

The History of Filipino Women's Writings

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An article from

Firefly - Filipino Short Stories

(Tulikärpänen - filippiiniläisiä novelleja)

Riitta Vartti (ed.), Kääntöpiiri, Helsinki 2001

The Philippines can be proud not only because of the country's high literacy rate but also because of her women authors who write and publish in the many languages of the country, both in the Philippines and abroad in diaspora. The development of women's writing is tied to the history of the country and the language question - from oral tradition to silencing of women under Spanish rule, from the English period under American rule to the date when more literature is written in vernacular.

In this article is told more about the writers who are not represented elsewhere in the book "Firefly".

The Language Question

They spoke the language of his childhood, the language he never used in Manila because it was not cosmopolitan enough.

Lakambini A. Sitoy: *Bones* (a short story in the collection *Mens Rea*)

My family thinks in Spanish, feels in Tagalog, prays in Pidgin Latin, and speaks English.
Sylvia Mayuga

In the Philippines, people speak several tens of languages and dialects which belong to the Southeast Asian Malay group of languages. Tagalog, Visayan (bisaya) and Ilocano are among the most common native languages with their several dialects. Before the Spaniards colonized the islands in the 1500s, many of the indigenous peoples had also already developed their own writing system (1).

However, in the Philippines just like in many other former colonized countries, majority of the writing middle class has not much used the languages of their people. One hundred years ago, the elite spoke and wrote in Spanish. After Spain sold the country to the U.S. during the turn of the 20th century, the elite switched to English. Over 400 years of colonial rule effectively alienated the elite from the people and its many languages. Some of the upper class people are still heard to say: "I speak Tagalog only to my servants." Therefore, the questions of identity and language are eternal topics in Philippine literature, besides class division that has remained almost feudal.

From Spanish to English

In addition to Catholic religion, during hundreds of years of colonialism, the Spaniards could only implant Spanish names and loan words in the country, but even during the highest peak of their rule only a fracture of people learned to speak it, the educated *ilustrados*. That was partly because no public school system was developed and "*indios*" were not allowed to the universities before the 1860s. Spanish was spoken especially by those who were educated in Europe as did the revolutionary hero, doctor and national writer José Rizal whom the Spaniards executed as a rebel in 1896.

The USA learned from its predecessor's mistakes and, as its first effort, established a public school system, based on English language. Consequently, the literacy rate rose rapidly, and first fictional texts written in the language of the new rulers were published shortly after the change. Already during the 1920s the former elite language was replaced by English, soon also practiced as a medium of fiction. In the 1940s, some authors writing in English, such like Jose Garcia Villa and Carlos Bulosan, were even noticed outside the country.

Beside this trend, fiction was published also in vernacular. During the 1800s there had been problems because of low literacy rate and poor education among people, and also because many publishers favored Spanish texts. During the first decades of American rule the atmosphere was more favorable to the native languages and several magazines published fiction in different dialects. (2)

Japanese occupation was a new turn

The four year occupation during World War II formed a break in the absolute hegemony of English. The Japanese with their idea of "Asia to Asians" closed English press and radios. This had a surprisingly big effect in the literature of the country. The mass media started to publish only in native languages and also several authors transferred to "the language of their childhood." Some did not return to English and instead, joined the literary tradition of Tagalog and other dialects, for instance Lina Flor and Trinidad Tarrosa Subido. (3)

Already before the war, the tradition of native languages was strong but it never gained similar status in literary circles compared to the English tradition (4). Many, for instance Estrella Alfon, wrote in vernacular in addition to English. For some writers English always remained entirely unknown. For instance Magdalena Jalandoni wrote only in Hiligaynon, one of the dialects of her home island.

After the war, English regained its powerful status. That was a period of magazines. Several weekly magazines like *Lidayway*, *Bulaklak*, *Aliwan* and *Tagumpay* regularly published novels of several women writers also in Tagalog and other dialects (5). Despite their popularity, those who wrote only in native languages were regarded as a bit less classy - except perhaps certain who were accepted in the literary canon like Magdalena Jalandoni, Liwayway Arceo, Genoveva Edroza or Lualhati Bautista (6). The style of those writing in native languages was blamed to be romantic and melodramatic and it did not gain acceptance of the elite.

The hegemony of English will stay - or will not stay?

The Philippines officially gained its independence in 1946, but not before in the latest constitution of 1987, Filipino was accepted as the second official language of the country beside English (7). This language, based mainly on Tagalog, the dialect of the capital region, had been under development work already since the 1930s. However, using it was not generally allowed in schools before the 1970s when the so called two language policy was established in education (8). The entire 20th century was actually a period of competition between English and Tagalog. Furthermore, the position of both of them was strengthened on the expense of the minor languages. In the competition, Filipino may be gradually winning as a consequence of the new national uprising that began during the 1960s.

However, the English language still has a firm position. Some people even argue that the Philippines is the third biggest English-speaking country in the world. The tight connection to the USA economically, militarily, and also culturally remained even after the

Independence. Therefore, English is still the language of not only advertisements, but it is also spoken in most of the mass media, in schools and universities, and in administration. That is also why most writers wrote in English during the 20th century. Because this phenomenon has already continued for almost an entire century, generation after generation, many do no longer have any other mother tongue.

Even though during the 1970s, the use of native languages started to be encouraged in the universities and in the entire cultural life, English has remained the hegemonic language of the authors. For some of them English is also a conscious choice for getting a larger audience. This may sound strange in the ears of Finns, because one should expect there were enough native language readers in a country of 75 million. Furthermore, the literacy rate is over 90%, although the skill is often only used to reading comics and the prayer book.

Own language - own mind? Filipino, Pilipino, Tagalog

In the Philippines, a debate over the name of the national language has been going on and still continues. When beginning its task during the 1930s, the Committee on National Language wanted, in the name of political correctness, to avoid the new standard language to become labeled only as Tagalog, the dialect of Manila area. Therefore also words from other dialects were integrated to it and it was named Pilipino, which also corresponds with the official name of the country, Pilipinas. However, since the times of dictator Marcos, Pilipino has been developed to a more international direction by accepting more loan words and foreign alphabets from Spanish and English. Therefore, in the new Constitution of 1987 the language is now called Filipino (filippiino in Finnish). Already the first letter of the name - that is difficult to pronounce for many ordinary persons - tells where the influences have been taken from. The Asian neighboring languages like Chinese and Japanese have left less marks. (9)

Many travelers get surprised by the Western and American atmosphere of the islands. Somebody has argued that, as a matter of fact, the Filipinos would prefer their country to be one of the states. The man in the street plays with English words and tells political jokes in English, and the president speaks foreign language to his people. A bigger and bigger part of the everyday vocabulary is adopted as such from English. The infatuation also manifests itself in the typical urban mixed language that is jokingly called Taglish (Tagalog + English).

The official standard language Filipino still remains for many only as one of the languages learned at school. Many Philippine dialects differ so much from each other that often people even prefer to use grammatically incorrect "bamboo-English" as a connecting language (10). Furthermore, only a part of the school books are printed in children's mother tongues, some of them are in Filipino, but many also in English. In addition to certain disadvantages, this also causes the advantage that most Filipinos can speak at least two languages more or less fluently.

Thus, what would be "genuine" Filipino language and literature? Perhaps everything is genuine that is written in the Philippines or by the Filipinos, and therefore, even Taglish is genuine culture of Manila? Some writers like Lualhati Bautista consciously use Taglish as a stylistic device.

Women writers through the ages

The Spanish era

Despite the fact that Filipinas enjoy a reputation of power and equality compared to most

of their Asian neighbors, in the history of literature they have shown only a little. The books of literary history, also those used as reference material in this article, barely mention women writers. Much research and publishing work is needed before they get the status they deserve. Silencing women's voice has a long history.

The Spaniards of the 1500s were horrified by the revolting liberty and too high social status of the woman, *mujer indigena*, in the islands just conquered by them. Women could own property and rule the people, act as leaders of rites and ceremonies of the society, and divorce their husbands. Women wrote poems on banana leaves and sang the tribe's songs - that was considered as women's work and is still regarded as such among indigenous peoples. The Conquistadors and the friars quickly changed this with the European model, where women's place was at home and not in prominent positions. As a consequence, during hundreds of years, education was given only to upper class girls, who were trained to become beautiful, submissive, capable to stitch embroidery, and suitable to marriage. The nun institution offered the only possibility for a career and teaching was the only educated occupation allowed to them. (11) Even towards the end of the 1800s, when men already formed Filipino intelligentsia, women were still not allowed to the universities nor abroad to study as their brothers did. (12)

Women's first literary products were mostly religious as Luisa Conzaga de Leon's translations (13). They were not results of independent creative work, but reproductions of stories with Spanish origin.

Caused by lack of education and silencing, women could not so visibly take part in the national uprising of the end of the 1800s, which also marked the developing of literature. Among them did not rise any literary influential persons equal of Rizal, and the contemporary men did not tell so much in their works about women. That is why, for instance, we do not know for sure, whether José Rizal's beloved one Leonor Rivera shared ideas of Rizal's heroine, whose model she is said to have been. Many have considered Leonor Rivera much more active and unconventional than the chaste, masochistic and easily fainting Maria Clara, who was later put on a pedestal as the ideal Filipina. Later, feminists have judged Rizal's image of a woman, even regarding his novels and their influence as the "greatest misfortune that has befallen the Filipina in the last one hundred years" (14).

Despite all the discrimination, the Filipinas made an effort to take part in the national uprising. The struggle against Spain opened for them new roles that surpassed their previous circles. Women also tried to influence the conditions of the emerging independent republic. They demanded equal right to education and debated over this with the revolutionary leaders during the 1880s. Well known are for instance the 21 women from Malolos, who corresponded with Rizal and Marcelo del Pilar. The women pressed to remove the laws that denied girls from schooling and learning Spanish, which at the time was the requirement for education. (15)

Leona Florentino (1849-1884) is regarded as the mother of Philippine women's literature and as a bridge from oral to literary tradition. She started writing poems already when 10 years old, but she never wrote for publishing. Her 22 preserved poems appeared in Europe in 1889 only after her premature death. Thus, one can say that she was the first Filipino poet who was also internationally recognized. They argue that Leona Florentino had to pay a high personal price for her writing. She left her son and her husband, who did not accept her writing, and preferred spending the rest of her life in solitude in another area. Some have suspected that her son censured his mother's erotic and rebellious production, and, consequently, we can never be sure what indeed she wrote. Leona Florentino was born in Vigan in an ilustrado family and she got a private education. She also wrote in Spanish, but mainly in her mother tongue Ilocano. (16)

The U.S. period

In the turn of the 20th century, following defeat in fight for the colony, Spain sold it to the USA that took power after a bloody war. The first independent period of the Philippines lasted barely two years.

What was fortunate in this unlucky turn was that the USA invested a lot in the education system. Edna Zapanta-Manlapaz, a researcher of literature, argues that they were particularly women who gained from the colonial policy of the USA. They were now, for the first time equally with men, accepted to study for instance in the newly founded University of the Philippines. For both genders English was equally a new language, so the men did not automatically win any privileged position. Thus, women started to publish in English simultaneously with men - which differed from the situation in other languages. Or even earlier than them: The first short story in English was published by a woman, Paz Marquez Benitez (17). Other contemporary women authors who wrote in English were Paz Latorena, Estrella Alfon, Angela Gloria, Genoveva Edroza-Matute and Loreto Paras Sulit (18). During their time happened the shift from European-Spanish to Anglo-American tradition.

Naturally, not anybody could become a writer in the 1920s and 1930s, during the shifting period from Spanish to English hegemony. Almost every famous woman writer of the time had the advantage of a well-to-do background in an *ilustrado* family, high education and a possibility to go to work outside home. Their problem was the resistance of the patriarchal society.

Magdalena Jalandoni (1901-1978) wrote her first novel in the age of 15 and she was the most productive Philippine writer of all time with her 70 volumes, of them 24 novels. Even though Jalandoni came from an *ilustrado* family - or perhaps because of that very reason - she refused to go to a school "fit for upper class women" run by nuns, and she headed to literary career against her lone breadwinner mother's wish. Writing was not regarded as an acceptable activity for a future wife, and furthermore, her daughter wanted to remain single if she could not find any soulmate equal to her. Jalandoni adored Philippine revolution and Rizal's novels, and she did not adopt any foreign literary influences except maybe Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*. Her novels are romantic and their characters are idolized. Therefore, some critics have compared her with Harriet Beecher Stowe and Charles Dickens. With her writings she strongly participated in the struggle for suffrage which women won at last in 1937. Because she wrote in Hiligaynon, she remained long outside the literary circles, unrecognized by both Filipino and English critics. Two of her novels have been translated into English. (19)

Estrella Alfon (1917-1983) was the only one of the authors of that period who did not come from the intelligentsia but she was a daughter of a store keeper from Cebu island. Also she was the last of the well known writers with an agrarian background. She was long regarded as a second class author. What was worst, during the hypocritical 1950s one of her short stories was accused of "obscenity" and she was charged in court. Alfon never recovered from this. (20). Besides hardships of both women writers and lower class authors, the episode reveals a culture that, even though of course changed a lot since those times, still remains strictly Catholic. In the eyes of a contemporary Filipino the story is even not that erotic to say nothing about pornography. (21)

A friend of Estrella Alfon, Lina Espina Moore (born in 1919), also born in Cebu, moved to Manila just before the war and worked for decades in several newspapers in addition to her fiction writing. She has written both in English and Cebuano, and she is known because of her work for promoting Cebuano literature. She has strongly criticized the

Tagalog hegemony. Her nostalgic novel *Heart of the Lotus* (1968) that describes the pre-war idyll, has been called the first Cebuano novel in English. *The Honey The Locusts*, published in 1992, is based on her experiences during the Japanese occupation. She herself worked in the guerilla movement opposing occupation and, among other things, lived in a brothel to be able to discreetly meet men who worked underground. (22)

Many women writers, especially those from the capital area, participated in the development of the media since the 1930s. They were able to travel and see the world, and they started creating a very cosmopolite atmosphere in the Philippine cultural life. Possibly as an extension for this international feeling, a big amount of the pre-war born women writers has, following the example of Paz Latorena, moved outside the country and created a career abroad, above all in the USA. A similar career seems still to be the lot of many writing in English, as is also seen in the author list of the book "Firefly". Good examples of them are Linda Ty-Casper and Cecilia Manguerra Brainard. It is surprising, that it is so common for authors to live outside their home country and, despite this, fully participate in its literary life. This reveals something of the Filipino mentality and situation in the country. Besides, very few can afford to start writing full-day in a developing country with no grant system for writers. That is argued for instance by Lilledeshan Bose who herself still stays in her home country.

However, some of the international writers have returned home, as an example Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo (born in 1944), known as a literary critic and essayist. She stayed for 15 years in different Asian countries and the USA. (23). Since returning to her home country she has worked as a professor of literature and she has published, among others, a pioneering collection of autobiographies from Filipino women writers and a research on post-colonial critic in the Philippines.

From the war to Martial Law

After the war, the Philippines experienced a period of economic growth and general optimism. The Hollywood film star cult harmoniously mixed with chaste Catholicism during that golden period of Finnish Armi Kuusela, the first Miss Universe who married a Filipino millionaire in 1953. As we can read in Armi's book, too, Manila in the 1950s was idyllic, houses were modern and magnificent, streets wide and clean, the entire country still full of promise - at least, seen from a Jaguar seat and through the windows of an air-conditioned house. (24). Already in the end of the 1960s the secure growth period ended, and many social problems became debated issues: poverty, pollution, the thousands who lived in garbage mountains, sex business around the military bases.

In the turn of the 1970s began a period of cultural revolution, student movements and new rise of nationalism. For the women writers it meant social awakening, commitment and protest. Some have criticized "housewives who did not remain in their place", but who started to write about the life of their maids and poor slum dwellers. For instance Gilda Cordero-Fernando now took her themes from new sources outside the walled societies of the upper class. Perhaps she had better opportunity for that because her family used to live in Quiapo, Manila, close to the slum areas of Tondo. (25). Many also wanted to practice the language of those masses whose consciousness they wanted to improve. Some others wrote their texts simultaneously in both languages they mastered. (26)

The last period of Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship of over 20 years threatened to suffocate the activity of the intelligentsia and writers, and the time also caused a turn in literary themes and the way they were approached. To strengthen his position Marcos declared the Martial Law in 1972 and denied more or less all the political activism and most of the organizations, papers and publishers. Many writers and other influential people went

underground or left for exile. Tens of thousands were detained, tortured and killed, among them many writers.

Among women writers one of the most famous victims of Marcos' persecution may be Ninotchka Rosca, who later on remained for good in the USA. Born in Caloocan City, in the northern side of Metro Manila, Ninotchka Rosca is a passionate writer of the politically active 1960s generation. She has possibly written the most biting descriptions of the Martial Law period and its agents. During her university years she founded several leftist organizations but, on the other hand, she was bounced out of many of them, perhaps because of her unpolished character, never prone to bow before any authorities. She always preserved a love-hate relationship with the leftist movement. As the Martial Law took effect in 1972, she did not go underground like most other activists, and therefore, she was detained right in the first arrest wave. This may have been just as well for her overall development, because, consequently, she could describe the torture chambers and rape machinery of the period's police forces from close perspective. However, her most mature texts she has written only after her prison and exile years. Her products also criticize the entire patriarchal society of the Philippines. Her heroines are fighters, and other kinds of women she dismisses as mere sacrificial lambs. From her novels the best known is *Twice Blessed* (1992). Her style might be called magic realism. (27)

The enormous anti-Marcos movement and fiery texts lead at last to the displacement of the dictator after the famous yellow EDSA revolution in 1986. The event got its name from the yellow t-shirts of the activists of People Power movement and from EDSA Highway, where the demonstrators spent those four crucial days. The first woman president Corazon Aquino was elected to power. Her husband Ninoy had been murdered because of political reasons. The Aquino period, however, did not yet mean end to human rights violations, but a turn in the atmosphere was final. The optimism of the beginning of the 1980s is demonstrated for instance in this cited text by a well known nun and women's movement activist:

Women all over the world are raising questions that have been on women's hearts for centuries, but stuck in their throats because of their socialization to silence. Now the silence is broken, the feet unbound and the hands put to work for the shalom, not only of the family and the society, but also of women.

Sister Mary John Mananzan, 1990

The Great Migration

The strong migration of the last decades has also begun to influence fiction not only for the part of topics, but also generating migrant literature. The enormous migration wave started during the 1970s economic crisis which Marcos tried to ease by marketing citizens abroad for cheap labor. The strategy, originally planned to be a temporary method in disaster, however, became an established system and the migration continues while governments praise migrants the real national heroes. Over six million or nearly ten per cent of the population lives abroad. The state has consciously continued to promote migration for guest workers in Arab countries around Persian Gulf, Europe and Japan, or permanent settlers in North America and Australia. The national economy depends on remittances of the migrants moved to richer countries. On the family level, leaving to work abroad is often the only solution to economic worries. There are no more families untouched by the migration. It is hard to stop it, because it has become a self-feeding phenomenon. The more people migrate, the more they migrate.

Over half of the migrants are women, of whom most end up being maids or entertainers - or wives - despite their high education. On the other hand, there is of course a question of brain drain. The educated labor, also badly needed in the home country, moves abroad.

Thus, in the Philippines there is going on their own "Great Migration", which is seen in uncounted films, novels, short stories, poetry and comics. Also in fiction the migrants and their families are heroes. Migration means a great drama to many - not only to those "unlucky Cinderellas" (28), who are carried back in coffins from Singapore, raped from Japan or flogged from Arab countries. For instance Marianne Villanueva, Nadine Sarreal and Edessa Ramos have written about migrants and their families.

The former colonial master USA is the desired destination of many migrants, and there are over two million Filipinos, among them quite a number of writers, living there. Thus, one can speak about Filipino-American literature. Jessica Hagedorn is an example of the young authors who have become famous and awarded there. Many of them already belong to the second generation of migrants. The existence of these writers wakes a question, can one still call them Filipinos? In the USA they join the ethnic literary boom that has come into fashion in that multicultural country.

Filipinos who have moved to other places have not gained so much fame in their new countries. However, possibly many of them do not even have such a drive, instead they publish mainly for the audience of their country of birth. Also writers residing in the USA remain in close contact with their former home country, and they publish in both countries as do Linda Ty-Casper and Cecilia Manguerra Brainard. Perhaps in this there is something typical for Filipinos?

Women's consciousness

The 1980s meant the appearance of a clear cut feminist consciousness in the texts of writers, linking it to social protest and politicization. This was first seen in poetry. Marjorie Evasco was one of the earliest feminist poets. Soon women also founded their own publishing houses, magazines and institutes for women studies. Forgotten women writers were discovered again and the literary history written anew. They wanted to break the "Great Grand Silence of the Centuries" (29).

The Filipinas now wanted to create their own images by themselves. The feminist critics began to dissect male writers' images of women - beginning from the national writer. Rizal was perhaps excused for his Maria Clara, but the younger authors no longer were. The most famous like Manuel Arguilla, Nick Joaquin, Jose Dalisay, Carlos Bulosan, Gregorio C. Brillantes, F. Sionil José and N.V.M. Gonzales were now strictly criticized. It was argued that in their images of women there was either matriarchal mystics and idealization or patriarchal underestimation and ignorance of women. The leftist writers had their own stereotypes: rich, stupid sluts and poor, but pathetic angels (30).

The previous writers, as for instance Paz Latorena, had told about women who were satisfied with their lot as sacrificers and martyrs and who yielded to a life through others, a role fit for their Catholic training. Now the role of a suffering victim and martyr did no longer do (31). In the most recent women's literature the heroines are totally different, above all complicated creatures, who have all kinds of features, also corrupt ones.

The latest fiction debating gender problems is an extension of the rise of women's consciousness. It has been in fashion to openly write out the female body, the long silenced physical part of her life. Then, themes are sexuality, menses, pregnancy, childbirth, motherhood and the still strictly forbidden abortion that the well-to-do secretly go for in Hongkong, and the poor visit a *hilot* risking their life. About this topic have written for

instance Rosario Cruz Lucero, Ligaya Victorio-Reyes and Jessica Zafra. Still as late as in 1968 Kerima Polotan caused resistance among her readers by just mentioning sexuality. Nowadays they write even about a divorce - or at least about a separation which is easier to arrange - and about sex out of wedlock, even about childless marriages. At last, a breakthrough in writing about sexuality was *Forbidden Fruit* (1992), a collection of erotica by women writers in Filipino and English. (32)

Liwayway Arceo (1920-1999), a recently died author, also known as a journalist and manuscript writer, was one of the most highly esteemed and awarded authors writing in Filipino. Her first works appeared in the 1960s and she mainly published short stories. *Ang Mag-anak na Cruz* (1990) and *Mga Kuwento ng Pag-ibig* (1997) are examples of her production. In addition to short stories, she has published two novels, *Canal de la Reina* in 1985 and *Titser* in 1995. Perhaps in a typical Filipino style she also wrote religious texts besides more nimble manuscripts for films, television and radio.

In addition to the literature with a social message there lives in the Philippines a very powerful tradition that could be called romantic or melodramatic. One of the genres much practiced by Filipinas are the autobiographic texts which often describe a Catholic childhood, a painful youth, a marriage on the side of a unfaithful husband, contradictions of work life - and life as a writer. Historically important turns like Japanese occupation, have been impressively described for instance through the personal experiences of Estrella Alfon and Maria Luna Lopez (33). In many NGO publications there continually appear fictional and autobiographic material, of which one example is for instance an anthology of stories *And She Said No!* published by human rights organizations in 1990. Despite their wishes many have to leave their fictional creation to those short stories published by the organizations.

The position and future of the literature

Until now, in the Philippines there have been only a relatively small amount of libraries and even those have been concentrated in the biggest cities, and thus the literature is not effectively spread over the whole country. There are very few books for children and the young ones. People largely satisfy their lust for reading with comics that are the most common art of literature. For example, from Rizal's works and other classics there have been produced versions in a form of comics. The government, NGOs, churches as well as other communities run their campaigns and handle their communication with the help of comics. The radio and television are next important channels. Even many well known women writers, for instance Lina Flor, Lualhati Bautista and Liwayway Arceo have beside novels and short stories written comics texts and manuscripts for the radio and TV soap operas and films.

The Philippine literature reflects a huge gap between the urban English and Tagalog culture of the capital city and the rural culture. They are too different worlds. This split was founded during the Spanish colonialism when western minded European-Spanish tradition was created. The first Philippine novels - such as José Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* - were written in Spanish, most of the later ones in English after the Anglo-American trend became hegemonic. The literature written in vernacular still has to struggle for its position.

From the part of women writers it has been always the question of a struggle to become heard. The first part of the Spanish era meant almost total silencing and their period ended with a dawning of women's rebellion in the end of the 1800s. At that time, only a few were brave enough to write - with an exception of poet Leona Florentino, the founder of women's literature. Even though political and ideological suppression has diminished and there are lots of women's writings, the economic troubles limit possibilities of many.

Through decades, a literary career has been possible only for those who can afford it. Even now it is not possible to rise from the grassroots to the position of a professional writer. Another problem is to become recognized. Many women writers are widely read and published, mostly in magazines, but because of "commercialism" they are not raised to the spheres of esteemed authors.

Note

- 1 Llamzon 1979; Pelmoka 1996.
- 2 Lumbera & Lumbera 1997, 87-103; Baltasar et al. 1981, 134-137, 155-157.
- 2 Manlapaz et al. 1999; Lumbera & Lumbera 1997, 178-197.
- 3 Lumbera & Lumbera 1997, 87-103.
- 5 Manlapaz et al. 1999.
- 6 Reyes 2000.
- 7 Phoneme "f" was imported to the country by Spaniards and did not exist in the original Philippine alphabet. This was a problem beginning from the name of the country given after their king Felipe. In native languages the country is called Pilipinas and respectively, Philippine persons are called Pilipina / Pilipino.
- 8 Manlapaz 1996; Llamzon 1979, 81-82.
- 9 Llamzon 1979.
- 10 Llamzon 1979, 87.
- 11 Jayawardena 1992, 159-160; Mananzan 1989; Feria 1991.
- 12 Eviota 1992, 60.
- 13 Policarpio 1996, 28.
- 14 Santiago 1992, 119-120; Fernandez 1998.
- 15 Aquino 1994, 593; Fernandez 1998, 23.
- 16 Evasco 1992, 12; Pineda-Ofreneo 1992, 35; Feria 1991.
- 17 Manlapaz et al. 1999.
- 18 Manlapaz 1996; Lumbera & Lumbera 1997, 178-197.
- 19 Feria 1991, 63-76; Evasco 1992, 12-14.
- 20 Feria 1991, 70-76; Hidalgo 1994, 41-51.
- 21 Manlapaz 1994; 1996.
- 22 Manlapaz 2000.
- 23 Lolarga & Sarabia 1996.
- 24 Kuusela-Hilario 1954.
- 25 Cordero-Fernando 2000.
- 26 Manlapaz 1994.
- 27 Feria 1991.
- 28 Manlapaz 1994, xxviii.
- 29 Evasco 1989.
- 30 Feria 1991; Kintanar 1992; Ventura 1994.
- 31 Bautista 1989.
- 32 Manlapaz 1994, xxxiv; Feria 1996.
- 33 Hidalgo 1994.

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