

If Women Are the Best Men in the Philippines, Why Are They Invisible in History?*

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"For too long, women have had no written memory of themselves. There can be no equality when more than half of humankind is without history" (Anderson and Zinsser 1988, Vol. I:xxiii).

Introduction

U.S. Governor-General Leonard Wood once remarked that the best men in the Philippines are the women. If this is true, how come women in the Philippines are invisible in history books?

This paper tackles the feminist issue of why, despite women's active participation in history-making as production and reproduction workers, not to mention as fighters for freedom and justice, Mr. Wood's remark about them is made to sound false by gender-blind historians. In the pages of history books, women are made to appear as mere passive onlookers as men single-handedly make history as wise law-givers, builders of industry, generals of armies, statesmen, conquering heroes and the like. A case in point is the National Historical Institute's publication on heroes, *Filipinos in History* which comes in two volumes (1989). Of the 117 subjects portrayed, only 17 are women. The way these 17 women are presented is also not something to cheer about. The writers made it clear that these women could not make history on their own. They made it to this history book only because they were in the service of the real heroes, as servers of food to male Katipuneros, nurses of wounded male soldiers, or makers of flags which men waved or raised in flagpoles as symbols of their patriotic aspirations. Some of them are portrayed as

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armed combatants during the revolution. But then, the write-ups clarified, these women early in their girlhood already manifested male qualities. In other words, what the writers are saying is that these heroines were actually men in women's bodies. This is illustrated by the entry on Teresa Magbanua (1868-1974).

She played more with her brothers than her sisters and with the neighborhood boys rather than with the girls her age. She pitched in her brothers' fight against the boys from the other side of town. She loved to climb trees, swim in the Jalar River and ride horses and carabaos (Vol. II: 27).

Despite the response to the call to make women visible in history sounded by feminists worldwide, especially after the declaration of 1976-1989 by the United Nations as the Decade of Women, it cannot be said with truth that the feminist dream of a holistic history of the Philippines is already a reality. What is undeniably a reality is the popular perception of men's history as Philippine history.

Objective of the Paper

It is the objective of this paper to focus attention on the fact that men's history or traditional history is not Philippine history, but merely a part of it, and to underscore the need for holistic history by including women's history in Philippine history.

A. Review of the Highlights in Traditional History or Men's History

Traditional history or men's history may be categorized into two: on the one hand, history told from the point of view of the colonizer, and, on the other, history told from the point of view of the colonial.

The first category is produced by a writer with the point of view of a man/upper class/white/conquistador.

As a man he subscribes to patriarchy or the ideology which posits the view that men are superior to women and children. As a member of the upper class he sees himself as the social, political and cultural better of the underclass and therefore fears the emergence of a social order that the upper class can no longer control or, worse, one that will be controlled by the underclass. As a member of the white race, he sees the non-white world and its natives as inferior and in need of upliftment

from the white race, the source of the only true religion, political correctness, progress and advanced art and culture. As a citizen of the victorious conquering nation, he naturally takes the side of his superior country and sees the conquered country and its citizens as a source of resources to exploit for profit. To the conquistador, there is no such thing as equal rights and privileges with the colonial. The colonial, in fact, must not be developed lest, to borrow Padre Bustamante's language, he be separated from his carabao.

The early Spanish chroniclers, namely P. Pedro Chirino, P. Francisco Colin, P. Juan Plasencia, Miguel de Loarca and Dr. Antonio de Morga typify the producer of traditional history written from the point of view of the male/upper class/white/conquistador. To them the natives they encountered in the Philippines were barbaric pagans who should consider themselves lucky at becoming the object of Spanish colonization by upper class and learned men of the superior white race and citizens of glorious imperialist Spain. Through Spanish colonization the lucky natives would get to know the true God through the true religion, the Universal, Roman, Holy, Catholic Church thus assuring themselves of eternal salvation. Additionally, they will be in contact with the colonizers who come from a higher form of civilization.

Reflect on the point of view of this text of Governor Francisco Tello:

They (the native chiefs of Laguna) were told how God our Lord had granted them great kindness and grace in keeping them under evangelical faith. . . . Our Lord had liberated them from the blindness and tyranny in which they were as subjects of the devil What is still more weighty, the most cursed and perverse sect of Mahoma had begun, through his followers and disciples, to spread and scatter through some of the islands of this archipelago its pestilent and abominable creed; but the true God was pleased at that time to bring the Spanish people into these islands, which was a cure and remedy for the mortal sickness which the said Mahometan sect has already commenced to cause in them. Besides this, the Spaniards had freed them from the tyranny with which their kings and lords were possessing themselves of their wives and goods, which was the greatest injury which could be inflicted upon them. They were also reminded of the great favor that God had granted them in giving them for their king and natural lord the Catholic Don Phelipe, our sovereign, to maintain them and keep them in peace and justice, with much gentleness and love. Our Lord might have deferred the conquest of these islands, and it would have been

made by other kings who are not so Catholic, as a punishment for the idolatry which they practiced; then they would have fallen into greater blindness and sin than before, and they would not have been so rich and well-provided as they are, nor would their property have been so safe. (Quoted in Constantino 1975:23).

Or on this text of Morga who was considered by no less than Dr. Jose Rizal as the most objective Spanish chronicler who wrote on the early years of Spanish colonization:

The Monarchy of the Kings of Spain finds aggrandizement in the zeal and care with which They have defended with their own natural realms the holy Catholic Faith which is taught by the Roman Church, from so many adversaries who persecute it and endeavor to darken its truth with the diverse errors which they have sown throughout the world. Thanks to this, They have through God's mercy, preserved their realms and subjects in the purity of the Christian religion, thereby meriting the title and renown as Defenders of the Faith which They now possess. Likewise for the courage of their invincible hearts, with which and at the cost of their own incomes and assets, with Navies and Spanish sailors, they have crossed the seas, discovered and conquered great kingdoms in the remotest and unknown corners of the world, Their people bringing with them the knowledge of the true God and messengers of the Christian Church with whom they now live, rule in peace and justice, civilly and politically under the shelter and protection of their Royal arms and power which the natives had lacked, having lived in the midst of tyrannical ignorance and barbarous cruelties on the part of the enemy of the human race which exerted and maintained dominion over it for a long time (Morga 1990:xxix).

Consider, too, this racist/sexist text written by Sinibaldo de Mas:

That they rarely love a Spaniard is also true. The beard, and especially the mustache causes them a disagreeable impression. . . . Besides, our education, our taste, and our rank place a very high wall between the two persons. The basis of love is confidence; and a rude Filipino girl acquires with great difficulty confidence toward a European who is accustomed to operas and society. They may place themselves in the arms of Europeans through interest or persuasion; but after the moment of illusion is over, they do not know what to say and one gets tired of the other. The Filipino girl does not grow weary of her Filipino, for the attainments, inclinations, and acquaintances of both are the same. Notwithstanding the Filipinos live. . . convinced that not one of their beauties has the slightest affection for us, and that they bestow their smiles upon us only for reasons of convenience, yet imagine that sometimes the

joke is on us only for reasons of convenience, yet I imagine that sometimes the joke is turned upon themselves—especially if the Spaniard is very young, has but little beard, and is of a low class, or can lower himself to the level of the poor Filipino girl (Blair and Robertson XL:225).

History Written by the Colonial

Traditional history written from the point of view of the colonial, as far as my readings go, started with Dr. Jose Rizal. In the latter half of the 19th century producers of history written from the point of view of the colonizer over-emphasized the white/conquistador point of view. Toward the last decade of that century LeRoy observed:

The bitterness of tone, the intolerance and contempt of the Filipino, and the flaunting of "race superiority," which came to characterize the writings of the friars and their defenders in this period—and which played no small part in leading the Filipinos to the brink of separation—are shown in full in the numbers of *La Política de España en Filipinas*, 1891-98 Blair and Robertson, XLII:164).

The likes of Jose Feced, once editor of the above periodical, and Wenceslao Retana, his associate editor, downgraded Filipinos so much that Rizal, with the help of his friend, Ferdinand Blumentritt had to answer bitter text with bitter text in the pages of the Philippine paper in Spain, the *La Solidaridad*.

Jose Rizal who clearly saw the connection between the writing of history and the making of history engaged himself in historiography. While in Europe during the Propaganda Movement, Rizal looked for historical documents that would support his thesis that the Philippines had a Golden Past which Frailocracy, created by the *patronato real*, progressively replaced as time went by with a corrupt and corrupting society. He returned to Europe in 1889 upon learning about the presence of Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (1609) in the British Museum.

Deconstructing Philippine History

Rizal republished *Sucesos* with his annotations in Paris in January 1890. The work is dedicated 'To the Filipinos' who should

know the past in order that you may be able to judge better the present and to measure the road traversed during three centu-

ries. . . . If the book succeeds to awaken your consciousness of our past, already effaced from your memory, and to rectify what has been falsified and slandered. . . . we shall be able to study the future (Rizal 1990:vii).

Rizal's choice of Morga is logical for the former's objectives. Morga was not a friar like the friars Chirino, Colin and Plasencia who perceived history as the battle between good and evil, between God and the devil. Morga was not a soldier like Loarca who perceived history as the battle between the conqueror and the vanquished. Morga was a high government official who, in Rizal's words, governed the destinies of the Philippines in the beginning of her new era and witnessed the last moments of our ancient nationality. Furthermore, Morga's training in canon and civil law, plus the fact that he was critical of Spanish rulers who exiled him to Mexico for this failure to defend the Philippines against the Dutch invasion, certainly made him less biased in favor of the Spaniards. Nevertheless, Rizal found Morga's account culture-bound. Consider: Morga who grew up in a temperate country saw winter in the Philippines (p. 242). He also misconstrued women's free expression of their sexuality as a sign of their weakness (p. 247). The bride price looked like the western dowry unjustly extracted by the bride's family from the groom's family because the bride brought nothing to the marriage.

Rizal's annotation rectifies Morga's mistaken perceptions. With regards to winter, our national hero wrote:

Morga takes the rainy season as winter and the rest of the year summer. However, this is not quite exact, because in Manila by December, January, and February the thermometer goes down more than in the months of August and September and therefore with regard to the seasons it resembles Spain as all the rest of the North Hemisphere (Sucesos 1990:242).

With regards to the perceived unchastity of women, Rizal says:

This weakness of Indio women that historians relate, it seems, can be attributed not only to the sincerity with which they obey nature and their own instincts but also to a religious belief that Fr. Chirino tells us about. A doctrine planted the devil in some women of these islands and I believe in all who cannot be saved, be they married or marriageable, is the woman who does not have some lover. Because they say he will help them in the next life by leading them by the hand in crossing a very dangerous river that has no bridge but a narrow piece of timber which must be crossed in order to reach what they call *Kaluahatian*.” (Ibid.: 247).

With regards to the 'unjust' dowry, Rizal wrote:

This dowry, if it can be called thus, represented a compensation for the parents of the bride for the care and education of their daughter. The Filipino woman, never being a burden to any one, neither on her parents nor her husband but all on the contrary, represents a value for whose loss the possessor must be compensated. And this is so true that even in our times parents consent with great difficulty to part from their daughters. It is almost never seen in the Philippines the sad spectacle that many European families present who seem to be in a hurry to get rid of their marriageable daughters, not infrequently the mothers playing a ridiculous role. As it will be seen, neither is there a *sale* or *purchase* in this custom. The Tagalog wife is free and respected, she manages and contracts, almost always with the husband's approval, who consults her about all his acts. She is the keeper of the money, she educates the children, half of whom belong to her. She is not a Chinese woman or a Muslim slave who is bought, sometimes from the parents, sometimes at the bazaar, in order to look her up for the pleasure of the husband or master (sic). She is not the European woman who marries, purchases the husband's liberty with her dowry, and loses her name, rights, liberty, initiative, her true dominion being limited to reign over the salon, to entertain guests, and to sit at the right of her husband (*Ibid.*: 283).

'Orientalism' or the use of the Western perception of the non-Western world as a tool for colonization was already seen and articulated by Rizal a hundred years before Edward Said made a name for himself by articulating the same. Rizal's annotation is valuable in the history of historiography in the Philippine setting. What it succeeded in accomplishing is the deconstruction of our colonial history. It devalued/marginalized/decentered what has been valued/privileged/centered by historians writing from the point of view of man/upper class/white/conquistador. In effect, Rizal's annotation called for a new approach in the writing of Philippine history. If history is a tool to understand the present so that the future can be rationally planned, it must be written from the point of view of the colonial, not the colonizer. The colonizer will always tell the story of the conquistador in relation to the story of the colonized which is essentially a master-slave relation. Naturally, it is the colonizer who will emerge as the hero in history while the colonized the heel. Rizal articulates this sentiment thus in his annotation regarding Admiral Alvarado de Mendana de Neira's account of his activities in the Solomon Islands:

The historians of the Philippines who do not fail to interpret unfavorably to the Indios a suspicion or accident, forget that on almost on all occasions the cause of discords has always come from those who pretend to civilize them, by force of arquebuses and at the expense of the territories of the weak inhabitants. They could not say that the crimes committed by the Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, etc. in the colonies had been committed by the islanders (p. 68).

Regarding the so-called altruism of Spain in colonizing the Philippines, Rizal wrote:

The conversion of the Philippines into the Christian faith was the only excuse that gave the kings the right to possession of the islands, in the opinion of all men then, military as well as civilians and theologians, like Fr. Alonzo Sanchez, Hernando de los Rios, Admiral Jeronimo de Bañuelos y Carrillo, and others. This last one, complaining about the neglect in which the Indios were found, said: "They have given up teaching these innocents the Catholic faith, which is the sole title under which the King of Spain holds this country which does not belong to his patrimony, etc." (Apud Ramusium). This and the existence even today of pagan tribes in the Philippines, elbowing with the most Catholic and devout populations, would prove by itself, if other data did not exist, that the Philippines was kept not only for "the support of Christianity and the conversion of the natives" but also for other political reasons. The Catholic Faith was a Palladian pretext to give an honest appearance to the rule. The reasons adduced in those times to incline the King to keep the Philippines as a necessity were seven: "The first, to increase the teaching of the Gospel. The second, to preserve the authority, grandeur, and reputation of the Spanish crown. The third, the authority to defend the Moluccas Islands and their trade. The fourth, to maintain East India. The fifth, to relieve the Westerners of their enemies. The sixth, to crack the forces of the Dutch to aid that of the crowns of Castile and Portugal. The seventh, to protect the trade with China for both. (Quoted from Juan Grau y Montfalcon, *Justificacion de la Conservacion y Comercio de las Islas Filipinas*, *Ibid.*:342).

Specifying Who Is the Oppressed in History

Rizal's call for writing Philippine history from the point of view of the oppressed colonial found an answer in Teodoro Agoncillo's *Revolt of the Masses* (1956). Agoncillo agrees with Rizal that history must be written from the point of view of the oppressed colonial. But who is the oppressed colonial? While Rizal made no specifications, Agoncillo does

so. While all Indios were oppressed, the degree of oppression differed. The members of the *principalia* were victims only of racial and conquistador oppression while members of the underclass did not only suffer from the same oppression but also from class oppression. It stands to reason, therefore, to posit the view that the Revolution of 1896 was neither solely initiated nor the handiwork of the *ilustrados* as theorized by not a few historians. The masses who had more reason to challenge the colonial order were equally engaged in revolutionary work. They may not have gone to Europe to be part of the Propaganda Movement as eloquent writers contributing to *La Solidaridad* and pro-Filipino publications in Madrid and Barcelona; they may not have engaged in intellectual discourse with the likes of Blumentritt and Moret; they may not have written novels worthy of review in redoubtable literary circles in various European cities, but involved with the revolution against Spain they surely were. The underclass members were open to mobilization for overthrowing the colonial order by one of their own, Andres Bonifacio who founded the Katipunan. This man has been overshadowed by Rizal, a member of the affluent middle class. Historians belonging to the upper class raised Rizal to the pantheon of national hero despite his rejection of the glorious Revolution against Spain. At any rate, Agoncillo opined, even if historians would want to write more about Bonifacio this is almost impossible. Historical documents pertaining to him are scant. His life and works, however, can be reconstructed and understood with a proper accounting of the organization and functioning of the Katipunan.

While it was Agoncillo's *Revolt of the Masses* which brought out into the open the role of the underclass in Philippine history by debunking the erstwhile popular theory that the main movers of Philippine history were the *ilustrados*, it was Renato Constantino who would push the theory to greater heights. In his *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (1975), Constantino debunks the 'Great Man Theory' of history as proposed by Thomas Carlyle who declared that at bottom, history is the biography of great men; of Ralph Waldo Emerson who said that there is properly no history but biography; of Pareto who made the pronouncement that history is the graveyard of the aristocracy. Moreover, Constantino also debunks the idealist philosophy of history which puts primacy on consciousness and sees history as the struggle between true and false consciousness. He wrote:

The individuals who made history colorful could not have made history without the people. Supermen may exist in romantic minds or among those who persist in the primitive practice of defying them; but no supermen exist, only leaders who became great because they were working with and for the people.

The various changes in society and the upward climb of civilization could not have been possible without the people playing definite and irreplaceable roles in each epoch. . . The advances of society, the advent of civilization, the great artistic works were all inspired and made possible by the people who were the mainsprings of activity and the producers of the wealth of societies. But their deeds have rarely been recorded because they were inarticulate (Constantino 1975:4-5).

The writing of history has its role in the making of history.

A history that serves as a guide to the people in perceiving present reality is itself a liberating factor, for when the present is illumined by a comprehension of the past, it is that much easier for a people to grasp the direction of their development and identify the forces that impede real progress. By projecting the people's aspirations, a people's history can give us the proper perspective that will enable us to formulate the correct policies for the future, liberated from outmoded concepts based on colonial values and serving only the needs of foreign powers (7-8).

How then must history be written?

Constantino, unlike Rizal, does not believe in objectivity. In the first place, the historian can never be objective because of ideological interpellation. In the second place, subjectivity has its uses. Historians must not only chronicle events but interpret them and their interpretations must be geared toward the creation of counter-ideology. The ideology of the oppressed foisted on the masses must give way to an ideology of liberation. The historian's task is to show in his work that

Historic struggles provide the people with lessons in their upward march and give them strength to the constantly changing society. In studying these struggles, a true people's history discovers the laws of social development, delineates the continuities and discontinuities in a moving society, records the behavior of classes, uncovers the myths that have distorted thought and brings out the innate heroism and wisdom of the masses. Such a history therefore constitutes both a guide and a weapon in the unremitting struggle for greater freedom and the attainment of a better society.

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The struggles for national liberation of the peoples of underdeveloped areas has enriched the literature of history and has been responsible for new approaches, new techniques of viewing events and writing history as a reaction to official histories which have been part of the arsenal of colonialists in perpetuating the backward conditions of their colonies. Philippine historians can contribute to this important stream of thought by revisiting the Philippine past to eliminate the distortions imposed by colonial scholarship and to redress the imbalance inherent in conventional historiography by projecting the role of the people (*Ibid.*:4).

Constantino takes into consideration class, race and conquistador perspectives but is awfully gender-blind. This is to be expected, for Marxism that guides his work is also gender-blind. Marxism identifies the class struggle as the ultimate motive force of history. Private ownership of the means of production creates two opposing classes, the capitalist and the proletariat. Of the two, it is the latter that functions as hero in history-making. This way of looking at history-making theoretically puts all men into the picture but not all women. Why?

Categorization of work into production work and reproduction work has something to do with it. The first is work that produces goods and/or services with exchange value while the second is work that produces goods and/or services with use value.

Doing production work under a wage system gives to the worker membership in the proletariat. Marx's theory of surplus value explains why the proletariat will inevitably engage in class struggle: the capitalist class steals the labor power of the proletariat and a time will come when the latter can no longer produce and reproduce life based on his wages (sexist language intended to underscore Marx's sexism).

Not all women are members of the proletariat. Only those in production work are. And the Marxist explanation of class oppression does not fully explain the oppression of women as production workers because the theory sees them only as workers and not as women workers. Consequently, the theory, while catching the reality of appropriation of the capitalist class of unpaid labor from women as production workers, does not catch their exploitation as women. The policy and practice of women as being the last to be hired and the first to be fired because of their gender, not to mention the practice of being laid or be laid off and

the reality of sexual harassment in the workplace, are realities totally ignored. Marxism also failed to see the problem of the 'double burden'. Women, unlike men, have to do reproduction work after a full day's production work.

As reproduction workers, women are even more exploited. This becomes clear when we look at what constitutes reproduction work. This is work that includes (1) procreation, (2) production of life, (3) reproduction of the relations of production, (4) the reproduction of social relations, and (5) reproduction of the mode of production.

Women give birth to children who will become workers. This work, while vital to society, is not valued, hence not paid and not reflected in the Gross National Product. Claudia von Werholf comments thus on this anomaly produced by patriarchal/capitalist ideology:

They (men) are obliged to produce *dead* things, 'cadaverous' commodities, but their womenfolk produce *living* labour power. What is capital's interest in labour power? The fact that it is *alive*. It is what capital is not. Capital's burning interest is not in the commodity, labour power, the objectified, unified, disciplined and hence in general underpaid object part of the worker. The fact that it is paid for leads workers to believe that their essence, their identity, consists in their commodity character, the social character of their labour, their 'humanity'. . . . They believe, must believe, that the more their labour power is transformed into a commodity, that is, the more permanent their employment, the higher the pay; in fact, the more *they themselves* become commodities, *machines*, the more 'human' they will be (Mies 1987:110).

Women's housework that entails the satisfaction of human life for food, shelter, clothing, sex, etc. is also not valued and therefore unpaid. Yet this work increases the surplus value of men's production work. Because men no longer have to produce their life and that of their family, capital can extract more surplus value from them. Not only that. They are also afforded the time for engaging in revolutionary work.

Women collaborate with capitalists by reproducing the relations of production. Through the socialization process, women transfer capitalist/patriarchal values like respect for property, obedience to authority, work ethics, consumerism, etc. In this kind of work, women put their own enemy inside their own children, thereby strengthening and perpetuating the very system that enslaves them. For this dirty work, women are not paid.

Women also reproduce social relations that are vital to the functioning of the family and society. Friendship and kinship are forged because women transmit ideas about such relations to the young. Again, women are not paid for this work.

Women, as a matter of fact, reproduce the mode of production. Yet for this service to patriarchy/capitalism, they are not rewarded but punished. Their punishment comes in the form of their exploitation.

The full extent of the exploitation of women's reproduction work is seen when we look at its relation to capital. This has a twofold relation. First, it is outside the wage system, yet it contributes to the accumulation of capital. It is akin to what Rosa Luxemburg calls primitive accumulation or the extraction of surplus from peasants, slaves and serfs who are outside the capitalist mode. Second, it is within the wage system in the sense that it is this work that is the precondition of the production work of men (Werlhof, *op. cit.*:14-7).

When we look at the reproduction work of women in relation to the production work of men, we find that it is both complementary and contradictory. It is complementary because it adds surplus value to men's work, thus including women in the class opposed to capital; on the other hand, it is contradictory because it is work that man exploits for his own interest, thus creating a contradiction between man and woman. Though they both belong to the class oppressed by capitalists, there exists a contradiction between them: Man oppresses woman (*Ibid.*).

Considering the contribution of reproduction work to accumulation on a world scale, von Werlhof asks:

[H]ow can production relations, which are the means for accumulation of capital, be or remain non-capitalist, or how can capital accumulation result from a different mode of production still existing? How can relations be non-capitalist, when capital itself creates them outside the sphere of wage labour, in order to enforce the continuation of original accumulation, especially where all pre-capitalist relations have already been absorbed? (*Ibid.*:17).

Indeed women as reproduction workers have not 'entered' the capitalist mode of production. Men have prevented their historic advance because reproduction work is needed for the accumulation on a global scale.

Presently, women as reproduction workers have become the paradigm of the North for exploiting the South. 'Housewifization' of labor

is a concept used by Bennholdt-Thomsen (1988) to describe the exploitation of labor in the South. Subsistence producers are mainstreamed in the capitalist economy the same way reproduction workers are. They are robbed of their status as production workers by working right in their own homes or landholdings rather than in factories or plantations owned by capitalists. Because they are not production workers in the orthodox capitalist sense, they do not receive 'wages' but are paid on piece rates that are cheap. And since they are not 'wage-earners', their relation with those who pay them for work done is not one of labor-management relation. This new relation between capitalists and workers does away with labor relations thereby enabling capitalists to avoid state regulation of it. Not only does this enable capitalists to reap greater profits, this also allows the North to export the exploitation of labor in their homefront.

History from Below

Like Agoncillo and Constantino, Reynaldo Ileto also addresses class/race/national perspectives. But, unlike the former, the latter does not limit his tools of analysis to political economy. He avails of the new perspectives offered by anthropology, history, literary criticism and politics. He also does not limit his sources. He does not confine himself to sources that emanate from the upperclass but pays close attention to previously ignored sources as folk songs, poems and manifestoes written in Tagalog and religious traditions in order to discover the thinking of the masses. Furthermore, he goes beyond the usual orthodox Marxist formulation of a 'determining base' and a 'determined superstructure'. In the concluding paragraph of his *Pasyon and Revolution*, Ileto makes this assertion:

There is a well-known saying that 'men make their history upon the basis of prior conditions.' But what determines human behavior must include not only real and present factors but also a certain object, a certain future, that is to be actualized. . . even the poor and the unlettered masses in the nineteenth century had the ability to go beyond their situation, to determine what its meaning would be instead of merely being determined by it. Not that the aspirations of the masses always were of a revolutionary nature or went beyond limited, private demands. Nonetheless, only those movements were successful that built upon the masses conception of the future as well as social and economic conditions (Ileto 1989:256).

Ileto compares his work with that of Constantino:

[Pasyon] deals with practically the same events during 1840-1910 but tries *to look at them from within, that is, from the perspective of the masses themselves insofar as the data allow it*. How, for example, did the masses actually perceive their condition; how did they put their feelings and aspirations into words? How precisely did Bonifacio and the Katipunan effect a connection between tradition and national revolution? How could the post-1902 mystical and millennial movements have taken the form they did and still be extremely radical? Instead of preconceived or reified categories of nationalism and revolution as the matrix to which events are viewed, I have tried to bring to light the masses' own categories of them (*Ibid.*:8; underscoring supplied).

Despite Ileto's success in decolonizing historiography, he fails to go all the way. Like the rest before him, he ignores the gender aspect of colonization. Yet, he was close to addressing it. His discussion on the languaging of the masses revolutionary discourse puts him right next to the door which he disappointingly does not open.

Ileto mentions briefly a woman in his book. She is Salud Algabre, an organizer in the Sakdal Uprising of 1935 and interviewed by David Sturtevant in 1968. She is supposed to have said that 'No uprising fails. Each one is a step in the right direction' (p.5). Had Ileto been able to transcend his patriarchal point of view and paid more attention to this woman, her work as a woman in the Sakdal movement and what she meant by what she said by listening to her articulations as well as silences, and how what she said was received by the male interviewer and to Ileto himself, he could have made history in historiography.

Ileto also discusses Bonifacio's poem, *Katapusang Hibik*, where colonizing Spain and colonized Philippines are both referred to as 'Mother'. Ileto does not bother to explain why the word 'mother' is used. Neither does he explain why Emilio Jacinto would represent *Kalayaan* as a young woman.

A feminist perspective would have allowed Ileto to retrieve an elided meaning in Bonifacio and Jacinto's works. And this is the meaning: Bonifacio calls the Philippines 'Inang Bayan' because of his experience with mothers. These are creatures who are a source of life and nurturance yet are abused by men as colonizers. Spain is also a 'mother' but she is only a surrogate mother and therefore not as concerned with the children she gets as a consequence of her real children's rape of Inang Bayan. Jacinto's repre-

sentation of *Kalayaan* as a young woman is also based on reality. Both are the constructs of men. *Kalayaan* or Liberty is a creation of the state which is the creation of men. Woman is also a construct of men. Beauvoir explains this thus: To become the master in the man-woman relation, man constructs himself as the 'One' and woman as his 'other'. To be active/strong/rational man constructs woman as passive/weak/emotional. Both *Kalayaan* and woman can be, and are, in fact, abused by men.

This bring us to women's history.

Blazing the Trail for Herstory

In 1990 the University Center for Women's Studies of the University of the Philippines and the Forward Looking Women sponsored the first national conference on the theme, "The Role of Women in Philippine History." In this conference, the need to put women in history books was stressed by the papers presented by both men and women in academe as well as the testimonies of those women who were active participants in the suffragist movement, the HUKBALAHAP, the class war of the 30's, and the anti-martial law movement of the 80's.

But while all the papers and testimonies centered on women, the desired feminist point of view was not discernible in all. This brings us to the question about women's history.

Women's History

How is women's history to be written? Who is to write it?

The last question will be answered first if only to show the need for freeing the historical imagination from being hemmed in by the age old practice of following order, for the history of women cannot be written by traditional historians given to traditional ways of writing history.

The answer: women and men. Again, note that instead of the age old practice of putting men ahead of women, there is a reversal. This is to emphasize the point that any woman or man who wants to produce text as women's history must pay particular attention to sexual/textual politics. To write women's history is to deconstruct the binary of man/sun/culture/reason vs. woman/moon/nature/emotion. Cixous' advice is worth remembering: Woman must 'write/rite' with her 'ink/blood' in order to retrieve the body that woman has lost. A man who is willing

and able to transcend patriarchal ideology also can and must write women's history.

How must women's history be written? Firstly, the point of view must be that of woman/underclass/non-white/colonized. As pointed out by socialist feminism, the sources of women's oppression intersect and can be separated only analytically. In the lived life of women in the Philippines, gender oppression is not the only oppression suffered by women. There is also the oppression of the poor by the rich, the ethnic minority by the dominant ethnic group and the Philippines as a Southern country by Northern countries. The writer of women's history must examine and show women's life in the context of these intersecting forms of oppression.

The writer of women's history must also seek all possible sources of history which include folk literature, women's diaries and life histories produced by interviews with women from all spheres of life. These sources can reveal women's perceptions of themselves as the 'un-othered'. Such revelations are needed to address the patriarchal colonization of women.

The writer of women's history must also disregard the traditional periodization of history. The usual periodization of Pre-colonial Philippines, Spanish Regime, American Regime, Japanese Occupation and Republican Period is not only unsuitable but an insult to both men and women because what is foregrounded is foreign rule. Moreover, this kind of periodization makes women invisible because of over emphasis on the race/national struggle.

The Marxist periodization based on the development of the mode of production from primitive to slave to feudal to capitalist to communist also makes women invisible for reasons already explained in my critique of Marxist theory.

I would like to conclude my paper by inviting all of you to find out why Governor-General Leonard Wood said: 'Women are the best men in the Philippines' and to dedicate your ink/blood in the writing/rite-ing of women's history so that after centuries and centuries of believing that the history of only half of Philippine society is the whole of Philippine society, we will at last undeceive ourselves.

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