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The Tagalog Literary Tradition in Amado V. Hernandez

MARY I. BRESNAHAN

At the end of Jose Rizal's *El Filibusterismo*, Padre Florentino heaves Simoun's treasure into the sea prophesying:

May nature guard you in the deepest of the deep among the corals and the pearls of the eternal sea. When men should need you for a purpose holy and sublime, God will know how to raise you from the bottom of the sea.¹

In retrieving these jewels from the sea floor, Mando Plaridel, the protagonist in Hernandez's novel *Ang Mga Ibong Mandaragit* (Birds of Prey), unwittingly takes up where Simoun left off in the struggle against oppression. He shares the "purpose holy and sublime" with the ill-fated Simoun (really Don Crisostomo Ibarra in disguise) of Rizal's novels. In the opening chapters of *Ang Mga Ibong Mandaragit*, Tata Matyas invokes Padre Florentino's prophecy. The triumphant retrieval of Simoun's treasure is marred by treachery leaving one man dead and Mando Plaridel marked with a deforming facial scar which, though ugly, becomes a symbol of his destiny to lead. Even today, Rizal's novels figure prominently in the Philippine literary and historical imagination. Hernandez is not the first to mention Rizal's works in his writing, but daring to write a sequel to "The Fili" is bold, if not foolhardy, requiring a heightened sense of broader Philippine literary traditions. This article will examine how the writing of Amado Hernandez bears witness to the themes and traditions of earlier Tagalog writing.²

1. Jose Rizal, *The Subversive*, trans. Leon Ma. Guerrero (New York: Norton, 1962), p. 299.

2. This article was excerpted from the author's dissertation, "Finding Our Feet: Problems in Interpreting a Foreign Text," prepared under the direction of A.L. Becker at the University of Michigan in 1984. Dr. Bienvenido Lumbea critiqued an earlier version of this manuscript.

Amado Hernandez has been characterized as an ardent nationalist, one concerned with the plight of the Filipino laborer, a Marxist and anti-imperialist, and a revolutionary poet. What all these descriptions share is their depiction of a person dedicated to the betterment of the human condition. Hernandez's life provides the proof for his sense of social responsibility. He was never part of the university elite—not as a *Balagtas* poet, as a guerilla during occupation, as a columnist, or as the head of the Congress of Labor Organizations. He was his own man. Hernandez's life paralleled the struggles he described in his fiction. He certainly was no stranger to suffering. This endowed him with a special vision, a sensitivity to the mental anguish which breathes life into his novels. *Luha ng Buwaya* and *Ang Mga Ibong Mandaragit* are the products of the mature writer no longer a young man.³ It is clear from reading these novels that the writer's sense of place in Tagalog traditions has had a chance to ripen. More than their plot structure and characterization, it is this awareness of the broader traditions of Tagalog prose and poetry that makes these novels interesting and significant artistic contributions to Tagalog literature. That these novels identify with Tagalog literary traditions is especially important in an era when those traditions have either died or become so westernized as to have become virtually lost. No young writer today has the comfortable familiarity and skill with the golden years of Tagalog prose and poetry that Hernandez had firsthand. The reasons for this go far beyond the scope of the present article. But, this diminished sense of context intensifies the importance of Hernandez's writing as a link with the literary past.

In 1969, the American critic of Philippine literature, Leonard Casper, who was visiting the Philippines, had occasion to drive Amado Hernandez home after the writer had lectured at the Ateneo de Manila University. Casper asked how the presentation had gone and Ka Amado responded, "All the young writers respect me for my politics, but they think my writing is old fashioned."⁴ Hernandez's self-reflexive comment is bittersweet. He understood the need of younger writers to experiment with new modes of expression. As an old man, he recognized that he was one of the few writers still around with a direct link to the past. He anguished over the reluctance of young writers to embrace any connection with the past.

3. Amado V. Hernandez, *Luha ng Buwaya* (Crocodile Tears) (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1974) and *Ang Mga Ibong Mandaragit* (The Birds of Prey) (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1969).

4. In a conversation at his home on the outskirts of Boston, Leonard Casper recalled the details of this conversation with Hernandez.

Hernandez makes both obvious and subtle references to many earlier Tagalog novels and stories. This article examines four elements of the Tagalog literary tradition in Hernandez's works—the use of emblematic names, a sense of place, stock themes and characters and references to Rizal. Lumbera defines tradition as “the complex of attitudes, themes, types, and technical devices employed in the literature of the past from which the poet, in his own time, consciously or unconsciously draws according to his needs.”⁵ In that sense it is clear that Hernandez is a traditional writer.

EMBLEMATIC NAMES

Hernandez's use of names carries three types of intertextual references. Like earlier Tagalog writers, he uses emblematic names which are transparent for the character they represent. But this is a common practice which is not exclusive to Tagalog tradition. Hernandez uses names from earlier Tagalog texts, and by doing this, he intentionally evokes the text where a particular character originated. He uses place name etymology which is one convention for beginning a story in Tagalog. For example, in *Luha ng Buwaya*, Pina, a nickname for Pilipinas, is an obvious symbol for country. Donya Leona really has the cunning and ability to spot the vulnerability of her namesake, the lionness. Her husband, Don Severo, is a man without joy as his name suggests. The Grandes are the big family in Sampilong. Dislaw can be understood in two ways. Like the Tagalog name for hawk, *lawin*, he is always ready to pounce on the vulnerable. Lumbera suggests that an alternate interpretation is that *dislaw* is closer to *dilaw* which is a term for an undercover management spy in the labor union.⁶ Hernandez would have been well aware of both of these possibilities. Mr. Danyo, like *danyo* or damages, nearly ruins Bandung's dream to become principal and marry Pina.

Hernandez's epic poem *Bayang Malaya* (Free Country) similarly uses emblematic names.⁷ The heroine is *Tala*, or star, while the hero who loses his life is *Magtanggol* (defender). The bigshot landlord is *Kabisang Laki*, literally Mr. Big. The journalist, *Lantay* (pure) refuses to sully his honor by collaborating with the enemy. He goes underground and adopts the pseudonym *Limbas*, which means bird of prey.

5. Bienvenido Lumbera, *Tagalog Poetry 1570-1898: Tradition and Influences in its Development* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1986).

6. Personal communication.

7. Amado Hernandez, *Bayang Malaya* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1969).

The village which helps the guerillas is named *Pugad*, or nest.

In *Ang Mga Ibong Mandaragit*, *Puri* or honor, is the heroine while the leading man, Mando Plaridel, takes his surname from the pseudonym used by the turn-of-the-century Filipino nationalist, Marcelo H. del Pilar. The name "Plaridel" has been generalized to mean a committed writer. Whitey is an American pilot who gets Dolly Montero pregnant and who is then conveniently transferred out of the country beyond the law. *Kapitan Pugot* or headless, is the cruel overseer hated by the tenants. Senators *Discurso* (like discourse) and *Maliwanag* (clear) are aptly named politicians, while it is a good thing that General Bayoneta chose the military over medicine.

The practice of using emblematic names did not originate with Hernandez. It is no accident that Modesto de Castro calls the sister who lives in the city *Urbana*, while her more protected younger sister, who lives at home in the provinces, is *Feliza*.⁸ Lope K. Santos in *Banaag at Sikat* (Light and Sunray), looks with hope to the future which promises to usher in much-needed change.⁹ It is no wonder that he calls the press in his novel *Bagong Araw*, or New Day. At the turn of the century, when Aurelio Tolentino wanted to criticize American colonial policy, he included these emblematic names in his play *Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas* (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow): the traitor is *Asal-hayop* (animal behavior), the Spanish Friar *Halimaw* (monster), America *Bagong Sibol* (young sprout), and Spain *Dilat na Bulag* (open but blind). Even Tagalog literary magazines feature use of emblematic names which suggest something about their content. For example, there have been these magazines: *Lidayway* (Dawn), *Likhaan* (Creation), *Sigwa* (Tempest), *Ang Mithi* (Ardent Wish), *Daigdig* (World), *Tagumpay* (Victory), *Silahis* (Sun Rays Breaking Through Clouds), *Ang Kapatid ng Bayan* (Brother of the Country), *Bagong Pagsilang* (New Birth), and *Kasarinlan* (Independence). The ideals expressed through these many emblematic names is clear to readers who know what these words mean. But transparent names are not always obvious to all readers. Some names function like intertextual beacons, signalling readers to look analogously to other texts. For example, Magat, the leader of the guerilla band in *Ang Mga Ibong Mandaragit*, is a hero just like Macario Pineda's Magat.¹⁰ Lumbera observes that this name "takes the reader as far back as

8. Modesto de Castro, *Pagsusulat ng Dalawang Binibini na si Urbana at si Feliza* (Manila: Imprenta y Libreria de J. Martinez, 1854).

9. Lope K. Santos, *Banaag at Sikat* (Quezon City: Manlapaz Publishing Company, 1970).

10. Macario Pineda, "Si Magat," in *Lidayway*, 1948.

colonial times and recalls one of the earliest rebels against Spain."¹¹ Kapitan Melchor, Donya Leona's father in *Luha ng Buwaya*, shares his name with Don Melchor, the police superintendent in Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* (The Lost Eden in translation). The play on names gets even thicker in the intertextual connection suggested by the title *Ang Mga Ibong Mandaragit*. This evokes a famous editorial in Spanish which appeared in *El Renacimiento* (Rebirth) on the thirtieth of October, 1908 which was entitled "Aves de Rapina" or "Birds of Prey." Hernandez demonstrates his knowledge of this editorial. Two of his characters, Mando and Magat, discuss the editorial:

Limampung taon na o noong ika-30 ng Oktubre ng 1908 iniulat ni Magat sa pahayagang *El Renacimiento* ay lumabas ang editorial na pinamagatang Aves de Rapina. Ang matapang na pahayagang Pilipino'y isinakdal ng isang mataas na pinunong Amerikano pagkat umano'y ang Kano ang tinutukoy ng editorial na lumikha ng malaking eskandalo nang mga araw na yaon.¹²

(It has already been fifty years since the thirtieth of October in 1908," said Magat, when the newspaper *El Renacimiento* published an editorial entitled "The Birds of Prey." That daring newspaper was sued by a high American official implicated in the editorial which resulted in a big scandal in those days.)

Hernandez's use of the exact title for his own novel suggests that he wants readers to recall this controversial editorial as a parallel for what the two men are contemplating.

Another level of Hernandez's sensitivity to the power of names is his use of one of the formulas for beginning a story from Tagalog oral tradition. Traditional telling often begins with an invocation begging the indulgence of the higher powers to bless the telling and to forgive any inadequacies on the part of the teller. For example, the Ilocano epic *Lam-ang* begins with this invocation:¹³

O God, the Holy Ghost
illumine, Lord, my thoughts
so I can relate faithfully

11. Bienvenido Lumbea and Cynthia Nograles Lumbea, *Philippine Literature: A Historical Anthology* (Manila: National Bookstore, 1982).

12. Hernandez, *Ibong Mandaragit*, p. 179.

13. In Asuncion David-Maramba, *Early Philippine Literature: From Ancient Time to 1948* (Manila: National Book Store, 1971), p. 47.

Similarly, the non-Christian Ilianon epic "Agyu" begins this way:¹⁴

My words first to the spirits passing by the house
whom I am requesting to go on.
Do not listen to my song—to my voice which is rising.
Hear it not. My voice is getting louder
for we are passing the time enjoying the fellowship.
Why do you listen? My voice is getting louder.
There is no reason why my voice should be hoarse.
There are people here listening to the song,
hearing the story which is a true one.
Spirits, proceed on your way, continue on your journey,
we are enjoying—we people gathered here—
we are going to follow a story, narrate it in a song.¹⁴

This practice of beginning with an invocation extended to later forms like the *corrido*. The Adarna Bird is both malevolent and benevolent and can only be caught with risk and cunning. An unwary, foolish bird hunter will be turned into stone. In the Tagalog *corrido* *Ang Ibong Adarna* there is this invocation: ¹⁵

Oh birheng kaibig-ibig Ina naming nasa langit liwanagan yaring isip nang sa layo'y di malihis	Oh virgin most loving Our mother in heaven Enlighten this mind so that we not stray too far.
Ako'y isang hamak lamang taong lupa ang katawan mahina ang kaisipan at maulap ang pananaw	I am lowly A body of clay My thinking is weak My vision is beclouded.
Kaya Inang matangkakal ako'y iyong patnubayan nang mawasto sa pagbanghay nitong kakathaing buhay	Therefore, protective mother take me in your care on the path of right so that I may tell this story.
At sa tanang naririto nalilimping maginoo kahilinga'y dinggin ninyo buhay na aawitin ko	And to everyone here All you gathered nobles listen everyone to the life I will recount

Tomas Hernandez similarly noted that the *komedya* begin with a prologue or short poem of praise called a *loa*.¹⁶ According to Mojares these invocations serve the following purposes: "invoking the diwata

14. From E. Arsenio Manuel in David-Maramba, *Early Philippine Literature*, p. 82.

15. From Maria Odulia de Guzman in David-Maramba, *Early Philippine Literature*, p. 157. (The translation is mine.)

16. Tomas Hernandez, *The Emergence of Modern Drama in the Philippines 1898-1912* (University of Hawaii: Philippine Studies Working Paper 1, 1976), p. 22.

(gods) as the inspirer of the bard, to beg the indulgence of the darkness and the spirits therein, to arouse audience interest, to render apologies for mistakes and inadequacies in the performance."¹⁷

A SENSE OF PLACE

Even more than a sense of time, a sense of place is important in vernacular story-telling. Beginning with the story of how a place got its name is part of the formula for how to tell a story in the Philippines. For example, in Manobo oral story-telling tradition, Hazel Wrigglesworth of the Summer Institute of Linguistics reports,

properly introduced scenes are the framework upon which the details of the story are hung. Without these carefully introduced scenes, the story appears as a complicated maze at best a rather baffling network of facts. New scenes highlight peak points in the plot.¹⁸

There are many stories for how places got their names—Manila, the Visayas, Makiling Mountain, to name only a few. Some Philippine epics are similarly imbued with a strong sense of place. For example, the Ilianon epic "Agyu," mentioned earlier, is a story of how the ancestral land of Gapunan came to be settled. Similarly, the Maragtas epic of Panay in the Visayas is an account of how ten datus from Bruenei came to settle there. Some other place name legends in Philippine folklore include: "The Origin of Bridal Veil Falls," "The Legend of Mount Arayat," and "The Legend of Sampaloc Lake."¹⁹ These examples suggest that there is a broad tradition both in the Philippines and Southeast Asia for imparting the importance of a sense of place. This sense of place coupled with the tradition of invocation finds expression in *Luha ng Buwaya*, which begins with a folk etymology for how Sampilong came to be named.

How Sampilong Got Its Name²⁰

Sa Ilang matandang katutubong
tagaroon ay walang makapagulat
kung bakit ang bayang ito'y
bininyagan ng Sampilong

Among the oldest people
from here, no one can say
how it is that this place
was baptized Sampilong

17. Resil Mojares, *Origins and Rise of the Filipino Novel* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1983), p. 42.

18. Hazel Wrigglesworth, "Rhetorical Devices," *Philippine Journal of Linguistics* 11 (June 1980):45-80.

19. Damiana Eugenio, *Philippine Folk Literature: An Anthology* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1982), pp. 205-09 and 267-68.

20. This translation was prepared by the author working with several native Tagalog informants.

Ang mga lumang kasulatan
na maaaring katagpuan
ng tiyak na tala ay
nangawala o nasunog

Old documents
which might have provided
a sure explanation
were either lost or burned²¹

Kahit si Ba Inteng na halos
hindi na makatanda sa tunay
niyang gulang ay walang
tahasang masabi.

Even Ba Inte, who can't
recall his real age
has nothing sure to say.

Alinsunod sa kanya narinig
na niya sa kanyang nunong
babae na ang Sampilong ay
pinaikling San Teofilo
alalaong baga'y San Pilo o
Sampilo tulad ng San Pedro
na naging Sampiro.

According to him, who had heard
this story from his great
grandmother, Sampilong was short
for Teofilo like St. Peter which
became Sampiro (by phonetic
change.)

Ang Sampilong ay Sampilong
na nang kalaunan.
Isang katangian ng wika
ng Tagalog na paikliin
ang mapaiikli.

Sampilong has been Sampilong
for a long time.
One quality of the Tagalog
language is that it likes to
shorten what can be shortened.

Makikita sa ginagawa ngayon
sa mga karatula ng dyipni
Ang Maypajo at Pajo at
ang Divisoria ay Soria.

Just look at the sign boards
on jeepneys. Maypajo is
shortened to Pajo and
Divisoria to Soria.

Kung minsan pa'y Sori na lang
pagka biglang pinutol ng tsuper
ang biyahe at pumihit sa kalsadang
maluwag-luwag bago datnin
ang talagang tungo na ipinagbayad
ng mga sakay.

Sometimes it even ends up
just being sori when the
driver suddenly turns around
on a wide street before
going the full distance
for which the riders have paid.

Tungkol pa rin sa Teofilo
ay hindi maipaliwanag
kung bakit ang santong ito
ang piniling pintakasi
pagkat bagaman ang Teofilo
ay hango sa salitang Griyegong
ang kahuluga'y "Umiibig sa Diyos"
naaalala pa rin ng mga palabasa
na ang lalong bantog na Teofilo

Regarding the name Teofilo,
it is not possible to explain
why this saint was chosen
patron saint because
although the name Teofilo
is derived from the Greek
word meaning "loves God"
those who are avid readers
yet remember the more

21. It is a popular belief that the Spanish burned all books and manuscripts of sixteenth century Filipinos.

ay yaong naging obispo sa isang bayan sa Asya Menor na ayon sa isang alamat ay nakipagsabwatan sa demonyo.

Isinasalaysay naman ng iba sang-ayon din kay Ba Inte na ang Sampilong ay hindi lagyo sa ngalan ng isang banal kundi sadyang taal na salitang atin na ang nais sabihi'y sampal o tampal sa ilong.

Diumano ang unang prayleng puti na nakarating sa gawing ito'y ayaw pagmanuhan ng hangal na Indiyong nakatagpo kaya sa pagkakunsumi ng among ay ibinuka ang limang malilintog niyang daliri at pinadapo sa nguso ng Indiyong walang galang.

Ngunit ang hangal na Indio'y talaga palang hindi nakakikilala ng pare kaya nang magbunot ng gulok ay kinilabutan ang pobreng saserdote at lumuhod sa pagmamakaawa.

(Here, Hernandez is imitating the attitude of the friars who thought of the natives as fools, an attitude which Hernandez himself abhors.)

Kabaligtaran niyan ang isa pang kuwento na dikuno'y hindi ang prayle ang nanampilong bagkus sa kanyang mahal na mukha lumagapak ang makapal na palad ng isang dalagang taga baryo.

Inaanyayahan umano ng kurang banyaga ang dalaga sa kumbento pagkapanggaling nila sa kumpisalan.

Kung ano ang sanhi ng pananampal ay siyang hindi matiyak ngunit sinasapantahang natuklasan ng

renowned Teofilo, the one who became bishop in Asia Minor and who according to a legend conspired with the devil.

But according to Ba Inte, others have said that Sampilong is not the nickname for a saint. Instead, it is really a purely native word that means "slap on the nose."

It appears that when the first friar set foot in our land the foolish native he met refused to kiss his hand as a sign of respect, and so from annoyance the priest opened his five fat fingers and made them alight on the upper lip of the disrespectful native.

However, the stupid Indio as it turns out really didn't know a priest so when he drew his bolo the poor priest was terrified and knelt pleading for mercy.

Another interpretation is that it wasn't the friar who did the slapping; instead he, on his dear face, felt the thick palm of a maiden from the barrio.

The foreign curate invited this young woman to come to rectory after confession.

Whatever motivated the slapping cannot be verified but I suspect the young woman

dalaga na ang pare ay tao rin at hindi anghel.

Nagkayari pang kung susulatin ang kasaysayan ng bayan ay pahalagahan ang alamat ng dalagang baryo na nanampilong ng prayleng banyaga.

discovered that priests are men not angels!

It was even agreed upon that if the history of this town should ever be written the story of the barrio maiden who slapped the foreign priest should be given due importance.

we see both from the narrator and Ba Inte, that Hernandez is quite aware of the traditional importance of place names. This fictional place name etymology does more than begin a story. Through it, the writer identifying himself with a Philippine story-telling tradition which attests a sense of place in the expression of a people's identity, a tradition with which he was well aware. In addition, he identifies with anticlericalism, a very important theme in vernacular writing.

COMMON THEMES

In the years before World War II, the young Hernandez spent his time in the company of skilled vernacular writers as the editor of *Impaguita* and *Mabuhay*. Literary historian Clodualdo del Mundo says that these weekly magazines "became the training grounds of poets and writers."²² Hernandez's position as editor afforded him the opportunity to become acquainted with the writing of many of his contemporaries. Today, many of these prewar works have either been lost or have become artifacts in limited-access research collections.

In 1927, a famous Balagtasian between Hernandez and Jose Corason de Jesus was published. The poet argued in verse whether the Philippines should get immediate independence from the United States. At that time, Hernandez favored gradual independence while de Jesus wanted an immediate severing of ties. Later, Hernandez would become an ardent nationalist. Lumbera commenting on the Balagtasian observes:

It was to become such a popular form of entertainment that practically every poet of the period, if he was worthy of the title *makata* (poet) had to display his mettle in declamation and argumentation as a Balagtasian poet. In its original form, the joust was written by only one poet with parts assigned in the manner of a verse playlet, to the intended partici-

22. Clodualdo del Mundo, "Spanish and American Colonial Literature in Tagalog," *Brown Heritage*, ed. Antonio G. Manuud (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1967), p. 374.

pants in the "contest." Benigno Ramos, in the thirties introduced social content making the contestants proponents of specific philosophical, political positions. Later on the Balagtasan assumed the form of debate in verse where the poets had to improvise in verse while arguing a position that they had been appointed to defend.²³

The *Ilaw at Panitik* (Light and Literature) Social Club was organized by Cirio H. Panganiban, Teodoro E. Gener, Jose Corazon de Jesus, and the man who is regarded as the father of the vernacular short story, Deogracias Rosario. During the early 1920s, Hernandez was writing short stories and poems under the tutelage of Deogracias Rosario.²⁴ Other masterful writers of this movement in the twenties through the thirties included Florentino T. Collantes, Fausto Galauran, and Juan Arsciwals. During this era, the young Hernandez competed with Jose Corazon de Jesus for the hand of Atang de la Rama, a beautiful zarzuela queen then at the height of her popularity, who eventually became Hernandez's wife. The young Hernandez found himself in an environment steeped in the traditions of several genres of artistic expression. Later, these evidences would be manifested in his writing.

Hernandez's novels share the common themes with other Tagalog writing: the belief that happiness will come after a long period of suffering, the revelation of the hero in disguise, selflessness and endurance in the face of suffering, change as a threat to tradition. The first of these themes reflects an unfounded optimism compared to the hardships in the world outside the novel. The attitude of *bahala na* or 'come what may' makes events seem to be beyond personal control. Many indigent Filipinos lack the resources to ever wrest control of their personal destinies. Even though major setbacks occur in both of these novels, they end on a note of optimism and reconciliation. Contrary to *bahala na*, Hernandez believes that simple farmers need not submit to fate. They can shape their own destiny.

The second theme, the hero in disguise, figures prominently in Hernandez's writing. In *Ang Mga Ibong Mandaragit*, Mando Plaridel, is really Alejandro Pamintuan, nicknamed Andoy, who was the former driver for Don Segundo Montero. Ultimately, Mando discloses his true identity to everyone's surprise, especially that of Dolly Montero, who has been completely fooled by her former servant. Mojares says that a common motif in early vernacular writing is for the poor hero

23. Lumbera, *Philippine Literature*, p. 108.

24. Clodualdo del Mundo, "Spanish and American Colonial Literature in Tagalog," in *Brown Heritage*, ed. Antonio G. Manuud (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1978), p. 376.

to discover that he is heir to a fortune or for lovers to learn that they are blood kin.²⁵ Andres, in *Luha ng Buwaya*, grew up an orphan in Manila. His mother died when he was still a child, and all he knew about his family was that they came from Sampilong. Andres loses everything during the war, and he and his family seek sanctuary in Sampilong. In tracking down his genealogy, Andres learns that his grandfather owned the track of land occupied by the squatter village plus a good part of the Grande estate. This tradition of disguise is best typified by Jose Rizal's Simoun who is really Don Crisostomo Ibarra disguised as an itinerant jeweler. Similarly, in Lazaro Francisco's *Ama*, the landowner, Don Pamfilo Melendrez, discovers that Ingkong Tasyo, the tenant he mistreats, is his long lost older brother who he thought had drowned years before.²⁶

A third theme, selflessness and endurance in the face of suffering, characterizes the Filipina heroine. Rizal's Maria Clara is the prototype for the steadfast woman in these early stories. Hernandez's heroines, Pina in *Luha ng Buwaya*, and Puri in *Ang Mga Ibong Mandaragit*, are selfless and enduring in the tradition of Maria Clara. Reyes identifies *baryo* versus *lunsod* as a central theme in the vernacular tradition.²⁷ In addition to the normal corrupting influences that cities have on people, Asians in cities have strong pressures to westernize which often means they must choose between indigenous values and, in the Philippine case, American values. This view sees rural areas as being protected from cultural "contamination." The picture in literature is much more complex than this simple dichotomy would suggest. For example, Lumbera described how

Taga-bayan came to be a flattering term for the Hispanized and therefore urbane and civilized Filipino while *taga-bukid* was to mock the Indio who had not learned the ways of the colonial master.²⁸

This pejorative distinction was accepted not only by the colonizers but by the colonized. For Hernandez, however, *taga-bukid* is not at all a term of derision. The rural *probinsiyana* is to be preferred to the city educated society woman who has lost her innocence. Pina in *Luha ng Buwaya*, knows what really matters unlike her counterpart, Ninet Grande, whose values have become confused. The opposition between Puri and Dolly Montero in *Ang Mga Ibong Mandaragit* is even more illustrative of Hernandez's preference for the *baryo*

25. Mojares, *Origins and Rise*, p. 426.

26. Lazaro Francisco, *Ama* (Quezon City: Manlapaz Publishing Company, 1981).

27. Soledad Reyes, *Nobelang Tagalog, 1905-1975: Tradisyong at Modernismo* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1982).

28. Lumbera, *Philippine Literature*, p. 31.

woman. Dolly Montero is all show and little substance. Taga-bayan figures like Don Segundo Montero, look down on their tenants. The tenants are submissive and subservient to this arrogance because they have no other real choice. Occasionally they rebel, but the price demanded far exceeds any tangible gain from rebellion and so they are socialized into submission. This struggle between landlord and tenant is part of the vernacular tradition. Starting with Isabelo de los Reyes' "Ang Kasama" the theme of tenant exploitation is vigorously addressed. Lazaro M. Francisco wrote three novels which contributed to the development of this theme: *Ama* (Father), *Maganda Pa Ang Daigdig* (The World is Still Beautiful), and *Daluyong* (Tidal Wave), widely regarded as his best novel.²⁹ Manuel Arguilla's "Rice"³⁰ and Hernando Ocampo's "We or They"³¹ are powerful stories describing the outbreak of violence. Arguilla's Pablo takes the Señora's rice for his wife and kids. "Rice is free in prison," he reasons "and when I'm arrested, there'll be one less mouth to feed." In Ocampo's "We or They," Tura's dying thought is his regret that the precious rice he took for his family is spilled all over the ground bathed in his blood rather than in his wife and children's stomachs. Hernandez's novels contribute to this collective portrait of the problems of the *ang mga anak pawis*, children of sweat, the metaphorical name for farmer or worker in Tagalog. His novels attempt to explain how farmers can break out of this vicious cycle.

HERNANDEZ AND RIZAL

The Spanish friar who abused his sacral power was a prime target for Rizal. This anticlericism is also found in both of Hernandez's novels. In *Luha ng Buwaya*, the friar is the butt of criticism. The narrator suggests that the father of Dislaw is Donya Leona's brother, Pascual, who is a priest vowed to celibacy. Rizal's Fr. Damaso has similarly violated his vow of celibacy and fathered Maria Clara. Pare Pascual, along with the corrupt chief, Hepe Hugo, openly lie about the deed to the squatter land which they know to be a forgery. This recalls the friars' forgery of the deed to Telesforo Tales' land in *Noli Me Tangere*. In the tradition of Father Damaso and Father Salvi in Rizal, Hernandez's Pare Pascual is not an admirable figure.

29. Lazaro M. Francisco, *Ama*; "Maganda Pa Ang Daigdig," *Liwayway*, 1955; "Daluyong," *Liwayway*, 1962.

30. Manuel Arguilla, "Rice," in *The Development of Philippine Literature in English*, ed. Richard V. Croghan, S.J. (Manila: Alemar Phoenix Publishing House, Inc., 1975), pp. 132-35.

31. Hernando Ocampo, "We or They," in *The Development of Philippine Literature in English*, pp. 136-39.

Rizal's Telesforo Tales is an important symbol of resistance and self-reliance for Hernandez. Telesforo Tales was a woodcutter who cleared some unclaimed land. When the friars discovered this, they produced a counterfeit deed and began charging rent on the property. Eventually the rent exceeded the profit and Tales lost the case in a court battle. Tales was kidnapped and when he was released, he found his family broken and his land seized by the friars. He armed himself and went to the hills vowing to fight the Spanish until the end. Ba Inte retells his story of a defiant man who refused to knuckle under in order to encourage the farmers of Sampilong not to lose their wavering resolve against the relentless Donya Leona.

References to Rizal are even more central in *Ang Mga Ibong Mandaragit*. When Tata Matyas, an old guerilla from the Philippine American War learns of Mando's success, he reminds the young man:

Ano ang sabi ni Padre Florentino
kung dahil sa isang banal at
matayog na layuni'y kailanganin
ka ng tao ipahintulot ng Diyos
pagkaraan ng isang siglo at ikaw
Mando ang lalaking hinirang.

It's just as Fr. Florentino
said if because of a holy
and sublime purpose you
should be needed by the
people, God permitting,
after a century, and you
Mando are the chosen one.

To this Mando responds humbly:

Nakalaan po ako kaya ko
sinabing ang mga kayamanang
ito'y hindi akin pagkat hindi
gagamitin sa sarili kong kabutihan.

I am willing and ready—
that's why I said these
riches are not mine
because they will not be
used just for me.

For readers familiar with Rizal, this is a powerful image.

S U M M A R Y

Those young writers who charged that Amado Hernandez's writing was old-fashioned were right. They recognized that Hernandez was the last vestige of an earlier group of writers. He had first-hand schooling in prewar Tagalog themes. He was able to draw upon this rich foundation and revitalize an earlier style to appeal to a new generation of readers. It is this heightened sense of antecedents which makes Hernandez's contribution unique. In a context where the urge to modernize was strong, Hernandez single-handedly preserved rich traditions and earned the status as literary craftsman in Tagalog.