through reasoning and through studying nature and not from any suspicious and contradictory revelation.

I advise you get hold of these exchanges with Fr. Pastells. You can also read the honest and equally intelligent replies of Fr. Pastells, which makes their exchange mentally stimulating and really interesting. But in the end, Rizal remained unmoved. He was not convinced by the priest's arguments as was clearly expressed in his last letter.

Therefore, our national hero, who was incontestably intelligent and no doubt studied these matters carefully, came to arrive at a very simple religious philosophy that was attuned to be one of the foundations of the Filipino

nation; attuned to his aspirations of independence, academic and religious freedom for our country.