

FOLKLORE AND HISTORY: SOME THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Not many months ago, officials holding responsible positions in the educational bureaucracy reportedly objected to the teaching of history as a separate subject in the schools. They argued that this is a "step in the wrong direction which will bring more educational harm than good to our school subjects" because history is "basically a dead and useless subject like Spanish" and is, therefore, irrelevant for it "gives our children practically insignificant values in our life."¹ I would rather like to think that the above attitude expresses popular sentiments against many textbooks not yet liberated from the influence of foreign authors who usually emphasize chronology, superficial presentation of events, simple enumeration and, of course, the benevolence of the ruling class — that is to say, the Spaniards and the Americans, and their native collaborators. These textbooks gloss over the colonial evils that brought forth sufferings and humiliations to the Filipino nation, and conditions propitious for the emergence of bizarre mediocrities who played the leaders' part.

These textbooks, in serving as props of academic colonialism, have ignored or slandered the common people; driven away from their pages, the latter have been forced to seek sanctuary in popular traditions and folklore where today many of them still live as fugitives in romance and mystery. By hiding behind the cloak of "subjectivist" or "objectivist" methodology, these historians have in fact indigenized colonialism for they advanced basically the same world views which have nurtured the old ideals, the old values, and the old goals which their history mentors anchored on hopes for, or expectations of, continued colonial power. Even when these historians strive for Filipinism, they still derive their political and ideological framework from the culture of imperialism and express their historical stand in a structure fundamentally colonial. The providential, positivist and subjectivist views of history at best fit into the cultural-ideological norms of the colonizers.

In recent years, however, they have been challenged as the struggle for the liberation of thought from all forms of new colonial bondage

gains more advocates in the academic world. The major thrust of this movement is to reverse the reversal of history enshrined by establishment historians. Hence, the clamor to improve research techniques, tap new sources in quantity and quality, expand research areas, rescue historical studies from the extreme unidisciplinary approach, and upgrade the standards of theoretical reflection. The corresponding agitation for a thorough re-orientation of world views in order to make them serve the best and highest interests of the people has also increasingly convinced many that practice without theory is blind for it merely gropes without guidance in darkness, while theory without practice is abstract and lifeless. The challenge to write a new history from the people's standpoint is part of this gathering movement for change whose goals, when finally realized, will disenchant the cynical and enlighten the people on their true role and tasks in history. The emergence of these new conditions and factors in historical studies requires a re-examination of the historian's intellectual equipment and function, the relationship between local history and national history, and the role of oral sources, particularly folklore.

I. The Historian: Basic Tools and Sources

As used in this paper, history has three fundamental meanings: first, it means the past events in the collective life of the people in a definite space-time continuum; second, the methods and techniques used in researching on these past events; and third, the results of the above operations consisting mostly of observations, analyses, conclusions and syntheses. These, as well as the past reality in particular, are all known through the process of historical cognition. Accordingly, the historian who reflects these in his works in a dynamic way is capable of raising his discipline to a genuine scientific endeavor.

Historic reality exists independently of man's consciousness. In fact, reality is a holistic system whose component parts are related directly or indirectly and, therefore, largely interact with one another. It possesses internal dynamism for inherent contradictions propel it to motion and development. Thus, minor changes occur which develop, when conditions become ripe, into major qualitative transformations. In the process, the old is superseded by the new which carries some aspects of the old. The regularities, movements and personalities in nature and society which the historian observes, whether these are in the local or national level, have interrelated modes of existence and expe-

rience transformative processes: they undergo birth, growth and decay. This truth is shown by the time-bound morphology of Philippine society.

Historical methodology emphasizes these fundamental relationships and investigates basic and non-basic problems, the significant stages in social development and the status that they finally attain in the contemporary period. In studying these levels and relationships of historic reality, the historian possesses two basic tools: the facts and data taken from various sources and the theoretical and practical knowledge acquired in his intellectual growth. Below is a diagram of possible sources of historical materials and their dynamic relationships:²

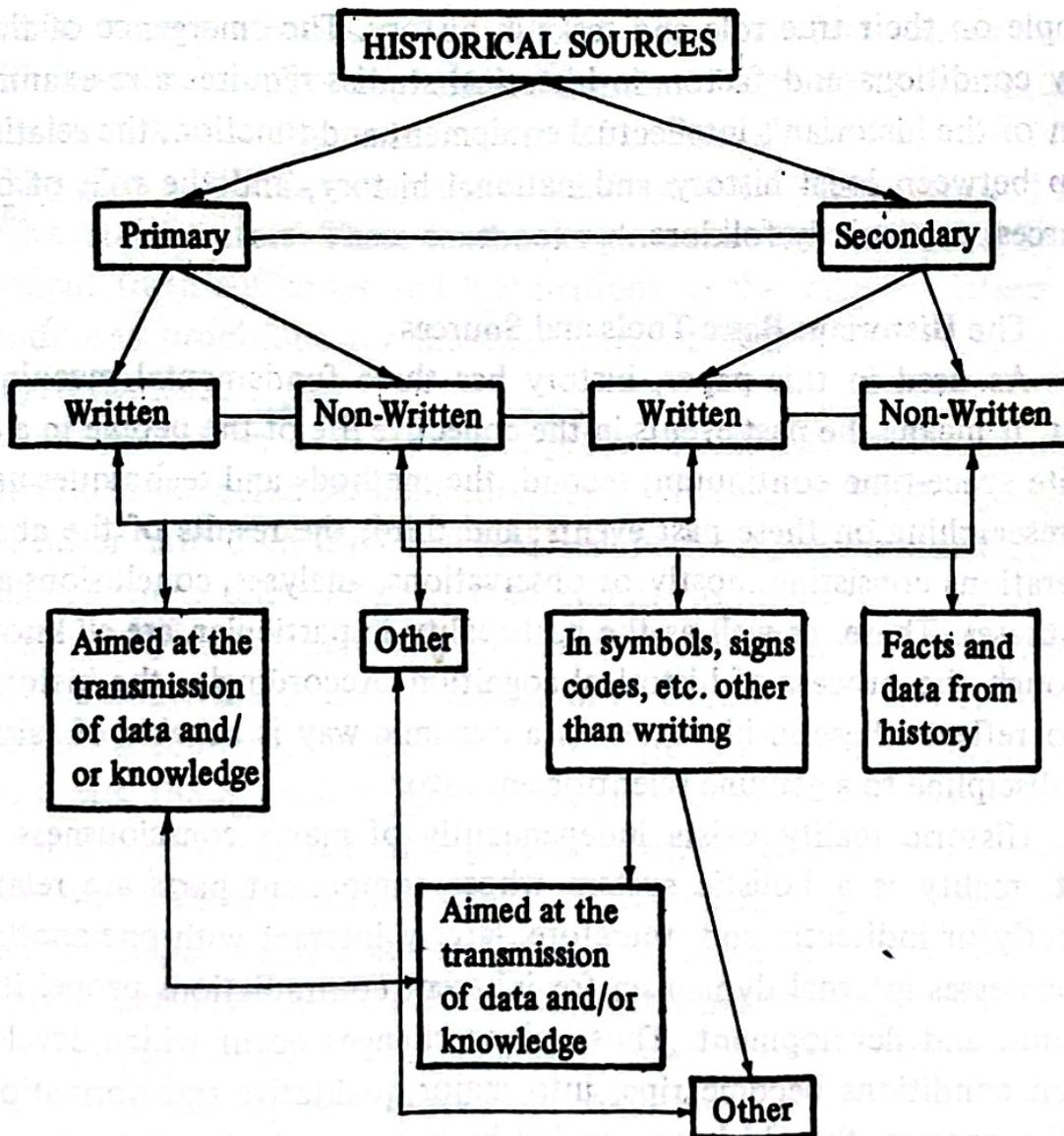


Figure 1. Basic Elements of Historical Sources With Writing As The Criterion of Division

In Figure I, it is evident that historical sources include all data (primary or secondary, written or non-written) about man's past that played a role in development. These sources may be discovered in various areas of social life and involve the manner in which they have been preserved or conveyed. Primary sources include the historian's direct knowledge, acquired facts and data characterized by the absence of another party, documents or physical objects whose reliability pose no question for examination though their authenticity is yet to be determined, and accepted signs or conventions. Apart from the written and non-written ones, there are also natural sources and man-made relics, and finally, the addressed and non-addressed sources. Secondary sources include, on the other hand, the historian's indirect knowledge, accepted or conventional signs that have to be deciphered or interpreted, documents involving a third party, and sources where there is need to establish the informant's reliability. Apart from the written and non-written ones (for example, oral and iconic information), others communicate information, convey facts and data without actually aiming to achieve that goal, and finally, the addressed and the non-addressed sources. Oral and folklore sources, which are non-written but are in any case important in the writing of history, can be either primary or secondary.

The historian analyzes and interprets these source materials in terms of their own language, psychological characteristics and graphic orientation (that is, the nature of their writing system and other signs and symbols). Facts derived from these sources require proper evaluation in the structure and process of development. A fact, let us recall, is a portion of reality which may be simple or complex, or small or big that develops intricate relationships in accordance to specific or general laws of change. In his work, the historian raises specific problems and formulates the corresponding objectives, with the end in view of gaining new findings and insights in order to obtain answers or solutions. Then he gathers as much facts as he can concerning the subject, area or problems of research, tests scientifically the authenticity of their sources and the reliability of their information, establishes their general conditions, background and relationships, and finally situates them in the structures and processes of change. This part of his work is done using the second basic tool: theoretical and practical knowledge, which is not directly based on historical sources but is available in social life. To make this knowledge a living and useful force, the historian interna-

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lizes and synthesizes it. Below is a diagram showing the relationships of its elements:³

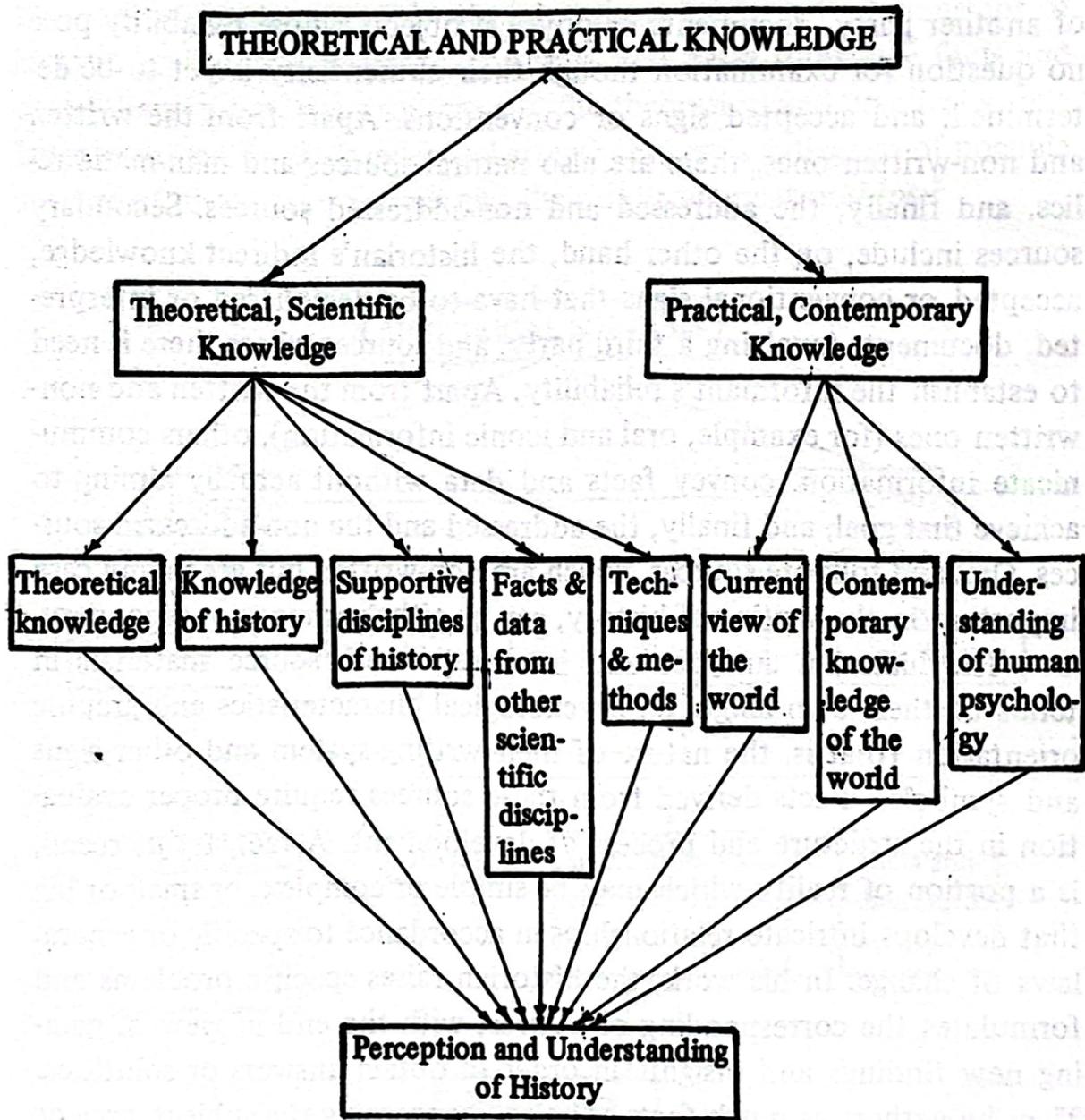


Figure 2. Basic Elements of Theoretical and Practical Knowledge

While reality is indeed complex and develops in a space-time continuum, portions or elements stay within configurations which are relatively at rest to warrant subjection to historical investigation. In this task, the historian's entire theoretical and practical knowledge plays a leading role. His constant application in research and synthesis of this knowledge across the years, through trial and error, enriches his command of theory while yet it deepens his perception of past reality. The continuing interaction between his knowledge of theory and its application to reality (which includes, among others, the study and assessment of source materials, the choice of the necessary evidence, the serious formulation of general statements, and synthesis) at each stage of intellectual growth eventually raises the quality and direction of his overall knowledge.

Theoretical and practical knowledge in general is therefore not static but purposive and dynamic. There are types of knowledge, however, whose self-imposed limitations prevent a holistic approach to historic reality. For example, world views deriving guidance and sustenance from the providential, positivist and subjectivist schools cannot significantly go far beyond the bounds of their framework in order to probe into the heart of reality. For this reason, historians of these schools have been occupied more or less with narrating the story of colonial policies, the state and administration, the governors-general, etc. and the ruling class' contributions to the national society. Thus, glossing over the regularities of social development and neglecting the role of the people, these historians fail to see any deeper into the historical process and the connecting link of their struggles. In effect, the resulting works serve the elite and act as a blinder to the masses, who are taken as a simple product of history rather than as a vital, creative element of the social process. In contrast to the above schools, the scientific world view recognizes the people's role in the creation of history and gives due emphasis to their labors; historians of this school thereby commit themselves to serve those historic forces seeking basic alterations in society, forces which are led by the most advanced detachment of the population in their forward surge to freedom.

In this context, how does the historian make the relationship between local history and national history meaningful?

II People's History: Local and National Dimension

The elements linking history on the local and national levels are

time, territory, population and the existing social, economic, political and cultural institutions; in short, the social system and its forces and regularities at definite stages of social development. The story of this system on the local and national levels is a vital part of the fabric of people's history in the same manner that, on another level, the nation is a component part of the international community.

A scientific view of the past impels the historian, who is armed with theoretical and practical knowledge and available sources, to study its various aspects from within as if he were a participant, in order to understand the people and their epoch — the social formation in whose wombs are contained their many concerns, their vital, active forces, and those interests which they desired to preserve or advance. In order to make a truthful interpretation of the past which is attuned to the needs of the present, the historian determines the acts or events which the people believed to be important, the problems they perceived, the issues they confronted, and their goals and aspirations. He asks questions like: What programmes of action did they formulate to achieve them? What are their needs and the historic forces that induced them to such an activity? What resulted from that collective endeavor? A significant aspect of this study is to determine the forces which are dying and those which are in the process of becoming, struggling in fact to establish alternative social orders in accordance to their collective needs and aspirations. To probe into the internal structure of reality, the historian inevitably deals with regularities, specific and general laws, as well as the various contradictions in the different epochs in the people's life, until finally he grapples with the causes and effects of the emergence and decline of social formations.

The most basic law observed in Philippine history, in this respect, is the development of economic forces. Conflicts between man and nature in space and time leads to changes in the forces that produce man's material wants. These changes challenge man to master nature in order to transform it further so that it can serve him in a better way. In the process, his material wealth increases. This creative relationship between man and nature generally reaches a new and a higher level — a development that occurs in a spiral manner and increasingly grows in complexity while yet it deepens in dimension through the years. Philippine history on this score reveals that the tools and instruments that man used in cultivating land and mustering natural resources help in self-improvement while simultaneously contributing to economic develop-

ment. Transformations from the hunting and fishing stage to the taming of wild animals and the establishment of husbandry, from fruit-gathering to swidden farming to sedentary agriculture, and from handicraft to industry and, much later, to manufacturing, technology and science all show that man through the centuries has generally improved his knowledge of nature and utilized its resources for the sake of collective life.⁴

This development, on the local and national levels, should interest the historian — especially the unevenness in the economic, political and cultural changes of towns, cities, provinces and regions in the social formation, including their principal and secondary causes as well as their internal and external motivating factors. The presence today of different types and levels of economies, from the most primitive to the capitalist within the context of the new colonial formation testifies to the leaps and bounds that have occurred in the past.⁵ Similarly, it is also interesting to discover what the various regions and local areas contributed, in the course of these developments, to the people's strivings to overcome their contradictions with nature while searching for greater freedom and a better life.

Historical progress issues in the long run from the development of economic forces. This reveals that the conflicts between those who direct the process of mastering nature and those who, in one way or another, are involved in that process is eventually resolved as history moves forward to a new synthesis. The increase in the number of more competent directors proportionately accelerates the rate of mastering nature. The need for directors thus speeds up the momentum of progress and, as a result, man's knowledge of nature deepens through the years, the complexity of the forces and relations of production grow, and the social system advances. Man's increasing mastery of nature is aided by science, which has developed from its basic folk moorings to the more advanced stage connected with technology and industry.

In effect, historical progress rests ultimately on the decision and action of the people who are primarily its motive power. This condition explains, for example, the differing impact of two colonial powers on Philippine society. While Spain was backward in so many ways and initiated very slowly changes in the country, the United States on the other hand introduced them on a relatively faster rate; this was possible because America possessed a highly developed science and technology, a bigger and well-organized capital, a stronger state, and better trained organizers: the business tycoons and the captains of industry who, with

the help of the state, were able to marshal more efficiently bigger economic and political power that ensued greater control of natural processes and resources and manpower in their drive for profit. In subsequent years, America intensified the integration of the Philippine economy with the capitalist market system. The gradual rearrangement of the global relations of power which has tilted unmistakably in favor of the democratic forces has maintained nevertheless the colonial relationship on a new level. But having reached its apex of development, imperialism in the Philippines is only capable of quantitative advances and is in fact preventing historic progress. Historians should inquire on how American domination affected directly or indirectly the local areas, especially their people's lifestyle and institutions.

Fundamental social relations depend on the level of the productive forces to which these relations ultimately adjust themselves. For example, the barangay was forcibly made to adapt under the pressure of the Sword and the Cross to the new economic and administrative organization introduced by the Spaniards who mustered some elements of the old order (like the power structure, the *datus*, the form of social organizations, etc.) for integration with the new organization of productive forces.⁷ In turn later, the Philippine Revolution initiated a reordering of society after the overthrow of Spanish power in consonance with the rise of new productive forces. The weakness of the revolutionary forces and the might of American imperialism halted this attempt, as a consequence of which the native bourgeoisie readjusted themselves to the needs and whims of capitalism. Social relations were thenceforth re-oriented to the requirements of the economic forces and structures introduced by the Americans. How did these adjustments affect history on the local and national levels? The interaction of imperialism and local, especially feudal, forces would certainly offer an interesting aspect of historical study.⁸

The supportive structures like the state and the laws, art and literature, morals and world views, and other institutions arising from the social base change in accordance to the transformations of the productive forces. These supportive structures more or less adapt to the new relationships in society in order not to act as their impediment. Development impels these structures on the whole to more or less alter while new elements appear. In some cases, however, elements of the old supportive structures do not change radically as long as they adjust successfully to the requirements of the new social order, as is the case usually

of the laws, family, religion, etc. Many laws, especially on property and political relations under the Spanish regime, were recognized by the succeeding American insular government. The *awits*, *corridos*, and *pas-sion* which dominated literature under Spanish rule continue up to our own time. On the local level, history will provide more examples of superstructural elements undergoing modifications from one epoch to another.⁹

After the bounds of the early communal societies were generally surpassed, the emergence of stratified societies gave rise to rivalries and antagonisms of varying intensities. These interactions occur because one group, sector or class (like those which own the basic means and instruments of subsistence) tends to maintain by organized force and deception those social relationships favoring them where other groups, sectors or classes (like those who own nothing but their power and capability to work) want to alter radically conditions which have deprived them of the basic necessities of human life. Exploitation, accompanied by oppression, is the greatest crime in the history of mankind and its operation consequently provokes resistance. This root cause of conflict and unrest on the historical plane sheds light on the nature of the revolts waged against the Spaniards for more than three hundred years which finally culminated in their overthrow by the Philippine Revolution; and later of the armed protests against the American and Japanese colonizers. These contradictions produced changes and moved society forward, but they also reflect its essential and irreconcilable differences — a condition arising from the fact that the ownership by a few of the means that sustain community life deprives the overwhelming majority of their own essential needs even as these render them without effective political power. People's history on the local level will reveal much about the source and character of folk protests, which rulers have often tagged in disparagement as "social disturbances", banditry, dissidence or filibusterism.¹⁰

A knowledge of the above regularities as they operated in Philippine history will help the historian understand the nature of social transformation and the people's role in it. In this context, local history is seen in a better light as a very important aspect of national history. Both need rigorous research methods, techniques and procedures from the holistic view as well as the analysis, evaluation, interpretation and synthesis of materials from a scientific perspective. But local history deals with a comparatively smaller level of reality — a geographic or po-

litical-administrative locale, a socio-economic unit, an ethnic group, a religious sect, an institution, etc. which scope, on the other hand, renders possible a sharper focus and therefore a more accurate and faithful reflection of reality. In a sense, its obvious limits are a potent source of strength for on this level history can now be dealt with more thoroughly and comprehensively.¹¹

This is not to overlook the fact however that from a scientific view history on the local, national and international levels are interconnected and cannot actually be taken fully independently of one another. Their formal separation is made only for analytical purposes. A people's history requires that a historian writing on international history must have a working knowledge of nations and regions; another dealing with national history must possess an understanding of international and local histories; and still another working on local history must be aware of national and international histories, and, of course, of their possible influences (direct or indirect) on the local people, structures or institutions. Whichever aspect or area of the past he works on, the historian must be able to synthesize historical materials appropriate to the system (micro or macro) that he studies.

What other connections should local history bear to national history?

The Filipino people, let us recall, have historically been struggling to form a united nation that is independent, free, prosperous and just. The main bulwark of these movements is the vast majority of the dispossessed and deprived population while the chief obstacles have been the old and new colonial forces aided by the native elite. In the local areas, the main impediments are the feudal forces, often aided by clan and tribal groups that form at times ethnic and regional power blocs. Popular movements, striving for freedom, have invariably created a tradition of resistance against the above obstructions to social progression.

The historian dealing with local history must think of the above conditions, especially of the ideals and aspirations of the people and the national community of which his field of responsibility is an integral part. The people's world view and historic stand can guide him better in this task more effectively and therefore scientifically. If local history is consistent in this thrust, then it will refuse to be an instrument for re-enforcing the feudal and tribal forces and their supporters whose existence has not only been tolerated but actually encouraged by colonial masters. Internecine strife, fanned by the latter, made it easier for

them to divide and conquer the Filipinos. The historian has to emphasize local contributions to nation-building and whenever possible, if warranted by source materials, to the popular strivings for complete liberation. These movements, generated by the auspicious confluence of social conditions and popular participation, brought forth a great revolutionary tradition which made us increasingly aware of our national identity. They demonstrate in fact the connection between the objective foundation of social life and the conscious activities of the people, who are the principal motors of social development. History books which accurately reflect this tradition is part of our intellectual heritage for national emancipation.

The feudal and tribal forces, at times assuming ethnic and regional forms, have strong historic roots. They have derived past strength from the tribal, regional and monocultural economies (like sugar, coconut, abaca, etc.), the tribal, provincial and regional power cliques, and from ethnocentric cultures and traditions. The analysis of alignments in the local-regional areas — that is to say, of groups, sectors, strata and classes — and their interests and behaviors in history enrich knowledge and promote a scientific understanding of the past. How did the above relationships form the people's consciousness, affiliation and activities?

This brings us to another point. While on the national scene the old and new colonial masters have generated their opposites, on the local level traditional economic (landlords, for example) and power (politicians and family dynasties) cliques have likewise given rise to their antagonists. Structural variations gave birth to historic contradictions. The unity and conflict of all these social forces should be examined on the national and local levels, including their inter-connections and their inner motivations and development. The local-regional elites, though possessing influential economic and political power maintained through heritage or through later acquisition, but in other cases by their connections with national politics and multinational corporations have not yet found enough articulate spokesmen in the field of history. While the elite rely heavily for their version of national history on establishment historians like Alip, Agoncillo, Zaide, etc. they are often confronted by a corresponding dearth of histories concerning themselves in the local areas.

This condition calls of course for the writing of alternative local histories from the people's viewpoint. Needless to say, this situation requires historians to study the operation of the fundamental laws of de-

velopment on the local level — if these worked here at all — or to investigate if there were specific laws whose functioning was confined here on account of its unique features and characteristics. The national schemes of periodization will certainly have varied applicability to particular areas. Why? Because while some local-regional structures and events may not actually influence national conditions, certain national structures and events may not at all be felt directly or indirectly in the local areas. The holistic character of the social formation does not in fact negate in any way the unevenness of the economic and political development of the local areas. For example, the lives of many farflung places and of many ethnic groups have remained unintegrated up to now with the national mainstream.

A genuine people's history, on either the local or national level, confronts the reality of feudal and tribal differences, including their ethnic and regional forms, by analyzing their harmful effects to the formation of an authentic national alliance for freedom and independence. For sure, the historian immured in localism, ethnocentrism and regionalism shall fail to comprehend the significance of this fact adequately since he does not understand the living connection between local history and national history; and neither shall he understand that social transformation, with an alleviating program of action for the overwhelming majority of the population, occurs when a popularly-based leadership decides upon the ripening of historic conditions to modify the old way of life and transform the social order that maintains it. On the other hand, a local historian aware of these facts will learn that all free members of society may actually play a role in the varied activities contingent upon the historic process, whose driving force is the people. Indeed, all forms of production, all political and cultural movements and all significant changes in Philippine society depend upon the people's labor and activities operating within the law-governed conditions of development. In writing the new history reflecting these realities, folklore performs a highly significant function.

III. Folklore and Historical Studies

Historians armed with the providential, positivist and subjectivist theoretical tools have led them to often reproduce uncritically archival and other official sources which largely reflect the characteristics, views, beliefs, activities and achievements of the ruling class. Immured in the confines of their world views and caught in the trap of their sour-

ces they could not therefore frequently transcend the political-ideological subjectivity of the colonizers. Thus, the logical result is the emphasis on the role of the foreign and native elites in historical development.

This is not to say that archival and others written by colonial officials and their hirelings are useless. The fact is, they are useful but in so far only as they are utilized guardedly and then re-interpreted in the light of contemporary requirements even as they are in the process supplemented by new source materials. Long standing problems that used to confront historians can only be solved by posing new interrogations. In this light, the significance of oral sources can be properly appreciated because they can be used to project new ways of dealing with the story of a very significant but maltreated members of society:¹² the common people, who have been dispossessed and oppressed in all possible ways for ages. They form more than 90% of the total population; yet, because of the peculiar social circumstances in which they have lived, they recorded very little if at all of their personal affairs and collective activities. On the other hand, their rulers: the builders of colonies, like the governors-general, the bureaucrats, the generals, the friars, the businessmen, the industrial magnates, and the intelligentsia serving them — wrote and kept the records which generally extolled their virtues, magnifying their achievements and portraying themselves as the heroes of their pageantry even as they libelled and caricatured the masses. Some Filipino historians, in fact, have often taken the rulers' viewpoint; many of their books consequently portray the people, in times of peace, as "good citizens" or as "docile subjects", and in times of revolutionary war as "insurgents", "simple", "ignorant" folks "whose unsophisticated mind could not see the various possibilities that might accompany a mode of action" — and hence were "moved by the impact of feeling and passion" during periods of mass action when they are transformed into mobs full of the "courage and abundant hope, the dash and careless abandon" of their class!¹³

In the face of this fact, there is a need therefore to re-orient historical methodology in order to open up for folklore, as for oral sources in general, the threshold of people's history. Folklore, in particular, is useful for this role because it is a product of popular creativity and possesses basic characteristics that make it a good source material for historical studies. First, it is a historical fact (I am here referring to authentic folk materials) since it occurs in a space-time continuum and, therefore, has a position in the structure and proceedings of change. Second,

folklore in communities dominated by oral traditions expresses popular world views, perception of reality, interpretation of events and reactions to historic movements and personalities.¹⁴ Third, folklore as a social record serves in its living form as a positive or a negative factor, or as an active or a passive influence on the life of its creators and carriers. Fourth, folklore plays generally an important role in local history on account of the fact that popular customs and traditions — of which it is a part — are established there on firmer grounds, as can be seen among many unintegrated or partly integrated ethnolinguistic groups. In the more advanced areas characterized by modern economic, political and cultural phenomena where the division of labor, technological stage, social differentiation, and administrative structure have reached a relatively higher state of development and is dominated by the written tradition, folklore serves less as a total view of the world than as a mirror of the very fragmentation of society. Fifth, folklore at some historic periods reflects mass movements and transformative processes. This type of folklore is neglected today because of the new colonial orientation of many scholars and the current dominance of the anthropological approach in folklore studies. Yet, history shows that while many traditional characteristics remain in folklore, some new ones in fact emerge with a new content — brought forth to life in response to the changing material conditions, the fresh challenges and directions of collective life, and the new problems of confrontation with social reality. The realistic and empirical content of this folklore can be seen in the artistic creations of the mass movements during the Philippine Revolution, the Philippine-American War, the anti-Japanese War, and other popular movements.

These movements show that folklore undoubtedly absorbs alterations in social life for which reason the people have been able to preserve records of their protracted, difficult and glorious struggles. Some types may even reveal how the people emerge as its makers while some others may portray them as the historians themselves narrating or singing their story in their own language and melody.¹⁵ No wonder the people in folklore of this type play a more visible role than in written documents, where on the other hand through the manipulation by the state and the mass media the historic stage is dominated by “national” leaders who consequently are made to appear as the heroes in the works of establishment historians. The above facts show then that without an adequate knowledge of the oral lore and traditions of the common

people and a comprehensive understanding of their characteristics and struggles at different periods of our social formation, a people's history cannot be written satisfactorily.

At any rate, the pressure from below has been such that through the centuries folklore has probably entered the legitimate arena of humanistic and scientific studies. In the field of anthropology, there are the works of Roy Barton, John Garvan, Fay-Cooper Cole, E. Arsenio Manuel, and others; in linguistics, those of Noceda y San Lucar, Otto Scheerer, Leonard Bloomfield, and others; and in works in literature, mass communications, custom law, psychology, sociology, political science, medicine, appropriate technology, etc. In historical studies particularly, folklore for a long time has been used as source materials for example in the works of Morga, Colin, Chirino, Loarca, Alzina, and others who drew pictures of the lifestyle, social organizations and some events in significant areas of the country at contact period. In the twentieth century, some historians like Alip, Agoncillo, Zaide, etc. have with great courage but with less method utilized folklore in the reconstruction of the epoch before the westerners came which they variously styled as "ancient", "pre-colonial", or "pre-hispanic" Philippines. Aware of these serious shortcomings, E. Arsenio Manuel therefore urged a multidisciplinary approach in the reconstruction of Philippine pre-history; especially the use, apart from written documents, of archeology, historical and comparative linguistics (especially lexicography and glottochronology), ethnology and comparative folklore.¹⁶ Jocano's subsequent misuse of folklore, in this respect, missed the point when from out of the blue he suddenly tried to force his so-called Sulod oral literature — just recently gathered — into what he called pre-Spanish Filipino poetry.¹⁷

In spite of the above aberrations, folklore when studied scientifically and used judiciously is a legitimate source material for the reconstruction of any period of history. In such a job, the type of folklore to be used will greatly depend on the epoch under consideration. While the reconstruction of pre-colonial Philippines for example has its own particular requirements, so does studies of other centuries including the contemporary period. For instance, an examination of various aspects of the old and new colonialism especially those dealing with "unwritten" and underhanded transactions would be more profitable in results and enlightening in coverage if oral sources, and possibly folklore, supplement written sources. It should be mentioned in connection with

this that historical folkloristics is slowly contributing to the development of techniques and methods that will further enrich historical studies from the viewpoint of folklore. Historians should, in fact, explore further this vital intersection of the life of folklore and history.¹⁸

From this discussion it is clear that folklore is useful for the historian because it can offer him a fact, lead him to historical data and sources, and present an opinion or perception. But to be more useful for his purposes, the historian – preferably with the collaboration of the folklorist – should study the origins and development of the folklore materials which are needed in his special field of study in order to discover their historical roots and ideological orientation. A simple, descriptive approach in this respect is not enough. In truth, what is needed is a genetic (that is, its role in the roots and origins of an event), structural (its place in a given whole), and causal (its role in the regularities and processes) explanation, with a constant awareness of the holistic and dynamic character of historic reality.¹⁹ While fieldworkers have already devised techniques for testing the folkloricity of these popular creations, the same must however be further examined in accordance to the strictly historical requirements of their authenticity as oral documents and the reliability of information that they contain. In practice, this means identifying sources, dating folk materials and determining whether they describe actual events, movements, institutions and personalities in general, or just elements or aspects only in particular. This activity logically impels the historian to sift the real from the fantastic, and the actual from the imaginative while applying critical safeguards similar to those used in the case of other historical sources. The data, including the more suspect claims and those which are hardly adequate or passable, are further checked with other available sources – though in no moment should the historian forget the fact that the latter ones can be very suggestive of their creators' reactions or regards towards the events of personalities they deal with.

As source materials of people's history then, folklore and oral sources can – depending on the subject or thrust of research and the other disciplinary approaches used – have the following broad functions in studying the past: as supplements to archival and written sources; as a counterforce to official sources; and in some unique cases, possibly as richer and bigger sources than any other. These probabilities affirm the fact that while the real history of the Filipino nation cannot be written without the story of the toiling masses, the latter remains

incomplete however without oral and folklore sources. In this scheme, new folklore produced by social movements, whether these are minor or major, should be given their corresponding attention.

In recent years, some have already recognized the necessity to creatively integrate into a solid historical synthesis the story of the people's life and struggles. This job can be done by a historian who, apart from being dedicated to serve the people's historic interests, is also equipped with the proper theoretical and practical knowledge to tap old and new sources (primary and secondary, written or non-written) even as he knows the fundamental nature of historical narration (consisting of the essential requisites, the sufficient conditions and the essential-sufficient conditions), the tools of narratives (historical imagination, language, taxonomy and arranging ideas and inferences), the elements of narratives (like laws and statements), and historical evaluation. His analytical method must enable him to synthesize materials on a synchronic-diachronic perspective firmly guided by the scientific world view.²⁰ In this task, the practical analysis of concrete conditions and the investigation of their attendant problems become scientific and, therefore, productive the more objective and ruthless the historian probes into the inner heart of reality.

IV. Perspective

The Philippines, like many backward nations of the world, has suffered severely from the evils cast forth by natural and social disasters. The people have always been their most serious victims. In the process, their cultural and intellectual activity, like many aspects of their economic and political life, also experienced the dehumanizing impact of oppression and backwardness — and so does historical studies: so all-embracing and pernicious indeed are their effects! The latter phenomenon in particular still happens at a time when in many parts of the world historians, confronted by knowledge explosion and technological revolution, already use new techniques and learning like information theory, cybernetics, game theory and decision-making, etc. in order to sharpen methods and make their research and theoretical instruments precise even as they utilize significant discoveries from other scientific and humanistic disciplines. This is not simply arguing for technical sophistication; rather, it is to dare historians to widen their horizons and to discover a more relevant charter for, and a better paragon of, historical studies that will serve even better the people's historic interests — in

consonance with their needs in an age of widespread and deep-seated global changes which have profoundly transformed societies and strengthened the great democratic movements of our time.

The role of oral sources in general and of folklore in particular, in the people's history that situates its subjects realistically in the mainstream of these earthshaking events is significant. For history, whether it be local or national, is an integral part of the processes embraced by the general laws of development which witness the interaction of forces in their continuing social modifications. In the long run this task which requires a great collective effort will have to use the competent local people's histories, evaluate which of their different, nay at times conflicting versions and interpretations of the same social phenomena, forces, movements, events, institutions and personalities are correct for the final synthesis that is a people's national history. In many ways then, the development of local history is a necessary pre-requisite for the full development of national history; the complete liberation of one, from the people's viewpoint, is the condition for the total liberation of the other. Thus, history issuing from this activity interprets the world correctly and reveals to all the people's immeasurable power to be their own masters as they marshal their historic forces in their awesome march to the future – fashioning them into a strong but versatile weapon for change and shaping the regenerative unity of the past with the present in order to integrate everything organically with the liberating forces of the social formation: an instrument no less that shall batter the bulwarks of the old world even while as a rising power it forges the marvellous beginnings of a truly new, just and humane civilization of free and equal men.

NOTES

1. *Bulletin Today* (June 8, 1978), p. 15.
2. This is based on the following: Jerzy Topolski, *Methodology of History* (USA & Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1976); Robert Jones Shafer, *A Guide to Historical Method* (Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1974), Revised Edition; William Todd, *History as Applied Science, A Philosophical Study* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1972); G. J. Garraghan, *A Guide to Historical Method* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1957); Donald V. Gawronski, *History: Meaning and Method* (Iowa: Sernoll, Inc., 1967); Gordon Leff, *History and Social Theory USA: The Merlin Press Limited, 1969*; Dharmendra Goel, *Philosophy of History, A Criti-*

cal Study of Recent Philosophies of History (India: Sterling Publishers Ltd., 1967); "Historiography", *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1951), Vol. VII.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1903-1909), 55 vols. The various censuses done in the twentieth century, namely, those of 1903, 1918, 1939, 1948, 1960, 1970 are also helpful in this score. See also the following: Antonio M. Regidor and J. Warren Mason, *Commercial Progress in the Philippine Islands*. A reprint from the *Phillippine Social Science Review*, Vol. II, No. 1 (February 1939); Benito F. Legarda, Jr., *Foreign Trade, Economic Change and Entrepreneurship in the Nineteenth Century Philippines* (Harvard University: Ph.D. Dissertation, 1955), "American Entrepreneurs in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines," *Bulletin of the American Historical Collection*, Vol. 1 (1972), p. 25-52, and "The Philippine Economy Under Spanish Rule", *Solidarity*, Vol. 2, No. 10 (1967), p. 1-21; Lewis E. Gleeck, Jr., *American Business and Philippine Economic Development* (Manila: Carmelo and Bauermann, 1975); A.V. Harrendorp, *Short History of Industry and Trade of the Philippines* (Manila: American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc., 1953); Vicente B. Valdepenas, Jr. and Gemiliano M. Bautista, *The Emergence of the Philippine Economy* (Manila: Papyrus Press, 1977); Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited* (Que on City: Tala Publishing Corporation, 1975) and Renato Constantino and Letizia R. Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past* (Quezon City: Foundation For Nationalist Studies, 1978).

5. *Ibid.* The existence of the primitive community is still evident. The works of anthropologists, like M. Vanoverbergh, "Negritos of Eastern Luzon", *Anthropos*, Vol. XXXIII (1938) and "Negritos of Eastern Luzon", *Anthropos*, Vol. XX (1925) show the pressure of external forces working on these societies. A synthetic approach is in Alfredo Panizo, "The Negritos or Aetas", *Unitas*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (March 1967), p. 66-101.

6. See note No. 4 above.

7. See Blair and Robertson, *op. cit.*, especially the works of Francisco Colin, "Labor Evangelica," (1663), Vol. 40, p. 37-98; Miguel de Loarca, "Relation of the Philippine Islands" (June 1952), Vol. V, p. 34-187; Pedro Chirino, "Relacion de las Islas Filipinas," (1604), Vol. XII, p. 169-321 and Vol. XIII, p. 9-217. See also Antonio de Morga, *Historical Events of the Philippine Islands* (1609) annotated by Jose Rizal (Manila: Jose Rizal National Centennial Commission, 1962) and a secondary source, John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1959).

8. See note No. 4 above, and James H. Blount, *The American Occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1912* (Quezon City: Malaya Books, Inc. 1968) and Romeo V. Cruz, *America's Colonial Desk and the Philippines, 1898-1934* (Quezon City:

University of the Philippines Press, 1974).

9. Legal, political and literary histories prove these.

10. See note No. 4 above; in any case colonial regimes of the old and new types have predictably reacted in this manner.

11. H.P.R. Finberg (ed.), *Approaches to History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962)

12. Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition* (A Study in Historical Methodology) (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961); Okon Edet Uya, "Oral History: Some Problems in Methodology and Perspectives", *The Significance of Historical Research* ed. by Lorraine A. Williams (Washington, D.C.: Howard University, The Department of History: The Second Series of Historical Publications, 1973), p. 13-24; Robert Jones Shafer (ed.), *A Guide to Historical Method* (Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1974), Revised Edition, p. 79-81; Allan Nevins, *The Gateway to History* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1963), p. 79-83; G. Kitson Clark, *The Critical Historian* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1967), p. 52; Elizabeth Dixon and James Mink (eds.), *Oral History at Arrowhead: Proceedings of the First National Colloquium on Oral History* (Oral History Association, 1966); Louis Starr (ed.), *The Second National Colloquium on Oral History* (New York: Oral History Association, 1968).

13. This is the attitude and, therefore, the standpoint of many Filipino ilustrado historians. See, for example, Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *The Revolt of the Masses* (Quezon City: U.P., 1956), p. 41, 99 and *Malolos: The Crisis of the Republic* (Quezon City: U.P., 1960), p. 127, 113, 649, 666 and 671.

14. Many works in anthropology show these; see, for instance the ethnographic works of E. Arsenio Manuel (Manuvu), Roy F. Barton (Ifugao/Kalinga), Fay-Cooper Cole (Tinguian/Bukidnon), Laura Watson Benedict (Bagobo), etc. I discussed aspects of this in "Folklore and World View," (Ts. 15 pp.), a paper read at the *Seminar Workshop on the Filipino Weltanschauung* sponsored by the Pambansang Samahan sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino and the Philippine Psychological Research House held at U.P., Diliman, Quezon City on May 29 – June 3, 1978.

15. There are legends about Jose Rizal, Antonio Luna, Andres Bonifacio, Macario Sakay, Crisanto Evangelista, Teodoro Asedillo, etc. "Ang Paghihimagsik Laban sa Espanya" (Kantaheng Pulube) collected by Carlos Ronquillo published at *Renacimiento Filipino* (June 7, 1911), p. 34 and June 14, 1911, p. 33) is a good and so is the *Parang Sabil* among the Tausogs. During mass movements, history has shown that songs, tales and legends about heroic and popular figures are created by the people themselves and then passed from word of mouth to another; some of these endure from one generation to the next generation.

16. E. Arsenio Manuel, *Agyu: The Ilianon Epic of Mindanao* (Manila: UST, 1969), p. 5-6.

17. F. Landa Jocano, *Philippine Prehistory* (Quezon City: PCAS, 1975), p. 211-212.

18. See, in this connection, the following: Jose Rizal, "Two Eastern Fables," *Truebner's Oriental Record*, No. 217 (July 1889); Nejeeb M. Saleeby, *Origin of the Malayan Filipinos* (Manila: 1912); Laura Watson Benedict, "Bagobo Myths", *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 26, No. 99 (Jan. - March 1913), p. 13-63 and *A Study of Bagobo Ceremonial, Magic and Myths*. *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, Vol. 25 (1916), p. 1-308; Dean S. Fansler, *Filipino Popular Tales* (Pennsylvania: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1965); Edward Norbeck, *Folklore of the Atayal Of Formosa and the Mountain Tribes of Luzon* (University of Michigan, Anthropological Papers, No. 5, 1950); E. Arsenio Manuel, "Ethnostratic Method For Dating Cultural Items With Illustrative Materials From the Folklore of Southeast Asia", A paper read at the Manila Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, 1960 and "A Survey of Philippine Folk Epics", *Asian Folklore Studies* Vol. 22 (1963), p. 1-76; and Juan R. Francisco, *Indian Influences in the Philippines With Special Reference to Language and Literature* (Quezon City: U.P., 1964); "Some Philippine Tales Compared With Parallels in North Borneo", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Vol. 10 (1962), p. 511-523; *Maharadia Lawana* (Quezon City: Philippine Folklore Society, 1969) and *The Philippines And India* (National Book Store, Inc.: 1971).

19. See notes No. 11 and 12.

20. See note No. 2.