

## THE POETRY OF BIKOL HISTORY

Maria Lilia F. Realubit

I owe the title of this paper to Emery Neff who in his book, *The Poetry of History*,<sup>1</sup> states that history should be written in such a way that humanity can be won to recognize its own likeness, to understand itself. Our task in this conference is clear: To be able through history to understand ourselves as a people, and for me in this paper to endeavor to understand the Bikols so they can be made understandable to others and to themselves.

I come to history because of necessity. My basic training is in literature, but in my analysis of literature I have to turn to the conceptual framework of the historian for events. The easiest thing would have been to get a good book in Bikol history, but there is not one written yet. Information on pre-Spanish Bikol can only be obtained from the writings of missionaries, and some bits of data in scattered sources and chronicles dealing on Philippine history. The archives in Spain have voluminous data, if only they were available. Also, the National Archives and convent collections of parish records await the historian. I have, however, some access to materials from Spain through the Valladolid convent and through copies of manuscripts sent by the archives in Pastrana to the Bikol Heritage Society, a small group of Bikol scholars in Manila. Of some use are three books on Bikol history written by Bikol writers: one entitled *Lucha y Libertad* (1938) by Elias Ataviado, which narrates the Bikol-American battles in 1900-1901, particularly in Albay and Sorsogon, and which an American historian<sup>2</sup> thinks is largely based on rumor; another one entitled *Ibalon; Monografias Historicas del Region Bicolana* (1941) by Mariano Goyena del Prado, which is more ethnography and legend than history, except for the first chapters; and the third, *Bikol Annals* (1956) by Domingo Abella, a scholarly work but confined only to ecclesiastical history.

Abella is objective about the colonization; he mentions the evils of the visitation system, and the abuses of the priests and bishops. The book takes the point of view of a Bikol . . . a Filipino, before Agoncillo and Alfonso, took a stand and wrote *A Short History of the Filipino People* (1960). In his "Introduction," Rev. Horacio de la Costa, S.J., wrote:

In devoting himself to the history of the diocese of

Nueva Caceres and the Bikol Region Dr. Abella performs a signal service to historical science in this country. Philippine historiography is relatively poor in regional and musical histories, and this lack leaves notable gaps in our knowledge which accounts of a more pretentious nature are unable to fill.

One book has been valuable, *Kabikolan In The Nineteenth Century Socio-Economic Change in the Provincial Philippines* (1976) by Norman Owen, who wrote it for his Ph. D. dissertation, University of Michigan. Owen has made use of a vast amount of primary data in national archives in Spain, England, the Philippines, and the United States, and in parish archives of small Bikol towns and private papers of families.

Yet these sources do not suffice in giving me a total picture of Bikol history. In the circumstances, and as a last resort, I have to draw from folklore, literature, and social-cultural materials, and use these as linkages to patch out the relatively few fragments in order to come up with a tentative statement on Bikol history. The results would have made a chop suey but I have been assured by historians that "there's nothing wrong with poking about in social science to try to find some formula, some hypotheses, some model, some method which has immediate relevance to one's own work."<sup>3</sup> In fact, the behavioral approach to historical analysis calls this method *Verstehen*, or the imaginative reconstitution of Stimulus and Response and their assumed connection. The method can at best provide a hypotheses about the reason behind observed actions.<sup>4</sup>

I begin my historical exploration of Bikol's pre-conquest past by going straight to folklore. My first insight into the historical richness of lore came with my study of the Bikol folk epic "Ibalon" which I use as springboard for this discussion. I have come to think it best to take this epic fragment in Spanish for what it's worth to Bikol, and that is, as a kind of mirror affording us what it was like in the past and enabling us to reach out to the "original epochs." Actually, work on the epic is continuing and gaining foothold with manuscripts obtained from Spain and field trips all over Bikol.

It is possible, I think, to regard the epic and all lore as a preserved archive of history which reveals ways of thinking peculiar to the people who produced or adapted them. It was naturally that our early fathers, in attempting to understand the world, should devise a "cosmo-

logy in the form of myths, inchoate philosophy, or science with theological coloring, and that these myths should reflect the climate of their origin."<sup>5</sup> The fact is that these forms "show accretions of folk elements, the humble influence of place and kinship and common emotion that accumulate through generations to shape and condition a distinctive native consciousness."<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, some traces or "remains" found in the epic, when subjected to documentation and factual authentication of details, were verified in the Spanish chronicles. Archeological diggings in the area where the epic is supposed to have originated likewise support the existence of the places mentioned. Thus, I see no problem as regards the place-names, rivers, mountains, implements, flora and fauna with which the epic abounds. The name of the hero, Handiong, is the name of a village in which valuable artifacts have been dug out in recent excavations. From reports of old men in this village the name Andong or Handong, shortened from Handiong, is that of an old old chief who ruled there in ancient times. Farther away is another village named Candato, meaning a place owned by a datu. In short, the problem in the epic is whether it is authentic as a folk creation or whether it is the work of the Spanish missionary who wrote Spanish poems exalting in the beauty of the Bikol land and people. However, I think that the Spanish elements in the epic, its language and certain overlays, are superseded by layers of native narrative patterns which are authenticated by a mass of myths, legends, tales and songs.

I immersed myself in these folkloric accounts, and let them speak to me intimately of the Bikol wilderness and ways of living, and the Bikol's manner of imagining and creating. I confess to the difficulty of the process in recapitulating the mental history of the Bikols, using lore as a point of reference. Presently, I am still trying to recover the original shape of events by reversing the process of amalgamation of myths and by rediscovering the history beneath the legends. In tracing, for instance, Bikol drama backward from its maturity in the works of Mariano Perfecto<sup>7</sup> towards its origin in old poetic forms in praise or petition to the gods, I try to recapture the atmosphere and spirit of the ancient Bikols in their geographic setting.

For Bikol is a land contrastively warm and wild. The land itself is many-formed. Fierce and rugged is its topography; blustery and typhonic are the monsoons. The earth's tremors are violent and its volcanic outbursts, cataclysmic. It is remarkable how all these merge with

the lush and abundant vegetation, fertile valleys, numerous rivers and teeming seacosts. There was a time when gold and iron mining created boom towns in Paracale and Mambulao; while gold-encrusted designs emblazoned the people's teeth. What of its seven volcanoes, four of them reputed dead, one suspected to be just asleep, one still smouldering in fire, and restless Mayon of beauty acclaim, which keep the land ever stirring and alive, and the people a free and spirited class.

Accordingly, these environmental conditions has had effects on the people, and have, consequently, brought about a course of activity and a set of attitudes and inclinations instinctive of the Bikols. Indeed the diverse surroundings have moulded a people adaptable to many situations and inclined to a sober and settled life. Fashioned with their own hands were implements necessary for livelihood: the plow and horrow; yoke, bolo and hoe; the boat for fishing and transportation; clay pots, loom and bobbins, ganta and other measures. The badas or whip, budyak or arrow, and minasbad or spear were made not only for the hunt but also for protection. Historical accounts say that the Bikols had organized settlements and some system of government. It had a chief who promulgated equal laws for the datu and commoners – the power of the datu being only a potential factor and exercised only in terms of danger or necessity, because forceful rule was unnecessary as the Bikols were a most governable people.<sup>8</sup>

Such brightness of life developed noble sentiments and thoughts, beauty and pleasure, poetry and song. The Bikols had their own system of writing; it was on leaves and stones where they wrote.<sup>9</sup> There was woodwork, pottery, and goldsmithing which reveal distinctive designs and craftsmanship. The Kalanay and Bagopantao pottery reveal diagnostic designs of scalloped decorations done in relief, curvilinear scrolls of alternating triangles, and cut-out-triangles in ring stands and patterns. Fifteen different designs show that the ancient Bikols had possessed culturally defined preferences, attitudes, and values for what they considered beautiful.<sup>10</sup> In the caves of Bato, Sorsogon and Cagraray, Albay, are an assemblage of stone tools and stone beads. There are bronze finds in the Camalig caves and in river settlements in Quipayo and Libmanan, Camarines Sur.

The ancient Bikols were a religious people. There was a pantheon of gods headed by Gugurang, who lived in Kamurawayan or heaven, and Aswang, who lived in Gagamban, or a place of fire. The general principles of this religion, which re-echo in the folk narratives, folk say-

ings, and folk songs are these:

First, that life is a god/father/nature given thing; hence, god/father/nature must be obeyed and respected; it is this same god/nature, a loving and a punishing father, who provides for him when he wants and chastises him when he transgresses.

Second, that wrong exists, forded over by Aswang; if man chooses Aswang, he commits wrong and displeases Gugurang, the god of good, who must punish him.

Third, man is free to make use of the fruits of the earth which god/nature/father has lavished on him.

Fourth, life is a series of tests of endurance – the victor will be rewarded, the transgressor will be punished. Conflicts are inevitable so man has to be strong.

Clearly, this shows that Gugurang loomed high in the Bikol pantheon of gods. Acting as some kind of aide were lesser gods; Batala, who was given a district to protect and make happy; ukot, the forest god; Katambay, who accompanied and guarded people; and Magindang, the god of fishing. Aswang was a sovereign rival, with a coterie of aides named Bonggos, or vengeful spirits; Korokoro, a night bird which brought bad omens; Oryol or Irago, the serpent daughter of Asway; Yasaw or Tambaluslos, the bringer of bad news, and several others.

Generally, the Bikol found by the Spanish was proud but not arrogant, obedient but not dumb. Chroniclers believed he was docile but impetuous and valorous, intelligent and vigorous. Highly impressed by the people, Fr. Batolome Ruiz, who came to Bikol in 1578, said:

. . . [they] were the least immoral of all those discovered in these kingdoms. . . those fond of women are very decent and retired. In some parts of these provinces, when they were still pagans, they considered it embarrassing and shameful to marry their own relatives even in the third and fourth degree.

Ribadeneira, who visited the region in 1589, wrote:

They are a calm and temperate people, honest and retired.... he had pottery and textile industries, he had gold and forest and sea products. ...The customs of these...Bikols are temperate and chaste. And the sentiments of the family here is very developed.<sup>12</sup>

Colin had this to say:

The inhabitants devoted themselves to the cultivation of their lands; they know how to make farm tools... they had instruments for fishing and household utensils made of bamboo and wood... they wore clothing which they themselves wove from pineapples. They were always reserved in covering their persons with extreme diligence, circumspection and modesty... The woman, very prudent and modest, is a stranger to any form of triviality.<sup>13</sup>

Gaspar de San Agustin likewise said:

All these provinces are of very docile people, and of great dexterity in mechanical jobs. These provinces abound in rice and other fruits of the earth like coconut trees from where oil is taken to light these islands....<sup>14</sup>

Castano, who stayed for long years and in various parishes, wrote:

... the Bikol region... is the most congenial of the Philippine territory... for the mildness and docility of its character and for the temperance of their customs. In it the native element of pure race prevails, with a sprinkling of heterogeneous mixture... It is a race of great impetuosity and valour and fond of social dealings; more intelligent and vigorous, more active, industrious and warlike, and adjusted to live clustered in compact villages...<sup>15</sup>

A multifaceted people then was engendered in such complex surroundings; the harsh and restless weather and volcanic conditions, and on the other hand, a happy and contented people, ascribable, too, to nature's other face, its bounty and munificence. What ill luck that the land's dynamism and potentiality, together with the people's creativity and adaptability, drew only the freebooters who rampaged its shores in pre-conquest times — the deserters and vagabonds, and soon the Spanish conquistadors, Philippine pirates, and Dutch invaders.

Assuredly, the arrival of the Spanish conquistador was met not

without opposition. The reconnoitering troops of the Spanish, who first reached Masbate shores in the year 1567 under the leadership of Mateo del Saz and Martin de Goiti, found the villages deserted.<sup>16</sup> The people had escaped to the mountains frightened anew by another invader. On the hilltops they had seen the coming of the Spanish ships; with *hamodiyong* horns and *balalong* gongs they warned the people of an impending invasion.

The people's desertion of the villages may have struck the Spaniards as a form of organized resistance which they did not dare attack. After all they had come from Panay only to look for food, and under the circumstances withdrawal from the Bikol shores was the best thing to do. And so it came that the people's exodus to the hills did delay somewhat the Spanish conquest of the Bikol region.

When the Spanish came back in 1569 wearing a cassock and blessing the people, with Luis de Guzman and his troops, who brought about friendship and obedience through peaceful ways,<sup>17</sup> the Bikols were subdued. How could they have fought civility — these civic people?

Actually, the Spanish was just trying a new method of amelioration. They knew too well that arms and hostility would get them no provisions at all, and conquest, their primary aim, had to be achieved through gentler ways. Besides their Cebu and Panay experiences had proved disastrous for them; they were not going to waste any more supplies.

For a change, the battle-scarred people, who were used to no less than battle-axes or machetes, not just from warring tribes but from sea pirates and marauders, may have compromised to prevent further disaster and useless massacres. Who could they have asked for aid, the land being situated in the remote south of Luzon and separated from it by barriers of distance, forest, and marsh, and from the Visayas by bodies of water.

Significantly, the first missionaries, Fr. Alonso Gimenez, who came in 1569, and Fr. Juan de Orta, who came later, were kind and sympathetic. Sincere in their apostolic mission, they traveled on foot, and horseback often, and sailed by sea or river most times, to get to the distant villages and settlements — making friends with the people and learning their ways and language.<sup>18</sup> Blair and Robertson believes that Gimenez may have written the first *Doctrina Cristiana* in Bikol.<sup>19</sup>

Not everything went well, however, Andres de Ibarra, who reached

Bikol shores in 1570, had committed abuses and blunders. Legaspi had him recalled to Panay to account for the people's complaints against his massacres and violence. But after an investigation, Ibarra was allowed to return to his station after he presented to Legaspi gifts of a golden chain and a comb.<sup>20</sup> The unfair deal must have caused the people such aggravation for they became hostile to the Spanish again.

When the next conquistador came in 1571, Juan de Salcedo's attempts to acquire Paracale's gold mines were repeatedly thwarted by a clever transmission of alarm signals through courier. These attempts were even circumvented also by the news that the Camarines valley people were ready to repel all aggression from the occupation forces.<sup>21</sup> There are stories saying that when the Spanish forces in Libon, one of the first royal towns in the country, decided to take for themselves the rich Oas fields, the same courier method of alarm saved the town. People opened the dikes and torrents of water overflowed the entire town that the frightened Spanish soldiers had to go back. If the Paracale incident was a fact, the Oas story cannot just be fiction.

Needless to say, the superior arms of the Spanish quelled Bikol resistance finally. Subjugation stilled the free spirit. The enemy, whoever it was, had always been too big to vanquish. There were the Moros, who came in droves by sea, killed the men, captured the children, raped the women, burned the houses, seized possessions, chased whoever escaped into inland territory and mountain hideouts, and cut off heads, arms, feet – anything they took on fancy. The typhoons and volcanic eruptions, the Spanish, the Moros – life was a constant peril and unending flight, where they often ended in defeat, families orphaned, and towns totally wiped out.

Then the Spanish became his ally in fighting the Moro and Dutch invaders. Bikol history is full of accounts of Spanish missionaries who were tortured or beheaded by the Moros, or of Bikols and Spaniards fighting together.<sup>22</sup> The impact of the Moros on demographic, commercial, and agricultural development in the 18th and 19th centuries was great. It seems clear that the intensity of the threat to settlement, to trade, and to capital accumulation which these raids represented between 1750 and 1818 must have been a major impediment or disincentive to growth in this period, and may be a reason which can help explain why Bikol was relatively slow in responding to the new economic opportunities and initiatives of the Manila government.

In any case, the cooperative action between the Spaniards and the

Bikols paid off in terms of converts. Soon the Spanish boasted that while Manila and the rest of Luzon were still under Muslim rule, the Bikols were already Christians.<sup>23</sup> On August 14, 1595 the Diocese of Caceres, one of the first four dioceses in the Philippines, was erected as a suffragan of the newly created Metropolitan See of Manila.

In 1905 the first Filipino bishop was a Bikol, Jorge Barlin. It was he who delivered the invocation at the inaugural session of the First Philippine Assembly on October 16, 1907. His episcopal consecration in Manila was a national event of great historical significance. His achievement paved the way for other priests to attain episcopal honors shortly thereafter, and caused the Americanization policy of the hierarchy to be shelved in the background even long before the end of the American Regime.

In 1898 as vicar forane of the province of Sorsogon, he was entrusted the reins of government by the Spanish provincial governor who peacefully surrendered his official prerogatives. If Sorsogon did not suffer a bloody September in 1898 such as that witnessed by Neva Caceres that same month, and other unsavory incidents in large scale which ordinarily accompany a change of regime brought about by the force of arms, it was due to Barlin who commanded the respect and esteem of the Bikol revolutionary forces and the people.

The arrival of General Ananias Diokno with his insurgent troops sent by the Revolutionary Government of Malolos, and the establishment of the revolutionary government, was a relatively peaceful one largely through the efforts of Barlin. When the Americans organized a civil rule in 1901 under Captain J.G. Livingstone of the 47th Infantry, U.S. Army, Barlin again was instrumental in rallying the people to the maintenance of peace and order. Uppermost in his mind, was the avoidance of bloodshed and the welfare of the people. A play titled "Barlin"<sup>24</sup> written in 1950 was based on the testimonies of the people who were close to him in Sorsogon and reveals his love and loyalty to his people and country.

In 1902 Barlin was offered by Gregorio Aglipay himself the pontifical regalia as the supreme prelate of the Aglipayan church. Barlin's answer was curt: "Prefiero ser lampazero a ser la cabeza de su jerarquia cismatica." It was his case with Fr. Vicente Ramirez, the parish priest of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur, who had defected to the Aglipayan sect and wanted to appropriate the church and its property for himself, that delivered the most damaging blow to the new sect from which it never

recovered. In Ilocos Norte only three priests had remained faithful to Rome; all the Filipino priests in Panay Island, sixty in number, had defected to the Aglipayan church with the support of their congregations. Because the defectees had moved into the ranks of Aglipapayanism without vacating their church buildings, a question arose for the American authorities to decide: to whom did those churches belong?

However, on the basis of Article VIII of the Treaty of Paris which expressly exempted ecclesiastical property from the purchase made by the United States; the Supreme Court in 1906 decided in favor of Barlin.<sup>25</sup> The question the Bikols ask today is whether Bishop Barlin deserves a niche in the pantheon of Filipino heroes.

With the Christianization, however the Bikol towns began to resemble Spanish pueblos entrusted to encomenderos who collected agricultural surplus as tribute, seized and shipped out all the gold they could find, and established in Nueva Caceres a city with about one hundred Spanish families and the full paraphernalia of Hispanic urban administration.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to said tribute, Spanish authorities and the clergy had other means of appropriating property, one of which having been "tax-collecting expeditions" to the hinterlands.

Jagor wrote:

The number of the Negritoes of the Isarog has, however, been much diminished by deadly battles between the different ranches, and by the marauding expeditions which, until a short time since, were annually undertaken by the commissioners of taxes, in the interest of the government monopoly, against the tobacco fields of the natives. Some few have been "pacified" (converted to Christianity and tribute); in which case they are obliged to establish themselves in little villages of scattered huts, where they can be occasionally visited by the priest of the nearest place; and, in order to render the change easier to them, a smaller tax than usual is temporarily imposed upon such newly obtained subjects.<sup>27</sup>

Tax-collecting expeditions would end in small wars against the Spanish. Jagor continues:

As the wild people could not understand why they should not cultivate on their own fields..., they saw on the cuadrille-

ros not functionaries of a civilized State, but robbers, against whom they are obliged to defend themselves by force; and apperances contributed no less to confirm them in their error; for these did not content themselves with destroying the plantation of tobacco, but the huts were burnt to the ground, the fruit trees hewn down, and the fields laid waste. Such forays never occured without bloodshed, and often developed into a little war which was carried on by the mountaineers for a long time...<sup>28</sup>

Even the lowland natives "bitterly complained" of the injustice of the settlement of their wages, and so were often driven from public employment to labor in the service of the officials. Rivalry among the missionaries, or between them and their superiors or bishop contributed to the misery of the lives of the people.

Among the clergy there was controversy regarding the visitacion questions, where priests argued against their religious superiors of bishop, affecting in such cases the people who were always on the receiving end.

A ltter sent to the Madrid central government from nine Franciscan friars in Camarines reads in part:

...we cannot but raise for your consideration the convenience that would result from the suppression of the provincial prelates... For they exercise the hardest despotism over their subjects, causing great troubles with discomfort, and even scandal in the towns when they make their visitations which are nothing but triumphal tours and bear no other fruit than that of opening a door to grudges, vengeance and gossips...<sup>29</sup>

∇

The early Bikols then were the first in Luzon to receive the lash of conquest. One punitive act was to dispossess the people of their lands and property which the Spanish appropriated for themselves. Of common knowledge was the forced labor extracted from the people who had to haul in brick or stone under the beat of the merciless Spanish whip. Garrisons were established everywhere in the Bikol area, and men were recruited to reinforce the troops that were sent to wrest Manila from Moro control.

A missionary, Fr. Pedro de San Pablo, write in a "representation"

dated October 12, 1619, Nueva Caceres (Naga City presently):

... the towns of our Province are becoming smaller and smaller as also the number of natives in them, in such a way that those towns with one thousand tributaries are now reduced to five hundred or six hundred... due to the forced loans, contributions and personal services... food was gotten that was not paid and if it was, then always at minimum rates for cutting trees, wood, making silos, rigging and other things for the construction or equipment of vessels.<sup>30</sup>

Fr. Pedro objected to the task of fortification, to the construction of ships, and to the expedition against the Moluccaus. He was worried over the possible diminution in the number of the people caused by the harm to the towns they had founded, that "the mothers might dry their breasts to kill their children for they preferred them dead rather than living such a hard life."<sup>31</sup>

For the Spanish was a very thorough master. He meddled in all spheres and aspects of life. He ordered a tearing down of the old ways and imposed on the people his own practices and standards. Even the matter of naming of families was meddled into by the Spaniards. The 1854 Claveria law regarding the re-naming of families was strictly enforced in the Bicol region. No schools were set up except to learn prayers from the parish priests:

A visitor from the Royal Audiencia came down to the Bikol region in 1702 and found these "evils" deeply rooted.<sup>32</sup> The natives were asked to contribute food without pay, perform personal services for the priests as domestics, cooks, and gardeners, and contribute wax and candles. The young girls were compelled to sweep churches and convents, pound rice as "repartamiento" for the religious and fiscales, deliver unthreshed palay, and bring firewood and food for the pigs. There is in Bikol literature a short play titled "Anti Cristo" which depicts the greed and lust of these priests so that a young girl kills one of them. The play written in the 1920s by Justino Nuyda is one of the best in Bikol literature. Even oppressive practices were the assessments burdened by extra supplies of timber and limestone. One, Fr. Pedro Ferrer, who was a soldier-priest but who often let the military in him win over the priest, was nearly killed by the people due to his militaristic methods.

The results of the conquest were fatal to the once free and happy Bikols. The foreign invaders had become their masters. The datos were now powerless, the people disillusioned and futile. Gone was vigor and initiative: the most warlike of Filipinos had been quieted and subdued. The Hispanization begot abnegation and nothingness. The much-beleanguered Bikol had become beaten up.

What evidences are there of this injury? From the oral traditions are revealed a very sensitive, gentle, and proud people whose social fabric was destroyed first by the colonization and then the commercialization. In Bikol folksongs are revealed a people full of sentiment, nostalgia, and even sadness for the loss of caging of a bird by the Spanish or a flower nipped too early by an uncaring stranger. In the folk tales are simpletons and fools who turn to mimicry, exaggeration, tomfoolery, satire, and wit in order to outdo and outwin the Spanish, Chinese, merchant, King, and so on. Folk speech is full of derogatory epithets against the Spanish, Chinese and greedy men. Many legends are about weeping maidens due to a cruel father, covetous men, and gentle old men dying for the sake of children. There are poems about a once vigorous and energetic man who has been rendered useless by the colonial powers that today he just sleeps waiting to be awakened him so he can fight his oppressors and free his native land. Legends speak of Mount Isarog, the region's biggest mountain, as a sleeping giant who will one day awake to fight greed.

To all these, the Bikols staged their own method of resistance. Using the old method of escape, they ran to the mountains and were immediately called *infieles*, *remontados*, or *cimarrons*. They defied the Spanish order to gather in the towns and went on living by themselves in scattered sitios. In fact, each sitio spoke a different language so that the dumbfounded Spanish priests put up a new edict — for all the people to speak the Naga Bikol which was declared standard.<sup>33</sup> All writing was done in the Naga dialect, but the people in the various towns still spoke their own dialects and do so up to this day.

It is true there was no proto-nationalist movement, such as those in Tayabas and Cavite because the Bikol way of life did not warrant this. The communities and villages were scattered and far from one another; the people were independent-minded. Fact is, the more the Spanish authorities waged campaigns to bring them to the towns the more they ran away. Those people in the mountains were never conquered by the Spanish, who instituted the bell in every village as a sign

of conversion and pacification.<sup>34</sup>

From early times, the Bikols have been a time-focused people. By experience they know that the forces of nature—rain, wind, typhoon, volcanic eruption, and earthquake—come to them unbidden and at any time. It is against these unconquerable forces that they had to program their lives. There was a time for planting, for harvesting, for rejoicing. Nothing could make them move except a typhoon, says a proverb. Thus, to expect the Bikols to have shown immediate resistance would be unBikol of them. Bikols bide their time, and if they were quiet, they were only thinking how best not to lose any more lives and where to hit the enemy best.

More reasons can be offered for the slow reaction and indifference of the people. One, education was mainly on the “caton” or in saying prayers. The first formal school was established in the early part of the 19th century, the Seminario-Colegio de Nueva Caceres, which encourage students for the priesthood, and much later in 1868, the Colegio de Santa Isabel, a normal school for women Catholics. A handful rich went to San Juan de Letran and the Universidad de Santo Tomas much later, and the Colegio de San Buenaventura in Guinobatan, Albay which opened in 1897. Even during the American period and the Commonwealth years only Bikols of some means could go to Manila to study.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the liberating force of education was not for the Bikols to enjoy until later.

Two, the Bikols are peaceful by nature. Combining this with a spirit of gladness contributes to an open character that is without pretense and restraint. Even the openness is balanced by soberness and quiet thinking. Only a cause big enough would provoke their anger, or hostility, but generally they are not vindictive. In fact, they are generally, adaptable to the point of naivete and for this they are often taken advantage of. Moreover, the Bikols are overflowing in hospitality to a fault. Guests are welcome and given the best of the house, but it can lead to such proportions as offering all they have even if they shall have been left bereft.

Three, colonial attitudes deter the Bikols. Deference to the mestizo, Amerikano, or Tagalog is common. Quite lacking in aggressiveness; they would rather stay behind and watch. Not that they are uncreative and unimaginative for Bikols are lovers of the arts. But the inclination towards the performing arts is indicative of a bursting forth of release of long-repressed energies and emotions. Take the enthusiasm of the

19th century for dramatic presentations such as the moro-moro or comedia, and at the turn of the century for the zarzuela.

Fourth, Bikols lack an economic and intellectual climate which could have stimulated ferment and change. In fact, Bikol today is considered one of the depressed areas in the Philippines. Present average monthly income of the Bikol poor is ₱42.00 monthly.<sup>36</sup> Until these last five years education was dominated by sectarian objectives which tended to narrow and repress thinking.

Let us go to Norman Owen who tells of the reasons behind this stagnation in a social-economic study of 19th century Bikol:

1. Agriculture was on the path to commercialization, but not far along that path by 1898. Riceforming grew in absolute and in degree of commercialization, but declined relative to population and remained predominantly a subsistence crop. The data are vague or contradictory for coconuts and coconut products, for fishing, fruits, vegetables, and most handicrafts, but it is clear that none of these expanded in the way that abaca production did.

2. Landowning may have become somewhat more commercial but no radical change was apparent. Individual plots tended to be small and scattered, with wealthy agriculturists tending to own a number of small plots rather than a single large estate.

3. The shift from a rice-centered to an abaca-centered economy did not imply a reallocation of land, only of human energy. But the commercialization of abaca production did not inspire analogous developments in most other productive industries, as we might suspect if we originally posited that the only missing factors in the economy was commercial awareness.

4. Some of the other industries expanded and became somewhat more commercial — lumber, cattle, sugar, cacao, and coffee — but all were on a very small scale.

5. Other industries declined in scale or in commercial importance — textiles, gold, cordage and tobacco. Shipbuilding enjoyed a mid-century boom but soon failed.

Thus, "there was nothing resembling a linear coefficient of deve-

lopment, nothing which automatically took the capital and the commercial attitudes generated in one key industry and transferred them to others.”

Why? [Owen says:] “The Spanish, Chinese, and in-migrant Filipinos and mestizos from Manila and Iloilo were more commercially alert than the average Bikol. The Bikols stuck to traditional technologies and lumped together production, processing and marketing. But they did not internalize all the values of a commercial society or embarked on a radical reorientation of their goals and strategies in life. They accepted the basic rules and mechanisms of commercial agriculture and engaged not only in production for the market but also in the multitude of more specialized occupations that a diversified economy entails... yet somehow failed to apply either the lessons or the profits... and did not transform themselves into a nation of entrepreneurs...”

What kind of relationship with indigenous society does this imply? Again Owen writes: “One possible interpretation would view it as a kind of colonialism internal to the Philippines, in which the passive Bikol majority was exploited by a minority of active outsiders, many of them also Filipinos.”

However the resultant feelings of resentment or even displacement may have been “diffused” among the Spanish, Chinese, Tagalogs, and Ilonggos, or in the fact that many of the in-migrants had endeavored to become accepted as Bikols. Dependency was another result, but this was mostly of the spiritual and psychological kind—on the priest. There were traditional patron-client ties but there was no evidence of a substantial increase in tenantry, or other evidences of a perceived shift in the balance between these dyadic relationships. For although we might distinguish between modern entrepreneurial Spanish capitalists at one end and traditional Bikol peasants at the other, there lay between them such a spectrum of ethnicity, occupations, economic roles and putative value systems that a continuum seems a better model than two discrete sectors.

Nearly all of the peasants were Bikols, but so were many of the landowners, middlemen and bureaucrats. Many of the outsiders who seized so many of the commercial opportunities in the region were choosing to adapt to Bikol society and its customs by the institution of marriage. In the two-tiered Bikol society, only the big people or *datus* owned lands while the small people were almost landless. Yet in the abaca boom the rising prosperity was shared by rich and poor alike.

Owen lists more reasons why Bikol failed to achieve 20th century growth:

- (1) The priests were rarely in the vanguard of economic change.
- (2) The endless cycle of secular price change in abaca, a cycle which was beyond the control of the country.
- (3) The great tropical depression.
- (4) Population pressure which limited factors to growth.
- (5) World imperialism.

In addition, Bikol did not develop these four critical developmental foundations required for the attainment of economic maturity; agricultural modernization, infrastructural growth, rise of domestic and entrepreneurial and administrative elites, and the general of domestic finance capable of maintaining public services and high levels of capital formation. One important failure was the development of a middle class. Altogether, these failings are in part due to the two colonial administrations and the Philippine government for short-sighted policies and for not taking cognizance of regional differences, and in part due to the shortcomings of the Bikol people whose Weltanschauung mainly rested on spiritual not material progress. Besides, in Bikol worldview, Nature had to be venerated, not exploited.

Even after the American rule with new schools, new roads, and tax reforms, the Bikols reeled under the new colonialism. Most disastrous among the American policies was that on language. The editorial in *The Students World*, the first newspaper in English published in Bikol says this:

We doubt not that the Filipinos realize that a people who master English are those that fate gave the best opportunity. For in fact no better chance was ever given the Filipino than the study and constant practice of English. A Filipino knowing the English language can stand and compete with anybody from any country.<sup>37</sup>

So with propaganda like this the naive and colonial Bikols took to English. Their highest aspirations in getting an education was to learn English and get a job, too. Bikol was relegated to the kitchen. The Bikol writings were not read and so the Bikol writers just faded away. However, during the latter years of the Spanish regime until the Common-

wealth years the people still wrote in Bikol. Then in the forties until last year writing in Bikol stopped. That was unfortunate for it is good for a people to write in their own language because it is that which provides a reality, a base. Words then have direct connections with reality and more accurate correspondences to their supposed equivalents in experience.

And Bikol writing has an originality of form and a significant content, if only it is given growth and development. But the Bikol people themselves are not interested and there seems to be no one writing in Bikol now. Poetry enjoyed a revitalization in the thirties, with the nationalist fervor. But today there are no new poets and so there are new ideas. The stories and novels written in the fifties are mediocre. It is only drama, the most social of all the arts, which has been consistently influencing the people and which is presently re-emerging with a new tone and relevance.

I mention the state of literary writing in Bikol because it is relevant to the understanding of Bikol history. "The study of the history of literature, besides being a part of the study of literature, is also a part of the study of history." Herder, in awakening German literature, developed his historical ideas and wrote of "History of the progress and energies of the human spirit in the flowing together of eras and nations."<sup>40</sup> Emergy Neff developed the theme that history nears perfection insofar as knowledge and art work are in harmony.<sup>41</sup> The great historians Voltaire, Gibbon, Carlyle, and Toynbee reflected on the scientific and literary trends of their own periods as well as the continuity of historical writing from one period to another. Their works as historians have come close to the level of poetic art.<sup>42</sup>

But poetry and history do not mix. No less than Aristotle and Samuel Johnson saw the distinction between them. Hume discriminated between fable and history on the basis of the writings of the Middle Ages which were indeed provincial and unscientific in that they were more interested in Christian miracles and divine punishments. The Greeks advocated a critical distance from myths and fables that enabled them to discriminate between historical accounts and offer nationalistic reasons for events. Since Karl Shapiro asked: "what was the dark day in time when History, one of the greatest of literary arts, put its tail between its legs and called itself a scientific puppy dog?"<sup>43</sup> History has become a social science. Accuracy and precision, erudition, veracity, and scrupulous minuteness — these are the requirements. When Marx

and Hegel claimed that history provided a philosophy of the world, and Kant agreed that history seeks to understand the unique event and not alone universal laws, historians began to reflect on what they were doing.<sup>44</sup>

In contrast, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. has described present-day historical writing as "dry, detailed, dusty investigations, deliberately devoid of sentiment, of comment, and of grace."<sup>45</sup> Francis Parkman wrote about the struggles of the English and French mainly from indigenous sources.<sup>46</sup> Even Ranke, who turned history unto a profession, combined exactitude with intuition, realism and fascination for the totality of cultural life as the *philosophes*.<sup>47</sup>

America today is undergoing a kind of ethnic revolution as more and more people are looking for their individual, cultural, ethnic, and spiritual roots – putting an end to the melting pot concept<sup>48</sup> which has been substituted to salad bowl by F. Landa Jocano.<sup>49</sup> George Pettitt in his book *Prisoners of Culture* bewailed the light treatment given to pre-history which can give insights on how the ancients participated in community life.<sup>50</sup> Our own Teodoro Agoncillo favored the relative completeness which folklore gives to the historical picture of this country.<sup>51</sup> Many histories portray a whole culture through political ideas, festivals, religion, attitudes toward marriage, commerce and a people's reading, writing, and art works. Like those of other local or regional histories, the function of Bikol history is not only to describe and clarify whereby the regional people differ, but also what cultural features they share.

One thing that can be said about the Bikols is that they generally play fair and will not try to outstrip the other person. Let me illustrate this from biography and try to show pockets of the Bikol's heart and mind. The first case is Jose Fuentebella, former ambassador to Indonesia and the man accused by Felixberto Serrano of keeping information on the Indonesian coup from the Philippine Foreign Affairs Office. Fuentebella was one of the Nacionalista Party organizers, member of the NP Executive Committee since 1910, the NP think tank which chose to stay behind scenes while letting Amang Rodriguez, Jose P. Laurel, and even President Marcos hug the spotlight. A member of Congress and the Philippine Senate since 1914, he worked very close with Quezon, until one day the relationship snapped because Fuentebella held on to his high principles. The antagonism lasted for 25 years. In 1940 Quezon went to Bikol and made a public apology for mis-

judging Fuentebella. Now Fuentebella could have gotten closer to Quezon and asked him for favors. Instead he spent his own wealth helping bright men become leaders of the community, region and nation.

Another Bikol case is Dr. Domingo Abella, the medical doctor, who switched to history after reading history in his father-in-law's library, where he hid from the Japanese. At UST where he had enrolled for a graduate course, he disagreed with his mentors on the claim that Espeleta was the first Filipino bishop. He then went to Spain to prove his point that Espeleta was not a Filipino, and gathered materials on the Philippines with his own money. In 1956 he published *Bicol Annals*, Volume I, but refused to write "Volume Two" after a student activist spat on his face at a rally regarding the Archives scandal on the alleged spiriting away of Chinese immigration papers. Had he not been too sensitive, the Bikols would have had a history book and I would not be having such a hard time here today.

Had Fuentebella taken advantage of Quezon (Fuentebella tells that he would have owned the entire area near the U.P. Campus had he accepted a bribe!), he would have been a bigger man than he is. Had Abella not withdrawn, greatly hurt by the insult, he could have spent the last years of his life on that history book.

There are many more Bikols who held steadfast to their moral principles. Remember Jose Lukban, that Mayor of Manila in the 1920s, who exiled the prostitutes of Manila to Davao. There was Jose Panganiiban, known as the Great Avenger of Filipino Freedom, editor of *La Solidaridad*, and close friend of Rizal, who died of tuberculosis in Barcelona, Spain, because he would rather go hungry than ask for charity from his friends. The first two directors of the Bureau of Education during the American Regime were Bikols – Celedonio Salvador from Naga and Prudencio Langanon from Albay. The point is not that all Bikols are like these men, but that the Bikols, many of them, are strongly inclined to holding steadfast to their moral principles.

Why were the Bikols regarded as pious, pacific, and home-loving? Perhaps the religiosity of the Bikol, having sprung from a veneration of nature, and given stress by the Franciscans who preached of the simple and humble life, had given rise to this moral code, to which the people clung and upheld.

Thus the silkworm industry, the tobacco monopoly, and the abaca boom – though good things in themselves as they took advantage of

the prosperity these gave — were not of their fathers and grandfathers, were new things and not tradition. Thus they were shyly responsive to commercialization but passive in commerce and entrepreneurship. Thus they were receptive to the initiatives of outsiders because they wanted to learn good things from them, for the Bikol is receptive to new ideas, too. Tradition gives them a base, and liberation, which is another dominant trait, would have given them continuity.

But the oppression was another thing. When the call to arms sounded, they rose as one to fight the Spanish authorities in Nagat, Daet, Legazpi, Sorsogon, and all over Bikol. Three native priests were at the center of the Bikol movement — Gabriel Prieto, Severo Diaz, and Inocencio Herrera. Elven rebels, including the three priests, were executed on January 4, 1897 at Bagumbayan Field; eight were deported to Fernando Po, Africa. There were arrests in almost every town, while hundreds were massacred in Daet. In Naga the property of the ilustrados were confiscated. Five Bikol representatives joined the Malolos Congress on September 15, 1898, namely Domingo Samson, Justo Lukban, Marcial Calleja, Tomas Arejola, and Mariano Abella, who was a member of the committee appointed to draft the Constitution.

September 18, 1898 was the last day of the Spanish rule in Naga. The midnight defiance was something the Spaniards never suspected would happen. Nucleus of the uprising was native contingent of the Guardia Civil under the leadership of Elias Angeles and Felix Plazo. At daybreak the insurgents were in complete control of the city as the Spanish guardia civiles lay dead on the streets; inside the Spanish garrison the commander and his family lay lifeless, and for days the white flag of surrender flew atop the San Francisco Church, where all surviving Spanish residents and authorities had taken refuge.

In their characteristic peaceful way, the Bikols succeeded in making the Spanish in Albay and Sorsogon leave the place in view of the approach of General Vicente Lukban. Lukban, who was from Camarines Norte, headed the functionaries—elect all over Bikol and presented them to President Emilio Aguinaldo.

Bikol self-government was efficient and competent, until the arrival of American occupation troops on June 20, 1900. The province of Sorsogon was ably defended by Col. Amadno Afran and Col. Emeterio Funes.<sup>52</sup> The landing in Legazpi three days later was resisted by the defending troops under generals Vito Belarmino and Jose Paua. The heroic Battle of Legazpi, where more than 22 riflemen and a double

number of bolomen succeeded in suppressing the American advance, is commemorated to this day in Legazpi City.<sup>53</sup>

In Camarines 2300 American soldiers landing on the shores of San Miguel Bay met strong opposition along the central towns. Naga was a ghost town when the Americans entered it on February 22. At the head of the insurgent troops was Ludovico Arejola who joined Elias Angeles at Agdangan, where on the twenty-fourth of February, a fierce battle took place with the American forces. On March 1900 more than 10,000 people volunteered to join the guerilla forces of Bikol and enabled the establishment of five military zones all over Ambos Camarines.<sup>53</sup> The towns were boiling cauldrons set to fire by American soldiers, who killed people and destroyed rice granaries and abaca warehouses. The people were "treated as so much cattle to be herded for a month or year... the Bikols naturally pacific. . . have been antagonized at every turn; promises have been made and never kept; their houses have been taken at the whim of officers so desiring, and the soldiery turned loose upon the country with little restraint or discipline."<sup>55</sup>

As a result, in Masbate a revolutionary government was set up by Vicente Treviño; in sitio San Vicente, Donsol, Sorsogon the people established their own revolutionary government led by two priests, Fr. Orense and Fr. Casiano de Vera who organized the Partido Federal in Bulan.<sup>56</sup>

The fifth was carried to the last by Simeon Ola, who attracted many loyal fighters, that in 1902-1903 "it took twelve companies of Philippine Scouts, twelve companies of Philippine Constabulary, and three different American commanders, with hundreds of thousands of Bikols forcibly reconcentrated in the towns and away from the barrios, to finally get him and his men to surrender until September 25, 1903. His aide, Col. Toledo did not surrender until October 25, 1903. As a result, 120 men died under cruel conditions in the Old Albay jail, 12 were hanged, 60 sentenced to Bilibid for sedition, and hundreds put out on road gangs for almost two years. It is sad that the National Historical Committee has not recognized Ola because it says that he was not commissioned under Aguinaldo's army.<sup>57</sup>

During the Japanese occupation, it was a Bikol leader, Wenceslao Q. Vinzons who organized the first guerilla forces in the region. In the mountain fastnesses of Tigbinan Pass, Camarines Norte, and unmindful of General Wainright's order to surrender, he dealt heavy blows on the Japanese. In 1942 he was killed by the Japanese together with his wife

and two children.<sup>58</sup>

In Camarines Sur the Tangcong Vaca guerilla units put up a good fight. Naga was an abandoned town once again when the Japanese entered the city. The destruction of the Balongay ferry and whaft paralyzed Japanese activities near the area for some time. On April 27, 1942 palay amounting to 27,000 canvas were taken from the Japanese warehouse in Libmanan and distributed to the people. On April 20, 1942 the fortnightly paper, *Voice of Freedom*, was inaugurated. Edited by Leon Sa. Aureus who wrote under the pen name Rosan Eulanes, it mimeographed news items and sneaked out copies by courier. On May 1 and 2, 1942 Naga was attacked and re-taken by the combined forces of all guerilla units in Camarines Sur.<sup>59</sup>

Other brave guerilla leaders were Teofilo Padua, who held fort in Mount Isarog; Ceferino Aureus, Capt. Juan Miranda and Mariano Aureus, who led the Tangcong Vaca Guerilla Units; Antero Flor in Iriga and Nabua; Salvador Escudero and Licerio Lapuz in Sorsogon; Francisco Sandico, Montano Zabat, and others of Albay, Catanduanes and Masbate. On July 1969, Francisco Boayes received a Presidential Iron Cross Medal for bravery.

One other courageous Bikol who fought the Japanese not by arms but by words was Jose Fuentebella, now 97 years old but still alive. As wartime Commissioner of the Fifth Administrative District comprising the Bikol Region, he addressed a large crowd in Naga City one day, saying: "Countrymen, I want you to know that the Japanese forces aim to kill 300 Filipinos for every Japanese soldier you hit. My policy, as representative of the Philippine government, is to kill one thousand Japanese for every Filipino shot." The audience kept an uneasy, horrified silence. The Japanese reacted violently; "Cut his throat!" Unperturbed Fuentebella went on: "If the Japanese can kill us, I tell you we Filipinos cando better. But right now we cannot do what we can. Right now only they can kill. So the best way is not to fight or provoke them. Isn't that reasonable enough?" Confused by his words, the garrison was determined to execute him. The Kempetai was just as adamant. Only one, General Osama, of the entire Japanese forces stationed in Naga, thought that he talked sense.<sup>60</sup>

No national historian has considered these Bikol struggles for freedom as important enough and they have not been written about. Some years back I came upon huge volumes of archival material on Bikol at the National Archives. I started to pore over them but I could not fi-

nish. I told Dr. Abella about the possibility of funds for studying those materials. But he was too busy with national history projects to bother about Bikol. Today there is a new book titled *Kabikolan in the Nineteenth Century: Socio-Economic Change in Provincial Philippines* by Norman G. Owen, from whom I quoted extensively in the previous paragraphs. Owen is from the University of Michigan. Why did it have to be Norman Owen, an American, to handle those manuscripts? Owen, in fact, and other American scholars are coming over to write our regional local histories.

But perhaps it is good that other people should write on Bikol history, if none from Bikol will do it, or if national historians continue to ignore Bikol. For instance, no matter how badly Charles A. Willoughby in the *Guerilla Resistance Movement in the Philippines: 1941-1945*<sup>61</sup> has treated the Bikol resistance movement, at least he made mention of the Bikols. The myths about Bikol, particularly about its supposed hospitality girls, are nowhere recorded in chronicle or history from Castaño to Owen, who would not have spared mentioning it if they found it in record. I suspect, however, that this matter was introduced to Bikol by Tagalog businessmen in the early 1900's who recruited girls for the Sta. Ana cabaret in Manila. The Bikol indeed has been seen through mists of misunderstanding and mythology, and I cannot hope to clarify this in a short short history like this paper. All I have been doing has been to try to define and clarify certain facets of Bikol life that seem puzzling and murky.

It is therefore the continuous oppression that stunted the Bikol's process of self-realization. Freedom is the one dream of the people. The poets, Valerio Zufiga and Manuel Fuentesbella, who wrote in the twenties and thirties the golden age of Bikol writing expressed their quest for freedom by the use of the bird and the arrow as symbols. The reference to the mythical symbol of the bird is persistent in oral literature. In the epic the death of the bird/flying lizard/monster named Rabot flung, the hero. Handiong, into stupor and consternation, so that he refused to talk to his people. This death of a bird is mourned and celebrated in folksong, folk dance, and folktale. There is no telling about the psychological if not spiritual consequences to a people bereft of both this dream and symbol. In contemporary times the absence of writing in Bikol, literary or historical, is traced to the lack of ideas and symbolic expression to corroborate the dream. Even the dream of freedom could now be differently colored or even alien-oriented.

Modernization has touched the Bikol. Now they are actively and gainfully engaged in commerce and industrialization. Domingo Guevara has put up his multimillion Radiowealth and Volkswagen, Inc., Celedonio Benipayo and Sons have printing presses all over Greater Manila; Juan Trivafio is in large-scale sugar development; Jose C. Reyes, Pepita Aquino, Willy Candano are in hotel and real estate business, and rice and corn farming. The Molls, Jacobs, Garchitorenas, and Centeneras — all landed Spanish mestizos — have sold out their estates to small farmers. Abaca is gaining headway once again through the Isarog Paper and Pulp Company, to which several large haciendas owned by the Fuentebellas, Ceas, Palmas, and others have affiliated. Heading the Isarog Paper is a Bikol, Bernie Silverio. Many of the rice farms are mechanized, the region enjoys good harvests in spite of the typhoons.

Much has to be done yet. The Bikol poor is still one of the poorest in the entire country. The handicraft industry is losing its foreign market because of poor quality production. More agricultural and technical skills are needed, better housing, more health and nutrition, more reading materials. It is true that education and modern living are changing the land and the people. Electrification has brightened the countryside. The Bicol River Basin Development Program with its multi-million dollar allocation promises a better life for the people. But now that that it is coming the general satisfaction is tinged with fear for the loss of the many cherished values.

It is a wonder, however, that in spite of all these the spirit of Gugmang continues to hover in the rural areas. Presently, the folk are agog over two Lolos who preach humanitarianism and heal with folk medicine and Catholic ritual. There have been a number of Lolos roaming the barrios and towns in the past, each of them with a large following.

This apparent recurrence of the old ways at a time when development is underway holds many meanings. Remember how colonization virtually upset the people's sense of security and brought about a shift or realignment of forces and concepts? Remember that a new religion was implanted to replace the new beliefs?

The way these Lolos mix Catholic ritual with superstition and appealing for humanitarianism would seem to indicate that the security that religion promised to bring has not been met; the Catholic faith did not at all give them the strength or ability to endure life.

One reason is that in our remote barrios touched but little by scientific knowledge and given but faint instructions in Christianity, the

people still take to the old superstitions. Another reason is that the Catholic faith was never adapted to the native culture and ways of the Bikols. Instead it destroyed the existing structures and superimposed the Spanish system over the people's value system. But in their traditional customs and beliefs, they had something to cling to, a crutch that offered them security in nature and society, and in a kind of salvation unthreatened by poverty and inequality.

The situation is grave. Four problems are disclosed: the necessity to reinforce the teaching of a broad and meaningful Christianity, to improve the kind of education given to the rural folk, to give them cheaply priced but relevant reading materials, and to solve the problems of poverty and inequality.

The Bikols have begun to ask questions and this is a form of asking what history is. Generally, they are still pious, pacific and home-loving. Should they begin to open their eyes to their native heritage, they shall recognize their likeness and understand themselves. It is in realizing their selfhood that they can realize themselves in history. Shaken out of a colonial mind they could become more realistic, more achievement-oriented, and more pragmatic in their thinking. Then they would emerge, as before, more distinctly Bikol, and a stronger and a more useful Filipino.

Thus, this paper with data obtained from the social-scientific analysis of historical structures, enriched and supported by folklore and literature, is a way to a revival of history as a humanistic discipline.

In closing, let me quote from John Nota, in his book *The Phenomenology of History*, a line which has been the guiding principles of this paper: the idea that "history is not something senseless but that in it man progresses toward self-realization – and that it depends on the free cooperation of individuals . . .," and if I may add, may be a powerful stimulant for the history we are making here today.

It is my hope that this paper, which regards poetry or literature as "the most adequate symbol for the quintessence of the human spirit, not to the neglect of Science but in harmony," will make the Bikol people understand themselves and be more than able to make history.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Emery Neff, *The Poetry of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

<sup>2</sup>Norman Owen, *Kabikolan in the Nineteenth Century Socio-Economic Change in the Provincial Philippines*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1976.

<sup>3</sup>Charles F. Delzell, *The Future of History* (New York: Vanderbilt University Press, 1977), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Caroline F. Ware, *The Cultural Approach to History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 315.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 315.

<sup>7</sup>Maria Lilia F. Realubit, "The Bikol Dramatic Tradition," *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review* (March, 1976) (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1976).

<sup>8</sup>Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>9</sup>Jose Castano, "Breve Noticia Acerca del Origen Religion, Creencias y Supersticiones de los Antiguos Indios del Bicol," *Archivo del Bibliofilo Filipino*, I, ed. W.E. Retana (Madrid, 1895), *passim*.

<sup>10</sup>Felipe Landa Jocano, *Philippine Preshistory*. Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, University of the Philippines System, 1975, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>Marcelo de Ribadeneira, *Historia de las islas del Archipelago Filipino...* Edition of P. Juan R. de Legisima, OFM., Madrid, 1947), p. 60.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41

<sup>13</sup>Francisco de Colin, *Labor Evangelica de los PP. de la Compania por Jesus en Filipinas* (Madrid, 1663, re-editada por P. Pastells, Barcelona, 1900).

<sup>14</sup>Gaspar de San Agustin, *Conquista Temporal y Espiritual de la Islas Filipinas* (Madrid, 1698).

<sup>15</sup>Castano, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>16</sup>Pedro Chirino, *Relacion de las islas Filipinas*. . . (Manila: Imprenta de D. Esteban Balbas, 1890).

<sup>17</sup>San Agustin, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

<sup>18</sup>Domingo Abella, *Bikol Annals*, Vol. I. (Manila: 1954), p. 2-4.

<sup>19</sup>Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, *The Philippine Islands* (Ohio: 1908), Vol. XXIII, p. 189.

<sup>20</sup>Colin, *op. cit.*, p. 664.

<sup>21</sup>Mariano Goyena del Prado, *Ibalon*, Monografia Historica de la Region Bicolana (Manila: General Printing Press, 1940), p. 14-16.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, *passim*.

<sup>23</sup>Abella, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup>Juan B. Ragragio, "Barlin," Naga City, 1968.

<sup>25</sup>Abella, *po. cit.*, p. 206.

<sup>26</sup>Owen, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>27</sup>Feodor Jagor, *Travels in the Philippines*, tr. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1875), p. 149.

- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.
- <sup>29</sup> Abella, *op. cit.*, p. 294.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.
- <sup>33</sup> Realubit, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
- <sup>34</sup> Abella, *op. cit.*, *passim*.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>36</sup> Bicol River Basin Development Program, *Comprehensive Development Plan 1975-2000* (Baras, Camarines Sur: July 1976), p. 57.
- <sup>37</sup> *The Students World*, ed. Jose L. Altmann (Albay, 1917), p. 1.
- <sup>38</sup> Richard G. Moulton, *The Modern Study of Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 375.
- <sup>39</sup> Neff, *op. cit.*, *passim*.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>43</sup> Harold P. Simonson, "Frederick Jackson Turner: Frontier History as Art," *American Journal*, Vol. V, No. 1 (June 1965), p. 48.
- <sup>44</sup> Neff, *op. cit.*
- <sup>45</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, "Interpreting American History," *Dialogue*, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 120.
- <sup>46</sup> Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, *The Modern Researcher* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1957), p. 190.
- <sup>47</sup> Theodore H. Von Lane, *Leopold Ranke: The Formative Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 12.
- <sup>48</sup> "the Melting Pot," *Horizon*.
- <sup>49</sup> Felipe Landa Jocano, Class Lecture, Philippine Studies 201, University of the Philippines, September 1979.
- <sup>50</sup> George Pettitt, *Prisoners of Culture*.
- <sup>51</sup> Theodore Agoncillo, *Cultural History of the Philippines* (University of the Philippines, 1960), Mimeograph, various pagings.
- <sup>52</sup> Cristina D. Jose, *Facts About Sorsogon*, p. 80.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>54</sup> James O'Brien, Rev. *The Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Bikol People*, Naga City: Ateneo de Naga, 1968.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>58</sup> Carlos Aureus, "Tangcong Vaca: Memoirs of the Valiant Years," *Bikol Mail* (September 1979), p. 17.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup>Maria Lilia F. Realubit, *Jose Fuentebella: The Political Genius* (Forthcoming).

<sup>61</sup>Charles A. Willoughby, *The Guerilla Resistance Movement in the Philippines: 1941-1945*.

<sup>62</sup>John Nota, *The Phenomenology of History* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1967), p. 124.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abella, Domingo. *Bicol Annals*, Vol. I. Manila, 1954.
- Agoncillo, Teodoro. *Readings in the Cultural History of the Philippines*. University of the Philippines, 1960 (Mimeograph).
- Altmann, Jose L., ed. *The Students' World*. Albay, 1917. 4 sheets.
- Aureus, Carlos O. "Tangcong Vaca: Memoirs of the Valiant Years," *Bicol Mail* (September, 1979).
- Barzun, Jacques and Henry F. Graff. *The Modern Researcher*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1957).
- Bicol River Basin Development Program, *Comprehensive Development Plan, 1975-2000*. Camarines Sur: 1976.
- Blair, Emma Helen and James Alexander Robertson. *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1803*, Vol. XXIII. Ohio: A.H. Clark, 1908.
- Castano, Jose P. "Breve Noticia Acerca del Origen, Religion, Creencias y Supersticiones de los Antiguos Indios del Bicol," *Archivo del Bibliofilo Filipino*, I, ed. W.E. Retana. Madrid, 1895.
- Chirino, Pedro. *Relacion de las islas Filipinas*. . . Manila: Imprenta de D. Esteban Balbas, 1890.
- Colin, Francisco de. *Labor Evangelica de los PP. de la Compania por Jesus en Filipinas*. Madrid: 1663. Reeditada por P. Pastells, Barcelona, 1900.
- Delzell, Charles F. *The Future of History*. New York: Vanderbilt University Press, 1977.
- Goyena, Mariano del Prado. *Ibalon: Monografia Historica de la Region Bicolana*. Manila: General Printing Press, 1940.
- Jagor, Feodor. *Travels in the Philippines*, tr. London: Chapman and Hall, 1875.
- Jocano, Felipe Landa. *Philippine Pre-History and Culture*. Quezon City: Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, 1976.
- Jose, Cristina D. *Facts About Sorsogon*. Sorsogon, 1970.
- Moulton, Richard G. *The Modern Study of Literature*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Neff, Emery. *The Poetry of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961.

- Nota, John. *The Phenomenology of History*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1967.
- O'Brien, John. *The Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Bicol People*. Naga City: Ateneo de Naga, 1963.
- Owen, Norman. *Kabikolan in the Nineteenth Century Socio-Economic Change in the Provincial Philippines*. Ph.D. Dissertation. University of Michigan, 1976.
- Ragragio, Juan. "Barlin," Naga City: 1968. (Mimeograph).
- Realubit, Maria Lilia F. *Jose Fuentebella: The Political Genius*. Forthcoming.
- Realubit, Maria Lilia F. "The Bicol Dramatic Tradition," *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review* (March 1976).
- Ribadeneira, Marcelo de. *Historia de las islas del Archipelago Filipino*. . . Edition of Po. Juan R. de Legisima, Madrid, 1947.
- San Agustin, Gaspar de. *Conquista Temporal y Espiritual de las Islas Filipinas*. Madrid, 1698.
- Schlesinger, Arthur. "Interpreting American History," *Dialogue*, Vol. II, No. 2, 120.
- Simonson, Harold P. "Frederick Jackson Turner: Frontier History as Art," *American Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (June, 1954), 48.
- Von Lane, Theodore H. *Leopold Ranke, The Formative Years*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950.
- Ware, Caroline F. *The Cultural Approach to History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.
- Willoughby, Charles H. *The Guerilla Resistance Movement in the Philippines: 1941-1945*. New York: Vantage Press, 1972.