

Introduction

To celebrate the centennial of the Philippine Revolution and to commemorate the 100th year since Dr. Jose Rizal, National Hero, Renaissance man and a champion of Filipino women, gave his life for his country, this double issue of the *Review* focuses on the theme: Women in Revolution and History.

For too long, Filipino women have been seen as being on the fringes of their country's history. Rarely, if at all, do women figure in Philippine historical writing, and when they do, they frequently suffer from stereotypes that seem to have been ingrained in the culture. The article by Dr. Maria Luisa Camagay, "Ang Kababaihan sa Texto at sa Reyalidad" compares the presentation of women in texts written by Bonifacio, Rizal and Mabini during the Revolutionary period to the reality of women during that time.

Gradually but increasingly, women are getting to be more visible in history, thanks to a number of historians who have painstakingly looked into the role women have played in the history of their country. Many of these efforts deal with specific women heroes who distinguished themselves during crucial periods of history such as Melchora Aquino, Teresa Magbanua, Trinidad Tecson, etc. These women were particularly active during the Revolution of 1898. The efforts of women during the Revolution, however, were not just individual but collective. The early study by Paz Policarpio, "The Filipino Women During the Revolution," gives us an overview of these individual and collective efforts. More recently, Cecilia Nava-Lochin gives us a closer look of a woman warrior in her profile of Teresa Magbanua.

Many accounts of the Philippine Revolution have been centered on Manila and its environs, including the proximate Tagalog provinces. To its credit, the National Centennial Commission of the Philippines has recognized the Manilacentric bias of most historical accounts and has made an attempt to look into the participation of the regions. Similarly, this journal has worked hard to get contributions from historians who have studied the participation of women in the other regions. In "The Women of Ilocos in the Revolutionary Era," Digna Apilado gives

us a clear-eyed account of the participation of women in Northern Luzon during the Revolution. Madrilena de la Cerna examines some of the available sources on women in Central and Eastern Visayas, deconstructing the male bias of one, highlighting the gender perspective of another. Milagros Geremia-Lachica explains the male takeover of the *babaylan* tradition in the Panay (Western Visayas) area but notes that women with their life-giving powers remain a potent force.

If we look more deeply into the researching, thinking and writing of Philippine history, perhaps one reason why women are rarely found in historical writing, particularly formal historical writing, is because of the dominant, male-centered view of history which valorizes physical acts of heroism. Albina Pecson Fernandez in “If Women Are the Best Men in the Philippines, Why Are They Invisible in History?” and Gertie Ampil Tirona in “Why Are Some Filipinas Historic But Not Heroic?” look at the problems of methodology and perspective in connection with the writing of women’s history. In a related article, “Ang Pinagmulan ng Kaisipang Feminista sa Pilipinas,” Lilia Quindoza Santiago attempts a further act of recovery by trying to show that feminist thought is by no means a foreign importation but has its roots in Philippine history, tracing the developments of these links through prehistory to the present.

A greater interest in the methods of oral history has also helped the cause of women in history, allowing their stories to be told, stories that would otherwise be ignored or neglected in traditional and formal historical research. Carina David and I have written an account of Salud Algabre, a revolutionary woman of a later age, based on a detailed interview by Isagani Medina.

Approaching the participation of women in history through traditional and non-traditional literary accounts can also yield rich results. Looking at a novel of the Philippine Revolution, Maximo Kalaw’s *The Filipino Rebel*, from a feminist perspective, Ma. Teresa Sicat looks at the distortions of the nationalist/historical view as based on patriarchal assumptions. Patricia Arinto’s reading of the letters of Rizal’s sisters, on the other hand, shows how the testimonial mode, perhaps the only way many women could write literature at the time, gives us a more participatory sense of the historical times in which they lived as women.

In this centennial year, the creative efforts of women have similarly focused on women in history as seen in the poems of Joi Barrios. Instead of focusing on the *ilustrado* (the intellectual elite who led the Reform Movement of the 1890s and were also active in the Revolution), she writes of “The Ilustrado’s Sister.” She stayed at home while her brothers went abroad to study and agitate for reform through their writings but her commitment to the nationalist cause was no less deep.

As part of its celebration of Women’s month in the centennial year, the University Center for Women’s Studies, together with Kasibulan, a women artists’ collective, held an exhibit of women artists interpreting the theme of this issue. Some of their paintings, sculpture and installations are reproduced in the Art Folio together with their own accounts of how they have interpreted women in history and revolution in their particular works.

We hope that the articles in this issue will balance male-centered views of Philippine history to which the reader is more frequently exposed and will convey the idea that in the Philippines, particularly in revolutionary times, history is herstory as well.

Thelma B. Kintanar

