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## Filipino Writing in the United States: Reclaiming Whose America?

E. San Juan, Jr.



Although the Filipino component of the Asian-Pacific Islander ethnic category of the United States Census Bureau has now become the largest—1,255,725 persons as of 1989 (O'Hare 1991, 2), and in the next decade will surpass the combined total of the Chinese and Japanese population, the import of this statistical figure has not so far been registered in the existing baedekers of American High Culture. Literary surveys drawn up in this era of canon revision ignore the Filipino contribution. In the 1982 MLA (Modern Language Association) survey of *Three American Literatures*, edited by Houston Baker, Jr., the Asian American section deals only with Chinese and Japanese authors. This omission is repeated in the 1990 MLA reference guide, *Redefining American Literary History*; no reference is made to Filipino writing except in a meager bibliographic list at the end under the rubric "Philippine American Literature" (Ruoff and Ward 1990, 361–62). In this quite inaccurate citation of ten authors' "Primary Works," three authors would not claim at all to be Filipino American: Stevan Javellana, Celso Carunungan, and Egmidio Alvarez.<sup>1</sup> Nor would Jose Garcia Villa, the now "disappeared" inventor of modern Filipino writing in English, who is a permanent resident but not a citizen. The classification "Philippine American" may appear as a harmless conjunction of equal and separate terms, but in fact it conceals subsumption of the former into the latter. In everyday life, the workings of American pluralist tolerance easily convert the "Philippine" half into a routinized ethnic phenomenon, normalized and taken for granted. How then do we account for the absence, exclusion, and potential recuperability of Filipino writing in the United States?

Everyone agrees that in this system numbers don't really mean anything unless the community exercises a measure of economic or political power. Filipino Americans remain an exploited and disad-

vantaged, not a "model," minority. A 1980 study of their income distribution found that young men (80 to 86 percent of whom are employed in the secondary sector in California) received only about two-thirds of the income of white males while the older men got half; women received one-half the income of white men. Such income disparities persist despite comparable investments in human capital (education, work experience, etc.) which generate low returns "suggestive of race discrimination" (Cabezas and Kawaguchi 1989, 99). Filipinos rank third in median household income behind Japanese and Asian Indians. An earlier study (Nee and Sanders 1985, 75-93) concluded that although Filipinos have a higher educational attainment than whites or recent Chinese immigrants, their average income is lower than Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans because they are confined to low-skilled, low-paying jobs.

Except in the last few years, Filipinos in the United States have not participated significantly in electoral politics in any unified way, burdened as they are by the inertia of "provincial allegiances and personality clashes" if we are to believe the academic experts (Melendy 1977, 362). Indeed we have to reckon with the enduring legacy of four centuries of Spanish and U.S. colonial domination to understand the Filipino *habitus*. Neither in media, business, nor public service have Filipinos made any meaningful dent. This fact of the community's powerlessness, together with the imitative and instrumentalized state of its mode of cultural production, explains the absence of Filipino writing in the orthodox canon. Its exclusion and subordination cannot be grasped unless the historical specificity of the Philippines as a former colony, and at present a virtual neocolony, of the United States, and Filipinos as subjugated and conflicted subjects, are taken into account.

### **Carlos Bulosan**

What distinguishes the necessary centrality of Carlos Bulosan's oeuvre in the shaping of an emergent Filipino American literary tradition is its capture of the inaugural experience of uprooting and bodily transport of Filipinos to Hawaii and the North American continent. In Bulosan's life-history (1911-56), the itinerary of the peasant-become-worker unfolds in the homeland of the occupying power (the United States) a drama of collective self-discovery: the traumatic primal scene of deracination is reenacted and valorized in the acts of participating in the multi-racial workers' fight against U.S.

monopoly capital (San Juan 1972, 119–43). And this solidarity formed in the popular-democratic process of struggling with whites and people of color against a common victimage gives birth to the Filipino writer. In effect, writing becomes a mediation between the negated past of colonial dependency and a future “America” where people of color exercise their right of self-determination and socialist justice prevails. Bulosan’s historicizing imagination gives us a sense of the genealogy of the Filipino subjugated self transported from the tributary formation of the colonial periphery to the West Coast’s “factories in the fields” and canneries in *America Is in the Heart* (hereafter *America*) which cannot be found in the works of his contemporaries.

In “How My Stories Were Written,” Bulosan evokes the childhood of Apo Lacay, the folk sage who inspired his vocation of re-telling, as “the age of great distress and calamity in the land, when the fury of an invading race impaled their hearts in the tragic cross of slavery and ignorance” (Bulosan 1983, 25). The historical reference here is to the ravages and massacres of U.S. pacification forces during the Filipino-American War (1899–1902) and the violent suppression of a nascent Filipino national identity—a foreign policy “aberration” in most textbooks, but recently vindicated by Stanley Karnow’s apology, *In Our Image*. In stories like “Be American,” in *America* and in his novel *The Power of the People*, Bulosan rendered in symbolic forms the decisive effect of U.S. imperial conquest in exacerbating feudal iniquity in the Philippines and bringing about the division of international labor that transformed the United States as metropolis of modernity and the Philippines into a source of cheap manual/mental labor.

Since it is impossible to ignore Bulosan’s works in dealing with Filipino “ethnicity”—his essay “Freedom from Want” published in *Saturday Evening Post* (6 March 1943) was commissioned to illustrate President Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms” speech; it was subsequently displayed in the Federal Building in San Francisco—how is Bulosan handled by the official Establishment to promote multicultural pluralism? Instead of presenting a catalogue, I will give an example of a typical recuperative exercise from *The American Kaleidoscope* by Professor Lawrence Fuchs.<sup>2</sup> He writes:

The life of Bulosan, a Filipino-American, illustrates the process by which the political struggle against injustice and on behalf of equal rights often turned immigrants and their children into Americans. . . .

Disillusioned, Bulosan considered becoming a Communist; at another time, he became a thief. But his principal passions were American politics and American literature, and these stimulated him to organize the Committee for the Protection of Filipino Rights, and to start a small school for migrant workers, where "I traced the growth of democracy in the United States" . . . recalling that his brother had told him "America is in the hearts of men." . . . When, after months of illness and debility, he finished his autobiography, he called it *America Is in the Heart*, using words similar to those of President Roosevelt to Secretary of War Stimson, "Americanism is simply a matter of the mind and heart," and those of Justice Douglas, that "loyalty is a matter of the heart and mind."

. . . Bulosan, the Filipino migrant worker, much more than Dillingham, the scion of an old New England family, had proved to be a prescient interpreter of American nationalism. Those who had been excluded longest from membership in the American civic culture had rushed to embrace it once the barriers were lifted. (Fuchs 1991, 237-38).

Earlier, Fuchs ascribes to Bulosan the fortune blacks didn't have of being befriended by a half dozen white women and the superiority of having access to a secret knowledge denied to other minorities. "When he spoke of the American dream he wrote of his migrant-worker students that 'their eyes glowed with a new faith . . . they nodded with deep reverence' . . . Bulosan identified with the experience of the Euro-Americans who had come to this country as immigrants" (Fuchs 1991, 147-48). As if that were not enough, Bulosan is lined up with "Carl Schurz, Mary Antin, and tens of thousands of other self-consciously Americanizing immigrants" (Fuchs 1991, 357). Bulosan is thus appropriated by official discursive practice and used to promote a "civic culture" of "voluntary pluralism" by erasing his socialist and anti-imperialist politics, his materialist outlook, and his paramount commitment to genuine national sovereignty and popular democracy for the Philippines. The strategy of containment here is one of tactical omission, calculated redeployment, selective emphasis, and more precisely decontextualization; its mode of uprooting certain words and phrases from their historical habitat of political antagonisms recapitulates Generals Otis' and MacArthur's discourse of pacification in the 1890s. It can also be read as a textual analogue to the HSPA's (Hawaiian Sugar Planter's Association) raid of peasant male bodies from occupied territory from 1906 to 1946.

We would expect a less distorting treatment of Bulosan from the revisionist anthology edited by Paul Lauter et al: *The Heath Anthol-*

ogy of *American Literature*. (1841–43). Unfortunately this reputedly iconoclastic textbook will disappoint us. Instead of using a story about migrant workers, the editor selected one rather precious, introspective sketch that gives the wrong impression that Bulosan is a neurotic existentialist from the tropics, a brown-skinned Wallace Stevens conjuring verbal fetishes from his head. Moreover, Amy Ling's prefatory note (1840–41) compounds the problem by reproducing factual errors and misleading judgments derived from Elaine Kim's guide to *Asian American Literature* (1982). Kim is responsible for the defusion of Bulosan's subversive politics by ignoring the barbaric racist subjugation of the Filipino masses. In addition, she subscribes to the immigrant paradigm of Euro-American success criticized long ago by Robert Blauner and others when she claims that Bulosan "shares with the Asian goodwill ambassador writers a sustaining desire to win American acceptance" (Kim 1982, 57). (Because the term "America" denotes an overdetermined complex relation of peoples and nationalities, I urge that its use should always be qualified.) In spite of her good intention, Kim's pedestrian conformism disables her from perceiving the deviancy of Bulosan's text: *America* "is in many ways part of that inclusive and characteristically Asian American genre of autobiography or personal history dedicated to the task of promoting cultural goodwill and understanding," an opinion induced by her completely uncritical endorsement of patronizing comments of reviewers and the brainwashed mentalities of her Filipino informants (Kim 1982, 46–47). Indeed Kim's project of sanitizing Asian American authors like Bulosan for mainstream consumption proceeds from the received assumption that ethnic texts are produced by the minds of lonely, disturbed, and suffering immigrants, helpless and lost, but somehow gifted with inner resources capable of transcending their racial, ethnic and personal adversities by dint of hard work, genius, and circumstantial luck. At best, in the spirit of an insidious philanthropic liberalism akin to Fuchs, Kim says that to become part of American society one can always rely on "the urge for good, for the ideal" which "was lodged permanently in the human heart" (Kim 1982, 51).

What all these reappropriations of Bulosan signify is the power and limits of the hegemonic consensus and its apparatuses to sustain its assimilative but ultimately apartheidlike project to absorb the Asian Other (read: labor power) into the fold of the unitary racializing capitalist state. In the case of Filipino Americans, it forgets the original deed of conquest and elides the question: how did Filipini-

nos come to find themselves in Hawaii and the U.S. mainland? From a world-system point of view, it is the continuing reproduction of unequal power relations between the Philippines and the United States that is the matrix of the disintegrated Filipino whose subjectivity is dispersed in the personae of migrant worker, expatriate intellectual (the major character-type in Bienvenido Santos' fiction), cannery or service worker, U.S. Navy steward, and solitary exile. And so Filipinos first appeared in large numbers in the landscape of this globally expansive Western power not as fugitives (the "Manilamen" of the Louisiana bayous) from eighteenth-century Spanish galleons but as recruited laborers (125,000 Filipinos in the period 1906-46; free passage from 1906 to 1925) shipped by the HSPA.<sup>3</sup> By the time this "forced" labor transportation was halted in 1934, there were 108,000 Filipino workers (70 percent of the work force) in Hawaii.<sup>4</sup>

In lieu of the usual static and atomistic view, I submit this principle of world-system linkage (the colony as an integral part of the imperial polity) as the fundamental premise for establishing the conditions of possibility for Filipino creative expression in the U.S. Lacking this historical perspective, one succumbs to sectarian fallacies susceptible to the "divide-and-rule" policy of the system. In their essay in *Aiiiiieee!*, Oscar Peñaranda, Serafin Syquia, and Sam Tagatac fall prey to a separatist fallacy and thus inflict genocide on themselves: "No Filipino-American ("Flip"—born and/or raised in America) has ever published anything about the Filipino-American experience . . . Only a Filipino-American can write adequately about the Filipino-American experience" (1975, 37-54). Writing in the early seventies, a time when Filipinos born during or after the war were undergoing the proverbial "identity crisis" in the wake of Third World conscientization movements that swept the country, our flip authors contend that Santos and Bulosan, because of birth, carry "Filipino-oriented minds" whereas "the Filipino born and reared in America writes from an American perspective" (Peñaranda et al, 1975, 50). Flawed by narrow empiricism, this stance of identifying with the hegemonic order which validates the "exclusively Filipino-American work" becomes openly supremacist when it dismisses Philippine literature as inferior, lacking in "soul" (Peñaranda et al. 1975, 510).<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to this Flip manifesto, the singular virtue of the volume *Letters in Exile* (published two years later) lies in confirming the deconstructive force of the foundational premise of colonial subju-

gation. Its archival and countervailing function needs underscoring. When the Philippine Islands became a U.S. colony at the turn of the century, its inhabitants succeeded the Africans, Mexicans, and American Indians as the "White Man's Burden," the object of "domestic racial imperialism" carried out through brutal pacification and co-optative patronage (Kolko 1976, 41-43, 286-87). The first selection in *Letters in Exile*, "The First Vietnam—Philippine-American War of 1899-1902," provides the required orientation for understanding the Filipino experience of U.S. racism culminating in the anti-Filipino vigilante riots of the thirties. Neither Chinese nor Japanese history before World War II contains any comparable scene of violent racial subjugation by U.S. forces; nor does Puerto Rican history, the only close parallel to the Philippines—except for the Spanish language, which makes all the difference.

Until 1934, when Filipinos legally became aliens as a result of the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Independence Act, their status was anomalous: they were "nationals," neither citizens nor aliens nor exactly wards. This limbo of alterity or neitherness as it were, not difference as such, is the stigma Filipinos had to bear for a long time. Only in 1934 did the Filipino "immigrant" (limited to fifty) really come into existence, hence neither Bulosan nor Villa were immigrants. Nor were recruited laborers rigidly bound to contracts. In this context, the hyphenated construct "Filipino-American" becomes quite problematic, concealing the priority of the second term (given the fact of colonial/racial subordination and its manifold internalization) in what appears as a binary opposition of equals. If the writings of Bulosan and Santos do not represent the authentic Filipino experience, as the Flips self-servingly allege, and such a privilege of representation belongs only to those born or raised in the U.S. mainland (which excludes territorial possessions), then this semantic legalism only reinforces "the thoroughly racist and national chauvinist character of U.S. society" (Occena 1958, 35) by eradicating the long complex history of Filipino resistance to U.S. aggression and expropriating what little remains for Euro-American legitimation purposes.

### **Systematic Recuperation and Paranoid Separatism**

By contrasting the polarity of ideological positions in the two texts cited, I intended to demonstrate concretely the dangers of systemic recuperation and the illusion of paranoid separatism. Even before our

admission to the canon is granted, as Fuchs shows, the terms of surrender or compromise have already been drawn up for us to sign. Who then has the authority to represent the Filipino and her experience? Answers to this question and to the problem of how to define Filipino cultural autonomy and its vernacular idiom cannot be explored unless historical parameters and the totalizing constraints of the world-system are recognized—that is, unless the specificity of U.S. imperial domination in the Philippines is foregrounded in the account. Since 1898 up to the present, the production of knowledge of, and discourse about, the Filipino as a people different from others has been monopolized by Euro-American experts like H. Brett Melendy, Emory Bogardus, and others. Consider, for example, Melendy's discourse on "Filipinos" in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* which offers a conventional functional-empiricist explanation for Filipino workers' subservience to the Hawaii plantation system due to their indoctrination "to submission by the barrio political system known as *caciquismo*" (Melendy 1980, 358); their kinship and alliance system inhibited social adaptation and "militated against their achieving success in American politics" (Melendy 1980, 362). Thus the Filipino becomes a "social problem." Not only does this scholar blame the victims' culture, but also acquits the power of U.S. "tutelage" from responsibility in deepening class hierarchy and fostering covert/overt dependency in its southeast Asian colony.

One of the first tasks of a decolonizing Filipino criticism is to repudiate the putative rationality of this apologia and replace it with a materialist analysis such as Bruce Occena's synoptic overview "The Filipino Nationality in the U.S."<sup>6</sup> Except for some economic inadequacies, Occena's attempt to delineate the historical, social and political contours of the Filipino in the U.S. as a distinct nationality can be considered a salutary point of departure.<sup>7</sup> According to Occena, two basic conditions have decisively affected the development of a unique Filipino nationality in the United States: first, the continuing oppression of the Filipino nation by U.S. imperialism, and second, the fact that as a group, "Filipinos have been integrated into U.S. society on the bases of inequality and subjected to discrimination due both to their race and nationality" (Occena 1958, 31).<sup>8</sup>

What follows is a broad profile of the sociopolitical tendencies of three waves of migration needed to clarify the heterogeneous character of the Filipino nationality. The first wave (1906–46) covers 150,000 mostly progressive workers concentrated in Hawaii and

California, mostly bachelor sojourners—crippled “birds of passage”—forced by poverty, ill health, etc. to settle permanently; the second (1946–1964) is comprised of 30,000 war veterans and their families, conservative in general because of relative privileges; and the third (since 1965, about 630,000 from 1965 to 1984) encompasses the most numerous and complexly stratified group due to the fact that they have moved at a time when all sectors of Philippine society are undergoing profound changes. This latest influx harbors nationalist sentiments that help focus their consciousness on developments at home and keep alive their hope of returning when their life-chances improve (although some will stay). Given the greater scope and frequency of communication and travel between the center and margin, linguistic, cultural, and social links have been considerably reinforced enough to influence the dynamics of community politics and culture, a situation “quite different from the previous period when the Filipino community in the U.S. was in the process of evolving a conspicuously distinct sub-culture which was principally a reflection of their experiences in U.S. society and alien in many ways to the national culture of the Philippines itself” (Occena 1958, 38).<sup>9</sup> Contradictory networks of thought and feeling traverse this substantial segment of the community, problematizing the evolution of a monolithic “Filipino American” sensibility not fissured by ambivalence, indeterminacy, etc. Recent immigrants are composed of urban professional strata exhibiting a generally backward consciousness and a militant majority who occupy the lower strata of the working class exposed to the worst forms of class, racial and national oppression. Occena posits the prospect that “the life options of many of these Filipino-Americans are grim—the ‘poverty draft’ will push them into the front lines of the U.S. war machine or the life of low paid service workers. Consequently, this emerging generation promises to be the most thoroughly proletarianized section of the third wave” (Occena 1958, 41) and thus ripe for mobilization.

Although I think the last inference is mechanical and does not allow for the impact of changing political alignments, ideological fluctuations, and other contingencies in the “New World Order” of late capitalism, Occena’s stress on the unifying pressure of racial and national marginalization serves to rectify the narcosis of identity politics which posits a mystifying “Filipino-American” essence. In addition, a focus on the overlay and intersection of the key sociological features of the three waves in the extended family networks should modify the schematic partitioning of this survey and intimate

a more dynamic milieu within which Filipino heterogeneity can be further profiled.

It becomes clear now why, given these nomadic and deterritorializing processes of exchange between dependent margin and imperial center, the use of the rubric "Filipino-American" can be sectarian and thus susceptible to hegemonic renegotiation and disarticulation. Should we then bracket "American" (not reducible to heart or mind) in this moment of analysis, mimicking the anti-miscegenation law of the thirties? Oscar Campomanes has tried to resolve the predicament of the intractable and schizoid nature of Filipino subjectivity (I hesitate to use "subject position" here because it may suggest a floating monad, a disposable lifestyle unanchored to specific times and places) by postulating three historical moments: colonial generation, ethnic identity politics, and political expatriation. Assuming the global configuration I have drawn earlier, he proposes to synthesize multiple literary productions by centering them in the phenomenology of exile:

Motifs of departure, nostalgia, incompleteness, rootlessness, leave-taking, and dispossession recur with such force in most writing produced by Filipino in the U.S. and Filipino Americans, with the Philippines as always either the original or terminal reference point. Rather than the U.S. as the locus of claims or "the promised land" that Werner Sollors argues is the typological trope of "ethnic American writing," the Filipino case represents a reverse telos, an opposite movement. It is on this basis that I argue for a literature of exile and emergence rather than a literature of immigration and settlement whereby life in the U.S. serves as the space for displacement, suspension, and perspective. "Exile" becomes a necessary, if inescapable, state for Filipinos in the United States—at once susceptible to the vagaries of the (neo)colonial U.S.-Philippine relationship and redeemable only by its radical restructuring (5).

This approach is provocative, leading on one hand to Edward Said's conceptualization of exile as a reconstitution of national identity and, on the other, to Julia Kristeva's psychoanalysis of every subject as estranged, the "improper" Other as our impossible "own and proper" (Said 1990, 359, 191-95). But how does this protect us from the internal colonialism at work in High Culture's idealizing of the worldwide division of labor?

While Campomanes does foreground the fact of dependency and its libidinal investment in an archetypal pattern of exile and redemp-

tive return, he indiscriminately lumps migrant workers, sojourners, expatriates, pseudo-exiles, refugees, emigres, and opportunists together.<sup>10</sup> The concept of exile fails to distinguish the unbridgeable gap between Bulosan's radical project of solidarity of people of color against capital and the conciliatory or integrationist tendencies found in the works of N.V.M. Gonzalez, Bienvenido Santos, and Linda Ty-Casper. Subjugation of one's nationality cannot be divorced from subordination by racial and class stigmatizing; only Bulosan and some Flip writers are able to respond to this complex dialectics of Filipino dislocation and subalternity. In a recent story, "The Long Harvest," Gonzalez easily cures the incipient anomie of his protagonist by making him recollect the primal scene of his mother suturing his narcissism with artisanal commodity production at home (28); as long as sublimating images of an archaic economy survive, the petit bourgeois expatriate can always resort to a restorative therapy of mythmaking and need never worry about class exploitation, racism, and national oppression.<sup>11</sup>

This is the caveat I would interpose. Unless the paradigm of exile is articulated with the global division of labor under the diktat of U.S. finance capital (via IMF-World Bank), it simply becomes a mock-surrogate of aesthetic distance and a pretext for elite aestheticism. The intellectual of color can even wantonly indenture himself to the cult of exile à la Joyce or Nabokov. Bulosan also faced this dilemma: stories like "Life and Death of a Filipino in the USA" and "Homecoming" (San Juan 1983, 25-30, 105-11) refuse commodity fetishism by fantasizing a return to a healing home, a tempting catharsis indeed: "Everywhere I roam [in the United States] I listen for my native language with a crying heart because it means my roots in this faraway soil; it means my only communication with the living and those who died without a gift of expression" ("Writings" 153-54). But he counters this nostalgic detour, this cheap Proustian fix, by reminding himself of his vocation and its commitment, as expressed in this resume of his career:

I am sick again. I know I will be here (Firland Sanitarium, Seattle, Washington) for a long time. And the grass hut where I was born is gone, and the village of Mangusmana is gone, and my father and his one hectare of land are gone, too. And the palm-leaf house in Binalonan is gone, and two brothers and a sister are gone forever.

But what does it matter to me? The question is—what impelled me to write? The answer is—my grand dream of equality among men and freedom for all. To give a literate voice to the voiceless one hundred

thousand Filipinos in the United States, Hawaii, and Alaska. Above all and ultimately, to translate the desires and aspirations of the whole Filipino people in the Philippines and abroad in terms relevant to contemporary history.

Yes, I have taken unto myself this sole responsibility. (Kunitz 1955, 145).

Bulosan's transplantation from the colonial village to the agribusiness enclaves of the West Coast coincides with his cognitive-aesthetic mapping of the future—not the "America" of corporate Euro-American business—as the space of everyone's desire and emancipated labor (San Juan, *People's Literature* 119–43; "Beyond Identity Politics" 556–58). When the patriarchal family disintegrates, the narrator of *America* (unlike Melendy's "Filipino") discovers connections with Chicano and Mexican workers, finds allies among white middle-class women, and taps the carnivalesque life-energies of indigenous folklore in *The Laughter of My Father*, Bulosan's satire of a money-obsessed society. He encounters the submerged impulse of anti-imperialist solidarity in gambling houses, cabarets, labor barracks—sites of loss, excess and expenditure that founds a new social bond; points of escape that circumscribe the seductive power of the American "dream of success." Bulosan's strategy of displacement anticipates the postmodern insight that "a society or any collective arrangement is defined first by its points or flows of deterritorialization" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 220).

It might be surmised that when the conclusion of *America* reaffirms the narrator's faith in realizing "our unfinished dream," an "America" diametrically opposed to the nightmares of history which comprise the substance of the book, Bulosan suppresses history. One might suspect that he infiltrates into it a "jargon of authenticity" and forces art to fulfill a compensatory function of healing the divided subject. David Palumbo-Liu cogently puts the case against this kind of closure in ethnic writing as capitulation to, and recapitalization of, the dominant ideology: "In ethnic narrative, the transcendence of the material via an identification with the fictional representation of lived life often suppresses the question of the political constitution of subjectivity, both within and without the literary text, opting instead for a kind of redemption that short-circuits such questions" (Palumbo-Liu, 4). But, as Marilyn Alquizola has shown, a probing of *America's* structure will disclose an ironic counterpointing of voices or masks, with numerous didactic passages and exempla critical of

the system undercutting the naive professions of faith and compelling the reader to judge that "the totality of the book's contents contradict the protagonist's affirmation of America in the conclusion" (Alquizola 1989, 216). Beyond this formalist gloss, a contextual reading would frame the logic of the narrator's exorbitant rhetoric with two influences: first, the routine practice of authors submitting to the publisher's market analysis of audience reception (wartime propaganda enhances a book's saleability) and, second, the convention of the romance genre in Philippines popular culture which warrants such a formulaic closure. Further metacommentary on the subtext underlying *America's* mix of naturalism and humanist rhetoric would be intertextual in nature, with the massive weight of Bulosan's indictment of capital in "My Education," in the 1952 ILWU *Yearbook* editorial, and in letters belying the imputation of an "America Hallelujah!" attitude to its author. Ultimately, we are confronted once again with the masks of the bifurcated subject disseminated in the text, traces of his passage through perilous contested terrain.

Forgotten after his transitory success in 1944 with *The Laughter of My Father*, Bulosan remained virtually unknown until 1973 when the University of Washington Press, convinced by Ethnic Studies scholars of Bulosan's marketability and impressed by the activism of Filipino and American groups opposed to the "U.S.-Marcos Dictatorship," reissued *America*. My current acquaintance with the Filipino community, however, confirms Bulosan's lapse into near oblivion and the unlikelihood of the Establishment initiating a retrieval to buttress the "model minority" myth. This immunity to canonization, notwithstanding the possibility that the fractured discourse of *America* can lend itself to normalization by disciplinary regimes, is absent in the works of Bienvenido Santos whose narratives cultivate a more commodifiable *topos*: the charm of victimage.

### Bienvenido Santos

Santos' imagination is attuned to an easy purchase on the hurts, alienation, and defeatism of *pensionados*, expatriated *ilustrados*, petit bourgeois males marooned during World War II in the East Coast and Midwest, and other third wave derelicts. His pervasive theme is the reconciliation of the Filipino psyche with the status quo.<sup>12</sup> Since I have commented elsewhere on Santos' achievement (1984, 171-73; 1986, 182-83), suffice it to note here its power of communicating the

pathos of an obsolescent humanism such as that exemplified, for instance, by David Hsin-Fu Wand's celebration of the universal appeal of ethnic writing, its rendering of "the human condition of the outsider, the marginal man, the pariah" in his introduction to *Asian-American Heritage* (Wand 1974, 9). The patronage of the American New Critic Leonard Casper is sure to guarantee Santos' respectability for undergraduate tutors and mediocre town libraries. Casper's technique of assimilation differs from Fuch's in its posture of neo-conservative essentialism. Bewailing Filipino society's loss of "agrarian ideals that guaranteed cultural uniformity and stability" (Casper 1979, xiv) and that supposedly accounts for the traumatic impact of the "America of individualism" on poor native psyches, Casper superimposes his antebellum standard on his client: Santos is "offering an essentially timeless view of Culture, which transcends history limited to the linear, the consecutive, and the one-dimensional" (Casper 1979, xv). But properly contextualized, Santos' *Scent of Apples*, and possibly his two novels set in San Francisco and Chicago, derive their value from being rooted in a distinctive historical epoch of Filipino dispossession. As symptomatic testimonies of the deracinated petit bourgeois subject, they function as arenas for ideological neutralization and compromise, presenting serious obstacles to an oppositional reading and any effort to thwart recuperation because they afford what Brecht calls "culinary" pleasure, a redaction of the native's exotic naivete for tourist consumption and patronage.

So far we have seen how Fuch's welfare-state liberalism can recruit the transgressive speech of Bulosan into the camp of "American nationalism"(!) and Casper's paternalistic chauvinism can shepherd Santos into the Western manor of polite letters. They don't really present any threat to the elite proprietorship of humane learning. Does that apply to Villa, avantgarde heretic now in limbo, who once scandalized the colony's philistines?

### Jose Garcia Villa

When Villa arrived in the United States in 1930, he was already acclaimed as a modernist master by his contemporaries, a stature further reinforced when his two books of experimental and highly mannered poems, *Have Come Am Here* (1942) and *Volume Two* (1949) came out and earned praises from the leading players in the Anglo-American literary establishment, among them: Edith Sitwell,

Marianne Moore, E.E. Cummings, Richard Eberhart, Mark Van Doren, David Daiches, Horace Gregory, Elliot Paul, and Irwin Edman. His poems were then anthologized by Selden Rodman, Conrad Aiken, and W.H. Auden (though, as far as I know, no textbook of American literature has included Villa). He has received numerous prizes including the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award and the Shelley Memorial Award; he was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in 1943. Villa claims that he was denied a Bollingen Prize because he was not an American citizen. On 12 June 1973, the Marcos government bestowed on Villa its highest honor, "National Artist of the Philippines." After the publication of his *Selected Poems and New* in 1958, however, Villa immediately sank into obscurity—an enigmatic disappearance that I think can be plausibly explained (apart from rapid mutations in taste and idiom in the literary marketplace) by the immense reifying and integrative power of mass consumer society to absorb, defuse, or flatten out individualist assertions of difference.<sup>13</sup>

Villa had no problems being hailed as an "American" poet by the luminaries mentioned earlier, including the editor of *Twentieth Century Authors*. For this reference guide, he confessed the reason why his poems were "abstract" and lacked feeling for detail and particularity:

I am not at all interested in description or outward appearance, not in the contemporary scene, but in essence. A single motive underlies all my work and defines my intention as a serious artist: The search for the metaphysical meaning of man's life in the Universe—the finding of man's selfhood and identity in the mystery of Creation. I use the term metaphysical to denote the ethnic-philosophic force behind all essential living. The development and unification of the human personality I consider the highest achievement a man can do. (1035-36).

Thirty years later, Werner Sollors tries to smuggle Villa back into the limelight by focusing on the poet's ethnic peculiarity, not his metaphysical selfhood, that substantiates the myth of American exceptionalism in which the languages of consent (to assimilation) and descent collaborate to Americanize almost any immigrant. Villa's indeterminate status in the United States motivated his invention of a new poetic language of "reversed consonance" (Sollors 1986, 253-54). Positing a genealogy of syncretic belonging, Sollors's discourse thoroughly cancels out Villa's descent. Meanwhile S.E. Solberg "natural-

izes" and so annuls the Filipino subject position by labeling Villa's spiritual quest a "personal and idiosyncratic fable, a protean version of the 'making of Americans'" (Solberg 1991, 54).

Elsewhere I have argued that Villa's poems can be properly appreciated as "the subjective expression of a social antagonism" which constitutes the lyric genre (Adorno 1974, 376; San Juan 1992). What preoccupies Villa is the phenomenology of dispossession or lack in general, a malaise which translates into the double loss of social function and audience when exile overtakes the Filipino artist. What is staged in Villa's texts are scenarios for overcoming the loss by the discovery and ratification of the imagination as a demiurgic logos expressing the poet's godhood, a process which also reciprocally evokes the forces of alienation and reification the poet is wrestling with; in short, both the reality-effect and the domination-effect (Macherey and Balibar 91-97) are fused in the poetic enunciation. Such contradictions, pivoting around the themes of revolt against patriarchal power, psychomachia, negativity, and bodily uprooting, elude the neocolonizing maneuvers of Sollers, Solberg, and Villa's epigones.

In a sense Villa had refused the "ethnic" trap by challenging imperial power to recognize his unique artistry and validate his equal status. But this also spelled his premature redundancy since reconciliation via aestheticism is nothing but the hegemonic alternative of healing the split subject in a transcendental restoration of plenitude of meaning. We can observe this in the way the crisis of exile, rendered as metonymic displacement in "Wings and Blue Flame: A Trilogy" and "Young Writer in a New Country" (in Villa 1933), is dissolved by metaphoric sublimation: in his visionary representation of the primal loss (exile as castration; expulsion by the father), the antinomic discourses of place, body, inheritance, and need converge in the colonized subject being reborn in the desert of New Mexico where the Oedipal trauma (the loss of the mother's/*patria's* body) is purged by a totalizing trope of the imagination. Art then functions as the resolution of the conflict between solitary ego and community, the unconscious and the fixated body, symbolic exchange and the imaginary fetish, between subjugated people and despotic authority.

In his sympathetic introduction to Villa's stories, Edward J. O'Brien intuits a "Filipino sense of race" or "race consciousness" embedded in the text but this consciousness swiftly evaporates in the "severe and stark landscape of New Mexico" (Villa 1933, 3). Such a

gesture of alluding to difference acquires a portentous modality when Babette Deutsch, again with the best of intentions, apprehends something anomalous in Villa's situation only to normalize it as strange: "The fact that he is a native of the Philippines who comes to the English language as a stranger may have helped him to his unusual syntax" (Deutsch 1962, 56). But the stigmata of the alien is no hindrance to Villa's creation of "luminous and vibrant" poems "concerned with ultimate things," topics not easily instrumentalized as Bulosan's idealism to vindicate the ethos of pluralism. Nonetheless, alterity is recognized but only at the expense of its subsumption in the sameness/identity of the artist whose artifices, endowed with unifying organic forms, transcend race, nationality, class, gender, and all other segmentations integral to profit accumulation in the capitalist world-system.

In any case, Villa's "abject" response to the world of commodities and the cash-nexus combines both acquiescence and nausea, given our hypothesis that the lyric form harbors social antagonisms and yields both reality-and domination-effects. His work might be read as a highly mediated reflection of the vicissitudes of the petit bourgeois Filipino who is driven from the homeland by economic and social disasters, ambivalently nostalgic and repelled, unable to accommodate himself to his new environment. Villa's "disappearance" is an allegory of the community's powerlessness. The group's persistently reproduced subordination arises from its belief that it owes gratitude for being given an entry visa, and that by imitating the successful models of Asians and other immigrants who made their fortune, it will gradually be accepted as an equal; at the same time, it cherishes the notion that it originated from an autonomous, sovereign nation enjoying parity with the United States. To salvage Villa, we have to read his work symptomatically for its absences, even as those very same ruptures and silences betray the contradictions that define the "American civic" consensus. Villa's agenda is unification of the human personality, ours the reinscription of our subjection in the revolutionary struggle to forge an independent Philippines and in the resistance of peoples of color to white supremacy.

### **Jessica Hagedorn and Fred Cordova**

In this emancipatory project to shape our cultural tradition, we can learn how to safeguard ourselves from the danger of pluralist reclamation by evaluating two recent attempts at self-identification:

Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters* and Fred Cordova's *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans*. Hagedorn's novel unfolds the crisis of U.S. hegemony in the Philippines through a postmodern collage of character types embodying the corruption of the Americanizing oligarchic elite (see San Juan 1991b, 125–26). In trying to organize and make sense out of the fragmentation of the comprador-patriarchal order which sacrifices everything to acquisitive lust, she resorts to pastiche, aleatory montage of diverse styles, clichés, ersatz rituals, hyper-real hallucinations—a parodic *bricolage* of Western high postmodernism—whose cumulative force blunts whatever satire or criticism is embedded in her narrative and converts the concluding prayer of exorcism and *ressentiment* into a gesture of stylized protest. Addressed mainly to a cosmopolitan audience, Hagedorn's trendy work lends itself easily to consumer capitalism's drive to sublimate everything (dreams, eros, New People's Army, feminism, anarchist dissent) into self-gratifying spectacles. At best, *Dogeaters* allegorically measures the distance between the partisanship of Bulosan's peasants-become-militant workers and the pseudo-yuppie lifestyles of recent Filipino arrivals. As a safe female substitute for Bulosan and an example of Third World postmodernism, Hagedorn will no doubt be the next season's "pick" for the Establishment celebration of its multicultural canon.<sup>14</sup>

As for Cordova's photographic discourse, one finds here a symptom of the conflicted subaltern compensating for its supposed lack by impressing the public eye with an overwhelming multiplicity of images of family/communal togetherness, images of smiling faces animating the rituals of the life-cycle enough to generate illusions of normalcy and progress. *Filipinos* turn out to be "first" on many occasions. Despite the negative witness of the text, the weight of those iconic images suffices to neutralize the stark evidence of a single photo (on page 42) that captured stooping, faceless farm workers caught in the grid of a bleak imprisoning landscape. Nothing is mentioned of why or how these workers were transported from another land. What is suppressed here can be gleaned from a comparable photographic discourse published by another outfit, *Pearls* (Bock et al 1979, 38–47). Its section on "Pinoy" offers an apologetic history and the usual documentary photos of Filipinos adapting to their new habitat, but the inclusion of newspaper cutouts headlining anti-Filipino riots serves to demystify the ideology of adjustment and compromise that informs such officially-sponsored

enterprises like Cordova's.<sup>15</sup> *Pearls* records a vestigial trace, a lingering effect, of what *Letters in Exile* strove to accomplish: a reconstruction of the historical conditions of possibility of the Filipino nationality's presence in the metropolis and their struggle to affirm their humanity by acts of self-determination.<sup>16</sup>

The authoritarian Marcos interlude (1972–86) in Philippine history which brought a flood of exiles and pseudo-refugees to the U.S. at the same time that Washington amplified its military and economic aid to the dictatorship, had foregrounded again the reality of U.S. domination of the homeland that distinguishes the Filipino nationality from other minorities. I reiterate my thesis that the vernacular texts of the Filipinos's experience of limits and possibilities here can only be theorized and grounded within the process of reconstructing the concrete historical particularity of its incorporation in the U.S. empire as a subjugated but recalcitrant people.

## Conclusion

What makes such disparate events as Fermin Tobera's killing in 1930 and the murder of Domingo and Viernes in 1981 the condensed, heuristic episodes of the Filipino odyssey?<sup>17</sup> You have to conceive of both occurring in the space of the heterogeneous Other occupied by U.S. "civilizing" power. While the texts of the nationality's cultural tradition abound in the social archive that cries for resourceful inventory—I am thinking of the oral histories of "Manongs," interviews of Philip Vera Cruz and other veterans of union struggles, testimonies in letters and journals, reportage, videofilms of the fight over the International Hotel in San Francisco, and other non-verbal signifying practices—unfortunately there are few discerning judicious commentaries or informed reflections connecting such events, the ethicopolitical issues involved, and the punctual lived experiences of the participants. Therefore I consider the production of critical transformative discourse a priority in the agenda to identify, generate, and select the text of the Filipino nationality's agency and praxis that have resisted incorporation. Toward realizing this agenda, I propose Bulosan's work as central touchstone, Santos's and Gonzales's fiction on the diaspora as loci for renegotiation, and Villa's writing as salvageable for counterhegemonic rearticulation. Meanwhile the prodigious creativity of a "third wave" generation—among these "fertil-

izers" (see epigraph) are: Jessica Hagedorn, Marianne Villanueva, Michelle Cruz Skinner, the Flips, Al Robles, Jeff Tagami, Luis Syquia, Virginia Cerenio, Thelma Estrada, and many more—remains a reservoir of practices for future hermeneutic appraisal and reader/writer empowerment.

To accomplish this project of rescue, affirmation, and defense of Filipino agency against recolonizing strategies from above, we need a radical transformation of grassroots consciousness and practice, a task astutely addressed by Marina Feleo-Gonzalez's playbook, *A Song for Manong*. What is at stake here is a recovery of the inaugural scene of Filipino subject-ification as a dialectical process that we find dramatized here when the script projects the figure of Pedro Calosa, a leader of the Tayug uprising in Pangasinan from whose milieu of sedition and dissidence Bulosan emerged, as one who learned the craft of resistance from the Hawaii inter-ethnic strikes of the twenties. Feleo-Gonzalez chooses to circumvent any easy return to a pristine homeland by concluding the performance with the solidarity-in-action of Euro-American and Third World peoples in the campaign to preserve the site of the International Hotel from corporate modernization.<sup>18</sup> Feleo-Gonzalez's intervention reawakens the community's conscience and redeems its "collective assemblage of enunciation" (such as Manuel Buaken's book *I Have Lived with the American People*) from the fate of recording by the celebrated "melting pot" religion. Indeed Buaken returns to haunt us with the lesson that no fable of dredging up a coherent and synchronized identity through memory alone, no privileging of the therapeutic power of art, can cement together the fragments of our uprooting from the native land and repair the tragic disintegration of the nation's spirit. In the breakdown of Buaken's "goodwill autobiography" as teleological narrative, we find a model for our project: our quest for linkage and wholeness encounters the testimonies of such early migrants as Francisco Abra (117–20) and Felipe Cabellon (121–24) soliciting empathy and justice, interrupting our pursuit. With the Filipino nationality in the United States still subjugated and the islands convulsed in the fire of people's war for liberation, the practice of writing by, of, and for Filipinos in the United States remains nomadic, hybrid, inchoate, amorphous, discordant, beleaguered, embattled, in abeyance. Such "minor" writing, always a praxis of resistance, is for Deleuze and Guattari (1986, 19) "the revolutionary force for all literature."

## Notes

1. Eric Chock, another name listed by Amy Ling, identifies himself as a Hawaiian writer and resident (Ruoff and Ward 1990, 362). The Filipinos in Hawaii, condemned to almost castelike conditions, constitute a community significantly different from Filipinos in the mainland. For a survey of the writing by Hawaiian Ilocanos, see Somera.

2. Aside from having served as Director of the Peace Corps in the Philippines (1961-63), Fuchs was Executive Director of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy under President Carter. Another mode of recuperation is exemplified by Stanley (4) who insists on the "relatively libertarian character of U.S. rule."

3. In 1946, 6,000 Filipino workers were imported to Hawaii to counter the industry-wide strike—proof once more that the Philippines is an "inside" factor in the U.S. imperial polity (Philippine Center 1985, 6).

To the early contingents of Filipino workers belong the honor of spearheading the first and most resolute labor militancy in Hawaii in modern U.S. history. According to Sucheng Chan, after the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907 limiting the entry of Japanese labor, Filipinos became the predominant agricultural labor force in Hawaii. "Not surprisingly, they became the main Asian immigrant group to engage in labor militancy. Moreover, as Beechert has noted, they did so in politically repressive environments with criminal syndicalist laws" (Chan 1991, 87). While Bulosan does not claim to describe, for instance, the epic strikes of 1924 in Hawaii's Hanapepe plantation and of 1937 in Puunene, the scenes of union organizing and strikes in *America* function as an allegorical emblem of all such instances of the sporadic or organized resistance of masses of people of color. Bulosan's life covers four major episodes in the Filipino workers' history: the action of the Agricultural Workers Industrial Union-Trade Union Unity League in 1930, the formation of the Filipino Labor Union in 1933, the affiliation of the Alaska Cannery Workers Union with the CIO in 1937, and the establishment of the Filipino Agricultural Workers Association in 1939.

4. Of 45,200 Filipinos in the West Coast, 25 percent were service workers, 9 percent worked in the Alaska salmon canneries, and 60 percent worked in agriculture (Takaki 1987, 316-18; Catholic Institute 1987, 36).

5. Aside from Sam Tagatac's experimental "The New Anak" (Peñaranda's "Dark Fiesta" deals with native rituals and folk beliefs in the Philippines), the Flips will only include the Flip poets—some of those in *Without Names* (Ancheta), and some in Bruchac's collection. I will not repeat here the bibliographic data of Filipino American authors found in Cheung and Yogi's excellent reference guide.

In fairness to the Flips, I should state here that Serafin Malay Syquia's poems and his essay "Politics and Poetry" (Navarro 1974, 87-89) represent a crucial intervention that seeks to reclaim an "America" reconstituted by people of color. At a time when leaders of the community were rejecting Bulosan's socialist vision and the legacy of the Manongs, Syquia and his comrades were striving to reconnect via their ethnic rebellion with the insurgency in the neocolony—an emancipatory project of opening up the space prematurely closed by Santos's conciliatory acceptance of the status quo. Gonzalez's myths of restoration and Villa's patrician withdrawal.

6. Occena's pioneering effort can be supplemented and corrected by regional studies made by Barbara Posadas, Ruben Alcantara, Edwin Almirol, Antonio Pido, and original archival work now being done by Campomanes and others.

7. Although the term "Asian American" as an operational bureaucratic designation is misleading because of the now widely disparate historical experiences of the groups concerned and tends to covertly privilege one or two of its elements (as in the MLA surveys I've cited), Occena points out that the self-recognition and societal recognition of the peoples involved stem from their integration into U.S. society "on the bases of inequality vis-a-vis whites, subjected to various forms of racial and national discrimination and constituted as an oppressed strata of U.S. society" (Occena 1958, 29). However, because the Asian and Pacific peoples since their arrival up to now have not amalgamated to form one distinct nationality, it is best to discard the label "Asian American" and use the particular names of each nationality to forestall homogenizing ascriptions like "superminority."

8. Until 1946, Filipinos did not have the right to be naturalized. Nor could they marry whites in California until 1948 or own land until 1956 (Philippine Center 1985, 8-9, 15-16).

9. This trend is discernible in the Flips statement of identity politics. The Flips mainly descend from the relatively conservative formation of the second wave of Filipino immigrants (about thirty thousand) comprised of war veterans enjoying some privileges (Catholic Institute 1987, 41-42). Their codewords registering anxiety toward "melting pot" miscegenation are found in phrases like "cathartic stage of ethnic awareness" and "maintaining ethnic awareness." But by juxtaposing inside/outside, they replicate what they want to negate: including the Same/excluding the Other.

10. Although Solberg is correct in pointing out the interdependence of Filipino American writing and indigenous Filipino writing in English, his ascription of a myth-making function to Bulosan and others (which explains, for instance, Buaken's failure to produce a unified narrative out of his own fragmented life) is misleading since the myth's regime of truth turns out to be a discourse of cooptation as "the Filipino dream of independence fades into the American dream of equality and freedom" (Solberg 1991, 56).

11. Gonzalez's subaltern mentality typically contrives an apology for the Cordova volume (xi) when he cites the white master's endorsement of his servant: "My servant was a Manila man." In this way the stereotype of Filipinos in the thirties as "wonderful servants" (Takaki 1989, 317) is repeated and reinforced.

12. To illumine the deceptive stoicism of Santos's closure in his stories "The Day the Dancers Came" or "Scent of Apples," it would be instructive to compare the ending of J.C. Dionisio's "Cannery Episode" (1936, 413) where the narrator captures the discipline and strength of the "Alaskeros" in the face of horrible mutilation of one of their compatriots. We also find in Pete's character (reflected by the choric narrator) an embodiment of revolt against the inhumane system, a subject position typically absent in Santos' and Gonzalez's fiction.

13. Elaine Kim dismisses Villa as non-ethnic (1982, 288). Bulosan's judgement of Villa reflects my own earlier polemical evaluation (People's Literature 73-76). For Bulosan, Villa "is somewhat in line with Baudelaire and Rimbaud, for these two appeared when French poetry had already reached its vortex and was on the down-

grade. Naturally they were great apostles of the poetry of decay. When we speak of literature as a continuous tradition, a growing cultural movement, Villa is out of place and time." Villa does not represent "the growth of our literature," rather he "expresses a declining culture after it has reached its height" ("Writing" 151).

14. Here I approximate the first mode of incorporation via commodity form that Hebdige outlines (94-96); the ideological mode of incorporation I exemplify in my remarks on Bulosan, Santos, and Villa.

15. Only two out of over two hundred photos depict Filipinos on strike (Bock et al. 1979, 76 and 81). Most are photos of families and relatives of the editor and the kin-related staff of the Demonstration Project. If one compares the text of the section on "Alaska Canneries" with a contemporary account of the dismal conditions by Emeterio Cruz, one will notice the textual and iconographic techniques of neutralization and obfuscation deployed by Cordova's album whose cut-off point is 1963, a revealing date which marks the initiation of radical activism in the Filipino community. In featuring Hilario Moncado (1983, 183), Cordova commits an act of partiality and censorship, one of many, when he fails to mention Moncado's notorious opposition to Filipino workers' demands for justice (Chan 1991, 76, 89).

Cordova's inadequacies include his false generalizations on religion (1983, 167) and his eulogy for one million Filipinos who died during World War II for the sake of "Americanism" (221). But these amateurish mistakes descend to unwitting racism when he lumps inter alia Lincoln, The Lone Ranger, Superman, Charlie Chan and Martin Luther King Jr. together (230).

A similar reservation can be made of otherwise instructive documentaries like *In No One's Shadow* where the cinematic sequence focuses on the normal adjustment of the Filipino immigrant despite all odds. This selective method of fetishizing individual success stories conceals the institutional structures and historical contingencies that qualified and limited such individual lives. The ideology of the image and its system of verisimilitude needs to be elucidated and criticized as a determining apparatus producing a deformed Filipino subjectivity ripe for hegemonic reproduction.

16. A modest attempt has been made by the Philippine Center for Immigrant Rights in New York City to revive the example of *Letters in Exile* with the publication of their pamphlet *Filipinos in the USA*. But no major initiative has been taken to organize the Filipino community on the basis of its nationality and its unique response to continuing U.S. domination since the demise of various socialist formations with Filipino leadership in the eighties.

17. Fermin Tobera, a twenty-two-year old worker, was killed during the anti-Filipino riot in Watsonville, California, on 22 January 1930, his body was interred in the Philippines on 2 February marked as "National Humiliation Day" (Quinsaat 1976, 55, 57; for a contemporary estimate of the Watsonville situation, see Buaken 1948, 97-107). Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes were anti-Marcos union activist and officials of the International Longshore and Warehousemen's Union, Local 37, in Seattle, Washington, whose 1952 Yearbook Bulosan edited. They were slain on 1 June 1981, by killers hired by pro-Marcos elements and corrupt union operatives. It is also alleged that the FBI and CIA were involved in this affair.

18. Berger inflects the theme of exile in this century of banishment by suggesting that "Only worldwide solidarity can transcend modern homelessness" (1984, 67).

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