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Fas-Ang: Cross-Cultural Currents in the Literature of Sinai C. Hamada

ANNA CHRISTIE VILLARBA-TORRES

Sinai C. Hamada is a Baguio-born Japanese-Filipino mestizo who writes poetry, essays, feature articles and short stories but is most notable as a short story writer. Sinai was born to Ryukichi Hamada, a Japanese mechanical foreman of Heald Lumber Company, Baguio City, who died in an accident while Sinai was only an infant, and Josefa Cariño, an illiterate Ibaloi woman who belonged to the prominent Cariño family of Benguet. In the context of Philippine literary history, Hamada belongs to the third period of Philippine literature in English, i.e., "The Period of Adaptation and Experimentation" (1925-35). He was educated in Baguio public schools and the University of the Philippines, Diliman, where he finished Law and Journalism. Today, at seventy-nine Hamada is still engaged in the practice of law in Baguio and Benguet as well as in *The Cordillera Post*, a weekly tabloid of which he is the editor.

In most of his stories and poems, Hamada operates on cross-cultural currents. If culture is a means of adaptation to communicate and cooperate with fellow man for societal survival, cross-culture is the comparison of cultures for the integration of these cultures. The literature of Hamada, himself a man of a different cultural background lends itself as significant material for this approach.²

Applied to literature, the cross-cultural approach can take two levels.³ At the simplest level, the approach investigates how and what aspects of a culture are depicted in the works of an author of a different

^{1.} Maximo Ramos and Florentino Valeros, eds., *Philippine Haroest*, rev. ed. (Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing, 1964), p. 10.

^{2.} Robert B. Taylor, Cultural Ways (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1969), p. 29.

^{3.} Yu-yuh Chao, "A Cross-Cultural Approach to Literature," in Literature and Society: Cross-Cultural Perspectives, 2nd ed., Roger Bresnahan, ed. (Los Baños: n.p., 1976), pp. 260-61.

cultural background. On another level, the approach seeks to analyze the cross-cultural encounters in an author's works. The cross-cultural theme, i.e., the interplay between two cultures, shows how the characters of different racial and/or cultural backgrounds placed in dramatic situations interact with one another. By dramatizing such encounters, differences and similarities in the characters' respective cultures are revealed.

The concept of racial or cultural otherness is not a fixed concept but a revolving theorization or process. In contemporary criticism, the concept of "the other" or "the outsider" centers on power relationships. In this article, however, "otherness" is used in a more relative sense, to make a distinction, a difference in race/culture, gender and class. To summarize the "crossing of cultural boundaries," the word fas-ang, lifted from Hamada's representative story, "Tanabata's Wife," is used. Fas-ang is a Bontoc term meaning "to cross over a boundary," or "to jump over to the other side." Bontoc, the capital of Mountain Province is divided into three parts, namely Bontoc Central, Eastern Bontoc and Northern Bontoc. The spoken dialect is Bontoc. However, there are slight linguistic variations in each part. In Central Bontoc for example, the "d" sound becomes "ch," the "b" becomes "f" and the "g" becomes "k" or "kh." Thus, fas-ang, a central Bontoc term becomes "bas-ang" in eastern and northern Bontoc.4 In this study, the word fas-ang will be used in a broader and more metaphorical sense. The presence of mixed cultures in Hamada's works indicates a crossing over, a fas-ang. The manner in which these mixed cultural elements is utilized reflects a particular stage in Hamada's awareness of fas-ang as world view.

The cross-cultural elements in Hamada's prose and poetry however do not seek to isolate the different cultures, races, genders or classes. On the contrary, they provide us with an interesting picture of our colonial and neocolonial history. More importantly, they help clarify a special concern of Hamada, i.e., the brotherhood of man.

STORIES OF LOCAL COLOR: 1930-46

Under the tutelage of an American teacher, Helen McCllurg, Hamada was drawn to writing as a junior at the Baguio City High School. The following year, aware that short stories were being published in the *Graphic*, Hamada sent his first short story, "Whose Home." Published

^{4.} Interview with June Prill-Brett, Sagada, Mountain Province, 4 May 1987. Dr. Prill-Brett is the outgoing director of the Cordillera Studies Center (CSC), UP College Baguio. She has written and published various articles on Bontoc and its inhabitants.

on 8 January 1930, it was chosen by Jose Garcia Villa as one of the best short stories for 1930. Hamada recalls that he was paid P8.00 for this story.⁵

Hamada's early experience of literature was in the form of narratives, from folk tales to community events told to him by his mother and maternal grandmother. This storytelling provided Hamada with a convention. His earliest works range from fables to works of fiction with a strong sense of place. After working on this convention, Hamada, like other writers, developed his own literary technique from his own distinctive sense of form.⁶

In "Whose Home" and five other stories written from 1930 to 1938, the young Hamada wrote stories with the "native situation theme." In the literary style of the time, writers sought to depict typical native scenes and situations. For the youthful Hamada, the portrayal of mixed cultures in everyday Benguet life was a manifestation of his romantic outlook. Like other Filipino writers in English, e.g., Arguilla and his native Nagrebcan, La Union, in Baguio and his adopted abode, Kalinga, Hamada supported the local color movement in Philippine literature in English.

Hamada's intention in "Whose Home" was to idealize a native situation (here) in Baguio at (that) time." Hamada is referring to the 1930's, when Japanese nationals dominated both the business and trade scenes in Baguio and the outlying districts. This "factual" story was based on "an actual situation where lowland and highland carpenters were hired together by Japanese contractors." The cultural differences in the story point out the Igorot's concept of home and family. Although Hamada claims that there was no original intent on his part to depict these cultural differences, the differences are there nevertheless. The story begins with the Pampango, Tagalog and Ilocano carpenters bemoaning their married state.

- ... What a life! Woman! h-m-m-m! As soon as I reach home, aroo! Tired and sweating, sus! I receive scoldings. Words—dirty words—woman! Because I drink a little wine—susmariosep! . . .
- ... My wife—hoo! If she does not make my head the target of plates, then it is the floor. And she likes to buy glassware so she has something to break. Por Dios! ..."
- 5. Interview with Sinai C. Hamada, UP College Baguio, Baguio City, 2 June 1988.
- 6. Northrop Frye, *The Educated Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), p. 41.
- 7. Sinai C. Hamada, Collected Short Stories (Baguio City: Baguio Printing and Publishing Co., Inc., 1975), p. 5. All succeeding page references are to this edition.
 - 8. Interview with Sinai C. Hamada, Baguio, 2 June 1988.
 - 9. Interview with Hamada, Camp 7, Baguio City, 14 May 1987.

... woman spoils all. Dirty home. When you arrive, she hands you the dirty baby. (p. 7)

Baroy, the Igorot carpenter however, is "eager to reach his cozy home," (p. 5) and sit down to a supper of simple fare with his wife and daughter. Secure in his hut with his family, Baroy cannot comprehend "the complaint of those men against women and home" (p. 9).

Hamada stresses that his "simple depiction of an Ibaloi homelover is typical of an Ibaloi who has found employment in carpentry, a new trade for him." Employment in a trade other than farming or mining, the more common livelihood activities for the native, is a source of pride that likewise helps strengthen his attachment to home and family.

"Sunka," written in 1931 is a story about a native couple, Adigan and Sunka, natives of Akop, Benguet. They are cousins. That is why Adigan has known and married Sunka. Adigan comes to their present home, quite a distance from Akop. He leaves his wife in the village and returns for her when their *kaingin* is ready. Their home becomes the resting place of travellers in search of fortune. The presence of travellers creates the tension in the story. This tension sharply delineates the fas-ang of cultures between native man and woman. For although they have been wed for "almost three harvests long," they are childless. Hamada points out that for Igorot society, the strongest motivation for a man and a woman to marry is to have children who will succeed them in their old age. Similarly, according to unwritten Nabaloi law, the absence of children, or if they are born dead or if they all die, serves as ample grounds for divorce.

In the story, apparently it is Sunka who is *basig* (sterile or unproductive). On several occasions, it is implied that Sunka has been growing intimate with the travellers. She stands close to the (first) traveller while he eats his lunch, and the traveller reddens in the ears while insinuating that Sunka keeps secrets. Sunka chooses to remain home complaining of a backache instead of going to the field. But Adigan refuses to believe his wife holds "secrets." The same unwritten Nabaloi law allows a man to divorce his wife if she lay with another man.¹³ Adigan realizes what is going on and takes action:

Suddenly, a thought flashed through his brain, and he saw everything clear. And a glint came into his eyes, seldom seen there; hard, meaningful. (p. 83)

^{10.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 2 June 1988.

^{11.} Ibid.

^{12. &}quot;Nabaloi Law and Ritual," American Archeology and Ethnology 15, quoted in Ernesto S. Alcantara, "Ibaloi Culture" in Baguio Tech Journal 4 (1966): 18.

^{13.} Ibid.

Adigan asserts his principle, his manhood: "I don't want any more travellers coming to our house uninvited" (p. 83). But he does not hurt her for "she was gentle-hearted and beautiful" (p. 83). There is no need to, as "both understood." Although the tension of Sunka's infidelity is strongly felt in the story, its treatment is subdued from the act itself to its resolution. Sunka now plays the dutiful wife, and man and woman are bound more closely together. The story ends with the birth of a child of their own, an apt symbol of two cultures clashing but meeting midway.

Among the highlanders, a distinction exists between those who live among people and those who live alone. "The Pagan," written between 1931 and 1932 illustrates this. Baroy is a young loner who lives in the mountains where he mines for gold. He descends to the valley settlement of Loakan occasionally to sell his gold. The people call him "a pagan" (p. 11). However, he is welcome in the valley because he is an orphan. The elders admire his industrious nature. The young women "liked him in one way [but] he liked them in another. [For] no one had taught him to like women the way they liked him" (p. 13).

Baroy represents two aspects of Igorot culture. One is Baroy's hardworking and pioneering traits. But he chooses to live away from the valley settlement (civilization) and opts for mountain life (primitiveness). Even his mining methods taught him by his father are primitive:

The mine was just above his hut. It was supported by posts he had hewn in the woods. He worked it with an iron pick. He sorted the ore, crushed it, and then panned the pulverized gold.

... sometimes, Baroy panned directly from the stream for gold. He had once actually seen the gleaming gold on the stream bed. The sight had instinctively thrilled him. (p. 13)

But Baroy is also human, and although he does not think of marriage, "the strange urge [beats] like a flame in [his] heart" (p. 14). This is the second cultural aspect Hamada projects via his character. Hamada says that the falling in love between the male and female in a native culture is not the same as in civilized society. As the buck chases the doe over the woodland, a man and woman in primitive culture base marriage on a "nature reaction." 15

^{14.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 14 May 1987.

^{15.} Edilberto Alegre and Doreen Fernandez, Original Manuscript of Interview with Sinai C. Hamada, Baguio City, 20 October 1983, p. 17. Subsequently published in revised form in the *The Writer and His Milieu: The Second Generation Writers* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1987).

The woman of Baroy's desire is Marujia, whom he sees bathing in the nude in the spring. After this incident, he tries to bring out all the gold in his mine. He finally descends, gold-laden, appeasing the anxiety of the community over his long absence. He lays the gold before Dampak, the village chief "to celebrate [his] wedlock with Marujia" (p. 16). The village sages approve of the marriage and "five steers, one carabao, ten pigs, wine and bread" (p. 16) are butchered and prepared for the *cañao*.

However, although Baroy dispels the people's notion that "he has no liking for women" (p. 13), his hardy and pioneering streak prevails. Married life will not tie him down. Spotting virgin land from the mountain home, man and wife cross the ridge beyond the valley to a new frontier.

Written immediately after the war, "Lonely Valley" is not based on any actual personal experience. Hamada wanted to find out if he could still write stories that would find their way into print. He wrote about Rita because he had classmates in high school who were American mestizas and who were "of course the prettiest in [the] high school campus and were most attractive to the high school boys." ¹⁶

The story is set in Camp 7, where Hamada now resides with his family. Hamada recalls that the American girl, Rita, had lived right below their home. Camp 7 is likewise the setting of other stories, e.g., "Homecoming," "Willy Nilly," and "The Last Slave" (partially). Now, Camp 7 is fast becoming a residential and commercial area and subdivisions and souvenir shops are common sights in the area. In the persona's nostalgic longing for "the valley of [his] dreams," Hamada illustrates the familiar urban-rural conflict and lost love. The valley is synonymous with Rita:

I think of Rita, and the twin brooks that flow into another as they tumble headlong down a cliff beyond the bend of the road. Of skies over the valley of Puy-as. The guava hills of Kawa. Oh. (p. 128)

Rico's mother wants her son to be a government clerk. She dreams of moving into the city. Thus, Rico turns his back on the valley and on Rita who has said:

... If you don't marry me now, Rico, you shall never have me. (p. 128)

His mother immediately takes to city life, but for Rico it is a "humdrum existence." Rita "had gone overseas, never to come back" (p. 128). So now, as a city hall clerk, Rico has to:

Type this. Mail this. Copy this. Type that. File that. Erase that. Erase it. TIME. (p. 130)

His aging mother insists that he should marry after she dies, but Rico protests: "I've almost forgotten I am a man" (p. 130). So, alone in the evenings, dreams of the valley recur to Rico:

Oh to return, but dreams are gone, and the one who was there is there no more. (p. 131)

With deep longing and regret, Rico recalls "the twin brooks [that] embrace and mingle as one at the vale's end" (p. 131). Without Rita, alone, the valley becomes a sad and sorry reminder.

A majority of Hamada's early stories speak of native situations, with old Baguio or the outlying districts as the backdrop. In these stories, one detects Hamada's fondness for "things past" and a natural portrayal of different cultures, for these stories are based on actual narratives Hamada heard from his close kin. This exemplifies the local color tradition which dominated the Philippine literary scene at that time. One critic notes that Hamada's (early) stories are characteristic of the short stories in English written by Filipinos from 1931 to 1941 in that they focus on local color with particular emphasis on certain tribes and places.¹⁷ Thus in the parallel development of Hamada's literary career and world view, fas-ang is limited to a literary technique, i.e., local color, and is still in the first stage of growth.

STORIES OF CONFRONTATION: 1930-54

Eleven stories by Hamada written from 1930 to 1954 fall in the second stage in the development of Hamada's attitude toward cross-culture. Most of these stories were written during Hamada's college years at the University of the Philippines. "The Fall of Irisan Bridge" won first place in the National Heroes' Day Contest at the University of the Philippines in 1933. Four other stories, "Kintana and Her Man," "Tanabata's Wife," "As Life Goes On," and "O Returning Day" received citations in Villa's Honor Roll.¹⁸

These stories reveal a change in the subject of fas-ang. Although the majority are love stories, which Hamada claims was "the fashion

^{17.} Virginia R. Moreno, "A Critical Study of the Short Story in English as Written by Filipinos from 1910 to 1941 with an Anthology of Representative Stories" (MA Thesis, University of the Philippines, April 1952), p. 73, quoted in Pacita Icasiano-Habana, "Asian Cross-Cultural Influences in Four Filipino Writers" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Santos Tomas, 1978).

^{18.} Icasiano-Habana, "Asian Influences," p. 131.

then," the use of fas-ang no longer carries the native situation theme. Instead there is a more conscious and serious treatment of fas-ang. Cultural delineations used as ornaments to enhance the story have been replaced by a confrontation of sorts. Here, the concept of the "other" is more strongly felt. One of the earliest stories which shows traces of conflict in mixed culture situations is "Compensation," written in 1930. The story is set in a large sawmill, with a virginal forest on an adjacent mountain.

Although the story is reminiscent of his father's own accident, Hamada notes that this story was based on another actual mishap he must have heard of in the neighborhood. Bakag (not his real name), is among the many Igorot lumberjacks who work in the mill—"sawing, rolling, hauling, hitching, piling and loading timber" (p. 218). He is likewise a champion wrestler, putting down each combatant, except the Japanese *jui-jit-suits*. More significantly, Bakag is loved by his peers. He is their idol. Laboring uncomplainingly, he always helps the weaker ones. Even the company considers him an asset. He is first in the payroll line and receives more than the average worker.

But one Saturday, an accident occurs:

The cable had been cut and it whirled terribly, swinging violently, even uprooting some pliant trees.

Bakag was caught in the twirl of the broken wire. The wire had been so taut that when it broke, its swish whistled. The spectators of the grim tragedy saw the man whipped by the cruel wire and swung off into a dense thicket. (p. 220)

The mangled body is located, wrapped and brought to the grieved family. The following morning, the mill paymaster hands Bakag's wife P100.00: "That is the company's compensation for your loss" (p. 220).

The sawmill company referred to here is based on the actual Heald Lumber Company, where Hamada's father was a foreman. Owned by an American, H.C. Heald this was among the earliest and later, one of the biggest lumber firms in Baguio City.

Two cultures operate in this story. On the one hand, there are the Igorot laborers who work in the establishment:

The Igorots love their work. They are strong but become stronger with hard labor. It partly solves their problem of securing subsistence where it is so hard to earn a living. (p. 218)

On the other hand, there are the "absent" company owners whose presence is felt only at the end when, through the paymaster, they

donate P100.00 as compensation for the family's loss. Unlike the native workers, these foreign capitalists need not toil physically in the production process.

Hamada clarifies that his primary motivation in writing the story was to emphasize the meager compensation received by the family of the Igorot. Hamada underscores the fact that he is an Igorot "who was not expected to know too much about his own rights." Thus, the final interjection of "What! . . ." in the story is satiric, "to highlight the fact that the compensation is inadequate for the life of a native." Hamada adds that there was "a misapplication of the compensation or reward for the efforts of the native." In other words, "the life of the native amounted to only P100.00," signifying "a low regard for a native meeting an accident in his work, which was different from other ethnic groups." 22

The Igorot worker is industrious. But because he is unaware of his rights (a risky job entails better pay) he falls victim to discrimination and oppression. For the Igorot therefore, "life [becomes] so cheap."²³ The issue here is not discrimination against the highlander per se, but that the highlander, in comparison to the lowlander, is primitive, and is therefore ignorant of his basic rights.

A love story which develops the conflict between primitivism and education is "As Life Goes On," published in *Graphic*.²⁴ Rebecca, a native girl is sent to the Anglican Mission School by her father. Here she learns how to sing church songs, to speak English and to rebel. Shortly after graduation from seventh grade, her father takes her away to be wed because of *kai-sing* to the son of the wealthiest native in the village. Rather than marry a man she does not love, Rebecca risks parental rejection and seeks refuge in the dormitory. The sympathetic matron praises her example:²⁵

She is the embodiment of the triumph of education over primitiveness.

Rebecca chooses to pursue her education and turn her back on the "rustic customs of her people." But Rebecca does not totally shun her upland culture. While at the Baguio Nursing School, she feels "the thrill of life" with a young Bontoc gentleman (p. 47). Unfortunately,

^{20.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 20 September 1988.

^{21.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 2 June 1988.

^{22.} Ibid.

^{23.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 20 September 1988.

^{24.} Sinai C. Hamada, "As Life Goes On," *Graphic*, 20 September 1934, pp. 12–13, 41, 47, 54–55.

^{25.} Ibid., p. 41.

^{26.} Ibid.

their romantic tryst is cut short when the Bontoc lad joins "Uncle Sam's Army" and shortly after, they lose touch with each other. Rebecca's pride in her upland heritage does not die with "education." A promising young doctor woos her, causing tongues to wag: "Imagine the scion of a wealthy family having to do with a common Igorot lass." Although the young man offers her marriage, Rebecca is unmoved—"I have pride, little though it is." In the end, Rebecca's education does not deter her from marrying the man of her choice. This is Sixto, the big burly Ilocano miner with whom she decides to spend her life. In the long run, her passionate heart, not her educated mind prevails.

Hamada effectively captures three historical periods in the Baguio-Benguet area in three of his stories. From these, we learn the prominence of mixed cultures. We likewise see coping patterns of the native inhabitants and the foreign invaders as their cultures clash.

The Spaniards, the first foreign power to set foot in the highlands, displayed a special interest in the mountain mines as a potential source of wealth. This was due to the high costs in maintaining a colony so far removed from the Iberian metropolis and the pressing need to reduce the annual subsidy, by which the treasury of *Nueva España* sustained the Manila Government.²⁹ However, when the Spaniards heard about the highlanders' habits of extracting only enough gold for small-scale trade and of carefully concealing major mine sites, their desire for gold was further intensified.³⁰

This historical datum comes to life in "The Punishment of Kutnon," one of Hamada's little known stories.³¹ The story is set in La Trinidad, a flourishing community surrounded by forested hills and fields of taro, sweet potatoes and sugarcane.³² Kutnon, a native farmer is to be whipped at the tribunal upon orders of the Spanish mayor, for having wronged a neighbor's wife. But before he could be flogged, he shows the mayor a gold nugget. The tide changes as the mayor pardons him on the spot and invites him to dinner. "Behold here, a subject worthy of the King and Queen of Spain. Follow ye his example. He will always

^{27.} Ibid., p. 54.

^{28.} lbid.

^{29.} American Historical Review 1, quoted in Robert Reed, City of Pines: The Origins of Baguio as a Colonial Hill Station and Regional Capital (Berkeley: Center for Southern and Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, 1976), pp. 461–64.

^{30.} Felix M. Keesing, The Ethnohistory of Northern Luzon (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 13-14.

^{31.} Sinai C. Hamada, "The Punishment of Kutnon," Philippine Journal of Education 17 (September 1934): 286–87.

^{32.} Keesing, pp. 48-49.

report where there is wealth for the crown."³³ After dinner, the true intent of the mayor's unwarranted hospitality surfaces. He wants to know the location of the gold. He resorts to gentle cajolery and stern threats to draw a confession from Kutnon. However, all Kutnon reveals is that the gold came from the mountain and that his ancestors' spirits forbid him revealing the exact location. Finally, threatened with torture, Kutnon remarks: "Ah, it were far better that you tortured me than I should invite the eternal curse of my ancestors, for greater tortures would be it."³⁴

The cultural differences are clear. The Spaniards coveted gold for nationalistic and/or personal reasons. The Ibalois lived on a subsistence economy. They feared the spirits of their ancestors. They did not believe that the land belonged to the people, rather they belonged to the land. Gold was exchanged for food. Until that food was consumed, they did not need any gold. But then each native went to the mine assigned, got what he needed according to his needs and not any more. As for coping patterns, the Spaniards employed threats of brute strength, to no avail. The natives, though physically defeated never revealed the actual location of their mines.

Tracing the history of foreign presence in the uplands is another story by Hamada, "Kintana and Her Man." The story records the coming of the Americans who were also stationed at the tribunal in La Trinidad. Apparently, the Americans were in pursuit of *insurrectos* who had fled to the mountains and were at the same time, protecting from marauding bandits the peaceful natives who owned the valuable gold of the Benguet hills (p. 23). Hamada notes that this was way back in 1848.³⁶

This story is based on an actual incident told to Hamada by his mother. Kintana, a twice widowed woman, not past middle age, is nearly abducted by a Negro soldier as she is tilling her camote kaingin. Five Nabaloi men rescue her and the soldier flees. Kintana files a complaint and a trial is conducted at the old tribunal. The American captain assures her that the man will be severely punished. Thereafter, the Nabaloi husbands stand guard over their wives. Kintana remains alone. But the lovelorn soldiers think her to be "an uncommonly beautiful woman" (p. 27), particularly a mulatto soldier who desires to meet her.

^{33.} Hamada, "Punishment of Kutnon," p. 286.

^{34.} Ibid., p. 287.

^{35.} The Philippine Islands, 1973 ed., s. v. "Expeditions to Tuy" by Doctor Julian Manuel de la Vega.

^{36.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 2 June 1988.

When he chances upon Kintana resting under a guava tree one fine afternoon, he whistles and smiles at her, holding three gleaming silver dollars in his hand. Kintana is taken by the "sweetly smiling eyes" (p. 29) of the mulatto, waves aside [the] hand with the silver dollars and allows him to hold her. "They are thus content to be as they were, locked for a time in eternity" (p. 29).

The cultural differences are strong in this situation. The black soldier thinks he can take Kintana by force. Kintana, taken aback by the dark skin of this foreigner, fights back. The mulatto thinks he can win Kintana with the three silver dollars. Kintana epitomizes native integrity by refusing the money. Eventually, the mulatto adjusts to her culture, smiling and gesturing amicably, thereby breaking her maidenly reserve.³⁷ The natural proximity of the mulatto, and not the money seems to have attracted her more.

The course of Baguio-Benguet history continues in Hamada's most anthologized story, "Tanabata's Wife." This story illustrates the coming of the Japanese immigrants, as well as other nationals from Asia and Europe, hired to work on the construction of Kennon road in 1903.³⁸ After its completion in 1905, some Japanese nationals turned to farming, settled mostly in La Trinidad, and intermarried into Trinidad families.³⁹

With regard to the Japanese presence in Benguet, Hamada notes the existence of "a different kind of interaction." Seemingly, the natives took easily to cordial relations with the Japanese. Hamada credits this to the fact the Japanese were also Orientals, and for the Ibaloi women in particular, "their native culture seems to be akin to the Japanese culture." In both cultures, the women carry their children on their back with a blanket strap. The Ibaloi women also have "an acknowledged inferiority to the men." 1

According to Hamada, "Tanabata's Wife" is factual, except for the surprise ending. The native woman was patterned after Maria Fasang, a native of Sabangan, Mountain Province. Her Japanese husband, a truck gardener in Kisad Valley was cousin to Hamada's father. As the real story goes, Maria Fas-ang was seduced by a Bontoc native who abandoned her in the ili (village) after they ran off together.

^{37.} Icasiano-Habana, "Asian Influences," p. 102.

^{38.} Interview with Hamada, Camp 7, Baguio City, 5 February 1987.

^{39.} Anavic Bagamaspad and Zenaida Hamada-Pawid, A People's History of Benguet Province (Baguio: Baguio Printing and Publishing Co., Inc., 1985), p. 234.

^{40.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 29 September 1989.

^{41.} Interview with Hamada, Camp 7, Baguio, 8 June 1989.

Maria's child by the Japanese was really a girl and she sent her daughter back to her Japanese father.⁴²

In Hamada's fictionalized version, the native woman finds work as helper in the vegetable gardens of a Japanese bachelor. After observing her for some time, the Japanese proposes marriage and the woman yields. Thus, "without ceremony and without the law, they were wedded by a tacitly sworn agreement between themselves" (p. 44). Fas-ang gives birth to a baby boy and Tanabata is pleased. But Fas-ang becomes a *cine* addict and during one of her trips to the city, she meets a native man and they run off together with the baby. Tanabata, in desolation, neglects his garden. Fas-ang, long deserted by her lover, hears about this and returns. Tanabata, "exultant," welcomes them into the house.

The choice of names in this story is interesting. Tanabata is the Japanese festival celebrating love held in the seventh month of the lunar calendar. According to the Tanabata myth, two stars, Cowherd (Altin) and Weaver (Vega) were lovers but were separated by the Milky Way. However, they were able to meet once a year, on July 7, if it did not rain.⁴³ The Tanabata festival is the Japanese counterpart of Valentine's Day. The festival begins at around seven in the evening and lasts until midnight. The highlight of the festival is the display of fireworks to light up the path of the two young lovers, *Orihine-sama* (female star) and *Orihito-sama* (male star).⁴⁴ Hamada, however, admits that he was unaware of this when he picked the name Tanabata.

Through Tanabata, the Japanese psyche is revealed. Honor rates high in the Japanese code of ethics, even in choosing a mate. Choosing a bride and raising a family are serious considerations, for the emphasis on the household and family requires a high degree of mutual cooperation. Tanabata is taken by Fas-ang's industrious nature and "buxom breast" (p. 41) yet he consults with his Japanese neighbor, Okamoto regarding his choice. For the Japanese, strength of character is in conforming, not in rebelling. Nonconformity brings humiliation and ridicule. Tanabata conforms when he consults with Okamoto about Fas-ang. He conforms when he shares household privileges with his wife. But when she abandons him, he is crestfallen. A death threat from his wife's lover prevents him from pursuing his wife and son.

^{42.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 14 May 1987.

^{43.} A Hundred Things Japanese (Tokyo: Japan Culture Institute, 1975), quoted in Icasiano Habana, "Asian Influences," pp. 89–90.

^{44.} Interview with Seiji Kamise, San Juan, Metro- Manila, 7 March 1989. Mr. Kamise is twenty-six-year-old Japanese national who has lived in Japan all his life.

^{45.} Encyclopedia Britannica, 1971 ed., s. v. "Japan."

He rebels as he pines for his wife and son, neglecting his garden altogether. Despite Okamoto's entreaties for him to go on with his life, he "[shuts] himself in" (p. 48), turns to liquor and becomes an object of humiliation. But Tanabata could not care less, thinking that "in a month, [he] would perhaps go home to die in Japan" (p. 48). Upon his family's return however, he "(lights) the big lamp that had long hung from the ceiling, unused" (p. 49).

On the other hand, although Fas-ang is the actual name of the character, it is significant in that fas-ang is a Bontoc term meaning "to cross over a boundary." In Bontoc, persons are named after a physical deformity or a specific act or quality remembered by the villagers. It is possible that a forefather of the woman character Fas-ang was not originally from Bisao, Bontoc. He could have "crossed over" to another village, possibly even a warring village to wed. This was a common practice in Bontoc during the proliferation of tribal wars. 46

Literally, Fas-ang crosses two boundaries in the story. First from her native Bontoc, through the Mountain Trail to Trinidad Valley and to Baguio, her destination. Her plan is to work as a road builder, as numerous roads are being built in the city. But she lands a job in Kisad Valley, in Tanabata's vegetable patch. This second boundary is now a boundary of cultures. The Igorot is known to be industrious, and Fas-ang "did not find it difficult to tend the truck garden" (p. 44). Although ignorant of ideas outside her, she learns and acquires some Japanese customs.

... she learned to use chopsticks ... they had a zinc tub ... wherein they heated water and took a bath in the evening. Fas-ang pickled radish after the Japanese fashion, salting them in a barrel; she began to use wooden shoes, though of the Filipino variety ... she became used to drinking tea and pouring much toyo sauce into their viands: mattresses too, and no longer a plain mat, formed her beddings. (p. 44)

However, this acculturation, or the acquisition of new traits from another culture⁴⁷ does not occur in the other traditions observed by Tanabata. At the baptismal celebration of their son, Kato, Tanabata's Japanese friends are invited. Fas-ang is confused, she "could not understand the chattering of her guest" (p. 45). As another Japanese custom dictates, Tanabata forbids her from going out for a month after childbirth. For Fas-ang, who knows no other life than that of outdoors, this is almost unbearable. At this point, Fas-ang is a victim of culture

^{46.} Interview with June Prill-Brett, UP College Baguio, Baguio City, 27 January 1989. 47. Irene L. Ortigas and Felix E. Regalada, Society and Culture in Rural Philippines, Introduction by Chester L. Hunt (Quezon City: Alemar-Phoenix Publishing House, 1978), p. 33.

shock. When an individual finds himself in an unfamiliar cultural environment where his previous learning is inadequate for coping, he may suffer some degree of emotional disturbance. Culture shock or "well of loneliness" affects the cultural stranger who feels the absence of people with sufficiently similar experiences who can understand how he feels. Though acculturated to some extent, Fas-ang "yearned to learn from her folks back in Bisao, Bontoc. Had the kaingins been planted with camote and corn (p. 45)?" "Often," she says, "she [felt] homesick" (p. 46). To overcome this, she turns to the movies, travelling two miles to the city, sometimes with her child, to see a film. Fas-ang admits that "she often met several of her relatives and townmates in the theater" (p. 47).

Anthropologically, culture patterns differ in degrees of consciousness and complexity as well as in kind. The simplest patterns of behavior are expressed in customs of dress, diet, work, salutation and artifacts.49 Fas-ang adjusts to these simple patterns without qualms. But to the more complex patterns underlying social, political and economic organization and the systems of religion, language, law, etc. Fas-ang is unable to completely "cross the boundary." 50 With no knowledge of the Japanese language and unaware of the significance of Japanese social behavior, e.g., revelry in baptismal celebrations and refraining from work after child-birth, Fas-ang retains feelings of being an outsider, the "other." It is the cine, where she meets her own kind, that becomes her welcome retreat. Tanabata on the other hand, is more perceptive. To begin with, "he had great respect for [the] sturdy, native woman" (p. 43). He is "most solicitous" (p. 45) toward Fas-ang as she is recovering from childbirth. He brings a pair of short pants and other clothes for her cousin, telling him to "do away with his Gstring" (p. 46). More importantly, he allows her to frequent the cine although "he could not understand what drew her to [it]" (p. 47). He is "too indulgent with Fas-ang. . . . he loved her too much to deny her any pleasure she desired" (p. 47). It is this same love that leads him to take back mother and son after their sudden and painful leavetaking. Fas-ang's return and Tanabata's acceptance are positive acts which help bridge the two different cultures.

A structuralist critic however points to the existence of binary opposition between the two cultures. Fas-ang represents the capable,

^{48.} Niel Warren, ed. Studies in Cross-Cultural Psychology (London: Academic Press, 1977). 1: 139-40.

^{49.} International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, reprint ed., s. v. "Culture" by Milton Singer.

^{50.} Ibid.

"sturdy" native woman with good business sense in a capitalistic environment. Fas-ang, who becomes subordinate to Tanabata according to dominant codes, falls victim to the cinema, "the force of market capitalism and cosmopolitan business." The problem is resolved upon Fas-ang's return. "The patriarchal family overcomes all obstacles and triumphs in the end." ⁵¹

Asked to comment on this observation, Hamada maintains that the story "is not as deep as that." Aside from being a love story, it is "a contrived portrayal of any Japanese man's love for children." 52

Hamada's college years at the University of the Philippines not only improved his craft as a writer, but considerably broadened his vision of life and the world. Fas-ang or Hamada's attitude towards mixed cultures crosses another boundary, i.e., confrontation. Fas-ang shifts from mere literary ornamentation to a stark manifestation of conflict of cultures and gender. However, for the maturing Hamada, Fas-ang is not meant to cause further disorder in the tension created by these cross-cultural clashes. As seen in the stories included in this section, e.g., "Tanabata's Wife," a compromise is implicitly arrived at in the end. Hamada's vision then goes beyond the prejudice and discrimination as he works toward the notion and realization of universality.

GROWING CONVICTION: UNIVERSALITY AND BROTHERHOOD

According to Hamada, it was only after college that he conceived of the notion of the brotherhood of man. It should be remembered that immediately after graduation from law school and passing the bar exam, Hamada set up his law practice in Baguio and wrote for the family-owned tabloid, *The Baguio Midland Courier*. He likewise taught at the Baguio Colleges Foundation (BCF) Law School and became president of the Baguio Press Club, reactivated after the war. Worth noting is his stint as chairman and general manager of the Mountain Province Development Authority (MPDA) from 1965 to 1973. These experiences brought him closer to the issues plaguing his native Cordillera and his highland brothers, and the sincere desire to be of service to them was further strengthened.⁵³

^{51.} E. San Juan, Jr., "Ideology, Text, History: A Contextual Interpretation and Critique of Fiction by Filipino Writers," *Kultura* 1 (1988): 15.

^{52.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 20 September 1988.

^{53.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 5 February 1987.

Hamada's exposure to different people, cultures, ideologies was made possible by two foreign grants. For five months, between 1960 and 1961, Hamada travelled to the United States on a journalism grant provided by the US State Department. Aside from the mainland and Hawaii, Hamada visited Puerto Rico to witness "Operation Bootstrap." He admitted that the small island was really pulling itself up by its bootstraps with American encouragement.⁵⁴

"America," an unpublished postwar poem is Hamada's fitting recap of his experience:

In the cup of hand What diversity of skyline Or destiny, Of racial color, or dream Of humanity.

But he is quick to add, "A light will probe darkness/ in the American dream" for "the Torch of Liberty/shall light the World."

A Japanese grant under the Colombo Plan brought Hamada to Japan from 1 May to 30 June 1971. This trip was in his capacity as MPDA Chairman.⁵⁵ His admiration for Japan is seen in another unpublished poem, "Japan:"

There is uncanny intelligence Fashioning West out of East Aping technocracy, surpassing model.

Hamada visited China on a Chinese Friendship grant for ten days between 1978 and 1979. Touring China from north to south, he noted the "absolute honesty" of the Chinese government.

Hamada claims he has not written any short story with the idea of universality explicitly in mind, but one story, "Out of Darkness and the Wilderness," written in 1954 does consider the notion.⁵⁶

"Out of Darkness and the Wilderness" is intended to portray the struggle of the natives to climb out of their primitive surroundings in order to rise in the world.⁵⁷ The story points to a fictional tribe, the Dalikno. Hamada is actually referring to the Cara-ao, a non-Ibaloi tribe who migrated from the Mountain Province to the Bokod area. They adopted the language and ways of the Ibalois, intermarried with them and have been accepted. However, they proved to be more virile

^{54.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 14 May 1987.

^{55.} Ibid.

^{56.} Ibid.

^{57.} Ibid.

and skillful than the local inhabitants. The Daliknos are a "pushing race... groping their way to fulfillment" (p. 140). Hamada attributes this to the fact that immigrant tribes seek to surpass the energies of the original settlers. As competition is inevitable, the immigrants realize the need to excel.⁵⁸

The story focuses on another migration pattern. Baroy Apolog, a Dalikno, runs away and joins the US Navy after World War 1. He marries an American woman, Helen, who bears him a son. When Baroy is killed in a sea battle, his brother-in law, Jack comes to the Philippines to learn about Baroy's culture and to meet his native wife and son. Prior to his marriage to Helen, Baroy was forced into a tribal union by his father and this brief union brings forth a son, Adigan Apolog. Ironically, Jack understands that the young Apolog's mission is to leave, but only "to return among [them] and lead [them] forth out of darkness and the wilderness" (p. 141). Shalmia, Apolog's mother, knows that he will leave like his father before him and all her entreaties "to keep him among his people, to lead as he was destined by God" (p. 141), will be in vain. She, along with Baroy's father, believes that Baroy has failed his people. They fail to see that his urge stems from a natural inclination of someone who has been educated and exposed to the outside world. For "the primitive mind would stop in the land . . . [but] someone has to lead those stumped in the next transition to the realms of the mind" (p. 141). There is a need to leave, only to return.

Hamada believes this is tied up with the idea of one world. If all the facilities of education and enlightenment were to be given to the native and all peoples of the world, the brotherhood of man would come to a concrete realization. Hamada feels that the constraints of education are divisive of humanity. Hence, if there were a freer and more facilitated communication of ideas, cultural differences notwithstanding, there would be no reason for mankind to be divided and feel hostile towards each other.⁵⁹

"Out of Darkness and the Wilderness" can be seen in the light of a biblical "Exodus," where Baroy Apolog serves as Moses for his people. But this Moses is "leading his people out of the realms of the land into the realms of the mind" (p. 2). The theme of returning is significant because "it is not just returning in the ordinary sense, but returning in the sense of resurrection and eternal recurrence" (p. 2). Although Moses (Baroy Apolog) is unable to carry out his mission because of his untimely death, his son, Adigan Apolog is his worthy successor

^{58.} Interview with Hamada, Baguio, 20 September, 1988.

^{59.} Alegre and Fernandez, manuscript of interview with Sinai C. Hamada, p. 20.

who, in turn, will bequeath to another the task of leading his people out of darkness and the wilderness into a bright and civilized world. In this sojourn, no miracle like the parting of the Red Sea is needed, but a sincere attempt on the part of the entire village to understand the value of education outside the perimeters of the tribe or an earnest effort on the part of the educated to enlighten the elders.

Education makes socialization possible. Socialization refers to all the factors and processes which make an individual live in the company of others. This includes training in basic human social processes, e.g., dialogue, bargaining, status awareness, emotional control and a sense of obligation without which an individual cannot cope with any society, whether it be his indigenous one or an alien one. Education and socialization can help the primitive mind advance in the changing world.

It should be recalled that the idea of education for the primitive is used in "As Time Goes On," with Rebecca as "the exemplar of the triumph of education over primitiveness.⁶¹ However, in that story, education becomes a means to rebel against tradition. Rebecca does not wish to marry the native man chosen by her father. Education helps make her independent—free to choose her man and her destiny. In "Out of Darkness and Wilderness," education serves as the motivation to return to one's village and lead one's people from primitiveness to civilization.

Hamada sees the need to stress this because more and more natives are using their access to education as a means of escape rather than return. Most of them flock to the cities and other urban centers upon graduation. They return home only for brief visits and/or to participate in rituals like the *cañao*.

The poem "Western City" illustrates the constraints between a highly urban western city and its Asian counterpart. The persona, undoubtedly an Asian, finds himself lost in an unfamiliar environment and climatic condition. Also, he is overwhelmed by the high tech living in the Western City:

The race of time runs on wheels Over subways, expressway, bahns, panting and suffocating.

For him, time ticked leisurely while he was on "a carabao's back." His culture shock however dissipates upon realizing that there is language to fall back on:

^{60.} Warren, p. 127.

^{61.} Icasiano-Habana, "Asian Influences," p. 96.

Were it not for words, commonly understood. I would have come unprepared like I write, the tongue bridges. The brotherhood of man.

In another poem, "When the World Calls," the plea for universality appears more urgent. Amidst the "suffering humanity . . . grinding 'neath skyscrapers" and " . . . trembling life/peeping out of pain/crying out of the misty depths," there is a plea for world understanding. This plea however falls on deaf ears—those who, in ignorance and/or indifference and apathy, "shall have no story to tell," will remain "stunned and ununderstanding." The persona knows it is pointless to admonish these individuals:

You know not what—Ah, better for you.

But for dedicated and concerned persons, "the world calls." Though the "mission trail" is long, like "heaven's rainbow," these unselfish souls shall ease man's tensions:

For the divine spark lurks
unsuspectingly
In the bosom of man.
The world calls indeed to the
listening heart.

Hamada says that writers need not stress the themes of universality in their works. The mere use of English would help. It is so flexible and malleable that one can write of actual Filipino situations and conditions using English without much difficulty or hesitation because of the translation of vernacular words. English therefore could be a versatile medium for expressing even the so-called Filipino soul.⁶²

CONCLUSION

The shift in the treatment of fas-ang from local color to confrontation is evident. However, in the third stage, the idea of fas-ang in not as clear. First, there is not much material to work on. At this point, Hamada was busy with his careers as lawyer and journalist, and no longer devoted much time to creative writing. Second, fas-ang as conviction or as a means toward the realization of the brotherhood of man was still an evolving idea. The seeds of universality are now beyond the germination stage and have begun to flower.

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