

# Philippine Historiography: Issues and Trends

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## ABSTRACT

The article provides a critical perspective through which the development of Philippine historiography can be viewed. The author starts with a discussion of Western/European conception of history and compares it with authentic Filipino conception of *kasaysayan*. The article argues that these developments are anchored to specific ideological changes through time. History serves as a legitimation of Spanish colonialism by means of the narratives by the early Spanish missionaries. History was also utilized as protest (e.g. the historical and ethnological researches by the Filipino propagandists). The article thus supports the idea that history, far from being objective, is political.

Keywords: historiography, annales school, new historicism, *Pantayong Pananaw* (from-us-for-us perspective) *Bagong Kasaysayan* (New History)

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## INTRODUCTION

For so many years, Filipino historians became followers of a very rigid tradition in writing history – a tradition based on positivism. Positivism holds that historical knowledge and interpretation ought to be based upon verifiable data gathered after examination of documents through internal and external criticism. Because of the weaknesses of this tradition, a new historical approach emerged. This historical approach is known as *New Historicism*. It seeks the interpretation of facts from all perspectives, including those that do not concern history before.

In the Philippines, as early as 1960's, historians exerted efforts to broaden the bases of their historical sources, and provided new and fresh interpretations that challenged the traditional discourses in history. Leslie Bauzon, in his article entitled "*Perspective on Contemporary Philippine Historiography*", emphasized the need to develop a methodology for interpretative historical analysis within the context of Philippine society. He argued that what the social scientists are using was based on Western

models, which do not fit the Philippine setting. Under this condition, Filipino historians are constrained to view Philippine history on the perspective of the Filipinos.

In this study, the researcher will discuss the development of Philippine historiography, from the colonial period to contemporary period. This writer will showcase the effort of Filipino historians to develop a historical approach that privileges the perspective of the Filipinos. A portion of the study will be given to distinguished Filipino and foreign historians who contributed to the development of Philippine historiography. The writer will also show how history is written and how a dominant perspective can affect the writing of history by choosing who/what will be privileged and who/what will be muted.

History as defined by a foreign scholar "*is the record of what one age finds worthy of note in another*".<sup>1</sup> For Carr, history is a study of human achievements. Whatever differences historians may give, still the term suggests past events.

The term *history* although means past that cannot be narrowed down to the records of past events. Likewise, even though the subject of history is past events, nobody can deny that it connotes many implications that affect the life of the people and the future of a country. As defined by Elizabeth Medina, history is not just the past but also and principally the present and future.<sup>2</sup> History is a forward projection. It is a social construction of a future reality. This writer assumes that the writing of history is a political endeavor. Since history is a continuous process, it is a good vehicle to use in directing the future of a country. This brings the writer to the question posed by Keith Jenkins about history and power. For Keith Jenkins, *history can never be and will never for one's self. It is always for one person*. He added that history is a form of power wherein the direction of the arrangement of the past is discussed.<sup>3</sup> In this case, the subjects that will be privileged and will be muted is based on the kind of discourse followed by historians. History as a discourse is a series of tactics of organizing and sequencing events and past systems according to individual outlook, interest, objective or goals.<sup>4</sup>

In the Philippines, the dominance of the colonial discourse has challenged Filipino historians to write the history of the Philippines using a discourse that will privilege the Filipinos. Filipino historians like Agoncillo, Iletto, Guerrero, Diokno, Salazar and others work hard to counter the colonial historiography that dominated Philippine historiography for a long time. The accumulation of new data and the development of new theories gave Filipino historians many aspects of Philippine history that were left unexplained. Historians, with the help of other disciplines like archaeology, anthropology, psychology, linguistics and other disciplines faithfully reconstructed the Philippines past using a Filipino perspective.

A prominent historian, Samuel Tan defined history as the dynamic process of dealing with the past in which the stages or aspects of development are interrelated brought upon by the understanding of the present and future.<sup>5</sup> Tan added that history is a collective interplay of events. Samuel Tan's view of history gives us a broader outlook in dealing with past events. His definition gives us clue that history is the achievement of different people in a particular time and not just the work of a particular group of people in a particular place. The writer believes that Tan debunked the Manila-centered history.

This view of Samuel Tan was supported by a prominent nationalist historian, Renato Constantino. Constantino emphasized that *history is the achievement of man not the individual but the collective*.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, we cannot assume that history is a primary work of an individual leader but a collective effort of the people. With this definition, Constantino strengthened the *history from below*. Following Marx's idea of history, Constantino views the masses as the real mover of history.

The post-EDSA period gave a new direction for Filipino historians. The move to use Filipino as medium of instruction had gained support from different historians. With this development, Zeus Salazar and the advocates of the *panatayong pananaw* gave new direction to the study of history. Using Filipino as medium, they defined history as *ang kasaysayan ay isang salaysay tungkol sa nakalipas na may saysay sa isang grupo ng tao*.<sup>7</sup> With this definition, the study of Philippine history is redirected to what the

people believe to be important to them. This is the reason for the study of oral traditions, culture and local history which are privileged in the discourse of the *pantayong pananaw*.

The study of history became possible with the development of writing. The invention of writing can be considered as one of the most important inventions of human civilization because it gave man the instrument to record their achievements. This important invention of human civilization ended the pre-historic age which also marked the beginning of the historic era.

History can be divided into different branches and these are as follows: general history which covers political, economic, diplomatic and military history; economic history which includes economic thoughts and economic system; cultural history which covers local and ethnic history; social history and myth history.<sup>8</sup> Although much of our history is devoted to political history, historians of today have included and emphasized economic and socio-cultural history as an important part of their discourse. Historical writing is dependent on the availability of primary source, documentary sources, secondary event or testimonies of the authorities.<sup>9</sup> Historical sources can be categorized into written, material and traditional. Written sources can be subdivided onto literary and official. The former is the interpretation of the writer which involves his subjectivity while the latter is a record produced when transacting business. Traditional sources such as folklore, oral tradition, epic and indigenous materials are also used as sources of history. Although history, as part of social science, follows the scientific way of viewing things. Historians continued to use traditions as one of the sources of history. Material objects such as money, guns, church bells and other materials which served as part of the events are undeniably important sources of history.

On the other hand, historiography is the art of writing.<sup>10</sup> It also refers to the theory and history of historical writing. The term historiography is rooted from the Greek word *historia* which means past and *graphier* which means to write. Although the writing of history can be traced thousands of years ago, historiography, the scientific way of writing history only gained

prominence in the early 1900s. Recent developments in historiography broadened the bases of history. The new historicism pioneered by Michel Foucault provided new perspectives in terms of historical interpretation. Data like oral history, folklore, indigenous materials and the likes which traditionally cannot be considered as sources of history are now considered as a possible source of history. This trend also looked into the “silences” in history. Bakhtin noted that *silences, not just the voices in history are important*.<sup>11</sup> These developments strengthened the effort of Filipino historians to write a history that will serve the Filipino people and a historiography that will offer a Filipino perspective.

### **The Writing of History in the Spanish Period**

The development of Philippine historiography can be traced back during the Spanish period. The early friars with their zeal to propagate Christianity studied the cultures of the early Filipinos and faithfully recorded their valuable observations. Although the writings of the early friars were basically missionary history, their recorded observations on the life of the early Filipinos are indispensable in the understanding of the Philippine past. Since the early historians were Spanish friars, their accounts were focused on the Spanish history of the Philippines specifically their missionary experience in the country.

The first order of friars that arrived in the Philippines was the Augustinian. Some of the Augustinian friars who contributed in the writings of history were Fray Juan de Grijalva who wrote the book *“Cronica de la Orden de N.P.S. Agustin en las provincias de la Nueva España”* which showcased the Augustinian missions in the Philippines, Fray Casimiro Diaz who wrote the Filipino uprisings in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and Fray Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga who wrote *“Historia de las Islas Filipinas”* which was a summary of the accounts of the early chronicles.<sup>12</sup>

The Dominican Order who came after the Augustinians became one of the most influential religious orders in the Philippines. Their experience as missionary in various areas of the country gave them sufficient knowledge

on the life and cultures of the early Filipinos. Some of the Dominican friars who gave valuable contributions in the development of Philippine historiography were Fr. Diego de Advante who wrote *“Historia de la Provincial del Santo Rosario”* which showcased their missionary activities; Fr. Baltazar de Santa Cruz who accounted the Binalatongan Revolt of 1860 in Pangasinan; Fr. Vicente Salazar; Fr. Diego Colantes who gave a vivid account of the Dominican mission in Batanes; and Fr. Juan Ferrando who worked on the history of the Dominican Order in the Philippines.<sup>13</sup>

The Order of St. Francis also held missionary posts in the country. The works of the Franciscan friars like Fray Juan de la Plasencia and Fray Francisco de Santa Ines are indispensable sources of knowledge regarding the cultures of the early Filipinos. Plasencia’s work *“Los Casturibres de los Tagalogs”* which was published in Nagcarlan in 1589 showcase the customary laws of the pre-Spanish Philippines. This book of Plasencia is considered as the first civil code of the Philippines. On the other hand, the book of Fray Francisco de Santa Ines tackled the ancient Filipino cultures and the missionary labor of the Franciscan Order in the Philippines, China and Japan.<sup>14</sup>

The Jesuit Fathers also made valuable contributions to the understanding of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Philippines. Fr. Pedro Chirino, who is considered as one of the most distinguished Jesuit historians, authored the book *“Relacion de las Islas Filipinas”* which was published in Rome in 1604. The book is narrative of the life of the Filipinos prior to their colonization. A vivid description of the authors can be found in the book. Other Jesuit historians are Fr. Francisco Collin who wrote on the Jesuit missions; Father Pedro Murilla Y. Velarde who made a very valuable contribution in Philippine historiography with his accounts of the history of the Philippines, mission and conquest of Mindanao and the inclusion of a map of the archipelago; Fr. Juan Delgado’s book gave a broader description of the Philippines by including the political ecclesiastical, economic, social and cultural accounts of the country.

The Recollect Fathers, although less popular compared to other religious orders in the country, had made distinguished contributions in

the development of Philippine historiography. The Recollect Fathers like Fray Juan dela Concepcion had written valuable information that can be used to understand the cultures of the Spanish Philippines.

As already mentioned, the accounts of the early Fathers regarding the Philippines and its people prior and during the Spanish colonization are indispensable sources of knowledge for the understanding of the Philippine past. Although their accounts contained biases against the early Filipinos, the information that they provided can be used by Filipino historians to correct the mistakes committed by early historians. Contemporary historians can use a post-colonial reading on the documents to eliminate the colonial bias. In this way, the myths that were written by the chroniclers regarding the Filipinos and their culture can be corrected.

### **Secular Historians in the Spanish Period**

The writing of history during the Spanish period was not confined to the hands of the friars. As a proof, many secular historians had shown great interest in the Philippine affairs which they recorded. The secular historians during the Spanish period can be divided into the following: Spanish officials in the Islands; foreign residents and writers; and the Filipino Ilustrado.<sup>15</sup>

Among the Spanish officials who served the country, Dr. Antonio de Morga, can be considered as the most respected. Dr. Morga's "*Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*" can be considered as one of the most reliable sources of information regarding the 16<sup>th</sup> century Philippines. Another authoritative work on pre-Spanish Philippine society was the book written by an encomendero in the Visayas, Captain Miguel de Loarca. Loarca's "*Relacion de las Islas Filipinas*" highlighted the material culture of the early Filipinos which according to him was on a very high degree of advancement. Being an *encomendero*, Loarca made a vivid description of the economic life of the early Filipinos. One of the colonial officials who worked on the history of the Philippines was Thomas de Comyn who wrote *Estado de las Islas Filipinas en 1810* which is valuable because of its description of the colonial



economy after the opening of Manila to international trade. Paul de la Goromiere who served as surgeon mayor of the Spanish army also wrote his impressions on the country. Aside from Morga's work, the three-volume work of Jose Montero y Vidal entitled "*Historia General de Filipinas Desde Descubrimiento Hasta Nuestros Diaz*" was a good account of the Spanish Philippines.<sup>16</sup>

Antonio Pigafetta, Henry Peddington, Dr. Jean Mallat, Sir John Browning, Dr. Feodor Jagor and John Foreman were foreign residents and writers who wrote their observation on the Philippines. Antonio Pigafetta who chronicled Magellan's voyage made a keen observation on the culture of the early Filipinos. His accounts were valuable because it was a first-hand information on the Philippines and its culture prior to the Spanish contact. Henry Peddington's book entitled "*Remarks on the Philippine Islands and their Capital Manila, 1818-1822*" is significant for its accounts of the native discontentment to the Spanish abuses. Other foreign historians during the Spanish-Philippine occupation were Dr. Jean Mallat who wrote vivid accounts on the education and the cultural conditions of the Philippines in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century; Sir John Browning who was a governor of Hong Kong whose book *A Visit to the Philippine Islands* was significant for its colorful description of social customs; Feodor Jagor who conducted an ethnological study of the Philippine regions; and John Foreman who made a critical observation of the Spanish administration. A contemporary of Rizal, Wenceslao Retana also penned several information regarding the history of the Philippines.

Although the accounts of these foreign writers were limited, still their contributions gave contemporary historians an alternative view in understanding the Philippine past.

### **Filipino Historians in the Spanish Philippines**

The opening of Manila to international trade has brought economic development to the country and this development paved way for the birth of the middle class. The economic prosperity that was achieved



gave Filipino historians the opportunity to study in Europe and work for Philippine reforms. The Filipino ilustrados like Rizal, del Pilar, Jaena, Paterno, Antonio Luna, Ponce, and Isabelo de los Reyes among others can be considered as the first Filipino nationalist-historians who defended the Philippines and the Filipinos from a very biased portrayal by foreign historians.

The propaganda movement used the liberal atmosphere in Europe to advance the fight of the Filipinos for reforms. The propagandists through "*La Solidaridad*" wrote several articles that dealt with the Philippine condition during and prior to Spanish colonization. Some of the articles written by Filipino writers were "*The Philippines a Century Hence*" by Rizal, "*Dasalan at Tocsohan*" by Del Pilar, *Fray Botod* by Jaena, and "*Ninay*" by Pedro Paterno, among others.

The nationalist writings continued during the time of the revolution. Filipino revolutionaries like Bonifacio, Jacinto, Valenzuela, Mabini, Artemio Ricarte and many others wrote several articles about the Philippines that ignited the nationalistic fervour of the Filipinos. Bonifacio's essay "*Ang Dapat Mabatid ng mga Tagalog*" is a very good narrative of the sufferings of Filipinos in the hands of the Spanish colonial government. On the other hand, his poem "*Pag-ibig sa Tinubuang Lupa*" manifests a strong love for the country and suggests that a life is worth living when it is sacrificed for the country. Bonifacio's and Jacinto's works can be considered as the forerunner of the *pantayong pananaw*. On the other hand, the writings of Mabini and Ricarte manifested strong anti-clerical and anti-colonial sentiment which was continued by our nationalist-historians in the 50s like Teodoro Agoncillo.

### **The Writing of History during the American Period**

On June 2, 1898, General Emilio Aguinaldo declared the independence of the Philippines. The short-lived Philippine Republic ended with the capture of Aguinaldo in Palanan, Isabela on March 23, 1901. In this year, the American government decided to terminate the military

government and replaced it with a civil government under the leadership of William Howard Taft.

Generally speaking, the writing of history during this period can be considered better compared to the writings of history during the Spanish period. Although, most of the writings of the Americans about the Philippines were extremely biased, still there were few Americans who wrote in favor of the Filipinos. Historians during this period can be classified into Filipino Ilustrado, American colonial officials, non-colonial officials and the so-called academic historians.

Filipino Ilustrados like Pedro Paterno, Rafael Palma, Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, Epifanio delos Santos, Teodoro M. Kalaw and Isabelo delos Reyes continued to be active in the socio-political arena during the American colonization. Their interest in the socio-political affairs of the country led them to contribute to the development of Philippine historical writing. These Filipino Ilustrados had preserved several information regarding Filipino society, cultures and history. Pardo de Tavera's rich Filipiniana collection entitled "*Biblioteca Filipina*" published in 1903 became one of the most reliable sources of historians in writing the history of the Philippines. As a proof the infamous book of Blair and Robertson entitled "*The Philippine Islands: 1493-1898*" used Tavera's Filipiniana collection. On the other hand, Epifanio de los Santos was a critic and biographer who worked on the life of Filipino heroes like Bonifacio, Del Pilar and Aguinaldo. His monographs regarding the revolution and the life of several heroes became one of the bases of modern historians.

American historians had made tremendous efforts in research to write the history of the Philippines. The 55 volume work of Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson entitled "*The Philippine Islands: 1493-1898*" is considered as an authority in Philippine history. American colonial officials also took time to write their version of Philippine history. Some of the notable colonial officials who contributed in the historical writing are Fred Atkinson, with his book "*The Philippine Islands*", 1903; James Le Roy who wrote "*Philippine Past and Present*", 1914; George Malcolm with his "*The Commonwealth of the Philippines*", 1936; and Joseph Hayden who

worked on the book *"The Philippines: A Study in National Development"*, 1936.<sup>17</sup> Generally, the accounts of the colonial officials were critical to the Republic of Malolos and to the Filipinos. Similar to the accounts of Spanish friars, the history written by the colonial officials is narratives off the history of the United States in the Philippines. In their writings, they boast of the achievements of the colonial administration in the country. They highlighted the changes and developments that the Americans introduced and made it appear that the Filipinos are nothing without the tutelage of the Americans. On the other hand, non-colonial officials in the country like Catherine Mayo highlighted the so-called backwardness of the Filipinos.

### **Historical Writings in the Third Republic**

After the Philippines regained its independence in 1946, the newly established Philippine Republic had to confront several problems. Aside from the rehabilitation of the country, the newly established government has to face the problems concerning national unity and national identity. In this light, the country was in need of *history that will reflect the characters of the people and will serve as a unifying factor of the country.*

In the early 50s, the writings of history continued to be dominated by traditional historians. The maxim *"No Documents, No History"* popularized by the positivist tradition espoused by Leopold Von Ranke in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century continued to have support from Filipino historians.<sup>18</sup> In the early 50s, Filipino historians of the American era continued to dominate the writings of history. Following the positivist tradition, early titans in the field of history like Dr. Nicolas Zafra, Conrado Benitez, Dr. Domingo Eufronio Alip, Dr. Gregorio Zaide, and Dr. Antonio Molina relied heavily on the use of documents as their unit of analysis in writing history.

History writing during this period was influenced by the cold war. The Philippines, being known as ally of the United States tried to combat communism by privileging the achievements of the colonizers in Philippine history. Historian Gregorio Zaide and younger scholars like Fr. Horacio dela Costa and Fr. Jose Arcilla had written their history books with

a clerical point of view. Needless to say, most of the writings during this period are actually the history of the colonies in the Philippines.

In the late 1950s, Teodoro Agoncillo who was considered as one of the most influential Filipino historians revolutionized the writing of Philippine history. Agoncillo in his effort to write the history of the Philippines using a Filipino standpoint highlighted the 1896 Revolution and considered 1872 as the beginning of the history of the Philippines as a nation. He considered the pre-1872 era as the lost history. He argued that what were written in the documents before 1872 are the history of Spain in the Philippines. For Agoncillo, we cannot see a substantive role of the Filipinos in history because Filipinos before 1872 were passive followers of the Spaniards. Agoncillo's book "*Revolt of the Masses, The Story of Bonifacio and the Katipunan*", stirred many controversies as tool for interpretation engaged him in different debates with the conservative. Nevertheless, in the early 80's the name Agoncillo became the most influential and respected historian of the country while his book was hailed by the liberals. Despite Agoncillo's popularity, an American historian Glen Anthony May, tried to discredit Agoncillo and his book particularly the methodology that he used in his research. According to May, leading Filipino historians like Agoncillo, Constantino and Iletto had violated historical cannons to suit their political agenda.<sup>19</sup> In the case of Agoncillo, May questioned the author's use of unreliable sources like oral interview. According to him, Agoncillo failed to follow the correct historical methodology. He cited as an example the failure of Agoncillo to use other reliable sources like documents pertaining to Katipunan and the 1896 Revolution. For May, the dependence of Agoncillo to the oral interview, which according to him was not done correctly for its failure to prepare a transcript, is a sign of the weakness of Agoncillo as a historian. Furthermore, he claimed that Agoncillo cannot rely on the oral interview because it was done after several years when the incident happened. He added that Agoncillo did not have much training in historical writings and he is more of a poet than a historian. For May, Agoncillo's use of speculative words that cannot be verified in documents manifests the lack of training of Agoncillo to conduct historical research.<sup>20</sup>

In spite of the flaws of Agoncillo's book, we cannot deny that the author had made great contributions to Philippine historical writings. Agoncillo had opened new avenues in the understanding of our nation's history. His book can be considered not just a political history but a social history.

Following the footsteps of Agoncillo, Renato Constantino placed the masses at the center in his treatment of history. Espousing the concept of people's history, Constantino defined history as the *collective people's struggle towards the full realization of freedom and liberty*.<sup>21</sup> He emphasized that the real mover of history are the masses and superman does not exist only leaders who became great because they were working with the people.<sup>22</sup> His book, "*The Philippines: A Past Revisited*" departed heavily from the traditional treatment of history. Influenced by political activism and the popularity of Karl Marx ideology, Constantino used Marxism as his tool of analysis. Unlike Agoncillo who believed that the real history of the Philippines only began after 1782, Constantino believed in the existence of Philippine pre-colonial civilization. He argued that the pre-colonial Philippines developed a structure he termed as communal democracy.<sup>23</sup> In the *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx defined that the mode of production of material life determines the general character of society's political and spiritual processes of life. Following this line, Constantino had shown that he was different from traditional historians who only showcased the colonizers' achievements in the country by emphasizing on the different revolts launched by the people against the colonizers. He also allotted space on the participation of the so-called religion-political movements in the struggle to achieve freedom.

Constantino and his book became popular during the height of activism in the country. Despite its popularity, some historians still find faults in his work. One of those who criticized the book was Glen May who commented that the book produced a nationalist who could not think critically.

Archaeological and anthropological findings in the late 1960s had given scholars the chance to reconstruct the Philippines prior and

during the early years of Spanish domination. In addition, the government encouraged scholars to devote their study on subjects concerning the Philippine pre-colonial civilization. The political situation during this time had pushed Marcos to use the idea of a glorious Philippine past as a basis of his *Bagong Lipunan*.

William Henry Scott and Dr. Landa Jocano were the leading scholars who specialized on the subjects that concern the pre-colonial civilization of the country. The two used different sources like the colonial documents, ethnographic accounts and archaeological data in their reconstruction of the Philippine past.

In his attempt to write a history that will reflect the masses, William Henry Scott termed the History of the Inarticulate. According to Scott, historians can see the participation of the people even in colonial documents by means of creative re-reading of the documents. He cited as an example those edicts regarding the Moros and other bandits that only show that Filipinos are responding to colonial oppression.<sup>24</sup> Both scholars had produced various monographs and books dealing with the Philippine pre-colonial past and various studies of the different indigenous groups in the country. Henry Scott's "*Cracks in the Parchment Curtain*" and Dr. Jocano's "*The Philippine Pre-history*" are considered authoritative works in Philippine pre-history.

The works of the two scholars had given historians new possibilities in the study of Philippine history. The sources in the historical writing are extended because of the data coming from anthropological and archaeological sources. One significant contribution of the two scholars is the inclusion of the different indigenous communities in the study of history that led to a better understanding not only of the Philippine past but acceptance and respect to the least acculturated Filipinos who tried to maintain their social order despite of the threats from the colonizers. Their effort to analyze and include the indigenous experience to our history gives scholars an alternative way of looking at the country's history from a standpoint of colonialism vs. anti-colonialism. In this way, the people will have the chance to hear the muted voices in history. As Bakhtin once noted

*the silences in history, not just the voices in history are important.*<sup>25</sup> A history from the periphery is a good alternative to counter the dominance of the colonial and *pueblo*-centered history.

In his book "*Pasyon and Revolution*", Iletto discussed how the people appropriated certain images in the *pasyon* to work for their side. In his presentation, Iletto had shown how the masses treated the *pasyon* to work for their advantage. The *pasyon* which was intended to make the people submissive became a subversive text that was used by the *pobres y ignorantes* to rebel against the *pueblo* authority. The author argued that the masses did not put into writings their participation in history, so in order to write a history from below, historians should deconstruct symbolic images that were part of the day to day activity of the people. In his book, the author explained how popular themes in the *pasyon* like *damayan*, *loob*, *liwanag*, *lakaran*, and *kalayaan* were appropriated by the people to rebel against the colonizers. He added that the virtues manifested in the *Pasyon* like submissiveness, simplicity and humility which are attributed to Christ were changed by the people to challenge the authority. In the *Pasyon* Christ possessed those virtues but still Christ was able to challenge the dominant center that led to his crucifixion. Despite of this, Christ was able to change the system of the world because He was regarded as the messiah. For the people who were living in the image of the *pasyon*, it is necessary for them to be Christ-like. According to Iletto, this will explain why the death of GOMBURZA and Rizal ignited the emotion of the people to take part in their suffering by fighting the Spaniards.<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, Iletto tried to critique many historians including those nationalist-historians for their treatment of history which he labeled as the Ilustrado's construction of historical reality. According to him, this tradition hinders the other construction of historical reality.<sup>27</sup> He suggested an alternative in the presentation of historical reality which he termed as non-linear. For Iletto, it is proper for historians to look into the other center of power, i.e. folk, healer, cults, *tulisanes*, and *colorums*. In doing this, historians will be able to present the other side of history that were muted by the dominant historiography.

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The popularity of Iletto's "*Pasyon and Revolution*", did not hinder some historians to criticize the author and his book.<sup>28</sup> Now, historians like Milagros Guerrero and Glen Anthony May questioned the methodology used by the author in writing his book. For Guerrero, the book of Iletto can be considered as a work of a fictionist rather than of a historian. She added that the author relied on the sources that cannot be verified by other historians.

Guerrero emphasized that history should deal with the articulation of conscious experience.<sup>29</sup> She emphasized that the *pobres y ignorantes* did not record their experiences. If historians will rely only on official sources, then what will be is the history of the elite. In response to Guerrero, Iletto cited Marx saying that "*men make their own history but they do not know that they are making it*".<sup>30</sup> He emphasized that what he did was to look into the collective mentality of the people rather than looking on a particular leader. He argued that historians should use unconventional documents that will *privilege* the voices from below or in Marc Bloch's term the mirror of the collective consciousness of the people.<sup>31</sup>

On the part of May, he argued that Iletto together with other nationalist-historians are guilty of recreating Bonifacio to suit their political agenda. He emphasized that they violated the principles of good historical writing because they relied heavily on sources that cannot be verified. For Iletto, what he did was to make use of the unconventional sources for him to be able to write a history from below. He reasoned out that what he did was a response to the tyranny of the archives. The lack of substantive materials that will showcase the role of the common people in history forced him to use the unconventional sources of history.

The book of Reynaldo Iletto's "*Pasyon and Revolution*" can be considered as a turning point in the history of Philippine historical writing. The post-structuralism approach of Iletto had given scholars new ways of looking into the history of the country. He opened new venues that can be used by scholars in their research. His creative re-reading of popular texts in order to decipher the role of the *pobres y ignorantes* in history only shows that scholars can combat the tyranny of the official documents which most

of the time only record the achievements of the literate. Iletto provided not only new methodologies but a different way to interpret history. His treatment of the collective psyche of the people added color in the historical interpretation that placed man at the center. Although Constantino, 1975, decentered man in his analysis of history, still Iletto dug deeper by hearing the voices below by allowing people to speak through his treatment on the collective psyche. Finally, unlike Agoncillo and other historians, Iletto's employment will give the silences in history the chance to be heard. It will give historians an alternative way of framing historical events. Instead of focusing on the *pueblo*-centered authority, Iletto suggested a counter-hegemonic discourse in order to dismantle the hegemony of the *pueblo*-center. In doing this, historians will be able to write history from below.

Aside from Iletto, Vicente Rafael, and Connie Alaras' significant studies using the tradition of *Annales* as their framework. Vicente Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism* is a good follow-up to the work of Iletto. In his book, Rafael looks at the role of language in the Christian conversion. The author argued that there was a misinterpretation of the message because of the problems of language. In his book, the author argued that the kind of Christianity that we developed only proved that the natives were not passive but active participants in the creation and interpretation of their culture. Contrary to Agoncillo, Rafael believed that we can see the active role of the natives to enter into such unconscious contract with the colonizers.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, Consolacion Alaras' "*Pamathalaan*" documented the world view of the *kapatirans*. This documentation gave people the chance to understand the mentality of the *kapatiran*. In doing this, we can have a better understanding of the mentality of the members of the religio-political movements who participated in the struggle for independence.

The works of Vicente Rafael and Conie Alaras are good additions to historiographical literature. Like Iletto, both scholars tried to penetrate the mentality of the common people. On the part of Rafael, his treatment of the data specially his use of language as tool for analysis gave scholars new lens to interpret history. His interpretation of the data gave impetus on the

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privileged role of the common people in history. On the other hand, Alaras' *Pamathalaan* provided new perspectives and ways of writing history that will answer the challenge posed by the changing time and changing needs of people.

## CONCLUSION

This writer described the development of Filipino historiography by presenting how the writing of history was affected by the dominant perspective of a period. Historical writing in the country has gone a long way from the time of the Spanish friars faithfully recorded their observations about the cultures of the early inhabitants of this land. Despite of the fact that colonial historiography is considered hostile to the Filipinos, the writings of the colonizers had provided modern day historians bases in their construction of the Philippine past. Given the right methodology and tools of analysis, modern day historians can unmask the biases in colonial writings. Historians searching for an alternative discourse in history can use the post-colonial reading in their interpretation of historical texts. In this study, the researcher had shown how Filipino historians and their foreign counterparts made use of unconventional sources to elicit the role of the common people in history. The tyranny of the archives had pushed historians to use unconventional sources in their writing of history. The development of new discourse had helped modern day historians to expound their analysis. The positivist tradition that dominated the writing of history had limited the historians to the use of official documents as center of analysis. In this case, scholars used alternative resources as a basis to better understand those people who were termed in history as bandits, *colorums*, *tulisanes*, and religious fanatics.

The period 1950s to early 90s was considered as great eras in the history of Philippine historical writing. First and foremost, these periods had produced dedicated Filipino historians who tried to re-direct the writing of Philippine history. Compared to the writings during the Spanish and American era, the writings of history during the post-war era can be considered revolutionary for the effort of Filipino historians to

write the history of the Philippines using a Filipino perspective. Aside from the historians mentioned in the discussion, the Philippines has produced Filipino historians who worked hard to come up with historical writings that can be used for a better understanding of the Philippines and its people. Together with their foreign counterparts, Filipino historians produced scholarly works explaining the Philippines and its people.

After the EDSA Revolution, Filipino historians became more aggressive in their efforts to present a Filipino perspective in writing history. Filipino scholars like Zeus Salazar and the advocates of *Pantayong Pananaw* (PP) have presented studies using Filipino (Tagalog) as medium in their academic discourse.

In this light, the *Pantayong Pananaw* has opened new venues and themes for historians to study like the world view of the indigenous, *anting-anting*, symbolic representation, *reduccion*, and other themes that discuss the culture of the Filipinos. In this regard, new methodologies and concepts were utilized like ethnography and folk literature.

Pantayong Pananaw is the brainchild of the UP historian Zeus A. Salazar. In "*Ang Pagtuturo ng Kasaysayan sa Pilipino*" (1971) and "*Ukol sa Wika at Kulturang Pilipino*" (1973), Salazar discusses the relation of language and culture as the basic thesis of Pantayong Pananaw. Ramon Guillermo, however, poses that Salazar's dissertation in University of Paris, Sorbonne entitled *Le concept AC \*'anitu' dans le monde austronésien: vers l'étude comparative des religions ethniques austronésiennes* set the initial conceptualization of PP. As Zeus Salazar himself,

*Isang resulta ng pakikipagtalastasan "sa labas" (at ng malalim na karanasan sa/ng iba) ang PP. Diwa na ito ng kanyang (Zeus Salazar) pag-aaral noong 1968 sa relihiyong Austronesyano na sinuri mula sa loob ng kabihasnang Austronesyano, sa pamamagitan ng panloob na konsepto/kategoryang AC\*'anitu' at hindi sa pamamagitan ng teoryang panlabas tulad ng "animism", "totemismo" at iba pang "ismo" mula sa Kanluran.*

Nevertheless, this writer believes that the *Pantayong Pananaw* is a good sign that the writing of history in the country is developing. The continuous search of Filipino historians for better perspectives that will showcase the Filipino point of view is a proof that the discipline of history in the country is moving forward. Whatever the flaws and weaknesses the *Pantayong Pananaw* have should serve as a challenge to Filipino historians to improve the discourse started by the Proto-Pantayo and *Pantayong Pananaw*. Since history is a continuous process, historians should not stop formulating new perspective because the marking points of events and usually the history that came out is the history of the literate. The popularity of the school of Annales followed by the emergence of post-structuralism has given historians the chance to explore the unexplored topics in history and engaged into a new historical interpretation. Filipino historians and their foreign counterparts had studied various fields in history like social, economic, local, biographical, and demographical study. For historians to be able to dig deeper into their chosen topics they used new methodologies and employed other disciplines like anthropology, archaeology, sociology, psychology and other disciplines in the interpretation of the historical texts.

As already discussed in the study, Teodoro Agoncillo's Revolt of the Masses, Constantino's "*The Philippines: A Past Revisited*" and Iletto's "*Pasyon and Rebolusyon*", are considered turning points in the history of Philippine historical writing. The book of Agoncillo had employed a class analysis in his interpretation and relied heavily on oral interview which is a big turnaround in the practice of history during his time. On the other hand, Constantino's book had decentered man in his treatment of history and used a Marxist way of viewing history. The book of Iletto which is considered revolutionary for its effort to understand the collective psyche of the people had violated historical canons set by the positivist tradition. His use of popular texts like the *pasyon* and other indigenous materials is a big "NO" in the traditional writing of history. For the positivist followers, Iletto utilized sources that cannot be verified. In addition, these popular texts have no identified authors which is essential for the positivists to verify the sources.

Despite the criticisms to historians mentioned, their contributions in the writing of history in the country are unparalleled and proof that their effort to offer an alternative discourse is moving forward. The efforts of these Filipino historians to offer new historical interpretations and develop a new perspective gained popular support in the academe. The *pantayong pananaw* which offers a Filipino standpoint in the interpretation of history through the use of Filipino language is a proof of the dynamism in the discipline of history. As already discussed many have its faults or weaknesses, nevertheless the formulation of this school of thought is a good beginning in the formulation of a Filipino perspective that will privilege all sectors of society like religious and ethno-linguistic groups in the writing of the country's history. Since history is important for national unity and development, scholars should engage in an interpretation that will privilege the Filipinos without underscoring the elite or the masses nor the colonizers. In this way, the Filipinos will have a feeling of belongingness because the history that is written is not confrontational.

## NOTES

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3. Maria Serena Diokno. *Philippine Nationalist Historiography and the Challenge of New Paradigms. Paper Read at the Colloquium on Indigenous Southeast Asian Historiography* Held on September 5-9, 1994 in Tokyo, Japan.
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10. Rosario M. Cortez, p. 78.
11. Augusto De Viana. *The Filipino-American War as a Season of Opportunities, Scoundrels and Heroes*. (Paper Read in the International Conference on the Filipino-American War Held on November 15-18 year 2000 at the Manila Hotel, Manila.)
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27. F.A Geologo. *The Writing of People's History in the Philippines* (Philippine Social Science Encyclopedia, Vol. II. 1993)



28. Francisco Gealogo, p. 17.
29. Francisco Gealogo, p. 24.
30. Francisco Gealogo, p. 24.
31. Francisco Gealogo, p. 29.
32. Vicente Rafael. *Contracting Colonialism*. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press. 1996), p. 43.
33. See 'Introduksyon' of Zeus A. Salazar, THE MALAYAN CONNECTION Ang Pilipinas sa Dunia Melayu. Lungsod Quezon: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 1998. xxiii.
34. *ibid*

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### **Seminars**

Bauzon, Leslie. *Towards the Filipinization of Research Methods in the Behavioural Science*.

De Viana, Augusto. *The Filipino-American War as a Season of Opportunities, Scoundrels and Heroes*. Paper Read in the International Conference on the Filipino-American War Held on November 15-18, 2000 at the Manila Hotel, Manila.

Diokno, Maria Serena. *Philippine Nationalist Historiography and the Challenge of New Paradigms*. Paper Read at the Colloquium on Indigenous Southeast Asian Historiography Held on September 5-9, 1994 in Tokyo, Japan.