

## SHORT STORY

The Philippine repertory of oral narratives includes folktales, ballads, and, at one time, epics. However, the *maikling kuwento* or the short story, minimally defined as a short, secular prose narrative, is a modern, largely Western form. It was only in the late 19th century that this form began taking shape in Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilongo, Ilocano, Bicol, Spanish, and perhaps the other major Philippine languages—in the context of the evolving print culture of the Philippines. The short story is known as *maikling kuwento* in Tagalog, *sugilanon* in Cebuano and Ilongo, *salita* in Pampango, and *sarita* in Ilocano.

The short story is foreshadowed in the *exemplum* or *ejemplo/ halimbawa/ pananglet*, the short illustrative stories used in novenas, sermons and various kinds of religious texts, as well as in the brief narrative sketches of the lives of saints (Spanish *vida*) that were usually a part of novenas and prayerbooks. Cebuano examples are Fr. Mateo Diez's *Casayoran sa Quinabuhi ni San Guillermo* (Lessons From the Life of San Guillermo), 1862, and the illustrative tales in Fr. Blas Cavada de Castro's *Ang Suga* (The Light), both in Cebuano.

As secularizing trends deepened in the late 19th century, the *exempla* and *vida* may have developed into *cuadros* or short narrative sketches in prose that did not only deal with secular themes and contemporary manners but were written and published as autonomous pieces and not merely as illustrative material for sermons, prayerbooks, books of meditation, and the like. The lack of publishing outlets in the 19th century prevented these early versions of the short story from making an appearance until 1900. In Panay, for example, the yearly publication of *Almanake Panayanhon* (Panay Almanac) carried facts about Iloilo towns, articles on medicine and agriculture, and adaptations of Spanish and European texts. It eventually carried the stories of early fictionists Angel Magahum, Serapion Torre, and Magdalena Jalandoni, and is still being issued to this day. The characteristics of the *cuadro* and *pananglet* are evident in the episodic nature of Magahum's adventure stories and in Jalandoni's *Mater Dolorosa* figures.

Only in the 20th century does the *maikling kuwento* emerge as a distinct literary genre. Its antecedents early in the century were highly externalized narrative sketches similar to the *cuadro* and to local folk anecdotes and popular tales like the folk narratives. The Tagalog *dagli/pasingaw*, Visayan *pinadalagan/binirisbiris*, or Spanish *instantanea/ rafaga* was a short account that assumed a number of functions in the newspapers, where it was published. The terms refer to the spontaneous and hurried quality of their writing. In some cases, the *dagli/pinadalagan/ instantanea* was an explicit expression of a man's love for a particular woman, but at other times, it became highly polemical, expressing anti-American and anticlerical themes. In the Spanish language, there was also the *prosa romantica*, full of figures of speech and told in flowering phrases.

The Tagalog *dagli* appeared in such newspapers as *Muling Pagsilang*, *Taliba*, *Ang*

*Mithi*, *Lipang Kalabaw*, *Buntot Pague*, among others. Among its more popular writers were Patricio Mariano, Lope K. Santos, Carlos Ronquillo, Gerardo Chanco, Valeriano Hernandez Peña, Iñigo Ed. Regalado, and Francisco Laksamana. Three dagli writers who wrote about the oppression of the rural and urban workers were Juan Arsciwals, Patricio del Rosario, and Antero Gempesaw. Del Rosario's collection entitled *Puring*, 1918, centers on the conflict between labor and capital. Cebuano writers who wrote the pinadalagan were Juan Villagonzalo, Pablo Aguilar, Uldarico Alviola, and Leoncio Avila. Generally considered the first Cebuano short story is the pinadalagan "Maming," published in the Cebuano newspaper *Ang Suga*, 16 July 1901. Sotto's collection, *Mga Sugilanong Pilipinhon* (Filipino Stories), 1929, written in Hong Kong, where he was in exile, in between 1901 and 1910, warns the Filipinos against colonization, reminds them of the abuses of the Spanish colonial period, and describes the ideal Filipino character. The first Ilocano story, written toward the end of the 19th century, is Isabelo de los Reyes' "Ti Langit Ti Inanamatayo" (Heaven Is Our Hope).

In Spanish, the most significant newspapers were *La Vanguardia*, *El Debate*, *Renacimiento Filipino*, and *Nueva Era*, which not only included literary sections but also sponsored literary contests. Among the fictionists of the first two decades of the century were Cecilio I. Apostol, Rafael Palma, Manuel S. Guerrero, Fernando Ma. Guerrero, Jesus Balmori, Sixto Roces, Jose V. Mariño, Buenaventura Rodriguez, Pascual H. Poblete, Francisco Rodriguez, and Enrique K. Laygo. Many of them also wrote in other genres.

The first short stories in Tagalog, which answer to the criterion of fictiveness, appeared in the second decade. Rosauro Almario's "Elias," 1910, in *Mithi*, is generally believed to be the first Tagalog short story. However, literary historian and critic Nicanor Tiongson has argued that Deogracias Rosario's "Kung Magmahal ang Makata," (When a Poet Loves), 1914, published in *Buntot Pague*, should be considered the first *munting kasaysayan* (short story) that manifested the writer's understanding of the meaning of the craft of fiction.

The popularity of the short story was assured with the publication of a number of magazines in the 1920s. The most important publishing company was Roces Publications, which put out *Liwayway* magazine in Tagalog in 1922. *Liwayway* immediately became the home of such Tagalog short story writers as Deogracias Rosario, who eventually gained recognition as the "Father of the Short Story," Pedro Gatmaitan, Amado V. Hernandez, Godofredo Herrera, Cirio Panganiban, among others. Other magazines followed suit and short stories were published in *Sampaguita*, *Republika*, *Bulalakaw*, *Hiwaga*, *Liwayway-Extra*, and *Mabuhay* in Tagalog; *Kasanag*, *Kabisayan*, and *Kapawa* in Hiligaynon; *El Obrero*, *Excelsior*, and *Veritas* in Spanish.

The use of English as the medium of instruction and the introduction of British and American literature as reading material produced short story writers in English, who first saw print in the *College Folio* of the University of the

Philippines in 1910. The early stories in English were romantic tales with legendary characters or were imitations of American and British adventure tales. Dean S. Fansler encouraged the use of Filipino material by having his students collect and retell folktales, which he compiled in *Filipino Popular Tales*, 1921. Some of its contributors were Vicente M. Hilario, Leopoldo P. Uichangco, Godofredo Rivera, Francisco M. Africa, Manuel Gallego, and Nicolas Zafra. Hilario and Africa became influential as teachers and critics, while Uichangco became acknowledged as one of the best short story writers of the period, along with Paz Marquez Benitez.

Fiction in the other regional languages found an outlet in the sister magazines of *Liwayway* in the 1930s: *Bisaya* in Cebuano in 1930, *Hiligaynon* in 1934, and *Bannawag* in Ilocano in 1934. Initially, the regional magazines published translations of the works of Tagalog fictionists like Susana de Guzman, Gregorio Coching, Belen M. Santiago, and Fausto J. Galauran. Soon, however, the translators themselves started writing their own short stories. Ramon Muzones of the *Hiligaynon* magazine, for instance, who began his writing career as a translator, became the most prolific Ilongo fictionist of his time. Cebuano fictionists published in the periodicals included Vicente Rama, Nicolas Rafols, Fernando Buyser, Vicente Flores, Sulpicio Osorio, Pantaleon Kardenas, Vicente Garces, Angel Enemecio, Florentino Suico, Maria Kabigon, Natalio Bacalso, Florentino Tecson, Rufino Noel, Celerino Uy, Fausto Dugenio, and Gardeopatra Quijano.

### **The Romantic Tradition**

As commercial magazines, these outlets catered to popular taste by publishing stories that followed the formula of didacticism, sentimentalism, and melodrama. Many of the stories, both in the regional languages and in English, were imitations of O. Henry stories, ending in a surprise twist. The favorite subject matter was love—between parent and child, man and woman, rich and poor. This is evident in the Tagalog anthologies *Mga Kuwentong Ginto 1925-35* (Golden Stories 1925-1935), 1936, edited by Alejandro G. Abadilla and Clodualdo del Mundo, and *50 Kuwentong Ginto ng 50 Batikang Manunulat* (50 Golden Stories by 50 Great Storytellers), 1939, edited by Pedrito Reyes, as it is in the anthologies in English, like *Filipino Love Stories*, 1927, edited by Paz Marquez Benitez, and *Tales of the Philippines*, 1923, edited by Zoilo Galang.

Folk narratives became the primary source of Bicol short fiction. In 1927 the news magazine *Sanghiran nin Bikol* carried three humorous tales: about the numskull Juan Osong, Aniceto Gonzalo's "Tolong Magtorogang" (Three Brothers), and Clemente Alejandria's "Panike" (Bat). The last, which explains why the bat flies at night, won the first prize in the magazine's contest. In the next few years, the stories followed the traditional formulas of the familial or forbidden love. Nicolasa Ponte Perfecto's stories, such as her first, "An Ina can

Parahabon” (The Mother of the Thief), 1929, were the first to break away from the folk narrative.

Filipino writers in all the languages had the same literary models: Guy de Maupassant, Prosper Merimee, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ernest Hemingway, William Saroyan, Dorothy Parker, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, Henry James, and Sherwood Anderson. Critics averred that a good story must create a single, unified impression through plot, point of view, and characterization. However, the Filipino fictionist soon learned to appropriate these Western conventions and merge them with Filipino story material. In 1925, Paz Marquez Benitez’s “Dead Stars,” immediately recognized by the critics as the best of all those published in English, marked the emergence of a short story that captured the Filipino, middle-class, masculine, and feminine sensibility in the Western classical form. In 1928 Paz Latorena’s “Desire” registered the woman’s objection to being treated as an object of the male gaze. First-generation writers in English who distinguished themselves were Francisco Arcellana, Manuel Arguilla, Conсорcio Borje, Casiano T. Calalang, Delfin Fresnosa, N.V.M. Gonzalez, Hernando Ocampo, Loreto Paras Sulit, Arturo B. Rotor, and Bienvenido Santos.

The Premio Zobel, established in 1920, gave awards to the best works in literature, science, and history, written in prose or verse in Spanish. In 1925, Enrique K. Laygo, considered the most important short story writer in Spanish, won the Zobel prize for his collection entitled *Caretas* (Masks), 1931. Other winners of various literary contests in Spanish were Enrique Centenera, Vicente de Jesus, Marcelino Ocampo, Jose Hernandez Gavira, Alejo Pica Valdez, and Estanislao Alinea. Some stories published after the second decade were by Epifanio de los Santos, Angel Lopez de Ayala, Antonio M. Abad, Serafin G. Enriquez, Josefa D. Diaz, Manuel R. Cabrera, Manuel Bernabe, Francisco Rodriguez, Jose Ma. del Rosario, Emmanuel M. D’Exploits, and Wenceslao F. Flores. A noteworthy short story collection was Evangelina E. Guerrero-Zacarias’ *Primicias* (First Fruits), 1935.

In 1926 Jose Garcia Villa started his annual roll of honor of short stories in English. Similarly, in 1927 Clodualdo del Mundo in his column “Ang Tao sa Parolang Ginto” (The Person in the Golden Lighthouse) and Alejandro Abadilla in “Talaang Bughaw” (Blue List), begun in 1932, initiated the move to improve the Tagalog short story by choosing the stories published within the year. A group of Tagalog short story writers also decided to give awards to the best stories, and among the awardees were Amado V. Hernandez, Rosalia Aguinaldo, and Deogracias Rosario. In Cebuano, Marcel Navarra’s “Ug Gianod Ako” (And I Was Carried Away) won the first prize in a 1937 contest. It was praised for its conscious use of lyrical language and its attempt at psychological depth through the use of the first-person point of view. The judges further declared it comparable to the fiction of Poe, Hawthorne, and Alphonse Daudet.

The writing of the Ilocano short story began about 1935, the steady stream of melodramatic plots and the pageantry of dons, doñas, señoritos, and señoritas

being occasionally broken by the rustic humor and homespun wit of Benjamin Pascual's fictional character, Kabo Timot, in his series of detective stories. David D. Campaño presented the jolly, sometimes silly, side of the Ilocano in his characters Alocaoc and Calawacaw.

Bicol writers were Salvador Perfecto, who wrote "An Balus kan Nganang Padayao" (In Return for Too Much Consideration), 1931; Nany Calderon Jr., "An Helang nin Pagkamoot" (The Disease Called Love); and Juan Nicolas, "Rimpos Cong Cantahon" (Often Would I Sing).

### **The Realistic Tradition**

In the 1930s there was a deliberate attempt by some writers to capture Filipino social reality as story material. Brigido Batungbakal and Hernando R. Ocampo wrote about class conflict. Genoveva Edroza Matute wrote of the same themes with psychological insight and irony. In 1938, *Hiligaynon* sponsored a contest that required the stories to have the theme of "Social Justice." Such a move produced a spate of stories about Negros sugar-plantation owners and their workers, the duplicitous nature of electoral democracy, and other such social realities, by Ilongo writers like Ariston Em. Echevarria and Victorio Hinolan. In Pampango, Rosario Tuason Baluyut's "Pamamali" (Revenge), 1938, depicts a tenant driven to kill his landlord. An outstanding feature of this story is that it relies on dialogue to carry the action. In English, local color and the use of folkloric material were used by Sinai C. Hamada and Amador T. Daguio in their stories of the Cordillera people.

The dichotomy between social realism and art for art's sake was aptly represented by the fiction of Manuel Arguilla and Jose Garcia Villa. Arguilla's "Caps and Lower Case," for instance, chronicled the exploitation of the urban working class, whereas Villa's "Footnote to Youth" reaffirmed the peasant's life of hardship and suffering as the nature of Life. The 1940 Commonwealth Literary Awards for English were won by the socially conscious writers Arguilla for ***How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories***, Lopez for ***Literature and Society***, Juan C. Laya for ***His Native Soil***, and Rafael Zulueta da Costa for ***Like the Molave and Other Poems***. In the 1940s, Macario Pineda portrayed country life as idyllic, Serafin Guinigundo depicted Manila as a jungle of corruption, and Brigido Batungbakal showed the illnesses of modernization creeping into the countryside. Nick Joaquin's first story, "Three Generations," 1940, represented the preoccupation with existentialism and psychological realism among writers in English. The ***Bikolnon Magazine***, founded in 1940, briefly encouraged short story writing until the outbreak of World War II.

During the Japanese Occupation from 1942 to 1945, Tagalog and Niponggo were declared the official languages, and writing in Tagalog was encouraged. In 1943, Liwayway conducted a contest to determine the best stories published during the year. Among the writers included were Macario Pineda, Narciso Reyes, and N.V.M. Gonzalez. Among the contest winners, a variety of themes was explored.

Narciso Reyes' "Lupang Tinubuan" (Native Land) shows an urban character going back to his hometown and rediscovering his roots and himself. N.V.M. Gonzalez's "Lunsod, Nayon, at Dagat-Dagatan" (City, Country, and Seashore) recounts an urban family's evacuation to the barrio. Liwayway Arceo's "Uhaw ang Tigang na Lupa" (Thirsty Is the Arid Earth) dramatizes with restraint a girl narrator's disillusionment about her family life. Emilio Aguilar Cruz's "Paghihintay" (Waiting) focuses on an old man alienated from his son as he waits, in solitude, for his death. In English, Bienvenido Santos wrote longingly of home in "Scent of Apples."

The critics' comments and evaluation of the best illustrated a definite preference for the story that exhibited the qualities of a modern short story as it had evolved in American literature. Thus, stories that showed the writer's superior handling of techniques of characterization, plotting, symbolism, and the use of point of view, were praised in the criticism of such influential writers as A. C. Fabian and Teodoro Agoncillo.

The themes of the Tagalog short story from its inception until the 1960s hewed closely to traditional lines. The stories dealt with the conflict between tradition and modernity, with familial topics such as love and fidelity, with the problem of injustice and exploitation, and with the reality of alienation in a world increasingly becoming materialistic. The techniques used were varied: from the dazzling manipulation of point of view by Macario Pineda, to the frenetic pace of Guinigundo's narratives, to the excellent characterization of Arceo and Edroza Matute.

Post-World War II Ilocano short story writers Jeremias Calixto, Narciso Gapusan, Hermogenes Belen, and Mauro Peña continued to dwell on the themes of courtship and romance, love and its pains, and poetic justice for the poor and the rich. However, there were also depictions of the ravages of war on the country. A Pampango war story was Fidel Castro's "Ing Dupical Ning Kampana" (The Ringing of the Bells), 1946, whose central character is a Huk guerilla who dies fighting the Japanese.

In the 1950s and 1960s, outlets for Bicol fiction were ***Bikolana*** and ***Bikolandia*** magazines. The most prolific writer was Ana T. Calixto, who wrote love stories, with complications being caused by parents' interference, the love triangle, or the difficulties of winning a woman's hand. Other writers in this tradition were Patricio M. Janer, Lily M. Abejero, Paquito Andres, Romeo Clara Nieva, Anastacio T. Angeles, and Valerio Zuñiga. A writer who rendered human relationships in a more realistic way was Inday D. Romero. Apolonio Bubán's "Madiklom na Dalan" (Dark Path) explored the world of prison inmates. Rogelio Basilio focused on contemporary social problems, such as the deterioration of a rural character in Manila, landgrabbing in Albay, the value of farming and manual labor as against white-collar jobs; and the depiction of the masses as the source of power and progress. A satirical piece on the Catholic clergy was O.N. Morato's

“Salamat Padre!” (Thank You Father!).

During these decades, the tenets of American New Criticism influenced short story writers in English, who paid greater attention to craft and New Critical concepts of universalism and realism, while at the same time wrestling with the question of Filipino identity and culture. The first Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature for the short story in English, 1950, was given to Juan Gatbonton’s “Clay,” who used symbolic representation to characterize the colonial nature of the Philippine-American relationship. Estrella Alfon expressed women’s concerns, such as a mother’s fierce protectiveness toward her children against sexual perversion, the constraints that women are socially conditioned to accept unquestioningly, or the madness that a woman is driven to. Her collection ***Magnificence and Other Stories***, 1960, could not include one story, “A Fairy Tale for the City,” 1955, a metafictional work that explored the complexities of the sexual psyche, because it caused Alfon and the magazine editor who had published the story to be brought to trial and fined for obscenity. Also focusing on the psychology of woman was Kerima-Polotan Tuvera, who showed her characters as trapped in social and economic dilemmas, such as the city-versus-village dichotomy.

Influences on Filipino fictionists at this time were existentialist writers Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett, Soren Kierkegaard, and Henri Bergson. Stream of consciousness and unorthodox notions of time were studied in James Joyce, William Faulkner, T.S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf. Most of regional literature, which continued to churn out adventure, detective, and sentimental love stories in commercial magazines, was untouched by this trend. For a brief period, however, a group of Cebuano fictionists, led by Godofredo Roperos, tried their hand at exploring the native psyche in the Hemingway, Joyce, or Faulkner tradition. Roperos’ “Langub sa Panumdoman” (Caves of the Mind), 1955, focuses on the inner workings of the mind, and Eugenio Viacrucis’ “Mga Mata sa Dagat” (Eyes at Sea), 1955, is heavily influenced by Hemingway’s ***Old Man and the Sea***. The readers of ***Bisaya*** magazine, however, raised an outcry against such stories, and by 1957, the editors were forced to revert to adventure and melodramatic stories. The regional magazines generally suffered from a decline in sales; hence, sensational stories of sex and violence were also resorted to in an attempt to compete with the movies. On the other hand, Marcel Navarra managed to sustain his readership without compromising his fiction—writing standards, because he was able to render the people’s native experience with the use of fictional conventions that did not jar the readers’ sensibilities.

Similarly, Ilocano writers tried to initiate improvement in the craft as well as in the choice of subject matter. Gregorio Laconsay, although writing about Ilocano courtship, romance, and the simple joys of rural folk, interwove local practices, customs, and values in his early writings. He explored potentially lachrymose themes, like death, with a restrained hand. Constante Casabar, Marcelino Foronda Jr., and Arsenio Ramel also wrote stories in the same tradition but against the backdrop

of sociopolitical problems of the region. The theme of migration, which as a practice became more prevalent among the Ilocano beginning in the second half of the 1940s, was portrayed as the result of the scarcity of resources in Ilocos after the war.

New writers in English during this decade were Gregorio Brillantes, Linda Ty Casper, F. Sionil Jose, Mario P. Chanco, Edith L. Tiempo, Benjamin M. Pascual, Alejandro R. Roces, Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, D. Paulo Dizon, Aida Rivera Ford, Rony V. Diaz, Lina Espina Moore, Wilfrido Nollo, and Juan C. Tuvera. Those who wrote about the Muslims and the Manobo of Mindanao were Ibrahim Jubaira, Morli Dharam, E.A. Enriquez, and A.S. Gabila.

At this time, Tagalog fictionists who wanted to reflect Philippine social and economic problems generally did so with a liberal humanist outlook. Some stories about the Huk movement stressed its moral and personal justification, such as those by Olimpio Villasin, Manuel Ocampo, and Genoveva-Edroza Matute, while others denounced it as violent and destructive, such as those by Eduardo B. Reyes and Ponciano P.B. Pineda. Stories about life in the slums, such as those by Pedro Dandan, 1947, Andres Cristobal Cruz, 1956, and Pedro Ricarte, 1958, reaffirmed faith in the individual's ability to transcend such temporal strictures as environment and poverty. In the same vein, Macario Pineda affirmed the value of the feudalistic and paternalistic relationship between the upper and lower classes as a way of resolving their differences.

Pampango fiction rarely focused on contemporary issues of the region for its subject matter, except to use these as backdrop to the traditional melodramatic plot. An exception was Canuto Tolentino's story "Mibalic a Paraiso" (Paradise Regained), 1953, which depicts a peasant, in desperate straits, joining the Huk movement and finally being persuaded to surrender. Immigration to a homestead in Mindanao is presented as the happy resolution to agrarian unrest in Pampanga.

The 1960s saw the Tagalog fictionists exploring social issues. The first half of the decade, however, produced fiction influenced by naturalism, thus expressing a pessimistic, even despairing, outlook. In 1964, a new group of writers published *Mga Agos sa Disyerto* (Streams in the Desert), with a view to inundating with life-giving waters the "arid" field of Tagalog literature. The writers included in this anthology first found recognition in "Mga Bagong Dugo" (New Blood), Liwayway Arceo's column in *Liwayway*. The fictionists included in the anthology, Rogelio Sicat, Edgardo M. Reyes, Eduardo B. Reyes, Efren Abueg, and Rogelio Ordoñez, signalled the appearance of a new breed of writers whose craft had been deepened by their exposure to European and American writers, ranging from Fyodor Dostoyevsky to John Steinbeck, and the urge to expose the illnesses of the social structure. Other Tagalog fictionists writing in this vein were Dominador Mirasol, Domingo Landicho, Levy Balgos de la Cruz, and Ave Perez Jacob.

The portrait of the city ruled by power and violence was made by Mirasol in "Isang Ina sa Panahon ng Trahedya" (A Mother in a Time of Tragedy), 1969, and Sicat in "Impeng Negro" (Impen the Negro), 1961. While Abueg painted the



countryside as a paradise in “Sa Bagong Paraiso” (In the New Paradise), 1963, he noted how the pastoral scene was being shattered by war in “Dugo sa Ulo ni Corbo” (Blood on Corbo’s Head), 1964. Ordoñez focused on the plight of the factory worker in “Dugo ni Juan Lazaro” (Blood of Juan Lazaro), 1961; Mirasol, on the sawmill worker in “Mga Aso sa Lagarian” (Dogs in the Sawmill), 1963.

A parallel movement in the Ilocano short story was led by Juan S.P. Hidalgo Jr., Pelagio Alcantara, Jose A. Bragado, Antonio Encarnacion, Dionisio Bulong, Fredelito Lazo, Meliton Brillantes, and Reynaldo Duque. Other writers of this period who tried to depict Ilocano life in the different places where they migrated were Cristino Inay, Lorenzo Tabin, Guillermo Andaya, Severino F. Pablo, and Francisco Quitasol. La Union was the setting for Zosimo Barnachea and Herminio Calicao; Pangasinan, for Fernando B. Sanchez, Prescillano Bermudez, Jaime Luzano, Manuel Diaz, and Casimiro de Guzman; Cagayan, for William Alvarado, Renato Paat, Wilson Salvador, Rosito Pimentero; Nueva Vizcaya, for Juan Quimba and Samuel Corpuz. Women writers were Eden Cachola Bulong, Cresencia de la Rosa, Crispina Balderas Bragado, Pacita Saludes, Crispina Martinez Belen, Onofrencia Ibarra, Amancia Pugat del Rosario, Sinamar Robianes Tabin, Cresencia Alcantara, Linda Landingin Villanueva, Ruperta Asuncion, and Maria Quigao Ventura. All these writers were encouraged in no small measure by the annual short story contest begun by *Bannawag* in 1961. **The Radical Tradition**

During the second half of the 1960s to 1972, the Tagalog writers’ analysis of the social problems of the working class became more astute, guided as the writers were by Marxist-Maoist literary theory. The writers strove to reflect a proletarian consciousness and to highlight social commitment and class contradictions as a product of the socioeconomic system, and not as personal antagonisms occurring between individual members of the conflicting classes. In 1971, *Sigwa* (Storm), an anthology of short stories that manifested the young writers’ various degrees of politicization, came out at a time when questions were being raised on the correct and relevant role of literature in society. Included in this collection were the works of Ricardo Lee, Fanny Garcia, Norma Miraflor, Wilfredo P. Virtusio, Efren Abueg, and Epifanio San Juan Jr. Like *Mga Agos sa Disyerto*, *Sigwa* dealt with violence and institutionalized injustice. The radical difference was seen in the stance the writers took to these social issues. The earlier anthology had featured the individual succumbing to the powerful forces around him or her, while the latter showed a more forceful and aggressive stand against all forms of inhumanity.

Epifanio San Juan Jr.’s “Anay” (Termites), 1968, showed the inevitability of the collapse of the social structure. Individualism was eschewed in favor of a collective consciousness in Ave Perez Jacob’s “Pagdating ni Elias Plaridel” (The Arrival of Elias Plaridel), 1972, Domingo Landicho’s “Elias at Salome,” 1969, Norma Miraflor’s “Sulat Mula sa Pritil” (Letter From Pritil), 1970, and Wilfrido P. Virtusio’s “Maria, ang Iyong Anak” (Maria, Behold Your Son), 1970. Fanny Garcia’s “Isang Daang Damit” (One Hundred Dresses), 1972, was an indictment of selfish, individualistic behavior. Efren Abueg’s “Kamatayan ni Tiyo Samuel”

(The Death of Uncle Samuel), 1966, suggested that nationalistic industrialization would slay Uncle Sam.

In the same decade an organization of Hiligaynon fictionists, Manunulat Sang mga Bahandi, was founded. Its president, Juanito Marcella, compiled their stories written in 1968 in an anthology called ***Bahandi I*** (Gems I), 1970. It contained both traditional and socially conscious fiction. Marcella's "Panaghoy sang Ginahandos nga Palpal" (Lament of a Stake Being Driven) focuses on the oppression inherent in the landlord-tenant relationship. It is a story akin to Rogelio Sicut's "Tata Selo" (Old Man Selo), 1962, considered a landmark in the history of the Tagalog short story. Other fictionists in the anthology are Isabelo Sobrevega, Ernesto F. Javellana, Ismaelita Floro Luza, Ali F. Bedaña, Leothiny S. Clavel, Ariston Em. Echevarria, Ray Gra Gesulgon, Lucila Hosillos, Nerio E. Jedeliz Jr., Antonio H. Joquiño, Lino V. Moles, Jose E. Yap, Epifanio T. Lope, Lilia S. Balisnomo, and others.

Cebuano short story writers since World War II included Eutaquio Cabras, Florentina Villanueva, Eugenio Viacrucis, Luis Ladonga, Tiburcio Baguio, Martin Abellana, Maximo Bas, Laurean Unabia, Fornarina Enemecio, Hermogenes Cantago, Nazario Bas, Porfirio de la Torre, Gumer Rafanan, Alex Abellana, Benjamin Montejo, Arturo Peaserada, Temistocles Adlawan, and Gremer Chan Reyes. Cebuano short story writing was enriched by such bilingual (English-Cebuano) writers as Estrella Alfon, Lina Espina Moore, Felino Diao, Godofredo Roperos, and sometime later, Junne Canizares, Ricardo Patalinjug, and Dionisio Gabriel. Social problems also served as story material for many of these writers during the 1960s to the 1980s. Jorge B. Batoctoy's "Ang Misteryo sa Nagpadayong Buto-Buto" (The Mystery of the Continuous Blasting), 1971, dramatized the problem of dynamite fishing; Rod M. Nadela's "Sagbot sa Katilingban" (Weeds of Society), drug addiction. Socialism was advocated by Patalinjug in "Ang Pulang Bukid" (The Red Mountain), 1971. Student activism was explored by Tiburcio Baguio in "Aquarius 1970."

In the early 1970s the young Tagalog writers took a firmer and unequivocal stance in the literary and political arena. Stories that advocated participation in the national democratic struggle were Edgardo Maranan's "Ipis sa Guhong Templo" (Cockroach in the Ruined Temple), 1971, and Ricardo Lee's "Dapithapon ng Isang Mesiyas" (Twilight of a Messiah), 1969, and his metafictional "Si Tatang, si Freddie, si Tandang Senyong at Iba Pang mga Tauhan ng Aking Kuwento" (Tatang, Freddie, Old Man Senyong and Other Characters of My Story), 1971. However, the imposition of Martial Law in 1972 abruptly silenced such creative dynamism. The short story contest in English conducted by ***Graphic Magazine***, begun in 1970 with the winning piece, "A Sickness in the Town" by Resil Mojares, was short-lived. Writers who had proclaimed an affinity for the national democratic movement in their fiction, such as Ricardo Lee and Fanny Garcia, became either political detainees or fugitives.

During this period, the government-controlled magazine, ***Focus Philippines***, edited by Kerima Polotan-Tuvera, was the only literary outlet and produced

insipid literature at best. The regional magazines were allowed to come out almost immediately after the declaration of Martial Law, but because of censorship, the stories hewed to safe themes like the New Society and the Green Revolution, besides the usual sex-and-violence formula. *Hiligaynon* folded up in the mid-1970s. In *Bisaya*, a deviation from the popular formula meant the exploration of existential themes, such as Junne Canizares' Kafkaesque story, "Damgo ug Tinuod" (Dream and Reality), 1975, albeit using as central character a judge torn between accepting a bribe and maintaining his integrity.

Explicit protest against the Marcos regime and its neocolonial status could only be expressed in underground fiction, which was published in the cultural periodicals *Ulos* and *Kamao*. Again, the dagli and the character sketch were used to advantage. The plot line of the underground short story was usually about the transformation of a character coming from the worker, peasant, or petite-bourgeoisie class. He experiences some form of injustice, which motivates him to join the mass movement, where he learns about society and revolution. Finally, he joins the armed struggle in the countryside.

"Kasama" (Comrade), the first story under Martial Law by the underground press, follows this plot line. The characteristics of the revolutionary, namely, "patience, trust and love for the masses, unswerving commitment to the revolutionary cause," are here emphasized. The periodical *Taliba ng Bayan*, 1972 to 1974, carried stories and poems. *Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win*, 1972-1973, a periodical for the middle forces, contained a story about Crispin Tagamolila, the Philippine Military Academy officer who defected to the revolutionary movement and became one of its first heroes.

One consequence of Martial Law is that many of the Filipino writers today, who are just now getting to the peak of their literary productivity, can look back to a common past, however diverse might be the career paths they have since taken. They had either taken an active part in the student revolution of 1968 to 1972, or at the very least, been witness to it. Even emerging young writers who had been too young to take part in the First Quarter Storm are heirs to this sociopolitical tradition in Philippine literature.

The post-Marcos era saw the proliferation of newspapers and magazines, which provided the writers with outlets for their works. The *National Midweek Magazine* encouraged both established and young writers to publish left-leaning fiction. The Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), under a new management, philosophy of decentralization and democratization, published a quarterly literary journal, *Ani* (Harvest), which would devote special issues to peasants' and laborers' fiction, as well as regional literature. In addition to the Palanca Awards and the CCP Literary Contest, other competitions, like the Gawad Ka Amado Hernandez and Gantimpalang Ani, exclusively for grassroots writers and advocates of worker and peasant issues, were held. Peasants, factory workers, and community leaders like Cesar Cervantes, Olivia Cervantes, and Ernie Yang

found an outlet in *Butong Binhi*, the literary magazine of the Ani Foundation.

Post-Marcos short stories show that current sociopolitical issues have taken on an immediate, personal dimension for the writer, who covers such diverse topics as Filipino immigration, the war in the countryside (including the Mindanao secessionist movement), class conflict between the worker and sugar-plantation owner, or peasant and landowner, feminism, the politicization of the Catholic clergy, and so on. All these are being written in the various Philippine languages and in English by writers who espouse different ideologies and who impute different degrees of importance to the aesthetics of fiction.

Fanny Garcia's "Guro" (Teacher), 1988, is highly informative of the culture and lifestyle of the New People's Army (NPA), whose members, by their very occupation, prevent the ordinary reader from knowing and understanding their humanity. It further explores the quandary of underpaid and overworked teachers, continuing political unrest despite the return of electoral democracy, and the younger generation's apathy. The story sprawls in several directions, revealing the author's anxiety to capture the complex interweaving of historical and social circumstances that writers of her generation were caught up in during the Martial Law period.

A traditional theme in Philippine fiction is the "clash of cultures," an instance of which is the conflict or contrast between city and rural life. Through the years, the fictional perspective on this conflict has shifted from the idealization of rural life to its portrayal as the site of political dissent and struggle. Like "Guro," Jun Cruz Reyes' "Syeyring" (Sharing), 1987, is an attempt at an inside look into the NPA by tracing the personal histories of the peasants who have joined it.

The immediacy of the countryside war is felt more strongly in the stories written in the other regional languages, such as the southern islands of Mindanao and the northern province of Ilocos, where military operations have intensified. "Agianon Paingon sa Adlaw" (A Trail Towards the Sun), 1987, by Gremer Chan Reyes portrays civilians caught in the crossfire between the government military and the rebels. Significantly, although the characters in this story belong to the middle class, they are not preoccupied by the kind of bourgeois paralysis that attacks the middle class character of fiction in English. In Philippine regional literature, sociopolitical problems are not just material for philosophical reflection, but are a matter of life and death.

On the other hand, although Manila-based writers, especially those who write in English, may feel far removed from the insurgency, they may still find themselves turning toward it as story material. Alfred Yuson's "A Voice in the Hills," first prize in the 1988 *Asiaweek* contest, focuses on the archetypal motif of the rites of passage, with a government and a rebel soldier involved in a love triangle. Gregorio Brillantes, who started in the 1960s as an introspective fictionist, won the 1986 Palanca Award with "A Flood in Tarlac," which portrayed the landlord-

tenant conflict. The story defines the class struggle as permeating the whole social structure, and not as a personal battle of wills between an individual landlord and a peasant. "The Hand of God," by Conrado de Quiros, which won the 1987 Palanca Award for the short story, depicts the metamorphosis of a priest from an apolitical seminarian to a "salvaged" martyr in his village parish somewhere in the mountains up north.

Participation in the nationalist struggle has produced writers with a detailed knowledge of the mountain flora and fauna and the specific workings of the government's counterinsurgency program, such as the homegrown, quasi-religious organizations. Ricardo Oebanda in his Ilongo story "Panatiko" (Fanatic) demonstrates the meticulous way in which religious cults are created in the province of Negros Occidental.

The influence of Latin American fiction has become more marked since 1986. This is evident in the device of magic realism in "A Flood in Tarlac," Dominick NA. Danao's "The Perpetual Monday Morning in the Life of Sakay," and in Eric Gamalinda's and Roland Tolentino's short stories.

The theme of Filipino immigration has been continued by Bienvenido Santos, whose 1988 story, "A Winter Coat for Pura," shows the toll that winter takes on a Filipino wife's mind and nerves; and Paulino Lim Jr., in "Homecoming," about the culture shock experienced by a migrant Filipino home on vacation. "Nena of the Villa" by Lina Espina Moore is set in the Mindanao war but mentions brain drain as a solution or escape seized upon by the professionals of the 1970s. A different kind of immigration story is about those who come to the Philippines, such as the Chinese immigrants. Charlson Ong is a young Chinese-Filipino writer whose two collections of short stories, *Men of the East*, 1990, and *Woman of Am-kaw*, 1992, focus on characters who are haunted by the demons of their Chinese past.

Philippine feminist fiction is most closely identified with such writers as Lualhati Bautista, Fanny Garcia, Joy T. Dayrit, and Lilia Quindoza-Santiago. Bautista's "Buwan, Buwan, Hulugan Mo Ako ng Sundang," (Moon, Moon, Drop Me a Knife) and Santiago's "Ang Pinakahuling Kuwento ni Huli" (The Last Story of Huli) show the woman fighting back against social and male oppression. The latter story is a treasure trove of historical and literary allusions, including all the women stereotypes who have filled up the pages of Philippine literature: laundrywomen, scavengers, rape victims, madwomen, and silenced women. Santiago, however, makes her Huli refuse to surrender to the structures of power by joining the armed struggle.

Among Ilocano writers there is presently a greater effort to gain a wider audience through bilingual anthologies: Reynaldo Duque's *Bagani Ubbog*, which he translated into Tagalog himself; *Kurditan: Mga Kuwentong Iluko*, 1988, stories translated either by the authors themselves or by Duque; Manuel Diaz's *Rice for*

*the Moon and Other Stories*, 1985, and *Ilocano Harvest*, 1988, edited by Diaz and Alcantara, some of which were written originally in English and some translated into English from Ilocano; and Mario A. Albalos' posthumous collection *Mga Uban at Rosas* (Gray Hair and Roses), 1990, translated and edited by Duque.

Unlike the Cebuano, Ilongo, and Ilocano short story, the Bicol and Pampango have remained relatively dormant. This may be due to the lack of outlets and, in the case of Pampango, the proximity of the province to the Tagalog region. On the other hand, even the other regions have not remained untouched by the increasing commercialization of magazines and the influence of other media, like movies, radio, and vernacular comic books, which have favored the production of quick, familiar, and formulaic fiction. While local writers' organizations and various literary competitions have tried to elevate the writer's craft, publishing conditions—joined to the neglect of regional literature by academic institutions and the consequent underdevelopment of literary criticism—have militated against the development of the regional short story.

In English and Tagalog, the fusion between modernism and commitment in the Philippine short story is continued today by writers like Jose Y. Dalisay Jr., Mario I. Miclat, Leoncio P. Deriada, Amadis Ma. Guerrero, Ninotchka Rosca, Noel Salonga, Roland Tolentino, Eli R. Guieb, R. Fulleros Santos, Mario L. Cuezon, Lemuel Torrevillas, Luning Bonifacio Ira, and many others.

• R.C.Lucero, with notes from S. Reyes, R. Mojares, M.L. Bulong, and P.E. Mariño

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